

Na Noda Mataniciva

Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines
for the Fiji Islands

हमारे मोती



Australian Government

AusAID

Fiji Education Sector Programme
(an Australian Government, AusAID initiative)



The PRIDE Project is financed by the European Union and NZAID, through the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat and implemented by the Institute of Education at USP.

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ISBN 978-982-332-032-8

Design & layout: Sereima Raimua, USP Multimedia Unit

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Title: In the Fijian language, Mataniciva is a pearl or something very treasured.
Na Noda refers to the collective 'our'. Hence, Na Noda Mataniciva refers to
everyone having responsibility for nurturing our treasures, meaning our young
children. Humare Moti has a similar meaning in Hindi.

Foreword

Since its establishment in the 1960s the development of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Fiji has been virtually the responsibility of communities and non-governmental organizations. In the recent past there has been a lot of pressure from both local and international communities for government to take a more prominent role in the development of this important level of education. Furthermore, there have been similar recommendations from reports of education reviews such as the *Fiji Islands Education Commission/Report 2000*, the *Suva Declaration 2005* and the *Education for All Action [EFA] Plan for Fiji under the UNESCO Dakar Goals*.

Fiji's EFA Action Plan has prioritized the development of Early Childhood Education for the period 2001 to 2015. A major target of this Action Plan is the production of clear and coordinated Kindergarten curriculum guidelines. While the Ministry has been offering an ECE programme at the Lautoka Teachers' College, graduates were not provided with a definite curriculum guideline.

The production of *Na Noda Mataniciwa* realizes the major strategy in the development of ECE in Fiji. The document sets out the vision, beliefs and values underpinning the conduct of Early Childhood Education in the country. It is originally intended for teachers but it can also be a useful resource for policy and decision-makers, parents, communities and other stakeholders.

The curriculum guidelines do not prescribe the content of what is to be learnt but rather outline the outcomes to be achieved at this level. Teachers are expected to contextualize these outcomes according to their local conditions and the resources that are available to them.

Expectations for children's learning and development in all areas are identified in the curriculum guidelines. The areas have been called the Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD). The FALD will also inform the curriculum in classes 1 and 2, and it will be linked to the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) that are used to organize the curriculum from class 3 onwards. It is envisaged that the curriculum guidelines, together with the Ministry of Education's policy on Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE), will contribute greatly towards the effective development, implementation, and monitoring of good quality kindergartens and early childhood services in Fiji. The curriculum guidelines also offer suggestions for children's transition to school, which in turn should lead to more successful school and lifelong learning for all children.

Quite ironically, while we tirelessly worry about what a child will become tomorrow, more often than not, we forget that he is someone today. The publication of this curriculum has been long overdue, and as the title rightfully signifies, the worth and the value we place on our young ones should surpass the most valuable pearl that can ever be found!

Filipe Jitoko

Permanent Secretary for Education, National Heritage, Culture & Arts, Youth and Sports



Acknowledgments

Many teachers and other stakeholders have been involved in the production of *Na Noda Mataniciva: Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for the Fiji Islands*. The writers of earlier drafts played a significant role, as did the teachers who trialled the drafts. From 2007 the drafts have been trialled in the Western Division, and more recently have been taken to all parts of Fiji. Awareness workshops have been held with Kindergarten and Class 1 teachers, Head teachers, Kindergarten Management, government and community representatives. The extensive feedback gathered from all those involved has led to the development of the current version of the curriculum. Thanks are due to the many personnel from the Ministry of Education who participated in this process, as well as to representatives of other Ministries, in particular the Ministry of Health who provided valuable input into sections on children's health, care and physical development.

While it is impossible to identify all those who have contributed to this document, several people should be mentioned by name: Mrs Ruci Kididromo, the coordinator of the project; Adi Davila Toganivalu; Mrs Unaisi Vasu Tuivaga; Mrs Viniana Kunabuli, A/Director of CAS; Mrs Ufemia Camaitoga and Mrs Biu Cava, early childhood lecturers at Lautoka Teachers' College. We acknowledge also the following training support officers who have worked tirelessly throughout 2009 to conduct workshops across Fiji on the curriculum guidelines: Vilimaina Daunibau, Alivia Ketewai, Sangeeta Jattan, Saleni Chand and Raijeli Lewaqausila. Lastly, we give special thanks to the teachers and children whose thoughts, photos and artwork appear throughout this document.

The Ministry of Education acknowledges the support of the Fiji Education Sector Programme (FESP), an Australian Government, AusAID initiative, and the Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education Project (PRIDE), an EU and NZAID initiative, who have funded the project. We thank them for their invaluable support to early childhood care, development and education in Fiji.

OUR vision

That the children of Fiji develop into healthy, happy and responsible individuals, with reverence for God. We want them to have a strong sense of identity, appreciate their own as well as others' cultures, have respect for the environment, and become life long learners who will contribute to the peace and prosperity of our nation, Fiji.

Me ra vakatoroicaketaki na gone e Viti me ra tubu bulabula, mamarau, tamata nuitaki ka dau vakarokorokotaka na Kalou. E gadrevi me ra vaqacacotaka na nodra kilai ira vakataki ira, me ra doka na nodra i tovo vakavanua ka oka tale ga kina nodra na tani. Me ra lewa matau na i yau bula; ra tutaka na vuli e na vei gauna taucoko ka vakaitavi ki na tiko veilomani kei na bula sautu ni vanua o Viti.

ईश्वर के प्रति श्रद्धा रखते हुए फीजी के बच्चे व्यक्तिगत रूप से स्वस्थ, खुश हाल तथा जिम्मेवार बने । हम चाहते हैं कि वे अपनी पहचान की भावना को बनाए रखें, अपनी तथा दूसरों की संस्कृति को महत्त्व दें, वातावरण का भी सम्मान करें, जीवन भर शिक्षा हासिल करते रहें ताकि वे हमारे देश फीजी की शान्ति और समृद्धि में अपना सहयोग दें ।

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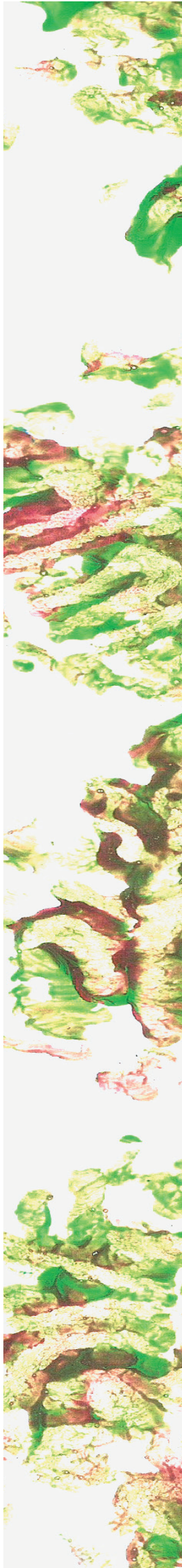
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PART A

Introducing the curriculum



1

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood in Fiji

Dui seva ga na bua ka tea¹

फांजीपानी (चमेली) की खूबसूरती उसके पोषण पर निर्भर करती है

We have many sayings in Fiji about young children. In these, children are often likened to the plants and other living things that are important for sustaining their villages and cultures. These sayings highlight traditional understanding and wisdom about the needs of young children, and the relationship between their development and the quality of care they receive.

In the past, families were the main source of children's learning. Children learnt from watching adults and from listening to legends and stories told by old people in the family home. They were cared for and disciplined by the whole community.

Times have changed and, with them, the contexts within which children live. The population of Fiji has become more diversified and urbanised. Even though traditional practices continue in many villages, children growing up in those villages require additional knowledge and skills if they are to play active roles in the wider community. Education is generally recognised as the pathway to engaging with these changing lifestyles and opportunities.

Kindergartens (or preschools) have been part of this education journey in Fiji since the 1930s, when expatriate women began running Kindergartens from their homes. By the 1950s many local women were also doing this. These well-intentioned people had no formal training and experience in the western practices that they were trying to follow. The majority of the centres provided very structured and formal programmes in school-like settings. It was not unusual to find children between the ages of 2 to 13 years sitting together in a small over-crowded room, with as many as 40 to 70 in a group.

¹ The beauty of the frangipani depends on how well it is nurtured

Nevertheless, these early initiatives paved the way for a strong early childhood movement in Fiji. In 1966 the Department of Education (now the Ministry of Education) formalised the establishment of Kindergartens for children between the ages of 3 to 5 years, and developed regulations governing the operation of Kindergartens. This was followed in 1968 by the appointment of the first Education Officer responsible for Kindergartens.

Changes have continued over the years. A range of early childhood programmes can now be found in urban, rural and even very remote and isolated areas of Fiji. The centres, which are generally owned privately or by the community, operate under various names: kindergartens, playgroups, preschools, day care centres, child care centres, and groups of nine. A number of early childhood training courses are also available in Fiji. These developments, together with increasing international evidence of the importance of early childhood, have created a demand from stakeholders for relevant policy, curriculum guidelines and standards for the young children of Fiji.

Purpose of the curriculum guidelines

The Government of Fiji acknowledges the importance of early childhood, and recognises early childhood as covering the period from birth to 8 years of age. In response to this, the Ministry of Education has included Kindergarten in the Fiji Islands National Curriculum Framework (NCF) which sets out the philosophy and structure for curriculum from Kindergarten to Form 7.

The purpose of *Na Noda Mataniciva: Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for the Fiji Islands* is to provide a vision and direction for those responsible for programmes for three to six year old children. The guidelines are intended primarily for teachers, but also for policy makers, head teachers, parents, caregivers, management, community and other stakeholders. The curriculum presents a framework to guide teachers and stakeholders in developing effective early childhood programmes for young children in Fiji.

The curriculum outlines expectations and outcomes for Kindergarten children in all areas of learning and development - physical, social, emotional, cognitive, creative and spiritual. The areas have been called the Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD). The FALD framework will also be used in Classes 1 and 2, to provide greater continuity across the early childhood years, and a more holistic programme in Classes 1 and 2.

Learning begins in the home. The Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines acknowledge this and encourage strong relationships between Kindergarten teachers and families. They also encourage working relationships between Kindergarten and Class 1 teachers and suggests ways of supporting children's successful transition to school. These relationships and transitions are seen as critical for success at school and lifelong learning.

Terminology

Early childhood is a general term, referring in Fiji to a period of childhood from birth to 8 years of age. Many terms are used around the world and in Fiji to describe programmes for children in this age group. In Fiji, Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) is a generic term used to describe all programmes for children from birth to 8 years of age; for example, playgroups, day care, Kindergartens, Classes 1 and 2. The term early childhood centre is widely used to describe the place where these programmes take place. 'Preschool' and 'Kindergarten' are both used in Fiji to describe programmes for 3-6 year old children. For the purpose of this document the term 'Kindergarten' is used.

Organisation of the curriculum

Na Noda Mataniciva is organised into three Parts. Part A provides an introduction to the curriculum and includes information about the beliefs, values and principles that underpin it. This includes a brief overview of young children's learning and development. Part B outlines expectations or desirable outcomes for children's learning and development in each of the six Foundation Areas of Learning and Development. Part C offers suggestions for planning and implementing programmes using the curriculum framework, and for monitoring children's learning and development. It also addresses issues such as partnerships and transition to school.

2

BELIEFS, VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

Beliefs and values

The way a society undertakes to educate its children depends on the knowledge, skills and values it believes to be most important. This is a critical factor in a multicultural society such as Fiji where there is a mixture of values and beliefs, and expectations for what children should learn.

Children experience and learn many things from their home environments; they adopt the ways, behaviours and attitudes of their own families very early in life. When children come to Kindergarten they already have a sense of their identity, and are developing cultural knowledge and family values. Their understanding and values will be extended as they adapt to the culture of the Kindergarten and mix with other children and adults who may be similar to, or different from, themselves.

In Fiji's diverse society, there is a need to examine our rich multicultural identities and values, and to include in our curriculum what we believe to be good for all our children. We want all children in Fiji to learn to care for and respect themselves, other people and their property, the environment and all living things.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) identifies many values that are shared in multicultural Fiji (p.11). It also makes a position statement on Spiritual and Values Education (p.38). These values are integrated into the Kindergarten curriculum as well as being a focus in the Moral and Spiritual Foundation Area of Learning and Development.

Beliefs, values and understanding about young children's care, development and learning have also influenced the development of the Kindergarten curriculum. These are discussed below.

Caring for children

Caring for children is one of the many roles of the Kindergarten teacher. Kindergarten children still require much individual attention and care while they are developing independence and a sense of their own identity in a context different from their home. Throughout the early childhood years, children need to be in safe, caring, secure and child friendly environments if they are to be physically healthy, mentally alert, socially stimulated and intellectually able to learn and develop to their full potential.

Good care is not just about providing appropriate nutrition or protecting the child from hazards and physical harm. It includes providing an 'enabling environment' that encourages interaction, conditions for exploration and discovery, and an introduction to skills that will affect later learning and living. This means being responsive to the child's developmental milestones and cues, being able to provide attention and care, being involved with the child, and encouraging autonomy, exploration and learning. It also includes protection of the child from abuse, exploitation and violence as these are all factors that have serious lifetime effects on a person's health and well-being. This highlights the special relationship between care and development and the importance of good adult-child interactions in the early years. Early childhood teachers play an important role in passing on these messages to parents, and modelling the very best practices in their interactions with the children in their care.

Taking steps to understand families and their child rearing practices is important. Fiji is a country of many cultures, each with varying beliefs and values about bringing up children. Making the transition from home to Kindergarten and school can be very demanding for young children. Teachers can support children by integrating positive child rearing practices from home into their programmes.

Understanding children

The early childhood phase of development covers the period from conception to 8 years of age. This is a period of rapid growth and development. For example, most brain development happens before birth and before a child reaches three years of age. The young child's brain is very vulnerable and can be damaged in many ways; for example, by poor nutrition or by stress and anxiety. Pushing formal learning too early and having unrealistic expectations for young children can contribute to this damage. Having a general understanding of child growth and development is important for teachers of young children; with this knowledge teachers can provide a programme that is developmentally-appropriate and responsive to the individual needs of children.

All areas of development are interrelated. Development in one area influences, and is influenced by, development in other areas. For example, a child whose language is delayed may have trouble interacting and playing with other children; a child with poor coordination may experience learning difficulties. Providing a holistic curriculum is therefore important for the child's overall development and learning.

Children develop at their own rate. Their development is influenced by individual differences, and by the cultures, families and wider environments in which they live. Nevertheless, there are patterns in their development – milestones that children might be expected to reach by a certain age; for example, in Fiji most babies are taking their first steps by 12 months of age. Teachers need to be aware of these milestones, and be able to share the information with families. They need to observe each child carefully, and seek further advice if the child has not reached a milestone within a reasonable time.



Going to the party – by Selina, aged 5

Young children tell us a lot about themselves through their drawings. Selina's drawing shows a rather mature level of development, but it is also fairly typical of a 5 year olds' drawing. In it she emphasises the things that are important to her: the hands suggest she wore lots of nail polish to the party; she also had on earrings and shoes with heels.

Below is a summary of important milestones in children’s development from 0-8 years:

Overview of development from 12 months to 8 years²

| 1 to 2 years | 2 to 3 years | 3 to 5 years | 5 to 8 years |
|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imitates adult actions• Speaks and understands words and ideas• Enjoys stories• Curious and enjoys exploring objects & places• Passes a toy from one hand to the other (crossing midline)• Walks steadily, climbs stairs, runs• Begins to assert independence; wants to do things without help• Plays alone• Likes to help with tasks• Follows simple directions• Solves problems• Begins pretend play | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoys learning new skills• Vocabulary continually increasing• Always on the go• Runs easily, with fewer falls• Gains control of hands and fingers• Can put objects together and pull them apart• Easily frustrated• Tries to be more independent• Follows simple requests and directions• Acts out simple scenes; e.g. cooking• Watches other children play, but may not join in | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full of energy; very curious• Has longer attention span• Talks about people and objects that are not present• Talks a lot, asks many questions• Tests physical skills, but with some caution• Expresses feelings in dramatic play• Likes to play with friends• Shares and takes turns sometimes• Shows creativity and imagination• Expresses ideas in many ways: e.g. painting, drawing, play• Interested in writing• Solves problems and makes simple plans | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Becomes able to take care of own personal needs: washing, dressing, eating, getting up, getting ready for school• Eager to go to school• Enjoys being challenged and completing tasks• Is curious about people and how the world works• Shows an increasing interest in numbers, letters, reading and writing• Gains more confidence in physical skills• Uses words to express feelings and manage own behaviour• Likes grown-up activities• Plays well with other children• Has friends |
| Developmental alerts: Check with doctor/health sister if child <u>does not</u> | | | |
| By 24 months | By 36 months | By 60 months | By 8 years of age |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try to talk or repeat words• Respond to simple questions• Walk alone, or with very little help• Show a variety of emotions: anger, fear, happiness, surprise• Recognise self in mirror; smile & point in mirror, say own name• Try to feed self; hold cup to mouth to drink | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Walk confidently with few falls• Avoid bumping into things• Carry out simple, 2-step directions• Point to and name familiar objects• Enjoy stories being read or told• Show interest in playing with other children• Start toilet training• Sort familiar objects (e.g. flowers, shells, seeds) according to one characteristic such as colour or size | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow simple directions in the given order: e.g. please go to the cupboard, get the keys and bring them to me• Use 4 or 5 words in a sentence with structure correct for their first language• Play well with other children• Perform most self-help skills independently: washing hands, brushing teeth, toileting• Alternate feet when walking up and down steps• Speak in a moderate voice, not too loud, too soft, too high or too low | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoy school and learning• Express ideas clearly• Solve problems and explain steps taken• Have friendships with other children• Participate in group activities• Follow instructions with multiple steps• Have a good appetite and continue to gain weight• Have improved motor skills: ability, balance, speed |

² Adapted from: Evans, J. et al. (2000). *Early childhood counts*. Washington: The World Bank; Allen, K. & Marotz, L. (2007). *Developmental profiles*. 5th edition. New York: Thomson.

How children learn

While development begins at conception, learning commences at birth, and continues throughout life. Young children learn best when they are actively involved and interested in what they are doing. They learn about themselves and their environment by touching, exploring, playing, watching, imitating, listening, talking, and by interacting with materials and the people around them. They do this by having real experiences at home, in the community, and in other learning environments. They are active learners who construct their own understanding and knowledge. Children learn best when information and concepts are meaningful, and connected to what they already know and understand. The ways young children learn should determine how teachers and other adults interact with them. Children do not need to be forced to learn; they are motivated by their own desire to make sense of the world.

Young children learn from everything that happens to, and around, them. They do not separate their learning into different subjects and disciplines, but integrate all areas of learning. This is done largely through play. Planning for play is seen as central to developing a curriculum that integrates all fields of learning and development. In a play-based approach teachers create playful ways of guiding children towards desired outcomes. This is more than what has traditionally been called 'free play'. A play-based approach requires purposeful planning for play. Teachers take on new roles – providing time, space and resources for play, observing what happens, interacting and challenging children with new problems to solve, then at the end of the day reflecting on children's learning, and planning additional resources and experiences for future learning.

A further critical role for the teacher is to show parents and administrators what children are learning through play. They can do this by documenting examples of children's play and identifying the many areas of learning and development being integrated into the play. This evidence is displayed in the room, on the noticeboards, in children's portfolios and at other places in the community where people are likely to read and take notice.

It should not be overlooked that many young children in Fiji learn a great deal from watching and listening, and also from direct instruction. There is room for all these approaches in a good early childhood programme. Teachers need to know many teaching strategies and approaches, and make decisions about the best approaches to use to facilitate children's learning and development. At the same time, they must learn to trust children's ability to initiate their own learning through play, and they need to provide learning environments that allow this to happen.

We want children to enjoy their childhoods, feel positive about themselves and others, and become successful lifelong learners. The more we encourage children to take responsibility for themselves, the more likely they are to become independent learners and responsible citizens.

Children with special needs

All children should be accepted into the Kindergarten programme, and their dignity respected. This includes children who have special developmental or learning needs, as well as those who may be gifted, or different by virtue of gender, ethnicity, economic status, or some other criteria. It is important to focus on children's developmental age, not just on their actual or chronological age. A child's development may be delayed or advanced in one or more areas for a number of reasons. In this case, the teacher needs to identify the developmental level of the child, and provide learning experiences that match that level. The structure of the curriculum supports this. Part B provides a continuum of outcomes for children from 3 to 6 years. It should link to Class 1 where teachers can find the next steps in the learning journey for children in need of extension. Likewise, Class 1 teachers can use the Kindergarten curriculum to guide their interactions with children who are not yet ready for Class 1, perhaps because they have not had the opportunity to attend Kindergarten.

Children with disabilities (for example intellectual, visual and hearing impairments) benefit greatly from playing with 'able-bodied' children in early childhood centres. Teachers must be able to support these children and their families, and know how to seek help and advice from other community organisations. If a teacher suspects that a child's development is delayed, s/he should discuss this with the parents, and suggest they seek medical advice. Teachers and parents may also contact the Special Education Unit of the Ministry of Education.

Guiding Principles

The above values, beliefs and understandings about young children have determined the philosophy underpinning *Na Noda Mataniciva*. From them, a set of principles has been developed. These principles are intended to guide teaching and learning in the Kindergarten. The principles are consistent with those outlined in the NCF (p. 14ff). They identify the priorities for those working with young children:

- **Relationships**

Children's learning and development are enhanced when they have positive relationships with other children and adults, and when teachers have good relationships with families and the community. In early childhood, parents and families are recognised as the first teachers of children. Teachers therefore work in close partnership with families and communities and maintain ongoing communication with them for the benefit of children.

- **Culture and Spiritual Awareness**

To develop a feeling of self-worth, children must appreciate and be confident in their own culture. They must also learn to respect the cultures and beliefs of others. They do this through sharing celebrations and special events, and through everyday interactions and experiences. Adults connect children to their cultures through use of the vernacular,

songs, stories, and learning experiences that involve families, the community and the environment. They support children's spiritual development through accepting and sharing religious practices, and through connecting children to the natural environment.

- **Caring and Respect**

Children must learn to care for and respect other children, adults, and their property; they must also learn to respect and care for the environment and living things. They learn this largely through good role modelling from teachers, parents and others in the community. Teachers encourage good practices and make sure that children care for, enjoy, respect and experience first-hand the beauty of their environments – the beaches, mud flats, sea, islands, sand dunes, rivers, streams, forests, mountains and land.

- **Inclusiveness**

Inclusiveness is about valuing diversity and ensuring that all children enjoy the benefits of the programme, without prejudice. The Kindergarten curriculum and learning experiences should promote respect and opportunities for all children and their families, regardless of gender, ability, ethnicity, religion or economic circumstances. The learning environment must also be flexible and responsive to children's individual needs and ways of learning.

- **Child-centred Learning**

Children construct their own learning through play and active engagement with materials, adults and other children in supportive and meaningful learning environments. All areas of learning and development - language, physical, social, emotional, intellectual, moral and spiritual - are linked. Therefore, the curriculum should be holistic, and provide for quality, play-based indoor and outdoor learning experiences that integrate all Foundation Areas of Learning and Development. For young children the process of doing things by themselves is far more important than any product or result. There must be time for children to reflect, create, imagine and make decisions for themselves.



3

THE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Key components of the curriculum

While learning is at the heart of the curriculum, teachers must take many things into consideration when planning a Kindergarten curriculum. Kindergarten teachers in Fiji are encouraged to use the following framework when planning and implementing their programmes:

- **Learning environments**

Learning occurs both indoors and outdoors. Both environments in the Kindergarten need to be kept clean, safe, attractive and well organised. When planning learning environments, teachers consider the resources to be used, their location and presentation, all in relation to the needs, interests and developmental levels of the children.

- **Relationships**

Relationships are central to effective teaching and learning. When planning, teachers reflect on ways to strengthen their relationships with children, their families and the community. They also consider ways to promote positive interactions and collaborative learning among children.

- **Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD)**

Based on their understanding of the children, teachers identify relevant outcomes in the FALD; they plan learning experiences and provide resources that help children achieve the outcomes.

- **Teaching and caring strategies**

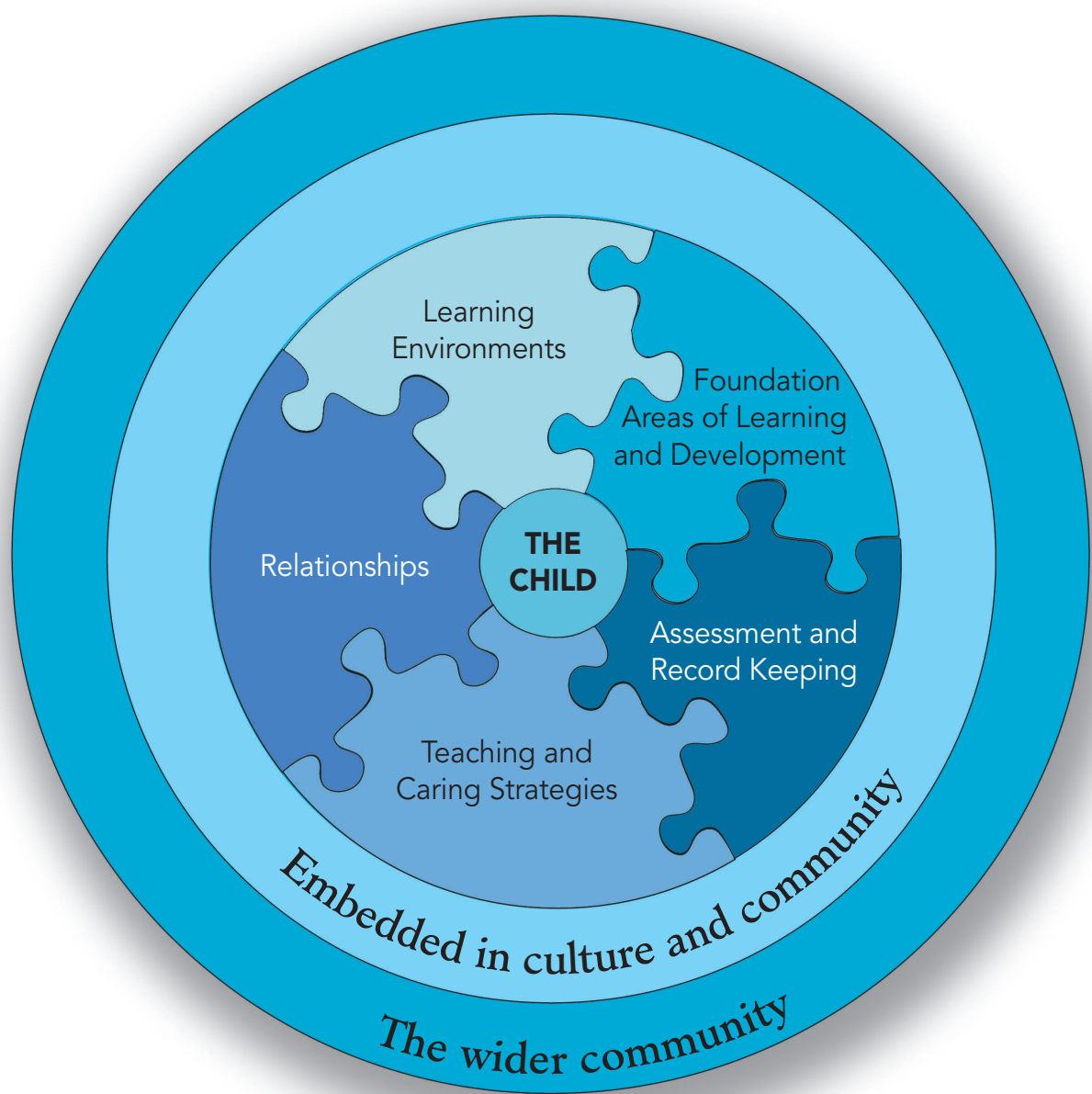
Teachers have a repertoire of teaching strategies and use these to help all children progress towards the outcomes. They allow many opportunities for children to initiate their own learning through play-based activities.

- **Assessment and record keeping**

Teachers use a variety of observations and other appropriate strategies to monitor and assess each child's development and learning; they record and reflect on this information and use it to plan ongoing learning experiences.

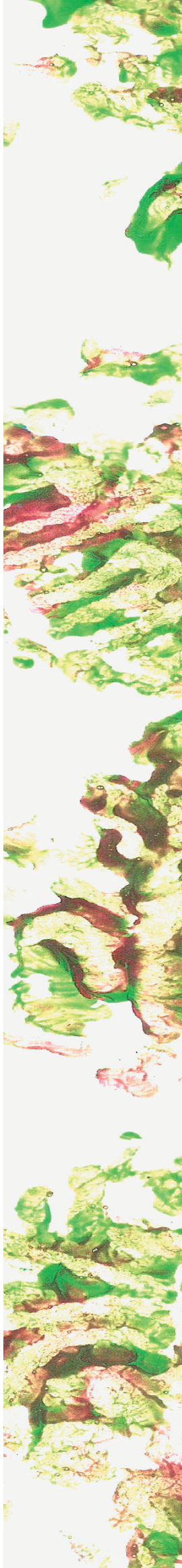
The curriculum framework shows these 5 key components surrounding the child, who is at the centre of the curriculum. The outer circles show major influences on the curriculum. Firstly, there is the local context – the cultures and community within which the curriculum is implemented. Beyond is the wider community – beliefs, values, policies and other national and international influences. All these factors impact on the curriculum and on teaching and learning.

The Kindergarten curriculum framework



PART B

Content of the curriculum



4

FOUNDATION AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT (FALD)

Organisation of the content

The content of the curriculum is organised into six areas. These are called Foundation Areas of Learning and Development (FALD), and are the areas around which Kindergarten teachers should plan for children's learning and development. The 6 FALD are:

- Physical Development, Health and Well-being
- Learning to Know
- Language, Literacy and Communication
- Living and Learning Together
- Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts
- Moral and Spiritual Development

Strands and sub-strands

Each Foundation Area of Learning and Development (FALD) is divided into a number of sections called Strands. For example, in Physical Development, Health and Well-Being there are two strands:

- Physical Growth and Development
- Healthy Living

Each strand is then divided into smaller parts called sub-strands. For example, Physical Growth and Development has three sub-strands: Gross motor development, Fine motor development and Perceptual-motor development. Healthy Living also has three sub-strands: Nutrition, Hygiene and Safe practices. This breakdown is shown below:



| FALD: Physical Development, Health and Well-Being | |
|---|------------------------------|
| Strands | Sub-strands |
| Physical Growth and Development | Gross motor development |
| | Fine motor development |
| | Perceptual-motor development |
| Healthy Living | Nutrition |
| | Hygiene |
| | Safe practices |

An outcomes approach

The National Curriculum Framework (p.27) outlines 7 major learning outcomes for all children in Fiji, from Kindergarten to Form 7:

- Be empowered learners
- Communicate effectively
- Conduct investigations
- Make decisions
- Select and use information
- Show enterprise
- Understand change, balance and relationships

The outcomes identified for each FALD in the Kindergarten curriculum contribute to the achievement of these outcomes. They describe what children might be expected to know and be able to do by the end of Kindergarten. In this sense, the outcomes identified in the Kindergarten curriculum provide destinations for learning and development in the preschool years; they should give purpose to teaching and planning.

At the same time, it is emphasised that development and learning in these early years are influenced by many factors, including prenatal factors. The outcomes are guidelines only. All children can learn, and their learning and development are optimised when teachers support each child along the learning journey according to their developmental and learning needs. Some possible steps along the way to achieving the outcomes are identified for this purpose. The age of 3 years is given as the starting point because this is the age at which the Ministry of Education (MoE) in Fiji allows children to attend Kindergarten.

There is a main outcome for each FALD, and an outcome for each strand within the FALD. These are fairly general. More detailed outcomes are in the sub-strands, and these are the ones teachers should use for their planning. Teachers select appropriate outcomes for their children and plan with these in mind. Most outcomes contain a great deal of content. Teachers will need to unpack the outcomes and identify the various concepts, skills and attitudes within them; these then become the focus of teachers’ planning. For example, one outcome in the sub-strand Gross motor development is: *Throw, catch and*

kick with increasing accuracy. To achieve this outcome a child will need to know how to throw, catch and kick. While many will come at this through observing others or through trial and error, others will need to be shown how to throw, catch and kick. All children will need lots of practice in all three skills – throwing, catching and kicking. Like many outcomes at the Kindergarten level, a teacher would probably work towards this outcome over the whole year. S/he would provide regular opportunities for children to play with balls of different sizes, and would informally intervene to support children needing help. In addition, she would sometimes plan specific learning experiences for children, especially for those needing help in developing these skills, and for those who are proficient and need extending.

Teachers across Fiji will use these outcomes, ensuring common goals and standards for all children in Fiji. However, teachers will decide on the learning experiences, the teaching strategies and the resources they will use to help children achieve the outcomes. Only in this way can the curriculum become relevant in the many diverse contexts of Fiji.

Summary of outcomes

| FALD | FALD OUTCOME | STRAND | STRAND OUTCOME | SUB-STRANDS |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | Children of all abilities develop and refine their physical skills; they begin to use practices that lead to active and healthy lifestyles | Physical Growth and Development | Children participate enthusiastically in physical activities; they develop strength, control, balance, coordination and body awareness | Gross motor development |
| | | | | Fine motor development |
| | | | | Perceptual-motor development |
| | | Healthy Living | Children become independent in carrying out personal routines and begin to use practices that keep them healthy and safe | Nutrition |
| | | | | Hygiene |
| | | | | Safe practices |
| LEARNING TO KNOW | Children use skills such as observing, exploring, communicating, questioning, problem solving, investigating and logical thinking to enhance their learning and understanding | Inquiry and Investigation | Children observe, explore and investigate the environment and increase their understanding of it | Observation |
| | | | | Exploration and Investigation |
| | | Representing and Symbolic Thinking | Children begin to use symbols and represent their thinking in many different ways | Using symbols |
| | | | | Representations |

| FALD | FALD OUTCOME | STRAND | STRAND OUTCOME | SUB-STRANDS |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | Children become effective communicators in their first language and develop the foundations for literacy | Early Mathematics | Children become aware of Mathematical concepts and begin to use the language of Mathematics | Number |
| | | | | Measurement |
| | | | | Shape and space |
| | | | | Patterns |
| | | | | Chance and data |
| LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION | Children act in ways that positively contribute to their own and others' social and emotional well-being and learning | Listening and Communicating | Children listen, understand and respond to non-verbal and verbal communication | Listening and Responding |
| | | | | Speaking and communicating |
| | | Reading and Writing | Children recognise that print conveys meaning, and begin to use writing materials with purpose | Becoming a reader |
| | | | | Becoming a writer |
| LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER | Children act in ways that positively contribute to their own and others' social and emotional well-being and learning | Myself and Others | Children think positively about themselves and are able to build healthy relationships with other children and adults | Sense of self |
| | | | | Relationships |
| | | Diversity | Children develop understanding of their own culture, become aware of other cultures, and begin to accept those who are different | Culture |
| | | | | Respect for diversity |
| | | Emotions and Behaviour | Children begin to identify and name their emotions, and to behave in ways that are socially and culturally acceptable | Emotional development |
| | | | | Behaviour |

| FALD | FALD OUTCOME | STRAND | STRAND OUTCOME | SUB-STRANDS |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| AESTHETICS, CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS | Children develop skills of observation and expression, while at the same time growing in ability to describe, interpret, appreciate, enjoy, create and reflect | Music, Movement and Drama | Children learn to use their voices; they listen to and enjoy music, and express themselves through music, movement and dance | Music |
| | | | | Movement and dance |
| | | | | Drama |
| | | Art and Craft | Children explore and use a variety of art media, and learn basic skills in the traditional crafts of Fiji | Art |
| | | | | Craft |
| | | Aesthetics | Children begin to enjoy and appreciate beauty in art, music and the world around them | Aesthetics |
| SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT | Children wonder about the world around them, they become aware of different beliefs and practices, and behave responsibly towards other people and the environment | Spiritual Awareness | Children show a sense of wonder and awareness of different beliefs and practices | Sense of wonder |
| | | | | Spiritual beliefs |
| | | Moral Development | Children develop a sense of right and wrong and become increasingly responsible for their actions | Sense of right and wrong |

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

OVERVIEW

A nation's destiny lies with the health, education and well-being of its children. Children have a right to the highest attainable standard of health, and the right of access to health care services. While governments and adults have the responsibility for providing these services, children also need many opportunities to develop their attitudes, knowledge and skills to become physically fit and lead healthy lifestyles. Health, safety and nutrition, as well as physical development, are therefore included in this FALD.

Physical development includes gross motor skills, fine motor skills and perceptual-motor skills. Gross motor development, such as running, involves moving the whole body and using large muscles. Fine motor development refers to using small muscles such as in the fingers and feet. As children's fine motor skills develop, their ability to coordinate their hands and eyes also increases. This is important for the development of writing and reading. Perceptual-motor development includes development of the senses, such as hearing and sight, and body awareness. Young children continue to develop and refine these physical skills throughout the early years, and need many opportunities to practise and extend their skills, regardless of their ability.

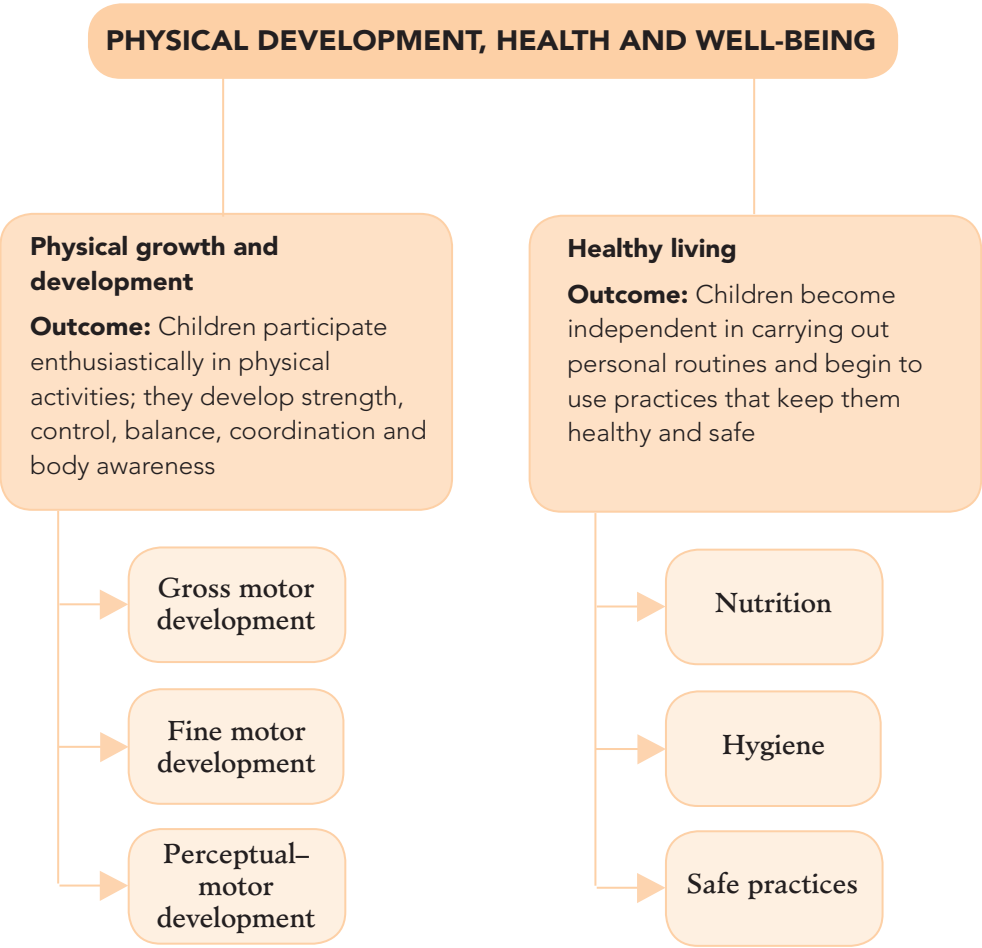
Health and well-being refer to the healthy state of the body, mind and soul throughout life. Good nutrition is essential for proper growth and development during the early years, and all stakeholders - families, community service providers and teachers - need to encourage good eating habits and physical exercise to ensure healthy growth, development and general well-being. Healthy children are strong, energetic, alert, enthusiastic and active. They have a positive image of themselves, are emotionally secure and strong in the knowledge that they are loved and able to do things for themselves.

MAIN OUTCOME

Children of all abilities develop and refine their physical skills; they begin to use practices that lead to active and healthy lifestyles.

STRANDS AND SUB-STRANDS

This Foundation Area of Learning and Development is divided into two strands; each strand has three sub-strands:



Reminder: The following outcomes are guidelines only. Children are all different and develop and learn at their own rate.

Physical Growth and Development

- **Gross motor development**
- Fine motor development
- Perceptual-motor development



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Perform many gross motor tasks with ease such as running, climbing, balancing...
- Throw, catch and kick with increasing accuracy
- Try new physical challenges with support, such as galloping, somersaults, cartwheels...
- Demonstrate increasing ability to control movements such as running and changing direction, throwing or catching while running...
- Play group games for fun, such as dog and bone, sack race, although not always following rules

They might then...

- Walk forward and backward easily
- Hop on the spot or moving a short distance
- Jump over low obstacles
- Kick a large ball with some accuracy
- Run with greater control such as stop and change direction without falling over
- Throw with one hand using an overhand or underhand movement

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Walk up and down stairs with alternating feet
- Run and stop without falling over
- Jump on the spot
- Balance a short time on one foot
- Roll, throw and catch a large ball with two hands



Physical Growth and Development

- Gross motor development
- **Fine motor development**
- Perceptual-motor development



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Use finer crayons, pencils, paint brushes and other tools such as a stapler
- Use either the left or right hand for most activities
- Cut along lines and around simple shapes
- Display greater eye-hand coordination as they build with blocks, do puzzles, paste and attempt other activities such as weaving voivoi leaves
- Use fine motor skills to care for themselves such as combing hair, manipulating zips and buttons, using hands or utensils correctly for eating

They might then...

- Use first two fingers and thumb (tripod grasp) to hold crayons, pencils and brushes
- Show preference for either the left or right hand
- Hold scissors correctly and cut along straight lines
- Use fingers and hands with greater control and strength such as threading flowers and beads, modelling with dough, tearing paper and pasting

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Use whole hand or fist (palmar grip) to hold jumbo crayons, thick pencils or brushes when drawing and painting
- Use scissors but with difficulty
- Use fingers to thread large objects, turn pages of a book, manipulate simple puzzles and blocks



Physical Growth and Development

- Gross motor development
- Fine motor development
- **Perceptual-motor development**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Show a greater interest in, and understanding of, the human body
- Explore more creative ways of moving their bodies
- Move and dance using their own space
- Use and respond to an increasing number of space words such as over, below, between, above, beside
- Identify and copy common sounds in the environment such as vehicles, birds and other animals
- Complete puzzles with at least 10 pieces
- Use all their senses to explore and investigate the environment

They might then...

- Name main body parts and their use
- Move to a steady rhythm or beat
- Explore moving their bodies in different ways with and without music
- Repeat simple clapping patterns such as 3 slow claps followed by 3 fast claps
- Imitate body movements modelled by someone
- Move body in relation to basic spatial directions such as crawl under the table, stand on the chair
- Complete more complex puzzles (5–10 pieces)
- Sort, match and describe objects according to texture, colour, shape and size
- Use all five senses with increasing accuracy to identify objects that are the same or different

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Identify and name main body parts
- Participate in basic rhythmic movements and musical activities
- Participate in sensory activities such as play dough, finger paint, feely bags
- Complete simple jigsaw puzzles (up to 5 pieces)
- With support, use their senses to identify a small number of objects that are the same or different



Healthy Living

- **Nutrition**
- Hygiene
- Safe practices



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Identify healthy and unhealthy food and talk about the relationship between food, health and growth
- Join in planning and preparing healthy snacks and meals
- Talk positively about, and try, food eaten by different cultures in Fiji

They might then...

- Talk about the importance of food and water for growth and health
- Identify healthy and unhealthy food, with support
- Group fruit, vegetables and other food by colour and type
- Identify where basic food such as milk, meat and fruit come from
- Participate in cooking and food preparation

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Sort, classify and name fruit and vegetables common in Fiji
- Show food preferences
- Show interest in helping with food preparation such as cooking, washing vegetables and dishes
- Be aware of the need to drink water frequently



Healthy Living

- Nutrition
- **Hygiene**
- Safe practices



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Take responsibility for their personal needs but may still need some help such as when bathing and blowing nose
- Follow important health care practices without being reminded such as washing hands after toilet and before eating
- Talk about the relationship between personal and environmental hygiene and disease such as mosquito-born diseases and their prevention
- Keep their environment clean, healthy and safe such as picking up rubbish without always being reminded

They might then...

- Take care of their own toilet and personal needs such as washing hands, bathing, brushing teeth with some supervision
- Dress themselves with minimal help
- Pack away play materials and put them in proper places
- Follow rules for keeping the environment clean and healthy such as putting rubbish in the bin



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Wash and dry hands, brush teeth and use handkerchief with assistance
- Help dress themselves
- Use the toilet with some assistance
- Pack away materials with supervision



Healthy Living

- Nutrition
- Hygiene
- **Safe practices**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Follow safety rules, still with supervision, and take more responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe
- Make emergency phone calls and identify people to contact when in danger
- Have the skills and confidence to report uncomfortable situations
- Talk about actions and consequences such as climbing and falling off a tree, drinking dirty water and getting sick

They might then...

- Under supervision, follow basic safety rules for fire, water, road and other environmental hazards
- Talk about what to do when in danger and identify some key people to turn to, such as parents, teacher, police
- Be able to give their full name, phone number and address in case they get lost or need help
- Talk about situations which make them feel comfortable and uncomfortable such as the way people talk to them or touch them



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Follow safety instructions when asked, such as holding hands, looking both ways when crossing the road and staying away from hot surfaces
- Talk about their bodies and be aware that not everyone should touch them

LEARNING TO KNOW

OVERVIEW

The FALD Learning to Know has a focus on developing skills, knowledge and attitudes that support children's enjoyment of learning and help them to become independent and successful learners. These skills include observing, exploring, thinking, problem solving, communicating, and using symbols. In the early years children need many opportunities to see and touch objects, to hear language, to move about and explore the environment. Early experiences and stimulation at home and in community environments provide the basis for this early learning. These experiences help children understand the world around them and develop concepts about the people and objects in it. They form the basis for future higher order levels of thinking required in all areas of living and learning.

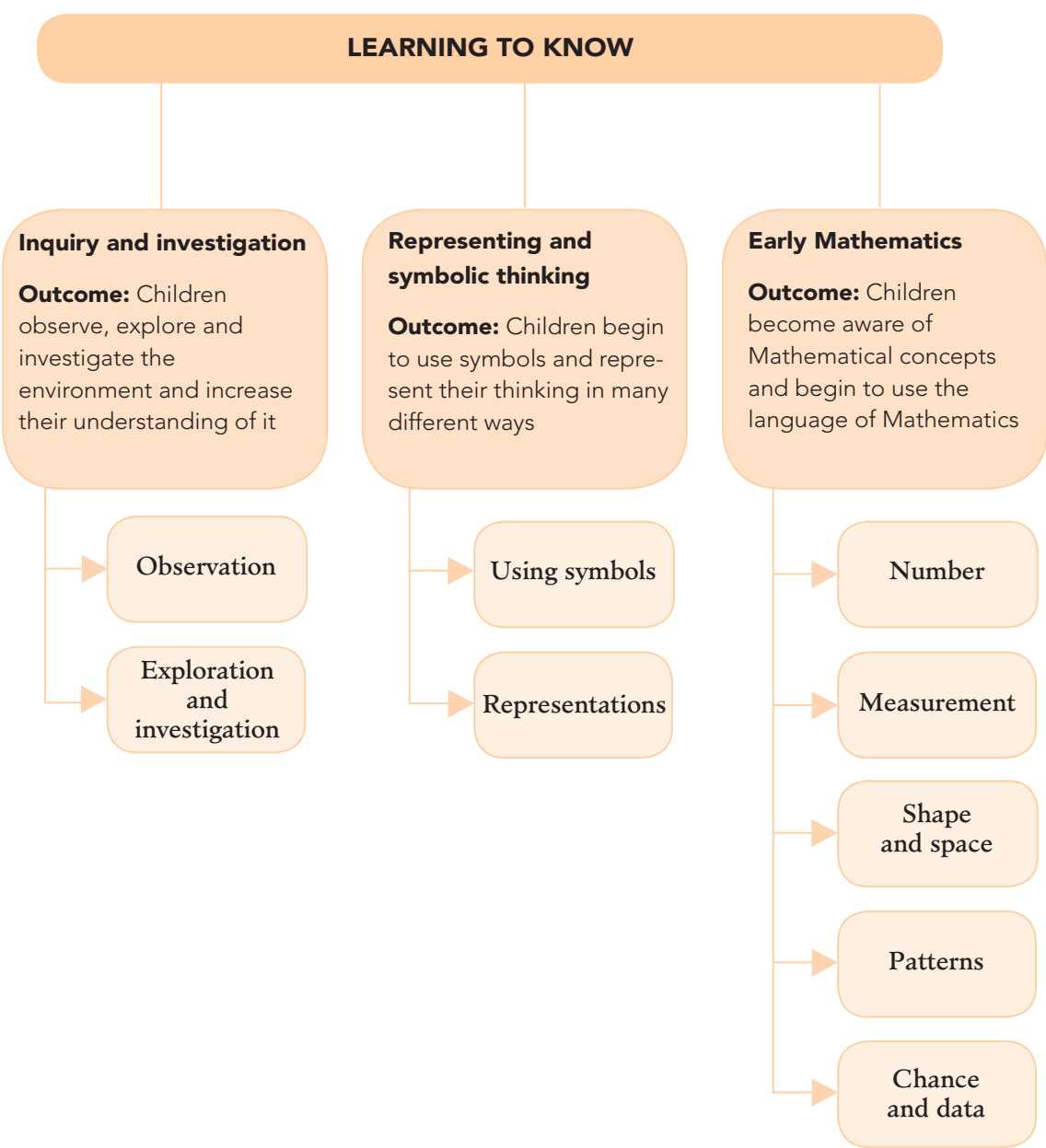
These skills also form the foundation of mathematical and science learning. Children already have considerable science and mathematical knowledge when they come to Kindergarten. This includes knowledge about cultural ways of counting, measuring and recording, and knowledge about the local environment. This knowledge comes from their daily interactions, observations and investigations, and will continue to develop and be refined through play-based learning in the kindergarten. As children interact and grow in their ability to communicate, major changes in their thinking occur. Social interaction and language should therefore be emphasised in all early childhood programmes.

MAIN OUTCOME

Children use skills such as observing, exploring, communicating, questioning, problem solving, investigating and logical thinking to enhance their learning and understanding.

STRANDS AND SUB-STRANDS

This Foundation Area of Learning and Development is divided into three strands; each strand has a number of sub-strands



Reminder: The following outcomes are guidelines only. Children are all different and develop and learn at their own rate.

Inquiry and Investigation

- **Observation**
- Exploration and investigation



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Pay careful attention to objects and things around them such as feathers, patterns on shells, or clouds and describe what they have observed
- Recognise the needs of plants and animals and respond to these, with assistance
- Give their own explanations and ideas about why things are as they are, such as Why can you see the moon in the daytime? Why do leaves turn yellow?
- Include more detail in their drawings, paintings and other representations

They might then...

- Notice more details in objects and ask 'what' and 'why' questions
- Talk about the needs and care of living and non-living things
- Talk about things in the environment and use an increasing vocabulary to describe them
- Represent objects they have observed in the environment
- Ask how things work

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Show curiosity about living and non-living things in their environment through touching, pointing and picking up objects and showing them to others
- Use simple words to describe objects
- Talk about the weather and its changes



Inquiry and Investigation

- Observation
- **Exploration and investigation**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Explore topics of interest to them using books, peers and other sources of information to find answers
- Make decisions and solve simple problems that they encounter during their explorations
- Enjoy collecting, sorting and classifying objects
- Select and use simple tools, such as a magnifying glass, to enhance their learning
- Communicate and share their findings with others in a variety of ways
- Have some basic knowledge about the local environment, both living and non-living
- Tell some traditional stories from the various cultures of Fiji about the natural environment

They might then...

- Explore the properties of natural phenomena such as sand, water and wind by adding water to sand, running in the wind and so on
- Investigate living and non-living things and talk about their findings
- Collect and sort objects of interest
- Make decisions and solve simple problems as they explore and play
- Understand the purpose of tools such as a magnifying glass and use these in their play
- Listen to short traditional stories about the natural environment, and ask questions

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Play with natural materials such as sand and water
- Use their senses to explore objects and materials
- Collect things of interest to them
- Use trial and error to find out about things
- Listen to short age-appropriate traditional stories about the natural environment



Representing and Symbolic Thinking

- **Using symbols**
- Representations



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Act out more varied and complex pretend roles, using less realistic objects and gestures as symbols such as holding hand to ear and pretending to talk on the phone
- Use symbols such as writing and drawing to express ideas
- Use the symbol systems of their culture such as letters, numbers and environmental signs to extend their play

They might then...

- Use real and pretend objects and actions in their play
- Use written symbols such as letters and numbers in their play



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Imitate what other people do, and pretend to be someone else such as a mother putting the baby to bed
- Use non-verbal communication in their play



Representing and Symbolic Thinking

- Using symbols
- **Representations**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Represent their thinking in many ways using a greater variety of materials such as drawing, painting, block play and music, as well as through verbal and non verbal expression
- Draw simple plans and maps with help, such as a plan for block construction or a map of their journey to kindergarten
- Add words and other symbols to their constructions and other creations so that they can share their ideas with others

They might then...

- Use a greater variety of materials to represent their ideas
- Ask for written words to go on their drawings, constructions and other creations.
- Use more descriptive-language to talk about their paintings, drawings and constructions



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Name their scribbles, drawings and constructions when asked
- Begin to express their ideas in a variety of ways such as painting, drawing, dancing, modelling, construction...

Early Mathematics

- **Number**
- Measurement
- Shape and space
- Patterns
- Chance and data



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Use some traditional or cultural ways of counting
- Sort objects into groups according to more than one attribute such as big green bananas and little green lemons; say how they are the same
- Say how many in a group of at least 3 items, without counting
- Count small groups of objects with awareness of one- to-one correspondence
- Identify and name numerals up to 5; match these to groups of 1-5 objects
- Use a range of number words such as more, few, lots...
- Use low ordinal numbers with accuracy such as 1st, 2nd, 3rd
- Describe a sequence of events such as tell the steps they took to complete a simple activity

They might then...

- Show some understanding of traditional ways of counting such as bundle of firewood – I vesubuka, kurdha
- Engage in meaningful counting activities related to their daily lives such as counting the number of children in a group
- Sort objects into groups using one attribute such as colour or size and explain how they are the same
- Show through their talk that they recognise numerals as different from letters
- Respond with a number when asked a 'how many' question

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Use some number words in their talk such as 'I'm 3 years old'
- Begin to sort objects according to one attribute such as colour or shape
- Join in number songs and games
- Rote count numbers up to 10, not necessarily in correct sequence



Early Mathematics

- Number
- **Measurement**
- Shape and space
- Patterns
- Chance and data



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Use some traditional ways of measuring and related language in their play
- Look for, try out and correctly select objects according to size such as matching lids and containers; blocks the same size
- Ask questions and make comments about quantity, time, money, distance such as How far? How much? How long?

They might then...

- Use some traditional ways of measuring in their play
- Use measurement language in their play and talk such as home time, long, high, heavy bigger, shorter
- Join in talks on the weather
- Pretend play with money and use money language
- Talk more accurately about times of the day; begin to use time words such as before, after, next

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Use basic measurement words such as a long way, big, heavy...
- Compare objects by size, weight and so on
- Show interest in money
- Talk about quantity as they pour and fill containers with water and sand
- Talk about times of the day such as lunch time, time to go home and so on



- Begin to use comparative words such as bigger than, heavier than
- Measure using non-standard measurements when asked a question such as How many steps to the door?
- Use some measuring tools such as scales, although not accurately
- Begin to recognise the value of coins and notes
- Show an interest in clocks and watches

Early Mathematics

- Number
- Measurement
- **Shape and space**
- Patterns
- Chance and data



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Use spatial language in their play and other activities such as under, behind, on top of ...
- Talk about themselves and objects in relation to their position such as 'I'm next to Mere', 'He's hiding behind the door'

They might then...

- Find their own space in a room
- Follow directions related to position such as under, behind, in front, beside...
- Sort objects according to shape
- Fit shapes together such as in puzzles and lego
- Use lines and shapes when drawing or painting

- Sort and describe objects according to shape
- Recognise and name basic shapes such as circle, square, triangle
- Create more complex patterns by putting shapes together as in puzzles, blocks, collage



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Join in activities where they have to move in space such as crawling under, over or through objects
- Use their bodies in space such as swinging and balancing
- With support, find shapes in the environment
- Complete simple puzzles



Early Mathematics

- Number
- Measurement
- Shape and space
- **Patterns**
- Chance and data



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Identify and talk about patterns in the environment
- Sort objects according to their patterns, and describe the patterns
- Try to copy traditional patterns such as patterns in mats, tapa, pottery and baskets
- Copy and extend simple patterns they see and hear such as clapping patterns
- Create patterns through drawing, threading, singing, clapping and other activities

They might then...

- Match patterns and tell how they are the same
- Find and comment on patterns around them such as in clothing, mats, food, tapa, baskets
- Repeat simple sound patterns such as clapping
- Create patterns in painting and other activities such as threading
- Talk about patterns they see, hear and make



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Identify patterns that are the same or different
- With support, find simple patterns in the environment
- Create simple patterns, such as in their painting and drawing

Early Mathematics

- Number
- Measurement
- Shape and space
- Patterns
- **Chance and data**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Use a vocabulary of chance words in their first language such as maybe, possibly, perhaps
- Join in group activities for recording simple picture graphs such as the number of boys and girls here today
- Ask questions about simple picture graphs
- Use a mark or picture to record information such as their attendance, or the activities they have completed during the session
- Suggest what might happen next in a story
- Guess and check such as how many potatoes in the bag

They might then...

- Be prepared to guess or 'have a go'
- Talk about personally significant possibilities such as 'We might go fishing'
- Use basic prediction words in their first language, such as 'It might rain today'
- Join in group activities for gathering simple data such as counting the number of children wearing red
- Join in activities for recording information such as filling in a weather chart

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Make simple choices when given two meaningful options
- Make simple predictions such as predict what the weather might be like tomorrow
- Interpret information in their environment such as look at leaves on the ground and identify which tree they came from



LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION

OVERVIEW

Language is the means by which individuals express emotions, thoughts and needs, as well as share ideas. Language is critical for the development of thinking and problem solving, and is learnt through positive parenting and social interactions.

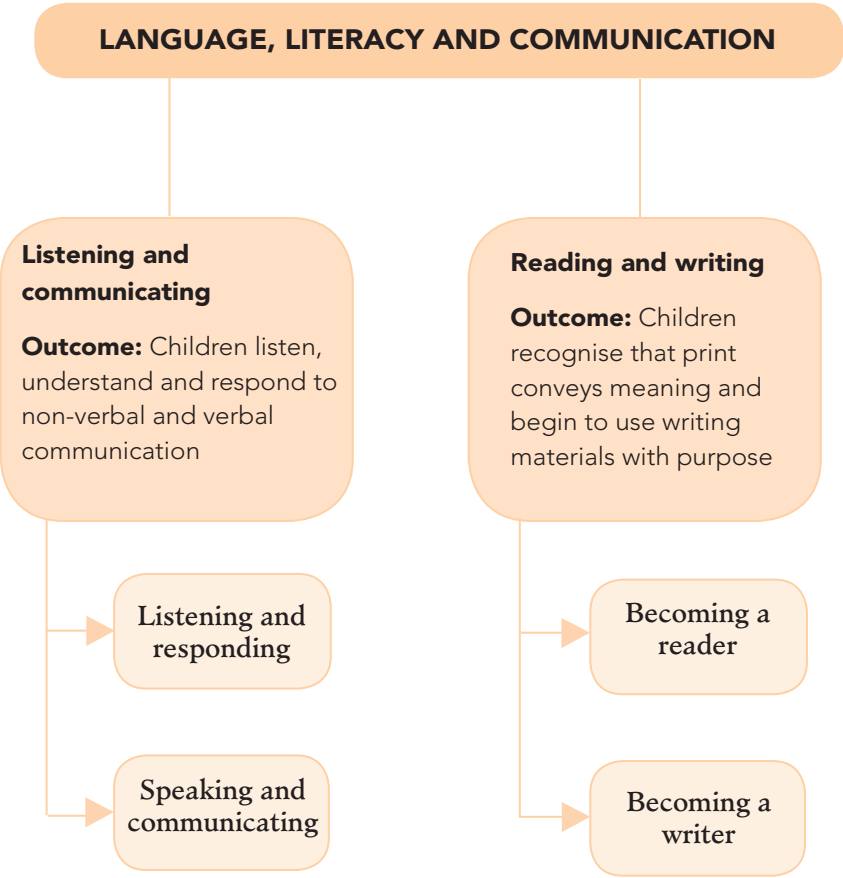
Literacy has its roots in language and in the ability to communicate. It involves understanding and using the symbol systems of a culture - not just the alphabet and number systems, but also environmental and cultural signs and symbols. Literacy learning begins at birth and continues throughout life. Babies’ and young children’s many ways of communicating (words, gestures, drawings, movement etcetera) are pathways to becoming literate adults, and should be valued and supported both at home and school. These pathways into literacy can be very diverse, depending on the social and cultural practices children experience in their families and communities. Some children are exposed to a lot of print from an early age, others grow up in more oral cultures where listening and talking are priorities. Many children in Fiji are also exposed to multiple languages, dialects and symbol systems. Teaching and learning in a child’s first language are encouraged in the kindergartens of Fiji as developing the child’s first language is an important foundation for developing other languages and literacy, and for supporting multicultural communication. Literacy is best supported when adults read or tell stories to children, sing songs, play games, encourage good listening practices, converse with children, and help them recognise signs and symbols in the environment. It is also supported when children play with letters, dictate stories about their drawings and paintings, and have many opportunities to express themselves. Teachers who provide these types of experiences will be building strong foundations for all areas of language, literacy and communication.

MAIN OUTCOME

Children become effective communicators in their first language and develop the foundations for literacy

STRANDS AND SUB-STRANDS

This Foundation Area of Learning and Development is divided into two strands; each strand has two sub-strands:



Reminder: The following outcomes are guidelines only. Children are all different and develop and learn at their own rate.



Listening and Communicating

- **Listening and responding**
- Speaking and communicating



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Make up rhyming and nonsense words
- Identify words that start with the same sound
- Respond by clapping, or in other ways, to syllables or patterns in words, such as their names
- Talk about the relationship between some sounds and letters
- Respond to a wide range of age-appropriate stories by asking and answering questions, making comments and predictions
- Sit and listen attentively for longer periods of time
- Follow instructions with more than two steps

They might then...

- Identify sounds that are the same or different
- Play with sounds and words
- Repeat nursery rhymes, chants, action songs and use these spontaneously in their play
- Listen for longer periods of time
- Make comments and ask questions when others are telling or reading stories
- Listen to and follow simple instructions

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Pay attention to and identify sounds in the environment
- Recite simple nursery rhymes and join in simple action songs, chants and mekes
- Listen for a few minutes when someone is talking or telling a story
- Listen to and follow a simple instruction



Listening and Communicating

- Listening and responding
- ***Speaking and communicating***



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Speak clearly in the first language or dialect
- Sing songs and recite rhymes in the other languages of Fiji
- Use their first language or dialect in a more extensive way
- Join in and take turns in conversations
- Ask and answer When? Who? Where? What? Why? questions
- Tell and retell stories, linking main ideas
- Create imaginative stories
- Use culturally appropriate ways of speaking and communicating
- Use many ways to communicate ideas and express emotions



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Use basic gestures and sign language
- Use sentences of at least 3 words in their first language or dialect to express their ideas and needs
- Ask questions
- Join in songs and rhymes with adults or children
- Express themselves through drawing, singing and moving

They might then...

- Become more proficient in using non-verbal communication
- Use the sounds and sentence structure of their first language with increasing accuracy
- Tell and retell stories
- Ask lots of questions

Reading and Writing

- **Becoming a reader**
- Becoming a writer



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Participate in stories, asking and answering questions, volunteering comments, predicting what comes next
- Tell, retell and act out stories, giving sequence to the story
- Use books for enjoyment and information
- Recognise common print labels and signs in the environment
- Be interested in letters, sounds and words
- Identify some letters and make some letter-sound matches, at least with the first letter in their names
- Dictate stories for adults to write down, and join in reading these

They might then...

- Participate in stories through comments and questions
- Use illustrations in a picture book to guess what the text says
- Distinguish between pictures and written words
- Point to words and signs and ask what they say
- Recognise their own names in print
- Show interest in having their stories written down

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Enjoy books and stories and ask adults to tell or read stories
- Pretend to read
- Recognise basic features of a book such as front, back, top, bottom, and be able to turn the pages
- Answer simple questions about a story
- Talk about their drawings and paintings when asked



Reading and Writing

- Becoming a reader
- ***Becoming a writer***



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Use pretend writing in play activities such as writing signs for block play or writing a shopping list for dramatic play
- Write some recognisable letters although these may not be formed correctly and may be reversed
- Tell stories or give information for an adult to write down and attempt to copy some of the writing
- Use some letters to represent sounds
- Try to write their own stories with help
- Write their first name

They might then...

- Pretend to write, using some letter-like shapes
- Write some letters in their names, especially the first letter, which may be reversed
- Talk about writing and drawing being different

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Communicate their ideas and thinking through scribbling, drawing and painting
- Observe adults and others writing and try to copy or join in
- Pretend to write, using scribbles



LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER

OVERVIEW

Children learn who they are and what life is about from the people around them. The family has the strongest influence on the way children view themselves and others. Working closely with families is therefore a critical role for the early childhood teacher. In this curriculum area we focus on children's developing sense of self, building trusting relationships with others, and developing understanding of themselves and the wider community. Learning experiences in the social and emotional area encourage children to become independent, collaborative learners and responsible citizens. Children develop understanding and pride in their cultures, and develop positive attitudes and respect for people of other cultures. Within a safe and inclusive environment, children develop the confidence and ability to identify and express their emotions. They learn the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour, and become able to tolerate change and adapt to an ever-widening world.

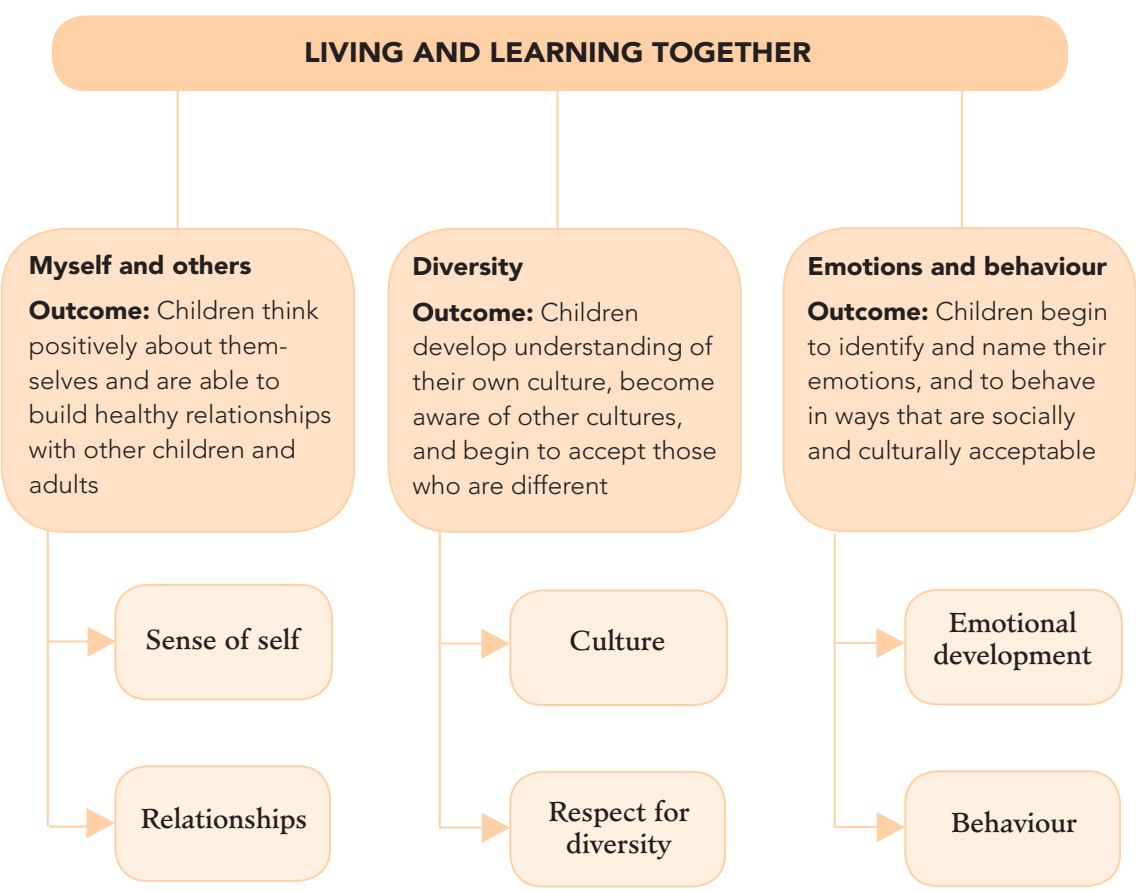
MAIN OUTCOME

Children act in ways that positively contribute to their own and others' social and emotional well-being and learning



STRANDS AND SUB-STRANDS

This Foundation Area of Learning and Development is divided into three strands; each strand has two sub-strands:



Reminder: The following outcomes are guidelines only. Children are all different and develop and learn at their own rate.



Myself and Others

- **Sense of self**
- Relationships



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Separate happily from their families when they go to kindergarten and adjust to small changes in routines and the environment
- Talk positively and confidently about themselves and their abilities; may talk about their feelings, their likes and dislikes
- Accept and persevere with challenges and be prepared to 'have a go'
- Make simple choices and plans, and follow through their decisions with increasing independence

They might then...

- Separate easily from family, but may sometimes cry or be anxious
- Share information about themselves and their families
- Move independently from one activity to another and persevere for longer with tasks and activities

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Settle down when comforted by teachers
- Talk about themselves and their families
- Focus on an activity for a short time, and move to other activities independently or with guidance
- Identify themselves as a boy or girl



Myself and Others

- Sense of self
- **Relationships**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Play cooperatively with other children most of the time
- Be more involved in small and large group activities
- Help other children
- Initiate interactions and participate in conversations with the teacher

They might then...

- Identify one of two friends by name
- Play happily with other children
- Join in group activities for longer periods of time
- Share and take turns when reminded
- Talk to other children and adults



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Play alongside other children
- Respond when spoken to
- Join in group activities for a short time
- Share and take turns when encouraged by the teacher



Diversity

- **Culture**
- Respect for diversity



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Share aspects of their culture with others
- Use some social and cultural practices without being told
- Participate in activities related to their culture and other cultures
- Join in stories and celebrations valued by their culture and other cultures in their community

They might then...

- Use their first language with confidence
- Identify and name members of their immediate family, and their relationship to them
- Follow simple social and cultural practices
- Join in simple rhymes and songs using the other languages of Fiji

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Talk in their first language or dialect
- Join in songs, games and stories related to their culture
- Pretend play using objects from their own culture and that of others



Diversity

- Culture
- **Respect for diversity**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Identify and talk about how people are the same and different and participate in related learning experiences
- Talk about the feelings of others and behaviours that hurt other people
- Remind others of acceptable behaviour towards those who are different
- Interact positively with all children and talk with respect about people who are different from themselves

They might then...

- Talk about similarities and differences between people as they read stories and look at pictures
- Interact and play with children who are different from themselves

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- With support from the teacher, interact and play with children who are different from themselves



Emotions and Behaviour

- **Emotional development**
- Behaviour



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Talk about their feelings and name them such as 'I feel sad'
- Express their emotions and feelings constructively through play, art, movement...
- Laugh and show that they have a sense of humour
- Persevere with age-appropriate tasks such as completing a difficult puzzle
- Talk about the emotions of other people and why they might be feeling this way

They might then...

- Be able to use more words to describe their feelings and emotions
- Use various ways to express their emotions such as painting, drawing, sand and water play
- Recognise the feelings and emotions of other people, such as when looking at pictures identify how the person feels

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Express the basic emotions such as happy, sad, scared, angry
- Use simple words to describe their feelings and emotions
- Show pride in themselves and their accomplishments



Emotions and Behaviour

- Emotional development
- **Behaviour**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Behave in culturally appropriate ways most of the time
- Have a say in making up meaningful rules for the kindergarten
- Take more responsibility for their behaviour towards other people and the environment
- Begin to behave in ways that support learning such as listening attentively for a short time, joining in group talks and working with others
- Play cooperatively with other children, taking turns, negotiating and sharing
- Resolve conflicts without always seeking the teacher's help, such as asking a friend to help

They might then...

- Show respect for others
- Follow meaningful rules
- Care for other people and the environment with support from others
- Join in group activities



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Follow basic rules in the Kindergarten
- Participate in group activities for a short time

AESTHETICS, CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS

OVERVIEW

Aesthetics is about taking notice of and appreciating beautiful things around us. Teachers support children's aesthetic development when they provide learning environments that are clean, tidy and attractive. They also support aesthetic development when they encourage children to look at and enjoy the beauty of things around them, and when they provide children with many creative and sensory experiences. Young children spontaneously create different sounds and music; they stop to admire many interesting things. They dress up in traditional costumes using saris, bangles, beads and sulus. They also recite chants and express their thoughts through painting, drawing and other art materials. In order to nurture and promote this spontaneity in children, and encourage creativity and appreciation, early childhood teachers need to provide appropriate learning experiences and environments that include all the arts. The FALD Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts includes music, movement, dance, drama, art, craft and aesthetics.

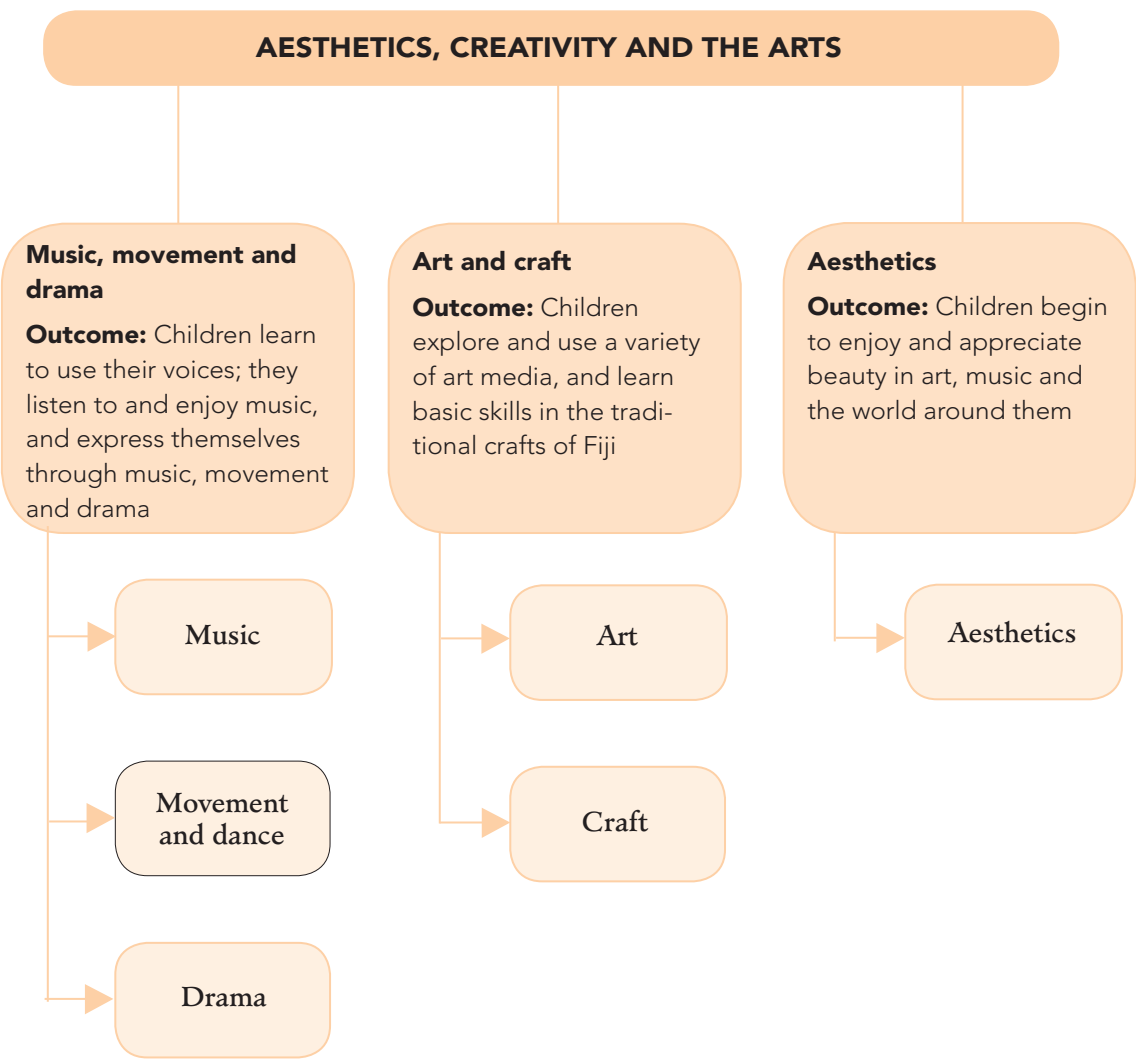
MAIN OUTCOME

Children develop skills in observation and expression, while at the same time growing in ability to describe, interpret, appreciate, enjoy, create and reflect.



STRANDS AND SUB-STRANDS

This Foundation Area of Learning and Development is divided into three strands, with a number of sub-strands:



Reminder: The following outcomes are guidelines only. Children are all different and develop and learn at their own rate.

Music, Movement and Drama

- **Music**
- Movement and dance
- Drama



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Sing with confidence and with a pleasant voice
- Recognise and be able to sing an increasing number of children's songs
- Sing songs in their first language and in the other languages of Fiji
- Create, sing and enjoy chants
- Enjoy listening to a variety of music, including that of other cultures, and have favourite songs and music
- Play percussion instruments, keeping in time
- Understand basic music concepts such as loud/soft, fast/slow, high/low, rhythm, beat

They might then...

- Participate in singing and musical experiences
- Sing and create chants spontaneously while doing other activities
- Move parts of their body in time with music
- Explore and experiment with percussion instruments
- Recognise, name and use some traditional musical instruments such as lali, dholak, coconut clappers, derua

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Enjoy singing, chanting and other musical activities, sometimes joining in, or just observing
- Identify and copy sounds in the environment
- Explore sounds made by everyday items such as pots and pans, as well as basic percussion instruments



Music, Movement and Drama

- Music
- **Movement and dance**
- Drama



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Move rhythmically, with increasing control over their bodies
- Take part eagerly in creative and traditional or cultural dances such as meke, bhangras and garbhas
- Listen, respond and talk about the mood of music such as 'It's fast and makes me feel happy'
- Use music and movement to express ideas and emotions
- Watch and talk about adult dance performances and try to copy the movements

They might then...

- Take part in movement and dance, using more rhythmic and controlled movements
- Take part in creative and traditional or cultural dances, such as meke, bhangras and garbhas
- Begin to use music and movement to express ideas and emotions

By about 3 years of age, children might.....

- Enjoy watching other children and adults moving and dancing, but not necessarily join in
- Move to music but not necessarily to the beat or rhythm, such as moving fast to slow music



Music, Movement and Drama

- Music
- Movement and dance
- **Drama**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Play out more involved story lines, negotiating roles with other children; the play may become more elaborate and continue for a longer time
- Act out familiar rhymes and stories, such as take on roles of story book characters.
- Use less realistic objects as symbols in their play, such as using a stick as a horse
- Make and find props to support their play
- Join play areas to extend their play

They might then...

- Join in play started by other children, or start the play and ask others to join in
- Play out more involved story lines with familiar characters, such as feeding baby doll and taking it shopping
- Pretend with actions, language and objects, including using dress-up clothes

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Play simple roles, imitating familiar characters and routines, such as being the father, pouring tea, mother going shopping
- Use real objects in a pretend way such as using coconut shells or fish tins for pretend cooking



Art and Craft

- **Art**
- Craft



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Manipulate, explore and experiment with art materials, combining materials and using them in different ways
- Move from the scribbling stage to creating drawings, paintings and other objects that are generally recognisable; may make decisions beforehand about what they are going to draw, paint or make
- Describe and talk about their artwork and be interested in sharing it with others

They might then...

- Manipulate, explore and experiment with art materials, sometimes combining materials and using them in different ways
- Gain more control over their scribbling, and name or tell a story about what they have made
- Use art materials to express their ideas and emotions.



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Use scribble patterns as they draw and explore art materials
- Gain increasing control over art materials such as rolling dough and clay, tearing paper, using crayons and paint
- Use their whole bodies and their senses to explore art materials such as in finger painting



Art and Craft

- Art
- **Craft**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Recognise and talk about local crafts, and identify what they are made from; comment on features such as colour, patterns, shapes
- Observe local people producing crafts and be interested in trying these materials and techniques
- Explore and use coconut leaves, shells, seeds and other local materials to make art and craft
- Use the skills of weaving and printing at a level appropriate for their development
- Participate in preparing cultural items for special occasions, such as threading flowers for garlands, making grass skirts

They might then...

- Collect, explore and try to use environmental materials such as making patterns with shells or seeds
- Observe adults preparing materials and making local crafts
- Try to weave with paper strips, voivoi or coconut leaves, with assistance
- Print with vegetable cuts and other objects

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Show interest in local crafts made by their families
- Play with toys and learning materials made from local crafts
- Collect and explore environmental materials



Aesthetics

- **Aesthetics**



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Notice, look for and respond to beautiful and interesting things, such as communicating their observations and feelings through art, music and movement
- Be more responsible for keeping their living and learning environments clean, tidy and attractive
- Display wonder and curiosity about natural and physical phenomena around them, such as light and shadow, shapes in a building
- Begin to use some art terms such as lines, shapes, colour
- Express an opinion about a piece of art, craft or music and give a simple reason for their opinion or choice

They might then...

- Use their senses more keenly to respond to beautiful or interesting things
- Help keep the environment clean, tidy and attractive, and contribute to this by bringing flowers or attractive things to kindergarten
- Begin to use the language of aesthetics in their first language; for example 'beautiful,' 'lovely' and 'pretty'

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Take notice of beautiful things such as touching leaves or shells, looking at the colours of butterflies, imitating bird songs
- Participate in activities that require them to use their senses, such as finger painting, water and sand play
- Help to keep the environment clean, tidy and attractive



SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

This area includes both spiritual and moral development. Spiritual development is an important part of the kindergarten curriculum in Fiji, where children of different cultural and religious backgrounds have opportunities to share their experiences and practices with others. The foundations of spiritual development can be seen in young children's response to the world around them. As they look with wonder at the world, they seek simple answers to their questions about the world around them. Teachers support children's spiritual development by encouraging their connection to the natural environment and by providing simple and honest answers to their questions.

Spiritual development is closely linked to moral development which is about developing a sense of right and wrong. This begins to develop at about two years of age. Moral development depends on children observing good role models from families, caregivers, teachers and other members of the community. Through play and interactions, children develop the ability to share, trust and care. They may also need to be taught explicitly some social rules and acceptable behaviour for use both in Kindergarten and the wider community.

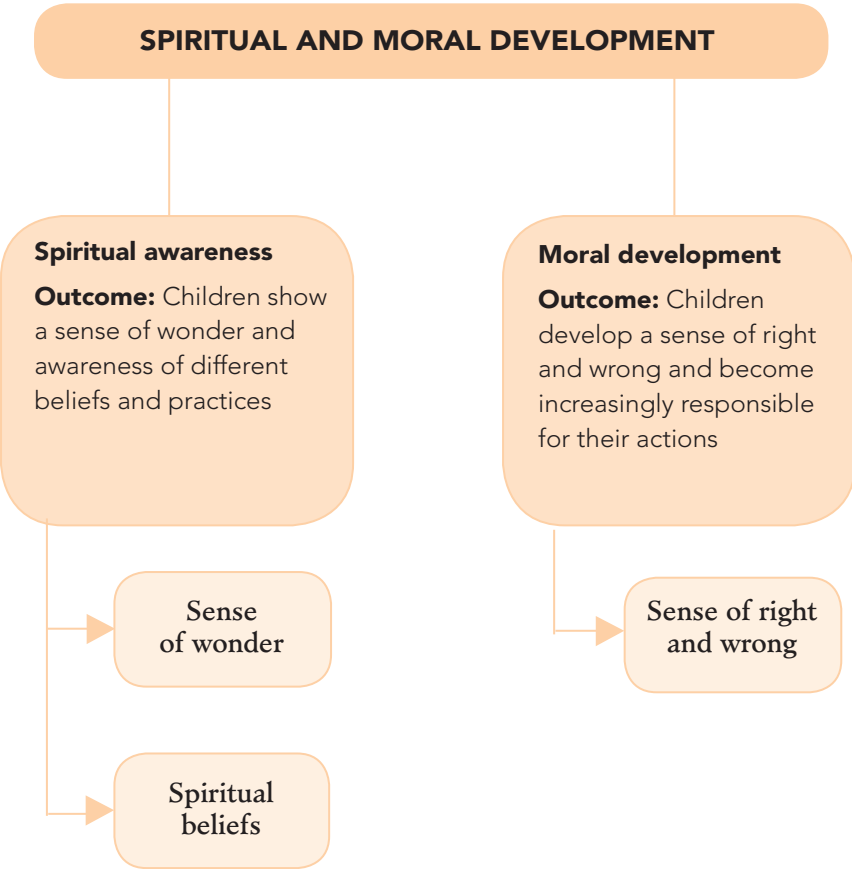
A challenge for those working with young children is to recognise when children know right from wrong and when they can be responsible for their actions. Such knowledge and understanding of children's development affects the way families and teachers handle situations. Children in Fiji come from families of many cultures and religions. It is to be expected that their behaviour will vary according to what is accepted and practiced in their families and communities.

MAIN OUTCOME

Children wonder about the world around them; they become aware of different beliefs and practices, develop a sense of right and wrong and behave responsibly towards other people and the environment.

STRANDS AND SUB-STRANDS

This Foundation Area of Learning and Development is divided into two strands, with several sub-strands:



Reminder: The following outcomes are guidelines only. Children are all different and develop and learn at their own rate.



Spiritual Awareness

- **Sense of wonder**
- Spiritual beliefs



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Explore and appreciate the beauty and diversity of the world around them such as the colours of a rainbow or the wonders of the seashore
- Talk about the cycle of life: birth, growth and death and be able to relate this to themselves, their families and their pets
- Treat both living and non-living things with respect and care

They might then...

- Observe and ask many questions about the world around them
- Begin to treat both living and non-living things with respect and care
- Talk about life and death and ask for simple explanations

By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Use their senses to observe and explore things around them
- Ask 'Why' questions about the world and how things have come to be



Spiritual Awareness

- Sense of wonder
- ***Spiritual beliefs***



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Talk about basic similarities and differences in spiritual practices such as going to a temple, church or mosque
- Talk about some of the customs and celebrations of various religions such as Diwali, Eid, Easter and Christmas
- Participate in retelling and dramatising traditional and religious stories

They might then...

- Share basic information on spiritual practices such as places of worship their families attend
- Take part in kindergarten activities related to celebrations such as Diwali, Eid, Easter and Christmas
- Listen and respond to age-appropriate religious and traditional stories



By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Behave respectfully during common religious practices such as saying grace before meals
- Show interest in activities related to celebrations such as Diwali, Eid, Easter and Christmas
- Listen for a short time to age-appropriate religious and traditional stories



Moral Development

- *Sense of right and wrong*



By the end of Kindergarten you might expect children to...

- Discuss things that are right or wrong
- With prompting, apologise for their wrong doing and try to make amends
- Talk about fair and unfair behaviour and relate this to their lives and to characters in a story
- Show empathy towards other people, with support
- Care for the environment without always being reminded
- Participate in age-appropriate activities that are for the good of the community

They might then...

- Follow reasonable instructions and respond positively to others
- Be kind to other children
- Say what they have done wrong when corrected by an adult
- Talk about right and wrong behaviour in story characters
- Show concern for other children and animals if they are upset or hurt

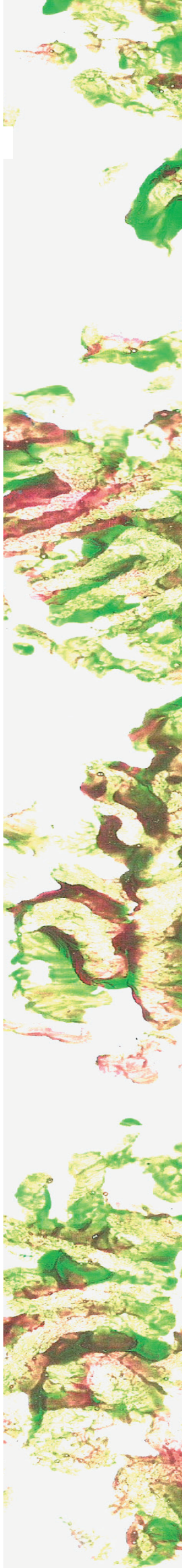
By about 3 years of age, children might...

- Follow rules and social conventions when reminded
- Talk simply about good and bad behaviour when asked



PART C

Applying the curriculum



5

RELATIONSHIPS

Building trust

When children leave the security of their homes and families to attend Kindergarten they face many challenges. Foremost among these is learning to trust the adults in their new environment. Without this trust they will not have the confidence to try new things, make friends, take risks, make choices – all essential foundations for successful learning.

A Kindergarten should be a relaxed, welcoming environment where every child is special, and every family respected. Developing strong relationships with children and families is therefore a priority for Kindergarten teachers. As you think about your daily life with children, consider how your practices, the daily routine, the resources, the room arrangement support relationships between the many people involved in the Kindergarten – between teachers and children, between children, between teachers and families, children and their families.

Overall, there should be a focus on relationships not rules in a Kindergarten. For example, when children start attending the Kindergarten accept that it takes time for some to build trust; support and give them time to settle in. Building relationships with children and families before children start Kindergarten is encouraged. This might be done through open days at the Kindergarten, home visits or weekly play groups held at the Kindergarten and attended by children and a parent or another family member.

Once children begin Kindergarten, there are many ways to help them develop trusting relationships; for example:

- Welcome each child by name as s/he arrives each day
- Make every child feel important and loved – get to know all children
- Use children's first language/dialect, even if it is just a greeting or a few words of welcome written at the entrance
- Let children see you respect their families
- Learn about each child's culture and make the curriculum inclusive of all cultures; e.g. include cooking utensils in the home area, have photos and pictures around the room, include songs and games from the children's cultures

- Put photos of children around the room
- give children a place to put their personal things
- help children make friends
- talk and listen to children
- support children, rather than punish them, when they make mistakes; they are learning how to behave just as they learn concepts and skills in other areas such as Maths or language
- let children feel they own the centre and have some control over what happens there; involve them in making simple rules
- work out a strategy for observing and planning for all children
- involve children and families in portfolio development



Friendships

Within a secure and trusted Kindergarten environment, children gain confidence and develop the many social skills that will enable them to make a successful transition to school. Being able to make friends is foremost among the social skills necessary for happiness and success in school and throughout life. While most Kindergarten children make friends easily, some may need considerable help. Teachers should be on the alert for children who are lonely, or may be excluded by other children because they are different in some way. These children need help. Likewise, the other children must be encouraged to accept and include all children regardless of their differences.

Learning each others' names through songs and games can be a regular activity that helps create a sense of community or togetherness in the Kindergarten. The learning environment too can be a powerful source of incidental learning. It should reflect every child who attends the centre. At times, teachers may need to intervene more explicitly; should they hear or see behaviour that is offensive or discriminatory they must respond – not through punishment but by talking to the offending children or to the whole group, and following up with some learning experiences that help children develop positive attitudes towards each other, and towards differences generally.

Relationships with families

Although a teacher's main task is to work with children, the needs and interests of young children are best met if parents are involved. Teachers who accept this partnership help ensure that the programme addresses the needs of each child, and that learning and development are supported at home. Through partnerships with families, children are likely to develop positive self esteem, pride in their families, have less discipline problems, and become happy and confident learners. Moreover, families that get involved in early childhood programmes are likely to develop positive attitudes towards education and better understanding of the education process. This forges closer links between home, the early childhood centre and the community, and provides pathways for continuity in children's learning and development.

There are many ways that parents, other members of the family, and the community can be involved in early childhood programmes. The onus is on the teacher to build relationships with families and explore ways that each might be able and willing to be involved. For example, parents and other family members might:

- Serve as members of the Management Committee and take active roles in the management of the centre
- Assist with the daily programme by preparing materials, supervising activities, reading or telling stories, myths and legends, teaching songs or playing particular instruments such as the guitar, ukulele, drum, mouth organ, lali or dholak
- Teach traditional dances, songs, and craft to the children
- Collect natural and recyclable materials for use in the programme
- Communicate with other parents that the teacher finds difficult to reach
- Share skills and knowledge with other parents through workshops at the Kindergarten
- Observe children at play and become better informed about how their children are learning and developing; they can then offer appropriate support not only at the centre but also at home
- Attend capacity building workshops such as those on child development, behaviour management, child abuse and neglect, Convention for the Rights of the Child

- Participate in working groups to mend children's library books, repair infrastructure, mend toys and equipment, clean the compound, repair or construct outdoor equipment
- Attend parents' association meetings at the school
- Assist during children's concerts and other performances

There are many levels of involvement. Teachers can encourage parents to be involved at a level that meets their particular needs, availability and capacity. At the same time, the home-Kindergarten relationship must be founded on families' strengths, not their weaknesses. Parents and teachers can draw on each others' strengths and knowledge to provide the best possible programme for the children. Without this partnership, Kindergarten teachers will find it very difficult to achieve their ultimate goals.

Communicating meaningful messages

As early childhood expands in Fiji, clear messages about early childhood care, development and education need to be communicated to families and the wider community. Every Kindergarten teacher has a role to play in this. While some teachers may speak out at open forums and at national events, for the majority of teachers the messages come through their daily communication and practice.

There is also information that teachers may want to give families and the community; e.g. information about play, about early literacy, and indeed about this curriculum and realistic expectations for Kindergarten children's learning and development. This information might be delivered through short and interesting workshops or through posters on a parent noticeboard. The family resource package that is being provided to all kindergartens should help you in conducting workshops.

There are many ways of communicating with families, and these will vary according to the context. What works in an urban Kindergarten may not work in a village situation, and vice versa. Teachers need to be clear about the messages they want to convey, and use strategies appropriate for their situation. They must at all times be respectful of local knowledge and practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. At times they might accommodate the old ways, at other times, they will need to rationalise new ways.



An attractive notice board and a sign-in book welcome families at this Kindergarten in Suva

Kindergarten – school relationships

A new and exciting movement is afoot in Fiji! Kindergarten and Class 1 teachers are starting to work together. Kindergarten and Class 1 teachers are visiting each others' classrooms, talking together and learning from each other. We believe children and teachers will be the beneficiaries of this movement. Kindergarten teachers will be less isolated, Class 1 teachers will become better informed about developmentally-appropriate practice in the early years, and children will experience a smoother transition to school and a richer, more successful school life. We hope you too will reach out and start building these relationships.

Relationships with Management

The roles of Kindergarten Management and Kindergarten teachers should complement each other. While teachers are responsible for all decisions relating to the children's programme, the Management Committee has many duties that influence the quality and effectiveness of the programme. These duties are spelt out in guidelines for Kindergarten Management, and are summarised below:

The management committee will work in partnership with Kindergarten teachers, families and the community in:

- Acquiring the land or property for the centre
- Developing a Constitution for the centre
- Constructing a building[s] if not already in place
- Getting the Kindergarten established and recognised by the Ministry of Education
- Developing employment regulations and contracts for staff
- Developing enrolment policies and procedures for the centre
- Purchasing and maintaining equipment and materials
- Ensuring security of the Kindergarten building and property
- Planning the annual budget
- Organising fundraising, working bees, parent and community meetings
- Drawing up a staff salary structure, and paying the teachers
- Regularly working on maintenance of infrastructure and grounds

Teachers-in-charge are expected to make monthly reports to the Management Committee. In these, teachers have opportunities to share information on their programmes so that Management become better informed about early learning and development, as well as hear about the specific needs of the centre.

6

LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Ni sa bula! Namaste! Welcome!

Walking into an early childhood centre should be an experience of wonder and delight. The environment should be filled with the sounds of young children talking, laughing and learning. Their learning should be reflected everywhere you look – on the walls, hanging from the ceiling, and in many different displays. The diversity of the children and families should also be obvious from the moment you step in the door – if not before. Here you should see the faces of the children in many photographs, and evidence of their various cultural backgrounds.

The organisation of the environment is an important aspect of any early childhood programme and conveys strong messages about the teacher and the programme. A space that is attractive, cheerful, orderly, and filled with interesting objects conveys the message that the teacher values children's learning and knows how to support it. Teachers who are aware of the power of the environment are also able to arrange indoor and outdoor spaces to convey the messages they want children to receive. For example, putting lots of print around the environment conveys important messages to children about reading and writing. This indirect way of teaching is very effective with young children.

Environments for young children need to be flexible and to adapt to children's changing needs, providing new challenges as they grow and develop. In a Kindergarten, children are at varying stages of development, so the environment needs to cater for a wide range of developmental levels including children with special needs. Observations of individual children, and participation in their play and learning, help teachers to evaluate each child's needs, strengths, and interests, and to respond by arranging the environment in ways that meet these demands.

Children need a predictable and familiar environment, as well as a variety of new experiences. Environments for young children should be stable places where there are familiar objects and people, and where at least some things remain constant. This is supported when teachers include familiar objects, languages, songs, stories and foods from children's homes.

Through the environments we provide we demonstrate our beliefs about young children and their learning. If we believe children are competent explorers, imaginative thinkers, creative problem solvers and can see the wonder and beauty within nature and the



environment, then we will give them learning environments that allow them to make decisions, express themselves, make discoveries, pose questions, be curious, and work collaboratively with others.



Health and safety

Having a clean, healthy and safe environment should be a priority for the Kindergarten Management and teacher. Although spills, scrapes, cuts and bruises are part of childhood, parents and guardians should not entrust their child to a setting that does not view the child's well-being as the primary concern.

The Fiji Early Childhood Care, Development and Education (ECCDE) policy sets out health and safety requirements for Kindergartens. These relate to essentials such as space, toilet facilities and access to water. Young children need sufficient space to move around freely and to explore using their whole bodies. They need a variety of spaces in which they can play and learn both alone and together. Small, crowded Kindergarten buildings can impose a lot of stress on both the children and the teacher, and certainly restrict the children's learning.

While the Management and teacher are responsible for children's health and safety, children must also learn health and safety practices. These are identified in the FALD Physical Development, Health and Well-being; for example, children should learn to:

- Use the toilet correctly
- Wash their hands before eating
- Wash their hands after going to the toilet
- Brush their teeth after meals
- Keep their hair clean by washing and brushing it regularly
- Keep their fingernails short
- Use a handkerchief to blow their nose

- Wear clean clothes all the time
- Drink clean water
- Keep their surroundings clean

Children learn health and safety practices largely through observing and copying the adults around them. Teachers must therefore model good practices and share important information on health and safety issues with families so that families too can model good practices.

Kindergartens should have the resources and know-how to offer experiences that challenge and teach children within safe environments. The equipment and materials in a group setting and the type of activities occurring during the course of a day can present risks if planning is not done carefully. Kindergarten teachers should check and reflect continually on the safety of the environment: Is it free of hazards that are likely to cause accidents from falling objects, burns, fires, poisoning, choking, cuts and so on? Does the outdoor equipment have soft material such as sand or bark chips underneath it to lessen the injury if a child falls?

Children are major instruments in their own protection. From birth on, children begin learning how to protect themselves to the limit of their judgment. For example, very young children in a group setting such as day care learn how to avoid some threatening social situations and how to handle new physical challenges. As they grow older, most children acquire a sense of what they can and cannot do, often through trial and error. Fortunately, when children are doing something they know to be risky, they are usually more alert. Some children, of course, have poor judgment or are extremely impulsive or are extreme risk takers. They are usually easily identifiable, and teachers need to observe them carefully.

Children's settings require ordered time and space – space that supports the programme goals and outcomes while offering a safe, healthy, pleasant place in which to live and work for all those who share it. What is needed is a planned environment, rich enough to challenge, but not so complex as to frustrate. The task of a young child is to make the world sensible, to construct or discover the properties, patterns, relationships that exist in the world and figure out where he/she fits in. The early childhood teacher's responsibility is to provide a setting where a group of energetic, individual children go about this task and where all learn to live with the daily challenges.

Storage

How teachers organise and present equipment and resources influence children's learning in many ways. Consider the messages children get if books and puzzles are all thrown in a box, or if posters are torn and dirty or left on the wall all year. Resources currently being used in the programme need to be presented attractively, and those not being used should be stored in a place which is clean and well-organised.

Good storage allows a teacher to:

- Maximize the use of resources. If you cannot find it, you cannot use it. If it is hard to get or is far away, you will not use it very often.
- Accumulate resources. If you cannot store it, you cannot keep it. At the same time, keeping junk that may never be used distracts from useful junk. If it has not been used for a year or two, it probably never will be used. Throw it away!
- Teach children about relations between things. If you cannot organise things in a way that children understand, you cannot expect the children to maintain an order.
- Teach children to take responsibility for putting things away. For example, a well organised block area allows children to put blocks back in the right place.

Children need access to a wide variety of materials, and should be encouraged to choose and put away materials themselves. The materials should be organised and displayed attractively; e.g. baskets and other attractive containers for collage materials. The materials and their organisation can encourage children to think, solve problems, and make decisions.

Some suggestions for organising and presenting materials:

- Locate the materials close to where they will be used. When things are nearby, children make more use of them
- Use containers that hold the contents comfortably and clearly display the contents
- Use containers that are aesthetically pleasing; e.g. baskets, and other containers made from natural materials
- Organise the materials in a way that is clear and understandable to the children
- Ensure all materials are safe and clean
- Label materials with words and symbols so that children can find and return things independently. In this way children will learn to 'read' the symbols, and learn that print has meaning
- Arrange materials on open shelves at child height. Shelves can be made from many local materials.

Arranging space

When thinking about arranging space, it is helpful first of all to identify the kinds of behaviour we want from the children. For example, if we believe that children learn through talking and interacting with other children and adults, then the environment should be set up to encourage interaction. Most teachers want to discourage noisy, disruptive behaviour such as running, jumping and yelling. One way to do this is to break up the learning environment. Various materials can be used for this purpose. A series of low shelves or screens allows adults to have a clear view of the whole room while also dividing the room into various learning spaces. Pot plants (not poisonous) and colourful pieces of fabric are other alternatives for screens. Because they can be moved easily, they also



allow for flexible use of the space. This is important as classroom organisation should be flexible, and the room re-arranged and re-organised every now and then. It needs to respond to the changing interests of the children.

Young children need the time, space and freedom to develop creativity and problem solving skills; this at times may mean that the environment seems chaotic rather than orderly. Kindergartens should be places where children, particularly those under five, can explore, using all their senses and their whole bodies. This means that the environment needs to be rich in sensory experiences, and have a variety of spaces for children to move in and through, places to be together and quiet places to be alone. Special learning areas include those for dramatic play, blocks, painting and other art activities, science, and music. These should be available every day as children build on their skills and their knowledge when they revisit equipment and resources regularly.

As children become familiar with these areas and where the resources are stored, they become independent in managing their learning. They are able to get their own materials and, at pack up time, help return the equipment and resources to their correct place, ready for the next session.

Children of all ages respond well to an environment where the adults have taken the time and the trouble to consider what might interest or motivate them. In a well-organised

environment, children soon learn that everything has its place. Furthermore, children and adults relate to the environment if they are empowered to make choices, move about freely, enjoy and feel a sense of ownership and pride in the organisation and presentation of the resources and equipment.



Learning outdoors

Freedom to explore and discover their capabilities outdoors enables children to solve problems and develop self-awareness and self-confidence. This applies to all areas of learning and development, not just physical development. Fiji abounds in natural materials that can be used to create learning resources and wonderful outdoor learning spaces. These resources are far more culturally appropriate than many of the commercial resources available in the shops or catalogues. Money is better spent on renewable resources such as paints and crayons, and on good quality resources that cannot easily be found locally; for example, books, blocks, picture sets.

Teachers can plan learning experiences outdoors for most areas of learning and development. For example, books, puzzles or blocks can be put on a mat on the verandah or in another shady spot outside, home or other dramatic play areas can be set up outside, as well as many art activities. The teachers below provide some examples:

As children gain control over their movements and balance, they test their skills and strength in a variety of situations. In Kindergartens, safe and challenging outdoor environments are needed to provide for all types of physical development; for example, balancing, throwing and catching, running, swinging. The equipment and materials should be challenging and plentiful enough to offer children of all abilities a choice of activities.

This equipment does not have to be expensive. Even in urban areas, there is huge potential to create exciting natural play spaces. Spaces where children are connected to nature are important for children’s overall learning and development. These offer many more learning opportunities than the metal play equipment found in many playgrounds.

At the same time, fixed equipment such as a climbing frame can be combined effectively with natural materials from the local environment. Natural materials such as logs, rocks, and stones add inexpensive design features to a play area; for example, big rocks and stones for seating, logs and trees for climbing. Home-made toys can also be made from natural or recycled material. For example:

- Wooden boxes and large cardboard cartons can be used for cubbies indoors and outdoors; they are also ideal in sandpits for stoves, refrigerators, table tops etc.



Using natural materials to sort and play outdoors

- Cable reels and reel centres can be covered with cloth for table tops and cubbies; they can be used in conjunction with climbing equipment and can be used with timber planks (e.g. to make bridges).
- Old tyres can be used to hold basins of sand and water; they can be joined in a fixed way to make tunnels or obstacle courses.
- Gardening can be provided as a real-life experience with strong, good quality tools for both children and adults. This can include collecting and using fresh seeds, growing seedlings and bulbs. Gardening can involve composting and making garden beds in the playground. Gardening flows naturally into cooking experiences and related literacy and numeracy learning.



Fixed equipment should be safe, but challenging. It should encourage children to use their bodies and imaginations in many different ways. Wooden equipment is more flexible than metal equipment, and allows for creative additions, such as the rope seen in this picture. This equipment would be safer if it had soft material such as wood chips underneath it.

Creating a playground using local materials and resources can be an exciting way to involve families and the community in the Kindergarten. The enthusiasm of the teacher with support from the Management can make it happen. Children too will enjoy being involved in making decisions about their learning environment, and being involved in real-life experiences such as digging a water way, making a garden, or creating secret childhood places.



Families and the community can be involved in creating outdoor play areas from local materials. This photo shows a sand pit under construction at Lomolomo.

Children make their own sandpit from an upside-down table



Mixing the paint

1



Painting the table (bags of sand in the background have been brought by parents)

2



Playing in the sand

3



7

MANAGING LEARNING

Good learning occurs in environments that are child-friendly, well-planned and well-organised, and where there are simple rules in place that everyone understands and follows. These are pre-requisites for implementing an activity or play-based curriculum with young children. Without these, children will not get full benefit from the programme; many are likely to wander from place to place, be boisterous, bored and misbehaved.

Managing behaviour

Children are not born knowing how to behave. At the same time, most young children want to please the adults who care for them. The message is very simple: adults must teach social behaviour just as they teach concepts and skills in Maths, health and so on. For this reason, the FALD Living and Learning Together and Spiritual and Moral Development are seen as important as the other areas of learning and development. Teachers are encouraged to integrate outcomes from these FALD into all their planning and teaching. For example, develop simple rules with the children early in the year and remind children of these every day as they move from the whole group to Activity time; 'catch' children being kind or sharing and comment on it; use times of conflict as teaching times. Remember, young children are still learning; teaching them rather than punishing them will be more effective.

Having a sound understanding of child development is important for guiding children's social development and behaviour. With this understanding, teachers will have realistic expectations for children's behaviour and can respond appropriately. They can also avoid situations that are likely to cause problems. For example, they know that young children learn best in small groups and cannot sit still for very long, so they keep whole groups short and active.

It is important that early childhood teachers pass this information onto families. Through short workshops and meetings, teachers can help parents and other adults understand young children's development and help them understand the important role they play as models for children's behaviour and teachers of social behaviour.

The daily routine

A daily routine is essential. This gives children the security of knowing what comes next, while also giving the teacher a framework for organising the daily programme. At the same time it should be flexible, allowing for the spontaneous events that occur during the day. The daily routine should indicate the different ways in which learning experiences are offered during the session. For example, a whole group at the beginning of the session; Activity or Work time, when children have about an hour to engage with materials and activities of their choice in various learning centres; other small and large group times; transitions and routines.

We realise that kindergarten sessions begin and end at different times and respond to different circumstances. Nevertheless, the daily routine should reflect the same balance of learning experiences that are shown in the example below.



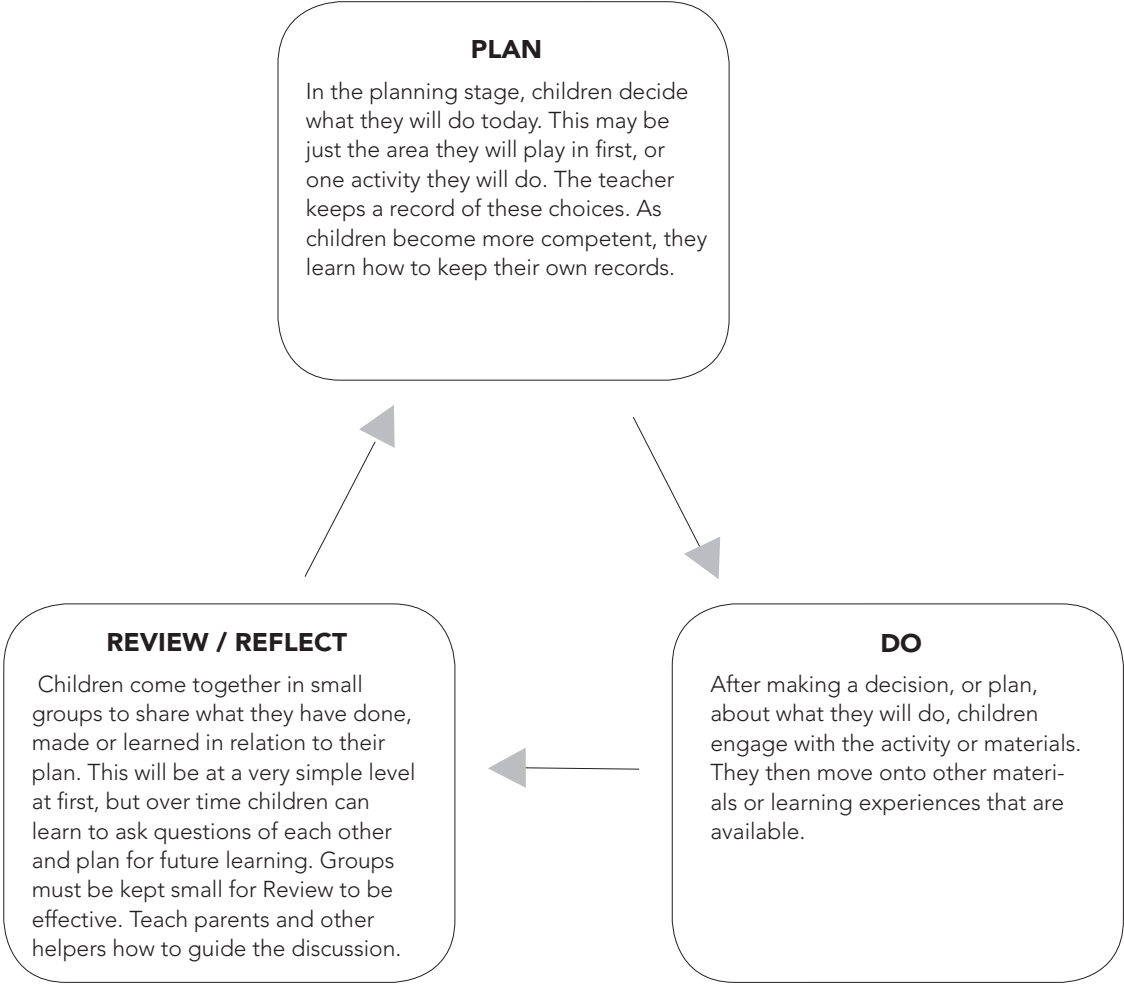
As these children arrive at kindergarten they take a library book and read quietly to themselves



| | | |
|-------------|------------------------|--|
| 8.15–8.30 | Arrival | As they arrive children put away their bags and other things. They might pin or hang their name card in a special place. Then they go to activities such as play dough, blocks, library, puzzles. The teacher may confine this to one or a few activities; e.g. children have to go to the library or to a table with writing/drawing materials. |
| 8.30–8.45 | Whole group | Time for some action and games, devotion, counting who is her today, talking together, perhaps a story. Then planning for the day: the teacher tells the children about any special experiences or activities that have been organised for the day, and asks them to think about what they will do today. They might talk about this together or with their friends. This is a good time to remind children about simple rules for behaviour; doing this regularly will help prevent behaviour problems. |
| 8.45–10.00 | Activity time | Children choose from a range of activities available and move freely from one activity to another. During this time the teacher may call aside one or a few children for individual or small group work. Ideally children will have access to learning areas set up both indoors and outdoors (at least on the verandah) |
| 10.00–10.10 | Pack away | Everyone is involved! Usually finishes with children coming together on the mat and then a transition activity to wash hands for morning tea. |
| 10.10–10.30 | Morning Tea | |
| 10.30–11.00 | Small group activities | Stories, language, music, movement or other activities ideally with no more than 10 children in a group |
| 11.00–11.40 | Outdoors | Large muscle activities and movement. If children have had access to the outdoors during Activity time, this time might also be used for Movement and Music. It can even be an extension of the earlier Activity period. |
| 11.40–12.00 | Whole group | Sharing what we did today and planning for tomorrow. May be better done in small groups if numbers are large. |
| 12.00 | Home time | |

Helping children become independent learners: Plan-Do-Review

One way to offer a flexible programme, while still putting some structure into the day, is to use a learning cycle approach. This can be used with the whole group, or with individual children who are ready to work this way. This approach is also referred to as Plan – Do – Review. It may be used in a very basic way at first, but if used consistently, it will help children to take some responsibility for their learning and to reflect on it. It is a very empowering and proven curriculum model that has been used effectively in early childhood programmes around the world.



Group times

Throughout the kindergarten day there should be opportunities for children to come together in both small groups and large groups (the whole group). Each type of group serves a different purpose. Nevertheless, all group activities should be active and play-based; they should be short (maximum 20 minutes), and they should be responsive to children's developmental needs and interests.

Small group times

Small group time is when children come together in groups of no more than 10 children for a focussed activity that has been planned by the teacher. This poses challenges for teachers in Fiji who sometimes have large groups of children. However, teaching assistants and parent helpers can be involved. The teacher needs to plan the small group activities as part of his/her weekly plan and take time to explain the activities to the assistant/helpers. S/he also needs to organise the resources for the small group activities and ensure that there are enough resources for all children in the group to be involved.

The focus of small group activities might be any outcome in any of the FALD. The teacher who understands her children, their interests and needs should have no trouble organising small group times. The resource book that accompanies these curriculum guidelines has numerous ideas for learning experiences.

Large group times

Young children learn best through individual interaction or in small groups. Whole group times, where there may be 30 or more children, are not good for focussed teaching. However, they are important for other reasons. These are times for

- Sharing and getting to know each other
- Having fun together
- Developing a sense of community

They are also times when the teacher can raise issues and give out messages to all the children.

With many children in a group, large group times are best kept to about 10 minutes, or else interspersed with action songs and games that allow children to move. Even if children are quiet in longer group times, the chances are they are not listening; others of course begin misbehaving.



Reading stories is best done in a small group so that all children can see the pictures clearly.

Transitions and routines

A day in any early childhood programme is marked by many transitions and routines. These provide numerous opportunities for both planned learning experiences and incidental learning. The resource book that accompanies the curriculum guidelines offers many suggestions for supporting both transitions and routines.

Transitions

Transitions are those times when children experience a change – usually a change from one place to another or from one activity to another. Settling into kindergarten is the most difficult transition for many children, and some children take a long time before this transition from home to kindergarten becomes a joyful and happy experience. Teachers and families can work together to ease a child's anxiety. The skilful teacher will also use various strategies to help the child settle into the kindergarten environment.

Other transitions occur frequently through the day; for example, from whole group to activity time, packing away at the end of activity time, going outside and so on. Teachers will manage the group better and enhance children's learning if they plan interesting activities and strategies to use during these transitions.

Routines

Routines are the everyday practices such as washing hands, going to the toilet, eating lunch, packing away and so on. These provide many opportunities for incidental learning and spontaneous teaching. For example, a photo of hand washing if placed above the wash basin will remind children of what to do; during morning tea the teacher has opportunities to comment on healthy and unhealthy food, and to remind children to drink plenty of water.



Toothbrushing should be a daily routine in every kindergarten

8

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

Assessing young children

From the moment they enter the world, if not before, babies are measured and tested. We want to know how heavy they are, how long etcetera. Likewise, as they get older we want to know how they are learning and developing. Teachers need this information so they can plan programmes that support each child's learning and development. Early childhood teachers also need it so that they can identify children who are not developing 'normally', and can seek help or early intervention.

Strategies and tools used to assess children in the preschool years are different from those used with older children. Formal assessment such as testing is rarely appropriate, although it may be used by psychologists and other professionals if there is concern about a child's development. Again, the assessment is used to identify the child's special needs and to intervene in ways that support future learning and development.

In the Kindergarten, and throughout the early childhood years, assessment is best done through informal approaches such as observing, recording and otherwise documenting what children do. Observing children in their daily activities and play can inform teachers about all areas of learning and development. There are many strategies for observing children, including anecdotal notes, running records, time samples, learning stories and checklists. Some strategies provide more information than others; some are more time consuming than others. It is important to choose a strategy that suits the purpose and to observe across all areas of learning and development.

Other informal approaches suitable for use with young children include:

- Conversations and interviews - talking with children and parents, sometimes on specific topics
- Oral questions - talking to children during their daily activities; this may include questions to assess their understanding of particular concepts
- Work samples - samples of drawings, paintings, sculptures, writing, diagrams of block building etc
- Photographs - good photos can provide a lot of information on children's behaviour and learning

- Performance tasks - the teacher can set up tasks or games; these should be meaningful and require active interaction with concrete materials. They should be organised as part of the daily activities and not in a test situation. The teacher observes as children perform the tasks. An example might be an obstacle course that allows the teacher to observe many gross motor skills.

Recording the information

Not everything a teacher observes can be recorded. The key is to observe in a focused way and record examples that provide useful information or evidence of learning and development. The many outcomes in the FALD should help teachers observe in a focused way.

Some basic information should be noted on all observations and other assessment items:

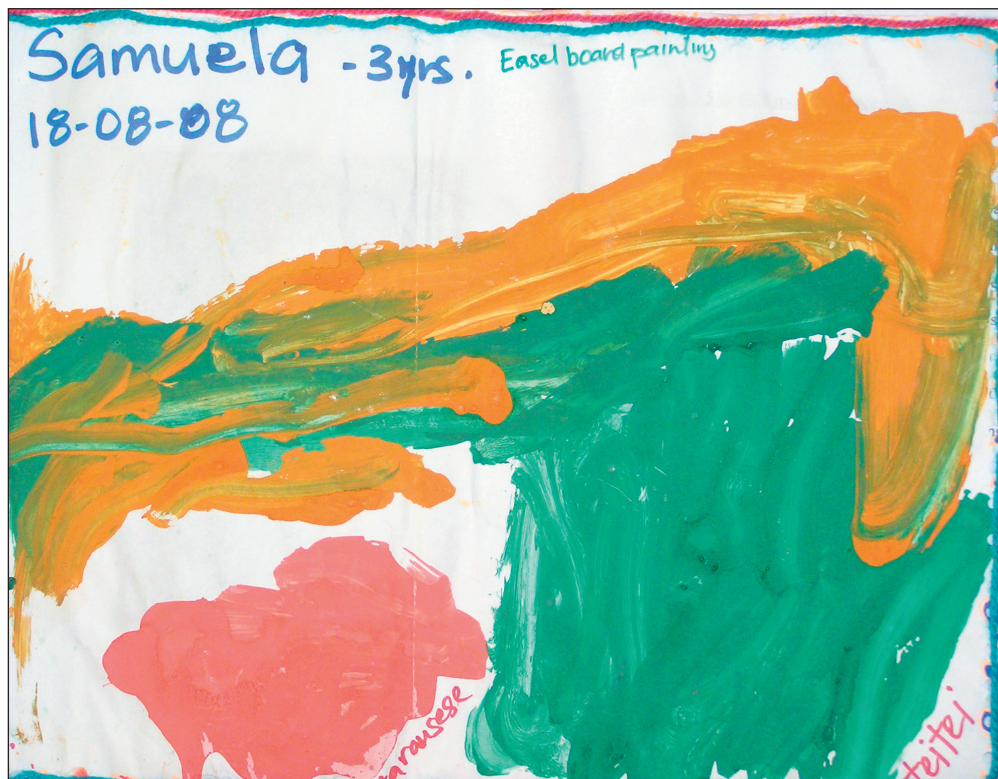
- The date and time the data was collected
- Child's first name (for privacy reasons, avoid using the full name)
- Age of the child in years and months
- Other children and adults involved
- The place where the observation occurred

Suggestions

- Work out a system for taking observations; for example, you might have 5 focus children each week, paying particular attention that week to gathering observations on them. Use a rotational system so that you observe everyone over a period of time
- Record in such a way that you do not have to rewrite the observations
- Involve other staff in taking observations and discuss the observations with them
- Write the observation when it is happening or as soon after as possible
- Write only what you see and hear (be objective)
- Include the children's words
- Interpret all observations, and other assessment items, making links to FALD
- Reflect on the information, and use it for future planning
- Store the observations in children's individual portfolios

Confidentiality

Files on children are private and confidential. They should be kept in a safe place in the Kindergarten. Access to this information should be given only to family members and school administrators. While all staff should be involved in gathering observations, only the teacher in charge of the Kindergarten should discuss the child with the family.



Reflection

Samuela stood quietly near to the easel board, watching his friends. When I was mixing the paints, he came and sat down beside me. Quietly he said, 'teacher, I want.' 'Can you mix?' I asked him and gave one colour paint and a brush to mix. He held the paint container with his left hand and used pincer grasp to hold the brush to mix the paint. He loved using the green as shown on his painting as he used a lot of green colour. When I asked him 'Do you like painting,' he responded with his eyebrows. I pointed to the red colour and asked him, 'what is this?' Rosi, another child, replied, 'taurasege'. And for the green colour, he said 'teitei'. He wanted to do more painting but there were other children who were still to paint so I told him that 'after they all finish then you can paint.' He agreed and went to play with the blocks. Samuela's painting is at a symbolic state.

This is an example of how a teacher can use a painting (or other samples of work) to assess young children. This teacher's observation of Samuela, and her comments, provide a lot of information about his learning and development. The painting and notes should both go in the child's portfolio.

Using the information

The purpose of assessment is to plan interactions and experiences that will support and extend each child’s learning and development. Observing or gathering the data is only the first step in the process. All records (observations, samples of work etc) must then be analysed for meaning. Teachers using *Na Noda Mataniciva* are encouraged to analyse the data using the 6 Foundation Areas of Learning and Development. An example is given below. This information should then be used for planning learning experiences for that particular child or group of children.

Sample anecdotal observation showing links to FALD

Child’s name: Pauliasi
Other children involved: Litia
Date: 31/07/09
Setting: Inside the Kindergarten

| Observations | Analysis | Links to FALD |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Several of the children were each given a coconut shell and asked to rub it on a rough surface to make the edges smooth. Pauliasi came over and asked for one too and went off by himself and started rubbing the coconut shell.</p> <p>Pauliasi is a playful boy who hardly concentrates for long, but today he did the craft work for a long time. Litia was moving around and didn’t make any effort to try, but at the end she asked Pauliasi if she could do the scraping. At first he didn’t let her, but, with words of encouragement, he agreed to give her a turn.</p> | P is able to approach the teacher | Living and Learning Together |
| | P asks politely for what he wants using his dialect | Language, Literacy & Communication |
| | He is developing fine motor skills | Physical Development, Health and Well-being |
| | P shows he can concentrate on tasks that are meaningful and enjoyable to him | Learning to Know |
| | He is learning the skills of a traditional craft | Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts |
| | P shows that, with support, he can share | Living and Learning Together |

Reflection and follow-up

I was surprised at Pauliasi’s concentration. This shows me that he can concentrate for a long time if he’s interested. I must provide more activities that interest him, and probably more craft work. Most of the children enjoyed the activity and are learning basic skills in a local craft. I will leave some coconut shells on a table so that children can repeat this activity in their own time if they want to.

Overview of the observation-planning cycle

The overall process of assessing and planning for children’s learning and development involves a number of continuous steps:

1. **Observing/gathering data.** Teachers use the strategies mentioned above to gather information on a child
2. **Analysing observations, using the 6 FALD.** Teachers analyse or interpret the observation looking for what it tells them about the child’s learning and development. This step is shown on the previous page.
3. **Planning, using the FALD and outcomes.** Teachers use the information from Step 2 to plan meaningful learning experiences for children. They link these experiences to FALD outcomes.
4. **Implementing the plan.** Teachers implement the experiences they have planned
5. **Reflecting.** They reflect on how the child/children responded and on what learning took place.
6. **Gathering further observations.** They continue to observe the child – and the cycle continues.

The observation-planning cycle



Portfolios

A portfolio is an effective way of putting together a continuous story of children’s learning and development over time. As such it is a very effective assessment tool, a place to collect information on a child – observations, samples of work, and other assessment items. At the beginning of the year the teacher will need to organise a folder, scrap book or other type of storage place for each child. Information and items are added to this throughout the year. Teachers need to be selective in deciding what should go in the portfolio. Selected items should tell of significant changes in a child’s development and learning, and be items of particular interest. Information from families can be included. In addition, children can be encouraged to participate by selecting pieces of work they would like included in their portfolios. In this way, families and children become involved in the assessment process, and the portfolio becomes a source of reflection from which can emerge further learning.

Sharing children’s learning

Portfolios allow teachers to share children’s learning with families, other teachers and stakeholders. They provide evidence to support a teacher’s verbal or written comments about each child.

Summarising the information in a portfolio adds value to it. This allows the teacher, parents and school administrators to see quickly the strengths, interests and needs of the child. The summary (or report) will need to be updated at regular intervals through the year – at least midway through the year and at the end of the year. A copy can be given to



parents at these times. For example, if there are parent-teacher interviews, the teacher can talk to the parents using the summary, and show them evidence from the portfolio to support his/her comments. At the end of the year, a copy of the final summary/report should be given to the Class 1 teacher. The portfolio is best given to the parents as a record of their child’s learning journey in Kindergarten.

Summaries or reports can be written in a narrative style or can be in the form of checklists or rating scales. The use of letter grades is not recommended.

Three examples, using the FALD framework, appear below. Teachers can modify these to suit their situations, the ages of the children, and the families who will be reading the reports.

Sample 1: Kindergarten Learning and Development Record

FOCUS FOR THE FUTURE

| | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Physical development, health & well-being | Family information | Learning to know |
| Language, literacy & communication | CHILD'S NAME Age: Date: | Aesthetics, creativity and the arts |
| Living and learning together | Strengths & interests | Spiritual & moral development |

Sample 2: Kindergarten Learning and Development Record

| | | |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Child's Name | | Age in years & months: |
| Date: | | |
| Background information | | |
| | STRENGTHS & ACHIEVEMENTS | FUTURE ACTION |
| PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | | |
| Physical Growth and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Body movement & coordination• Using small muscles to control & use tools such as crayons, brushes & scissors• Body awareness | | |
| Healthy Living <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Looking after personal needs; e.g. toileting, eating, washing hands, brushing teeth• Following health & safety rules and practices | | |
| LEARNING TO KNOW | | |
| Inquiry and Investigation <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is curious, and takes an interest in what is happening around him/her• Asks questions• Early understanding of the environment & science concepts | | |
| Representing and Symbolic Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using objects in symbolic way during pretend play• Using symbols in play; e.g. numbers, letters, signs• Represents thinking in many different ways | | |
| Early Mathematics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of number• Measurement & other Mathematical concepts• Beginning to use the language of Mathematics | | |
| LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION | | |
| Listening and Communicating <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listening skills• Responding appropriately to non-verbal and verbal communication | | |
| Reading and Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding that print conveys meaning• Awareness of letters & sounds• Interest in writing | | |

| | STRENGTHS & ACHIEVEMENTS | FUTURE ACTION |
|--|--------------------------|---------------|
| LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER | | |
| Myself and Others <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confidence & self concept• Adjustment to new situations & challenges• Friendships with other children• Interactions with teacher | | |
| Diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding of own culture• Awareness of other cultures• Attitudes to those who are different | | |
| Emotions and Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expressing & controlling emotions• Behaviour | | |
| AESTHETICS, CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS | | |
| Music, Movement and Drama <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Singing voice• Enjoying music• Expressing self through music, movement and dance | | |
| Art and Craft <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoying & using a variety of art media• Interest in learning basic skills in the traditional crafts of Fiji | | |
| Aesthetics <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enjoying & noticing beautiful things• Helping keep the environment clean, organised & attractive | | |
| SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT | | |
| Spiritual Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of wonder• Becoming aware of different beliefs and practices Moral Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a sense of right and wrong• Becoming increasingly responsible for his/her actions | | |

NOTE: Teachers using this form should write brief comments in each box. They should date each comment.



Sample 3: Kindergarten Learning and Development Record

| Child's Name | | Age in years & months: | |
|--|-----------|------------------------|-----------|
| Date: | | | |
| Background Information | | | |
| OUTCOMES | BEGINNING | DEVELOPING | COMPETENT |
| The child: | | | |
| PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | | | |
| Physical Growth and Development Participates enthusiastically in physical activities; demonstrates strength, control, balance, coordination and body awareness | | | |
| Healthy Living Shows independence in carrying out personal routines and is beginning to use practices that keep him/her healthy and safe | | | |
| LEARNING TO KNOW | | | |
| Inquiry and Investigation Observes, explores and investigates the environment and shows an increasing understanding of it | | | |
| Representing and Symbolic Thinking Is beginning to use symbols and to represent his/her thinking in many different ways | | | |
| Early Mathematics Is becoming aware of Mathematical concepts and is beginning to use the language of Mathematics | | | |
| LANGUAGE, LITERACY AND COMMUNICATION | | | |
| Listening and Communicating Listens, understands and responds to non-verbal and verbal communication | | | |
| Reading and Writing Recognises that print conveys meaning, and begins to use writing materials with purpose | | | |

| OUTCOMES | BEGINNING | DEVELOPING | COMPETENT |
|--|-----------|------------|-----------|
| LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER | | | |
| Myself and Others Thinks positively about him/herself and is able to build healthy relationships with other children and adults | | | |
| Diversity Is developing understanding of his/her own culture, becoming aware of other cultures, and beginning to accept those who are different | | | |
| Emotions and Behaviour Is beginning to identify and name his/her emotions, and to behave in ways that are socially and culturally acceptable | | | |
| AESTHETICS, CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS | | | |
| Music, Movement and Drama Is learning to use his/her voice; listens to and enjoys music, and expresses him/herself through music, movement and drama | | | |
| Art and Craft Explores and uses a variety of art media, and is learning basic skills in the traditional crafts of Fiji | | | |
| Aesthetics Enjoys and appreciates beauty in art, music and the world around him/her | | | |
| SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT | | | |
| Spiritual Awareness Shows a sense of wonder and awareness of different beliefs and practices | | | |
| Moral Development Is developing a sense of right and wrong and becoming increasingly responsible for his/her actions | | | |

NOTE: When completing this form teachers should write a date in the appropriate box. For the child to be considered ‘Competent’ the teacher must have observed the behaviour on several occasions. The evidence will be in the teacher’s observations and other assessment items in the portfolio.

9

PLANNING AND REFLECTION

Learning in Kindergarten

Some of the most exciting learning in a Kindergarten comes from spontaneous incidents that attract the children's attention – the hairy caterpillar crawling up a tree, a broken water pipe, or something that happened on the way to Kindergarten. These events are rich learning opportunities if the teacher can capture the moment and extend it. There is no intention to replace these wonderful teachable moments with a fixed curriculum. While planning in Kindergarten is very important, the curriculum should be flexible and teachers always ready to follow children's interests.

Na Noda Mataniciva does not prescribe what to teach. It is best to think of it as a map to guide teachers in planning and making decisions about children's learning and development. Many Kindergarten teachers are already doing what is suggested in the curriculum guidelines. They are observing children and planning with children's needs and interests in mind. They are modeling good practices and interacting regularly and positively with families.

Na Noda Mataniciva offers a framework within which teachers can plan programmes for the children in their care. Through the outcomes, it identifies appropriate content for a Kindergarten programme – i.e. the knowledge, skills and attitudes that should be addressed in Kindergarten. This content is not just about academic learning. It includes all areas of learning and development – physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language, creative and spiritual. The guidelines also address other factors that need to be considered when planning an early childhood curriculum. As mentioned in Part A, there are 5 components of an effective Kindergarten curriculum, and all should be taken into consideration when planning:

- Learning environments
- Relationships
- The 6 Foundation Areas of Learning and Development
- Teaching and caring strategies
- Assessment and record keeping

Teachers will decide how to deliver the content to their children; i.e. the learning experiences and teaching strategies they will use, and the ways they will monitor children's learning and development. No two programmes will be exactly alike as each programme should match the needs of the children and the context within which the programme operates. Furthermore, within any Kindergarten programme there is likely to be wide variation in the ages, backgrounds and needs of the children. Teachers require a repertoire of strategies if they are to support the learning and development of each child. Nevertheless, the approaches and strategies used should be active and play-based and involve children interacting with concrete materials and people, and having real experiences. They should be underpinned by the 5 guiding principles outlined in this document - Relationships, Culture and Spiritual Awareness, Caring and Respect, Inclusiveness, and Child-Centred Learning.



The story behind the picture!

Fineisi's friend, M, got very sick and was taken to hospital. The children at her kindergarten were told that she got sick because she played in dirty water. Fineisi became very interested in all of this and declared that she was going to be a doctor. The teacher responded to this interest by organising many learning experiences. One of the experiences was to set up a light box with an X-ray. In the photo, Fineisi is using the X-ray to tell a story about her friend, M.

Planning for learning

Different levels of planning

It is helpful to think of planning as occurring at three different levels: long-term, mid-term and short-term:

Long-term planning

Long-term planning is something that generally occurs at the beginning of the year. It has little to do with individual children, and more to do with the teacher setting broad goals for what s/he hopes to achieve through the year. For example, at this time the teacher might plan how to involve families more effectively, or reflect on how to plan better for individual children, or how to improve the outdoor learning environment. Many Head Teachers also have expectations at this stage for teachers' annual plans. At this time of the year, when Kindergarten teachers do not know their children, they should be wary of providing details of the children's programme beyond very general goals. Long term planning should include strategies for achieving the goals identified. For example, if a goal is to provide better for outdoor play, then the teacher needs to identify the strategies or steps s/he will take to achieve this goal.

Mid-term planning

Mid-term planning is what teachers do when they plan topics or projects. Although these topics or projects will integrate all FALD, there may be a particular focus on one or more FALD or on a particular component of the curriculum (e.g. the outdoor environment). Many teachers decide on these topics at the beginning of the term. While this may be necessary for gathering resources, topics should remain flexible to allow input from children and responses to their emerging interests (see later in this section for more information on topics).

Short-term planning

In Kindergarten, this is usually the weekly planning, but should include daily reflection and changes to the weekly plan (e.g. the teacher noticed some children 'digging for treasure' today, so she decides to hide some 'treasure' in the sand pit tomorrow). Short-term planning is very focused on responding to individual children, as well as to the emerging needs and interests of the group. The daily reflections guide planning for the following week.

If a topic is being explored, the teacher integrates learning experiences related to the topic into the weekly and daily plans. Not everything that happens through the week or day can be linked to the topic. Regular learning centres such as water, blocks and library should always be available but may or may not be part of the topic. There may also be weeks when there is no topic, just a range of interesting and challenging learning experiences and resources. Likewise, there may be weeks when there is more than one topic.

Using outcomes

Think of learning as a journey. Outcomes are the destinations, and the learning experiences that you provide are the various pathways and means by which children reach those destinations. There can be many different pathways to the same destination. When you embark on a journey, obviously you need to know your destination. Likewise, teachers need to know the destinations for children’s learning and development. These destinations, or outcomes, are identified in the 6 FALD. Teachers need to become familiar with these and when planning their programmes, select outcomes that match their children’s learning and developmental needs.

Unpacking outcomes

Teachers must understand an outcome before they can plan learning experiences related to it. The term ‘unpacking’ is often used for this process. Unpacking an outcome means pulling it apart so that you understand what it is that children need to know and be able to do to achieve the outcome. This helps teachers to be more focused and to plan and sequence learning experiences that help children achieve the outcome. Each FALD sub-strand in *Na Noda Mataniciva* has three levels of outcomes to cater for children across the broad age range of 3 to 6 years. These are outlined in the three different columns. Teachers can use outcomes from any of the three columns, whichever is more appropriate for the developmental levels of their children. However, most teachers of 4 to 5 year olds are likely to use the outcomes in the 3rd column for most of their children as these identify what we hope children will achieve by the end of kindergarten. Teachers would use the other two columns for very young children or for those children needing additional support.

Following is a process for unpacking outcomes:

Step 1: Identify the sub-strand that matches the needs and interests of the children (your ongoing assessment and record keeping of the children should guide you in this)

- Find the appropriate FALD
- Select a strand from that FALD
- Select a sub-strand

Example

| | |
|------------|-------------------------------------|
| FALD | Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts |
| Strand | Art and Craft |
| Sub-strand | Art |

Step 2: Identify an outcome from the sub-strand

- Read the outcomes for the selected sub-strand
- Select the outcome that relates to the concepts, skills or attitudes on which you want to focus

Example

| | |
|------------|--|
| FALD | Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts |
| Strand | Art and Craft |
| Sub-strand | Art |
| Outcome | Describe and talk about their artwork, and be interested in sharing it with others |

Step 3: Unpack the outcome

- Underline all the verbs and other key words in the outcome

Example

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| FALD | Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts |
| Strand | Art and Craft |
| Sub-strand | Art |
| Outcome | <u>Describe</u> and <u>talk about</u> their <u>artwork</u> , and be <u>interested</u> in <u>sharing</u> it with <u>others</u> |
| Verbs used in the outcome | describe, talk about, sharing |
| Other key words | artwork, interested, others |

Step 4: Identify what the child might be able to do if they have achieved this outcome

- Look at all the verbs and key words and identify what you might expect to see a child do (This is evidence you might try to capture in an observation and put in a child’s portfolio)

Example

| | |
|---|---|
| FALD | Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts |
| Strand | Art and Craft |
| Sub-strand | Art |
| Outcome | <u>Describe</u> and <u>talk about</u> their <u>artwork</u> , and be <u>interested</u> in <u>sharing</u> it with <u>others</u> |
| Verbs used in the Outcome | describe, talk about, sharing |
| Other key words | artwork, interested, others |
| What you might expect to see a child do | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to the teacher and other children about their drawings, painting etc• Use words that describe their drawings, paintings etc |

Step 5: Think of learning experiences

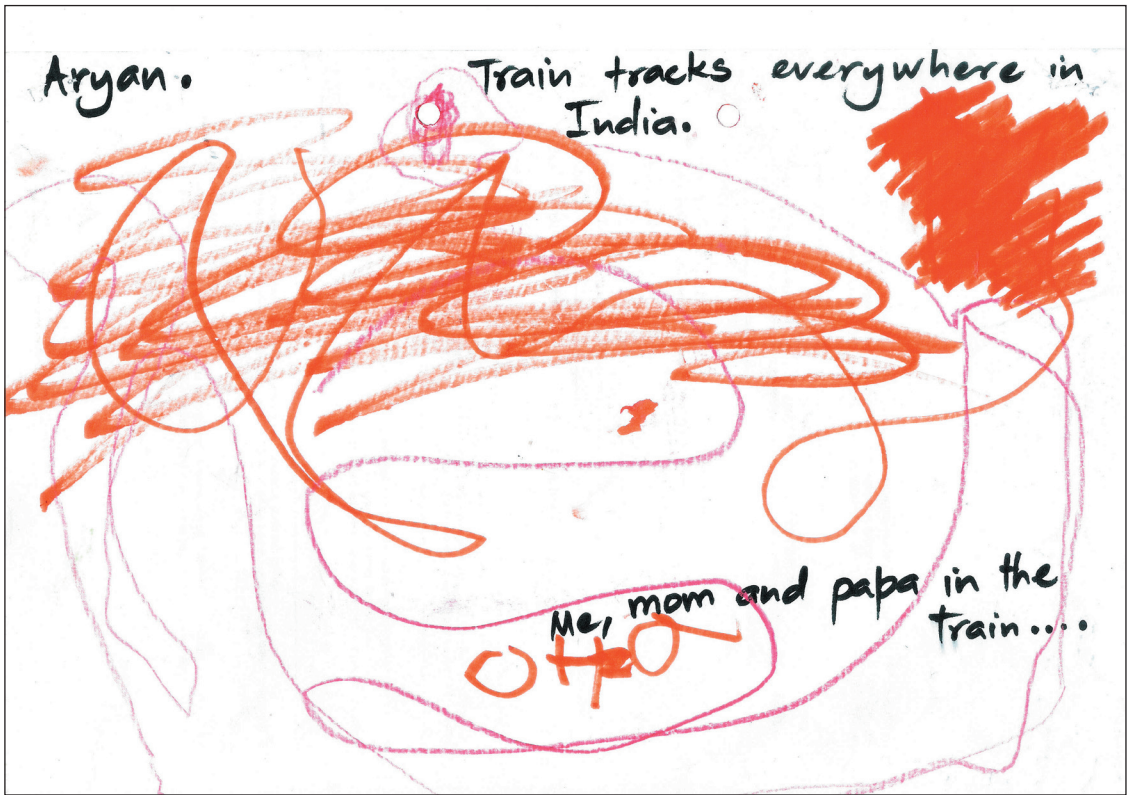
- Think of learning experiences that will help children achieve the outcome
- Sequence the learning experiences, from easy to more challenging

Example

| | |
|---|---|
| FALD | Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts |
| Strand | Art and Craft |
| Sub-strand | Art |
| Outcome | <u>Describe</u> and <u>talk about</u> their <u>artwork</u> , and be <u>interested</u> in <u>sharing</u> it with <u>others</u> |
| Verbs used in the outcome | describe, talk about, sharing |
| Other key words | artwork, interested, others |
| What you might expect to see a child do | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk to the teacher and other children about their drawings, painting etc• Use words that describe their drawings, paintings etc |
| Learning experiences | <p>NOTE: These are examples only. The learning experiences will vary according to your children and the context of the Kindergarten (e.g. whether you are in an urban area, or on an island or in an interior village). Try to sequence the learning experiences from simple to more challenging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily painting, drawing & other art activities• Meaningful talk to children about their art whenever the opportunity arises• Use children’s art to extend colour concepts and words, and other art vocabulary such as ‘light’, ‘dark’, ‘lines’• Share artwork in group time• Use adult and child art for talks – e.g. paintings, drawings, weaving, prints• Plan an art exhibition and invite everyone! |

Putting outcomes in the weekly plan

Teachers use various ways of writing up their weekly plans. Whatever format they use they must identify outcomes for groups of children and individual or focus children before completing the plan. **This is a priority. The curriculum will not be effective if teachers do not do this.** They must also show on their plan how they will provide for individual, small group and large group activities through learning centres and group activities, both indoors and outdoors. The planning format or framework below allows teachers to include all this important information. A full-size copy is included in the Appendix. Although teachers would complete only one plan a week, they would make changes and additions each day based on reflections at the end of the day. Teachers are encouraged to take this framework and adapt it to suit their own contexts and resources. Teachers wanting to use another planning framework, in particular a school programme book, will need to reflect on how to adapt these formats to suit the new curriculum.



This drawing and the accompanying story tell us a lot about Aryan, his interests and experiences. A good kindergarten teacher would intergrate his experience of trains in India into the curriculum. For example there could be a topic on trains, or India or holidays.

SAMPLE WEEKLY PLANNING FRAMEWORK ² (page 1 of 3)

Date:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| BLOCKS | OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN | LIBRARY CORNER |
| ART & CRAFT | | INVESTIGATIONS IN MATHS & SCIENCE |
| MUSIC CENTRE | OUTCOMES FOR FOCUS CHILDREN | DRAMATIC PLAY |
| THINKING & MANIPULATIVE ACTIVITIES | TOPICS OF INQUIRY | SAND AND WATER PLAY |

SAMPLE WEEKLY PLANNING FRAMEWORK (page 2 of 3)

Date:

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|---------|---|----------|--------|
| PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH & WELL-BEING | | | INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY | | |
| Large group experiences | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
| | | | | | |
| Small group experiences | | | | | |

REFLECTION (page 3 of 3)

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| WHAT WORKED | WHAT NEEDS CHANGING |
| INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN | FOLLOW-UP |

² Adapted from G. Gronlund (2003). *Focused early learning: A planning framework for teaching young children*. St. Paul MN: Redleaf Press.

Topics of inquiry

Most Kindergarten teachers in Fiji plan around themes or topics. In the curriculum guidelines the term ‘topic of inquiry’ is used. The term ‘project’ is also commonly used in early childhood. Topics of inquiry or projects involve children in active learning and exploration as they investigate topics of interest to them. This is quite different from the passive role children may play in a teacher-driven theme. If topics are chosen carefully, they are an effective way of providing an integrated, child-centred curriculum that encompasses all Foundation Areas of Learning and Development.

Below are some suggestions for selecting and developing topics, and linking them to the Foundation Areas of Learning and Development.

Step 1: Identify and unpack the outcomes you want to focus on

Step 2: Select a topic

Topics can be initiated by the teacher or emerge from the children’s interests; for example:

- Observe and listen to the children to identify their interests;
- Identify topics that link to children’s daily lives, and that allow connections to families and the community;
- The teacher might select a topic from a community calendar that has been prepared at the beginning of the year (see below);
- The teacher might choose a topic that allows a focus on specific outcomes that s/he believes are important at the time;
- Choose topics that have potential for developing and integrating outcomes across the FALD, topics that extend children’s thinking, and that allow for exploration and investigation. Avoid topics that are insignificant and superficial or for which you do not have resources.
- Involve children in the choice
 - ♦ Let children suggest topics (e.g. ask ‘What would you like to learn about this week?’) With practice, Kindergarten children can participate well in this approach;
 - ♦ If there are several choices, allow children to vote on their choices (think of the learning involved in this process. If at first children are reluctant or unable to suggest ideas, the teacher can provide some choices, and children can vote on these);
 - ♦ Do a web with the children on the chosen topic to find out what they already know about the topic;
 - ♦ With older children, you can also ask what they want to find out. Write their ideas on the web or write their questions underneath.



Below is what happened when one Kindergarten teacher tried this approach:

Monday morning in Rakiraki

This topic began on Friday when we discussed three topics:

- Leaves
- Farm animals
- Birds

As there were two teachers doing their practical attachment they helped in the discussions. After this, children were asked to raise their hands if they wanted to learn about the topic mentioned. The results were:

- Leaves – 14 children
- Farm animals – 7 children
- Birds – 4 children

On Friday before they went home I reminded them what to bring on Monday morning:

*Navolau children (4) - voivoi
Rakiraki children (4) - coconut leaves
Nagoro children (3) – leaves of different shapes
Town children (7) – leaves that provide food
Nadovi children (2) – leaves for medicine
Wairuku children (2) – leaves used for art/decoration*

This morning was a very interesting morning. The children came with bags of leaves. A boy from Navolau brought a few sasa broom sticks with voivoi and asked the teacher, 'Make my broom and mat for me'. An Indo-Fijian boy from Nagoro brought a bag of mango leaves and sand to hang on our door. This is what they usually see at home – hanging mango leaves on the doors is a belief. We talked about the different leaves and what we know about them. I wrote this like a web on the newsprint. Then I asked the children what they would like to find out.



They grow on trees
Some fall off the trees
They grow in the garden

They look different
Some are big and
some are little


We can eat them

People make mats and things
Last time we put some paint on
the leaves

My grandmother makes
medicine with them

They're green

Leaves



That afternoon I used the children's ideas to make another web, brainstorming ideas for learning experiences. I thought about FALD outcomes that I wanted to focus on and made a plan for 2 weeks. I have written the plan on newsprint and pinned it on the notice board so that parents can add ideas and feel welcome to come to Kindergarten and get actively involved with their children.

Litiana

Step 3: Investigate the topic

The teacher takes the web done with the children and develops it further, thinking of learning experiences that relate to the desired outcomes, and teaching strategies and resources s/he will use. There are various ways of creating a web. One way is to use a concept map; another approach that has become popular with teachers is to use a 5Ws + H strategy. Both these approaches are shown at the end of this section.

Step 4: Make a weekly plan

Teachers now transfer outcomes, learning experiences and other important information from the web to a weekly plan. Using the planning framework included earlier in this chapter you will see how the experiences fit into some (not all) of the learning centres and certainly into the group experiences and the family and community involvement section.

Putting the web on the notice board or wall is a good idea. This way, the teacher and children can use it to reflect on their learning and to plan further learning experiences. A topic that engages Kindergarten children this way may continue for many weeks. Mini topics may develop from it. For example, some of the children in Litiana’s Kindergarten were interested in investigating birds and farm animals. A wise teacher will keep these interests in mind and think of ways to integrate them into the main topic – leaves. For example, some farm animals eat leaves, some leaves are poisonous for animals; birds use leaves for their nests, and get food from leaves.

Opportunities for family and community participation should be explored for all topics. A real-life experience in the community is a good way to begin exploring many topics. In the above example, Litiana has made a strong connection to the families and communities of her children by inviting the children to bring leaves from home.

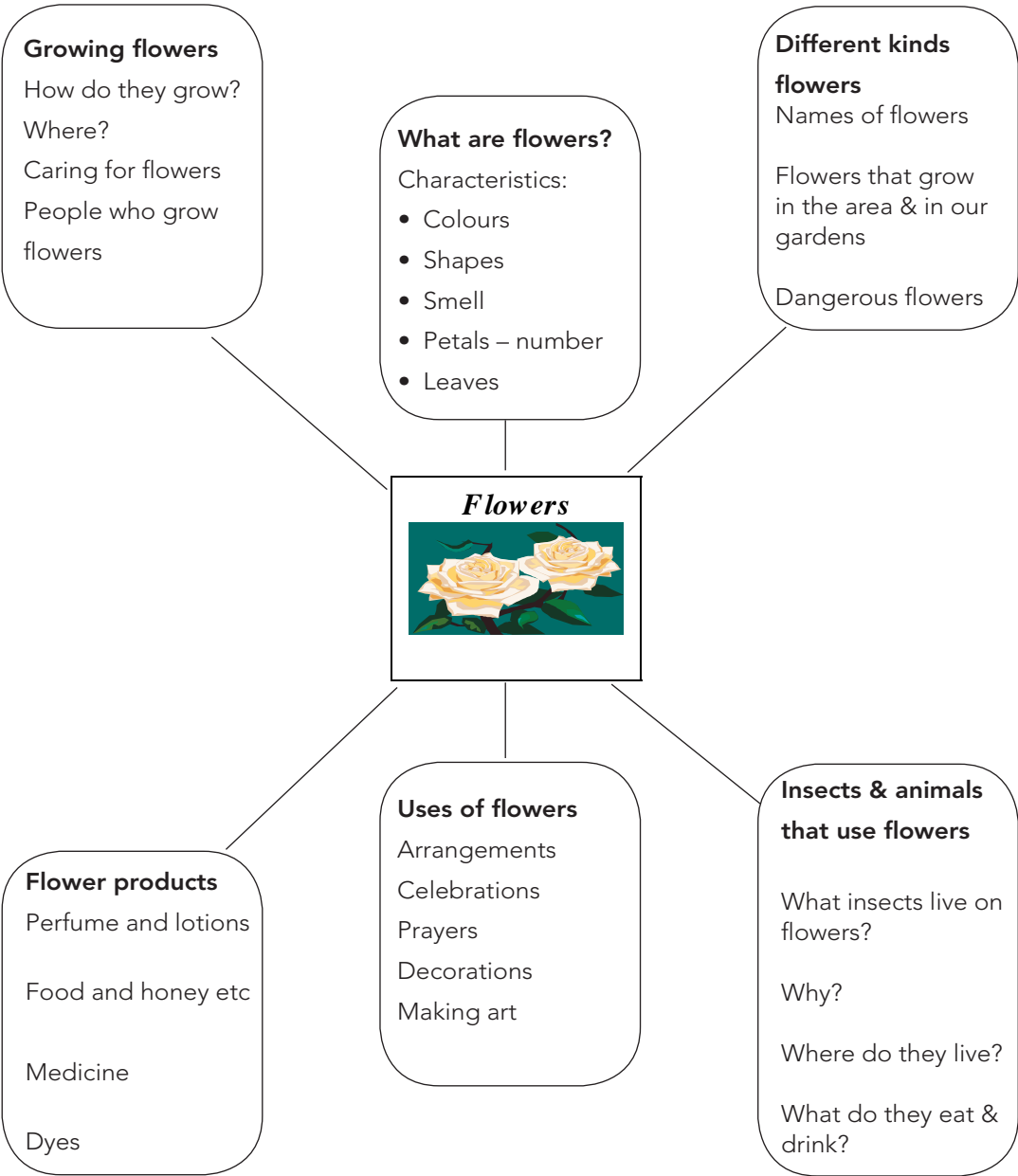


Step 5: Celebrate the learning

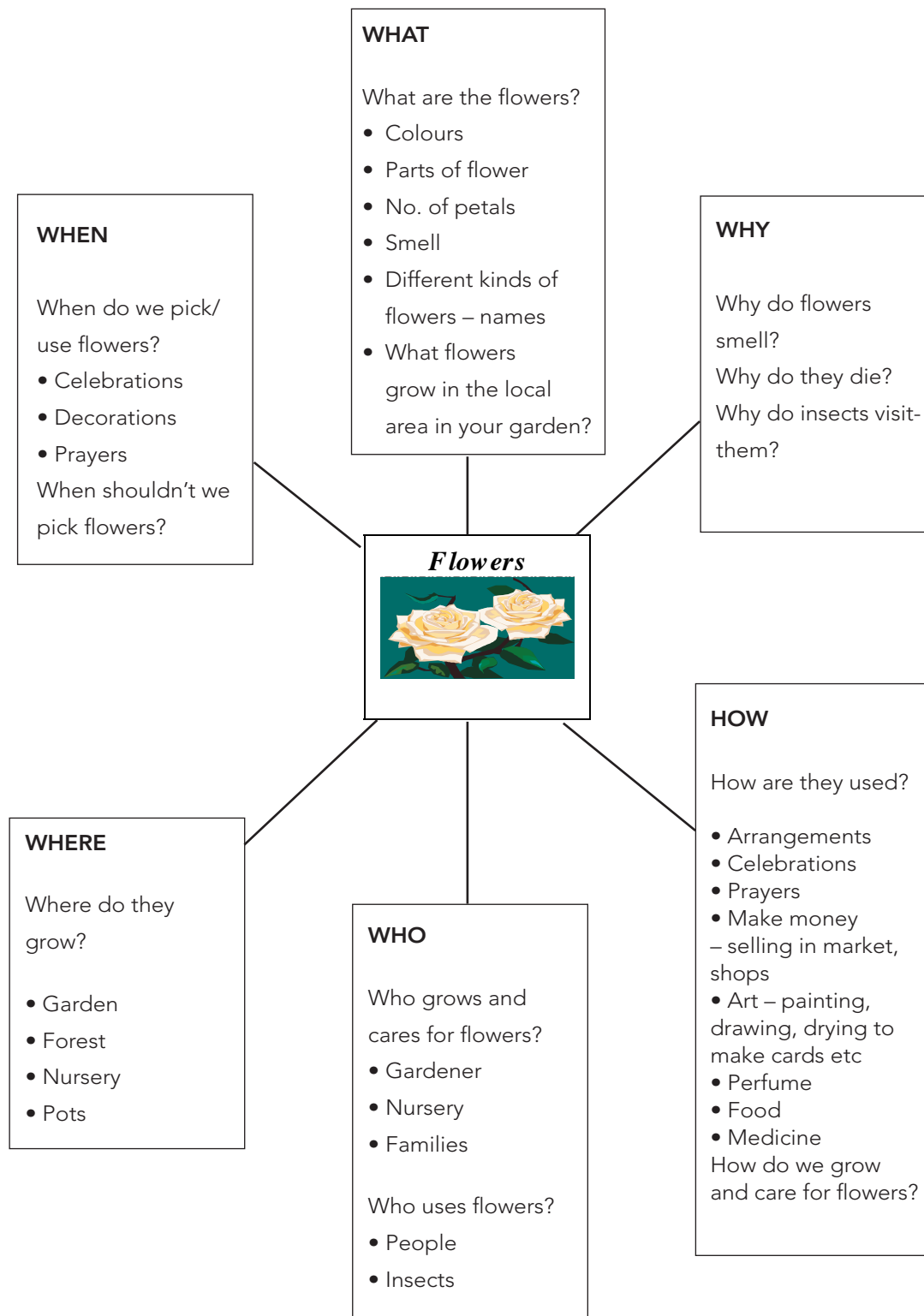
If a topic has truly engaged children, then celebrating and sharing their learning at the conclusion of the topic is important. There are many ways that this can be done; for example, a morning tea, a display at the Kindergarten, school or somewhere else in the community, a meke or another cultural event.

Examples of the webbing

Example 1: Using a concept map



Example 2: Using the 5Ws + H strategy



Using a community calendar

A community calendar is a long-term planning device that provides a rich source of ideas around which planning can be organised. This approach ensures a culturally-relevant curriculum and offers many opportunities for the inclusion of families and the community. Their involvement will likely begin at the long-term planning stage as they help the teacher identify significant community and cultural events around which teachers can plan experiences throughout the year. Not all community events are suitable for Kindergarten children. Teachers should select those that provide avenues for integrated, play-based learning, using criteria similar to those outlined for selecting any topic of inquiry.

Step 1

Draw a circle on a large piece of paper.

Step 2

Divide the circle into 12 equal parts, one part for each month of the year.

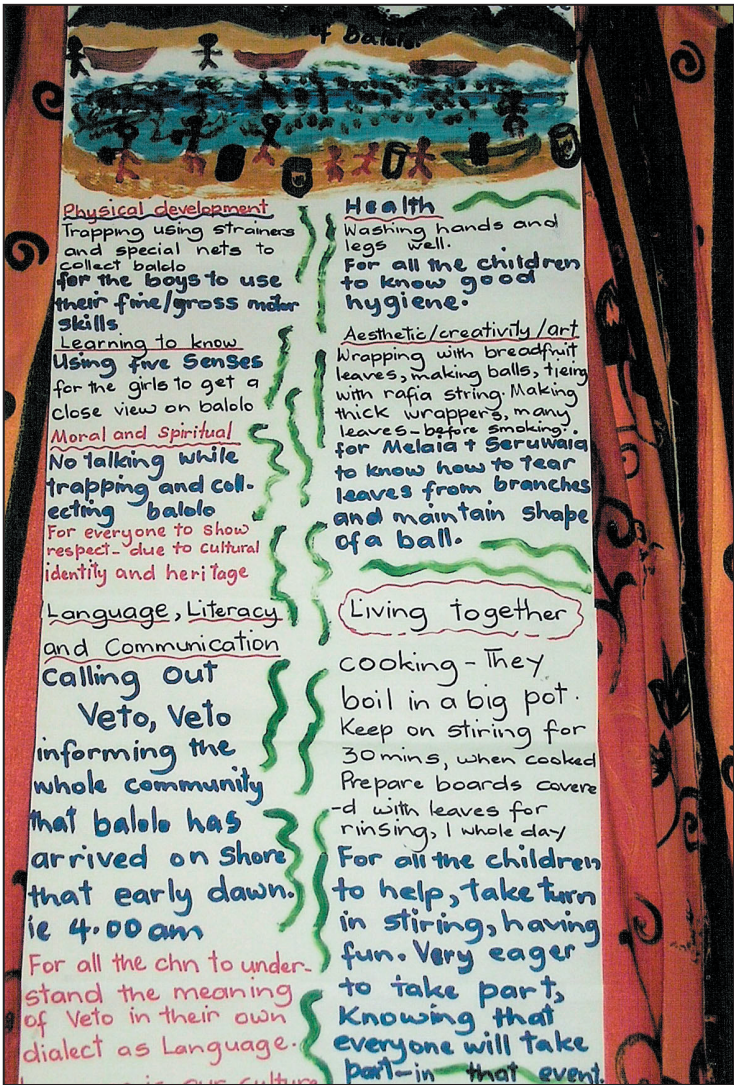
Step 3

In the space for each month, write down relevant events that occur in the community and environment. Focus particularly on the changing natural environment (e.g. planting and harvesting particular crops, the kinds of fish in season such as nuqa, crabs) and on other happenings that are of interest to young children.

Step 4

From these many ideas, select topics that can be explored with the children.

The photograph below shows the many opportunities this approach provides for learning in and about the local community and culture. This teacher is exploring ‘Fishing for balolo’ as a topic.



Reflection

Reflection on what happened, what worked, what needs changing etcetera is part of planning and should be done daily. Using the reflection section of the weekly planning framework (see Appendix), teachers make brief notes at the end of each day, and write these changes on their weekly plan. As the teacher reflects on children’s learning and on their needs and interests, s/he identifies FALD outcomes for future planning.

Below are some reflective comments that Litiana made during and at the end of Week 1 of her topic on leaves:

| WHAT WORKED | WHAT NEEDS CHANGING |
|---|--|
| <p>With the leaves we covered a lot of early Maths. Children were able to do ordering – biggest to smallest; matching – same shape, colour; sorting – food, medicine, Art/craft.</p> <p>Parent volunteers came into the centre to mend our mat (voivoi), weave a mat and make a liku vasili for meke.</p> <p>Parents’ involvement made the children feel proud and confident</p> <p>Children scraped coconut leaves and made sasa brooms</p> <p>The Fijian children learnt how leaves are used by Hindus to make pooja</p> <p>Children know more about leaves</p> | <p>Attendance of the children – those who miss a day are lost in our discussions</p> <p>Listening – a few children are not listening well and disturb the other children</p> <p>Safety – need to be aware of this when children are using knives for scraping coconut leaves</p> |
| INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN | FOLLOW UP |
| <p>S has trouble listening</p> <p>M was very proud when her mother fixed the mat. She is still talking about it.</p> <p>Be, T and Su made boats out of the leaves today and were more interested in sailing their boats than in the activities I planned</p> | <p>Focus on listening skills for the whole group</p> <p>I am very happy with the way the parents are getting involved in this topic. It is something everyone can contribute to. Keep this in mind with future topics.</p> <p>I must find ways to involve children who don’t attend every day. Observe and find out what they are interested in. Trying to involve them in a topic the other children have selected does not work. There must be other interesting activities and materials for them.</p> <p>If I am to become better at following children’s interests I should extend the interest Be, T and Su showed in boats. Put different leaves near the water trough tomorrow and see what happens.</p> |

Keeping a reflective journal

Apart from daily reflections, all teachers are encouraged to keep a reflective journal. This is an exercise book or notebook in which they think and write about their own teaching and about issues, challenges and incidents that occur in their Kindergartens or classrooms. Entries might be made weekly or even fortnightly, or when something eventful happens, as was the case for Makelesi. Notice how she has described what happened, and then reflected on it.

The Day of the Pet Show

We were all sitting down discussing what is the best pet to keep. All the children were listening attentively. A little boy suggested that a dog is a very good pet. He said that he has a dog and he plays with him all the time. Another one said that a cat is a very good pet because it kills mice. Another boy said that a goat is a very good pet too. The children were asked if they could ask their parents if they could bring their pets to school. Alipate, who was a very quiet boy, never said anything. We decided to show our pets the next day as soon as school started.

The next day came and all the nine children brought their pets. Alipate's pet was in a brown bag. Nobody saw it. All the children lined up and all the children showed their pets. Some came with hens with their chickens. A few brought their cats. Two boys came with their dogs. When it came to Alipate's turn he turned his sack inside out. Out jumped two big frogs. One of the girls who brought her hen with the chickens yelled and ran with her chooks back home. The other three girls in the room crowded together and started to cry. It took some time to settle everyone. The boys laughed and laughed. By the time everybody had settled the two frogs had jumped out the door and disappeared.

Reflection

I was quite unsettled by the incident. Frankly, I was frightened by the frogs myself. It never occurred to me that anyone would consider a frog a pet. As a teacher I have a responsibility to teach children that all animals, though some look ugly like the frog, are created by God. We must look after them and treat them with respect. I must plan a programme where I can show video tapes of different local animals and their uses.

After a few days, when I thought back on this incident, it made me laugh and laugh. When I remember the children's faces with their different expressions, I continue to laugh and laugh some more.

Makelesi

Making links to the FALD in the reflection is recommended; in this way teachers can see how they are addressing the Foundation Areas of Learning and Development, both through their planned learning experiences and incidentally. Here is an example from Siteri:



Date: 13/07/09

| What happened | Teacher’s comments & reflection | Links to FALD |
|---|---|--|
| <p>The children all waited at the village market, so I called them to walk towards the shop. Most of them were asking, ‘What shall we buy from the shop?’ I said we will buy cereal. Unfortunately they didn’t have cereal so we ended up buying a kilogram of rice. N helped me carry the bag of rice back to the kindergarten.</p> | <p>The children know their village well and are confident to wait for the teacher; they are having a learning experience together in the community</p> <p>Going shopping – using money</p> <p>Planning & preparing healthy meals</p> <p>Children talk to and help the teacher</p> | <p>Living & Learning Together</p> <p>Learning to Know</p> <p>Physical Development, Health and Well-being – Nutrition</p> <p>Living & Learning Together</p> |
| <p>The children prepared cooking utensils like cups, saucepans, hand towels. Some of the boys collected pine cones to help in lighting the fire. Some corrugated iron was brought out from the store room and put underneath the window. Instructions were given not to get close to the edge as someone might get hurt. But Ino was concentrating on preparing the tea and walked beside the iron and accidentally hurt his left toe. He burst out crying when he saw blood gushing out, so I dashed to him and held the pressure point in order to stop the blood. While I was doing this, N thought of the lantana leaves. She ran and picked as many leaves as she could. She then squeezed them. She kept on picking the lantana leaves till we had stopped the blood. The boys didn’t want to help but I understand them and asked them to come closer to the victim and comfort him.</p> | <p>Cooperating with each other</p> <p>Observing and exploring to find pine cones</p> <p>Explicit teaching about safety</p> <p>Ino was not listening carefully and did not follow my instructions</p> <p>Ino was very emotional</p> <p>Very, very interesting to have some children who know about local plants & medicines and can help and attend minor case like this. The boys are modeling traditional male behaviour; they see this as girls’ business. I want them to be caring and to know how to help in an emergency</p> <p>Follow up</p> <p>We have all learnt a lot from this experience. I need to be sure children understand and follow safety instructions. Ino particularly needs to listen more carefully. We will focus on listening and following instructions next week. Everyone was interested in what N did with the lantana leaves. Perhaps we will explore a topic about local plants and their uses. This would give us lots of opportunities for learning outside, which the children really enjoy. Some of the parents could get very involved too</p> | <p>Living & Learning Together</p> <p>Learning to Know</p> <p>Physical Development, Health and Well-being – Safe practices</p> <p>Language, Literacy & Communication</p> <p>Living & Learning Together</p> <p>Learning to Know – Culture; Behaviour</p> <p>Physical Development, Health and Well-being – Safe practices</p> <p>Living & Learning Together</p> |

10

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Starting school

Starting school is an exciting time for most young children. It is a major milestone in their lives and a time for new experiences, opportunities and friendships. Nevertheless, this dramatic change in their lives can cause considerable stress and anxiety. How well parents and teachers support children in this time of transition can have major implications for their success and happiness at school and beyond.

For children coming from rural settings to urban schools, or the reverse, starting school can be a particularly daunting experience. This is especially true for children who leave their families in villages and rural settings to attend urban schools, or urban children being sent to attend village schools and stay with grandparents or extended families. This is a reality for many children in Fiji. Not only do these young children have to adapt to the environment and culture of the school; they have to do it in the absence of their immediate families.

Children's prior to school experiences also vary dramatically in Fiji. Although there has been an expansion of Kindergarten and other early childhood programmes, the majority of children do not have access to, or attend, an early childhood programme prior to school entry, or may attend for only one term. Poverty also greatly influences the early learning and development of many children, and their readiness for school. It can affect their health, brain development, behaviour and academic achievements. Families with low incomes have other more urgent needs to attend to and thus the children's interests and enthusiasm for learning are often pushed aside. In fact, low income families tend to have very different priorities.

Overall, this means that children starting school in Fiji have enormous differences in their pre-school experiences and hence in their needs as early school learners. Looking at the individual needs of children starting school is therefore a priority for Class 1 and Head teachers.

Whatever the context, children require a supportive and caring environment when they begin school. A supportive and caring environment is one in which the curriculum and teaching practices are developmentally and culturally appropriate, where there are

connections to families, Kindergartens and other early childhood programmes, and where each child can continue to grow, develop and experience success.

Getting ready for school

When children start school they are already successful learners. If they have been in caring family environments, their natural disposition to learn will have ensured that they have developed in all the foundation areas of learning and development – physical, cognitive, language, social, emotional, creative and spiritual. What is needed at this point is a smooth pathway from their learning at home or at Kindergarten to learning at school.

Unfortunately, for many children, the pathway is far from smooth. It becomes a rough and bumpy ride into unfamiliar territory. When they arrive some are quickly labelled ‘not ready’, or ‘problems’, and may become early failures in the school system. Some may even be denied entry to a school on the basis of a readiness test. The perception of those administering these tests is that to be ready for school a child must be able to accomplish set academic tasks which have been determined by the Class 1 and/or Head teacher. In these situations, decisions about readiness are based on the children’s abilities to speak, listen, follow directions, pay attention, answer questions about a picture, write their names, recite their addresses, telephone numbers [if any] and do simple mathematical addition and subtraction. The child’s admission to a particular school will be dependent on his/her test performance. When denied admission, the parents are usually told that their child is ‘immature’ and ‘not ready for school’, as in the following scenario:

My granddaughter was looking forward to going to school after Kindergarten. Her parents had applied for a place and were asked to take her for an interview. Two weeks later the parents went to school to check her interview result. The Head teacher’s reply was that she did not get through. Her parents asked for the reasons and were told that she could not shape her letters and numbers. The Head teacher also added that my granddaughter could not put the alphabet and numbers in order. She jumbled both her letters and numbers when writing.

I asked the parents about the process of the interview. They said she was taken into the room for the interview without them being present. The parents were very disappointed with the process, and did not want to tell their child the result. They just told her they would take her to another school. She is now attending Class 1 there (no interview required), and after one term is doing very well with her writing and counting.

The increased focus on early learning and development can lead families, teachers and other administrators into thinking that children need an academic, teacher-directed Kindergarten curriculum. In response, some teachers are forcing a downward movement of the primary curriculum into the Kindergarten. Many do this to accommodate parents' wishes for their children to become proficient in school learning as early as possible, or so they can pass the school entry test. For example, friends of the above family were sitting each night with their Kindergarten child, rigorously 'training' her in the skills needed to pass the test. 'Her Kindergarten was a gruelling experience for her and her mother who would stay up in the night to help her daughter learn the alphabet and numbers 1-100.'



Extensive research from around the world suggests this emphasis on academic learning in Kindergarten is misguided. A child's readiness for school depends on readiness in five areas:

- Physical well-being and motor development
- Social and emotional development
- Approaches to learning
- Language development
- Cognition and general development



There is also evidence that children who have attended a Kindergarten with this holistic focus are more ready to learn, have the social and emotional skills required of the school environment, and have enhanced language and cognitive skills. *Na Noda Mataniciva: Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for the Fiji Islands* supports and encourages this broad definition of readiness. It offers a holistic approach to teaching and learning in Kindergarten, with a focus on active, play-based and child-centred learning. We believe that children who engage with this curriculum will be well prepared for school, not just academically, but in all areas of learning and development. At the same time, the outcomes included in the curriculum are guidelines only for what children might know and be able to do by the time they enter school. Given the great diversity of prior-to-school experiences for children in Fiji, it cannot be expected that all will travel at the same speed or reach these destinations at the same time. Learning should not be seen as a race, but as a journey to be enjoyed.

Ways families can help

- Talk positively to children about school
- Visit the school with the child
- Go shopping with the child for a school bag and other essential items
- Enrol children in Kindergarten for a year
- Get involved in the Kindergarten and school

Ways Kindergarten teachers can help

- Provide children with a curriculum that addresses all areas of learning and development, and that is child-centred and play-based
- Conduct workshops about early learning and development, and inform families and communities about appropriate teaching and learning in Kindergarten
- Give families and communities information that helps them prepare children for school
- Monitor children's learning and development through regular observations
- Encourage children to become independent
- Establish a working relationship with the Class 1 teacher
- Take the children to visit the school, Class 1 teacher and classroom
- Encourage playgroups at the Kindergarten, attended by parents with their young children

Preparing schools for children

Readiness is not only about preparing the child for school. Schools must also prepare for children. All the gains made during the preschool years may disappear very quickly if children do not have a smooth transition to school, or if the school curriculum and approaches are inappropriate.

While schools and teachers may face many challenges, an understanding of the needs of young children starting school can help them respond to the children in ways that support a successful transition to school.

Ways Head teachers can help

- Put very good, experienced teachers in Class 1
- Reduce class sizes in Class 1 where possible
- Work with Class 1 and Kindergarten teachers, Management and families to develop transition programmes; e.g. visits by Kindergarten children and their parents to the school, home visits, visits by Class 1 teachers and children to the Kindergarten, social events
- Encourage parent helpers and other adults to help in Class 1, especially at the beginning of the year
- Locate the Kindergarten near the school and include the Kindergarten teacher, children and families in the life of the school
- Review admission and enrolment practices
- Work with families and the community to encourage attendance at Kindergarten

When asked about the qualities of Class 1 teachers, parents in Fiji emphasised that they should be:

Caring, gentle, patient, friendly, humble and know how to handle small children.

Some also talked about the need for Class 1 to be more informal, like the preschool

Ways Class 1 teachers can help

- Talk to the Kindergarten teacher, read the Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines, and develop an understanding of what a good Kindergarten programme looks like
- Use active, child-centred teaching and learning approaches in Class 1
- Become better informed about child development and early childhood approaches
- Make the curriculum developmentally-appropriate and relevant to the children and their individual needs
- Integrate the language and culture of the home into the curriculum
- Group children so that they can interact and support each other



- Visit the Kindergarten
- Use all the space available for learning experiences, both indoors and outdoors
- Make resources from local and recycled materials, especially where resources are limited
- Monitor children's learning and development in appropriate ways

As children begin school, a challenge for Class 1 teachers is to find out about each child. The most effective ways are observing children and talking with them and their families. Time spent observing children learning in informal contexts will lead to more appropriate approaches and environments, and hence to greater success for children at school. All children are different, and all are ready to learn from birth. Matching learning experiences to the child's level of understanding, and supporting a child's learning, are critical for ongoing successful learning in the school environment.

When asked to reflect on their experiences of starting school, Class 1 children said they were nervous, anxious, excited, crying.... While most said they were now happy at school and had friends, they spoke about wanting more playing time.

Two challenges consistently highlighted were bullying and having to learn in languages other than their mother tongue – meaning standard Hindi or Fijian, or English. The problem of bullying was raised by many children. Concerned by his daughter's distress over bullying, one child said her father taught her to punch. When the bully next approached her she gave him a good one!

Working together

The way forward lies in working together. Kindergarten teachers, families, Head teachers, Class 1 teachers, community stakeholders such as health personnel can work together to ensure that children starting school are healthy and well-prepared for a successful school life, and that schools are prepared to receive and support these young active learners. An approach that involves care, education, health and nutrition has been found to be most effective in terms of preparing children for this journey.

The National Curriculum Framework and the Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines offer strong support by providing continuity across the early childhood years. If the FALD framework is used from Kindergarten to Class 2, children in Fiji will have a continuous and appropriate early childhood curriculum that will link with Key Learning Areas (KLAs) in Class 3. This should ensure more successful school and lifelong learning for the children of Fiji.

Learning is not a race, but a journey to be enjoyed.

Appendix

Sample planning forms



SAMPLE 1: WEEKLY PLANNING FORM (page 1 of 3) Date:

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| BLOCKS | OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN | LIBRARY CORNER |
| ART & CRAFT | OUTCOMES FOR FOCUS CHILDREN | INVESTIGATIONS IN MATHS & SCIENCE |
| MUSIC CENTRE | | DRAMATIC PLAY |
| THINKING & MANIPULATIVE ACTIVITIES | TOPICS OF INQUIRY | SAND & WATER PLAY |



SAMPLE 1: WEEKLY PLANNING FORM (page 2 of 3)

| PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH & WELL-BEING | | INVOLVEMENT OF FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY | | | |
|---|--------|---|-----------|----------|--------|
| Large group experiences | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
| | | | | | |
| Small group experiences | | | | | |

SAMPLE 1: WEEKLY PLANNING FORM (page 3 of 3)

REFLECTION

| WHAT WORKED | WHAT NEEDS CHANGING |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN | FOLLOW -UP |



SAMPLE 2: WEEKLY PLANNING FORM¹ (page 1 of 2)

Date:

Topics of inquiry:

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|
| Outcomes for all children | | | | | |
| Outcomes for focus children | | | | | |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Library | | | | | |
| Investigations in Maths & Science | | | | | |
| Art & Craft | | | | | |
| Dramatic play | | | | | |
| Music | | | | | |
| Sand & water play | | | | | |
| Blocks | | | | | |
| Thinking and manipulative activities | | | | | |
| Physical development, health & well-being | | | | | |

¹ This format may suit teachers who want to use the programme book distributed to schools. Adapt the learning centres and areas to suit your own situation.

SAMPLE 2: WEEKLY PLANNING FORM (page 2 of 2)

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|---------|---------------------|----------|--------|
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Large group experiences | | | | | |
| Small group experiences | | | | | |
| Involvement of families and the community | | | | | |
| REFLECTION | | | | | |
| WHAT WORKED | | | WHAT NEEDS CHANGING | | |
| | | | | | |
| INDIVIDUAL CHILDREN | | | FOLLOW-UP | | |
| | | | | | |

Glossary

Aesthetics

An awareness and appreciation of the beauty found in nature and in creative works such as art, music and dance. Teachers support children's aesthetic development when they encourage them to use all their senses to experience and respond to the world around them; e.g. watching rain drops on a window, splashing in water, touching and smelling the petals of a flower, moving to the beat of traditional music.

Anecdote

Used in early childhood, it refers to a written description of an incident in a child's behaviour. Teachers observe an incident; e.g. 2 children playing and talking in the home area, and write down what they heard and saw. It is written after the event and is usually short. Teachers then analyse the anecdote for what it tells them about a child's learning and development, and use the information for planning future learning experiences.

Assessment

Assessment is the process of finding out about a child's learning, development and behaviour using a variety of strategies.

Authentic assessment

Refers to assessing not only cognitive and academic achievement, but development and learning in all areas. Authentic assessment involves observing, recording and otherwise documenting what children do, and using this information to make judgments and plan for children's future learning and development.

Autonomy

From about 2 years of age, most children want to do things for themselves – i.e. to be autonomous. This is when they may resist holding a parent's hand to cross the road, or may get frustrated and throw a tantrum because they cannot do something. Cultures vary in the extent to which they encourage autonomy or independence in young children. However, it is generally agreed that preparation for Kindergarten and school should include encouraging children to do things for themselves; e.g. toileting, opening lunch boxes. Independence in self help skills is a foundation for independent learning whereby children learn to do things without always seeking the help of a teacher. Instead they may seek the help of other children.

Child development

This refers to changes in a child over time. It is more than growth, which refers only to physical changes. Development refers to changes in all areas – physical, social, emotional, cognitive, language, creative, spiritual.

Chronological age

This refers to a child's age in years and months, as opposed to developmental age, which is a child's level of development. For example, a child may be 4 years of age but his/her level of development might be like that of a 6 year old, or a 5 year old might be performing like a 3 year old. Teachers are encouraged to observe children and find out their level of development, and plan for this, not for their chronological age.

Cognitive development

Development related to component thinking, remembering, knowing and other mental processes. A part of something

Component

A part of something

Discriminate

This simply means to tell the difference between things. However, when used in relation to people it generally refers to singling people out on the basis of their race, gender, religion etc, and treating them differently because of this.

Early childhood

This is generally accepted as the phase of development between birth and 8 years of age.

ECCDE

Early Childhood Care, Development and Education. This is an overarching term for all programmes for children 0-8 years of age in Fiji (e.g. Kindergarten, daycare, playgroup, Classes 1 & 2). It includes informal programmes for babies, young children and their families.

Explicit teaching

A teaching strategy used to give very direct or precise information to children; e.g. health and safety rules. This strategy can also be useful when children are being introduced to something for the first time.

Focus children

These are the individual children that a teacher may observe and plan for during a day or week. Early childhood teachers are encouraged to identify 'focus children' in all their plans, as well as planning for the whole group.

Holistic

Used in relation to the development of the child in all areas – intellectual, language, social, emotional, physical, spiritual, creative.

Integrated learning

Learning experiences that include a focus on many areas of learning and development rather than one particular area such as language.

Learning centre

This can be a regular area in the room, such as dramatic play or blocks, or a table space with a particular curriculum focus such as Science. It can also be related to a topic, with a variety of hands-on materials and play-based activities.

Learning experiences

In Kindergarten, the term 'learning experience' is used rather than 'lesson' to describe experiences planned for children's learning and development. Many learning experiences are quite informal, such as placing a selection of materials in the sand pit; others may be more structured such as planning for music and movement with a group of children.

Perceptual-motor development

This is an aspect of physical development. It includes development of the senses (hearing, sight, smell etc) and body awareness.

Portfolio

A collection of children's work, and other information about children, which, when analysed, is an assessment tool that teachers use to make judgments about children's learning and development.

Prejudice

Unfair judgment, bias or discrimination

Repertoire

This is a collection of some kind; e.g. a teacher may have a repertoire of stories or games or teaching strategies from which they can select.

S/he

This is an abbreviation of 'she or he'.

Socio dramatic play

Socio dramatic play is pretend or imaginary play that involves children negotiating roles and interacting with each other.

Spatial

This comes from the word 'space'. As children become aware of their bodies, they are also learning how their bodies occupy space. They learn concepts such as under, over, behind, and the words to go with these concepts. This is called spatial development.

Spontaneous incidents

These are the unplanned events that occur through a day and which provide opportunities for teaching and learning; also called 'teachable moments'.

Strand

A part or component of something. Each FALD in the curriculum guidelines is divided into strands and each strand is then divided into sub strands. Sub strands are parts of strands.

Transition

Refers to a shift or movement from one place to another. Often used in relation to children moving from home or Kindergarten to school; hence the term 'transition to school'.

Transition activities

Early childhood teachers need to manage the movement of children between activities; e.g. the time between a group activity and snack time. They use short activities such as songs and games which are called transition activities.