Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide

Joyful Learning through Play
Balanced Development All the Way

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Foreword

In light of the changes in society and the needs of children, the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) conducted a review on the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" (2006), and proposed key emphases to further enhance the kindergarten curriculum. The CDC is an advisory body that provides recommendations to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG) on school curriculum development from kindergarten to Secondary Six. Members of the Council include principals, teachers, parents, employers, scholars of tertiary education institutions, professionals of related sectors, representatives of the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority, representatives of the Vocational Training Council, and officers of the Education Bureau.

To align with the objectives of education as stated in the "Report of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education" alongside other relevant initiatives, this Guide is named as the "Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide" to indicate the continuity among the kindergarten, primary and secondary education curricula, forming a coherent and co-ordinated education system to achieve the goal of whole-person education.

In this Guide, "schools" refers to kindergartens, kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes serving children aged from 2 to 6 years.

Views or suggestions on the "Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide" are welcome and may be sent to the Secretariat of the Curriculum Development Council Committee on Early Childhood Education by post, fax or e-mail:

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Chapter 1

Overview

Overview

1.1 Rationale

Children are society's hope for the future. Early childhood is an important stage of development. Stakeholders have earnest expectations for quality kindergarten education.

Quality kindergarten education should **be aligned with primary and secondary education** in laying a firm foundation for the sustainable learning and growth of children, fostering in children a balanced development in the domains of **ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics**, thus achieving the goal of **whole-person education**.

> Kindergarten education should be aligned with primary and secondary education to foster in children a balanced development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics, thus achieving the goal of whole-person education.

Kindergarten Education → Primary Education → Secondary Education

1.2 Background

In 2000, the Education Commission issued *"Learning for Life, Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong"*, which set out the goals of education for Hong Kong in the future:

> **"To enable every person to attain all-round development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics according to his/her own attributes so that he/she is capable of lifelong learning, critical and exploratory thinking, innovating and adapting to change."**

In line with the directions of educational reform, the CDC published the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" in 2006, introducing a curriculum framework that focused on **lifelong learning** and **whole-person development**.

In 2015, the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education published a report to make recommendations on the policy of future kindergarten education and set out the following objectives of kindergarten education:

"To lay the foundation of lifelong learning by fostering in children an inquisitive mind, an interest in learning and exploration, a balanced development, a healthy self-concept, and the ability and confidence to adapt to the ever-changing world."

In order to inform the direction of the curriculum review and facilitate ongoing renewal of the curriculum, the CDC took into account the education objectives as stated in the Report of the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education and consolidated the characteristics of children's development and learning, **the development, strengths and current situation of local kindergartens**, as well as the experiences that kindergartens have gathered through their efforts over the years. The CDC also conducted comprehensive consultation on the curriculum and collected views from different stakeholders.

1.3 Core Value and Guiding Principles of Curriculum Design

Core Value

We maintain the rationale stated in the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" (2006), adopt **"child-centredness"** as our core value, and uphold the essential principle of "Understanding and respecting the unique developmental patterns of every child."

Guiding Principles

(i) Catering for the growth and developmental needs of children

Children like to explore and are **active learners**. Their development is a gradual process and their learning is influenced by their growth and developmental patterns. The curriculum content should focus on events that align with children's abilities.

Adopt "child-centredness" as our core value, align with the characteristics of children's development and learning, and review the development, strengths and current situation of kindergartens.

(ii) Providing real-life, sensory and interesting learning experiences

For a quality Kindergarten Education curriculum, emphasis should be placed on nurturing children's interest in learning and sustaining their learning motivation. Providing **real-life, sensory and interesting** learning experiences helps children gain first-hand life experiences and knowledge, thus achieving the prescribed curriculum aims.

(iii) Catering for learner diversity and the different needs of children

Children are unique individuals whose **abilities, personalities, interests, backgrounds, cultures, living habits and modes of learning** are varied. Teachers should have reasonable expectations of children and provide them with appropriate support, so that children with diverse characteristics and needs can enjoy learning in the same school.

(iv) Sustaining the strengths of the existing school-based curriculum

The curriculum of kindergartens in Hong Kong has always been adaptable and flexible. A caring and professional teaching force has been providing children with school-based learning experiences to cater for different needs. The design of the curriculum should **build on school-based experiences and strengths to enable continuous enhancement**.

(v) Collaboration among school, family and community

Quality kindergarten education relies on collaboration among school, family and community in which **all stakeholders have close communication and co-operation**. Stakeholders should also agree on the core value of "child-centredness" and share with one another the objectives and directions of kindergarten education to ensure mutual support and alignment.

We intend for quality kindergarten education to nurture every child so that they become **happy, healthy, positive, proactive, inquisitive, communicative, sociable, creative and imaginative**.
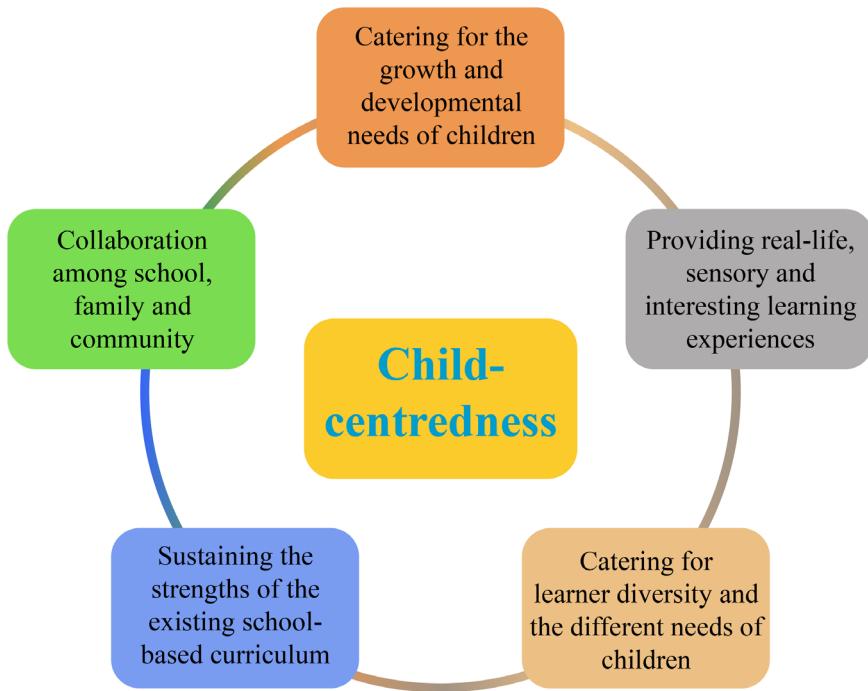
Figure 1: Core value and guiding principles of curriculum design

1.4 Development and Learning of Children

Learning activities should provide children with opportunities for free exploration, cater for children's development and interests, make use of sensory stimulation and real-life themes, and create a friendly and respectful atmosphere.

The growth and development of children involves various domains including cognition, physique and social skills. These areas are complementary and interrelated.

Children vary in their pace of development. The Kindergarten Education curriculum upholds the core value of **"child-centredness"**, and regards children as unique individuals. Standardised criteria should not be used to assess children's performance and achievements.

The following are insights into "how children learn" with reference to the literature on Developmental and Educational Psychology:

- Children are **full of curiosity** and **active in learning**
- Children have **different modes of learning**
- Children enjoy exploring with their **senses to learn new things**
- Children acquire new knowledge **building on their prior experiences and skills**
- Children love to learn in an **accepting, encouraging and supportive** environment

To sustain and enhance children's learning interest and motivation, teachers should:

- provide children with opportunities to **explore freely, discover knowledge and validate their discovery**
- care for the **interests, development and needs** of children, and take note of their differences
- encourage children to learn by using their **senses** and promote all-round development
- choose **real-life themes** and provide children with interesting learning experiences
- create a **friendly, respectful, accepting, appreciative and harmonious** learning atmosphere

1.5 Strengths and Development

- The Kindergarten Education curriculum in Hong Kong is **flexible and dynamic**. It responds readily to the various needs of children and keeps abreast of the educational developments and trends.
- The teaching force in the field of kindergarten education is **caring, dedicated and professional**. Pre-service and in-service professional development programmes have been raising standards of professionalism of teachers to facilitate the development of kindergarten education.
- **Parents care about their children** with respect to their growth and needs in various domains of development and are keen to participate in the parent activities and seminars organised by schools.
- **Society recognises the importance of kindergarten education** in the growth of children, and firmly believes that schools can establish a good foundation for children's whole-person development.

1.6 Current Situation and Changes

- Starting from the 2017/18 school year, the Government will provide 15-year free education and implement **the policy of Free Quality Kindergarten Education** to improve school environments and enhance the professionalism of teachers. It is an opportunity to continuously enhance the development of kindergarten education.

- **The prevalence of electronic screen products** has resulted in children having more opportunities to encounter such products. It poses a serious challenge to children's physical, emotional and social development, as well as their modes of learning.

- Parents' concern about the learning performance of their children can gradually shape a competitive culture. Some parents push for learning performance to meet their own high expectations, which exerts pressure on the physical and psychological development of their children.

- Parents are generally protective. Some parents intend to do everything for their children, which leads to dependence and reduces the opportunity for children's self-care abilities to develop.

- In conjunction with changes in the **demographic structure and policies**, the admission rate of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children and cross-boundary students has changed. Members of society and teachers have developed an enhanced understanding and concern for learner diversity and the different learning needs of children.

1.7 Directions of the Review

This curriculum review includes the following key emphases:

- focusing on **nurturing in children a balanced development**
- strengthening the promotion of **moral education**
- providing elaboration on the **learning objectives of each learning area**
- reinforcing catering for **learner diversity** and **promoting an inclusive culture**
- promoting the use of **real-life themes to connect each learning area**
- promoting **learning through play** and strengthening the element of free exploration in play
- enhancing the **interface between kindergarten and primary education**

1.8 Consultation and Views

Based on the key emphases mentioned above, the CDC arranged between June and September 2016 a series of focus group meetings and seminars in addition to the distribution and collection of questionnaires to understand the views of school principals, teachers and parents from kindergartens and primary schools as well as scholars of tertiary institutions and members of society.

The Education Bureau organised and analysed the views collected. Not only could the data be used as reference for reviewing the Kindergarten Education curriculum, they could also provide important information for the production of learning resources and the planning of future professional development activities.

With an understanding of the key emphases of the review and taking into consideration the current situation of curriculum development, resources, strengths and needs, schools can progressively implement the recommendations made in this Guide starting from the 2017/18 school year.

Schools should also encourage and make flexible arrangement for teachers to participate in professional development activities for continuous enhancement of the quality of education.

1.9 Summary of Each Chapter

This Guide contains eight chapters. It provides recommendations on the rationale, directions and implementation of the Kindergarten Education curriculum. The appendices of this Guide also provide a glossary and references for teachers. The chapters are summarised as follows:

Chapter	Summary of Contents
Chapter 1: Overview	Introducing the **rationale, positioning and core value** of the Kindergarten Education curriculum, as well as the **guiding principles and directions** of the curriculum review
Chapter 2: Curriculum Aims and Framework	Elaborating on the aims and framework of the Kindergarten Education curriculum, and the **learning objectives of each learning area**, as well as providing recommendations on the strategies for implementing the curriculum
Chapter 3: Whole-school Curriculum Planning	Elaborating on the framework of curriculum planning in respect of four dimensions, namely **analysis of context, organisation of aims and content, formulation of strategies** and **evaluation of effectiveness**, as well as providing specific recommendations on **time allocation of activities, teaching strategies** and **methods of evaluation**
Chapter 4: Learning and Teaching and Assessment	Elaborating on the learning characteristics of children and the roles of different stakeholders in kindergarten education; promoting **learning through play,** and strengthening the element of **free exploration in play**
Chapter 5: Catering for Learner Diversity	Providing recommendations on the directions and strategies for promoting an **inclusive environment** in schools, catering for learner **diversity** in terms of personalities, abilities, interests, languages, cultures and living habits
Chapter 6: Adaptation to School Life and the Interface between Kindergarten and Primary Education	Providing directions and recommendations on the **measures and strategies to facilitate the interface** between kindergarten and primary education and children's adaptation to school life
Chapter 7: Home-School Co-operation and Community Participation	Providing directions and recommendations on offering children quality learning and play experiences through **collaboration among school, family and community**
Chapter 8: Teachers' Professional Development	Providing recommendations on nurturing **high quality** teachers and promoting their **continuous professional development**

1.10 Aims and Use of the Guide

Apart from kindergarten practitioners, different stakeholders including parents, primary school curriculum leaders and members of society can refer to this Guide to enhance their knowledge of children and kindergarten education.

This Guide aims to provide a clear and comprehensive curriculum framework for kindergarten principals, curriculum leaders and teachers to plan a curriculum with school-based characteristics.

Based on the missions and conditions of the schools, characteristics of children and expectations of parents and society, schools can refer to the curriculum aims, framework and recommendations on strategies as stated in this Guide to provide children with appropriate and effective learning experiences.

Other stakeholders, including parents, primary school practitioners and members of society, can also read the relevant chapters of this Guide to enhance their knowledge of children and kindergarten education and make suitable co-ordination and arrangements, so that they can work together to enhance kindergarten education and achieve the prescribed curriculum aims.

Primary school principals, vice principals, curriculum leaders and teachers can understand from this Guide the rationale, curriculum aims, content and methods of assessment of kindergarten education. An enhanced understanding of children's modes of learning and strategies enables schools to sustain the learning interest and confidence of their new primary students, which facilitates their adaption to school life and transition from kindergarten to primary school.

Parents can also read this Guide to learn more about the aims and framework of the Kindergarten Education curriculum, understand learner diversity and the challenges children face when entering kindergarten or preparing for entering primary school. With a better understanding, parents can fully collaborate to bring about a pleasant and effective learning and life experience for children.

Chapter 2

Curriculum Aims and Framework

What should children learn?

Curriculum Aims and Framework – *What should children learn?*

2.1 Curriculum Rationale

The curriculum covers "Values and Attitudes", "Skills" and "Knowledge", which promotes a balanced development in children through approaches of "Real-life Themes", "Integrated Approach" and "Learning through Play".

This chapter sets out the curriculum rationale, curriculum aims and implementation principles to provide **a comprehensive and flexible curriculum framework**. It also lists the learning objectives and the examples of learning expectations for each learning area.

With reference to the curriculum aims and framework set out in this Guide, the school's mission and characteristics, as well as children's development and needs, kindergartens can set their own curriculum aims and design content and related learning and teaching strategies with school-based characteristics.

The Kindergarten Education curriculum adopts the principle of promoting comprehensive and balanced development in children covering **five developmental objectives**, namely **"Moral Development", "Cognitive and Language Development", "Physical Development", "Affective and Social Development" and "Aesthetic Development"**, with a view to actualising the development in the five domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics respectively.

The five developmental objectives mentioned above are to be achieved through six learning areas, namely **"Physical Fitness and Health", "Language", "Early Childhood Mathematics", "Nature and Living", "Self and Society" and "Arts and Creativity"**. Real-life learning themes that are closely related to children's daily life experiences, cognitive abilities and interests can connect the content of the six learning areas to provide children with integrated and comprehensive learning experiences which are conducive to their learning.

Like the primary and secondary curriculum frameworks, the Kindergarten Education curriculum framework includes three interrelated components, namely **"Values and Attitudes", "Skills" and "Knowledge"**. Together they constitute a coherent curriculum structure.

The Kindergarten Education curriculum attaches great importance to fostering children's interest in learning, cultivating positive values and attitudes, as well as strengthening self-confidence and self-care abilities. Regarding knowledge acquisition, emphasis is placed on constructing basic knowledge and concepts.

2.2 Curriculum Aims

The aims of the Kindergarten Education curriculum are as follows:

- **To foster children's balanced development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics**

- **To help children develop good living habits and a strong and healthy body**

- **To foster in children an interest in learning, an inquisitive mind and eagerness to explore**

- **To instil in children positive values and attitudes**

The curriculum aims mentioned above are conducive to nurturing children to be **happy, healthy, positive, proactive, inquisitive, communicative, sociable, creative and imaginative.**

It is of prime importance for children to have **a comprehensive and balanced development** at the kindergarten stage. Undue emphasis on the learning of knowledge or skills in the curriculum can undermine children's interest and confidence in learning. This is unfavourable to their personal growth and future development.

The curriculum aims mentioned above set out our expectations of children's development:

Curriculum Aims	Expectations on Children
To foster children's balanced development in the domains of **ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics**	• To show courtesy and develop basic concept of right and wrong **(Ethics)** • To acquire basic cognitive and communicative abilities **(Intellect)** • To maintain good health and undergo wholesome development both physically and psychologically **(Physique)** • To enjoy their social life and apply basic social skills **(Social skills)** • To enjoy participation in creation and appreciation of arts, and be creative and imaginative **(Aesthetics)**
To help children develop **good living habits** and **a strong and healthy body**	• To acquire self-care abilities **(Good living habits)** • To be able to put into continuous practice of their own accord a physically and psychologically healthy lifestyle **(A strong and healthy body)**
To foster in children **an interest in learning, an inquisitive mind and eagerness to explore**	• To be curious, and fond of observing their environment and discerning how things are interrelated **(An interest in learning and an inquisitive mind)** • To be capable of using the senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch to explore, and understand new things of their environment **(Eagerness to explore)**
To instil in children **positive values and attitudes**	• To understand themselves, respect and care for others, have passion for life and exhibit good behaviour **(Positive values)** • To be optimistic and confident, and be courageous in facing changes in life and growth **(Positive attitudes)**

2.3 Developmental Objectives

As a direction for children's balanced development, "Moral Development" is added, together with "Cognitive and Language Development", "Physical Development", "Affective and Social Development" and "Aesthetic Development".

This Guide maintains the four developmental objectives for children as proposed in the "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum" (2006). The **element of moral development in "Affective and Social Development"** is emphasised and strengthened as **"Moral Development"** to achieve **a balanced development in the five domains** of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics in the curriculum.

Children's moral development is closely related to how they understand themselves, develop the concept of right and wrong, express their emotions and feelings, and interact with others.

Hong Kong is a fast-developing international city with the traditional values being challenged in its ever-changing social context. Parents and various sectors of the community have growing expectations of the moral development of our next generation.

Research in Developmental Psychology has established that **children as small as 3 years old have developed an initial understanding of the concept of right and wrong**. The kindergarten stage is a crucial time for children to be nurtured in their moral development. The caring, dedicated and professional teaching force in Hong Kong kindergartens has always been committed to fostering children with positive values and attitudes.

Moral and Civic Education, which aims at nurturing in students positive values and attitudes, has been one of the Four Key Tasks in the curriculum reforms[1]. The respective learning content is covered in all Key Learning Areas and subjects. (For details of *"Basic Education Curriculum Guide – to Sustain, Deepen and Focus on Learning to Learn (Primary 1-6)" (2014): Four Key Tasks – Achieving Learning to Learn, Moral and Civic Education*, please refer to the following URL: https://cd.edb.gov.hk/becg/english/chapter3A.html

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[1] In 2001, the Curriculum Development Council suggested in its report *Learning to Learn - The Way Forward in Curriculum Development* that the Four Key Tasks, including Moral and Civic Education, Reading to Learn, Project Learning, and Information Technology for Interactive Learning be implemented in various Key Learning Areas (KLAs) and across KLAs, so as to help students develop independent learning capabilities.

In light of the development and characteristics of children, schools can **focus on the positive values and attitudes** that align with their school mission and context, e.g. perseverance, care for others, responsibility, when **planning their school-based moral education**. Schools can let children experience and put into action positive values and attitudes in the daily learning environment, which has numerous opportunities for interpersonal interactions. (For details of "A proposed set of values and attitudes for incorporation into the school curriculum", please refer to Appendix 1 of this Guide.)

Children at their elementary stage of cognitive development will find abstract moral concepts rather difficult to comprehend. Moral education should start with understanding and application so that children can come to an initial understanding of the fact that behaviours can be classified as "right" or "wrong", as well as "good" or "bad". There is no pressing need to discuss with children moral issues which require higher-order thinking skills.

Schools may also **invite parents to support and engage** in creating an atmosphere favourable to the fostering of positive values and attitudes in children, and the promotion of moral education.

Currently, moral education is covered in all learning areas to promote children's moral development. The related learning and teaching resources can still be used.

Teachers are encouraged to **adopt continuous observation in daily learning activities in school to understand children's moral development**. Positive feedback can be provided in a timely manner to show appreciation and assure children of their good attitudes and behaviours.

Teachers are also encouraged to help children with patience and love to recognise their areas for improvement. Harsh criticism should be avoided. "Behaviour Rating Scale" or "Checklist" should not be the only means to assess and compare children's performance in moral development.

"Behaviour Rating Scale" or "Checklist" should not be the only means to assess and compare children's performance in moral development.

2.3.1 Developmental Objectives and their Elaboration

Developmental Objectives	Elaboration
Moral Development (Ethics)	- To develop an initial understanding of the basic **concept of right and wrong** and nurture **positive values** in children - To help children establish a **positive self-image** as well as **optimistic and positive attitudes** towards life - To foster in children positive attitudes towards people and help them learn to **respect** and **care** for people around them - To develop a basic understanding of their roles and responsibilities in **family, school, society, country, the world and other aspects in life**
Cognitive and Language Development (Intellect)	- To arouse and fulfil the **curiosity** of children, and to cultivate in them an inquisitive and proactive attitude towards people and things around them - To develop children's **simple logical concepts in mathematical literacy** - To develop children's abilities in **analysis, reasoning, judgement and problem-solving** - To develop children's abilities in **language** and **thinking**

Developmental Objectives	Elaboration
Physical Development (Physique)	• To develop children's **sensory perception and abilities of concentration and observation** • To cultivate in children **good living habits** and **self-care abilities** • 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**
Affective and Social Development (Social Skills)	• To help children understand their thinking and emotions, and **express their feelings and needs** through appropriate means • To enrich children's social life experiences and strengthen their **interpersonal and communication** skills • To nurture children to be sociable and to learn to **establish good interpersonal relationships** through negotiation and co-operation
Aesthetic Development (Aesthetics)	• To allow children to **explore the artistic elements in life** 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 **creativity** and **imagination**, 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 their environment**

In addition, the Department of Health has collaborated with the Education Bureau and the Social Welfare Department to develop the *"Pre-primary Children Development and Bahaviour Management - Teacher Resource Kit"*. It provides information on the developmental characteristics of children from 2 to 6 years old for teachers' reference. (Please refer to Appendix 2 of this Guide for details.)

2.3.2 Interrelationship between Developmental Objectives

Developmental objectives are interrelated and complementary. Promotion of one developmental objective leads to enhancement in other objectives. For example, children who learn to use proper language to express their feelings and needs will exhibit improved communication and relationship with others. This illustrates how the affective and social development of children is enhanced by the development of their language ability. Moreover, mastering gross and fine motor skills allows children to participate in artistic creation. This illustrates how children's physical development facilitates their aesthetic development.

Moral Development
(Ethics)

Aesthetic Development (Aesthetics)

Balanced Development

Cognitive & Language Development (Intellect)

Affective & Social Development (Social Skills)

Physical Development (Physique)
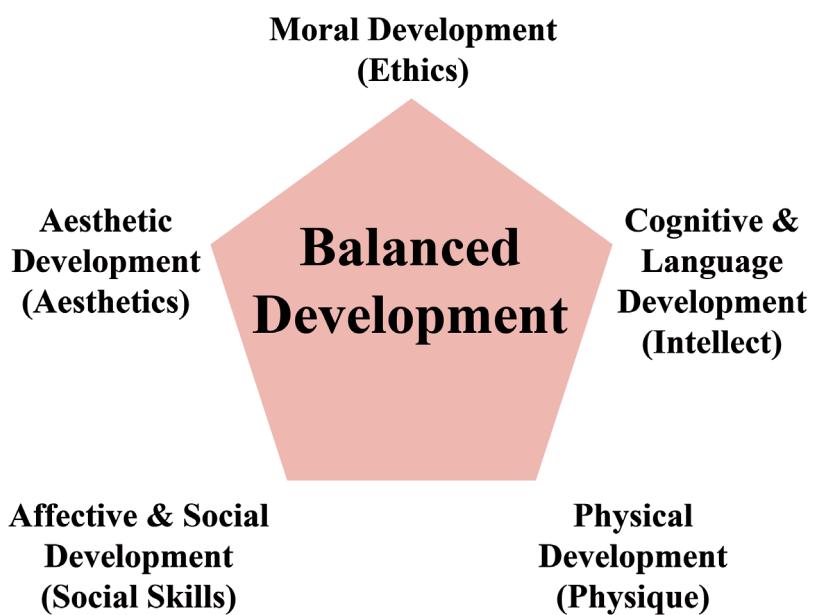
Figure 2: Equal importance of the five domains to achieve balanced development

2.4 What to Learn? How to Learn? How to Assess?

Curriculum planning of kindergarten education focuses on three aspects, namely **"Curriculum Aims and Content"**, **"Pedagogy"** and **"Assessment"**, to achieve the goal of promoting children's learning.

- **What should children learn to make learning meaningful and valuable (Curriculum Aims and Content)?**

- The learning content should cater for **children's interests** to stimulate their motivation in learning.
- The themes should centre on **children's life**, to provide oppounities for practice and generate meaning for learning.
- **Children's prior knowledge and experiences** should be taken into account to help them gradually develop levels of deeper understanding of new things.
- A comprehensive and balanced curriculum is conducive to children's enhancement in **"Knowledge", "Skills"** and **"Values and Attitudes"**.

(For recommendations on curriculum planning, please refer to Chapter 3 "Whole-school Curriculum Planning" of this Guide.)

. **How should teachers facilitate children's learning (Pedagogy)?**

- Teachers should understand children's developmental and learning characteristics, and design **learning activities with abundant sensory stimulation.**
- As children begin to develop their concentration, **uninteresting and repetitive drilling** or prolonged periods of one-way teaching **should be avoided**.
- **Environment that is conducive to learning** should be created. Interest corners should be set up to encourage self-directed learning in children.
- Teachers should be equipped with adequate subject knowledge and understanding of children's abilities in order **to choose appropriate teaching content** and pedagogy that facilitate children's understanding.
- Attention should be given to **learner diversity and different learning needs** during teaching so as to promote an accepting and inclusive culture in schools.

(For recommendations on learning and teaching strategies, please refer to Chapter 4 "Learning and Teaching and Assessment" of this Guide.)

- **How is learning to be promoted through understanding the learning performance of children (Assessment)?**

  - Learning, teaching and assessment are **indispensable** in curriculum implementation and overall curriculum planning should be worked out at the very beginning of the term.
  - No form of examinations, neither oral nor written examination, should be used in assessing children's learning performance.
  - **Continuous observation, record and feedback** can assure children of their learning performance and help them understand their areas for improvement.
  - The data collected can **serve as feedback for the school for enhancing the curriculum** and facilitating children's learning.

(For recommendations on assessment strategies, please refer to Chapter 4 "Learning and Teaching and Assessment" of this Guide.)

Curriculum Planning
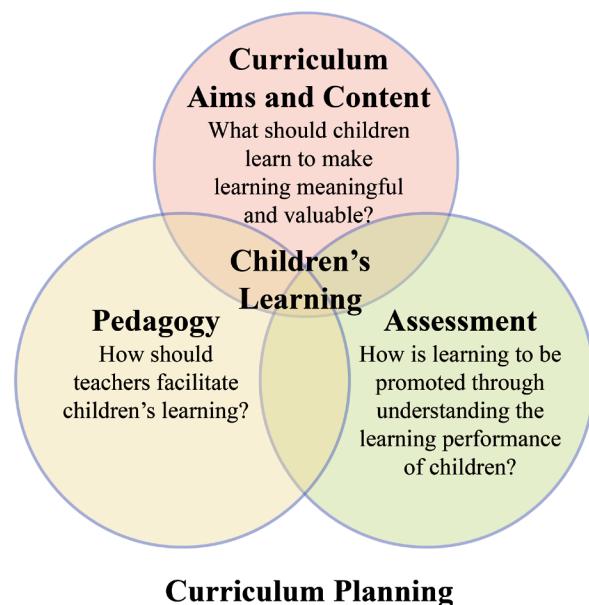
Figure 3: The three orientations of planning the Kindergarten Education curriculum

2.5   Real-life Themes

Real-life themes, such as family, festivals and community, can be used as the main focus in curriculum organisation to connect the content of different learning areas.

Designing integrated learning activities using themes can connect the content of different learning areas and help children connect the learning content with their life.

In addition to arousing their interest in learning, children should be given **ample opportunities to experience the content related to the themes and understand the relationships between different concepts** at school and in their daily life so as to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of what they have learned.

(For recommendations on curriculum planning, please refer to Chapter 3 "Whole-school Curriculum Planning" of this Guide.)

2.6   Curriculum Framework and Learning Areas

The curriculum framework of Kindergarten Education comprises three interrelated components, namely **"Values and Attitudes", "Skills"** and **"Knowledge"** and covers six different learning areas, including **"Self and Society", "Nature and Living", "Physical Fitness and Health", "Arts and Creativity", "Early Childhood Mathematics"** and **"Language"**, which concurs with the five developmental objectives proposed in this Guide. This provides children with comprehensive learning experiences.

The classification of learning content into different learning areas **provides a framework for reviewing the comprehensive and balanced learning elements** to ensure children's whole-person development in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics. **However, it is not intended to promote learning by subjects.**

Therefore, we have revised the names of three learning areas to highlight that **kindergarten curriculum should address children's development** and that over-teaching should be avoided. The amendments are as follows:

Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum (2006)	Amendments	Purposes
Early Mathematics	**Early Childhood Mathematics**	To show explicitly that learning of mathematics at this stage should take into account children's growth and their developmental needs
Science and Technology	**Nature and Living**	• To avoid confusion with the "subject-based" curriculum framework for primary/secondary schools • To focus on cultivating curiosity and exploring phenomena in life and nature
Arts	**Arts and Creativity**	To place emphasis on the learning elements of free expression and creativity
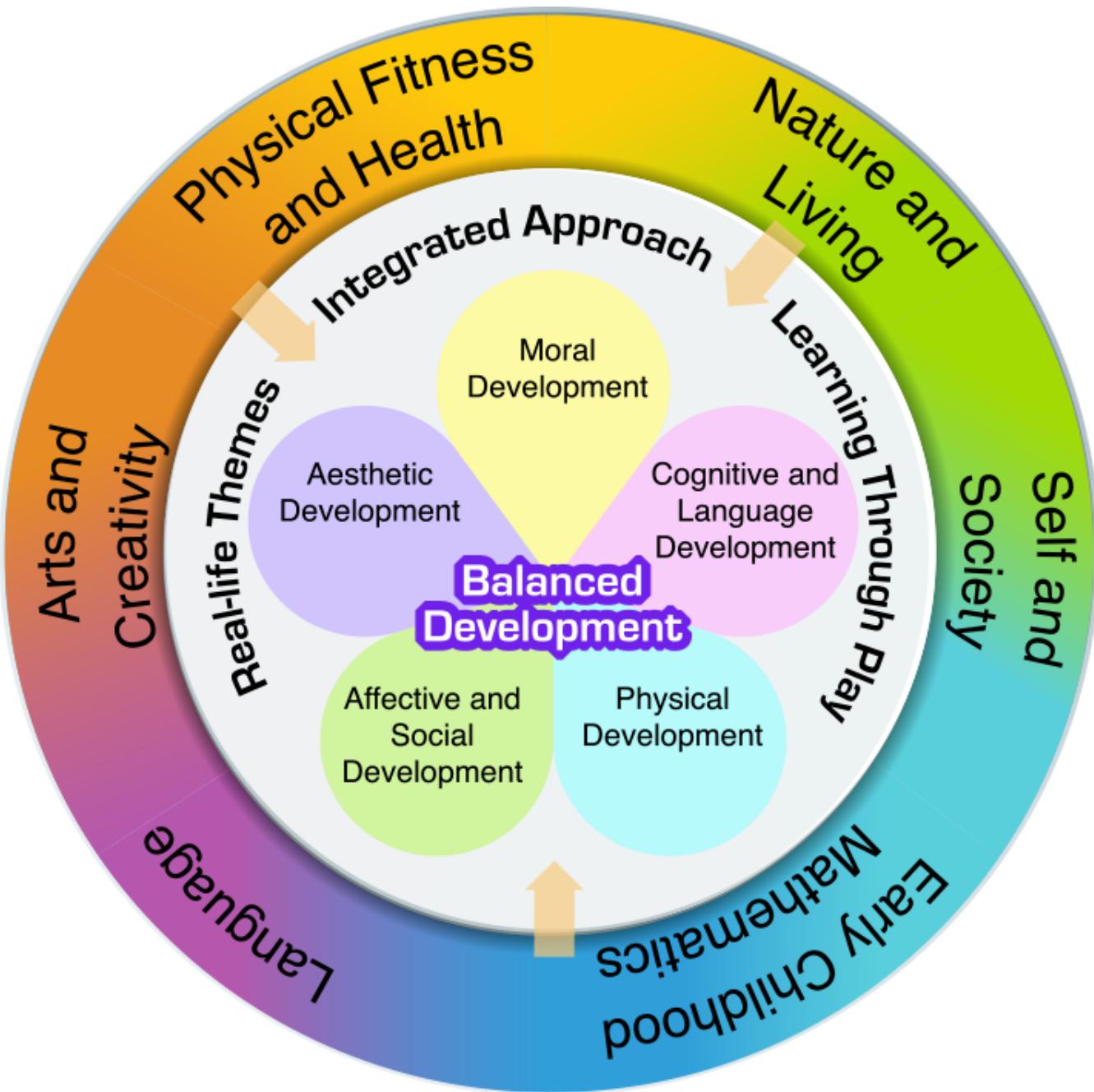
Figure 4: Kindergarten Education Curriculum Framework

The following sections set out the **rationale, learning objectives, examples of learning expectations, as well as pedagogical approach** for all learning areas based on the learning and developmental characteristics of children at the kindergarten stage.

2.6.1 Learning Area - Physical Fitness and Health

To help children develop a strong and healthy body, an interest in participating in physical activities, positive values and attitudes and good living habits.

Rationale

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines "health" as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being" and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Therefore, in addition to **attaining physical fitness** and being disease-free, children should also maintain a **joyful state of mind, a healthy body and a good social life**, in order to be genuinely healthy.

Active participation in physical activities not only enables children to promote musculoskeletal development, enhance cardiopulmonary endurance and prevent chronic diseases, but also helps them build self-confidence and self-worth, strengthen willpower and perseverance, and learn to observe rules and respect others.

Schools are recommended to help children of different age groups **develop a strong and healthy body, an interest in participating in physical activities, positive values and attitudes and good living habits** through diversified physical activities.

Schools can refer to the *"Physical Activity Guide for Children Aged 2 to 6"* published in 2014 by the Department of Health when formulating strategies to foster children's physical development and raise the awareness of teachers, children and parents regarding physical activities. This can facilitate collaboration with parents to nurture a healthy lifestyle in children.

Learning Objectives and Related Examples of Learning Expectations

Learning Objectives	Examples of Learning Expectations

To develop gross and fine motor skills, acquire control over basic movements, and understand the concepts of space and direction	• Develop gross and fine motor skills and acquire abilities to control basic movements:
	  - Develop basic skills and movements, such as walking, running, jumping, crawling, balancing and throwing
	  - Develop the skills of balancing, moving and controlling
	  - Learn the right postures, develop co-ordination, flexibility, sensitivity and sense of rhythm, and strengthen muscle strength and endurance
	• Understand the concepts of space and direction:
	  - Understand the concept of space by co-ordinating the senses
	  - Understand the concept of direction such as up and down, left and right, front and back through dynamic physical activities

To nurture an interest and habit of active participation in physical activities, and develop positive values and attitudes	• Be willing to participate in group activities, observe rules and respect others, and develop self-confidence and courage as well as social skills • Learn to get along with others and cultivate team spirit • Be willing to take risks, unafraid of failures and persistent • Understand the importance of co-operation in social life and to strengthen the sense of belonging and collective responsibility
To use senses to explore the surroundings, raise awareness of health and safety, and develop self-protection abilities	• Identify the functions of the five senses, i.e. sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, and improve knowledge of the body • Develop good living and hygiene habits • Develop a basic understanding of health and safety, and have a sense of self-protection

Pedagogical Approach

- Teachers are encouraged to pay attention to children's health conditions at all times during physical activities **to ensure they are healthy and fit enough to do exercise**, have no symptoms of infectious diseases and are suitable for participating in group activities.

- **Prolonged and intense exercise should be avoided** to prevent health risks due to physical exhaustion.

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

- Learning content should be organised according to the principle of progressing with an increasing degree of difficulty and complexity. Children should be given **sufficient practice time and encouragement** to enable them to enhance their abilities step by step.

- **More appreciation and recognition** of children's performance should be given to encourage new attempts and enhance their self-confidence. **Comparison** of children's abilities **should be avoided**, and recognition should be given to the efforts and progress they have made during the process.

2.6.2(a) Learning Area - Language (Chinese)

Language education for children should start with nurturing an interest in language and good learning attitudes.

Rationale

Chinese is the medium of communication for most people in Hong Kong (with Cantonese as the major spoken language, while Putonghua and other dialects are also in use. Traditional Chinese characters are mainly used in reading and writing), and most schools adopt Chinese as the medium of instruction. We recommend **developing children's Chinese ability first**.

Language education for children should start with nurturing an interest in language and good attitudes towards language learning. In general, children's **listening and speaking abilities should be nurtured first**. They can be **exposed to an authentic and language-rich environment with various types of language materials** for developing their abilities.

Children **develop the ability to listen and speak a language before they exhibit reading and writing abilities**. Schools are recommended **to provide children with fun and real-life listening and speaking experiences**, and to enrich children's reading and writing experiences on the basis of their good listening and speaking abilities.

In addition, as there are more opportunities for children to listen to and speak Putonghua, teachers can adopt the principles mentioned above, take into account children's background and characteristics as well as their professional knowhow and judgement in organising interesting and diversified activities, such as play and singing nursery songs, to expose children to Putonghua in a relaxing and joyful context to conform with the diversified language environment of Hong Kong.

Learning Objectives and Related Examples of Learning Expectations

Learning Objectives	Examples of Learning Expectations
To develop an interest in language learning (Chinese)	• Enjoy participating in language activities e.g. singing nursery songs, listening to stories and reading books • Listen attentively and understand what others say, and communicate in speech or express ideas and feelings in drawing and writing • Actively ask questions and respond to teachers' questions • Understand the timeline or causal relationship of events in daily conversations, life experiences and stories
To develop a good attitude towards communication	• Hold attention and show patience when communicating with others • Be willing to communicate with others with courtesy, and wait until his/her turn to speak • Speak in a gentle tone using the right words
To build a foundation for language use gradually	• Pay attention to the language materials in everyday life and recognise the characteristics of language • Develop the habit of reading, take the initiative to read, and acquire the basic skills for reading such as the directionality of text • Imitate the intonation and pace of adult speech and start to organise ideas for own expression

Pedagogical Approach

- Taking into account the characteristics and pace of language development among children, kindergartens should provide them with integrated language learning experiences with **listening, speaking, reading and writing experiences incorporated naturally into the daily teaching contexts.**

- **Catering for children's interests**, life experiences and prior knowledge, strategies such as singing nursery rhymes, listening to stories, daily conversations, play and reading picture books should be adopted to enrich children's language experiences. (For the characteristics of children learning language (Chinese), please refer to Appendix 3 of this Guide.)

- Encourage children to stay focused and listen attentively to others, and instruct children to respond politely, thus **developing a good attitude towards communication**.

- Learning to write should align with children's physical development. Schools **should not ask K1 children to hold a pencil and write**. Teachers are recommended to arrange diversified activities to enhance children's fine motor skills, facilitate their eye-hand co-ordination, and help them develop the concept of orientation and the proper sitting posture.

- After children possess the aforementioned pre-writing related skills, teachers can **create meaningful contexts** to let children start learning to write basic strokes and then simple characters.

Chinese Learning for Non-Chinese Speaking Children

The earlier non-Chinese speaking children start to learn Chinese, the quicker they can adapt to the local curriculum and integrate into the local community.

- The earlier non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children are exposed to Chinese, **the quicker they can develop an interest and confidence in learning and integrate into the local community**. We encourage parents of NCS children to arrange for their children to study in kindergartens as early as possible, so their children can be immersed in an authentic Chinese language environment.

- The opportunity for NCS children to be exposed to the Chinese Language before admission to school or outside the classroom is relatively limited. As models demonstrating language use for children, teachers are advised to speak slowly and express ideas with the aid of body language, pictures or real objects.

- Activities such as singing nursery rhymes and story-telling can help NCS children learn Chinese in a relaxing atmosphere. Teachers may also **facilitate exchange among children** by providing more opportunities for local and NCS children to play together, so that both parties benefit from the increased listening and speaking practice.

- Teachers may adapt the learning content and choose themes that children are more familiar with, for example, festivals, food, clothing and living habits **to allow sharing of culture and customs among children of different races**. This not only increases the resonance and interest in the learning content in NCS children, but also encourages their language communication.

(For the learning process, difficulties, learning and teaching strategies, as well as the support and resources for Chinese learning for NCS children, please refer to Appendix 5 of this Guide.)

2.6.2(b) Learning Area - Second Language (English)

Rationale

The language experiences acquired by children at an early age have tremendous effects on their language development. Children often see and hear English in their everyday life, and the early experience with English can help them develop an interest in the language. Proper guidance and encouragement from teachers will help children **develop awareness and concepts of English at an early stage**, which lay the foundation for their future English language development.

At the kindergarten stage, **in light of the development of language ability and needs of children**, teachers can **provide an interesting, meaningful and authentic English environment** to build their confidence in using simple English for communication with others. (For the characteristics of children learning language (English), please refer to Appendix 4.)

Learning Objectives and Related Examples of Learning Expectations

Learning Objectives	Examples of Learning Expectations
To build an interest in English	• Display interest in English signage or broadcasts in their surroundings • Enjoy singing nursery songs and saying rhymes in English and participate in fun English activities • Find pleasure in listening to or reading English stories
To develop the attitude and confidence in interacting with people and their environment using simple English	• Understand English words and conversations related to everyday life • Enjoy using simple English words, phrases or sentences to respond to questions, requests or instructions related to their life and school experiences
To gradually develop basic concepts of English	• Gradually understand the English alphabet and simple English words • Develop the basic concepts of print and books, and the basic reading skills

- As models of language learning for children, teachers should **possess good proficiency in spoken English, speak with accurate pronunciation and use language correctly**.

- Teachers should **use authentic materials** to create a language-rich environment to cultivate children's interest in English and motivate them to learn. Fun listening and speaking activities, such as singing nursery songs, listening to stories and engaging in daily conversations can improve children's confidence in using English.

- **Shared reading of English picture books and big books** can help children develop an awareness of English print, the concept of books, basic reading strategies and an interest in reading.

- **Teachers can make use of different sessions** to enrich children's English language experiences. For example, engaging children in simple English conversations during snack time or morning assembly, singing familiar English nursery songs with children when they wait for the start of the next activity, or displaying English materials in the classroom may enhance children's English learning experience.

- **Mechanical copying, recitation or memorisation of learning content does not benefit children's English language development**, but imposes stress on children's learning and undermines their interest in the language.

2.6.3 Learning Area - Early Childhood Mathematics

To develop children's interest and motivation in learning mathematics through solving practical problems in real-life situations.

Rationale

Mathematical concepts are closely related to children's life. Real-life and contextualised learning can help children become aware of the relationship between mathematics and their life. Children should be encouraged to put into practice what they have learned by **using mathematical concepts to solve practical problems in everyday life**.

There is a strict learning progression for mathematics, in which the level of learning content gradually increases. Learning of mathematical concepts should be in line with children's cognitive development, and experimenting with objects can help reinforce the concepts in children.

Learning Objectives and Related Examples of Learning Expectations

Learning Objectives	Examples of Learning Expectations
To develop an interest in learning mathematics	• Display an interest in numbers and quantities in their environment, and recognise the concepts represented by numbers and mathematical symbols • Be aware of the shapes of objects and enjoy using their senses to compare the sizes, shapes and weights of objects • Be interested in the patterns of ordering of different things, enjoy exploring and trying to imitate the patterns of ordering • Be willing to think and solve daily life problems by using mathematics
To be aware of the relationship between mathematics and life, and gradually build up the ability to think and solve daily life problems by using mathematics	• Understand the relationship between numbers and quantities, and be able to compare and tell the differences in quantity by using mathematical language • Explore the properties of quantity, shapes and space (e.g. front, back, left, right) by various methods such as observation and touching • Recognise the properties of objects, and conduct activities such as sorting, ordering and sequencing • Develop the concept of time and recognise the regularity of days, months and alternation of seasons, and be able to express time
To cultivate an attitude to actively observe and care about things around them that are related to mathematics	• Express thoughts by using mathematical expressions such as more/less, long/short, addition/subtraction, front/back and left/right • Search for and appreciate various things in their environment that are related to mathematics and cultivate an attitude that promotes careful observation of the surroundings

Pedagogical Approach

- To cater to children's development and thinking ability, teachers should assist children to understand basic mathematical language step by step and foster their sensitivity to numbers and space.

- Teachers should make use of daily activities and play to introduce and consolidate mathematical concepts as appropriate. The introduction of mathematical concepts should follow **the principle of simplicity and concreteness** concentrating on one attribute at a time and progressing gradually.

- One-way teaching and repetitive drilling on operations of mathematics can cause resentment. The activities should match children's interests. Teachers can **create real-life learning contexts and select suitable objects and teaching aids** to facilitate children's learning.

- Children's language development and their formation of mathematical concepts are complementary to each other. Teachers are recommended to **use mathematical concepts more often to discuss with children about the things they encounter in their everyday life** and encourage children to communicate among themselves.

2.6.4 Learning Area - Nature and Living

Rationale

Children are curious by nature. "Nature and Living" emphasises developing and sustaining in children **curiosity and exploratory spirit to help them learn how to acquire knowledge**, and to instil in them **the values and attitudes to respect, appreciate and cherish the environment and nature**.

There are various interesting phenomena in nature, for example, light and darkness, floating and sinking, hot and cold, etc. Schools may encourage children **to explore the physical world with multiple senses** in order to discover the fascinating things and phenomena in nature and explore the way they relate to our everyday life.

Understanding scientific concepts through observation of phenomena in nature; gaining a preliminary understanding of modern technology and the influence it brings to us through everyday life experiences.

Rapid technological advancement changes our living habits. Teachers can guide children to be aware of the technological products in their everyday life to gain an understanding of their use and changes over the course of time in order to make good use of technology.

Schools should create a safe environment for children to express their thoughts towards nature and surroundings, and to experience the relationship among nature, technology and our everyday life, through **observation, prediction and comparison**.

Learning Objectives and Related Examples of Learning Expectations

Learning Objectives	Examples of Learning Expectations
To develop curiosity about the environment and phenomena around and to enjoy exploring the surroundings and nature	• Be curious about natural phenomena and display a desire for exploration • Take the initiative in understanding their surroundings and be willing to try out technological products • Develop an attitude of inquisitiveness and truth-seeking
To cultivate an objective and open-minded attitude; to acquire basic exploratory skills through observation, questioning and making assumptions; and to develop abilities to solve problems	• Be able to observe by using the senses of sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch • Be capable of using observation, prediction and comparison to explore and understand things in their environment • Be able to express findings in simple language and share thoughts of things discovered
To appreciate, respect and care for nature and live an environmentally-friendly life	• Care for and appreciate the beauty of nature, animals and plants • Develop attitudes and habits of protecting the environment and cherishing resources • Appreciate that technology improves life and know how to make good use of technology

Pedagogical Approach

- Teachers should encourage children **to be aware of their surroundings and the natural environment** and to deepen their understanding through observation and discussion.

- Exploratory activities that involve easy observation, obvious changes and simple procedures should be selected. A trial run should be conducted to **ensure the activities are feasible, safe and appropriate for meeting the developmental needs of children**.

- Exploratory activities should focus on cultivating in children an inquisitive attitude and let them derive pleasure from exploration. Teachers can encourage children to take risks **without placing emphasis on arriving at a "standard answer"** or rushing to disclose the results.

- Nature and technology are closely related to our everyday life, so teachers are recommended to let children explore and discover for themselves the knowledge **in both the natural environment and the real world**.

- The amount of time spent on using technology as teaching aids should not affect the overall teaching arrangements. Children's health should always be the top priority and indiscriminate use of technology should be discouraged.

2.6.5 Learning Area - Self and Society

We should help children know themselves, gain a basic understanding of the expected etiquette and behaviour in different social groups and acquire basic interpersonal skills.

Rationale

When infants enter childhood, with their physical and cognitive development taking place, they begin **to develop a better understanding of themselves and gradually form their self-image**.

With changes in their social circle and the need for emotional attachment, children also start forging relationships and bonds with people outside their family, such as teachers and classmates.

Cultivating **self-discipline** in children, helping them learn to take responsibility for their behaviours and emotions, and developing their **critical thinking skills** and **independence** are conducive to laying a good foundation for future learning and growth.

Children adopt different roles in different social groups. To enhance children's social development, schools should offer **authentic and real-life contexts** in which children can learn to express their emotions and needs in an appropriate way, **to get along well with others**, as well as **to respect** and **care for others**.

Learning Objectives and Related Examples of Learning Expectations

Learning Objectives	Examples of Learning Expectations
To become optimistic and confident and to acquire a positive self-image	• Be aware of their own strengths and interests and know that they are unique individuals • Develop the basic skills for managing their emotions and read others' emotions
To respect others and get along well with them	• Enjoy making friends, learning and playing with others • Accept, respect and appreciate their differences from others in terms of appearance, language, ability, culture and living habits • Be willing to observe rules in learning or play, and care for others' feelings • Resolve conflicts and arguments in social groups through listening, discussion and negotiation
To take the initiative to learn about different social groups (e.g. family, school, local community, society, nation) and to show commitment and active participation	• Understand and recognise their identities and roles in different social groups • Enjoy participating in group activities and be willing to get along well with other group members • Be polite, respectful and loving towards their parents, and to care for the school, and show concern about the local community as well as society • Have a basic understanding of the Chinese culture and their national identity, and respect the cultures, habits and lifestyles of other countries and nationalities

Pedagogical Approach

- Taking into account children's characteristics and pace of development, schools should offer various learning activities to let children **realise their abilities and strengths, and develop self-confidence and a sense of accomplishment**.

- Teachers should provide children with opportunities to make decisions on their own, and let them learn how to make judgement and **be responsible for the decisions they have made**.

- Teachers should encourage children to actively participate in various activities and give them sufficient time for interactions to **experience the norms in social life**.

- Teachers should make good use of the natural environment and community resources for organising suitable activities to help children understand our society through authentic and real-life experiences, as well as to learn to **love the environment and care for the local community**.

- Teachers should use everyday life events as learning materials in a flexible way, and **enhance children's understanding of and active participation in family, school, local community and country through various modes of activities**.

2.6.6 Learning Area - Arts and Creativity

Through diversified and interesting activities of creating, presenting and appreciating the arts, children's imagination and creativity can be inspired and nurtured.

Rationale

Arts are the essence of human culture and the expression of beauty. Children can derive pleasure and satisfaction from arts. Art activities not only cultivate children's interest in arts, **but also nurture their attitude of lifelong learning and promote positive personality development**.

Arts are a form of communication through the use of a myriad of symbols and language. It is desirable to let children **express their feelings and ideas** through exercising senses of sight, hearing, touch and body movement.

Children are curious about the world and full of malleable ideas. Through **diversified and interesting activities in creating, presenting and appreciating arts**, children's imagination and creativity can be inspired and nurtured.

Diversified art forms and activities can extend children's sensory experiences, which helps them perceive the world and **facilitates their cognitive development**.

Learning Objectives and Related Examples of Learning Expectations

Learning Objectives	Examples of Learning Expectations
To develop sensory abilities and accumulate art experiences	• Derive pleasure from creating with different senses and body movement • Actively participate in various art activities related to music, drama, dance and visual arts • Enjoy listening to music and respond to beats and rhythms with movement and singing
To express feelings and unleash creativity through presenting and creating the arts	• Use their facial expression, voice and movement to express their feelings and creativity, for example, expressing happiness through singing and spontaneous movement/dancing • Use visual elements such as lines, colours and shapes to express their thoughts, feelings and creativity
To develop creativity through active exploration in art activities	• Explore timbre and sound effects through various media and ways • Create and explore visual arts through using various materials and ways • Engage in rhythmic creations and creative expression activities with body movement and other art elements

Pedagogical Approach

- Create an innovative and artistic learning environment. **Make use of the classroom layout** to display children's learning outcomes in the arts so as to enhance their learning motivation and self-confidence, and foster their skills and sense of satisfaction in artistic expression.

- **Design interesting activities** focusing on children's participatory process and experiences to encourage expression of creativity. Avoid drilling of skills and rote learning, and allow children to enjoy the pleasure of participating in the activities.

- Give children **sufficient time and freedom,** and organise different art activities to encourage creative expressions and sharing of experiences, thoughts and feelings.

- Allow children **to participate in diversified art activities and widen their exposure to different works of arts** in order to broaden their understanding about arts, and nurture their aesthetic sense and appreciative capabilities.

Chapter 3

Whole-school Curriculum Planning

How to design a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children?

Whole-school Curriculum Planning – *How to design a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children?*

3.1 Directions of Curriculum Planning

Conducting whole-school curriculum planning through an open and flexible mode.

This chapter aims to provide directions and proposed modes for kindergarten curriculum planners to implement the core value and guiding principles for curriculum design proposed in Chapter 1:

- **Child-centredness**
- **Catering for the growth and developmental needs of children**
- **Providing real-life, sensory and interesting learning experiences**
- **Catering for learner diversity and the different needs of children**
- **Sustaining the strengths of the existing school-based curriculum**
- **Collaboration among school, family and community**

Schools should plan an **open** and **flexible** school-based curriculum with reference to the recommendations made in this Guide. For contents and key emphases of curriculum planning, please refer to the following chapters:

Elements of Curriculum Planning	Relevant Chapters
Reviewing the **current situation of the school** and **children's characteristics**	Chapter 3 "Whole-school Curriculum Planning" in this Guide
Organising **real-life and interesting** learning content	Chapter 4 "Learning and Teaching and Assessment" in this Guide
Adopting **sensory exploration** and **play-based strategies**	Chapter 4 "Learning and Teaching and Assessment" and Chapter 5 "Catering for Learner Diversity" in this Guide
Aligning with **teachers' professional development** and collaborative exchange activities	Chapter 8 "Teachers' Professional Development" in this Guide
Collaborating with parents and making use of **community resources**	Chapter 7 "Home-School Co-operation and Community Participation" in this Guide
Systematically **collecting data about and evaluating children's learning performance** and curriculum effectiveness	Chapter 3 "Whole-school Curriculum Planning" and Chapter 4 "Learning and Teaching and Assessment" in this Guide

Curriculum planning consists of the following four main stages:

- **Analysis of context**
- **Organisation of aims and content**
- **Formulation of strategies**
- **Evaluation of effectiveness**

These stages, which are interrelated, are developed according to the core value of the Kindergarten Education curriculum and the guiding principles for curriculum design. The experiences and new knowledge derived from **assessment provide timely feedback** to inform the directions, conditions, aims, content and strategies for curriculum development, and help **achieve continuous enhancement of the school curriculum.**
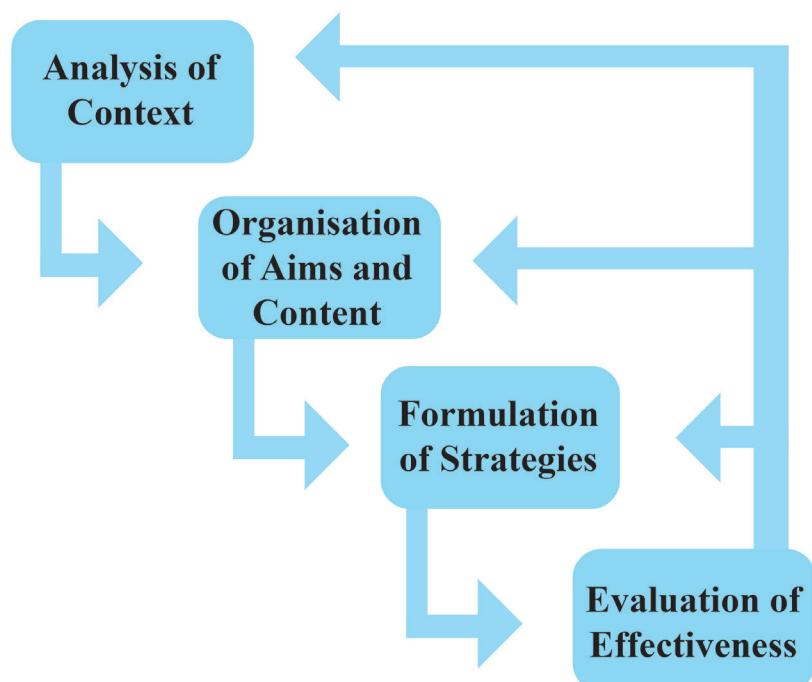
Figure 5: Stages of curriculum planning

3.2 Analysis of Context

In recent years, research in Developmental Psychology and related fields has enhanced public understanding of children. It brings new insights to Kindergarten Education curriculum, which focuses more on children's comprehensive and balanced development which lays a foundation for their lifelong learning.

As curriculum development is an ongoing process, schools should regularly review the current situation of their curriculum to respond to changes in society, as well as educational trends and new issues.

For example, with changes in social policies and demographic structure, importance is attached to children's diversity. Schools should review the learning themes, content or activities in a timely manner to cater for their diversity in terms of personalities, abilities, interests, pace of development, languages, cultures and living habits, and provide an inclusive learning environment for children. (For recommendations and examples of catering for children's diversity, please refer to Chapter 5 "Catering for Learner Diversity" of this Guide.)

In addition, **different schools have their own history, school mission, teaching force, community environment and teaching resources.** Schools should take into account the factors mentioned above when conducting school-based curriculum planning, and set specific and practicable teaching objectives as the guiding principles for curriculum development.

Schools can take the initiative to understand **parents' expectations** and make appropriate adjustments to provide quality and special learning experiences for children.

3.3 Organisation of Aims and Content

Each stakeholder plays an important and irreplaceable role. Stakeholders collaborate with each other to achieve the aims of the Kindergarten Education curriculum.

Stakeholders	Roles
Principal/ Vice Principal	• To lead teachers to set curriculum aims and development plans collaboratively, and to build consensus • To encourage teachers to actively participate in professional development activities, and to promote observation and experience sharing so as to continuously enhance teachers' professionalism • To keep regular contact and communication with parents, alumni, other schools, community organisations, government bureaux and departments, non-governmental organisations, etc. and to solicit their concerted efforts and support
Curriculum Leader	• To examine children's developmental needs and to set the directions of curriculum development and specific learning objectives • To conduct curriculum planning, select appropriate learning materials and design diversified learning activities, with a view to promoting quality Kindergarten Education curriculum • To conduct ongoing evaluation on the curriculum and review its effectiveness, report regularly to the principal/vice principal, discuss the development plan or search for resources, with a view to continuously refining the curriculum
Teacher	• To understand the rationale and directions of school curriculum implementation; acknowledge and fulfil the mission and responsibility of nurturing a balanced development in children • To serve as a role model for children by words and deeds, and instil in children positive values and attitudes • To provide timely and positive feedback to children and encourage them to reflect, so as to foster their learning and growth • To better understand children, and actively participate in professional development activities to enrich their pedagogical knowledge and skills
School Staff	• Staff playing different roles in the school have frequent contact with children, and they are also role models for children affecting their growth and development • All staff should work together to ensure the learning environment is safe and hygienic • Leaders should maintain close communication with the staff to share common goals, and encourage them to provide quality education and care for children to meet the needs of learning activities

When organising curriculum content, teachers should select familiar **experiences or events related to children's daily life** as the learning themes based on **their interests, pace of development, abilities and prior knowledge.** An integrated approach that coherently connects different learning areas, e.g. schools, families, friends and relatives, food, transportation, community, four seasons and festivals, etc. should be adopted to facilitate a balanced development of children **in the domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics**.
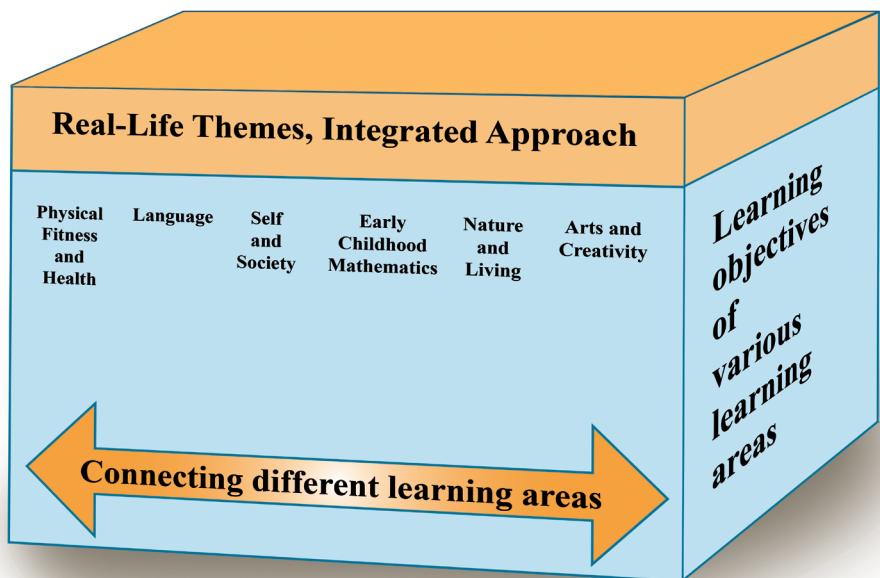
Figure 6: Real-life themes connecting different learning areas with an integrated approach

Fragmented and trivial learning content is not recommended. **An integrated approach of theme-based learning can effectively consolidate children's learning content and life experiences, and let them practise and apply what they have learned in life** so as to make learning meaningful.

Key emphases of learning should be repeated in children's learning experiences, in which children can continuously learn and apply relevant knowledge and skills. Such learning content should **progress with an increasing degree of difficulty/complexity** based on children's abilities and form progressive learning stages.

The curriculum content consists of a series of learning experiences, including teacher-led content and child-initiated content. The learning content can cover the **learning experiences inside and outside the classroom**. Teachers can seek learning content from snack time, morning assemblies, visits, birthday parties, festive parties so as to enrich children's learning experiences.

3.4 Formulation of Strategies

A quality Kindergarten Education curriculum should be in line with the principles of curriculum planning. While implementing, other important factors, such as the role of teachers, the design of learning environment and timetabling, should also be taken care of. The teaching objectives set can only be achieved by adopting various appropriate learning and teaching strategies.

Schools are advised to devise appropriate strategies based on **"timetabling"** and **"arrangement of space"**, so as to effectively achieve the aims set for curriculum.

Timetabling

Children accumulate life experiences and acquire knowledge in every minute and second. Schools should plan daily activity schedule in accordance with children's age and learning characteristics to cater for their developmental needs.

To facilitate children's balanced development, time allocation should be flexible. **Teaching by subjects or mere delivery of academic knowledge should be avoided.**

(i) Category of activities

Kindergarten curriculum includes the following types of activities:

- **Indoor and outdoor activities;**
- **Gross and fine motor activities;**
- **" Quiet" and " active" activities;**
- **Individual, group and class activities;**
- **Activities initiated by children and organised by teachers.**

(ii) Planning the content of activities

In light of various factors such as their education mission, school conditions, children's needs, schools can consider and plan a flexible activity schedule and do the following:

- Co-ordinating the use of venue for arranging **different types of activities** so that children can have sufficient space to play and explore, thus **facilitating a balanced development**.

- Providing opportunities for children to **explore independently and learn in groups**. Children can have their alone time to arrange activities on their own, or they can chat, co-create or play with peers.

- Encouraging children to participate in sensory activities. They can then **construct knowledge** through sensory perception and **personal experiences**, and apply what they have learned in everyday life.

- Providing **diversified play and learning activities** based on children's different abilities and interests, and catering for their different needs.

(iii) Suggested time allocation

Daily activities arranged by kindergartens should include: health inspections, temperature check (if necessary), conversation (individually between teachers and children), physical activities, music activities and art activities, free choice corner activities, sharing of life experiences, toilet time, snack time, lunch time and afternoon nap (applicable to full-day kindergartens).

Schedules of daily activities mentioned above should be **flexible** and an appropriate proportion of activities should be arranged to **cater for the diversity and developmental needs of children**.

Full-day kindergartens and kindergartens providing longer activity time should arrange children to have more free choice activities, physical activities, music activities and art activities.

Half-day and full-day kindergartens should arrange no less than 30 and 50 minutes every day respectively, for children to participate in free play.

Half-day and full-day kindergartens should **arrange no less than 30 and 50 minutes every day respectively for children to participate in free play**. Free play can be carried out during free choice activities and physical activities. (For rationale and arrangements of free play, please refer to Section 4.4 of Chapter 4 of this Guide – "Learning through Play".)

The table below sets out an example of daily activities and schedules for full-day and half-day kindergartens as a reference.

Example of Content of Activities and Schedules		
Content of Activities	**Approximate Time Allocation (minutes)**	
	Half-day	**Full-day**
Morning and Afternoon Assemblies / Whole-class or Whole-group Activities (health inspections, conversation and sharing of life experiences)	15-30	15-30
Learning Activities and Free Choice Corner Activities (e.g. play involving construction, creation, exploration, manipulation, social interaction and language)	75-95	110-145
Physical Activities, Music Activities and Art Activities	45-60	90-105
Toilet Time	20-30	40-60
Meals (tidying up, lunch time, snack time)	15-20	60-95
Afternoon Nap / Break	-	80-105
Tidying-up Activities and Getting Ready to Go Home (conclusion and sharing of the day's activities, conversation and nursery rhymes)	10-15	25-30

Arrangement of Space in Schools

Reasonable and comfortable arrangement of space, including arrangements of tables and chairs, aisles, decoration of interest corners and design of display boards, can create a relaxing and pleasurable learning atmosphere for children.

Schools should ensure that children can learn in a **safe and healthy learning environment**. Furniture should be checked regularly and be replaced if broken so as to prevent accidents. There should be enough space for activities and appropriate facilities in the classrooms. The height of classroom furniture or partitioning boards should be adjusted to children's height.

Teachers should be **flexible in using activity space**. Interest corners should observe specified requirements in size. "Active" and "quiet" activity corners should be separated to avoid groups of children disturbing each other. In addition, the layout of the classroom should be periodically changed according to the curriculum plan so as to give children a fresh impression all the time. This can arouse children's interest in learning, creativity and exploration.

3.5 Evaluation of Effectiveness

Assessment should facilitate children's learning, and provide data for further refining the curriculum and implementation strategies.

Assessment is an indispensable part of curriculum development, which can ensure children's learning and achieve a **"balanced development in the five domains of ethics, intellect, physique, social skills and aesthetics"**. Assessment should be in line with the following principles:

- **Assessment for learning;**
- **Assessment should be a continuous process;**
- **Assessment should be carried out in an authentic learning environment;**
- **Teachers, parents and children should be involved in assessment.**

Systematic review of children's learning performance can help teachers understand their development, and provide important data for curriculum planning, which in turn inform and refine the **aims, content and implementation strategies** of the curriculum. Below are the recommendations on evaluating the directions for curriculum:

- Are curriculum aims **in line with the trend of education** and can they respond to the needs of society?
- Is the curriculum content **comprehensive** and able to facilitate children's **balanced development** effectively?
- **Are there any conditions or factors** in schools that may facilitate or undermine children's learning? How can they be improved?
- **Have the schools planned any specific and practicable measures** to cater for learner diversity?
- **Would learning and teaching strategies address children's abilities and needs?** How can children's learning effectiveness be further enhanced?
- **Have schools formulated and implemented effective strategies** to facilitate children who are newly admitted to school or in upper kindergarten class (K3) to adapt to school life?
- **Have schools collaborated with parents and made good use of community resources** to promote children's learning effectiveness?
- **Can assessment strategies comprehensively and accurately reflect** the development and learning performance of children?

Schools should set up a wholesome mechanism which monitors and reviews the current situation of curriculum implementation and provides timely feedback to teachers for adjusting the directions for curriculum development for continuous enhancement of the teaching quality. (For the directional strategies and recommendations on implementation of assessment, please refer to Chapter 4 of this Guide "Learning and Teaching and Assessment".)

Chapter 4

Learning and Teaching and Assessment

How do children learn?

How can teachers facilitate children's learning and conduct assessment?

Learning and Teaching and Assessment –
How do children learn? How can teachers facilitate children's learning and conduct assessment?

4.1 Approaches to Learning and Teaching

Learning content should be selected from real-life themes, provide interesting learning experiences, cater to children's interests and needs, address individual differences, appeal to multiple senses, solicit participation of different stakeholders, and create a caring atmosphere.

"Child-centredness" is the core value of Kindergarten Education curriculum. Teachers should understand the features of the ways children learn when designing curriculum and learning activities.

Highly effective learning activities entail the following features, which can sustain and enhance children's interest and motivation in learning:

- Learning content should be selected from **real-life themes to offer children interesting learning experiences** and help them connect what they have learned with their everyday life experience.

- Learning content should be in line with the **interests and needs of children and respect individual differences** to enable different children to derive satisfaction from learning, and sustain their interest in learning.

- Children should be encouraged to **explore with multiple senses** through learning activities and play to help them accumulate firsthand new learning experiences.

- Professional support and resources from **schools, families and community should be solicited for curriculum planning** to provide children with quality and enriched learning experiences.

- A learning atmosphere full of **friendliness, respect, acceptance, appreciation and harmony** would help children feel loved and cared for, so that they would establish positive values and attitudes.

4.2 Roles of Teachers

Teachers have multiple identities and roles such as **curriculum designers, knowledge providers, learning facilitators, behaviour models and caregivers**.

Teachers pay attention to children's physical and psychological health and habits, and understand the needs of individual children. Teachers establish good relationships with children, so that children feel respected and accepted.

Teachers teach by words and deeds and practise what they preach as role models for children.

Teachers participate in designing and implementing the curriculum. Their **mastery of the rationale and principles** of the curriculum and their **attitudes and skills** in planning and conducting the activities directly affect the effectiveness of curriculum implementation.

Teachers **create a pleasant and joyful learning atmosphere**, encourage children to interact and learn from each other, and give them timely guidance, so as to stimulate children's interest and confidence in learning.

Teachers' **understanding, recognition and commitment** to kindergarten education are key elements of quality kindergarten education. (For teachers' professional development and training, please refer to Chapter 8 of this Guide "Teachers' Professional Development".)

4.3 Learning and Teaching Resources and Community Resources

Kindergartens have a wide range of **learning and teaching resources**, including books, teaching packages, multimedia learning resources, learning materials prepared by the government or other organisations. The **communities** where children live also offer a platform for learning and rich learning content to help them understand our society.

Teachers should actively use different kinds of learning and teaching resources as well as community resources to design teaching materials, and **develop school-based curriculum by taking into account the school mission, children's characteristics and growth needs**.

Schools may also strengthen communication with primary schools nearby, and **arrange exchange activities among kindergarten and primary school teachers** to facilitate their understanding of the curricula at different key stages, thereby **enhancing the interface between kindergarten and primary education**. (For ways to enhance the interface between kindergarten and primary education, please refer to Chapter 6 of this Guide "Adaptation to School Life and Interface between Kindergarten and Primary Education".)

(Information on Kindergarten Education curriculum resources and reference materials is available at the website of the EDB:

http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/preprimary/curriculum-resources.html)

4.4 Learning through Play

Play can address children's development and interests, and is an effective learning strategy.

Rationale

Children love to play. They can derive pleasure, fun, a sense of success and experience through play with others, collaboration and imitation. Play is an effective way of learning that best suits the developmental characteristics of children.

Play is considered an ideal mode of activity that facilitates children's physical and psychological development. Children use language, mathematics, senses and prior experiences in play, and various ideas will emerge in the process. Children will gain understanding of themselves, others and the environment. It also facilitates the development of **creativity, problem-solving skills and versatility**.

In addition, children learn to use their gross and fine motor skills in play and **develop eye-hand co-ordination ability** to facilitate control over physical movements. Play helps children **express emotions, build confidence and develop social skills**.

It is widely accepted among the academia and in the field of education that **children's learning and development can be fostered through play**. Building on the experiences and strengths in teaching in local schools, we deepen the rationale of learning through play in children and **further strengthen the element of free exploration in play**.

Types of Play

From the perspective of child development, play can be divided into**:**

0-2 years old		2-3 years old		3-4 years old		4 years old and above
Solitary Play	→	Parallel Play	→	Associative Play	→	Co-operative Play
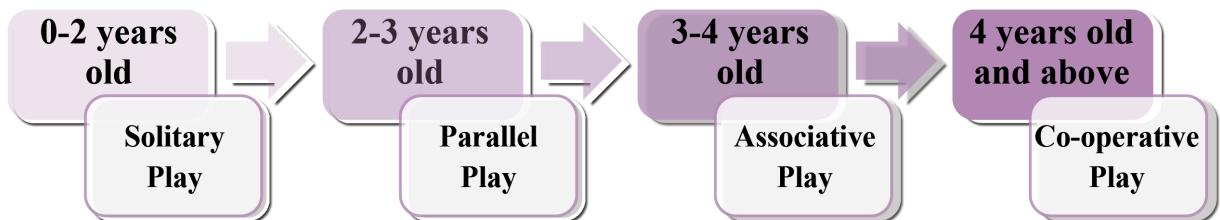
Figure 7: Features of play conducted by children of different ages

- **Solitary play:** Children at the age of 0 to 2 years are strongly self-centred. They love to play alone, and have no intention to play with other children.

- **Parallel play:** Children at the age of 2 to 3 years begin to have social awareness. They will play with the same things or toys, yet they still play individually.

- **Associative play:** Children at the age of 3 to 4 years begin to play with friends but the play is not organised. Children just do the same activities with limited co-operation.

- **Co-operative play:** Children over the age of 4 years begin to engage in more complex play. The games are organised with certain rules and require co-operation to complete.

In addition, play can also be divided into the following categories based on their types:

- **Functional play:** Use of gross and fine motor skills of the limbs, for example, climbing, throwing, pushing and pulling.

- **Constructive play:** Use of blocks or toys to build other things, such as houses and bridges.

- **Creative play:** Use of materials such as playdough, sand and paper to create simple items.

- **Imaginative play:** Use of available objects or toys to engage in role-play through imagination.

Strengthening the Element of Free Exploration

Free exploration is one of the key elements in play. It is a catalyst for children's effective learning, enabling them to maintain and enhance their concentration and interest in learning. Schools should address children's natural instinct of a love to play and provide children with the opportunities to participate in free play. Below are recommendations for implementation:

- Design a variety of play **in line with the curriculum aims and content**, and in accordance with children's life experiences, interests and abilities, so as to provide children with **relaxing and effective learning experiences**.

- **Create a safe environment conducive to play**, flexibly co-ordinate the time for different classes to participate in play, make good use of different facilities such as interest corners in the classrooms and venue for gross motor activity, and allow children to move freely in the activity area.

- Teachers may **minimise restrictions in play** and allow children to select various toys, invite playmates and design ways to play in free play based on their own preferences, abilities and life experiences. In this way, play can be more interesting, and children can fully **express their feelings and explore the things around**.

- Half-day and whole-day kindergartens should arrange children to participate in **free play** lasting for no less than **30 and 50 minutes** respectively every day. Schools should avoid arranging other learning activities during time slots dedicated to free play for children.

The Roles of Teachers

Not only are teachers the **"providers"** who arrange the place, time and materials necessary for play, but also the **"participants"** and **"inspirers"** of play. Teachers' participation in play enhances its enjoyableness and helps children develop imagination and engage in play.

Being simultaneously **"interveners"** in and **"observers"** of play, teachers should solve problems for children during play at an appropriate time. They can understand and interpret the performance of children in play and analyse their progress in learning and development.

After play, teachers should **invite children to share their experiences and feelings**, help them organise and consolidate the new knowledge and skills acquired, and provide them with timely and positive feedback.

The Role of Information Technology (IT)

Appropriate integration of IT equipment to assist learning and teaching can bring interactive and interesting activities and experiences in play and help cater for children's diversity.

However, **IT cannot take the place of learning activities or play**, especially outdoor learning, artistic creation and physical activities. Over-reliance on technology in teaching will deprive children of the opportunity to learn from the real world.

With the advancement in IT, children in Hong Kong come into contact with electronic screen products at an early age. Prolonged use of such products may affect children's social and communication abilities and pose potential health risks such as vision problems or obesity.

When using electronic learning media, teachers should consider whether the activity design is appropriate or whether the content ties in with the development and learning needs of children. **The right attitudes and habits in using electronic products as a learning or leisure tool should also be developed**.

Schools should offer guidance to parents as appropriate, and encourage them to refer to the recommendations from the Department of Health that **children aged from 2 to 6 should avoid prolonged use of electronic screen products** and remind their children to have proper rest for their eyes.

("The Report of Advisory Group on Health Effects of Use of Internet and Electronic Screen Products" (Executive Summary) of the Department of Health can be downloaded from the following URL:
http://www.studenthealth.gov.hk/english/internet/report/files/e_report.pdf)

4.5 Assessment for Learning

Assessment does not mean "scoring" for the performance of children, but is for them to identify the areas for improvement, so as to facilitate learning.

Purposes

Effective assessment can reflect children's performance on learning and development, and provide children with **positive feedback**, helping them to identify the areas for improvement.

Assessment is also an important part of the curriculum, as it serves as **the blueprint for curriculum development** and helps schools review its content and effectiveness of implementation.

By assessment

Teachers can

- **understand children's learning progress as well as physical and psychological development**;

- **identify learner diversity** so as to provide children with appropriate care;

- **keep parents informed about their children's life and learning progress at school**, in order to promote home-school co-operation;

- review the effectiveness of learning activities for **timely adjustments of teaching content and strategies** to meet children's needs.

Children can

- **understand their own learning performance** and be willing to take advice;
- know their own **strengths** and understand the **directions** for improvement;
- **review and reflect on their own performance** with the assistance and encouragement of teachers and parents.

Parents can

- **understand their children's performance at school**;
- deepen their **understanding of the growth** of their children;
- establish **reasonable expectations** of their children;
- **understand and align with the pedagogical approach of schools**, with a view to providing children with the best education.

Principles

- Assessment is conducted for learning, rather than **comparing children's performance and abilities**.
- It is **conducted in an authentic environment** to understand and follow up on the process and changes of children's learning and growth, and to provide feedback for curriculum planning.

Recommendations for Implementation

- Effective assessment relies on teachers' careful observation and accurate record on children, as well as objective and comprehensive analysis, so as to **provide feedback for teaching and to facilitate children's learning and healthy development**.

- Teachers should understand children's growth and developmental patterns in order to **set reasonable expectations of children** and to accurately assess their abilities and performance.

- Teachers should understand the purpose of assessment and **choose appropriate assessment modes and tools**. Assessment methods such as oral and written examinations or those requiring children to recite or memorise learning content can only provide partial and fragmented assessment of what children know.

- **In an authentic learning environment**, teachers can accurately and comprehensively reflect the performance of children **by observation and recording**, and should avoid exerting pressure on children.

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

- Teachers should **frequently communicate with parents** to exchange information on children's performance at school and home. Teachers may also provide parents with advice on how to follow up on children's learning to facilitate children's development through the **"home-school synchronisation"** approach.

- Let parents **obtain and understand** the information on assessment and the performance of their children **in a timely manner**, which can facilitate their support for children's learning.

Emphases of Assessment

This Guide proposes to achieve the goal of balanced development of children through six learning areas. Emphases of assessment should also be based on understanding children's performance in various developmental objectives.

Developmental objectives	Emphases of Assessment
Moral Development (Ethics)	• Children establish initial concepts of right and wrong, and demonstrate positive values • Children are confident of themselves and develop an optimistic and positive attitude towards living • Children live in harmony with others, respect the differences between others and themselves, and establish good relationships with others • Children have a basic understanding of their roles and responsibilities in different aspects of life in the family, school, society, country and the world
Cognitive and Language Development (Intellect)	• Children demonstrate curiosity, and are interested in people and things of the surrounding environment • Children have simple concepts in mathematical literacy, with basic abilities in analysis, reasoning, judgement and problem-solving • Children have good language development, and are able to express what they think
Physical Development (Physique)	• Children know about their body and senses • Children are able to hold attention and have good observation skills • Children have good living habits and self-care abilities, and establish a healthy lifestyle • Children can control gross and fine motor activities and co-ordinate body and limb movements • Children are aware of their body boundaries and develop awareness for self-protection
Affective & Social Development (Social Skills)	• Children understand their thoughts and emotions, and express their feelings and needs through appropriate means • Children are willing to communicate with others, and are confident in familiar situations • Children have team spirit, and are willing to negotiate and co-operate with others
Aesthetic Development (Aesthetics)	• Children pay attention to the arts media in the surrounding environment and show curiosity • Children are willing to share their feelings on works of arts • Children develop creativity and imagination, and enjoy creating • Children like to appreciate things in the surrounding, and take the initiative to participate in art activities

Arrangement of homework

- Kindergarten education **should aim at fostering in children an interest in learning and confidence, and help them develop a strong and healthy body**.

- After school, children should have **sufficient time to rest and enjoy family life**, or to enjoy their leisure time, cultivate a wide range of interests and develop good living habits.

- Homework is generally defined as tasks accomplished at home. An appropriate amount of homework in line with children's abilities can consolidate, extend or assess children's learning performance, but it is not the only way to do so.

- **Do not require children in nursery class (K1) to hold a pencil and write**.

- **Do not require children in lower and upper kindergarten classes (K2 and K3) to do mechanical copying and calculation**, and do not arrange homework that is excessive, frequent and too difficult, so as not to cause unnecessary pressure and drilling.

- Schools may arrange children to do some **simple learning tasks or parent-child exercises, which are relaxing, fun and appropriate**, such as reading picture books, collecting objects and passing on messages. These tasks are in line with the abilities of children and parents may offer guidance as appropriate.

- These simple learning tasks can **extend children's interest in learning, develop good habits and a sense of responsibility, and strengthen parent-child relationship**.

(For details, please refer to the URL on "List of Dos and Don'ts for Kindergartens":
http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/quality-assurance-framework/dos-donts-for-kindergartens/index.html)

Learning portfolios

- **Children's growth and development is a continuous process**. Setting up learning portfolios for children allows parents and teachers to record important information of children at various stages as evidence of children's growth.

- A portfolio is a **systematic record of children's growth, not an assessment tool**.

- The portfolios may be passed to new teachers for their reference and follow-up action when children are promoted to higher grades, and handed over to parents for retention when children leave the schools.

- When schools adopt portfolios as children's learning records, they should have a holistic plan to ensure that adequate training is provided for teachers, and that parents understand and recognise the relevant rationale.

- Schools should continuously collect parents' opinions and children's responses. If necessary, strategies may be adjusted or revised to achieve the intended objectives.

Chapter 5

Catering for Learner Diversity

How to create an inclusive learning environment?

Catering for Learner Diversity –
How to create an inclusive learning environment?

5.1   Rationale

Children are diversified with different personalities, abilities and interests, as well as pace of development, languages, cultures and living habits.

Children are unique individuals with different **personalities, abilities** and **interests**, as well as pace of development. They **also vary in languages, cultures** and **living habits**.

With changes in social policies and demographic structure of Hong Kong, importance is attached to the diversity of children at schools and in the community.

As schools **adopt "Child-centredness" as the core value of the curriculum**, teachers should care for, accept and understand children's individual needs and uphold the principles of inclusion so as to allow children to develop their strengths and unleash their potential.

5.2   Aims

Schools with an accepting and inclusive environment can promote children's physical and psychological development:

- **Strengthening children's learning motivation** can sustain their interest and initiative in learning.

- **Developing children's various potential** can allow them to enjoy a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment brought by learning.

- Flexible curriculum design and diversified teaching strategies can **promote children's love for learning** and consolidate their learning.

- By learning and living together, children can learn to respect and accept others, and **cultivate positive values**.

5.3 Recommendations on Strategies

> Catering for children's diversity does not mean to "label" or "segregate" children. Instead, understanding of children's diverse needs should be deepened, so that appropriate arrangements can be provided to promote inclusion.

Children should **have the opportunity to receive quality education, regardless of factors such as culture, race, family background, development and ability**. Schools should strive to create an inclusive learning environment for children and offer them pleasant and rewarding learning experiences.

Schools should review their school contexts in a timely manner to understand the needs of the whole school and individual children. Schools should also **formulate policies on inclusion, and cater for children's diversity in curriculum planning and implementation**. Whole-school approach should be adopted to promote children's learning and development.

Schools should understand and **accept children's diversified abilities and needs in learning**, and make adaptation in curriculum and pace of learning and teaching to ensure children's proper development.

Effective support strategies should be devised according to the school context to allow children with different learning or adaptation needs to **be able to enjoy learning with their classmates on the same campus**.

Adjustments can be made in the following ways:

- **Adjusting the curriculum aims**
  Schools may review their mission, and pay more attention to children's diversity according to their backgrounds, abilities and interests. Schools should also **include the objectives of inclusion and catering for differences** in the curriculum as the basis for revising the learning content and adjusting the teaching strategies.

- **Adjusting the learning content**
  Teachers should start with deepening their understanding of each child in the class, and **set reasonable expectations** of them. Then teachers should choose appropriate learning content for children and develop different levels of learning to help them establish basic knowledge and abilities, and allow those with higher ability to extend what they have learned.

- **Adjusting the learning strategies**

  Children have different abilities and learning modes. For example, some children tend to consolidate their learning by experimenting with objects, while others like exploring new knowledge. Teachers may flexibly arrange whole-class, small groups and individual teaching, and **design various games**, learning activities and teaching aids for children to promote effective learning.

- **Adjusting the modes of assessment**

  Children have their own strengths and weaknesses. Teachers should not compare the learning abilities of children on the basis of their learning performance. Children's progress can be best and comprehensively reflected through daily and continuous observations. Teachers should adopt flexible assessment criteria, **acknowledge the abilities of children, and establish their learning confidence, instead of focusing on the goals children have yet to achieve**.

In addition, **a variety of grouping methods can be flexibly used** to offer a chance for children with similar abilities or abilities with significant differences to learn together in order to facilitate development and benefit one another. Teachers may arrange children with different races, backgrounds, languages and interests to play together, and allow them to know more about one another and develop friendship during co-operation.

If a teacher finds out that a child has **consistent and obvious problems and difficulties** in a particular development area (or different development areas), he/she **should refer the child** for professional assessment **as soon as possible**.

Schools should attach importance to children's diversity. Curriculum leaders and teachers can work closely to support children's learning and development.

Curriculum Leaders

- Set up **effective home-school communication channels and mechanisms** to establish regular contact and communication with parents to let them understand and support the teaching arrangements of the school.

- **Keep in close contact with the community**, and make good use of community resources. For example, invite relevant organisations to work out follow-up and counselling plans for children in need.

- **Create an inclusive environment on campus**. Encourage children to get in touch with people with different cultures, living habits, languages and abilities, and help them develop the values and attitudes of accepting and respecting others.

Teachers

- **Understand, accept and appreciate the unique growth, backgrounds, cultures and living habits of individual children**, and know that they will demonstrate different personalities, abilities and interests.

- **Deploy strategies for identifying, handling and following-up with children's diversity**. Take the initiative to contact parents to discuss the needs of children and develop follow-up plans.

- When necessary and with the consent of parents, seek assistance and **early intervention** from medical staff, social workers and other professional parties **to provide children with timely support**.

- Acknowledge the existence of diversity among children in class, which, **if handled properly, not only facilitates learning, but also cultivates their positive values and attitudes**, such as respect, acceptance, living in harmony and care.

- **Regard children's diversity as an opportunity for curriculum development**. Allow children to derive pleasure from learning and life, and let their parents feel respected and cared for.

5.4 Children with Potential Difficulties in Development or Special Learning Needs

Teachers should have professional knowledge to identify children with special learning needs, know how to communicate and co-operate with their colleagues and parents, and **refer cases for further professional advice in a timely manner**.

However, teachers' **main role is to "identify" and "make referrals", rather than to find out what specific learning need a child has**. Teachers only need to be aware of children's problem, intervene as early as possible and make suggestions to parents on referrals for assessment. When doing so, teachers have taken the first step of offering appropriate help and arrangements for children.

The Department of Health, the EDB and the Social Welfare Department have jointly prepared the *"Pre-primary Children Development and Bahaviour Management - Teacher Resource Kit"* to help teachers identify children with special learning needs as early as possible. Recommendations on how to refer children for professional assessment and support are also provided. For details, please visit the URL below:

http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/comprehensive-child-development-service/index.html#Reference

The Social Welfare Department offers the "Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services" for children with special needs to access the necessary training early in the prime training period. For details, please visit the URL below:

http://www.swd.gov.hk/en/index/site_pubsvc/page_rehab/sub_listofserv/id_psosps/
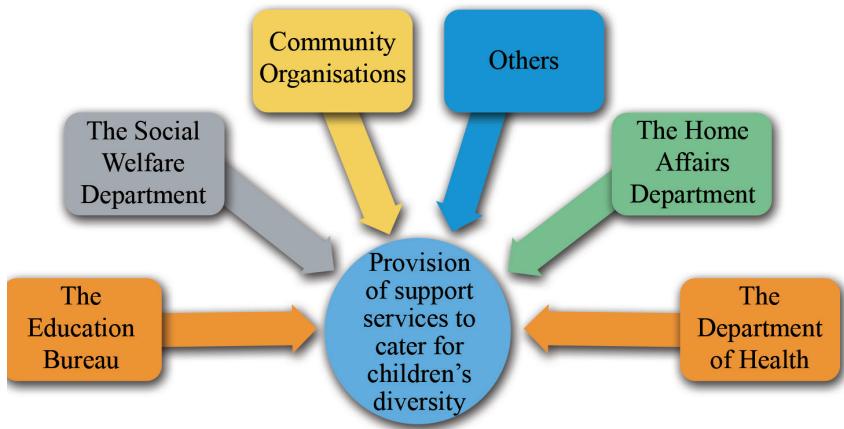
Figure 8: Provision of support services to cater for children's diversity by various departments or organisations

5.5 Non-Chinese Speaking or Newly-arrived Children

Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) or newly-arrived children **need to adapt to local lifestyles and cultures, and to integrate into school and community life**. They may encounter challenges in language, communication and learning, and may have diversity in abilities and interests. They need additional care and support in knowledge and skills about everyday life.

Schools can offer support to NCS and newly-arrived children in the following ways:

- **Deepen their understanding of the environment and facilities of the community;**
- **Help them understand local cultures and lifestyles;**
- **Improve their listening and speaking abilities in Cantonese, and help them learn Traditional Chinese characters.**

Some NCS or newly-arrived children may experience a longer period of adaptation in a new environment, and may appear to be timid due to difficulties in verbal communication. Teachers should pay more attention to their progress in adaptation, and help them build up confidence and self-image.

In addition, teachers should also gain a better understanding of the cultures and customs of NCS or newly-arrived children, for example, their eating habits. Or teachers may **exercise discretion** in handling their clothing, so that they **feel accepted and acknowledged, and have less anxiety**.

Effective home-school communication can help children adapt to and integrate into school life at an early stage. Schools may establish good home-school communication channels to help parents of NCS or newly-arrived children understand the school curriculum. As far as circumstances allow, teachers may encourage parents who understand both Cantonese and other languages to be a bridge of communication to facilitate exchange.

The EDB encourages and supports NCS students to integrate into school and community life at an early stage, and is committed to helping them learn Chinese well. The EDB provides additional resources to schools, arranges professional development activities for teachers and offers school-based support services, with a view to enhancing their knowledge and skills on educating NCS children.

For EDB's support services to NCS students, please refer to the following URL ("Summary of support services for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students"):
http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/ncs-students/summary-ncs-support-services/index.html

Chapter 6

Adaptation to School Life and the Interface between Kindergarten and Primary Education

Collaboration among parents, kindergartens and primary schools

Adaptation to School Life and the Interface between Kindergarten and Primary Education – *Collaboration among parents, kindergartens and primary schools*

6.1 How to Facilitate the Interface

The curricula of different key stages are designed according to the developmental and learning needs of students, so their rationale, implementation modes and learning expectations vary.

Children at the stage of kindergarten have to face two important **"developmental challenges"**, i.e. **"from family to kindergarten"** and **"from kindergarten to primary school"**. They may feel nervous and anxious, refuse to go to school or even display regressive behaviour.

These **"developmental challenges"** are also **"opportunities for growth"** for children. If handled properly, these challenges help children adapt to the environment of a new stage of learning, but also enhance their confidence and sense of achievement, rendering them strong enough to face the changes and challenges of the environment.

Schools should formulate comprehensive plans and persist in their implementation with a view to helping newly admitted children adapt to the school life. They should also be in close contact with parents and keep them informed of their children's progress in adaptation in school.

Kindergartens and primary schools should collaborate in helping children adapt to the curriculum and life in primary schools. **In accordance with the child-centred principle, schools should aim at nurturing interest in children and laying a solid foundation for learning. Kindergartens should not advance the primary school curriculum to kindergarten education and pre-teach the primary curriculum content in kindergartens.**

Primary schools should also adhere to the **child-centred principle** by paying attention to the learning characteristics of lower primary students, especially at Primary One. Primary schools should also adopt the classroom learning and assessment modes that children are familiar with in kindergarten. This will sustain children's learning interest and bolster their confidence.

6.2 Adaptation to School Life

That children living with and being cared for by their family members from birth fosters the development of a trusting and intimate relationship.

Admission to the kindergarten marks the beginning of a new phase. Children have to adapt to an unfamiliar environment and overcome the fear and anxiety brought about by temporary separation from their families. They have to learn to take care of themselves and get along with teachers and classmates. These are new experiences and challenges to children.

Schools should collaborate with parents to help children begin their school life with joy and confidence.

Preparation of Kindergartens

Helping the newly admitted children adapt to school life is **a task that requires whole-school participation. All staff should be familiar with the measures on orienting children to school** and make them feel accepted and cared for so as to ease their anxiety and fear of the new environment.

Schools should **continuously implement** measures to help children adapt to school life. They should constantly assess children's progress and needs, and flexibly arrange adaptation programmes to accommodate their different paces.

Organising talks and workshops for parents regularly can enhance parents' understanding of the challenges children will face on admission to school and keep them informed of their children's progress of adaptation at school, which enhances collaboration between the two parties and helps children grow happily and healthily.

Parent Education

Parents play an important role in helping children integrate into and adapt to the learning and life at school readily. Schools may refer to the following recommendations on promoting parent education:

- Help parents **understand the school arrangements at the beginning of the school year and daily routines**, so that parents can anticipate the changes their children may face in their daily life and take corresponding actions.

- Ask parents to **pay attention to the possible emotional changes of their children**, encourage them to take the initiative to express their concern and support to their children, and listen to children's sharing of their anecdotes at school.

- Provide parents with concrete suggestions to **help children develop positive values and attitudes** and adapt to the changes at school.

- Explain to parents the changes children may experience during growth and their learning needs, **take the initiative to listen** to parents' opinions and concerns, as well as understand and share their worries about their children's promotion to kindergarten.

The Roles of Teachers

- Understand children's fear and anxiety, and take the initiative to **show care and support** in an accepting manner.

- Be **kind and friendly**, and give children a sense of security to help them gradually adapt to school life.

- Cater for children's emotions and feelings first, give them sufficient emotional support, **develop a trusting relationship** with them, and help them adapt to the new changes readily.

- Allow children to understand and follow the school routines **gradually**, and create opportunities for children to develop good attitudes and learn to get along well with others.

6.3 Interface between Kindergarten and Primary Education

Children meet another **"developmental challenge"** when they are promoted to primary school. They will experience a change of identity, from being elder brothers and sisters in kindergartens to becoming younger brothers and sisters in primary schools. They also have to adapt to a new learning environment and the curriculum requirements that are different from those in kindergartens, and meet new teachers and friends.

Kindergartens, primary schools and parents should collaborate to prepare children for primary schools in various aspects, namely psychology, emotion, living habits and learning.

The Roles and Work of Kindergartens

Kindergarten Education curriculum aims at promoting children's balanced development. It focuses on fostering their confidence, learning interest, inquisitive mind, positive values and attitudes, as well as helping them develop good living habits and a strong and healthy body.

Learning is a long process. At the kindergarten stage, it is more important for children to **lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning and develop learning abilities and attitudes than to pursue knowledge.**

Requiring children to learn the primary curriculum content will undermine their learning interest and motivation, damage their confidence, leading to their loss of drive to learn, which is in contradiction to the aims of the Kindergarten Education curriculum.

In terms of learning content, schools should help children lay a solid foundation of basic knowledge, which is conducive to their future learning. Teachers **should not teach the primary school curriculum content in advance**, for example, asking children to write difficult words with complicated strokes or do complex calculation exercises.

Teachers should allow **sufficient time** in their teaching for children to experiment with the teaching aids or to explore to develop a solid foundation of basic concepts.

Theme-based content, which helps children connect learning with life, provide valuable learning experiences for children before their subject-based learning at the primary level.

Upon admission to primary schools, children have to address their different needs, such as wearing clothes, going to the toilet, packing schoolbags and having lunch by themselves. **Schools can develop children's life skills**, improve their self-care abilities, and help them adapt to primary school life.

Kindergarten Education curriculum should aim at fostering children's confidence, learning interest and inquisitive mind.

In addition, schools can also nurture **children's skills in communication and making friends**. Children should learn to take the initiative to introduce themselves, greet others, and start a conversation so as to reduce their apprehension in an unfamiliar environment and help them integrate into the social life of primary school readily.

Schools may also **arrange visits to primary schools** or invite alumni to share their experiences in learning and life at primary schools so as to calm their nerves and anxiety about being promoted to Primary One.

The Roles and Work of Primary Schools

Upon receiving new students, primary schools should continue to sustain children's confidence and interest in learning.

Upon receiving new Primary One students, primary schools should make plans to help children gradually adapt to primary school life and study, taking into consideration children's growth and learning to sustain their confidence and interest in learning.

Primary schools should **understand the curriculum design and teaching modes adopted in kindergartens**, and make adjustments in the curriculum to accommodate children's learning and developmental pace and help them adapt to a new stage of learning progressively.

Due to the changes in the environment and learning mode, new Primary One students may feel apprehensive and withdrawn. They may also experience a fear of learning and school life. Schools should familiarise Primary One students with the new environment and learning requirements with acceptance and patience.

At the beginning of a new school year, primary schools can **organise various orientation activities** for Primary One students and their parents to know more about the schools while the schools can have an initial understanding of the new students. Orientation activities may include:

- introducing the aspiration, mission, motto and history of the schools;

- meeting the teaching staff such as class teachers, subject teachers, school management and student counselling teachers;

- explaining day-to-day operation of the schools and the general requirements on students;

- introducing the school curriculum, and modes of learning and assessment; and

- inviting senior students to share their experience in learning and life at school.

Activities for the interface between kindergarten and primary education cannot be completed in a single move. Teachers should continue to observe the adaptation process of Primary One students, and flexibly introduce measures to ensure a smooth interface. Primary schools can handle the adaptation period with flexibility, setting and extending it according to students' needs to facilitate gradual adaptation of new students.

In terms of **living habits**, schools may **flexibly adjust recess and lunchtime** to allow Primary One students sufficient time to go to the toilet, eat or rest. During lunchtime, schools may also arrange for some staff or parent volunteers to assist in distributing lunchboxes, and help Primary One students gradually learn to have lunch independently.

In addition, whole-day schools should make the most of their school hours, and **arrange relaxing learning activities** in the afternoon. This not only allows students to unleash their potential but also avoids their fatigue after lunch.

In terms of **organisation of curriculum content**, as children are used to learning in an integrated approach at kindergartens, primary schools should **flexibly arrange the timetable** for Primary One students to carry out inquiry-based learning activities by units or themes, and to sustain the inquisitive mind that students have developed at kindergartens.

In terms of **teaching strategies**, as Primary One students are still small and less focused, teachers should **try to adopt play or activities in their instruction** to meet children's needs and characteristics in learning. For example, in Chinese and English lessons, teachers may tell stories or organise role-play activities to help children understand the learning content.

In terms of **arrangements of homework**, subject teachers of the same class should **co-ordinate the daily amount of homework** to reduce the pressure of learning on Primary One students. Schools should also make good use of tutorial lessons to allow students to complete certain part of exercises at school under teachers' guidance, or have their questions on homework answered.

In terms of **assessment on learning**, schools **should adopt a step-by-step approach** and make appropriate arrangements on the mode and frequency of assessments by taking into account students' abilities and progress of adaptation. Specifically, schools **should not conduct dictations or written assessments shortly after children's admission to Primary One. In addition, teachers should not require Primary One students to recite or memorise a large amount of subject knowledge**.

Primary school teachers may **refer to the learning portfolios of kindergarten graduates** to gain a better understanding of the new Primary One students and their development in various aspects, and take note of their diversity. Schools should continue to promote the culture of inclusion to ensure that Primary One students can receive appropriate support and guidance in the interface of their learning and life.

Schools should also **solicit parents' support and participation** by organising activities such as seminars, parents' day and "Parents' Classroom" to help them understand the challenges facing their children in a new setting, and be their good listeners.

Primary schools may defer the arrangements of giving homework, dictations and tests for half a school term or a school term.

(For the recommendations on the interface between kindergarten and primary education, please refer to "Interfaces at Various Key Stages" in Chapter 9 of the *"Basic Education Curriculum Guide (2014)"* at https://cd.edb.gov.hk/becg/english/chapter9.html.)

The Roles and Work of Parents

Every child is unique with different developmental and learning needs at different stages. Parents should **hold reasonable expectations of their children, and choose suitable schools for them by taking into account their interests and abilities**.

Parents should actively participate in activities related to the interface between kindergarten and primary education or adaptation organised by kindergartens or primary schools, which enables them to understand the strategies of assisting their children to adapt to a new learning environment, and co-operate with the schools in related measures and arrangements.

To avoid exerting pressure on children, parents need not enrol their children on "interview classes", "learning classes" or "tutorial classes" that merely aim for preparing children for Primary One.

In everyday life, parents may **progressively develop children's self-care abilities** by letting them take care of themselves and be responsible for certain household chores, and encouraging them to pack their schoolbags, clean the house and keep personal belongings properly.

(For the various measures and recommendations on the interface between kindergarten and primary education, please visit the EDB website and download the "*Booklet on Enhancing the Smooth Transition from Kindergarten to Primary School*":
http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/tc/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/primary/materials/transition-from-k-to-p/interface_final.pdf) (Chinese only)

Chapter 7

Home-School Co-operation and Community Participation

Consensus and partnership among all stakeholders are necessary to nurture children

Home-School Co-operation and Community Participation – *Consensus and partnership among all stakeholders are necessary to nurture children*

7.1 Partnership

Families are the key setting in which children's characters are shaped, and parents are their first teachers. The development of children's personality, self-image, values and attitudes is greatly influenced by parents and other family members.

Parents' **expectations** of children, their **parenting styles and arrangements for leisure activities** all have profound impact on children's learning and development.

Involvement of parents and the community helps **promote quality kindergarten education**. Children grow up in three different environments, namely **family**, **school** and **community**. Good communication, connection and collaboration among the three are conducive to children's healthy growth.
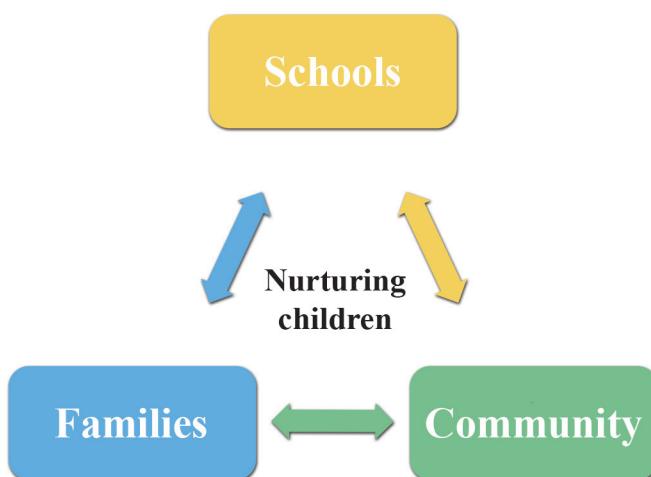

Figure 9: The joint efforts of schools, families and the community in nurturing children

Among them, **parents are close partners of schools**. In addition to assisting their children to learn, parents are also important resources of schools. Parents can assist schools in the implementation of the curriculum and provide opinions regarding the planning and implementation of the curriculum, which facilitates the sustainable development of schools. **It is of prime importance to establish mutual trust between schools and parents**.

Nowadays, kindergartens often hold seminars, workshops, fun days, lesson observation sessions and other activities for parents, or recruit parent volunteers to encourage their participation, enhance their understanding of the kindergartens and develop a sense of belonging.

7.2 Principles of Implementation

Adopting sincere and respectful attitudes

- **Sincere** communication is the foundation for home-school co-operation.

- To foster mutual trust, schools should **respect parents of different races, languages and cultural backgrounds** for them to feel understood and valued.

Understanding the needs of parents

- Hong Kong is a diversified society with different types of families. Parents' readiness to participate in home-school activities hinges on their beliefs about raising children, working hours and educational background.

- To encourage parental involvement for the development of home-school co-operation, it is advisable for schools to **plan various types of activities to meet their needs**.

Understanding the different roles of parents and teachers

- Parents' expectations of their children are influenced by their own experience of growth. Some parents may even project their own wishes onto their children.

- With professional knowledge and through daily observation at school, teachers can understand children's developmental and learning needs, and hold reasonable expectations of them.

- When providing guidance to children, **teachers should understand parents' preferences and explain patiently to them the school's rationale of education and children's growth and learning needs**, with a view to enhancing parents' understanding and recognition of the school's policies and approaches, and eliminating any conflicting views between parents and schools on educating children.

- Strengthening the communication and understanding between teachers and parents can facilitate the work in promoting children's all-round development.

Introducing community resources

- Every school has its own mission, environment, resources and teaching force of different training backgrounds. When planning home-school co-operation activities, schools should consider not only the needs of children and parents, but also their own conditions, and **make good use of community resources**.

- Schools may invite professionals, such as early childhood education specialists, social workers and psychologists, to conduct **parent education seminars**.

- The management should encourage and render support to teachers to take relevant **professional development programmes** offered by professional organisations or the community.

- Teachers can **introduce community resources** by providing parents with relevant information so that parents can choose to participate in those they are interested in.

7.3 Recommendations on Implementation Modes

The connection between parents and schools has developed from factual routine communication on schools matters through school notices and parents' signing student handbooks in the past to mutual collaboration nowadays, with parents' involvement in the school operation and provision of opinions on school policies.

Schools may refer to the recommendations below to plan their home-school co-operation activities:

- **Establish communication channels** to enhance mutual understanding and gather information about children's lives both at home and at school.

- **Organise parent education activities** on topics like children's growth, emotion management and moral development to enhance parents' understanding of the growth and developmental characteristics of children and improve their parenting skills.

- **Recruit parent volunteers** to assist schools in implementing activities to foster a sense of belonging to the schools in them.

- **Keep parents informed of** the progress of **curriculum implementation**, and the teaching strategies and content adopted by teachers to enlist their support for the learning activities at schools.

- **Encourage and support the establishment of communication channels among parents to promote exchanges**. Wherever conditions permit, home-school co-operation associations can be set up to encourage parents' expression of views on school policies.

Chapter 8

Teachers' Professional Development

Continuously enhancing professional competence and establishing learning communities

Teachers' Professional Development -
Continuously enhancing professional competence and establishing learning communities

8.1　Directions

An excellent teaching force is an important part of education. School **teachers' continuous enhancement of professional knowledge can improve teaching quality, promote the growth of children and facilitate the progress of development**. Another key factor for implementing quality education is teachers' enthusiasm for teaching.

Hong Kong society and its demographic structure have been constantly changing. Schools and the society are increasingly concerned about the diversity of children. The demands for relevant education and support services from children and parents are also continuously increasing.

Teachers' professional development is an ongoing long-term goal rather than a short-term training programme. It has far-reaching and positive impacts on the sustainable development of schools.

To **enhance professional competence and promote sustained development, schools** should properly plan the **arrangements for teachers' professional training**, actively organise and promote professional interflow both inside and outside schools, and encourage teachers to participate in professional dialogues and share teaching experiences. Schools may:

- understand and identify teachers' needs in professional development;

- connect further studies of individual teachers with the learning activities organised by the learning communities of schools;

- make adjustments to administrative arrangements to encourage teachers' participation in various forms of professional development activities; and

- create a culture of learning and sharing at school.

Teachers should regard teaching as a collective mission, actively share pedagogical knowledge with one another, and work together to contribute to the provision of quality school education to children.

8.2 Strategies

Schools should **encourage teachers to participate in training activities** to acquire new pedagogical knowledge and skills in different ways. Taking into consideration teachers' development needs, schools can also organise professional development activities such as talks, seminars, workshops, school visits to enrich their professional knowledge.

Both the EDB and tertiary institutions provide school principals and teachers with **professional development programmes and school-based support services** to collect evidence of and promote effective learning and teaching strategies and experiences. Schools can actively gather relevant information to make informed choices and effective use of different services.

Schools may also collect and systematically analyse data in relation to children's development and the effectiveness of learning and teaching to understand teachers' development needs, which facilitates **the formulation of short-term and long-term plans for teacher training**.

8.3   Implementation

Professional development of teachers is high on the agenda for schools' human resources plannig. In planning for teachers' professional development, schools should pay attention to the following:

- **formulating teacher professional development policies** that reflect the opinions of teachers;

- **co-ordinating and allocating resources flexibly** to align with education policies and curriculum development of the school;

- adopting structured learning and other **diversified modes of teacher professional development**;

- providing teachers with **a sharing platform** and arranging peer lesson observation and collaborative lesson preparation to promote exchange of teaching experiences, discussion on children's learning difficulties and sharing of knowledge;

- conducting timely **review of the effectiveness of training activities** and teachers' professional development needs; and

- **developing a database** to sustain and deepen experiences and good practices.

8.4   Support Measures of the Education Bureau

The EDB attaches great importance to the professional development of teachers, and promotes their professional growth by the following strategies and measures:

- organising **professional development activities for teachers** to enhance teachers' professional knowledge;

- provding diversified modes of professional support such as **school-based professional support services**, "Seed" projects, research and development programmes;

- **offering professional development programmes** on education issues such as the learning and adaptation of NCS children to enhance the relevant knowledge and skills;

- **strengthening professional exchange among kindergartens and primary schools** to promote mutual understanding;

- **organising school networks and establishing knowledge communities** to promote an open, inquiry-based, reflective and collaborative culture of learning and sharing;

- soliciting the support and participation of all parties to **produce learning and teaching resources and multimedia resources**; and

- **continuously reviewing and improving** support measures to align with curriculum development and address the needs of teachers to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness.

A Proposed Set of Values and Attitudes for Incorporation into the School Curriculum

Core Values: Personal	Sustaining Values: Personal	Core Values: Social	Sustaining Values: Social	Attitudes
◆ sanctity of life	◆ self-esteem	◆ equality	◆ plurality	◆ optimistic
◆ truth	◆ self-reflection	◆ kindness	◆ due process of law	◆ participatory
◆ aesthetics	◆ self-discipline	◆ benevolence	◆ democracy	◆ critical
◆ honesty	◆ self-cultivation	◆ love	◆ freedom and liberty	◆ creative
◆ human dignity	◆ principled morality	◆ freedom	◆ common will	◆ appreciative
◆ rationality	◆ self-determination	◆ common good	◆ patriotism	◆ empathetic
◆ creativity	◆ openness	◆ mutuality	◆ tolerance	◆ caring and concerned
◆ courage	◆ independence	◆ justice	◆ equal opportunities	◆ positive
◆ liberty	◆ enterprise	◆ trust	◆ culture and civilisation heritage	◆ confident
◆ affectivity	◆ integrity	◆ interdependence	◆ human rights and responsibilities	◆ cooperative
◆ individuality	◆ simplicity	◆ sustainability	◆ rationality	◆ responsible
	◆ sensitivity	◆ betterment of human kind	◆ sense of belonging	◆ adaptable to changes
	◆ modesty	◆ national identity	◆ solidarity	◆ open-minded
	◆ perseverance			◆ with a respect for:
				⇧ self
				⇧ others
				⇧ life
				⇧ quality and excellence
				⇧ evidence
				⇧ fair play
				⇧ rule of law
				⇧ different ways of life, beliefs and opinions
				⇧ the environment
				◆ with a desire to learn
				◆ diligent
				◆ committed to core and sustaining values

■ Values may be defined as those qualities that an individual or society considers important as principles for conduct and that are intrinsically worthwhile. Values are fundamental to the formation of attitudes, which in turn affect the acquisition and application of the values. They may be broadly categorized as core and sustaining values. An elaboration of these terms is provided below:

"Values constitute the foundation of one's attitudes and beliefs, which subsequently influence one's behaviour and way of life. Values can vary across societies, as different social and economic conditions in different geographical locations may lead to different value emphases. However, across societies, we can also identify certain values that are commonly or universally emphasised. The emergence of these universal values illustrates the common concerns of human societies, the basic qualities for human existence, the common elements in human civilisation, and also the common characteristics of human nature… We call these universal values core values." And sustaining values are "other values that are also important at an instrumental level, being regarded as important or helpful for sustaining the core values."

(Extracted from Learning to Learn: Life-long Learning and Whole-person Development (2001) Appendix II)

Appendix 2

Developmental Characteristics of Children from 2 to 6 Years Old

Age	Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
2 to 3 years	**Gross motor skills:** 1. Able to walk at their own will, pull and push objects simultaneously or step backwards 2. Need to rest both feet on one step in mounting a flight of stairs. Need to be supported at the beginning but can gradually do it on their own with no assistance 3. Able to jump from a flight of stairs, but prone to injury 4. Gradually able to kick a ball 5. Gradually able to throw a ball into a basket 6. Gradually able to ride a tricycle **Fine motor skills:** 1. Able to unwrap sweets 2. Able to turn pages of a book 3. Able to screw on a cap 4. Able to pile up pieces of toy bricks 5. Able to thread big beads 6. Gradually able to draw lines, circles, etc. 7. Try folding paper and using scissors 8. Know how to play with clay with their hands	1. Able to match colours, shapes, objects and sizes 2. With repeated attempts, able to put five rings onto a stick in sequence of their sizes 3. Able to assemble puzzles of three to five pieces 4. Know their own names 5. Know about the names and functions of some body parts 6. Able to identify daily necessities by their senses 7. Begin to understand the meaning of number one and two 8. Begin to show memory, like suddenly remembering some favourite objects and looking for them 9. Perform role play like imitating a doctor/ teacher, etc.	**Language comprehension:** 1. Able to follow instructions to name each body part 2. Able to understand common nouns, verbs and adjectives **Language expression:** 1. Able to express their wishes with limited words and short sentences 2. Know how to ask with "what" 3. Try singing nursery rhymes by imitation	1. Not yet ready to share toys with peers 2. Able to take turns with peers under instruction by adults 3. Easy to get jealous towards peers who take away adults' attention from them 4. Easy to lose temper when frustrated, yet also easy to forget about unhappy experience when attention is distracted 5. Like to follow routines, dislike changes 6. Begin to show preference for food 7. Like to be praised, have preference for beautiful clothes **Self-care abilities:** 1. Know how to express the need for toileting and able to go to toilet on their own under prompting, but wetting sometimes still occurs in day time 2. Able to wash hands with assistance 3. Able to put on/pull down their pants, take off their clothes, shoes and socks

Age	Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
3 to 4 years	**Gross motor skills:** 1. Able to take one step at a time in mounting a flight of stairs 2. Able to go up to the slide and climbing frame 3. Able to walk along a line or on footprints 4. Able to cross legs when sitting 5. Able to kick a slowly moving ball 6. Able to catch a big ball being thrown to them 7. Able to ride a tricycle **Fine motor skills:** 1. Able to hammer wooden blocks 2. Able to screw on a cap tightly 3. Able to build up a pillar of more than ten pieces of toy bricks 4. Able to hold pens like adults 5. Try to fill colour in a random manner; Able to do so in an assigned area later 6. Able to draw a cross and inclined line 7. Use scissors to cut paper strips 8. Use fingers to glue things	1. Able to distinguish between two objects by their sizes, length, texture, hardness 2. Able to put five rings onto a stick in sequence of their sizes upon two attempts 3. Able to assemble puzzles of six pieces 4. Begin to understand the concept of sequence, and able to make pattern with toy bricks or beads according to sequence 5. Begin to know how to classify and match objects like food, clothes, and able to associate objects according to their uses, such as shoes with socks and cups with plates 6. Able to match three to four colours and identify their names 7. Know their own names, sex and age 8. Able to differentiate male and female 9. Able to draw a person with head and some body parts 10. Able to recite from one to ten 11. Able to count from one to three or four objects 12. Able to recall three numbers just heard 13. Able to find two objects by memory	**Language comprehension:** 1. Able to understand some rather abstract words like "same/different", "open/close", "top/bottom" and "in/out" 2. Understand the meaning of "pretending" 3. Pay attention when hearing stories, like to ask adults to repeat telling their favourite stories **Language expression:** 1. Begin to give a chronological account of incidents that happened in the past 2. Mainly use nouns, verbs and sometimes adjectives in speech 3. Able to use words like "here", "there", "you and me", etc. 4. Begin to ask with "what", "where" and "who" 5. Know how to control the volume and speed when speaking 6. Though the pronunciation is still not clear, people (including strangers) can understand their words pretty well 7. Able to sing nursery rhymes together with actions	1. Able to play with toys alone without adults' company 2. Like to join games led by adults, able to follow rules of games 3. Will take turns when playing toys 4. Know what belongs to them and what does not 5. Know that they should care for younger children and are willing to share toys with others 6. Able to accept adults' advice, regard parents as authority and obey orders 7. Begin to learn to show courtesy, able to say "please" and "thank you" as told 8. Begin to expand their social lives and interests outside their families and enjoy outdoor activities **Self-care abilities:** 1. Able to eat with a spoon 2. Able to get water from a bottle 3. Understand that they have to clean their mouths after meals 4. Begin to wash hands with soap and dry their hands 5. Able to go to toilet on their own in day time, wetting seldom happens 6. Know how to put on and pull down their trousers 7. Manage to dress and undress their loose outer clothes 8. Able to undo big buttons 9. Try putting clothes on hangers 10. Begin to understand the concept of danger, and know that they should not approach fire, boiling water, etc. 11. Able to obey rules; Will not walk out to the middle of a road when going out

Age	Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
4 to 5 years	**Gross motor skills:** 1. Able to jump forward and backward successively, with one foot and while running 2. Able to pick up objects on the ground while running 3. Able to throw and catch bean bags 4. Walk on a balance beam 5. Able to throw balls 6. When swimming, able to walk on shallow water or float on floater 7. Play confidently with slides, climbing frames and swings **Fine motor skills:** 1. Able to thread beads 2. Able to draw quadrilaterals 3. Able to draw simple pictures such as people, houses, trees, vehicles, etc. 4. Able to fold a piece of paper along an inclined line 5. Begin to do simple paper cutting and pasting 6. Able to cut simple pattern 7. Able to stick several pieces of plasticine together	1. Able to distinguish between living things (e.g. cat, dog, tree) and non-living things (e.g. toy, cup and plate) 2. Able to place furniture in the appropriate room 3. Able to point out a different type of object 4. Able to assemble puzzles of eight pieces 5. Able to identify things and events by sound 6. Able to imitate voices of animals 7. Able to draw a man with head, body, limbs and features of the face 8. Begin to understand the concept of time, able to tell what they usually do in the morning, afternoon and evening 9. Begin to understand position and speed, e.g. able to distinguish front and back, fast and slow, middle and the first and the last, etc. 10. Pay attention to their environment, able to point out the missing part and what is inconsistent in a picture 11. Able to identify simple and common signs, like road signs and shop plates 12. Able to recite from one to twenty 13. Able to count up to ten objects 14. Able to recall four things in a picture just seen 15. Able to tell which of the three things just seen are missing 16. Able to read simple words 17. Able to single out a word of different nature: e.g. "cow, goat, dog, car"	**Language comprehension:** 1. Begin to understand the difference between "past" and "present" 2. Able to have simple conversation on the phone **Language expression:** 1. Able to talk about experiences in everyday life 2. Begin to express themselves with complex or much longer sentences 3. Able to tell stories from pictures in sequence 4. Able to use words like "because", "therefore", "some", "several", "many" appropriately in conversation 5. Able to use opposite/ complementary words and sentences 6. Able to tell names of family members and their own home address 7. Able to tell the colour of a particular object, like: banana is yellow 8. Able to talk about people of different occupations and their responsibilities 9. Like asking for explanations of things they don't understand 10. Begin to ask with "why", "when", "how", etc. 11. Able to solve simple quizzes like: "I have four legs, a tail, like to eat fish, can catch mouse, who am I?" 12. Able to speak fairly fluently and clearly	1. Able to be self-disciplined and stay within a confined area even without adults' supervision 2. Willing to observe rules of the games when playing with other children 3. Able to take care of younger children and small animals and console their companion when they feel unhappy 4. Have vague concepts of right and wrong, only know that they will be punished for bad behaviour and will be praised for good behaviour 5. Know how to say "thank you", "sorry" 6. Able to get along with strangers in conversation and without timidity 7. Able to help adults do simple tasks at home **Self-care abilities:** 1. Able to eat and pick up food with chopsticks with instructions 2. Able to set up dining utensils for meals 3. Able to clean up dirt with a piece of cloth 4. Able to turn on taps to wash hands, dry hands and wash face 5. Begin to try brushing teeth; Able to wipe nose 6. Able to get up for toilet at night, no more wetting 7. Begin to put on/ take off clothes

Age	Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
5 to 6 years	**Gross motor skills:** 1. Able to run well on their toes swiftly and take quick bends 2. Able to fast run a distance of fifty feet, without feeling tired 3. Able to walk up and down stairs alone with alternate foot like adults 4. Able to hold a ball while running, kick a moving ball or play ball with a racket 5. Able to climb a string-ladder 6. Able to play on their own on a swing **Fine motor skills:** 1. Able to nail with a hammer 2. Able to put small beans into a bottle 3. Able to hold objects weighing over ten pounds 4. Able to thread shoelaces 5. Able to sharpen pencils with a sharpener 6. Able to draw straight lines with a ruler 7. Able to erase with an eraser without tearing the paper 8. Able to fill colour in an assigned area 9. Able to draw a rhombus and a triangle 10. Able to fold a piece of paper into half and then further half 11. Able to cut irregular shapes 12. Able to copy numbers and simple Chinese, English words	1. Able to put things of different length, height, width and size in correct order easily 2. Able to play simple puzzle games 3. Able to name different colours and shapes of common objects 4. Able to tell the general contents of pictures just seen 5. Able to repeat three acts from a story just heard 6. Able to count and write from one to twenty 7. Able to tell the order and position of an object. (e.g. the first, the second) 8. Understand the difference between "half of a piece" and "one full piece" 9. Able to do simple mathematical addition and subtraction 10. Able to recall five numbers just seen or heard 11. Able to tell the year, month, day and week 12. Able to tell the time (e.g. 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock) by looking at a clock, but depending on whether they are given the chance to learn 13. Able to understand meaning of common words 14. Able to tell ten common words	**Language comprehension:** 1. Begin to understand the difference of "yesterday", "today" and "tomorrow" 2. Understand words like in/out, far/near, bottom/top, enter/leave, start/end, etc. 3. Understand the content of a story **Language expression:** 1. Able to give a logical account of what has happened recently 2. Able to describe a picture 3. Able to communicate with family members or peers without difficulty 4. Able to speak up in turn without digressing from the subject 5. Grammar and structure of children's language are more or less the same as adults 6. Able to use words like "although", "however", "but", though sometimes inappropriately 7. Use different adjectives to describe a person or an object 8. Able to briefly describe four seasons 9. Able to tell their own date of birth 10. Able to express feelings with appropriate words 11. Able to talk back, protest or even scold others when frustrated	1. Able to play games which require co-operation with several peers, understand the principle of fair play and the need to follow group decisions, also able to explain rules of the game to other children 2. Able to play competitive games like chess 3. Begin to choose companions that they like 4. Able to turn on/off television and select their favourite programmes **Self-care abilities:** 1. Able to eat and pick up food with chopsticks 2. Able to use public toilets alone if required 3. If trained, able to clean up themselves after going to the toilet 4. Know how to choose suitable clothes 5. Able to comb their hair 6. Able to do simple housework, like tidying up their own clothes, set up dining utensils for meals 7. Know how to cross the road carefully 8. Know how to ask for help when losing their way and able to tell their own home telephone number and address

Characteristics of Language Learning (Chinese) of Children

Language experiences at the early age bring tremendous influences on the language development of children. Language experiences commensurate with their natural development will help children acquire an interest in language learning. Children will enjoy using language to think, communicate and learn. This will lay a foundation for children's language development.

Language learning can be in two modes: acquisition and learning. Language acquisition takes place when the learner voluntarily finds different language rules during the time he/she is exposed to language materials in a natural language environment, whereas language learning refers to a teacher leading the learners to practise the language through contact with various processed language materials, and the learners develop the language ability. Since a child is born, he/she can develop language ability through the language acquisition mode, and language learning of the child should further progress based on this foundation.

Before receiving school education, children will begin to develop the ability to speak the language through contact with the language materials in their everyday life, and are able to actively participate in interactive language activities. They will also be able to understand the different meanings of the various sounds in the basic sound system. Nevertheless, children are not capable of distinguishing the motives of the speakers from the various tones or changes in their intonation. Children's use of language is still largely limited at this stage, and their way of expression is usually different from that of adults with its own characteristics. They tend to use single words or single phrases to denote the meaning of a whole sentence; even when they use multiple-word sentences, there are intervals between phrases, and the structures are not strong; although some children might begin to pay attention to grammar, they do not usually place any emphasis on it. But at this stage children's vocabulary grows at a rapid pace, and apart from nouns and verbs, they learn a lot of adjectives as well.

Although the stages in which children develop their language ability are not absolute (they include overlapping in different stages, and the actual developmental pace of each child is different), teachers should pay attention to the existence of these stages, and language teaching should proceed progressively in light of children's particular pace of development. In other words, teachers, on one hand, need to understand that children's language ability is limited before they enter kindergarten, they, on the other hand, should also focus on these limitations and create conditions for children to utilise the modes of language acquisition and language learning at the greatest extent to help children develop their language ability. Generally speaking, children's listening and speaking abilities are developed before reading and writing abilities. Schools should provide children with real-life and interesting listening and speaking experiences, so that they can enrich their reading and writing experiences based on their good listening and speaking foundation. Therefore, children's language education should put its best effort into helping children foster interest and good attitude in language learning, expose them with a variety of language materials, and bring out the effects of language acquisition. In addition, when providing children with appropriate and quality listening, speaking, reading, and writing experiences, teachers can guide them to consciously be aware of the characteristics of language, and prepare them for the acquisition of language knowledge in the future.

Characteristics of Language Learning (English) of Children

World-wide studies show that children have enormous potential for language development and early childhood is the golden period for language learning. Given a favourable environment, children can learn more than one language effectively. Hong Kong is a pluralistic society with a diversified language landscape, which helps increase their exposure to English.

Generally speaking, listening and speaking precede reading and writing in language development. Children's language acquisition also begins with listening and speaking and is gradually followed by reading and writing. Studies on second language acquisition show that, when a child is exposed to a second language, he/she will go through a silent period or receptive period, during which the child will develop listening and comprehension abilities in English. Through rich and appropriate exposure to English, the child will enter the early production stage, and attempt to verbally use simple English words to express his/her meaning. Sustained and appropriate exposure to English can help a child enter the speech emergence stage or expansion of production stage. During this stage, the child will try to verbally use simple English phrases or sentences to express a more complete meaning.

In light of children's pattern of language development, the principle of "starting with listening and speaking" should be adopted at the kindergarten stage. Children should first develop listening and speaking abilities (oracy), and then gradually reading and writing abilities (literacy). Listening and speaking abilities are closely related to reading and writing abilities. Studies on the acquisition of English as a second language show that children's reading ability in English is founded on their oracy; and their ability to write English is based on their listening, speaking and reading abilities. When children have developed English listening and speaking abilities, they can progressively develop their early reading ability through rich and appropriate exposure to English. In addition, studies on children's English language development show that there are two stages in the development of children's writing ability, namely the pre-writing and conventional writing stages. Children need to develop their writing ability step-by-step, and not to begin to write the English alphabet or words too early. Therefore, when children are first exposed to English, we should provide them with plentiful and appropriate listening and speaking experiences, rather than reading and writing experiences too early or too much.

Language experiences have tremendous effects on the language development of children. Appropriate language experiences at an early stage will help children acquire an interest in English learning. Children will enjoy using English to express and communicate, and develop an early awareness and concepts of English, which lays the foundation of their English language development. The development of basic oracy and literacy at this stage can facilitate the learning of listening, speaking, reading and writing in English at the junior primary level.

Chinese Learning for Non-Chinese Speaking Children

What are the processes through which non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children learn Chinese?

- The mother tongue of NCS children is not Chinese. Before entering kindergartens, they have little or no opportunity for Chinese exposure, **so their "starting point" for learning Chinese is not the same as that of Chinese-speaking children.**

- After entering kindergartens, the process through which NCS children learn Chinese **is essentially the same as that of Chinese-speaking children**. They both start from listening and speaking, then learn words and phrases, and accumulate their language sense. They then learn to write strokes and simple components, and foster their ability and interest in reading.

- However, when NCS children first start schooling, they are relatively more reticent than Chinese-speaking children, as they face an unfamiliar language environment. This is because they are being exposed to Chinese for the first time, and consequently they go through a longer "silent stage" when learning their second language. At this point, NCS children learn Chinese by observing and listening. Hence, teachers should try to increase their exposure to Chinese, encourage them to express themselves and exit the "silent stage" as soon as possible.

- After a period of listening and observation, NCS children will gradually progress from the "silent stage" to the "imitation stage". They will begin to imitate their teacher's speech and express their needs.

- In light of this stage, when teachers use keywords or frequently-used words to communicate with NCS children, they should slow down their speaking pace, enunciate clearly, or combine body language to demonstrate to children the proper pronunciation of Chinese words.

- When NCS children make mistakes in intonation, teachers should guide them to try to pronounce words correctly, and enrich the content of their original speech or extend the conversation.

- Teachers can request children to repeat language after their demonstration and correction to increase their chances of speaking, and strengthen their ability to make sentences out of words.

- When NCS children have accumulated a certain amount of vocabulary and grasped the basic structures of word order, they will try using Chinese. At this stage, teachers can use different methods, complementing them with theme-based learning or learning through play to increase the motivation for NCS children to learn Chinese and the opportunities for its use.

What are the difficulties NCS children face when learning Chinese?

The common difficulties NCS children face when learning Chinese are as follows:

- **Enunciation**
  NCS children might not be aware of the characteristic of "one syllable per character" in Chinese, nor might they grasp the concept of having different tones bringing different meanings, so they are less likely to understand the change in tones, for example, they might read 「凍」(cold) as「動」(move).

- **Recognising characters (Structures of the characters)**
  The first step of learning a language is to acquire its words. Children must accumulate a certain quantity of words in order to understand, communicate and use the language. The mother tongues of NCS children are vastly different from Chinese, so they are likely to encounter difficulties or deviation. In addition, because some of the structures of Chinese characters are similar, for example, "大"(big), "天"(sky), "犬"(dog), and "太"(too/very) , they are likely to mix them up.

- **Writing characters**
  Some NCS children see Chinese characters as pictures. They imitate and copy, and memorise one character at a time, while not understanding the rule that the stroke order of Chinese characters proceeds from top to bottom, left to right, outside to inside. This is not conducive to the connection with what they have learned or to future application.

- **Use of vocabulary**
  Since the commonly used language in an NCS family is not Chinese, schools might be the main or only place where NCS children are exposed to Chinese. As a result, they have fewer opportunities to use Chinese, and the spoken vocabulary they can speak and use is limited.

How to help NCS children overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese, and foster their ability and interest in learning Chinese?

To tie in with theme-based learning or learning through play, teachers can include suitable language learning elements to address needs:

- **Focusing on the difficulties NCS children have when learning Chinese, and adopting suitable learning and teaching strategies:**
  - **Enunciation**
    ❖ In Chinese, one character corresponds to one sound. Thus, when teachers are guiding NCS children to read, they can point at the characters while reading. They can also clap while reading. For instance, when teachers are reading the Chinese words "幼稚園" (kindergarten), they can slowly clap three times to establish in the children's mind the concept of "one syllable per character".
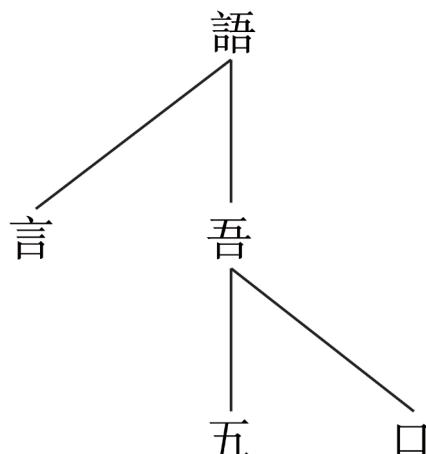
❖ Meanings are differentiated by tones in Chinese. Teachers can demonstrate repetitively, and ask children to repeat after them. In addition, teachers can also try to use comparisons to help children understand that various tones denote different meanings. For example, creating scenarios such as "The weather is so 'cold' 「凍」 that we need to 'move' 「動」", so that children understand there is a difference between the tones and the meanings of 「凍」(cold) and 「動」(move).

- **Recognising characters**
  ❖ When teachers are teaching related themes, they can design picture cards and character cards, and character-recognising games to assist NCS children to recognise characters. Teachers can also impress upon children keywords or frequently used characters in stories by pointing at the characters during storytelling.

  ❖ In addition, teachers can choose words which have more composites, and play word building games with NCS children. For example, the word "天" (sky) can be associated with "天空" (sky), "天晴" (sunny), "天氣" (weather), and "春天" (spring),etc. This exercise can increase their spoken vocabulary. Teachers can also let children read aloud a word repeatedly to deepen their memory of the character structure and its pronunciation.

  ❖ NCS children like to sing and they are musical. Teachers can teach children to recognise characters with the help of a melody when they teach children to sing children's songs. The sentence structures of children's songs tend to be repetitive, or they only change one or two words in each sentence, so they can be easily memorised. This is helpful for strengthening children's character-recognition ability.

- **Writing characters**
  ❖ NCS children tend to see Chinese characters as pictures. When they write, they have problems with strokes or confuse the left and right sides of the characters. Teachers should first teach children to break down the characters into radicals and components, then match different radicals and components into various characters, and then words.

  ❖ Teachers should let children learn frequently used radicals such as "氵", "扌", "忄", "艹", "口", "言", etc, then match them with different components to form a character. For example, the character "語" can be broken down into the radical "言" on the left, with the character "五" on the upper right hand corner, and the character "口" on the lower right hand corner, as in the following diagram:

❖ Teachers should progressively guide children to memorise different "radicals" and "components" so that they understand the basic principles of the structure of Chinese characters, instead of trying to memorise the characters individually. This lessens NCS children's burden when recognising Chinese characters.

❖ Teachers should first teach NCS children the common structures of Chinese characters, such as top and bottom, left and right, and inside and outside. Teachers can then help them develop habits of writing Chinese characters in stroke order from top to bottom, left to right, and outside to inside. However, when teachers teach children to write, they should create an inclusive learning atmosphere and review the overall structure of the characters instead of concentrating on miniscule details such as the order of the strokes, or the shape of the strokes. This avoids undermining children's interest in learning to write, which hinders their learning.

- **Use of words**
  ❖ Since NCS children have fewer opportunities to use Chinese in their everyday life, it is easier for them to forget what they have learned. Kindergartens should provide ample opportunities for NCS children to use Chinese, and encourage them to express their needs in Chinese. In addition, teachers should provide additional instances for NCS children to communicate and co-operate with local Chinese-speaking children to increase NCS children's opportunities for using Chinese.

  ❖ Teachers should revise words with NCS children in order to consolidate what they have learned. In addition, when trying to enrich NCS children's vocabulary, teachers should guide them to understand the relationships among words to improve their memory and usage. For example, when teaching the theme of "transportation", teachers should categorise "buses", "MTR", "mini-buses", and 'trams" as "public transport". When a teacher asks a child, "Which form of public transport do you take most frequently?" The child can recall related vocabulary from their memory more easily and apply it.

- **Emphasising building the rules of Chinese Language, and creating a rich Chinese Language environment**
  · Teachers should use clear, simple verbal instructions, such as "put down your school bag", "sit down", "stand up" and "wash your hands" to help NCS children establish classroom routines. Teachers should avoid using lengthy sentences or different phrases to express the same meaning. For instance, teachers sometimes say "sit down", and at other times say "sit". This avoids confusing NCS children and hindering their learning progress.

- When children understand classroom routines, teachers should put emphasis on building the rules of Chinese language and create a rich Chinese language environment. Schools are the main or even sole places where NCS children are exposed to Chinese, so teachers should use Chinese as much as possible, and body language or pictures should only be used as aids when needed. They should also avoid using English or other foreign languages as supplement to prevent children from becoming too dependent. If the medium of instruction of a school is English, Chinese teachers should speak only Chinese, so as to establish children's awareness in differentiating languages.

- Kindergartens should make use of their space to exhibit materials with rich Chinese elements, or design meaningful and fun language games in the Language Corner. Decorations in other corners can also include language learning elements, for example, to display Chinese sentences, frequently used radicals or components, etc., so that NCS children can immerse themselves in a rich Chinese learning environment.

▪ **Arousing interest in learning Chinese**

NCS children lack confidence when using Chinese, and are not willing to speak actively. Teachers can organise activities children are interested in according to their learning characteristics, such as sing-along, group games and quizzes. These can focus on learning difficulties and arouse their interest in learning Chinese. Such activities should also imitate real-life situations, so that NCS children can easily and naturally use Chinese through role-play.

▪ **Fostering interest in reading and developing comprehension ability**

- When NCS children have accumulated a certain amount of vocabulary and grasped basic word order, teachers can use picture books as teaching aids to foster children's interest in reading, and help them learn to expand their vocabulary and understand the characteristics of Chinese sentence structures. They can then gradually develop their abilities in listening and reading comprehension, thus enhancing their capacity for expression.

- Teachers should select picture books that match children's life experiences, with suitable levels of difficulty of text, as well as repetitive sentences and predictable plots. They should also use appropriate strategies, such as the following:

❖ **Listening carefully:**
Children like to listen to stories, because the content and plots of the stories are appealing. Teachers can ask NCS children to listen carefully, and answer simple questions, or retell the content, engage in role play or conversations after listening to the stories. This can help children improve their comprehension ability, and cultivate an attitude of attentive listening and a willingness to listen.

❖ **Observing pictures:**
Storybooks are usually complemented by pictures to help children understand the content of the story. Teachers should make good use of pictures to guide children to observe and say the names of things or the meaning of pictures, thereby increasing their speaking and expression abilities.

❖ **Pointing and reading words and sentences:**
After teachers have led children in reading stories, they can point at the keywords, frequently used words, or the repeated sentences, and let children read after them. In this way, children can understand the meaning of the words and sentence patterns.

❖ **Using reading strategies**

⇨ **Prediction**
Teachers can use the method of questioning, and make use of a book's cover, title and illustrations to guide children in predicting the content of the story. This helps stimulate children's thinking and expands their vocabulary.

⇨ **Retelling**
Teachers can use different methods (such as verbal narration, sequencing of picture cards, role-playing, etc.) to encourage children to retell a story in their own words. This helps develop their verbal expression abilities (vocabulary and grammar) and strengthens their understanding of the story.

▪ **Extended learning outside school**
Teachers should encourage NCS children to learn and use Chinese outside school, such as watching children's television shows to enhance their Chinese listening ability. They can also encourage children to notice road signs and different instructions on the streets, and learn commonly used words in everyday life. Teachers can ask children to prepare before school or extend their learning after school, for example, by asking them to collect words and picture cards related to the themes of learning.

What support measures and resources are available for helping NCS children learn Chinese?

- **Non-Chinese Speaking Parent Information Package: Your Guide to Education in Hong Kong - e-version**
  http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/student-parents/ncs-students/support-to-student-and-parents/package/ncs-parent-information-package-chi_eng.html

- **Tips for Parents of Non-Chinese Speaking Students—Kindergarten**
  http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/student-parents/ncs-students/support-to-parents-and-students/Tips%20for%20Parents%20of%20Non-Chinese%20Speaking%20Students_KG_Eng.pdf

- **Lexical Items with English Explanations for Fundamental Chinese Learning in Hong Kong Schools**
  http://www.edbchinese.hk/lexlist_en/

Glossary

Aesthetic development	Imagination is stimulated when observing the environment through the senses and comparing the forms of different things. Children express their inner thoughts, feelings, emotions and imagination through the language of different media.
Affective and social development	The sensory-perceptual ability of children causes them to be inquisitive and active learners. If coupled with positive reinforcement, these attributes lead to pleasurable learning. Furthermore, the experience of social interaction provides them with a sense of identity, self-confidence and self-esteem. It also encourages them to be more proactive and self-motivated in learning and in establishing social interaction with others.
Assessment	Assessment is the systematic review of the children's physical and psychological development based on developmental objectives in an authentic learning environment. It provides data for understanding learning performance and refining a curriculum. Standardised criteria should not be used to assess children's performance at the stage of early childhood.
Balanced development	To promote, through an appropriate Kindergarten Education curriculum, children's development in five aspects, namely moral, cognitive and language, physical, affective and social and aesthetic, as well as to cultivate the related concepts of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the six learning areas.
Child-centred curriculum	The curriculum design is based on children's developmental and learning needs, experiences and interests.

Cognitive and language development	Through physical activity, sensory experiences, and the use of language and symbols, children construct knowledge of the world. These abilities enable children to construct knowledge and develop their intelligence through real-life situations and experiences.
Curriculum framework	The curriculum framework comprises the basic directions and principles for schools to develop their curriculum. Based on these basic directions and principles, schools may develop their own curriculum, including the specific learning content and learning and teaching strategies tailored for children of different ages, with a view to providing children with appropriate care and guidance.
Developmentally appropriate practice	Based on the approach of teaching through play, it is suggested that kindergarten education should address the developmental characteristics of children. Moreover, children's personalities, family backgrounds, cultural backgrounds and individual differences should be taken into full consideration, and the active role teachers play in teaching should be emphasised, with a view to promoting children's healthy growth and sustainable development.
Free play	"Free play" is a behavioral activity evoked by the intrinsic motivation of children. It places emphasis on children's autonomy and free participation and children are not limited by the rules or preset goals established by adults. During free play, children can choose their own tools, ways to play, playmates and activity area.
Fine motor skills/ Gross motor skills	Broadly defined as the development of fine motor skills and gross motor skills, which involve the motor skills of fine muscle groups and large muscle groups.

Inclusive culture	Families and children from different cultures, languages and backgrounds should have increased interaction to gain understanding of one another through activities, and to help them cultivate values and attitudes of acceptance and respect.
Interface between kindergarten and primary education	Kindergarten and primary education are different stages of education, varying with respect to the modes of learning and learning environment. Communication and collaboration between kindergarten and primary education should be enhanced to help children adapt to a new stage of learning.
Homework	Homework is defined as task(s) accomplished at home. While appropriate homework can consolidate, extend or assess children's learning performance, it is not the only way to do so. Teachers should consider alternatives to serve such purposes.
Integrated curriculum	An integrated curriculum is a mode of curriculum that connects the learning goals and content of different learning areas in a meaningful manner. Children can explore familiar themes related to their daily life in the integrated activities, and thereby acquire a holistic learning experience.
Interest corner	In the interest corner, children can choose to take part in an activity they are interested in either on their own or in groups. Teachers should prepare diversified materials for children to manipulate according to their developmental and learning needs, thereby facilitating children's learning in different areas and enhancing their learning interests.
Learning areas	Children's learning includes three key elements, namely "values and attitudes", "skills" and "knowledge". Schools should adopt an integrated approach and use real-life themes to connect the six learning areas, namely, "Physical Fitness and Health", "Language", "Self and Society", "Early Childhood Mathematics", "Nature and Living" and "Arts and Creativity".

Learning community	A learning community is a group of people who have shared values and goals, and work closely together to generate knowledge and create new ways of learning through active participation, collaboration and reflection. In a school context, a learning community may involve not only students and teachers, but also parents and other parties.
Learner diversity	Children differ in cultures, languages, life experiences, learning styles, abilities, motivation and interests, thus leading to different learning needs.
Learning environment	This broadly refers to the fact that learning can take place in different locations such as at home, at school, or in the community.
Moral development	Children's moral development is closely related to how they know about themselves, how they develop the concept of right and wrong, how they express their emotions and feelings, and how they socialise with others. It is challenging for children to comprehend abstract moral concepts, so teachers can start with understanding and application to let children know that behaviour can be categorised into right or wrong, as well as good or bad. We should also show children proper behaviour so that they can put positive values and attitudes into action in everyday life.
Simple learning task	Kindergartens may assign some relaxing and fun simple learning tasks for children to complete (e.g., reading picture books, collecting articles and passing on messages). These tasks help children develop good habits and a sense of responsibility.

Theme-based learning

Theme-based learning refers to the approach of adopting a series of themes children are familiar with and concerned about to connect the objectives, content and modes of learning of various learning areas. Common themes include schools, seasons, festivals, animals and different professions. Kindergartens can introduce the content of these themes through stories, picture books, project approach, etc.

Values and attitudes

Values are standards for personal judgment and evaluation of things that have a profound impact on decision making and behaviours. Attitudes are the emotions and behaviours expressed by individuals towards people and things, which may reflect their concepts, values and perspectives.

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(Formerly known as Ad Hoc Committee on "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum")
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	Dr TAM Ka-keung, Andy Curriculum Development Institute, Education Bureau	Since 2 August 2016
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