

Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum

Endorsed by the

**Curriculum
Development
Council**



Issued by the
Curriculum Development Institute
Education Department
Hong Kong 1996

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This guide is prepared by the Working Party on Kindergarten Education. Members of the Working Party, appointed by the Secretary for Education and Manpower, include experienced professionals from kindergartens, the child care sector and pre-primary training institutions, as well as representatives from the Education and Manpower Branch, the Health and Welfare Branch, the Social Welfare Department and the Education Department.

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Foreword

Reference materials published so far by the Government on the design of pre-primary curriculum and activities include the “Guide to the Kindergarten Curriculum” and the “Activity Guidelines for Day Nursery”. The former was revised in 1993 by the Kindergarten Co-ordinating Committee of the Curriculum Development Council. It focuses on the principles of kindergarten curriculum design and implementation methods. The overall aim of kindergarten education is to provide children with a balanced development in the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects. The kindergarten curriculum should take into account the developmental characteristics and individual needs of young children with due emphasis on sensory experience, observation and experiments to arouse children’s interest in learning. The curriculum should also be designed to include civic education elements to assist young children to adapt themselves to group life, and to understand the relationship between the individual and society.

The “Activity Guidelines for Day Nursery” was compiled by a Joint Working Group set up by the Social Welfare Department and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (Joint SWD/HKCSS Working Group) in 1986. It provides child care staff with suggested activities which are in line with the developmental characteristics and needs of children aged between two and six. The Guidelines further point out that through play and actual experience, young children can be nurtured to attain a balanced development in physical, intellectual, language, social and emotional aspects.

In May 1994, the Board of Education made a considerable number of recommendations on pre-primary education, one of which was the unification of pre-primary services provided by the Education Department and the Social Welfare Department. The Working Party on Kindergarten Education, reconstituted in February 1995, seriously examined the feasibility of unifying the curriculum design of the two types of pre-primary services mentioned. In April 1995, the Working Party proposed to amalgamate the “Guide to the Kindergarten Curriculum” and the “Activity Guidelines for Day Nursery”, as well as to set up an ad hoc working group with members drawn from the Education Department and Social Welfare Department. In preparing the draft of the amalgamated Guide mentioned above, the ad hoc working group consulted, in September 1995, experienced practitioners of kindergartens, child care centres and pre-primary training institutions.

The draft was completed and circulated to all pre-primary institutions for comments in February 1996. The guide was subsequently revised in the light of the suggestions given and was endorsed by the Curriculum Development Council. It is hoped that this guide will serve as a useful reference for all involved in pre-primary education.

Chapter 1

Aims of Pre-primary Curriculum

1.1 General Aims

- 1.1.1 The care and education services provided by pre-primary institutions in Hong Kong help to foster children's balanced development in their physical, intellectual, language, social and emotional aspects. Such services also develop in children an interest in learning which helps to prepare them for future education.
- 1.1.2 Apart from the acquisition of academic knowledge, children should also equip themselves with other life skills, such as self-care skills, communicative skills, social skills, etc. so as to enable them to adapt to society. It is through direct life experiences, sensory perception and interesting activities that children develop good habits, establish confidence in themselves and in other people, comprehend things around them, as well as live up to social expectations. Factual knowledge obtained through stereotype textbook teaching or rote-learning is only superficial. These teaching methods will only curb the creativity and cognitive thinking of children, and do not guarantee that children can remember and make use of the knowledge acquired. Therefore, children should be educated in a natural and pleasant environment, and it is through various activities and life experiences that children attain a balanced development in different aspects (see Appendix 1).

1.2 Specific Aims

The general aims may be elaborated into specific ones to facilitate actual curriculum design. Some of the more important specific aims of pre-primary curriculum are:

1.2.1 Aims related to intellectual development

1. To cultivate in children positive attitudes towards the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of their surrounding environment.
2. To enable children to develop their concentration and observation, as well as their analytical, reasoning, judgment and problem solving skills.
3. To lay the foundations of basic numeracy and literacy.

1.2.2 Aims related to communicative development

1. To broaden and refine children's innate and family-learned verbal and non-verbal interpersonal communication proficiency.
2. To encourage and help children identify and express their thoughts and emotions through language.

1.2.3 Aims related to social and moral development

1. To assist children to attain a socially acceptable balance between their personal interests and those of the community, to establish good interpersonal relationships, as well as to accept basic social values and norms.

2. To develop in children a sense of responsibility and positive attitudes towards both work and people.
3. To cultivate in children an inclination to interact with and love their environment.

1.2.4 Aims related to personal and physical development

1. To foster in children good habits and self-care abilities.
2. To help children acquire the skills of expressing their feelings, both positive and negative.
3. To enable children to perceive the importance of self-control in leading a happy life in a pre-primary institution and to help them develop such a habit.
4. To nurture in children a sense of self-esteem, confidence and achievement
5. To enhance children's development of their gross and fine motor skills.
6. To promote children's sensory-perceptual development.

1.2.5 Aims related to aesthetic development

1. To stimulate children's creative and imaginative powers.
2. To cultivate in children abilities to enjoy life and to appreciate various forms of beauty.
3. To encourage children to enjoy participating in creative work.

Chapter 2

Development Characteristics and Learning Objectives of Children Aged between 2 and 6

2.1 General Introduction

2.1.1 The pre-primary educator must have specialised knowledge about the characteristics of child development before they can be responsive to the needs of children, set reasonable learning objectives and design a curriculum which suits children's abilities and interests. The developmental patterns of most children correspond in general to their age and the growth is gradual and predictable. The major developmental characteristics of each age level in the physical, intellectual, language, social and emotional aspects are outlined in this chapter as a general reference for pre-primary educators. The developmental characteristics are tabulated in Appendix 2 to help pre-primary educators to have a better understanding of the development of children aged between 2 and 6. It should be noted, however, that the age-related expectations in this chapter and Appendix 2 should be treated as a guide only, as child development progresses at varying rates within and among children. No two children are exactly alike and within every individual, the rate of various areas of development also differs. Educators are advised to use the information with flexibility and draw relevant verifications in the light of their daily observations.

2.1.2 Local pre-primary institutions assign children to various classes according to their age. In line with this practice, this Chapter provides some important learning objectives on nurturing children according to the developmental characteristics of each age level for the reference of pre-primary educators. In referring to the objectives suggested in this Chapter, pre-primary educators should pay attention to the following:

1. In daily operations, “play”, “learning” and “care” should be taken as a whole since all the three elements contribute to the overall development of a child and have a mutually stimulating effect.
2. The development of each age level has a bridging effect on another age level. A former developmental stage lays the foundation for the next. Therefore, the coherence and continuity of the learning objectives of each stage should be attended to in the course of implementation.
3. “Spoon-fed” teaching approach should be abandoned. Children should be given chances to acquire practical experience through direct participation. Their motivation to participate in activities and to learn should be reinforced.
4. While striving to achieve the learning objectives of each age level, adjustments should be made to take into account the characteristics of pre-primary institutions, the community as well as the cultural background of parents. The objectives set should not be too high to avoid overburdening children and subjecting them to unnecessary pressure.

5. In the course of implementation, regular and timely evaluations should be made for the purpose of further improvement.

2.2 Characteristics of 2-year-olds

- 2.2.1 **Physical Development** – Although 2-year-old children can do all the basic movements, e.g. sitting, standing, walking, running, crawling and jumping, etc., they may not be able to master some newly-learned actions such as walking up and down stairs. Children of this age require most attention because they are usually very energetic but unaware of danger. As to the manipulation of fingers, their dexterity and good eye-hand co-ordination are fully reflected in their actions, such as piling up several toy blocks. Children at this stage show that they are more at ease with using the right hand or the left and are capable to twisting a cap off a bottle or turning a doorknob.

- 2.2.2 **Intellectual Development** – Though their attention span is rather short, children of this age begin to show that they have the power of memory and try to imitate others' gestures and language. Basic concepts, such as matching, shapes, sizes, etc., are gradually built up. Moreover, children of this age start to recognise their names and are capable of identifying themselves or their family members in mirrors or photos. They remember some names and functions of the five senses and four limbs. At play, they like to try new playthings and re-assemble toys after dismantling them.

- 2.2.3 Language Development – The emergence of memory and concepts contributes to the basic foundation of language development of 2-year-olds. They are able to look for objects by following instructions, and can understand some common nouns, verbs and adjectives. If adults want to stop them from doing something, they are able to say “no” in reply. They can also use limited vocabulary and short sentences to express their wishes. At this stage, their pronunciation may not be accurate and their language still includes some childish or self-created words and sounds. They also use one word to represent various meanings. For instance, “car” is used to signify all kinds of vehicles.
- 2.2.4 Emotional Development – 2-year-olds enjoy being praised and have a strong preference for beautiful clothes. If things go against their wish, they will easily get annoyed. However, they forget unhappy experience quickly as they are easily attracted by things and happenings around them. In everyday life, they tend to follow established rules and dislike changes. They are usually very lovely but rather self-centred. They are quite emotional and attached to adults.
- 2.2.5 Social Development – Children begin to extend their area of movement, respond to their surroundings, learn to get along with others, and show a certain degree of independence in their daily life. For example, they will try to eat by themselves with a spoon and drink water with a cup. They will also take off their clothes, shoes, socks,

etc. with the assistance of adults. However, 2-year-old children still do not understand the concept of sharing and therefore can only play on their own. Though they can wait for their turn and take part in simple play activities under the guidance of adults, they easily feel jealous and unhappy when their peers distract the attention of adults from them.

2.2.6 Learning objectives for 2-year-olds

1. To arouse children's interest and curiosity in their surroundings by using concrete objects and examples in their daily life and to help children learn from adult models by making use of their imitative capabilities.
2. To nurture children's wish to take part in play activities and to stimulate their interest in all kinds of activities.
3. To enhance children's comprehension of language, enrich their vocabulary, and foster their interest in reading through interaction with adults and their environment.
4. To cultivate in children the concept of observing regulations and help them develop good habits with the assistance of adults.
5. To enable children to develop trust in others and to help them build up a sense of security as well as confidence in a new environment through love and care.
6. To promote children's motor development and to provide conditions of free play for the further development of gross and fine motor skills.

2.3 Characteristics of 3-year-olds

- 2.3.1 Physical Development – Children’s fine motor skills develop at a later stage, but the ability in manipulating their hands enables them to look after themselves. 3-year-old children in general can eat with spoons and forks by themselves, drink with cups, dress and undress, do up and undo simple buttons, put on and take off shoes without shoe laces. They can also draw a circle or a cross with a crayon. At this stage, children’s gross motor skills develop faster and their body co-ordination is better than before. Most children of this age like to run, jump and ride a tricycle. Some may still need to rest both feet on one step in mounting a flight of stairs. When they get to three and a half years old, most of them have no difficulty in climbing or descending stairs with alternate foot.
- 2.3.2 Intellectual Development – Children’s life experience will directly affect the formation of concepts. At this stage, most children know their own names, their sexes and the names of the major parts of the body. They can also understand the meaning of such concepts as “above” and “below”, “front” and “back”, “beside”, “big” and “small”, “long” and “short”. They are able to tell whether things are the same or different and are capable of identifying several colours. Sometimes they can use words related to time and quantity, but cannot manage to grasp such concepts fully.

- 2.3.3 Language Development – The language skills of children develop rapidly at this stage. Basically, they can understand adults’ instructions and use simple language to express their feelings and needs. They can concentrate on listening to simple stories and like to sing simple songs or nursery rhymes. They also like to imitate words and phrases used by adults and can formulate a short sentence.
- 2.3.4 Emotional Development – Though some 3-year-olds still hold on to their views, most are already quite receptive to adults’ advice. On one hand, children of this age often experience fear and anxiety and need to get a sense of security from adults, on the other, they are very imaginative and keep talking to their toys or animals to express their feelings.
- 2.3.5 Social Development – Children of this age are not as self-centred as when they were 2 years old. They understand that they are required to observe regulations and have just begun to expand their social circle outside their family. They tend to play by themselves at the beginning but gradually get into the habit of sharing toys with other children and following simple rules of games through learning. Some children, however, remain “egocentric” and often want others to do what they say, resulting in frequent antagonistic behaviour. Therefore, adults need to guide them patiently.

2.3.6 Learning objectives for 3-year-olds

1. To enrich children's daily experience and to develop their interest in their surroundings.
2. To provide children with learning opportunities to improve their comprehension and expression, thus enabling them to express their needs, feelings and wishes through language.
3. To teach children to listen to others attentively.
4. To guide children to understand the consequence of their behaviour so that they will learn to observe regulations, accept others and experience the fun of playing with their mates.
5. To encourage children to act independently and to develop basic self-care skills.
6. To help children enjoy the pleasure of physical play and grasp some basic motor skills.
7. To develop children's imagination through different kinds of games, and to provide opportunities for them to apply their imagination and creativity in various games.

2.4 Characteristics of 4-year-olds

- 2.4.1 Physical Development – Children of this age can move their fingers dextrously and are able to draw simple pictures and do simple paper cutting and paste work. They can also construct “buildings” with toy blocks. They are also capable of dressing, undressing, buttoning up, brushing their teeth, folding paper and threading beads. Children of

this age also have a stronger physique and can walk for quite a long distance. They are quick in action and their basic movements are more dextrous. Not only are they able to run, jump, climb, or stand on one foot, but they are also more skilful in catching, throwing or riding a tricycle.

- 2.4.2 Intellectual Development – They have a better understanding of their surroundings. For example, their concept of time already enables them to tell what they usually do in the morning, afternoon and evening. For spatial concepts, they can distinguish positions such as “front”, “back”, “middle”, “first and last”, etc.. They are also able to count from one to ten. They have a preliminary concept of classification of objects, and are able to distinguish between what is light and heavy, thick and thin, and long and short. Some of them can even tell the right from the left.
- 2.4.3 Language Development – Children can speak clearly and speak out whatever they think of. They like to ask questions and can give brief descriptions of everyday life and pictures. They are also able to read simple words and phrases and use opposites.
- 2.4.4 Emotional Development – Their emotions may fluctuate occasionally, and they show strong affection or dislike. They are very imaginative and may confuse reality with imagination at times. 4-year-old children, in general, can observe simple rules and sometimes manage to behave properly to please adults.

2.4.5 Social Development – They have become more self-disciplined and are willing to observe the rules of games. They show politeness towards people and have learned to say “Thank you”, “Sorry”, etc.. They also know how to get along with strangers. But they still have very vague concepts of right and wrong, and only know that actions resulted in punishment are bad and those resulted in praise are good.

2.4.6 Learning objectives for 4-year-olds

1. To develop in children an interest in acquiring the knowledge of society and nature so as to enhance their concern and spirit of enquiry into their surroundings.
2. To develop in children some early mathematical concepts.
3. To provide children with communication opportunities and to enrich the content of conversations so that they are able to make use of language in enhancing their thinking, analysing, judgement and problem-solving skills.
4. To arouse children’s interest in reading and encourage them to start learning the written language.
5. To promote co-operation among children and to provide them with opportunities to assume responsibility so as to give them the sense of achievement.
6. To foster children’s good behaviour and habits.
7. To guide children to express their feelings appropriately and to control their emotions.
8. To strengthen children’s self-understanding and to help them build up a positive self-image.

9. To familiarise children with basic motor skills and to help them master more complicated motor skills.

2.5 Characteristics of 5-year-olds

- 2.5.1 Physical Development – They can fully control the movement of their wrists to fold paper and use the scissors. They use the pencil and painting brush skilfully and can produce simple art and craft work. In taking care of themselves, they know how to eat and pick up food with chopsticks or comb their hair by themselves. Children of this age are able to walk at fast as adults. They can easily walk on a narrow path and are rather skilful in climbing, crawling, sliding and swinging. They can also dance to the music and do physical games.
- 2.5.2 Intellectual Development – They have acquired the basic concepts and skills of reading, writing and early mathematics. They can understand fairly well the concepts of time, space, quantity and classification of objects. They can put objects of different lengths, heights widths and sizes in correct order and are able to count from one to twenty. They can also describe the contents of pictures shown to them.
- 2.5.3 Language Development – The grammar and structure of children's language at this stage are more or less the same as adults. They can communicate with family members or other children and are able to

talk in turn without digressing from the subject. They can give a logical account of what has happened recently. They can also transmit simple messages and enjoy telling stories.

2.5.4 Emotional Development – Being emotionally more stable, they begin to express their emotions by means of language, have better self-control and are willing to accept constructive comments from adults. Occasionally, however, they still need to be reminded by adults.

2.5.5 Social Development – In terms of self-care ability, they have become more independent. They can choose suitable clothes, bathe by themselves and do some simple housework. As regards social behaviour, they begin to choose the playmates they like. They also participate in co-operative games involving several peers and are willing to abide by the rules of the game. Besides, they have also learnt to protect the weak and to console others.

2.5.6 Learning objectives for 5-year-olds

1. To develop an awareness of the community so as to enhance children's knowledge and concern in things which are closely related to daily life.
2. To arouse children's interest in learning and to impart to them some basic knowledge in mathematical concepts, simple calculations, natural science, etc..

3. To strengthen children's abilities and interests in reading, and to improve their writing skills and language proficiency.
4. To encourage children to develop co-operative attitudes towards active participation in various activities so as to promote their social development.
5. To guide children to appreciate the pleasure of group life and to develop correct concepts of their roles and responsibilities in a group.
6. To help children cultivate good character and good behaviour, as well as to teach them how to accept and appreciate themselves and other people.
7. To strengthen children's aesthetic appreciation and to stimulate their creative potentials.

2.6 Children's Learning

2.6.1 The Meaning of Learning

Learning is a self-motivated psychological activity which leads to modifications in children's knowledge, skills, habits and attitudes, both in terms of quality and quantity, resulting in a change of behaviour which will persist.

Learning also originates from external "stimulus" experienced by children. Responding to such stimulus, their innate learning motives would be aroused, resulting in behavioural changes.

2.6.2 Conditions for Learning

Learning is in fact affected by internal and external conditions. Internal conditions refer to certain pre-requisites that children should possess for learning. These include physical fitness, mental maturity, comprehensive power and stable emotions, etc.. External condition refers to the living environment of children, including suitable learning opportunities and interesting learning materials, etc.. The acceptance and encouragement by adults are of course very important as well.

2.6.3 Elements of Learning

The elements of learning comprise knowledge, skills and attitude which are developed in children through participating in learning activities.

- a. Knowledge : Knowledge means the understanding of things. It is generally acquired through the memorisation and comprehension of facts and information. Another effective way of acquiring knowledge is through organising and grouping together things or events with similar characteristics to form specific concepts.

The pre-primary educator should take into consideration the interests and comprehensive power of children in the selection of teaching materials. To young children, it is of primary importance to have knowledge about oneself. As they gradually grow up, they will divert their attention from themselves to the people and things around them. At this stage, the pre-primary educator can

make use of things in daily life as examples and guide them to learn through appropriate means.

- b. Skills : Skills refer to the various abilities acquired from learning, e.g. language proficiency, social skills, self-care abilities, motor skills, etc.. Skills training is attained through diversified activities and the provision of a suitable environment for children so that they can master different skills through repeated practices.
- c. Attitudes : Attitude refers to value judgement, power of appreciation and a person's orientation in behaviour. A child's attitude is directly affected by his/her degree of maturity and his family background. The behaviour of pre-primary educators, as well as the objectives and nature of activities also have a positive effect on the development of the child's attitude.

While one of the elements of learning mentioned above may be more prominent in certain learning activities, these elements of learning should be integrated in most circumstances. For example, in introducing the topic "Rabbits", children can learn about the appearance and behaviour of rabbits by observation. Children can also be given the opportunity to feed and take care of rabbits, and eventually develop a caring attitude towards small animals. They will understand that like human beings, rabbits also need food and rest, and that both rabbits and human beings are animals. In so doing, the concept of "animal" is gradually formed.

Chapter 3

Principles of Curriculum Planning

3.1 General Introduction

Broadly speaking, the pre-primary curriculum refers to all the programmes which take place in the pre-primary institution, including health inspections, toileting, meals, rest, music activities, story telling, art and craft, group learning, games, and all kinds of indoor and outdoor activities. These programmes should be well planned by the pre-primary educator, and should meet the needs and interests of young children. Children should be encouraged to participate actively in all learning programmes that cater for the all-round development in all aspects.

3.2 Principles of Curriculum Planning

The planning of pre-primary curriculum should be based on the following principles :

3.2.1 Catering for the overall physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social development of children.

Children's physical, intellectual, language, emotional and social developments are all interrelated. Therefore, in curriculum planning, the emphasis should not be placed solely on the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but also on children's physical development, emotions, responses, thoughts and attitudes.

3.2.2 Meeting the developmental needs and abilities of children

Children have to acquire certain basic knowledge, skills and social behaviours at different age level. In planning the curriculum, educators should make the best use of children's motivation to learn with due respect to their needs and abilities. For instance, while the self-care abilities of 2 or 3-year-olds are limited and are emotionally dependent on adults, they begin to develop the concept of independence. Therefore, in curriculum planning, due consideration should be given to the development of self-care abilities and the building up of the sense of security and confidence through routine training and diversified free play activities. The acquisition of knowledge on academic subjects should not be over-emphasised. When children are forced to learn at inappropriate times, they will experience frustration and failures, and in turn develop negative attitude towards learning. On the other hand, if children's ability is under-estimated and their learning is delayed, they are deprived of the opportunity to be stimulated and to develop. However, as children differ in character and ability, flexibility should be exercised in designing the curriculum to ensure that the needs of individual children are met and that every child can fully develop his/her potentials and strengths, and enhance his/her self-confidence.

3.2.3 Relating to the experiences and interests of children

Children's previous experiences are a vital source of knowledge acquisition. Therefore, curriculum planning should be based on the experiences of children and should be drawn from the environment in

which they live. Learning proceeds from the known to the unknown, from the surface to the underlying, from the near to the far away, and from the simple to the complicated. In this manner, children's horizons could be broadened gradually. Moreover, the contents of the curriculum should be of interest to children so that they are self-motivated to take an active role in learning. As children's interests change with their age, it is imperative to follow their interests and make use of the best opportunity to engage their interest in activities and learning.

3.2.4 Motivating children's curiosity and thirst for knowledge, and encouraging interactions and independent thinking

The curriculum should offer children opportunities to discover, experiment and explore. Children first learn from their sensory experiences. Children are curious and active by nature and they learn about people, events and objects in the physical world by looking, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting. Children need to learn through interaction with pre-primary educators in the course of various activities. Through mutual support from peers, imitation, co-operation and collaboration, children will learn to think, assume, provide and conclude. The whole learning process is an expanding and continuing process. When adults have everything planned and teach children solely through words and pictures, or they ask them to learn the teaching materials by heart, they deter children from thinking and acting independently. The results obtained are just superficial and children will only become passive and dependent learners.

3.2.5 Fostering knowledge, skills and attitudes in different areas of learning. A balanced curriculum is required for the all-round development of children. To design a balanced curriculum, the contents covered should include the learning of knowledge, concepts and skills, as well as the acquisition of proper attitudes in language activities, early mathematics, natural science and social studies. At the pre-primary stage, children should be helped to develop proper attitudes towards themselves, other people and the physical world. This is just as important as the mastering of concrete knowledge and concepts of the environment, the application of knowledge and life skills. Furthermore, the knowledge and concepts of different areas of learning imparted to children should be accurate, based on evidence and appropriate to children's abilities.

3.2.6 Using themes for the purpose of flexible curriculum integration

The thematic approach is the prevalent curriculum model in pre-primary education nowadays. Pre-primary educators should choose those themes appropriate to children's experiences and interests and design a series of learning activities based on the concept of the spiral curriculum. This approach should complement the principle of balanced curriculum planning, and aims at helping children to acquire knowledge and skills in different areas and foster proper attitudes through various activities. It goes without saying that, detailed planning is needed for this approach, under which clearly defined teaching objectives, contents and activities have to be set beforehand. This prior arrangement, however, may lack

flexibility, hence ignoring children's tendency to learn freely and spontaneously. Thus, when designing the outline of thematic teaching, allowance should be made for children to offer inputs, or flexibility should be built in to adjust and revise the activities so as to accommodate to the instant responses and interests of children.

3.2.7 Promoting the unique values and functions of different kinds of play activities

Play is an important part in the development of children. Different kinds of play activities have their unique educational purposes and values to enhance the holistic development of children. To achieve the maximum effectiveness, each activity in the curriculum programme should have clearly defined objectives.

3.2.8 Providing children with opportunities to express themselves, to be creative and to enjoy the fun of activities

Play promotes initiative, independence, entertainment and creativity. Consideration should be given to these features in the design of play activities, and suitable opportunities and counselling should be provided to let children choose at their own will, to express themselves freely, to exercise their creativity and to enjoy activities in a joyous atmosphere. Through observation, experiencing and imagination, children's creativity is stimulated. Their sense of aesthetic appreciation, achievement and confidence is also enhanced. The pre-primary educator should give due importance to the process rather than the outcome of the activities.

3.2.9 Giving due consideration to children's family background and their experiences gained in the family

Children are nurtured in their respective families. Their growth and development are, therefore, closely related to their family background. In designing the curriculum, the pre-primary educator should take into account parents' ways of bringing up their children, their habits, and education and economic backgrounds. In so doing, there will be co-ordination and mutual understanding between the institution and family life, and both parties can play their roles more effectively. The pre-primary educator should help parents understand the needs of their children and familiarise them with the activities carried out in the institution so that the nurturing method of the family is in line with the institution.

3.2.10 Meeting the needs and development of society

"Children" is a part of our society. Curriculum planning should be in line with the needs and development of society. When the pattern of daily living in our society changes, various life skills required by children will also change. The contents of the curriculum should, therefore, be updated and revised in response to the prevailing developments in society. Furthermore, children's neighbourhood should also be taken into account. Children should be guided to keep abreast with the progress of the community and be informed of the available community facilities, services and activities. In this manner, children's social and civic awareness, and their relationship with the community will be enhanced. For example, when the theme of

public transport is introduced to children, the Mass Transit Railway should also be included in addition to the traditional modes of transport like the car, bus, train and ferry. If the pre-primary institution is located near the Light Rail Transport, the theme chosen can also be based on this means of transport.

Chapter 4

Principles of Curriculum Implementation

4.1 General Introduction

While an ideal curriculum is based on the principles mentioned in the previous chapter, other factors also contribute to the success of curriculum implementation. Firstly, effective curriculum implementation depends on the professional knowledge of pre-primary educators, their attitudes and skills of implementation, and the availability of a well-prepared learning environment and facilities. Secondly, the daily schedule of activities of the pre-primary institution should cater for the developmental needs of different age groups, and group work needs to be flexibly designed to ensure the effective use of both time and space. Furthermore, objective and systematic evaluation is also an integral part of curriculum implementation as it helps pre-primary educators to evaluate the effectiveness of activities and identify areas for improvement. Finally, children's development stems from the family and, therefore, parental involvement has an important role on the implementation of the pre-primary curriculum. This chapter will give a detailed account of the factors mentioned above.

4.2 The Role of the Pre-primary Educator

The pre-primary educator is a key factor contributing to the success of the implementation of the pre-primary curriculum. Her mastery of principles and rationale of curriculum planning, her preparation before lessons, as well as her

attitudes and skills in conducting activities will directly affect the effectiveness of children's learning. In short the pre-primary educator should attend to the following important points:

4.2.1 Understand the characteristics of child development

The pre-primary educator should understand the temperament of children, the characteristics of their development, their style of living, cultural background as well as their experiences and abilities to ensure that the curriculum provided for children meets their developmental needs.

4.2.2 Establish good relationship with children

The pre-primary educator should adopt a caring, receptive and open attitude towards children. She should listen to children patiently and encourage them to express their feelings, raise questions and voice their opinions. While conducting activities, she should use simple sentences, open-ended questions as well as simple instructions to help children understand the learning contents. She can also use eye contact, smile, nods or other body language to show children her appreciation, encouragement and consolation. When children begin to feel that they are respected and accepted, and when they begin to trust the pre-primary educators, they will be more confident to make new attempts in the learning process.

4.2.3 Provide varied learning experiences

Before conducting any curriculum activities, the pre-primary educator

should make ample preparation, e.g. preparation of lesson plans, collection of teaching materials, arrangement of the learning environment, production of teaching aids, etc. so as to provide a rich and well-arranged learning environment. The pre-primary educator should encourage active participation and interaction among children during the activities. At the same time, she should make the most of children's learning opportunities to enrich their experiences. Besides, she should be responsive to changes in the learning environment as well as children's interest, and give children appropriate guidance whenever necessary.

4.2.4 Create pleasurable learning atmosphere

The pre-primary educator should be optimistic, amiable and humorous. These personal qualities, together with the active participation of the pre-primary educator in activities, can create a pleasurable learning environment which will enhance children's initiative and involvement in learning, as well as stimulate their creative and imaginative power.

4.2.5 Set a model for children

Children learn by imitation. The pre-primary educator should pay special attention to her behaviour and attitude which will directly or indirectly affect the development of children. She should set good examples to children and behave properly including attending to her personal hygiene, social manners, and transmitting positive social values such as "concern", "friendliness", "willingness to share", "eagerness to help", etc.. She must practise what she teaches and

demonstrate compliance with a code of ethics in word and deed in all activities in the course of delivering the curriculum. As children regard their pre-primary educators as role models, they learn desirable attitudes and behaviours from them, thus developing their potentials in all areas.

4.2.6 Promote the overall co-ordination of the pre-primary institution

The concerted effort of staff of every rank in a pre-primary institution contributes to the smooth implementation of the pre-primary curriculum. To improve the overall co-ordination work in the pre-primary institution, it is necessary for pre-primary educators to promote mutual understanding and co-operation among themselves through communication channels within the institutions such as meetings, newsletters and daily conversations. It is more desirable if educators can share their working experiences, achievements and failures, joys and sorrows so as to establish a mutually supporting system. They should also attach importance to professional enrichment and try to take up different responsibilities to enhance their professional knowledge. Through effective co-ordination of the pre-primary institution, the aims of pre-primary education will be achieved.

4.3 The Learning Environment

4.3.1 General Introduction

The classroom is an important learning venue for children. A well-designed and decorated classroom not only creates a delightful atmosphere but also promotes effective learning. Therefore, the pre-primary educator should prepare a comprehensive and detailed plan when arranging the classroom. The allocation of space, e.g. passages between tables and chairs, the separation of “quiet” and “active” activity centres, the design of display boards and the overall layout should be in line with the teaching themes. These arrangements aim at providing an environment with adequate space for free movement, easy access to toys and learning materials, and serve the purpose of stimulating children to learn.

4.3.2 Safety

Pre-primary institutions should observe the safety regulations and guidelines issued by the Government to ensure that children learn in a safe environment. The floor surfaces must be flat and non-slippery. All exits and staircases are to be kept free from obstruction. Furniture and equipment should not have protruding corners, nails or splinters. Moreover, all toys and articles used should be non-toxic and free from lead. Pre-primary educators should also prevent children from playing small articles such as beads and buttons. Broken articles should be repaired or discarded. Moreover, first aid kits should be easily accessible. To minimise accidents, children's

safety should always be the top priority when designing the classroom layout and planning activities.

4.3.3 Wall and floor

Classrooms should be spacious. Narrow and elongated rooms or rooms with large pillars should be avoided. The rooms should have suitable facilities and space for activities, adequate lighting and good ventilation. It is advisable to paint the wall with a soft colour to give a natural and comfortable feeling. The use of bright coloured paints on the other hand will help to arouse children's pleasant and exciting feelings. Walls which are within easy reach of children can be covered with plastic boards or ceramic tiles to facilitate easy cleaning or posting of children's work. The floor surface must be kept clean and dry at all times. The materials used for covering the floor should be of a more durable nature, easy to clean, able to absorb sound, and suitable for sitting, e.g. rubber tiles, rubber mats, etc.

4.3.4 Layout of activity centres

To prepare an activity centre which caters for children's interests, the pre-primary educator must observe specified requirements in size and capacity. "Active" and "quiet" activity centres should be separated to avoid groups of children disturbing each other. Interest corners, toys and facilities for creative activities should be diversified and changed periodically according to the developmental needs of children. Toys should be provided in activity centres for individual or group activities. For reading or home corners, soft mats or cushions should

be placed so that children can take a rest there. Individual child should also be allowed to go inside alone to calm down his/her emotion when necessary. If the room is too small due to physical constraints, special installations could be used e.g. movable shelves, sand boxes, water tanks, etc..

4.3.5 Arrangement of furniture

To ensure effective supervision, the height of classroom furniture or partitioning boards should not block the view of the pre-primary educator. The furniture should not be centralised in one specific learning centre but should be placed evenly and fully utilised for partitioning purposes. The height of toy and art cabinets or racks should be within easy reach of children. Cabinets should be sufficiently heavy to be stable and equipped with locking wheels so they can be easily moved or used as partitions. The back of cabinets can also be used for display of children's work. It is advisable to arrange tables and chairs in groups due to the following advantages :

1. More space could be spared for activity centres.
2. Toys and teaching aids may be used effectively and flexibly so that children may have more fun.
3. Children, when seated in groups, will have more chances to interact with one another and it is also easier to swap activities.
4. Such arrangement will help the pre-primary educator to give individual care and attention to children, build up a cordial and friendly relationship with children, and help to make the atmosphere in the classroom more relaxed.

Tables can be arranged in different combinations. The height of tables and chairs should be of the height that children can rest their forearms when they sit down. The height of chairs should be such that the feet of children can reach the ground when they are sitting. Desks should be placed near cabinets that store learning materials on condition that there is sufficient space for children to move around.

4.3.6 Displays inside the classroom

Display boards and strings can be used inside the classroom to display children's work. Potted-plants can also be used to beautify the classroom. The layout of the classroom can be periodically changed according to the curriculum so as to give children a fresh impression all the time. The display on boards can also motivate children to learn. Displaying children's work should serve as an encouragement to children rather than an exhibition of a small number of outstanding work. Each child should have a chance to exhibit his/her work, and participate in mounting displays and hanging decorations. Exhibits should be changed periodically and mounted within the eye level of children.

4.3.7 Arrangement for physical activities

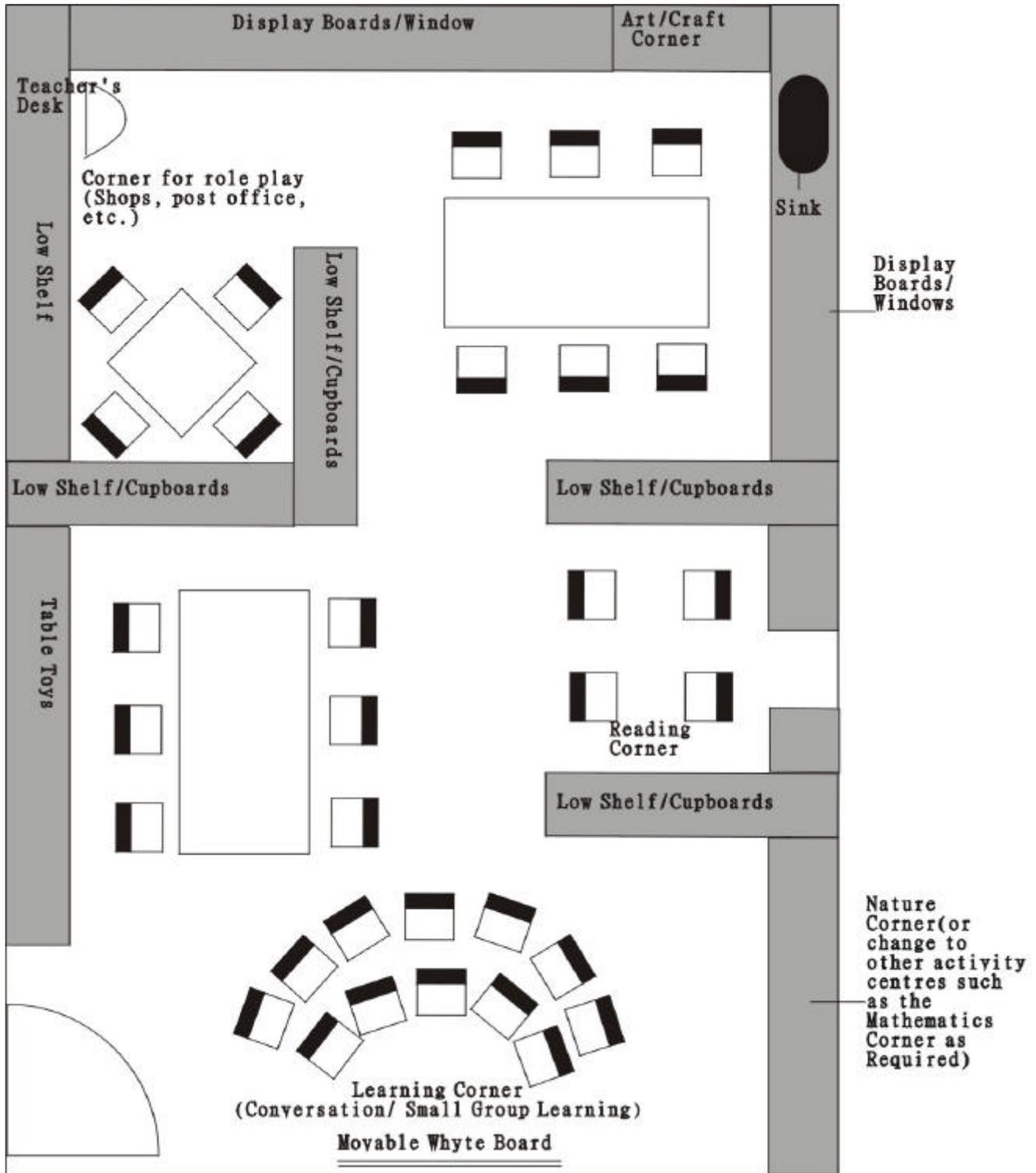
Factors such as safety, space, floor materials, etc., should not be overlooked when arranging a suitable physical play area. For pre-primary institutions with outdoor areas, there should also be an indoor area for gross motor activities on rainy days. For institutions

without outdoor areas, the indoor play area should be spacious, and the noise problem should also be taken into consideration. Pre-primary educators can occasionally take children in groups to nearby parks or sitting-out areas, provided that there is sufficient manpower to look after the children. Equipment for physical play should be in varied forms. This can help to promote children's interest in climbing, crawling, balancing, jumping, etc.. Physical play can also be integrated with role play. For instance, traffic signs, roadblocks, and petrol stations, etc., can be placed in cycling areas to enable children to have more fun in playing. If activities take place outdoors, careful planning and preparation must be made before the outdoor activities take place to ensure that sufficient manpower will be deployed to take care of children to minimise the possibility of accidents. As to outdoor/indoor physical play, pre-primary educators should train children to observe rules and help them know what they should do to ensure their own safety and that of other children. Moreover, special attention should be paid to the suitability of the venue as well as the safety standards of play equipment. Carpets or rubber mats should be placed under the equipment. Regular checking of all play facilities is required to make sure that nothing has been damaged. The joints of iron or wooden equipment are liable to damage and wear and tear. When damage or defects are detected, repair work should be done immediately. To ensure safety, pre-primary educators should double check the apparatus and equipment before using them.

4.3.8 Classroom Layout

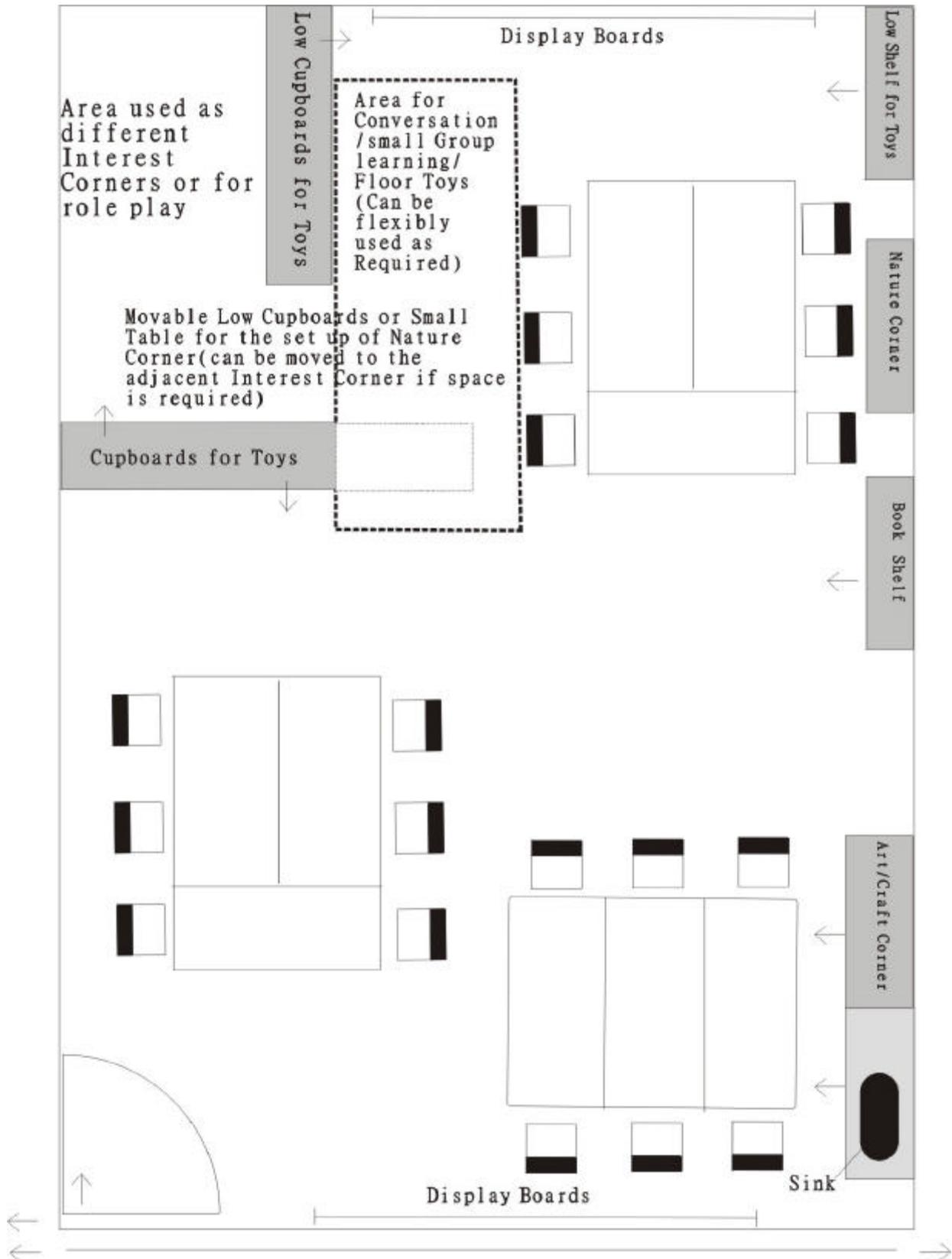
Classroom is the place where various activities of children take place. The pre-primary educator should be aware of the importance of the learning environment. A well-planned and well-prepared learning environment when flexibly used, will provide a fruitful and stimulating setting and maximise opportunities for children's learning. Three sample classroom layout plans are given below:

Classroom layout plan* - Sample 1



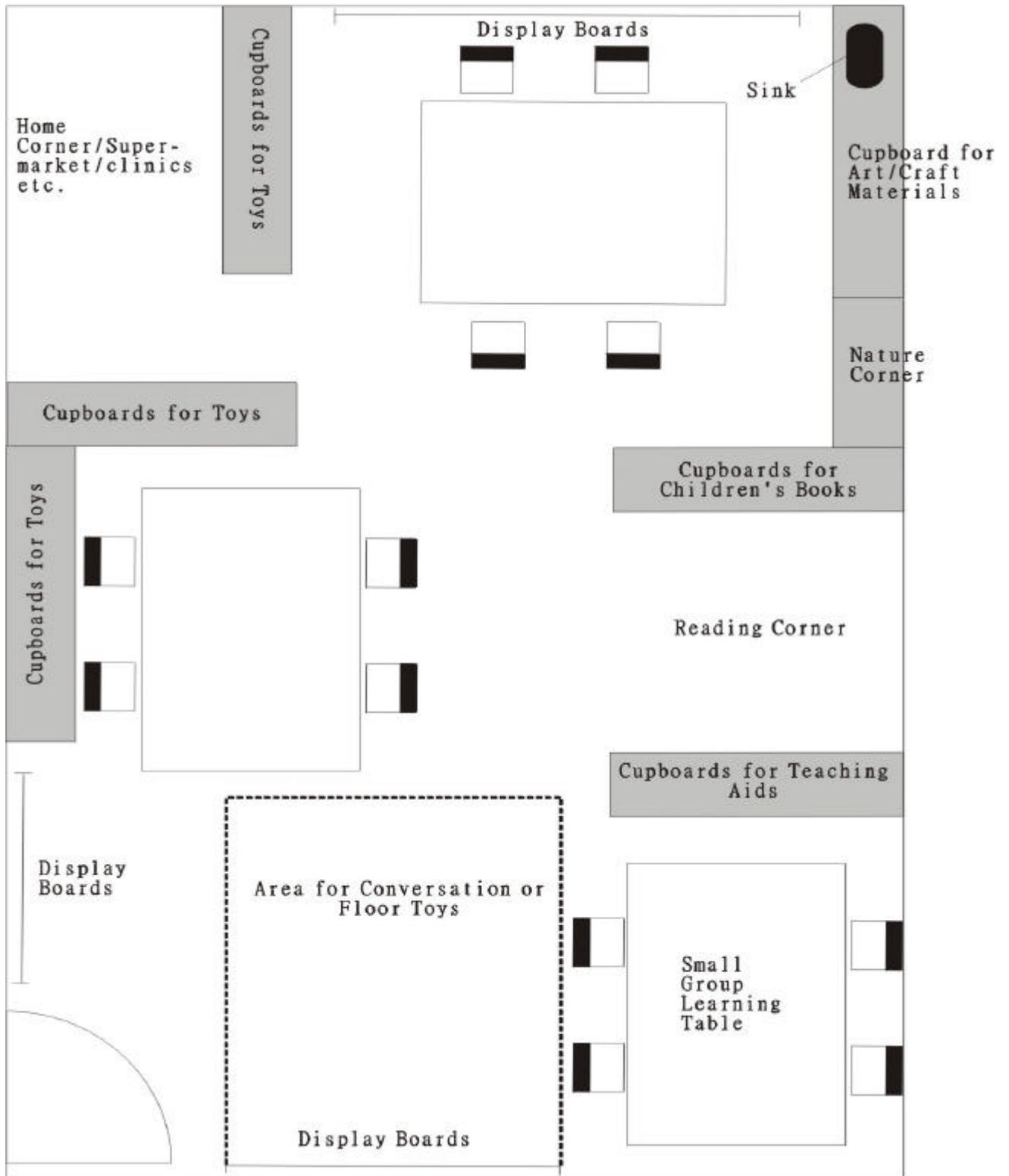
*The arrangement of the classroom layout plan should vary according to the resources of each individual classroom.

Classroom layout plan* - Sample 2



*The arrangement of the classroom layout plan should vary according to the resources of each individual classroom.

Classroom layout plan* - Sample 3



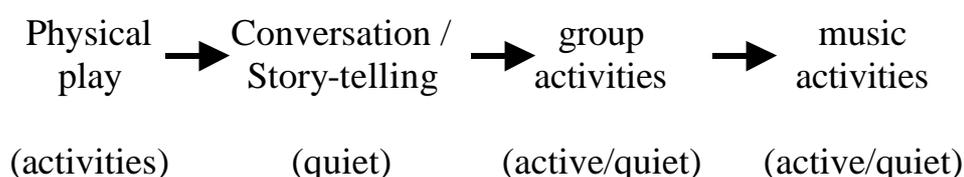
*The arrangement of the classroom layout plan should vary according to the resources of each individual classroom.

4.4 Schedule of a Day and Use of Time

4.4.1 Beginning at birth, children learn through making sense of every physical experience and they accumulate these repeated and frequent experiences that may have positive or negative effects on their development. Likewise, the curriculum offered and every minute spent in the pre-primary institution have direct or indirect effects on their learning. To help children achieve a balanced development, subject teaching or the sheer delivery of academic knowledge should be avoided in organising the schedule of the day. Activities should be geared to children's developmental needs and their behavioural characteristics of different stages. Furthermore, the use of time should also be flexible. Some of the principles for drawing up and use of time-tables are as follows:

1. Keep the balance of “active” and “quiet” activities :

Children need “quiet” activities to replenish their energy exerted in strenuous activities in the same way as they need some relaxing activities to regulate their body and mind after taking part in academic learning. Maintaining a balance in the “active” and the “quiet” activities not only meets children's need of physical activity but also enables them to calm down their excitement through quiet activities. Activities should be so arranged that “active” activities are followed by “quiet” ones, or vice versa, as shown below :



2. Provide opportunities to explore independently and develop social relationship :

While pre-primary children are self-centred, active and curious, they are rather weak in concentration. They need social life, but have difficulty in co-operating with others. Therefore, they should be given opportunities to work in groups and to co-operate with other children so that they can learn the proper ways of dealing with people and handling problems. The pre-primary educator should allocate time for group learning and physical play, prepare a flexible and free indoor and outdoor learning environment, and provide children with opportunities to explore individually, in small groups or as a whole class. Given the stimulating learning environment, children should be allowed to move freely and happily and exercise a degree of choice of activities. They may work or stay alone at one activity centre to enjoy the privacy with their toys, or they can participate in exploratory, creative or entertaining activities with two or three friends or the entire group. Such an arrangement will be conducive to children's social development. Group activities such as play activities and certain routine activities help children learn to observe discipline and get along with others.

3. Motivate children to learn and provide opportunities to explore and investigate :

Children have to learn through their sensory perception. To meet their special needs, the schedule of activities should include art and craft activities, music, life skills training so that children can be

satisfied and build up their self-confidence through observation, investigation and practice.

4. Planning varied activities to gear to children's abilities and interests :

Ideally, activities for children should be planned to gear to their interests and needs. Thus, in organising activities, the amount of time allocated for various activities should reflect age, needs, interests and abilities of children. Younger children require more time to take food and wash their hands because their self-care ability is limited. Moreover, as the concentration span is short, the duration of those activities that call for a high degree of concentration, such as listening to stories and music, should be kept as short as possible. Adequate resources should be provided for small group learning. Free choice activities should be varied in content and the time spent on each of these activities should not be too long.

- 4.4.2 In drawing up the daily routine, the pre-primary educator should observe the following:

1. Children's toilet time should be flexibly arranged, depending on the environment and conditions of the institution.
2. The organisation of daily group activities requires the pre-primary educator to provide a number of varied free choice activities for children. Arrangements should also be made so that they can complete several activities each day. The pre-primary educator can take one or two groups for small group learning by rotation

each day but each child should have a chance to finish all the activities over the week.

3. Class teaching and group activities should be taken as a whole, serving to achieve the learning objectives. Therefore, the duration of each period in the timetable need not be strictly adhered to.

4.4.3 Since kindergartens and day nurseries have different service hours, the arrangement of time-tables will be different. The time-tables for half-day/full-day kindergartens and day nurseries are listed below for reference of pre-primary educators to enable them to have a general idea of the arrangement of activities of pre-primary institutions.

Sample Time-table for Half-day Day Nurseries

Day of the Week Time (am/pm)	MONDAY - FRIDAY
8:30 – 9:00 12:45 – 1:00	Admission (health inspections, conversation : Including general knowledge, sharing of everyday experience and news)
9:00 – 9:45 1:00 – 1:45	Physical Play
9:45 – 10:15 1:45 – 2:15	Snacks
10:15 – 11:15 2:15 – 3:15	Small Group Learning, Learning Activities and Free Choice Activities
11:15 – 12:00 3:15 – 4:00	Music/art and Craft Activities/Story-telling/ Interest Activities/Group Games
12:00 – 12:30 4:00 – 4:30	Free Choice Activities/Discharge

Sample Time-table for Full-day Day Nurseries

Day of the Week Time	MON - FRI	SAT
8:00 – 8:45 am	Admission, Health Inspections, Free-Choice Activities	
8:45 – 9:15	Breakfast	
9:15 – 9:30	Conversation : including General Knowledge, Sharing of Everyday Experience and News	
9:30 – 10:30	Small Group Learning, Learning Activities and Free Choice Activities	Free Choice Activities and Interest Activities
10:30 – 10:45	Snacks	
10:45 – 11:30	Physical Play	
11:30 – 12:15	Music / Rhythmic movement / Story-telling / Sharing of Everyday Experience	Lunch
12:15 – 1:00 pm	Lunch	Free Choice Activities / Discharge
1:00 – 3:00	Afternoon Nap	
3:00 – 3:45	Physical Play	
3:45 – 4:15	Snacks	
4:15 – 4:45	Music / Rhythmic Movement / Interest Activities / Games / Free Choice Activities	
4:45 – 6:00	Free Choice Activities / Discharge	

Sample Time-table for Half-day Kindergartens

Day of the Week Time (am/pm)	MONDAY – FRIDAY / SATURDAY
9:00 – 9:30 9:30 – 1:30	Welcome / Whole-class Learning (health inspections, conversation : general knowledge, story-telling, sharing of everyday experience)
9:30 – 10:15 1:30 – 2:15	Small Group Learning, Learning Activities and Free Choice Activities
10:15 – 10:30 2:15 – 2:30	Snacks
10:30 – 11:45 2:30 – 3:45	Physical Play Interest Activities / Art and Craft Activities Music Activities

11:45 – 12:00 3:45 – 4:00	Tidying up, Getting Ready to Go Home
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Sample Time-table for Full-day Kindergartens

Day of the Week Time	MONDAY - FRIDAY	SATURDAY
9:00 – 9:30 am	Welcome / Whole-class Learning (health inspections, conversation : general knowledge, story-telling, sharing of everyday experience)	
9:30 – 10:15	Small Group Learning, Learning Activities and Free Choice Activities	
10:15 – 10:30	Snacks	
10:30 – 12:00 noon	Physical Play / Interest Activities / Story-telling / Nursery Rhymes	
		Tidying up, Getting Ready to Go Home
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Lunch (including preparation, lunch time and tidying up)	
1:00 – 3:00	Afternoon Nap	
3:00 – 3:30	Interest Activities / Physical Play	
3:30 – 3:45	Snacks	
3:45 – 4:15	Music Activities	
4:15 – 4:30	Tidying up, Getting Ready to Go Home	

The above samples are for reference only. Individual pre-primary institutions should plan their daily schedule in the light of circumstances and needs, and make adjustments to the above suggested time-tables whenever necessary.

The approximate time allocation for each activity is outlined below:

Time Allocation of Activities in Day Nurseries

Activities	Approximate Time Allocation (minutes)	
	Full-day	Half-day
Admission (health inspections, breakfast, free choice activities, conversation : including general knowledge, sharing of everyday experience and news)	75 – 90	15 – 30 (excluding breakfast time)
Group Activities (small group learning, learning activities and free choice activities)	60 – 75	40 – 60
Physical Play	45 – 90	30 – 45
Creative Activities (e.g. music, rhythmic movement, art and craft activities, etc.)	40 – 60	20 – 30
Language activities (e.g. story-telling / conversation / sharing of news, etc.)	20 – 40	20 – 30
Interest Activities (e.g. group games / making simple snacks / science experiments, etc.)	30 – 40	20 – 30
Meal (tidying up, lunch time, snack time)	45 – 60	15 – 20
Afternoon Nap	120 – 135	-
Toilet Time *	50 – 75	20 – 30
Discharge	30 – 90	15 – 30

* Note : “Toilet Time” should be arranged according to the individual needs of children. They may also go to toilet in groups before or after breakfast, snack or lunch time, afternoon nap and physical play, under different classroom situations.

Time Allocation of Activities in Day Kindergartens

Activities	Approximate Time Allocation (minutes)	
	Full-day	Half-day
Welcome / Whole class Learning (health inspections, conversation : general knowledge, story-telling, sharing of everyday experience, etc.)	15 – 30	15 – 30
Group Activities	40 – 60	40 – 60
Physical Play	45 – 90	30 – 45
Creative Activities (e.g. music, art and craft activities, etc.)	40 – 60	30
Interest Activities (e.g. group games / making simple snacks / science experiments, etc.)	30 – 40	20 – 30
Meal (tidying up, lunch time, snack time)	60	15 – 20
Afternoon Nap	90 – 120	-

4.5 Grouping

4.5.1 The daily schedule of learning activities should be arranged with flexibility for the purpose of making effective use of available resources, increasing children's concentration and promoting learning through personal experience. Suggestion on grouping, group activities and the role of the pre-primary educator are briefly introduced below:

1. Grouping

In general, learning activities can be in the form of whole class learning, small group learning and individual learning. (In small group learning, children may be grouped according to the same age or mixed ages.) In grouping children, the pre-primary educator should consider factors such as the needs of children and classroom management.

a. Whole class learning

Whole class learning can be used to present the content of the theme, and conducting activities in music, story-telling, sharing experience and nursery rhymes. Gathering children on a whole-class basis provides them with opportunities to share and express their views and develop their language skills. This will enhance their concentration and help calm them emotionally, thus helping them to switch from one activity to another smoothly.

b. Small group learning

The pre-primary educator may design different curricular and a variety of learning activities according to the age, interests and abilities of children. Children are divided into small groups and are taught by turns. The pre-primary educator can observe children's progress and attend to individual needs, thus developing a closer relationship between the pre-primary educator and children. Small group learning provides children with ample opportunities to try and experiment on their own. This helps to build up their self-confidence, satisfy their curiosity and motivate self-initiated learning.

c. Individual learning

Individual learning should include both planned and incidental learning. When children are given the choice of free activities or individual learning, the pre-primary educator should direct their attention to them regularly, conduct incidental learning activities whenever appropriate and provide individual guidance to children according to their interests.

2. Planning of Activities

During group activities, children are divided into several small groups. While the majority of children will be allowed to learn on their own in an orderly manner, one group will be led by the pre-primary educator in their learning. To begin the day, the pre-primary educator may gather children together and talk to them for a while or sing some nursery rhymes with them so as to keep them in good mood before the activities are carried out. When

they have finished one activity, they should tidy up before starting another activity. To achieve the best learning effects, appropriate arrangements should be made to fully utilise space and resources. Some suggestions regarding grouping, activity programmes, content of activities and time allocation are listed below for reference :

a. Grouping

Though the pre-primary educator is expected to follow some established principles in grouping children, a certain degree of flexibility should be allowed, e.g. :

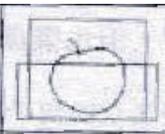
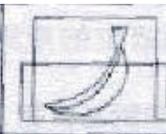
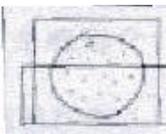
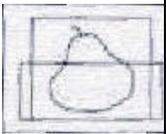
- i. In view of individual differences, children may be divided into 3 to 4 groups according to different abilities.
- ii. The number of children to be allocated in a group should depend on the age of children and the content to be taught. For instance, the size of a group for 2-year-olds or 3-year-olds should be smaller. If the content to be taught requires more time and individual practice, e.g. pouring water, fastening buttons and wiping table, etc., it is advisable to teach children individually or in groups of two.
- iii. Individual guidance should be given to children of relatively slow learning ability.

b. Activity Schedule

The pre-primary educator should consider the abilities and needs of children before drawing up the activity programme. For instance, group activities should be made simple and

flexible for 2-year-olds or 3-year-olds, who have shorter spans of concentration and are not able to follow established procedures on their own. In this case, children should be allowed to choose their activities freely except for one compulsory activity specified by the pre-primary educator. For children who are 4 or 5 years old, different activities may be conducted according to established procedures because they have better concentration and are capable of following established procedures. These activities can be scheduled in such a way that each group of children will participate in some individual activities in accordance with the programme. To enable children to carry out group activities in an orderly manner, it is suggested that the pre-primary educator should divide the activities into “group learning”, “learning activities” and “free choice activities”. Activities should be well co-ordinated and picture cards may be used to familiarise children with the activity programme. For example :

Activity Programme

Activity Programme	Group				
	1. Small group activity		1	4	3
2. Learning activity (1)		2	1	4	3
3. Learning activity (2)		3	2	1	4
4. Free choice activities		4	3	2	1

c. Activity Programme

- i. Small group learning – This includes learning of certain abstract concepts, such as mathematical and natural science concepts, and training that requires more practice like language proficiency, life skills, skills in art and craft as well as social skills.
- ii. Learning activities – These refer to activities which can be independently carried out by children to consolidate their own knowledge and experience, such as activities in art and craft, mathematics and language. Children may be asked to complete a number of different activities in the time allocated to learning activities.
- iii. Free choice activities – Children are given the choice to play games in the home corner, music corner, nature corner, toys corner or art and craft corner of their own choice, and are free to select different sorts of educational toys and teaching aids to play with. This may also be the time for children to have their refreshments. Alternatively, the whole class may be arranged to take refreshments together during this period of time or in groups at other times.

d. Allocation of time

In general, the duration of group activities is about 60 minutes. If the pre-primary educator has to arrange group activities for 4 groups of children daily, the time allocated for each group should be about 15 to 20 minutes. While the pre-primary

educator may control the time for group learning, the duration of all other activities should be determined in a flexible manner to take into account children's varying speed of work. If a child fails to complete a task within a specified period of time, he/she should not be ordered to stop or switch to another activity abruptly.

3. Responsibilities of the pre-primary educator

A pre-primary educator should take note of the following points in conducting group activities :

a. Preparation

Choose suitable teaching materials and venue for teaching, and then plan the activities according to the teaching themes. Decorate the classroom, divide children into groups and get to know the activity programme well. Check whether each interest corner is adequately equipped and set the objectives for guidance. If more than one pre-primary educator is responsible for a particular activity, the division of responsibilities must be clear to ensure consistency in the activities and to facilitate the educators to co-ordinate and help each other during the activities.

b. Conducting Activities

Let children consolidate their knowledge and assimilate experience through play before providing them with new information. Be alert to the response of children, and give them sufficient time to explore and learn from actual experience. Give them advice and encouragement based on

their needs or be a mediator in case of dispute.

c. Recording

Keep a detailed record of the progress of all children to facilitate follow-up guidance, highlighting their peculiar behaviour, e.g. becoming withdrawn all of a sudden, showing aggressive behaviour or a regression in ability.

d. Evaluation

Evaluation of the results and outcomes must be carried out after the activities to check if the learning objectives have been achieved or whether specific ways of improvement have to be developed.

4.6 Evaluation

4.6.1 Purpose of Evaluation

An evaluation is different from a test. Its purpose is to help the pre-primary educator to understand the developmental needs of children, to evaluate whether the curriculum has achieved the learning objectives, whether the content and method of the activities are appropriate, and whether the activities match the interests, needs and abilities of children. Through evaluation, parents can understand the development and learning progress of their children, and the pre-primary educator, at the same time, will be able to identify children with special needs, e.g. appropriate assistance and service can be provided for slow learning children as early as possible. Apart

from understanding the individual child, the educator can also obtain an overall picture of the whole class through evaluation, and assess whether activities conducted over the year have accomplished the objectives of the curriculum. Data gathered during evaluation may also shed some light on how to improve the current curriculum and make necessary adjustments in the future.

4.6.2 Principles of Conducting Evaluation

The following points should be observed when conducting evaluation :

1. The objectives of evaluation should match the overall developmental needs of children. Avoid giving undue emphasis on achievements in individual curriculum area at the expense of performance in other aspects such as social, emotional and creativity development.
2. Evaluation should be based on information gathered from different sources, including regular and continuous observations, reports on children's behaviour, information provided by parents, and class work of children. These data should also be collated and analysed.
3. Assessment tasks should be within the understanding of children and should be conducted in the form of daily classroom activities as far as possible so as to avoid exerting any unnecessary pressure on children.
4. Evaluation aims at identifying the strengths of children, uncovering and developing their potentials, or establishing the baseline for

education so that suitable guidance can be given.

5. All children have their own characteristics. Their trend and pace of development are also different. The pre-primary educator should note that the age, background and prevailing emotions of children may affect their performance. Therefore, the pre-primary educator should avoid using the same standard to evaluate the performance of different children.
6. Comparison should only be made between the past and present performance of the same child, rather than among children.
7. During evaluation, the pre-primary educator should ensure that children themselves are sufficiently involved so that they can see their own progress and gain greater self-confidence.
8. The pre-primary educator should remain objective and avoid prejudice in the course of evaluation. The views of children should also be given due consideration.
9. Parents should be informed of the evaluation results in a clear, systematic and positive manner, so that they can have an idea of the progress made by their children and have greater confidence in the growth and development.

4.6.3 Evaluation Areas

The areas of evaluation are as follows :

1. Design and implementation of the activities

The pre-primary educator should evaluate

- a. whether the activities designed are in line with the educational objectives, whether they match the abilities and interests of

children, and whether they allow children to participate and learn through their senses;

- b. whether sufficient preparation has been made before the activities, e.g. getting ready the necessary equipment or familiarising children with the objectives and procedures of the activities;
- c. whether the timing of the activities is appropriate and compatible with the pace of children;
- d. whether the environment is conducive to teaching and learning so that both pre-primary educator and children can concentrate on the activities;
- e. whether the design and use of teaching aids are conducive to conducting the activities, and whether the mode and quantity of the teaching aids would allow children's participation;
- f. whether appropriate skills are used to conduct the activities, and whether the attitude of the pre-primary educator is congenial, positive and encouraging.

2. Developmental progress of children

The pre-primary educator should regularly observe the daily behaviour of children and communicate with their parents to learn about the behaviour of children at home. They should then make use of specially designed evaluation forms to record the developmental progress of children.

4.6.4 Types of Evaluation

The types of evaluation can be classified as follows :

1. Pre-activity Evaluation

Variations in the developmental needs, as well as in the learning progress among children, can be attributed to the difference in their family and cultural background and past experience. Therefore, before activities are conducted, an evaluation on children's abilities and past experience should be carried out. The results of the evaluation will be used as reference in designing activities and may be used to compare with the information obtained after the activities.

2. Conducting Evaluation

The pre-primary educator may not be able to grasp fully the needs, interests and abilities of children while designing the activities. Hence, evaluation must be made regularly during the activities to ensure the objectives of the activities are achieved. Evaluation can be based on the response of children during the activities to see if there is something wrong with the activities. For example, whether children are interested or impatient or whether a few children can give correct answers to questions raised. If something is found to be wrong with the activities, the pre-primary educator must look for the causes. Find out if the activities are lacking in variety, the teaching aids are inappropriate, the activities are too difficult for children, or time is not sufficient for each activity. The pre-primary educator should then analyse the problem and then readjust the activities accordingly.

3. Post-activity Evaluation

Comparison should be made between the pre-activity and post-activity evaluations as to determine whether children have attained their learning objectives. Evaluation could be made by observing children's performance during activities to find out if most children can attain the learning objectives. If only a small number of children fail to attain the objectives, individual counselling could be arranged for these children; and the learning objectives may be readjusted to suit the abilities of these children when necessary.

4. Follow-up Evaluation

In addition to the previous forms of evaluation, follow-up evaluation should be conducted. Follow-up evaluation should be conducted to check whether children can continue to apply what they have learnt (knowledge, attitude, skills, etc.) in their daily life.

4.6.5 Methods of Evaluation

Evaluation at the pre-primary level should include the following two methods :

1. Observation and Recording

The pre-primary educator should observe children's interests, motivation and attitudes as well as how they behave and participate during the activities. The pre-primary educator should then record her observations in writing or by using forms. The information gathered should be collated and analysed. In the course of observation, open-ended questions may be asked so as to

assess children's comprehensive and organising power.

2. Survey and Examination

Information obtained through communicating with parents, e.g. conversations, questionnaire surveys and health inspections of children, may be used as reference materials in the provision of counselling service and the design of learning activities.

4.7 Parental Involvement

4.7.1 Value of Parental Involvement

Children's development stems from their families. Education at the pre-primary level often needs the support and involvement of parents in various degrees and forms. The pre-primary educator and the parents should reach a consensus about the needs of children. With parents' involvement, the learning experience acquired by children at the institution can be extended, consolidated or even further developed at home. As for parents, they can know more about the development and needs of their children, reinforce their roles as parents and improve their relationship with their children. The pre-primary institutions, on the other hand, can obtain accurate information through parents' active involvement and design as well-planned curriculum with clear objectives which can cater for the individual needs of children. Apart from this, parental involvement will constitute an extra resource for the implementation of the curriculum and will enhance the effectiveness of its implementation.

4.7.2 Degree and Principles of Involvement

Parental involvement may be divided into various degrees :

1. Fulfill the fundamental duties of taking care of and educating their children so that children can grow up and be educated in a healthy and pleasant environment.
2. Understand the implementation of the curriculum and the learning progress of their children through formal and informal communications with the pre-primary institution.
3. Assist in the implementation of the curriculum through participation or providing assistance in the preparation of teaching materials.
4. Provide children with learning activities at home so as to consolidate their learning and to be in line with the overall teaching objectives of the institution.
5. Take part in the affairs of the institution as a parent representative.

Pre-primary institutions may promote the above levels of parental involvement according to their own conditions and limitations. Generally speaking, if the parents are more involved, the greater will be their satisfaction. More important still, pre-primary institutions should try to maintain a frequent, open and two-way communication with parents so that parents' expectations and needs will be better understood by pre-primary educators.

4.7.3 Mode of Involvement

Pre-primary educators can communicate with parents via the following modes :

1. Individual contact

Preliminary contacts and visits to the pre-primary institution prior to the commencement of the school term can help children and their parents to adapt themselves to the transition from family to pre-primary institution. The pre-primary educator can arrange interviews with parents when they take their children to and from the pre-primary institution or at other convenient time. The pre-primary educator may also make use of activities, such as home visits, etc., to learn more about the children's behaviour, family background and the attitudes of the parents. This will help improve communication with the parents and solve problems.

2. Supply of information

Leaflets, circulars, publications, newsletters, notice-boards or mini-exhibitions may be used to help parents learn more about the operation and teaching of the pre-primary institution. For example, news about family life in the community, resources on education, further education opportunities, etc. can also be disseminated to parents.

3. Gatherings for parents

Seminars, talks, movies or slide shows, picnics and celebration parties can be held regularly to enrich the knowledge of parents in educating children and to provide opportunities for parents to exchange their views or share their experience in educating

children.

4. Visits to the pre-primary institution

By paying visits to the pre-primary institution, parents will have a better idea of how their children behave in the pre-primary institution and manage to co-operate in providing a consistent principle on guidance to children.

5. Participation in activities

Try to make the best use of parents' resources, specialities and interests to enrich the activities organised for children, e.g. encouraging parents to lead in art and craft activities, preparing snacks, telling stories, introducing different occupations, or taking part in the planning and organising of special activities.

Chapter 5

Outline of Curriculum Activities

5.1 General Introduction

As pointed out in Chapter 3, the pre-primary curriculum, in a broad sense, refers to all the activities experienced by children in the pre-primary institution. These include activities which take care of children's physical health, various kinds of play which stimulate children to learn, as well as learning activities which encourage children to acquire knowledge and skills and develop proper attitudes. Play, learning and care are the three essential elements of daily activities in a pre-primary institution. These activities are complementary to one another and are designed by the pre-primary educator to promote children's active participation in achieving an all-round development in them.

The following sections are detailed descriptions on the areas of care, habits, routine training, play activities and scope of learning. In the course of implementation and application, the pre-primary educator should make cross-reference with the principles and concepts of all these areas, and to integrate them to keep in line with the spirit of play, learning and care.

5.2 Care, Habits and Routine Training

5.2.1 Introduction

The daily schedule of activities in a pre-primary institution should allow sufficient time to cater for children's physical needs and routine training. A strong physique and good habits are in fact the

foundation of healthy growth. Children learn the routines of everyday life through care services which are structured in line with their developmental needs. As a result, they will develop good habits and self-care skills. These objectives are closely related to children's future achievement in formal learning and adaptation to social life. The contents of the above activities will be elaborated as follows :

5.2.2 Care services

The following services should be included in a pre-primary institution to cater for children's physical needs :

1. Health inspection

a. Objectives

The pre-primary educator should pay attention to children's health condition before starting the day's activities to ensure that children are in good health, have no symptom of infectious diseases and are suited for group activities.

b. Points to Note

The pre-primary educator should observe if there is anything peculiar with children's appearance. For example, whether they are fresh and energetic, and whether any part of the body is hurt or shows red patches. The pre-primary educator should also touch children's foreheads and hands to check if they have a fever or whether a clinical thermometer is required to confirm this. Further enquiries on children's health condition and emotional state at home on that day should be made with parents so as to re-affirm the observations made in

the institution. In addition, attention should be paid to children's health condition throughout the day in order that appropriate arrangements could be made to take care of children. The pre-primary institution should also check on children's weights, heights and immunisation records regularly to ensure that they enjoy good health and receive immunisations as scheduled.

c. Guidelines for Implementation

The pre-primary educator should note the following points in conducting health inspections for children :

- i. Natural and friendly manners should be adopted so that the whole learning process can be conducted under a pleasant atmosphere, and children should be guided to pay attention to their health and to have a proper understanding of the health inspection process in order not to create any fear among children.
- ii. Articles for use in health inspections should be sterilised and kept clean.
- iii. Health records should be kept accurately and in detail for further reference whenever necessary.
- iv. If a child is sick or shows any symptom deviant from the normal development, the pre-primary educator should inform the parents and should not give any unprescribed medicine to the child. In case of emergency, the child should be sent to a doctor for diagnosis so that the child can receive proper treatment as early as possible.

Referral services may be provided if necessary.

- v. When the sick child is still in the institution, he/she should be isolated from other children so as to avoid the spreading of infection. The pre-primary institution should provide a room or a resting place for the child to rest and wait for his/her parents to take him/her home. The child's secretion and excreta should be carefully disposed of. The things which have been used by the child should be sterilised and cleaned thoroughly. The pre-primary educator should take good emotional care of the sick child. Detailed records should also be kept afterwards for filing and for the information of the child's parents.
- vi. If unusual wounds are found and child abuse is suspected, appropriate actions should be taken in accordance with procedures concerning child abuse announced by the Government.

2. Meals

a. Objectives

Snacks or meals are given to children at regular intervals so that they can be provided with a balanced diet and the needs of their physical growth can be satisfied. Moreover, through the guidance of the pre-primary educator in providing a proper balance of different kinds of food, children would develop an interest in food, and a good habit of eating at regular intervals. This helps children in maintaining a balanced diet. They can also learn some basic table manners.

Guidelines for Implementation

The pre-primary institution should note the following points in preparing meals for children :

- i. A balanced diet should be provided and fresh food should be chosen. Processed food such as canned meat, and fish-balls, spicy and fried food or food containing monosodium glutamate, should not be taken. The menu should be prepared in advance and in line with the recommended composition provided by the Hospital Authority. All kinds of food must be cleaned and well-cooked. The style of cooking should be varied, with the colour, smell and taste of the food taken into consideration in arousing children's interest in food.
- ii. Children should be given enough time to eat in a pleasant environment. Soft music can be played to encourage a relaxed atmosphere.
- iii. The institution should try to learn about children's eating and drinking habits from their parents and, as far as possible, to provide consistent guidance, e.g. in giving them an appropriate amount of food, encouraging them to eat more, allowing children to take rice, meat and vegetable together or separately, assisting and encouraging children to feed themselves, teaching them table manners, etc..

- iv. The pre-primary educator may briefly introduce the food to children before meals to encourage the interest and knowledge in food.
- v. Children should have direct access to drinking water to encourage them to drink more.

3. Resting

a. Objectives

Full-day pre-primary institutions should arrange an afternoon naps for children to take a break so that they can regain their energy and develop a good habit of taking rest.

b. Guidelines for Implementation

The pre-primary educator should note the following points in arranging a nap for children :

- i. The environment for the afternoon nap should be kept quiet and comfortable, e.g. curtains should be lowered to darken the room and good ventilation should be maintained.
- ii. Individual beds and bed clothes should be allocated to children. Beds should be so arranged with space between them to enable the pre-primary educator to walk through and take care of children.
- iii. The pre-primary educator has to help children calm down emotionally. Soft music or story-telling may help children fall asleep. In case children cannot fall asleep or wake up earlier than expected, the pre-primary educator may arrange some “quiet” activities for them. It is not

desirable to force them to sleep.

- iv. Children should be encouraged to take care of themselves according to their ability, e.g. taking off their shoes and clothes and putting them in order before going to sleep, and trying to put on their shoes and clothes after the nap.
- v. Children may be awakened by soft music or a gentle stroke after the nap. When they wake up, they may be taught to do some simple and relaxing exercise, or to sing some nursery rhymes, etc., to calm them before the commencement of other activities.
- vi. Children should be properly clothed according to the change of weather and room temperature.

5.2.3 Habits

1. Objectives

Children have a strong urge for independence and want to accomplish things by themselves. They enjoy sharing the work of adults. One of the aims of the pre-primary curriculum is to help children develop good habits and acquire independence. In this regard, the pre-primary educator should devise suitable activities for children to learn to look after themselves, such as acquiring some knowledge of self-care, hygiene, table manners and safety, etc. in achieving the following objectives :

- a. To satisfy the physical needs of children.
- b. To help children develop good personal hygienic habits.
- c. To help children adapt to social life.

- d. To enable children to work independently.
- e. To cultivate their self-confidence and sense of responsibility.

2. Guidelines for Implementation

Children need to acquire and enhance their skills through concrete experience and repeated practices. Therefore, in guiding children to acquire the skills of self-care, the pre-primary educator should :

- a. Understand the developmental characteristics of children and employ the approaches and equipment which will suit their ability to allow them to enjoy the learning process with a sense of accomplishment;
- b. Have a careful and detailed planning, clearly work out the steps and approaches to be adopted before giving guidance to children;
- c. Allow sufficient time for children to learn and not offer immediate assistance when a child fails to meet the expectations lest he/she will be deprived of the opportunity and the right to practise;
- d. Admit the limitations of children's ability. Each step taken during the conducting of activities should be judged according to the ability of children and guidance should be offered so as to minimise children's chances of encountering failure. If necessary, help them complete the most difficult part of the task;
- e. Be aware of individual differences and should not expect all children to finish a task at the same time;

- f. Show positive response to children's good performance by praising them verbally or by smiling or nodding;
- g. Set a good example, such as maintaining good hygienic habits and a clean and tidy appearance; and
- h. Keep in touch with parents to learn about children's habits at home and guide children with patience in accordance with their ability.

3. Content of Activities

Children should be taught within their capability, to take care of themselves, learn proper social manners (for example, speaking softly), develop healthy habits and take care of their own safety. This will not only cultivate their sense of independence, but also develop their fine motor skills and improve their eye-hand co-ordination.

4. Guidelines on Methods Conducive to the Forming of Good Habits

a. Encouraging Self-care :

Children's individual needs should be attended to and facilities for personal use, e.g. storage shelves, art racks and clothes hangers, etc., should be provided. Sanitary ware, such as stools and sinks, should suit children's heights and needs. Personal sanitary items like towels, combs and toothbrushes, should be within children's reach.

b. Small group learning :

Certain activities which require children to experience and practise for themselves, e.g. doing up buttons and folding aprons, etc., should be taught either individually or in groups

according to children's ability so that every child can have enough time for frequent practice.

c. Providing opportunities for repeated practices :

As far as possible, try to incorporate the skills children are learning into their daily routines, e.g. having snacks, toileting and taking meals, etc. so as to provide opportunities to practise the skills repeatedly. As time goes by, children will master the skills and gradually regard such life skills as part of their responsibilities.

d. Guiding children to observe general safety rules and table manners by making use of games, stories, nursery rhymes and pictures, etc.. For example, children should know that dangerous substances may endanger their health or life, as well as activities and places which may be hazardous.

e. Incidental teaching :

When teaching children how to wipe their mouths, tears or running noses, etc., the pre-primary educator should preferably provide them with a mirror so that they can see what they are doing.

f. Using labels as an aid :

The pre-primary educator may attach colour-coded labels to toys and toy cabinets and ask children to put the toys in the cabinet bearing the same label.

g. Working out clear and systematic working procedures :

A task should be broken down into a number of identifiable steps according to the abilities of children. The pre-primary

educator should then teach children how to do it step by step.

- h. Making use of a duty roster (can be in a pictorial form) to enable children to take turns in performing tasks such as watering flowers and feeding small animals.

5.2.4 Routine Training

Routine training, as the name implies, is concerned with the discipline and rules of daily life, i.e. the basic procedures and practices one has to follow in dealing with people and handling matters :

1. Objectives :

- a. To help children learn how to do things in an orderly manner.
- b. To encourage children to build up self-confidence.
- c. To train children to exercise self-control, to be co-operative and observe rules.
- d. To help children look after themselves.
- e. To cultivate their sense of responsibility.

2. Guidelines for Implementation :

- a. Organisation of activities must be in line with the institution's facilities and use of space.
- b. Rules should be set in accordance with the abilities and needs of children.
- c. Detailed planning is required before routine training. Appropriate procedures should also be worked out for implementation on a step-by-step basis.
- d. The pre-primary educator should explain to children the importance of observing rules. With older children, rules

may be drawn up through negotiation so that children willingly accept and follow them.

- e. The pre-primary educator must constantly remind children of such rules and give them sufficient time to learn how to follow them.
- f. The pre-primary educator has to be sincere and patient in giving guidance to children, take note of the ability of individual child and observe children's reactions in activities, giving them proper assistance when necessary, and setting an example for them to follow.
- g. The pre-primary educator has to be consistent in enforcing the rules if desired results are to be obtained.
- h. The pre-primary educator can make use of various interesting approaches to guide children to observe such rules.
- i. The pre-primary educator should praise and encourage children who observe the rules.
- j. If some children are found to have failed to observe some of the rules, the pre-primary educator should check whether the rules are too harsh for children so that the rules can be modified accordingly. Meanwhile, extra guidance should be given to children concerned so that they gradually learn to follow the rules.

- k. There should be frequent contacts with parents to let them know about the significance and scope of routine training given to children. More optimum educational outcomes can be achieved through better communication between the home and the institution.

3. Scope of Activities :

a. Daily routines :

As children may have some apprehension about going to pre-primary institution for the first time, pre-primary institutions should organise some orientation programmes for new comers. These programmes will familiarise children with the daily routines so as to prepare them psychologically for the sequence of activities. This will not only help children alleviate their anxiety and acquire a sense of security, but will also enable them to develop the concept of time from their own daily experiences. The pre-primary educator can make use of pictures sequenced from left to right to present the daily programme. The pre-primary educator can introduce each session of activities to children and brief them on the activities indicated by the picture following. This procedure will familiarise children with the daily schedule, and will help them form the habit of reading horizontally-aligned characters as a preparation for future reading.

b. Rules and politeness :

In the interest of children's own safety, and in view of their needs to learn to respect and get along with other people, it is

necessary to formulate a set of rules which they are expected to observe appropriate for their abilities. These rules can cover such areas as queuing, listening, tidying up and being polite, where both verbal and non-verbal forms of expressions are included. Children would be pleased to discuss with adults the rules to be observed. These rules should be introduced to children gradually. Before children are required to follow a specific rule, the rule should be explained to them clearly and concisely. Meanwhile, various methods should be used to help them comply with the rules.

4. Examples of Implementation :

As young children (in particular children attending pre-primary institution for the first time) do not have a high comprehensive power and are rather self-centred, it is not easy for them to understand why they have to observe rules. Besides setting a good example, the pre-primary educator should also exercise patience in giving guidance to children so that they will have sufficient time to familiarise themselves with the rules. The pre-primary educator can also make use of stories, nursery rhymes, conversation, sharing, discussion and incidental teaching. Cues for children could be in the form of :

- a. Displaying posters/pictures which remind children of the rules and regulations;
- b. Introducing nursery rhymes which encourage good behaviour;
- c. Displaying pictures which illustrate proper behaviour;
- d. Making use of games/songs;

- e. Conducting campaigns such as “walking gently”, “keeping clean”, “punctuality” and “good behaviour”, etc.. The good behaviour of children should also be extolled and encouraged. Such campaigns should be promoted throughout the whole institution and be regularly reviewed.

5. Allocation and utilisation of space and resources :

The pre-primary educator should exercise caution in the utilisation and allocation of space so as to reduce the risk of accidents and help children observe the rules :

- a. The pre-primary educator should pay attention to the allocation of “quiet” and “active” activity centres when designing the physical arrangement of the classroom and outdoor activity space. The areas for riding tricycles, waiting, running, jumping, and playing with sand and water, should be properly marked to prevent children from being knocked down by tricycles whilst running or jumping, and to prevent the sand from being mixed with water. The “reading corner” should not be set up next to the “home corner” to prevent children from being disturbed while reading.
- b. The number of participants for the activities of a given interest corner should be specified. Certain items of equipment should be provided, where possible, to facilitate compliance with the rules. For instance, if a “home corner” is limited to 4 players at a time, then 4 labels may be placed outside the corner so that each player can use one on entering the corner. This will not only enable the pre-primary educator to monitor

the number of participants, but will also help children observe the rules of fair play and avoid unnecessary disputes.

5.3 Play Activities

5.3.1 Introduction

Play is an experience indispensable to the development of children and is vital to the all-round development of children. An ideal learning environment should include the provision of adequate free play activities for children so as to let them feel like playing freely at home. Children should, therefore, learn in a relaxed and pleasant environment. Various kinds of toys, materials and natural resources should also be provided in the classroom to stimulate self-initiated learning. Good order in the classroom will help children feel satisfied and concentrate on learning. In Chapter 3, it has been emphasised that one of the principles of curriculum design is to promote the unique functions of various kinds of play activities. The objectives, principles of implementation and scope of various play activities adopted by pre-primary institutions are illustrated in detail below.

5.3.2 Physical Play

Physical development is an important objective of pre-primary education. Physical activities are generally divided into two types, namely gross motor and fine motor activities. Gross motor activities

emphasise the provision of opportunities to master, through personal experiences, the basics of physical development, e.g. balance, co-ordination, suppleness, elasticity and endurance, etc.. These activities will also help children understand the concepts of distance, weight, speed, rhythm, height, safety at heights, grasping and holding articles, etc.. Various kinds of gross motor activities will help to stimulate the development of children's height, weight, bones, muscles and co-ordination. The activities can also enhance the functions of the respiratory, circulation, digestive and nerve system of children.

In addition, these activities, to a certain extent, can give vent to children's emotions so that the objective in developing in them a healthy body and mind can be achieved. Provision of a stimulating environment would also help to promote the development of their sensory and language abilities.

Fine motor activities refer to the activities which would improve the dexterity and power of co-ordination of children's hands (including fingers, palm and wrist), such as playing with toys on the table or on the floor (e.g., various kinds of construction toys, puzzles, hand-puppets and small toy blocks), art and craft activities using various kinds of materials (e.g., painting, printing, craft work using recycled material, paper craft work, plasticine and playdough), playing with sand and water, singing by finger rhymes, etc.. Fine motor activities can stimulate children's eye-hand co-ordination so as to help them master skills required in their everyday life and provide them with opportunities to learn about the forms and characteristics of objects through their sensory contacts. Children should also be

encouraged to cultivate the habits of thinking, acting and concentrating while playing, as well as to develop their creative and thinking abilities while enjoying the fun of these activities.

1. Objectives

- a. To help children develop their fine and gross motor skill.
- b. To enhance children's basic motor skills required in daily life and help them develop agility.
- c. To help children build a good physique and cultivate their love for physical activities so that they will have a balanced development in their body and mind, and become healthy and happy children.
- d. To cultivate children's will-power, develop their leadership skill, boost their confidence and encourage them to express their feelings, as well as to control their emotions.

2. Guidelines for Implementation

- a. While the rate of physiological and psychological development is different for each child, the development of physical abilities for all children is progressive and follows a set pattern. For instance, children learn to sit before they can stand, and walk before they run. It is also easier for them to control their large muscles than their small muscles. The pre-primary educator should, therefore, pay attention to the physical development of each individual child and understand the functions of various kinds of activities so as to make the right choice.

- b. Flexibility should be exercised when designing the scope of activities and factors such as time, season and venue (indoor and outdoor) should be duly considered. Space in the surroundings and outdoor areas should be fully utilised to allow children to engage in physical activities.
- c. Equipment chosen should be suitable for different physical activities so as to increase variation and fun. Some of the equipment should be made accessible to children.
- d. The pre-primary educator should pay attention to safety measures. For example, equipment should be checked regularly, a safe venue should be chosen and sufficient routine training should be provided. While activities are in progress, the pre-primary educator should pay attention to the surroundings and the abilities of children, and be alert at all times and ready to take any necessary action to ensure safety.
- e. The pre-primary educator should allocate time to develop children's gross motor skills every day. Before physical activities, children should be guided to warm up and to stretch their limbs and joints, so that their bodies can be adapted to more vigorous actions later. Before coming to a halt, they should be given some relaxing exercises to slow down gradually.
- f. Simple demonstrations are much more effective than long and tedious explanations, but rules concerning the activities and points to be noted must be explained clearly. The pre-primary educator should give children adequate time to

practise. Children should be encouraged to take part in the activities on their own initiative instead of being forced to do so.

- g. The pre-primary educator should pay attention to children's health. If children are found to be unsuited for physical activities, they should be allowed to rest.
- h. Children should be given ample opportunities to learn how to get along with others and to comply with social norms in a natural atmosphere. The pre-primary educator should guide children incidentally on how to get along with others in harmony. Physical competition or comparison of performance should not be emphasised.
- i. When children are participating in activities to develop their fine motor skills, they need a quiet and spacious environment. They should also have an adequate variety of safe materials to allow them to use their creative and thinking abilities. The activities should be fun and allow children to obtain satisfaction from participating.
- j. Equipment should be placed within the reach of children, with obvious indications on its use and procedure in restoring them back in order. Restoring things back in order after play activities provides an opportunity for children to develop their sense of responsibility and learn good habits. This practical activity should be regarded as an effective way to learn.

- k. Toys and materials for play activities should be checked regularly, cleaned and replenished frequently to ensure they are safe, clean and sufficient in quantity.

3. Scope of Activities

a. Gross motor activities

There are many kinds and modes of gross motor activities which can generally be divided into the following two types :

- i. movements that do not require equipment, including such actions as walking, running, rotating, crawling, rolling, bending and stretching, jumping, going through, balancing, getting up and down stairs, etc..
- ii. movements that require equipment, including movements that require large equipment such as tricycles, climbing frames, balance beams, slides, tyres and swinging boats, etc., and also those that require small equipment such as toy blocks, bean bags, balls, ropes and hula hoops can also be used.

Moreover, the pre-primary educator may change the mode of physical play slightly to add more fun, for example :

- imitative physical play : the pre-primary educator may design various kinds of imitative actions by using simple music or rhythm to enable children to engage in various kinds of basic movements like walking, running and jumping rhythmically and systematically.
- sequenced physical play : use such facilities as balance beams, tyres and tunnels to arrange a designated route for

children to do various kinds of jumping, going through and climbing movements in sequences. By so doing, all parts of the child's body can be activated.

b. Fine motor activities

Fine motor activities can be divided into the following types according to the materials and equipment used :

i. Formal materials/equipment

All sorts of puzzles, beads, hammering-bench, dolls, puppets and music boxes are used. By using these materials/equipment, the steps and objectives would become more obvious, and it is thus easy for children to engage in such activities, which can promote children's eye-hand co-ordination, memory and concentration. But the variation of these activities is rather limited and would not satisfy the creative needs of older children.

ii. Semi-formal materials/equipment

Materials such as construction toys made up a different kinds of materials can be used. Children may use these materials to build houses, means of transportation, people and animals. Activities can be modified according to children's imagination. Children's thinking ability can be promoted in the course of construction. Children can also develop skills of manipulating things. Semi-formal materials, however, have their own specific formats. For example, there are rules for building with construction toys and integrating hexagon pieces, and children have to

comply with the specified rules before any modifications can be made and children cannot exercise their creativity as freely as in playing with non-formal materials.

iii. Non-formal materials/equipment

These include all materials which are used in art and craft activities, such as colours, materials for craft work using recycled material, cartridge paper, plasticine, playdough, sand, water, materials for carpentry, toy blocks, etc.. While playing, children can choose the materials, create the steps and objectives to express their personal feelings, exercise their imagination and thinking, and express themselves freely.

5.3.3 Music Activities

1. Objectives

Human beings show their ability to appreciate music as early as infancy. When a baby hears melodious sounds, he/she will listen attentively and happily and then respond with innate body movements. The pre-primary educator may help children to develop such potential and interest with appropriate guidance. For example, as children sing to the music, they can be guided to imitate movements or sounds or those made by animals, or make body movements according to the rhythm, and be encouraged to express themselves or exercise their creativity freely. The pre-primary educator should respect their feelings and praise their performance. Music activities should aim at the cultivation of

children's interest in music rather than the training of musical skills. As a result, children can obtain fun and satisfaction by participating in various music activities. Music activities should be designed in such a way that children can express themselves freely in their own special ways without pressure and acquire knowledge of musical elements such as rhythm, melody, tone and beat, etc..

- a. To arouse children's interest in music and encourage them to enjoy the fun of music activities.
- b. To enhance children's ability to appreciate music.
- c. To cultivate children's auditory perception through recognition of the melodic and rhythmic qualities of sounds, e.g. high and low, strong and weak, fast and slow, etc..
- d. To build up children's confidence in singing and their ability to sing.
- e. To teach children to recognise simple percussion instruments and to develop their concentration and co-operation through performance.
- f. To encourage self-expression through the use of rhythmic movements in response to music.
- g. To enhance the understanding of lyrics through music activities and to encourage self-expression through dramatised songs.

2. Guidelines for Implementation

- a. Children should have approximately 30 minutes of music activities daily. The pre-primary educator should adopt an integrated approach in teaching.

- b. Music activities should be staggered with other “quiet” and “active” activities. At the beginning and end of the activities, children should be told to do some simple breathing and relaxing exercises. This will enable them to calm down and join in the next activity.
- c. The duration of each music activity should be planned flexibly, taking into consideration the interest of children.
- d. The activities planned must be targeted to the abilities of children.
- e. Every child should be given the opportunity to participate in the music activities and individual attention should be offered if possible.
- f. It is not necessary for music activities to be conducted in a music room. The pre-primary educator can make use of a tape-recorder or percussion instruments to hold lessons in the classroom or outdoors.
- g. The pre-primary educator should choose suitable teaching materials for music activities and sufficient preparation should be made. For example, the pre-primary educator should be familiar with the tunes and the teaching aids so that they can concentrate on children and react accordingly during the activities.
- h. As the main objective of music activities is to encourage self-expression through music, the pre-primary educator should avoid giving too much demonstration or asking children to repeat the same action.

- i. It is not necessary for the pre-primary educator to accompany singing with the piano. But if the piano is used, it would be better for the pre-primary educator to play the melody accurately.
- j. The pre-primary educator should try her best to demonstrate singing correctly with a gentle and clear tone.
- k. Different musical elements, such as rhythm, pitch, dynamics, tone colour, and interval should be introduced through various activities.
- l. Children should be motivated to be creative and express themselves freely, for example, adding actions in the form of a singing game or creating new words to the songs they like. They should also be rewarded for their meaningful efforts.
- m. Children's active participation may be encouraged through dedication of the pre-primary educator.

3. Scope of Activities

a. Listening activities

The pre-primary educator may ask children to listen to different sounds from the surrounding environment or to appreciate a certain musical piece through the following approaches :

- i. The pre-primary educator should help children cultivate and develop their listening abilities through various activities, e.g. to detect and recognise different sounds and tone colours from the environment, etc., or to identify the sources of sounds, and to distinguish whether the sound is

loud or soft, strong or weak, continuous or static, etc..

- ii. The pre-primary educator may record sounds of musical instruments, animals or the natural environment for children to identify and imitate.
- iii. The pre-primary educator may ask children to listen carefully and try to identify songs which they know well so as to develop their power of concentration and memory.
- iv. The pre-primary educator may select cassette tapes of different types of music and songs (e.g. those suitable for various occasions, those from other cultures, those played with different musical instruments and those belonging to different times), accompanied by related pictures or stories, to introduce various kinds of music to children. This can be followed by discussions to promote children's interest in and love for music.
- v. Music appreciation sessions can also be organised during other activities.

b. Singing

Pre-primary children are still learning to recognise intonation and metre. Hence the pre-primary educator should not expect too much from them in this respect. As long as the pre-primary educator is able to manage within intonation and metre, children will learn them gradually. The pre-primary educator may ask children to do some breathing exercises before singing in order to help them relax and sing more easily. Children should be encouraged to sing naturally so that they

can hear their own singing. This is also an effective method to prevent them from singing out of tune. Children who are weak in intonation and metre can be seated close to the pre-primary educator so that they can imitate her. Children who do not like music may be invited to clap their hands and stamp their feet according to the rhythm, or play a certain role in a dramatised song. They might be influenced gradually by the joyous atmosphere and would begin to sing along as well. Children may also be grouped together with one of them being asked to lead the singing by rotation. As a result, children who do not like singing may also join in singing because they have the opportunity to lead the singing.

The pre-primary educator has to take note of the following points in arranging singing activities :

- i. Songs with a simple, allegro and repetitive melody are most popular with children. The range of the melody should be between “Middle C” and “High C” and songs with progressive variation are preferred as children may find it hard to manage complicated or fast changing music rang and may easily sing out of tune.
- ii. The lyrics chosen should be elegant, simple and related to children’s life experiences. Some songs with actions or imitative sounds are suitable for children between the age of 2 and 3. Children between the age of 4 and 5 can even appreciate humorous lyrics and like songs with variations or which can be sung by groups alternately. The

pre-primary educator should also pay attention to the matching of the words and the melody to avoid distortions made in the musical notes, meaning of lyrics and beauty of the songs.

- iii. When a new song is taught, the pre-primary educator should demonstrate with a gentle and pleasant voice. She may also ask children to clap their hands, stamp their feet or perform other rhythmic movements to familiarise themselves with the rhythm and the tune of the song.
- iv. The pre-primary educator may make use of pictures, stories, movements and musical instruments to stimulate children's imagination about the content of the song.
- v. The pre-primary educator should pay attention to children's volume of singing, and should stress the importance of singing softly and naturally. The duration of singing activities should not be too long.
- vi. The pre-primary educator may demonstrate of use a tape-recorder to introduce some melodious songs so as to attract children's attention and to guide them to sing along.
- vii. The pre-primary educator may ask children to sing some familiar songs in groups or individually so as to establish their confidence in singing and help them master the pitch level. Sometimes, the pre-primary educator may record children's singing on a tape recorder for their own appreciation.

viii. Children may hum familiar or self-created melodies spontaneously while they are playing. Such self-initiated singing should be encouraged.

c. Rhythmic Movement

Rhythmic movements refer to the integration of body and limb movements with the elements of time (fast or slow), space (stretching, bending, big or small), direction (forward or backward, up or down, left or right), force (heavy or light) and emotions (strong or weak, cheerful or sad). Such elements are transformed to rhythmic movements to express one's feelings or appreciation of music. The pre-primary educator has to pay attention to the following points in conducting rhythmic movements :

- i. The selection of movements should be based on the principle that children should be guided to use every part of their body. Undue emphasis on lower limb movements such as walking, running, jumping, stepping, etc. should be avoided. On the other hand, movements of the head, neck, shoulders, chest, stomach, hip and knees, or even fingers and tip toes should be included.
- ii. The pre-primary educator may play simple music from the piano or percussion instruments and ask children to follow the rhythm to do different movements, e.g. clap, step, side, walk, walk on tip toes, run, jump, leap, etc., or imitate animal gaits and movements.

- iii. In using music from the tape recorder or percussion instruments, the pre-primary educator may encourage children to create movements from imagination. When the music stops suddenly, children may be asked to freeze in certain postures, such as imitating the form of an aeroplane, a rabbit or an old man, etc.. Thus children can be trained to have quick responses.
- iv. The pre-primary educator may use stories or nursery rhymes, accompanied by music or songs, as the theme of rhythmic movements, and ask children to play the characters in the stories.
- v. The pre-primary educator may make use of familiar limb movements to arrange simple steps for group dances for children. This may enhance children's sense of rhythm and cultivate their social skills and co-operation.
- vi. The pre-primary educator should arrange a spacious room for children to take part in rhythmic movement. Children should preferably take off their coats and put on light shoes to facilitate free movement. Some simple warm-up exercises may help children relax and join in the activities.
- vii. The pre-primary educator should agree with children on the rules that they have to observe before the start of the rhythmic activities. Such rules should include observance of the space provided for the activities, signals used for the starting and ending of the activities and avoidance of running into one another.

d. Percussion Instruments

Percussion instruments include those with fixed pitch and those without. Simple non-pitched percussion instruments are more suitable for pre-primary children. Such instruments include tambourines, Chinese wood blocks, castanets, jingle bells, cymbals, bass drums, shakers, side drums, temple bells, double bells, etc.. However, chime bars, a pitched instrument, is also suitable for pre-primary children. Percussion instruments which require more skills such as triangles, xylophones and glockenspiel, etc. should be left until the children are mature enough to handle. The pre-primary educator should take note of the following points in conducting activities with percussion instruments :

- i. Musical instruments should be introduced to children gradually. The introduction may start with experiencing the sounds which can be produced by their own body movements (e.g. patting different parts of the body, stepping with the tip and sole of their feet, opening and closing their lips to produce loud and weak sounds, etc.). Next, children may try to produce rhythmic sounds by using common articles such as sheets of paper, chopsticks and bottles. The movements should be in tune with the requirements of the song and rhythm, as well as children's interests. The names of the instruments and the correct method of playing them should be introduced clearly. Children should be helped to listen and identify different

- tone colours.
- ii. The pre-primary educator may teach children to make percussion instruments themselves with different types of materials.
 - iii. Percussion instruments should be used as frequently as possible to arouse children's interest in music activities.
 - iv. The pre-primary educator may put some musical instruments in a music corner in the classroom for children to observe and experiment with them freely in identifying their shapes, names and sounds.
 - v. Children should be trained to take good care of the instruments and restore them back to their place after use. Every child in the class should have a chance to play the instruments.
 - vi. Before playing the percussion instruments, children should be made familiar with the rhythmic pattern through clapping and stepping.
 - vii. Many sounds in the environment may be simulated by musical instruments. The pre-primary educator may make up stories with songs and let children use suitable instruments to describe the characters and their actions in the stories.
 - viii. In using various kinds of musical instruments to play a piece of music, participants need to have a strong power of concentration, co-operation and self-discipline. Since this is a test for both children and the pre-primary educator,

it is undesirable to expect too much from them.

e. Musical Games

Musical games cover a very broad area. More static games place emphasis on aural training (such as matching of voices, naming the person on hearing his/her voice and identifying the musical instrument(s) on hearing the sound(s)). More dynamic games would test the children's adroitness, e.g. musical chairs and follow-the-leader, etc.. In most cases, they are imaginative play which incorporate singing and rhythmic movements. Irrespective of the form they take, the purpose of such games is to give children happy experience with music. Therefore, the principles of selection should be based on simplicity, maximum participation and short waiting time. The games should also promote children's spirit of co-operation, and any keen competition should be avoided.

4. Equipment

The pre-primary institution should have the following music equipment :

- a. A piano or any other instrument suitable for accompanying singing and musical movement, e.g. electronic organ, guitar, recorder, etc..
- b. A cassette tape recorder.
- c. Percussion instruments – triangles, tambourines, wood blocks, castanets, jingle bells, shakers, cymbals, bass drum, side drum, xylophone, chime bars, glockenspiel, etc..

d. Home-made instruments

The pre-primary educator may teach children to make their own instruments by using different types of materials, for example :

- i. Putting some dried beans, sand or rice into containers such as plastic bottles or cans.
- ii. Other materials like sand paper, boxes, coconut shells, straws, tin containers, etc. may also be used.

e. Music corner

A music corner may be set up in the classroom where percussion instruments, home-made instruments, a cassette tape recorder, and pictures related to music may be placed. Children should be allowed to play the instruments, identify the sounds they produce and create their own music.

f. Music Room

An ideal music room should be sound-proofed and air-conditioned. If this is not possible, the pre-primary institution is still encouraged to consider setting up a separate music room.

5.3.4 Art and Craft Activities

1. Objectives

Art and craft activities refer to painting and producing three-dimensional creative work using different materials. Although children's ability in making art and craft work may vary according to individual interests, potentials and experiences, their

development in this respect follows a general pattern. At first, they like to scribble, rub and press the materials in a disorderly manner repeatedly to explore the characteristics of the materials and their own power of manipulation. Later, they are able to draw out or form some shapes by rubbing at times. They will repeat trying till they can fully master these skills before starting to create meaningful work of their own. There may still be some discrepancies between the real object and children's end product, but children are already capable of exercising their imagination to express in their creative work what they have seen in reality.

- a. To satisfy children's needs to be creative.
- b. To cultivate children's creative ability and aesthetic appreciation.
- c. To enrich children's imagination and to satisfy their curiosity.
- d. To enable children to express their feelings, enjoy the fun of creative work, attain a sense of achievement and build up their self-confidence.
- e. To satisfy children's curiosity to explore the characteristics of different materials.
- f. To develop children's fine motor skills and their eye-hand co-ordination.
- g. To cultivate children's power of observation and appreciation, as well as their co-operative spirit.

2. Guidelines for Implementation

- a. Learning activities should be designed to allow children to express or interpret their inner feelings in their own way.

Adults must show respect for and give praise to children's creative work so as to encourage children to develop their creative potentials to the full.

- b. Art and craft activities may be arranged for the whole class or for a group of children. Moreover, they may be chosen as an interest activity at the end of a certain task, on an individual basis.
- c. The pre-primary educator should make adequate preparation before the activities and children should always be given a chance to carry out various art and craft activities using a variety of materials. These materials should meet safety and hygienic standards.
- d. The pre-primary educator may make use of visits, life experiences, stories, nursery rhymes, music, conversation, slides, pictures and real objects to arouse children's interest in art and craft activities.
- e. The pre-primary educator should not give too many suggestions, constraints or guidance to children. When working, children should not be disturbed unnecessarily.
- f. The pre-primary educator should make sure the various kinds of materials, colours and tools are easily accessible to children.
- g. Children should be allowed to talk to each other and share their experiences in the course of their activities. The pre-primary educator should guide them to discuss or express themselves at the appropriate time, so as to stimulate their imagination. The pre-primary educator should also encourage children to

talk to one another when they working on a group activity together to develop their co-operative spirit.

- h. Activities should be conducted in a relaxed atmosphere, perhaps accompanied by music. The pre-primary educator should give constructive encouragement and show appreciation to each group or individual.
- i. Children differ in their pace of work. If a child does not finish a piece of work within the specified time, the pre-primary educator may allow extra time for the work to be completed if wanted.
- j. The pre-primary educator should not force children who have no interest in a particular kind of art and craft work to join in the activity. Such children can be allowed to observe the activity and be guided to participate in such activities or be encouraged to select other art and craft activities.
- k. Children should be trained to pack up a variety of materials and put them back in order after the activities.
- l. The children's art and craft work may be used to decorate the classroom, to encourage children to share their creative experiences and appreciate work of each other. The work should be returned to children to show to their family.

3. Selection of Subject Matter

The subject matter should be selected according to children's age, ability and experience. As children between two and three years of age are still developing a firm grip of the pencil, they should not be asked to fill in colours on an outlined drawing. In fact, it is a

satisfying experience for them to scribble freely with crayons, paint brushes, and other tools on a large piece of drawing paper. Once children have moved beyond this first stage, the pre-primary educator may then select subject matter for art and craft activities with reference to the following principles :

- a. According to children's experience – the theme of art and craft activities may be based on children's daily experience, e.g. :
 - i. things they see every day such as flowers and plants, toys, vehicles and people with whom they have daily contact such as family members, friends and people who help them;
 - ii. events, games, activities, such as birthday parties, picnics or visits;
 - iii. special festivals like Chinese New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival, etc.;
 - iv. news or incidents.
 - b. Through imagination – elements from stories, songs, music and nursery rhymes can enrich children's imagination.
 - c. Relating to a teaching theme – e.g. for the theme “Family”, children can be encouraged to draw or make masks / portraits / puppets of members of their families, or to draw their ideal homes, etc..
4. Types of Teaching Materials

The pre-primary educator should allow children to create and to express themselves with the use of a variety of art materials in order to develop their abilities and interests. Moreover, activities

should be organised according to children's abilities. The following are examples of teaching materials for pre-primary children :

a. For younger children

i. Picture-making

Moulding, water-resist painting, folded patterns, joining dots, surface texture rubbing, patterns with rolling marbles and finger painting, etc..

ii. Creative activities with different types of materials

There is no limit to what children may find interesting. They may store up or attach great value to some trivial or insignificant objects thrown away by adults, e.g. a shell, a pebble, a small box or an empty can, and these may become treasures. The pre-primary educator can also use children's interest to develop their creativity by devising creative games or art and craft activities with the use of different materials. Moreover, the pre-primary educator may let children create and design freely with the use of newspaper, old magazine paper, wrapping paper or paper bags in various activities like kneading, rolling, tearing and pasting. The emphasis of such activities is on the fun and experience gained during the course of creation. Therefore, the pre-primary educator need not insist on tidiness and the quality of the end-products, nor should she punish or tease a child whose work does not come up to standard.

iii. Clay, Plasticine and Dough

These are very pliable materials. The pre-primary educator should allow children to beat, pound, pinch, knead and press such materials in order to satisfy their desire to create and enhance their development in various aspects.

b. Older children are more mature and can engage in a wider variety of activities. The following examples are for the reference of pre-primary educators.

i. Picture-making

- Painting and drawing (simple sketching)

Children should be allowed to draw freely, using various tools and colouring materials.

- Simple pattern-making

Children are encouraged to use colours or different materials like leaves, flowers, pebbles, cloth fragments, buttons, colour paper, gift wrappings, magazine paper, moulds and potatoes to make symmetrical or repetitive patterns by means of painting, pasting, collage, folding and moulding.

- Collage

Materials such as colour paper, magazine paper, tissue paper, threads, cloth fragments, straws, herbal slices, etc. can be used to make pictures by means of tearing, cutting and pasting.

- Simple printmaking

Stamping, object printing, paper printing, stencil printing and polyboard printing, etc. can be introduced.

- Group work

The class may be divided into small groups and each group can draw on a large piece of paper. As an alternative, children may draw individually on the same theme. The pictures drawn could then be cut out and stuck onto a large piece of drawing paper to form one big masterpiece of group work.

- ii. Three-dimensional work

A variety of three-dimensional toys, ornaments and tools, etc. can be made from paper boxes, paper bags, empty cans, clay plasticine, etc..

- iii. Paper work

Children are encouraged to do simple cutting, piercing and pattern work using white or coloured paper or tinfoil, and then asked to do simple folding activities.

5. Materials and Equipment

- a. Materials

- i. Drawing materials

Wax crayons, oil pastels, coloured chalk, coloured pencils, felt pens (sign pens), paint brushes, poster paint (liquid or powder form), tempera colours, finger-paint, etc.

ii. Natural materials

Pebbles, flowers, leaves, herbal slices, wood, shells, etc.

iii. Different types of materials

Gift wrappings, magazine paper, newspaper, paper boxes, paper bags, paper cups and plates, tissue paper rolls, sponge, peanut shells, lollipop sticks, ice-cream cups, straws, buttons, cloth fragments, threads, scraps of soft wood, etc.

iv. Paper

Cartridge paper, sugar paper, white newsprint, crepe paper, tissue paper, cardboard, etc.

v. Others

Clay, dough, flour, plasticine, Styrofoam, etc.

b. Equipment

Easels, brushes, scissors (safe and sharp), paste, printing blocks, etc.

6. Evaluation and handling of children's artwork

- a. Art and craft activities in the pre-primary stage should not be used as a means to teach children to produce work that are good by adult standard, neither should they be regarded as a kind of skill training. Such activities should be looked upon as a means of helping children to express themselves and gain satisfaction. Therefore, the pre-primary educator should not judge children's artwork by the standard of an adult, nor should they emphasise on "neatness". Moreover, there is no need to mark or grade children's work.

- b. As children express their feelings through art, their artwork reveal their inner world, daily life, feelings and imagination. For this reason, the pre-primary educator should not ask children to follow a sample in drawing or painting, nor impose adults' thoughts on their pictures. They should try to understand children from what they have drawn and, through conversation, help children to express their ideas more substantially.
- c. One of the objectives of art and craft activities is to develop children's aesthetic ability. However, the pre-primary educator should accept that children may have different interpretations of beauty and their choice and matching of colours is a revelation of their subjective mind rather than the objective truth.
- d. Art and craft activities also develop children's fine motor skills. Therefore, the pre-primary educator should encourage children to paint and draw spontaneously. She should understand that children at this stage have limited ability of wrist and finger movement. Meaningless colouring exercises should be avoided.
- e. The display of children's artwork can help them acquire a sense of achievement. When possible, the pre-primary educator should display all children's work on boards. If the space in the classroom is inadequate to display the artwork of the whole class, the pre-primary educator must make arrangement to exhibit the work of every child in turn over a

certain period of time.

- f. Children should be given opportunities to introduce their artwork and to learn to accept and appreciate the work of others.
- g. Children's pictures can be bound into a picture book, with simple descriptions added to facilitate reading by children.

5.3.5 Block Play

1. Objectives

By playing with blocks, children can develop their creativity and imagination, express their feelings and appreciate the fun. Moreover, they can co-ordinate the operation of their gross and fine motor skills and experience the relationship between building and some basic concepts such as big and small, tall and short, heavy and light, cubic shapes, direction, balance and symmetry. Children can also cultivate a spirit of co-operation and experience the fun through playing with their peers. These play activities will motivate them to talk with others and will enhance their language development.

2. Scope of Activities

Blocks vary in quality, size, shape, colour and type. There are also numerous methods of playing with blocks. For example, they can be played on the table or on the floor; individually or in groups; or played in a sand tray or used with dolls in imaginative play. In addition to the provision of small blocks which can be played on the table, some pre-primary institutions also set up a

large block corner for children. The pre-primary educator may refer to Section 5.3.2 of this chapter on how to arrange fine motor skill activities with small blocks. When designing a large block corner, the pre-primary educator may make reference to the following points :

- a. The location of the corner should be away from the main passage so that block work created will not be kicked down by passers-by.
- b. Ideally, the corner should be shielded so that the blocks and toys cannot be scattered all round. By so doing, children can also concentrate on their play activities since disturbance is kept to the minimum.
- c. This corner should be separated from other “quiet” corner(s) (such as the book corner). It may also be carpeted so that children can play on the floor comfortably and the noise of playing with blocks can be reduced.
- d. Sufficient space and blocks should be provided in the corner for the designated number of children. Otherwise, quarrels and conflicts may easily arise and children cannot enjoy the activity to the full.
- e. The pre-primary educator should provide various kinds of blocks so that children can have a choice and build what they want to. Discarded materials such as sweet boxes, metal boxes, plastic bottles and shoe boxes may also be used to broaden children’s perspectives and enrich their creative experiences.

- f. Blocks should be classified and kept on roomy shelves or in plastic boxes with picture labels so that children can easily reach them and restore them back.
- g. The pre-primary educator should guide children to keep the safety rules of the block corner.
- h. The pre-primary educator should show appreciation of children's work and discuss the process of creation with them.
- i. The pre-primary educator should pay attention to the cleanliness of the blocks and try to replace them regularly with blocks of different materials.

5.3.6 Water Play

1. Objectives

Water is versatile and is very attractive to children. While enjoying the fun of playing with water, children will unknowingly relax and concentrate at the same time. Through their sensory contacts, they will discover the characteristics of water, such as infiltration, refraction, conduction, dissolution, floating and pressure, etc.. Children may subsequently find interest in exploring these physical phenomena and the related vocabulary. In the course of stirring, beating, catching, and treading, children will improve the movement of their hands and the co-ordination of their four limbs.

2. Scope of Activities

- a. Children can play with water in a variety of ways. The pre-primary educator may put water in a water tray, together with such objects as showers, plastic bottles and cups, sponge,

funnels, balls and nets, etc. for children to play freely. Sometimes, the pre-primary educator may add some non-toxic colours and soap in the water to make the activity more attractive. Children may use water and sand to make mud and play some building games. If possible, the pre-primary educator may place a padding pool on the floor for children to play in it.

- b. The pre-primary educator should take note of the following in arranging water play for children :
 - i. The water tray or paddling pool should be located far away from the passage way so that children can be free from any disturbance and concentrate on their playing. Ideally, it should be located in the vicinity of the source of water and the drainage spot to facilitate the filling of water and cleaning work. A mop should be placed nearby for tidying up the slippery floor.
 - ii. The water should be clean and the volume should be sufficient for the number of children using it.
 - iii. Other toys should be provided to add fun to the activities, but the quantity should be appropriate to avoid impeding children.
 - iv. Children should put on aprons (or swimsuits when playing in the pool) so as to prevent their clothes from getting wet, otherwise, they may not be able to play cheerfully and whole-heartedly.

- v. The pre-primary educator should guide children to keep the rules of safety. Special attention should be paid to safety when a paddling pool is used.
- vi. Sufficient manpower should be deployed to conduct these activities, so as to provide a safe and orderly environment for children to enjoy the fun of playing with water.
- vii. Water play should not be take place in cold weather.

5.3.7 Sand Play

1. Objectives :

Both dry and wet sand can give abundant sensory stimulation and satisfaction to children, especially in the sense of touch. As such, sand is extremely appealing to children. Since sand is versatile, children can freely construct objects according to their own imagination. In so doing, children can attain a sense of achievement and become content. Moreover, in the course of playing with sand, children can realise the concepts of texture, weight, volume, dryness/wetness, three-dimensions, etc. and also the meaning of these terms. In taking part in sand play with their peers, children's socialising ability and language proficiency will also be enhanced.

2. Scope of Activities :

- a. The pre-primary educator can let children play freely at a sand tray or in a sand pit with dry or wet sand. Children can play with shovels, buckets, bottles, funnels, sieves, wooden boards or models of people, animals, cars, plants, etc.. Children can

practise digging, probing/rubbing, piling, transporting and moulding, as well as performing an imaginative act. If the sand pit is large enough, children can be allowed to play barefooted in it. This will be beneficial to their sensory, emotional and physical development.

- b. Points to note when playing with sand :
 - i. The sand tray or sand pit should be located far away from the main passageway to prevent interference from passers-by.
 - ii. The floor of the corner for sand playing activities should be covered with a large piece of plastic cloth to facilitate cleaning up after the play.
 - iii. A suitable amount of sand and enough tools should be placed in the sand pit or sand tray for a designated number of children to play with.
 - iv. Attention should be paid to ensure that the sand and the tools are cleaned, repaired and replenished. Care should be taken to ensure there are no sharp or pointed toys in the sand pit.
 - v. Children should wear aprons so that they can play freely without soiling their clothes.
 - vi. Children should keep the safety rules when playing with sand.
 - vii. Plenty of time should be allowed for playing and tidying up after the play.

5.3.8 Imaginative Play

1. Objectives :

Through activities such as role-play and simulation of actions or sounds, children can have a better understanding of the appearances or shapes of various personalities and objects which they come across in daily life, a better knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of other people, as well as stronger association and imagination. Such activities will also help to develop social skills and enhance language proficiency. In their imaginations, children can transcend the limitations of reality and assume the roles they have chosen. By giving vent to their own feelings regardless of possible consequences, they can enjoy themselves to the full. Therefore, such imaginative play has a stabilising effect on children's emotions.

2. Scope of Activities :

- a. There are two types of imaginative play. The first type is initiated and devised by children themselves. For instance, they may pretend that they are pre-primary educators telling a story to a group of children, or play with a chair as if they were driving a public vehicle. They may also imagine that they are playing with some hypothetical objects while using construction toys, sand, water, plasticine and blocks. They may even pretend that they are another person or an animal. Under a safe and suitable setting, the pre-primary educator should always encourage children to engage in such self-initiated activities. This is because such activities take

place in a most natural way and children often find them interesting. Moreover, the pre-primary educator can also deepen her understanding of children by observing their individual behaviour and ways of thinking during these activities.

- b. The other type of imaginative play is planned. For instance, a certain area of the room may be decorated into a family corner or supermarket, barber shop, clinic, car cleaning centre, gas station, post office, tuck shop, restaurant, laundry or book shop, etc.. It is better for the pre-primary educator to design these play activities together with children, discuss how these activities should be played, and provide them with the right concepts. The pre-primary educator can also take children to these areas and to discuss them. When play activities are in progress, however, the pre-primary educator should refrain from interfering as far as possible so that children can organise, pick their roles and exercise their imagination and creativity freely.
- c. Points to note in organising imaginative play :
 - i. The play activities should focus on enriching the daily experience of children, so as to widen their scope of imagination.
 - ii. A special corner should be assigned for role-play so that children can learn to distinguish between imagination and reality.

- iii. The tools and equipment used should be simple, clean, and fairly common. Real objects are preferred, e.g. clean bottles, hair rollers and topknots can be used in the setting of a barber shop. The pre-primary educator may ask children and their parents to help collect these articles, which should be arranged in an orderly manner, so that children can restore them and put them back.
- iv. Masks, hand puppets and simple costumes, etc. can be good aids for imaginative games. If children are interested in making these themselves, the pre-primary educator should encourage them to do so.
- v. The time allocated for the play activities should be flexible to suit the needs and interests of children. For younger children, a few minutes will be good enough.
- vi. Younger children may require more instructions on how to play with the equipment. But if children can find out the answers by themselves, this would be better and will give them a greater sense of achievement. Moreover, the play activities will be conducted in a more natural way.
- vii. The pre-primary educator may take part in children's play activities to arouse their interest or act as a mediator in case of argument. She should, however, adopt a natural and friendly attitude, withdrawing from the scene at the appropriate time so as to allow children to carry on with their play activities.

- viii. The pre-primary educator can observe the behaviour of emotionally unstable children during play activities, with a view to finding out their problems so as to facilitate counselling at a later stage.
- ix. The pre-primary educator may also introduce, during play activities, concepts which children have already grasped in their normal learning activities, such as the concepts of counting, matching, etc., or self-care skills, so that children can revise and consolidate what they have learnt.

5.3.9 Cooking Activities

1. Objectives :

Children learn through their response to sensory stimuli. Cooking activities, which involve all the five senses (i.e. touch, hearing, taste, smell and sight), are ideal for teaching purposes. Through such activities, children can acquire knowledge of the shapes, colours and properties of various food substances, observe their changes in the course of cooking and get a taste of the finished products. They may even participate in cooking activities by following instructions. Experiences gained in such activities will enable them to master certain basic concepts and techniques of hygiene such as eye-hand co-ordination and measurement of quantity. The pre-primary educator can also introduce the favourite dishes of people of different countries to broaden children's knowledge and to offer them a chance of tasting something novel.

2. Scope of Activities

- a. Children may be allowed to take part preparing the following food/drinks which involve only simple cooking procedures :
 - i. Mixed fruit sundae.
 - ii. Bread or biscuits spread with butter or jam.
 - iii. Popcorn made with an electric rice cooker.
 - iv. Sandwiches of various types.
 - v. Different kinds of drinks such as fruit punch, papaya milk, or any other types of punch.
 - vi. Eggs prepared in different methods.
 - vii. Butter cookies and cakes.
 - viii. Salad made with chopped fruits, eggs and potatoes.
 - ix. Soup made with chopped vegetables.
 - x. Stuffed dumplings.
- b. Points to note in conducting cooking activities
 - i. Simple diagrams can be drawn in advance to help introduce the ingredients and cooking procedures.
 - ii. Children should be encouraged to take part in the cooking and reminded to wash their hands first and keep themselves clean.
 - iii. The pre-primary educator should make sure children know the safety rules and the proper ways of using the cooking utensils. Children should not be allowed to use sharp knives. It is better for them to start learning how to prepare food which can easily be cut into small pieces, e.g. bananas, ham, etc.. The pre-primary educator should

keep children away from hot water or a stove, and enforce strictly all safety rules.

- iv. Although such activities may cultivate in children the habit of maintaining a balanced diet, the pre-primary educator should not over-emphasise this point, or else the children's interests in the cooking activities will be impaired.
- v. Children should be encouraged to invent or suggest some recipes, but care should be taken not to mix together certain food substances which may become unsuitable for consumption, e.g. acidic substances should not be added into milk.
- vi. The quantity of food should be appropriate. The ingredients, too, should be used economically and should be easy to prepare.
- vii. When the food is ready, children can be asked to comment on the recipe and the process of cooking. They may find it more interesting if they are allowed to do so. The pre-primary educator can also introduce terms to do with sound, taste and quantity as well as the cooking environment, and ask children to express their feelings and views to develop their language proficiency.

5.4 Scope of Learning

5.4.1 Introduction

In a narrow sense, the scope of learning of pre-primary education includes the learning of language, mathematics, science and society. However, in arranging learning activities, over-emphasis on formal teaching should be avoided, and the study of a certain curriculum area should not be confined to a specified period of time. A better approach is to use the available resources of the institution in a flexible way, taking into account children's interests and abilities in providing an environment which children will find learning relevant. They can also take the initiative in acquiring knowledge and skills of different curriculum areas as well as developing proper attitudes through direct personal experience.

To enable the pre-primary educator to master the learning objectives of different curriculum areas, teaching principles and the scope of learning of pre-primary education, an introduction on each curriculum area : language activities, early mathematical activities, experience in natural science and social experience is given in the following paragraphs :

5.4.2 Language Activities

1. Introduction

- a. Contemporary educationists recommend that young children develop all aspects of language in a relevant and integrated way based on experience. When using language in

meaningful and real situation, learners develop their listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. Researches have found that children follow a certain developmental pattern in language learning. Before they are admitted into a pre-primary institution, they have already started to learn how to speak through daily conversations, how to read from the various forms of pictures and written language they come across every day, and how to write from drawing and scribbling experience. Thus, a pre-primary language curriculum should centre on devising and providing an enriched language learning environment, in which children can develop their language proficiency through trying out, exploration and interpersonal interaction.

- b. To help the pre-primary educator gain a better understanding of the goals for the development of basic language skills of pre-primary children, the aspects of language, reading and writing, as well as the integrated approach to language learning will be discussed in the following paragraphs. It should be noted that even though the development of children's language generally follows a certain pattern, the pace of development of an individual child's language may vary, depending on maturity and life experiences. Therefore, a pre-primary institution should set reasonable language requirements according to individual child's abilities, rather than rigidly prescribing the progress to be made according to children's age.

2. The Use of Language

a. Objectives :

The use of language includes the ability to understand the language as well as to use it orally. One of the objectives of language activities is to help children learn how to control their pitch, the volume and the tempo of their voice so that they can speak fluently, naturally and clearly. Another objective is to help children learn how to express their ideas using proper sentences and appropriate facial expressions. The principle in designing language activities should thus aim at stimulating children's thinking and enhancing their language skills so that they can :

- i. express their opinions and needs;
- ii. ask questions;
- iii. explain/justify their behaviour;
- iv. report what they experience and see every day; and
- v. make use of language to infer, find out and solve problems, or forecast the outcome of events.

b. Principles of Teaching

- i. The pre-primary educator should motivate children by using everyday objects or things that interest them, and then encourage them to describe, report, ask questions and express opinions.
- ii. The pre-primary educator should start conversations with children at moments such as during assembly, play time, snack time and interest activities.

- iii. The pre-primary educator should use words and phrases easily understood by children when talking to them.
- iv. The pre-primary educator is a good person for children to talk to. During conversation, she should listen with patience, allow children sufficient time to think and respond and let them know that the educator enjoys listening to them.
- v. Conversation should be carried out in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. If children have any difficulty in expressing their ideas, the pre-primary educator should give them guidance and encouragement to build up their confidence in speaking.
- vi. The pre-primary educator should let children speak more and encourage them to use complete sentences.
- vii. Open-ended question-and-answer techniques should be employed more frequently to stimulate children to develop their conversational skills.
- viii. Children should be allowed to express different views and have different responses. Generally speaking, it is not necessary to arrive at a consensus or a definite answer.
- ix. The pre-primary educator should set an example and help children speak with accurate pronunciation and in a polite and natural manner. She need not deliberately correct children's faulty pronunciation but should demonstrate the right way.

- x. The pre-primary educator should play the role of a good ‘language model’. When children are asked to describe a scene or answer a question, she may either elaborate on what has been said or give them the opportunity to continue without interruption. Correction of their mistakes in vocabulary or sentence structure should be done naturally.
- c. Scope of Learning :
- To enable children to make good use of their hearing to identify different sounds, to understand what sounds are on so that they can follow instructions and acquire knowledge, it is necessary to help them develop the following basic listening skills :
- i. Listening
- the ability to concentrate;
 - the ability to distinguish the various properties of sounds, e.g. volume, pitch and duration, etc.;
 - learning about the rhythm of sounds;
 - distinguishing the relationship between different sounds and their backgrounds;
 - using their imagination according to the sounds heard;
and
 - remembering different sounds, and reproducing and imitating them.

ii. Conversation

The content of conversation, which includes everyday terms and simple dialogues, should be extended from oneself to concrete matters :

- oneself and one' s next-of-kin;
- things encountered by children in their daily life;
- daily habits and manners;
- conversation on general knowledge; and
- social conversations.

iii. Story-telling

Story-telling is an effective means of developing children' s language. As story books contain pictures and texts which are complementary to each other, they can help children learn new characters and phrases. The plot of a story can attract children' s attention to listen or read. Children may also learn how to describe the course of events systematically with the right words and sentences. This will improve their power of expression. The pre-primary educator should choose stories with interesting and healthy content suitable for children and use such teaching aids as puppets, moppets, paper dolls, pictures, slides or real objects. She should present the stories in an interesting way and help to train up children in listening and speaking. After telling a story, the pre-primary educator may, where appropriate, organise follow-up activities, e.g. she may ask children to play the

roles in the story or express their views about the ending of the story, etc..

iv. Simple Nursery Rhymes and Riddles

- When teaching nursery rhymes to children, efforts should be made to arouse their interest in reciting, to drill them in accurate pronunciation and fluency. Children should not be forced to memorise nursery rhymes in a formal way.
- Nursery rhymes can be taught in conjunction with learning activities and themes. The pre-primary educator can also collect or design her own teaching materials. The content should be related to children's experience and the words used should be suitable for their age.
- The pre-primary educator should emphasise oral training in teaching nursery rhymes. It is not necessary for children to understand and write the words used in the nursery rhymes.

v. Games

Through games, children will learn to reflect their thoughts, experience and understanding of their surroundings. Children can learn through games and such activities as conversation, listening, describing pictures, nursery rhymes, riddles, and role-play/simulation games.

3. Development of Reading Skills

‘Reading Skills’ refers to the ability to comprehend that symbols carrying meanings, e.g. pictures, signs and words. At the initial stage, the pre-primary educator may allow children to develop their reading experience by comprehending the meanings of some signs or pictures. When they have built up some ideas of symbols, the focus of learning can be shifted to the comprehension of words and sentences.

a. Objectives :

- i. To develop children’s interest in reading and help them form good reading habits.
- ii. To help children acquire more knowledge through reading.

b. Scope of Activities and Related Guidelines

- i. The pre-primary educator may help children practise eye-hand co-ordination and develop their power of identifying different shapes and their memory through various games using tangrams, jigsaw puzzles, sequential pictures and dominoes, etc.. Although all these teaching aids perform similar functions, the pre-primary educator should use a variety of aids so that children will not feel bored. Children should be encouraged to take active part in general activities and activities requiring close observation and comparison.
- ii. Books are one of children’s major sources of knowledge and ideas. In reading interesting books, children will be attracted by the beautiful illustrations, and they will also

be eager to know the meaning of the words and sentences. They will thus develop an interest in language and enjoy talking about interesting story plots among themselves.

In selecting reading materials for children, consideration should be given to their age, abilities and experiences.

The following points should be noted :

- the story should be interesting with a healthy theme;
- the plot should be simple and repetitive, with vivid and easily understandable characters to enrich children's imagination and satisfy their curiosity;
- the illustrations should be colourful and attractive, with simple and vivid characters and are thematically explicit; and
- simple language and vocabulary should be used.

Books for children can either be purchased or produced. The pre-primary educator may encourage children to collect posters, postcards, used books/newspaper, calendars, pictures in advertisements, can labels and photos, or drawings made by themselves, etc. so they can make their own books. If it is necessary to add simple words, the pre-primary educator may ask children to cut out printed words from other books/newspaper or to print words with ready-made rubber stamps or to write down the words that they know.

The pre-primary educator should show that she loves

reading story books. To arouse children's interest in reading story books, she can tell stories from books, and regularly introduce new books to them. Sometimes she can read story books with them, giving them some hints and additional information where appropriate. In this way, children will be guided to observe details and acquire a deeper understanding of the stories.

As children's concentration on reading is of a very short duration, it is not necessary to have a fixed period for class reading. In the classroom, a well-lit book corner should be set up. There should be comfortable chairs or mats for children to sit down and read without being disturbed. The quantity of books need not be large in number. Apart from interesting reading materials, it is important to include books related to the teaching theme of the week. For instance, if the theme is "Family", books on "Family Members", "Home Appliances", "Family Life", "Homes of Children in Different Countries" and "Safety at Home" are all relevant.

Children should be encouraged to read books before and after lessons and during interest activities time, and to put the books back in the right place after reading and in good condition.

iii. Learning Characters

Learning characters is an important transitional stage from the use of spoken language to the learning of written language. In choosing appropriate characters and phrases for identification and reading by children, the pre-primary educator should refer to the following points :

- The characters and phrases chosen, e.g. those characters matching various teaching themes, should be closely related to the everyday life and experience of children, so as to help them master and remember the characters and phrases.

Simple characters should be taught first, and then complex ones. Characters/words of similar forms, like ‘牛’ and ‘羊’, ‘日’ and ‘目’, ‘石’ and ‘右’, ‘中’ and ‘巾’, ‘牙’ and ‘耳’, ‘手’ and ‘生’, should not be taught quickly as they are easily confused.

- Nouns should be taught first, but phrases, or even simple sentences, that are meaningful in children’s daily life or which would arouse their interest can also be used as a medium for children to start learning the written language.
- In introducing new characters, the pre-primary educator can explain with objects, pictures, actions, facial expressions as examples. In order to consolidate children’s knowledge of the language, pictures and objects in the classroom could have name

cards. She can collect or produce relevant books and put them in the book corner. In addition, she may arrange different kinds of games to provide opportunities for repeated learning. Children will be able to learn characters through such individual and collective activities as matching pictures with word cards, treasure hunts, domino games, fishing and guessing riddles.

- Children should know the shape, pronunciation and meaning of a character. If children are asked to identify a certain character just from its position in the book instead of grasping the shape of the character, their memory of the shape of a character will not be accurate.

4. Writing Ability

As a language skill, writing does not confine itself to writing with a pen. Writing is also a method of expressing ideas in pictures, signs and words. While pre-primary children are more interested in expressing ideas in pictures, 5 to 6 year-old children may be able to write simple sentences under the suitable guidance of adults.

a. Objectives

- i. To encourage children to express what they see, hear and feel in the form of pictures.
- ii. To enable children to write simple characters and phrases, with emphasis on :
 - fostering children's sense of touch;

- developing their power of co-ordination and their sense of direction;
 - cultivating their knowledge of space and angles;
 - training their dexterity in the control of their fingers and in the forming of a right-handed or left-handed habit; and
 - teaching children to adopt the right way of holding pencils, the right posture in writing, and to master the sequence of strokes.
- b. Principles of Teaching
- i. Emphasis should be placed on teaching children to relate an incident sequentially.
 - ii. Children should be encouraged to conduct their writing activities by simply drawing pictures or drawing pictures that matched with words.
 - iii. The pre-primary educator should not force children to write with pencils/pens before they are ready. Generally speaking, children under the age of four should not be expected to write.
 - iv. Children often lack confidence when they first start to learn to write characters. The pre-primary educator could encourage children to write in a sand tray, on a desk top or on a magic board with their finger tips or to write with a wet finger.

- v. Children can practise with different kinds of writing instruments, and writing materials should not be restricted to squared paper and exercise books only.
 - vi. The characters or phrases selected should be simple and easy to write. Children should be asked to write characters with mainly vertical and horizontal strokes and simple components.
 - vii. The pre-primary educator should teach children how to identify the different parts of a Chinese character before asking them to learn how to write Chinese characters.
 - viii. Guidance should be given to children between four and five to help them grasp the correct balance and proportion of Chinese characters. As for children between five and six, more guidance should be given to teach them how to write Chinese characters accurately in terms of strokes and shapes.
 - ix. Children should only write a few characters, phrases or sentences each time. Excessive writing should be avoided.
 - x. The pre-primary educator should give appropriate guidance and encouragement to children according to individual need.
- c. Scope of Learning :
- i. Pre-writing activities
 - Children will be able to achieve eye-hand co-ordination, brain-hand co-ordination and flexible

control of fingers through play, art and craft activities and routine training.

- The pre-primary educator can ask children to draw any of their personal things that they see in everyday life.
- Only when children grasp the skills of holding the pencil properly can the pre-primary educator ask them to draw lines within a confined area.

ii. Writing characters

- The pre-primary educator should teach children the right posture for writing and the proper way of holding a pencil.
- Children may learn to write characters, phrases and sentences which are simple, familiar, easy to write and related to their daily life.

iii. Writing activities

- Children can be asked to arrange single characters in the right order to form a sentence.
- Children can be asked to fill in the blanks with suitable phrases to form a complete sentence.
- Children can be asked to express an idea in simple pictures and phrases.

In February 1996, the Curriculum Development Council completed its study on Chinese handwriting at the kindergarten level and made a number of recommendations. The main recommendations

have been included in paragraph 4(b). For further details, please refer to Appendix 3.

5. Integrated Approach to Language Learning

In the previous paragraphs, language is looked at through its different aspects of development. The pre-primary educator, however, should adopt a whole-language approach to provide children with integrated language learning experiences. In other words, the pre-primary educator should create a meaningful language learning environment for children so that their experiences in listening, speaking, reading and writing can be integrated into the everyday classroom situation and curriculum activities, and children should be guided to use the verbal and written language in a meaningful way. For the reference of pre-primary educators, some examples of providing children with integrated language learning experiences are listed below :

- a. desks, chairs, cabinets and other furniture items in the classroom can be labelled with relevant names;
- b. names of children can be written by the pre-primary educator or copied by children on the doors of their lockers, pictures drawn by them, and other work produced by them;
- c. information concerning the name of the activity centre, the number of its users, and procedures for using the equipment and materials of the centre can be displayed by means of diagrams and words;
- d. children should be encouraged to write and the pre-primary educator should accept their form of writing;

- e. children should be encouraged to describe their learning experiences, which the pre-primary educator can record and then relate back to them so that they can understand the connection between verbal and written language;
- f. various kinds of reading card writing materials can be placed in the activity centre so that children can write if they wish e.g. children may be provided with pencils and paper to describe or draw the buildings they have constructed in the block corner; or they can be asked to follow the instructions in diagrams displayed in the nature corner or cooking corner; and
- g. children can be encouraged to report on an outing or a picnic, either verbally or with drawings supplemented by writing which can then be collated into a news-report or a nature diary.

5.4.3 Early Mathematical Activities

1. Objective :

Mathematics is closely related to our daily life. The pre-primary educator should introduce basic knowledge in mathematics to children according to their age, experiences and interests through various kinds of mathematical activities. The objectives of introducing early mathematical concepts are as follows :

- a. To help children develop their concentration and memory, and observation and logical thinking.
- b. To help children build up the concepts of number, shape, space, time and simple computations.

- c. To cultivate in children the right learning attitude to serve as the foundation for learning mathematics in future.
- d. To stimulate children's interest in mathematics.

2. Principles of Teaching :

- a. Introducing mathematical concepts is only part of the learning activities in the pre-primary curriculum, which should be implemented in accordance with the development of children's interest at different stages, and in close association with learning activities to fulfill the overall objectives of the curriculum.
- b. Introducing mathematical concepts is not restricted to a specified period. The educator ought to make use of every opportunity to introduce and consolidate mathematical concepts through games and daily learning activities. The introduction of each mathematical concept should be clear and systematic, concentrating on one attribute at a time and progressing gradually.
- c. The mathematical activities should be interesting. The pre-primary educator should carefully select activities which are suitable for children's abilities and make use of appropriate objects or teaching aids to encourage their active participation so that children will derive satisfaction from the activities and develop self-confidence.
- d. Since thinking and language are closely related, the development of language and the formation of concepts are complementary to each other. Children should be encouraged

to discuss the things they encounter in their daily life. They should be given opportunities to talk, and to communicate among themselves and with the pre-primary educator. “Spoon-fed” approach should be avoided. Children should be given the opportunities to explore and discover ideas on their own as far as possible.

- e. The pre-primary educator should use mathematical vocabulary correctly, but the teaching of mathematical terms such as “sorting”, “matching”, “combination” and “statistics” may not be necessary.

3. Scope of Learning :

- a. Through preliminary activities such as “sorting”, “matching”, “comparing”, and “ordering”, children are enabled to develop the concepts of size, quantity, length, weight, thickness, height, etc. and the appropriate use of mathematical vocabulary.

i. Sorting

The pre-primary educator may use toys, objects or specially designed teaching materials to help children distinguish the similarities and differences of various objects, and to classify different objects according to their attributes.

ii. Matching

Let children put two identical objects into pairs, or match objects that have a close relation with each other. Through sorting and matching activities, children may improve their observation. They will examine objects

carefully, identify them and draw conclusions. This lays the foundation for comprehension and logical thinking.

iii. Comparing

Comparing is the third vital preliminary activity. In making comparisons between objects, children will develop the concepts of size, length, weight, thickness, etc..

The pre-primary educator should provide a suitable environment for children to observe, identify and compare the sizes, lengths, weights, thickness of objects, etc.. Furthermore, through one-to-one correspondence activities, the pre-primary educator may gradually guide children to understand the concept of difference in quantity. They may then have a preliminary understanding of addition and subtraction. They will also learn some mathematical terms such as ‘many’, ‘few’, ‘more’, ‘less’, etc..

iv. Ordering

After children have acquired a good understanding of the concept of comparing, the pre-primary educator should ask children to compare the sizes, lengths and thickness among three or more objects. Children are helped to understand the concept of ordering when they arrange the objects in order according to certain attributes. If children have acquired the ability to count, such occasions can be used to introduce the concept of ordinal numbers e.g. first, second, third, etc.

To build up the concept of ordering, the pre-primary educator can start off by using objects that can be arranged in order, such as a set of plastic cups or jigsaw puzzle boards of different sizes so that children may arrange the objects from the biggest to the smallest or vice versa. Children can see and touch these objects in the course of practising and the actual experience they have acquired may further strengthen their concept of ordering.

b. Shapes

Children are able to develop a basic understanding of shapes through various games and activities. As most objects in our daily life are three dimensional, the pre-primary educator should help children learn about shapes with real objects. Children may learn about simple shapes in ordinary games such as fitting tangrams, building blocks, and playing with plasticine, etc.. Children should also be encouraged to discuss the shape of objects they see in their daily life, collect pictures and stick them on a scrap-book in order to strengthen their knowledge of shapes. Children may also be enabled to develop their imagination by piecing together paper-cuts to form different pictures or patterns in art and craft activities.

c. Spatial concepts

Children may be taught to distinguish the spatial positions of above and below, front and back, middle, left and right, etc., through daily experiences. Furthermore, they can also be taught to distinguish the position of front and back, above and

below and middle through activities in the pre-primary institution such as lining up, seating arrangements, outdoor and indoor games. Children in a 5-year-old class may also learn to differentiate the left from the right.

d. Concept of time

Opportunities should be given to help children acquire the concept of time in daily activities, including that of morning, afternoon, evening, yesterday, today, tomorrow, day, week, month and year.

The pre-primary educator should carry out time-reporting activities in line with the daily schedule of activities of children in the pre-primary institution so as to introduce to them the concept of time. It is not necessary to introduce the knowledge of reading the exact time in seconds, minutes and quarters from the clock at this stage. The pre-primary educator may also make use of a daily record of the weather, class time-tables, birthday parties and festivals of the year to introduce to children the days in a week and then help them acquire the concept of day, month and year.

e. Measurement

Activities should be organised so that children can measure with real objects. Through such practice, they can acquire the basic concepts of length, weight and volume. The pre-primary educator may help children measure the desk with a book, the classroom by footsteps and weight school bags by hand or with a simple scale. The concept of volume may be

introduced through playing with sand or water. Regarding the concept of measurement at the pre-primary level, more emphasis should be placed on direct comparison. The introduction of standard units is not required at this stage.

f. Counting and simple computation

i. Counting within 20

Children may be taught the concept of quantity and the order of numbers within 20 through counting different kinds of real objects. In teaching numbers, the pre-primary educator should not merely ask children to recite the numbers, as it will only make them memorise the numbers by rote without really knowing the relationship between the number and the actual quantity. In teaching counting, the pre-primary educator should always provide real objects for children to touch and count one by one. The counting of numbers should be introduced progressively.

In a 3-year-old class, counting from 1 to 5 should be taught. The pre-primary educator should design more activities to help children understand the relationship between the numbers within 5 and the quantity represented by them. If children really understand the meaning of numbers at this stage, it will be much easier for them to learn to count from 1 to 20 and the quantity represented by them when they move to upper classes.

It is not advisable to start teaching children to write

numbers too early. Therefore, it should not be taught in a 3-year-old class. In a 4-year-old class, the writing of numbers should be taught according to the individual ability of children. The progress of counting numbers and writing numbers need not be the same.

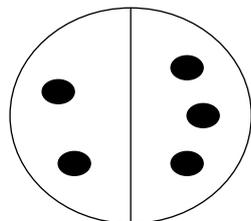
- ii. Children should be introduced to the combination and computation of numbers within 10 only after they have developed precise concepts of numbers. Children should be guided to compute with real objects and through games so that they may learn addition and subtraction from actual experience.

In teaching computation, the pre-primary educator should make use of real objects to conduct simple verbal computation activities. As the ability to read and comprehend is limited in pre-primary children, arithmetic problems should not be introduced. The pre-primary educator may conduct simple and direct verbal computation making use of whatever objects children encounter in their daily life. It is not advisable to introduce complicated computation such as consecutive addition and mixed computation at the pre-primary stage. Children of higher ability may be allowed to do more complicated computation which does not involve the carrying of numbers. However, they should not be pushed to do so if it is observed that their abilities are not yet up to standard. Computation formulae may be

introduced only when children have acquired a good understanding of counting and composing numbers with real objects. Generally speaking, the introduction of computation formulae may begin with recording real objects. Therefore, it is more appropriate to adopt a horizontal form of expression at this stage. An example is given below.

Record all the basic combinations of addition and subtraction with 10.

5.



(Narration)

3 plus 2 equals 5;

5 minus 3 equals 2.

After that, proceed to using signs of +, -, =

Note : The combination of numbers is the first step in introducing the concept of addition and subtraction. Formal written calculations should be introduced at a later stage. The signs of addition, subtraction and equation are used here for recording of results of counting of real objects, and not for calculation.

iii. Statistics

Statistics at the pre-primary level is only a means of counting and computation. Thus detailed analysis is not necessary. In conducting statistical exercise, the pre-primary educator should prepare some pre-printed stickers on the objects to be counted and ask children to

arrange the printed pictures one by one to produce a pictogram, thus making the presentation of data more attractive and easier to compare.

g. Knowledge of coins

To pre-primary children, money exchange is quite beyond their comprehension and therefore the pre-primary educator should not expect too much from them. Children may be taught to identify the colour, shape, size and value of the various kinds of coins through activities like sorting, comparison and matching. When children know enough about coins, games like “Buying and Selling” and “Opening a Small Shop” may be organised.

5.4.4 Experience in Natural Science

Pre-primary children are ego-centric. They learn about people and things around them through their sensory experiences. Many of the things that they encounter in everyday life are closely related to science. Thus, the pre-primary educator should, taking into account the age and experience of children, guide them to observe, explore and experience the environment so as to enrich their knowledge, satisfy their curiosity and thirst for knowledge, strengthen their problem-solving ability and help them develop an inquisitive attitude in learning. In this way, a solid foundation will be laid for their future study.

1. Objectives :

- a. To stimulate children's interest in the environment, and foster in them an open attitude of learning through such activities as subjective observation, manipulation, analysis and exploration.
- b. To help children develop their power of observation through contact with nature.
- c. To help children cultivate a love for animals and plants.
- d. To help children understand the relationship between man and nature, and to arouse their concern for their living environment.
- e. To help children develop problem-solving skills.

2. Principles of Teaching :

- a. In arranging learning activities, the pre-primary educator should take into account the abilities, interests and daily experiences of children.
- b. The pre-primary educator should encourage children to participate in learning activities so as to acquire first-hand experience.
- c. The pre-primary educator should carry out the activities personally before asking children to do so and make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the activities will be conducted safely and smoothly.
- d. Before conducting scientific experiments, the pre-primary educator should ask questions which would arouse children's curiosity in the topic.

- e. During experiments, the pre-primary educator should not disclose the results directly, but instead, she should encourage children to use such methods as classification and comparison so as to study and observe experimental results.
- f. Learning activities arranged should be easy to observe or with immediate, conspicuous changes.
- g. The activities should be in line with the teaching themes.
- h. The procedures of activities should be simple.
- i. The activities can be conducted by individual child or in groups.
- j. At the end of the activities, the pre-primary educator should ask children to present or record the results of activities by using a tape-recorder, pictures, tables, samples or simple words, etc.. These findings can be shared or discussed with other children in the same group or in the whole class. Children should be guided to be sceptical, to guess and ask questions, and to record their conclusions.
- k. The pre-primary educator should avoid using scientific terms not easily understood by children.
- l. The pre-primary educator should make use of every opportunity to teach. For example, by sharing experience or observing the scene in the streets with children after a typhoon or rain.

3. Scope of Learning

Science and everyday life are inseparable. It is best for pre-primary children to learn science from their actual experience.

Thus, the things they see in everyday life may be included in the scope of learning.

- a. The form and growth requirements of animals.
- b. The form and growth requirements of plants.
- c. Natural phenomena, e.g. the sun, the moon and stars; seasonal and climatic changes; fine, cloudy and rainy weather; wind, thunder, lightning, etc..
- d. The properties of such matters as sand, water and magnets.
- e. The relationship between daily necessities and life.
- f. Basic knowledge of physics, e.g. concepts of force, floating, sinking, etc..
- g. Changes in the conditions of food, e.g. raw, cooked, fresh and rotten.

4. Suggested Activities and Equipment

Apart from related group activities, the pre-primary educator can also set up a Nature Corner and arrange visits.

a. The Setting Up and Use of a Nature Corner

The setting up of a lively Nature Corner in the classroom provides opportunities for children to acquire knowledge of nature through collecting, observing, caring for animals and plants, experimenting and keeping records. Such activities are likely to arouse their interests in learning.

The pre-primary educator can make use of the Nature Corner to carry out various activities for learning general knowledge. The role of the pre-primary educator here is not only to set up the Nature Corner and encourage children to contribute, but

also to direct their active participation, such as changing water in the vases, watering the seedlings, sorting and labelling samples, as well as give guidance and instructions as to how pet animals may be kept such as feeding them with an appropriate amount of food. It is advisable for the pre-primary educator to supervise, guide and instruct children in their daily routine work.

i. The Discovery Table

The discovery table should be of a suitable height so that children can see the objects on display easily. There should be sufficient space around it for children to touch, observe and compare the objects. In case of crowded classrooms, the use of tops of low cupboards, low and wide window sills or shelves can be considered.

The objects displayed on the discovery table should be attractive, and should be changed regularly according to the season and the teaching theme so as to arouse children's curiosity and motivate them to learn.

ii. Flower vases, pots and other containers may be purchased or produced from recycled materials.

iii. The Aquarium

The aquarium should best be wide-mouthed for good ventilation, with some coarse sand and a few pebbles placed at the bottom. Suitable pond plants such as waterweeds and duck weeds can ensure adequate supply of oxygen for creatures such as goldfish and tropical fish.

Children can observe and appreciate as well as learn about the lives and habits of these creatures.

iv. Display Board

A good place for the display board is the wall near the discovery table, where information relating to the exhibits like pictures, a weather chart, a duty roster and a pictorial nature diary may be shown.

v. Magnets

Apart from magnets of different shapes, there should be different kinds of objects, such as metal strips, feathers, clips, small stones, ceramic tiles, cork, paper, iron nails, iron lids, smooth wooden splinters, etc. Let children find out about magnetism from using the objects mentioned above.

vi. A magnifying glass

Children should be encouraged to observe objects more closely through a magnifying glass.

b. Visits and Outings

The pre-primary educator should plan visits and outings to provide learning opportunities outside the classroom. Such activities will help children experience social life, expand their horizon and give them opportunities to observe and contact with the outside world. In the process of observation, children will get to know the environment and its changes and enrich their scientific and social knowledge. For all these reasons, the pre-primary institution should try to organise such

activities. The following points may help the pre-primary educator in planning visits and outings :

- i. Preparations before the visit or outing
 - After deciding upon the objectives, date, time and place of visit/outing, the pre-primary educator should visit the site prior to the actual outing, collect relevant information, contact the persons-in-charge of the site and give a brief introduction of the site to the children.
 - Inform parents of all particulars of the outing, seek their permission for their children to participate and request them to complete the reply slip. Parents may also be invited to assist in taking the children to the visit or outing.
 - The pre-primary educator should brief children on the objectives, place and points to be noted prior to the outing. For example, if they are to visit a supermarket, the pre-primary educator may use relevant pictures to discuss with children, arouse their interest in learning, and guide them to make in-depth observation according to their abilities.
 - It is not advisable to organise visits and outings to spots far away from school. Instead, nearby places should be chosen when possible. If transportation is required, arrangements should be made well in advance.

- The pre-primary educator should plan groups and their supervision. Children should be in groups, each of which is supervised by an adult. The adult should know children in his/her group well to give them a sense of security. He/she should make them wear a name tag bearing the pre-primary institution's name, its address and telephone number. He/she should have a list of children's names. The pre-primary educator and the group leader should both be responsible for all the preparation and keep an eye on the safety and health condition of children.
 - Prepare suitable equipment and assist children in collecting, observing, interviewing and recording.
 - The first-aid kit should be taken on all trips.
 - For safety purposes, roll-calls should be made both on assembly and dismissal.
- ii. Guidance during the visit

The pre-primary educator should help children make observations in accordance with the teaching objectives. For example, when children are observing rabbits, the pre-primary educator should guide them in their observation by asking questions such as :

- What grows on a rabbit's head?
- What colour are its eyes?
- What colour is its fur?

Children will acquire knowledge about rabbits in all aspects through observation and answering these questions. For smaller children, the pre-primary educator should let them observe one thing or phenomenon at a time so that they learn more easily.

In the process of observation, not only should the pre-primary educator ensure that children see clearly, but she should also give them suitable opportunities to feel, smell, hear and taste. Sensory experience can reinforce children's observation.

In the same way, the pre-primary educator may ask older children to observe and make simple comparisons of two or more animals at the same time, for example, a rabbit, a tortoise and a guinea pig. Thus children will have a better and more accurate understanding of these animals. During outings, the pre-primary educator should draw children's attention to the scenery, seasonal characteristics and their impact on the growth patterns in plants and animals. If possible, she may also alert them to the evidence of seasonal characteristics and changes in the surroundings, or ask them to make simple records.

- iii. Visits and outings must be in line with classroom teaching. Follow-up activities must be carried out in the classroom after each visit or outing. This can be done by encouraging children to talk about the trip so as to develop their power of expression; or asking them to draw pictures,

make records or picture books about it. As for the articles that children have collected during the visit or outing, the pre-primary educator can help them in sorting, lead them to appreciate and make further observation, which will help to consolidate their learning.

5.4.5 Social Experience

The pre-primary educator should help children acquire basic knowledge of themselves through sensory activities and practical experience in accordance with their age, experiences and interests. From learning about themselves, they will come to know about their family as well as the people and things they come across in their daily life. In this way, children will gradually broaden their knowledge of the social environment, and their experience of life will be further enriched through direct observation, free exploration and personal involvement. They will develop a strong interest in the environment and in order to satisfy their thirst for knowledge, they will learn to get along with other people harmoniously.

1. Objectives

- a. Expand children's social circle and help them understand themselves and the social environment in order to cope with the needs of living.
- b. Encourage children to pay attention to personal hygiene and cleanliness of the environment.

- c. Guide children to understand the close relationship between the individual and society with a view to developing their civic awareness.
- d. Provide children with opportunities to participate in social activities so that their social skills can be developed.
- e. Help children develop the right attitudes in dealing with people so that they can enjoy social life.
- f. Help children cultivate a knowledge of the Chinese race and culture, as well as other countries' customs and traditions.

2. Principles of Teaching

- a. Children should be provided with a stimulating learning environment and suitable opportunities according to their interests, abilities and needs. Meanwhile, they should also be encouraged to participate in activities. They should learn through play and practice and derive satisfaction and a sense of achievement from the learning process.
- b. Stress should be placed on the discovery method of teaching with the use of appropriate teaching aids and real objects to enhance children's interest in learning. The pre-primary educators should avoid "spoon-feeding" lecturing and requiring children to learn by rote.
- c. Teaching is not necessarily confined to the classroom. The pre-primary educator should make use of the physical environment and the resources nearby, e.g. the institutions' premises, outdoor playgrounds, parks, transport facilities, markets and shops, to organise activities like outings and visits

for children so that they can learn from personal experiences. Safety of children must be taken into account when planning outdoor activities. Parents' written approval should be secured before allowing children to participate.

- d. Teaching materials, especially those involving abstract concepts, should be arranged in proper order, starting from more familiar objects or things which children encounter regularly and which directly affect their daily life, then gradually extending to other objects or things further from their knowledge. A better approach is to first consider whether children really use such materials in their daily life or whether they need to know such materials at this stage, before introducing the materials to them. The teaching materials chosen by the pre-primary educator should fit in with the season or the festival to ensure a close relationship between the children's learning and their lives.
- e. Appropriate counselling and incidental teaching should be given if children are engaged in a dispute, become emotionally unstable, or are particularly intrigued by a haphazard incident.
- f. The pre-primary educator should set an example for children to follow. For instance, she should be consistent at all times, display positive attitudes, treat people courteously and respect other people's feelings.
- g. Children should be given ample opportunities to make choices for themselves so that they can learn how to make judgements, develop self-confidence and acquire independence. However,

the pre-primary educator has to bear in mind the limited judgement and analytical power of children and should not give too many choices.

- h. Children should be given sufficient time and opportunities to practise their social skills and to adapt to social norms.

3. Scope of Learning

- a. Help children understand their roles, responsibilities and the relationship of the individual to the family and society through provision of experiences such as :
 - i. to know and care about oneself..
 - ii. to know and care about the family.
 - iii. to know and care about the school.
 - iv. to know and respect public personages.
 - v. to be acquainted with community facilities and take part in related activities.
 - vi. to learn about the different customs, cultures and festivities of China and other countries.
- b. The pre-primary educator can cultivate moral values in children by setting a good example and encouraging children to behave properly and form good habits through daily experiences and routine activities, e.g. :
 - i. develop a positive self concept;
 - ii. help and co-operate with other people;
 - iii. be affectionate, polite and considerate;
 - iv. show respect for the elders;

- v. be concerned with social affairs, take good care of public property and observe social ethics;
- vi. pay attention to order and safety;
- vii. care for plants and animals and appreciate the natural environment.

4. Guidelines on Activities

- a. Moral values can be cultivated in children through daily activities in the institution, e.g. applying the rule of taking turns in snack times, using the toilet and other activities.
- b. Let children learn through various activities such as role-play, co-operative or imaginative play and games.
- c. Make flexible use of the existing resources in the institution. Apart from buying additional equipment, the pre-primary educator can make use of the existing furniture and equipment for games and play activities. In practice, the same set of equipment used for the layout of a home corner can also be utilised as a shop, a post office, a hospital, a supermarket and the like.
- d. Make use of favourable conditions, where appropriate, to enable children to acquire knowledge of the people and affairs in the community through personal experience. Suitable methods may include :
 - i. Meeting a guest-speaker
People from all walks of life can be invited to introduce their work to children. Alternatively, a guided tour can be organised to offer children opportunities to meet

members of different professions in the service sector, e.g. policemen, firemen, postmen, bakers, etc. so that they can develop a better understanding of the work of the above professions, experience the actual work carried out by them, and learn how to contribute to society in a similar way in future.

ii. Picnic/Outing

An outing to a park, a swimming pool, etc. can provide children with opportunities to learn about the rights they enjoy in public places and how they should behave in such places.

iii. Sharing of views on current affairs

Where appropriate, chances should be taken to introduce some current affairs to children in brief, such as the cleaning campaign, the anti-smoking campaign, Community Chest fund-raising activities, district board elections, etc. so that children can get to know about these events and become more interested in participating in them.

iv. Participation of volunteers in the institution's activities

Volunteer workers such as boy scouts, members of various student bodies, etc., can be invited to assist in organising open days or other major events in the institution so as to promote mutual understanding.

e. Design special activities whenever appropriate. For example, the following measures may be taken to help 2-to 3-year-old

children adapt to the new environment at the start of a new term :

- i. Have the children divided into small groups and start the new term on different dates.
 - ii. Hold meetings with parents of children newly admitted to the institution.
 - iii. Extend the daily programme gradually to the normal hours.
 - iv. If necessary, allow parents to stay with their children on a temporary basis. Parents should also be encouraged to participate in various activities together with their children, so that children can experience the pleasure of attending pre-primary institutions and develop a sense of belonging and security.
 - v. It is not necessary to follow the time-table and curriculum rigidly in the first two weeks of the new term.
 - vi. Reserve some time daily for children to choose their favourite activities, toys and playmates.
- f. Conduct different kinds of activities such as individual conversation, group sharing or class activities so as to provide a variety of social occasions.

5.5 Curriculum Model

It has been pointed out in Chapter 3 that the “thematic approach” is currently a main teaching approach in the pre-primary curriculum. Based on various principles of curriculum planning, two teaching examples on the themes of “Plants” and “Who am I?” are outlined in Appendix 4 for the reference of pre-primary educators. Besides, it is noted that the “project approach” has become more and more popular with pre-primary educators, who are attaching great importance to this curriculum approach. In fact, both the “thematic” and “project” approaches can be traced to the same origin. The difference is that the “project approach” places greater emphasis on the initiative of children to explore and discover by themselves during the learning process; hence the pre-primary educator has to assume a less dominant role, but rather, act as children’s companion in the learning process. Appendix 5 gives a brief introduction on the “project approach”. In order that local pre-primary curriculum can achieve diversification, pre-primary institutions are advised to try out the “project approach”.

CURRICULUM AIMS ACROSS LEVELS

	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Sixth Form
General Aims	<p>The general aims of the pre-primary curriculum are both enabling and preparatory, bridging the gap between the family and an outside social group. The curriculum aims at enlarging children's view of the world from their family to that of their school. It should enable children to attain a balanced development of their social, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects. Pedagogical programmes should foster in children a positive attitude towards their cognitive, emotional and kinaesthetic learning which are important to the success of their future education.</p>	<p>The general aims of the primary curriculum share, to some extent, the enabling and preparatory nature of the aims of the pre-primary curriculum. The primary curriculum mediates between pre-primary and secondary curricula. On the one hand, it encompasses and reinforces the same areas of development as in the pre-primary curriculum-intellectual, communicative, social and moral, personal and physical, and aesthetic. On the other hand, it enlarges the achievements of pre-primary tasks and furnishes children with the knowledge, skills and attitudes, in rudimentary form, required for approaching the tasks of the secondary curriculum satisfactorily. In particular, the primary curriculum should aim at enabling children to achieve their optimum levels of attainment against the targets to be set from time to time in specified curriculum areas.</p>	<p>The general aims of the secondary curriculum are to some extent influenced by the fact that it leads, for part of the student body, to immediate entry into society either after completion of secondary 3 or that of secondary 5. The preparatory nature for further education however, is present for those students who continue in the sixth form.</p> <p>The general aims of the secondary curriculum, therefore, are fourfold. First, the curriculum continues to promote students' all-round development in the intellectual, communicative, social and moral, personal and physical, and aesthetic spheres. Secondly, it provides a general and worthwhile education at the junior secondary level, in particular by enabling students to achieve optimum levels of attainment against targets to be set from time to time in specified curriculum areas. Thirdly, it prepares students for education beyond secondary 3 and secondary 5 as required. Fourthly, it prepares students for the world of work after completion of the junior secondary level and the senior secondary level education, and helps them to become well-balanced and responsible individuals capable of coping with the needs and demands of the community.</p>	<p>The general aims of the sixth form curriculum are to produce balanced, well-informed individuals who are proficient in both English and Chinese, and who are prepared for further education, work and adult life. The sixth form curriculum should be broadly-based to cater for a wide range of abilities so that all individuals can achieve their full potential.</p>

	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Sixth Form
Specific Aims Intellectual	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To cultivate in children positive attitude towards the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of their surrounding environment. 2. To enable children to develop their power of concentration and observation, as well as their analytical, reasoning, judgement and problem-solving skills. 3. To lay the foundation of basic numeracy and literacy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To strengthen a reliance on independent enquiry and use of analytical thinking. 2. To introduce children to the factual information, basic concepts and thought-patterns of the various disciplines and to familiarise them with their use in the world around them. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop in students the ability to think conceptually; to apply principles of logic; to be creative; and to make decisions based on reasons. 2. To provide students with the main mathematical, scientific, technical and commercial knowledge and skills needed for functioning in a highly technological society. 3. To help students develop the habit of independently acquiring the on-going knowledge and skills that they may require to meet the social, informational and technical transformations of a fast-changing community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To deepen students' grasp of the concepts, paradigms and modes of expression of particular disciplines; to encourage them to assume increasing responsibility for independent and continuous learning, and to develop the skills necessary for identifying and exploiting available resources and retrieving necessary information. 2. To help students to develop their creative, critical and analytical thinking and their ability to make rational and independent decisions. 3. To encourage students to utilise their knowledge, reasoning powers and problem-solving skills for work and study processes.
Communicative	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To broaden and refine children's innate and family-learned verbal and non-verbal interpersonal communication proficiency. 5. To encourage and help children identify and express their thoughts and emotions through language. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To promote children's efforts to improve intelligible and socially acceptable interaction with those around them through a variety of media. 4. To acquaint children with the oral and graphic formalities of Chinese and English and to train them in their use. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To foster students' ability to communicate effectively in both Chinese and English in relation to the integrating and instrumental roles that each language plays in the Hong Kong community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. To help students to develop their ability to communicate effectively in oral and written Chinese and English in relation to the different roles that each language plays in the Hong Kong community. 11. To develop students' ability to make effective use of non-linguistic forms of information transfer and information technology.

	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Sixth Form
Social and Moral	<p>6. To assist children to attain a socially acceptable balance between personal interests and those of their community, to establish good interpersonal relationships, as well as to accept basic social values and norms.</p> <p>7. To develop in children a sense of responsibility, and positive attitudes towards both work and people.</p> <p>8. To cultivate in children an inclination to interact with and love their environment.</p>	<p>5. To help children begin to develop a personal sense of social and moral values and to become aware of their roles in the family.</p> <p>6. To impart to children knowledge and understanding of the culture, traditions and way of life of their own community and those of other communities with a view to developing respect for them in children.</p>	<p>5. To support students in identifying and cultivating personal ethical values and in applying these values to contemporary social issues.</p> <p>6. To train students in the habit of acquiring information and understanding about matters of concern for Hong Kong, China and the world and in making personal contributions towards the resolution of these places within the limitation of their circumstances.</p> <p>7. To make students aware of the noteworthy aspects of Chinese culture, to strengthen their esteem for it and to help them develop a positive attitude towards other peoples, cultures, values and ways of life.</p> <p>8. To help students appreciate the cultural richness of Hong Kong's international life and to help them acquire the habit of adapting it for their personal development.</p>	<p>4. To encourage students to develop an understanding of and concern for their community, an appreciation of their cultural heritage, an understanding of the relationship of Hong Kong to other countries and cultures and the interdependent nature of the modern world.</p> <p>5. To encourage students to develop social skills, leadership qualities, and a sense of responsibility for and commitments to the community.</p> <p>6. To help students develop a sense of moral and social values, including respect for other people and in particular, their views and beliefs.</p>

	Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Sixth Form
Personal and Physical	<p>9. To foster in children good habits and self-care abilities.</p> <p>10. To help children acquire the skills of expressing their feelings, both positive and negative.</p> <p>11. To enable children to perceive the importance of self-control in leading a happy life in a pre-primary institution and to help them develop such a habit.</p> <p>12. To nurture in children a sense of self-esteem, confidence and achievement.</p> <p>13. To enhance children's development of their gross and fine motor skills.</p> <p>14. To promote children's sensory-perceptual development.</p>	<p>7. To provide children with sufficient information to enable them to cope with the physical and emotional changes that occur during their development from childhood to adolescence.</p> <p>8. To assist children to attain a feeling of self-security, establish a healthy and stable way of life and positive attitude towards learning and life.</p> <p>9. To encourage children to develop their physical and social skills and to guide them to make good use of their leisure and attain a well-rounded life.</p> <p>10. To inform children about their own and other cultures and to stimulate their interest in them.</p>	<p>9. To promote students' mental and physical health with good balance; to develop cultural and recreational interests and to guide them in making good use of their leisure.</p> <p>10. To help students to learn about themselves, to develop a positive, realistic self-image and an appreciation for their roles in the family and the community.</p>	<p>7. To promote students' mental and physical health and to encourage their worthy use of leisure.</p> <p>8. To prepare students for adulthood and for their roles and responsibilities within the family and society in a period of rapid change.</p>
Aesthetic	<p>15. To stimulate children's creative and imaginative powers</p> <p>16. To cultivate in children abilities to enjoy life and to appreciate various forms of beauty.</p> <p>17. To encourage children to enjoy participating in creative work.</p>	<p>11. To bring examples of various forms of art to the attention of children and to train them in producing objects of their own creation in order to cultivate in them aesthetic norms and to inspire their aesthetic imagination.</p>	<p>11. To help students to identify their areas of cultural interest and expertise, and to encourage them to develop their imagination and creativity.</p>	<p>9. To nurture students' creativity and to promote their aesthetic development.</p>

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS : 2-YEAR-OLDS

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
<p>able to walk at their own will, pull and push objects or step backwards.</p> <p>need to rest both feet on one step in mounting a flight of stairs.</p> <p>gradually able to kick a ball.</p> <p>gradually able to throw a ball into a basket.</p> <p>gradually able to ride a tricycle.</p> <p>able to jump from a flight of stairs, but prone to injury.</p> <p>able to pick up small objects like pins, threads, dried grapes, etc.</p> <p>able to unwrap sweets.</p> <p>able to turn pages of a thick book.</p> <p>able to pile up a few pieces of toy bricks.</p> <p>able to thread big beads.</p> <p>try folding papers and using scissors.</p> <p>know how to play with clay with their hands.</p> <p>able to screw off a cap or turn a door knob.</p>	<p>begin to show memory, like remembering there are sweets in the refrigerator, or looking for their favourite toys.</p> <p>begin to learn matching by colours, shapes, objects and sizes.</p> <p>with repeated attempts, able to put five rings onto a stick in sequence of their sizes.</p> <p>begin to know their own names.</p> <p>able to identify themselves and their family members in the mirror or from a picture.</p> <p>know about the names and functions of some body parts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to identify daily necessities by their senses. <p>perform role play like making a telephone call, feeding a doll, etc.</p> <p>able to assemble puzzles of three to five pieces.</p> <p>begin to understand the meaning of numbers one and two.</p>	<p>able to follow instructions to find an object.</p> <p>able to name each body part.</p> <p>able to understand common nouns, verbs and adjectives.</p> <p>understand the meaning of “not allowed”.</p> <p>able to express their wishes with limited words and short sentences.</p> <p>try singing nursery rhymes by imitation.</p> <p>know to ask with “what”, “who” and “where”.</p> <p>use one word to stand for collective meaning like: “mi-mi” refers to all animals with four-feet, “car” refers to all kinds of vehicles.</p>	<p>try to eat with a spoon.</p> <p>able to drink from a cup.</p> <p>able to drink with a sucking tube.</p> <p>begin to show preference for food.</p> <p>know how to express the need for toileting.</p> <p>able to go to toilet on their own under prompting.</p> <p>wetting sometimes still occurs in day time.</p> <p>with adults’ assistance, able to wash hands, put on/pull down their pants, take off their clothes, shoes and socks.</p> <p>not yet ready to share toys with peers.</p> <p>able to take turns with peers under instruction by adults.</p> <p>easy to get jealous towards peers who take away adults’ attention from them.</p> <p>like to be praised, have preference for beautiful clothes.</p> <p>easy to lose temper when frustrated, yet also easy to forget about unhappy experience when attention is distracted.</p>

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
gradually able to draw lines, circles, etc. begin to get used to using either left or right hand for writing.			like to follow routines, dislike changes.

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS : 3-YEAR-OLDS

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
<p>able to go up to the slide and climbing frame.</p> <p>able to ride a tricycle.</p> <p>able to kick a slowly moving ball.</p> <p>able to catch a big ball being thrown to them.</p> <p>able to walk upstairs with alternate foot.</p> <p>able to walk along a line or on footprints.</p> <p>able to cross legs when sitting.</p> <p>able to hammer wooden blocks.</p> <p>use scissors to cut paper strips.</p> <p>use fingers to glue.</p> <p>able to build up a pillar of nine pieces of toy bricks.</p> <p>use three pieces of wood to make a bridge.</p>	<p>able to put five rings onto a stick in sequence of their sizes upon two attempts.</p> <p>able to match different colours and identify their names.</p> <p>able to distinguish between two objects by their sizes, length, texture, hardness.</p> <p>begin to understand the concept of sequence, and able to make pattern with toy bricks or beads according to sequence.</p> <p>begin to know how to classify and match objects like food, clothes, and able to associate objects according to their uses, such as shoes with socks and cups with plates.</p> <p>able to recall three numbers just heard.</p> <p>able to find two objects by memory.</p>	<p>able to understand some rather abstract words like “same/different” “open/close”, “top/bottom” and “in/out”.</p> <p>begin to understand the difference between “past” and “present”.</p> <p>understand the meaning of ‘pretending’.</p> <p>pay attention when hearing stories, like to ask adults to repeat telling their favourite stories.</p> <p>begin to give a chronological account of incidents that happened in the past.</p> <p>able to describe with appropriate actions and voices.</p> <p>know how to control the volume and speed when speaking.</p>	<p>begin to expand their social lives and interests outside their families and enjoy outdoor activities.</p> <p>able to play with toys alone without adults’ company.</p> <p>able to eat with a spoon.</p> <p>able to get water from a bottle.</p> <p>understand that they have to clean their mouths after meals.</p> <p>able to go to toilet on their own in day time, wetting seldom happens.</p> <p>know how to put on and pull down their trousers.</p> <p>able to wash hands with soap, though adult assistance in drying their hands is still required.</p> <p>barely manage to dress and undress their loose outer clothes.</p> <p>able to undo big buttons.</p> <p>try putting clothes on hangers.</p>

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
<p>begin to hold a pencil properly to do drawing.</p> <p>try to fill colour in a random manner.</p> <p>able to draw a cross and inclined line by imitation.</p>	<p>know their own names, sex and age.</p> <p>able to differentiate male and female.</p> <p>able to draw a person with head and some body parts.</p> <p>able to assemble puzzles of six pieces.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • able to recite from one to ten. <p>able to count from one to three or four.</p>	<p>able to use words like “here”, “there”, “you and me”, etc.</p> <p>mainly use nouns, verbs and sometimes adjectives in speech.</p> <p>begin to ask with “why”, “how” and “when”.</p> <p>able to sing nursery rhymes together with actions, though the pronunciation is still not clear, people (including strangers) can understand their words pretty well.</p>	<p>begin to understand the concept of danger, and know that they should not approach fire, boiling water, etc.</p> <p>will not walk out to the middle of a road when going out.</p> <p>like to join games led by adults, able to follow rules of games.</p> <p>will take turns when playing toys.</p> <p>know what belongs to them and what does not.</p> <p>know that they should care for younger children and are willing to share toys with others.</p> <p>able to accept adults’ advice, regard parents as authority and obey orders.</p> <p>begin to learn to show courtesy, able to say “please” and “thank you” as told.</p> <p>know how to call “grandmother” and “grandfather”.</p>

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS : 4-YEAR-OLDS

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
<p>able to jump forward and backward successively, with one foot and while running.</p> <p>able to throw and catch bean bags.</p> <p>walk on a balance beam.</p> <p>able to throw balls.</p> <p>able to pick up objects on the ground while running.</p> <p>when swimming, able to walk on shallow water or float on ring.</p> <p>play confidently with slides, climbing frames and swings.</p> <p>begin to do simple paper cutting and pasting.</p> <p>able to cut simple pattern.</p> <p>able to thread beads.</p> <p>able to construct a small tower with six pieces of toy bricks by imitation.</p> <p>able to draw simple pictures such as people, houses, trees, vehicles, etc.</p> <p>able to screw on a cap.</p>	<p>begin to understand the concept of time, able to tell what they usually do in the morning, afternoon and evening.</p> <p>begin to understand position and speed, e.g. able to distinguish front and back, fast and slow, middle and the first and the last, etc.</p> <p>pay attention to their environment, able to point out the missing part in a picture.</p> <p>able to point out what is inconsistent in a picture.</p> <p>able to identify things and events by sound.</p> <p>able to imitate voices of animals.</p> <p>able to distinguish between living things (e.g.: cat, dog, tree) and non-living things (e.g.: toy, cup and plate).</p> <p>able to place furniture in the appropriate room.</p> <p>able to point out a different type of object.</p>	<p>able to speak fairly fluently and clearly.</p> <p>begin to express themselves with complex or much longer sentences.</p> <p>able to talk about experiences in everyday life.</p> <p>able to tell stories from pictures.</p> <p>able to use words like “because-therefore”, “some”, “several”, “many” appropriately in conversation.</p> <p>able to tell relatives’ names and the district which they themselves are living in.</p> <p>able to tell the colour of a particular object, like: banana is yellow.</p> <p>able to talk about people of different occupations and their responsibilities.</p>	<p>begin to dress and undress, clean their noses, wash and dry their hands by themselves.</p> <p>learn how to brush their teeth and eat with chopsticks.</p> <p>able to help cleaning up the dining table after meals.</p> <p>able to clean up dirt with a piece of cloth.</p> <p>able to get up to the toilet at night, no more wetting.</p> <p>able to be self-disciplined and stay within a confined area even without adults’ supervision.</p> <p>willing to observe rules of the games when playing with other children.</p> <p>able to take care of younger children and small animals and console their companion when they feel unhappy.</p> <p>have vague concepts of rights and wrong, only know that they will be punished for bad behaviour and will be praised for good behaviour.</p> <p>know how to say “thank you”, “sorry”.</p>

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
<p>able to fold a piece of paper along an inclined line.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> able to stick several pieces of plasticine together. 	<p>able to recall four things in a picture just seen.</p> <p>able to follow order to perform three actions in succession.</p> <p>able to tell which of the three things just seen are missing.</p> <p>able to recite from one to twenty, count from one to ten or follow instructions to show one to five things.</p> <p>able to draw a man with head, body, limbs and features of the face.</p> <p>able to assemble puzzles of eight pieces.</p> <p>able to identify simple and common signs, like road signs and shop plates.</p>	<p>like asking for explanations of things they don't understand.</p> <p>able to read simple words.</p> <p>able to use opposite/complementary words and sentences.</p> <p>able to solve simple quizzes like: "I have four legs, a tail, like to eat fish, can catch mouse, who am I?".</p> <p>able to single out a word of different nature: e.g. "cow, goat, dog, car".</p>	<p>able to get along with strangers in conversation and without timidity.</p> <p>able to receive telephone calls and help adults do simple tasks at home.</p>

DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS : 5-YEAR-OLDS

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
<p>able to hold a ball while running, kick a moving ball or play ball with a racket.</p> <p>able to play on their own on a swing.</p> <p>able to climb a string-ladder.</p> <p>able to run well by their toes swiftly and take quick bends.</p> <p>able to walk up and down stairs alone with alternate foot.</p> <p>able to fast run a distance of fifty feet, without feeling tired.</p> <p>able to nail with a hammer.</p> <p>able to hold objects weighing over ten pounds.</p> <p>able to fill colour in an assigned area when paying attention.</p> <p>able to sharpen pencils with a sharpener</p> <p>able to draw straight lines with a ruler.</p> <p>able to erase with an eraser without tearing the paper.</p>	<p>able to put things of different length, height, width and size in correct order easily.</p> <p>able to name different colours and shapes of common objects.</p> <p>able to draw a rhombus by imitation.</p> <p>able to play simple puzzle games.</p> <p>able to recall five numbers just seen or heard.</p> <p>able to tell the general contents of pictures just seen.</p> <p>able to repeat three acts from a story just heard.</p> <p>able to count from one to twenty, write from one to ten.</p> <p>able to place one to five in terms of quantity in correct sequence.</p> <p>able to tell the order and position of an object. (e.g. the first, the second).</p>	<p>grammar and structure of children's language are more or less the same as adults.</p> <p>able to communicate with family members or peers without difficulty.</p> <p>able to speak up in turn without digressing from the subject.</p> <p>able to give a logical account of what has happened recently.</p> <p>able to use words like "although", "however", "but", though sometimes inappropriately.</p> <p>begin to understand the difference of "yesterday", "today" and "tomorrow".</p> <p>understand words like in/out, far/near, bottom/top, enter/leave, start/end, etc.</p> <p>able to talk back, protest or even scold others when frustrated.</p>	<p>able to set up dining utensils for meal.</p> <p>able to eat and pick up food with chopsticks.</p> <p>know how to choose suitable clothes.</p> <p>able to comb their hair.</p> <p>If trained, able to clean up themselves after going to the toilet.</p> <p>able to do simple housework, like tidying up their own clothes.</p> <p>able to turn on/off television and select their favourite programmes.</p> <p>know how to cross the road carefully.</p> <p>know how to ask for help when losing their way.</p> <p>able to tell their own home telephone number and address.</p> <p>able to play games which require co-operation with several peers, understand the principle of fair play and the need to follow group decisions, also able to explain rules of the game to other children.</p>

Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social and emotional
<p>able to cut out a pattern from a book.</p> <p>able to fold a piece of paper into half and then further half.</p> <p>able to put small beans into a bottle.</p> <p>able to thread shoelaces.</p> <p>able to follow instructions to construct a three-step stair with big square toy bricks.</p>	<p>able to tell immediately the quantity of four or below.</p> <p>understand the difference between “half of a piece” and “one full piece”.</p> <p>able to show the exact quantity of a given number of ten or below.</p> <p>able to do simple mathematical addition and subtraction.</p> <p>able to read and understand tens of commonly used words.</p>	<p>able to express feelings with appropriate words.</p> <p>able to describe a picture.</p> <p>use different adjectives to describe a person or an object.</p> <p>able to tell their own date of birth.</p> <p>able to briefly describe four seasons.</p> <p>begin to understand the concept of calendar and time.</p> <p>able to tell the year, month, day and week.</p> <p>able to tell the time (e.g. 3 o’ clock, 4 o’ clock) by looking at a clock, but depending on whether they are given the chance to learn.</p>	<p>begin to choose companions that they like.</p> <p>able to play competitive games like chess.</p> <p>able to use public toilets alone if required.</p>

Note: The above information outlines the major developmental characteristics of children in physical, intellectual, language, social and emotional aspects. In designing the curriculum, pre-primary educators are advised to use the information with flexibility and draw relevant verifications in the light of their daily observations.

Appendix 3

A Study on Chinese Handwriting at the Kindergarten Level

The Curriculum Development Council endorsed in 1996 the report on a study of Chinese Handwriting at the kindergarten level. The study was conducted by performing one-to-one tests on 97 children in 26 kindergartens at the beginning of the nursery class level, at the end of the nursery class level, at the end of the lower kindergarten level and at the end of the upper kindergarten level. The report includes the following recommendations:

I. Principles on writing readiness at different levels

a. Nursery class (3-4 years old)

- i. Kindergarten teachers are advised not to expect children to write at nursery class.
- ii. In view of the fact that children's writing readiness should be developed before they are asked to write, kindergarten teachers should foster the development of pre-writing related skills such as fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and concepts of orientations through the following activities:
 1. eye-hand coordination: including activities like threading beads or straws, putting different-sized beans into a large box by hand or by spoon, ball bouncing, hammering bench, marble shooting, building of blocks, doing puzzles, colouring, cutting and pasting, doing mazes, rolling and catching plastic hoops and finger puppets, etc.
 2. development of fine motor skills: including activities like playing with blocks or plastic pieces, doing puzzles, playing with playdough or plasticine, threading, screwing on the caps of different sized bottles, sand play, drawing pictures, finger painting, fitting and inlaying pictures, and piling, etc.
 3. using a writing instrument: including activities like drawing of straight lines, slanting lines or circles, etc.
 4. development of orientation: including activities like arranging pictures in the correct order, driving of toy cars, drawing routes of vehicles, etc.
- iii. Kindergarten teachers should give more guidance to children in developing correct writing posture as the majority of children had incorrect writing postures at nursery classes.

b. Lower kindergarten class (4-5 years old)

Kindergarten teachers should be more aware of children's individual differences in writing readiness.

Kindergarten teachers should observe carefully the indicators of writing readiness and assign writing or pre-writing activities accordingly.

c. Upper kindergarten class (5-6 years old)

Kindergarten teachers may introduce writing at this level since most of the children already possess writing readiness.

II. General principles on selecting suitable Chinese characters for kindergarten children

a. It is suggested that when kindergarten teachers ask children to write Chinese characters, they should focus on choosing the Chinese characters with mainly vertical and horizontal strokes.

b. Kindergarten teachers are advised to teach children how to identify the different parts of a Chinese character before they actually learn to write a Chinese character. They are advised to choose those Chinese characters with fewer strokes and simple components as these characters are easier to write.

c. Kindergarten teachers should be aware of the fact that writing Chinese characters with the strokes at the correct positions is not easy for most children.

d. Teachers should not be too demanding if children cannot write the stroke types '㇀', '㇁', '㇂', '㇃' correctly. If children have to write Chinese characters with these strokes, more guidance from their teachers is needed.

e. More guidance should be given to children of lower kindergarten class to get the correct balance and proportion. More guidance should also be given to children at the upper kindergarten class to write Chinese characters precisely in terms of strokes and shapes.

EXAMPLES OF “THEMATIC APPROACH” TEACHING PLANS

Example 1

Topic : Plants

3-year-old class: Looking at flowers

Objectives:

1. To get to know flowers and trees.
2. To cultivate an interest in plants.
3. To cultivate a caring attitude for flowers and trees.
4. To acquire the skill of sorting.
5. To promote creativity.
6. To practise swaying the body and stretching the limbs.
7. To learn to adapt to norms in the institution.
8. To develop the power of concentration.

4-year-old class: In the garden

Objectives:

1. To get to know common plants.
2. To know the relationship between plants and one's daily life.
3. To get to know the relationship between small insects and plants.
4. To learn to grow seeds.
5. To learn to care about plants.
6. To learn to express one's feelings in different ways.
7. To develop the co-ordination of different parts of the body.

5-year-old class: The little gardener

Objectives:

1. To get to know how a plant grows and what it needs.
2. To learn the different parts of a plant.
3. To know the relationship between plants and man.
4. To know the relationship between plants and animals.
5. To learn simple planting methods.
6. To get to know the importance of environmental protection and extend one's knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment.
7. To experience the joy of creation.
8. To enhance agility in movement.
9. To try solving problems on one's own.

Method and Content:

3-year-old class	4-year-old class	5-year-old class
1. To acquire basic knowledge on the characteristics of flowers and trees through observation, audio-visual materials and practical experiences.	1. To learn more about the characteristics of plants and their growth through learning activities such as collecting samples, planting, observation, by comparing and discussion.	1. To learn about the growth and appearance of plants through activities such as outdoor visits, planting, observation, drawing, collecting samples and by comparing.
2. To get acquainted with relevant expressions and vocabulary and learn their usage through language activities.	2. To enhance one's language ability using relevant expressions and vocabulary, and to learn the relationship between numbers and to quantity through integrated learning activities.	2. To learn and use relevant expressions, vocabulary and sentences and acquire simple computation concepts.
3. To develop learning skills through sorting and sensory activities.	3. To cultivate an interest in science through simple experiments and recording.	3. To acquire knowledge of the value of plants and the inter-dependence between society and nature through daily experience and related activities so as to understand one's individual responsibility.
4. To learn to take care of flowers and trees through watering plants, visiting flower shows, etc..	4. To learn the relationship between plants and man in daily life through practical experiences.	4. To try to solve problems on one's own.
5. To learn to adapt to norms in the course of daily activities.	5. To learn to appreciate one's environment and use different means to express oneself through art and craft activities, music and practical experiences.	5. To enhance one's ability to express and create through activities such as art and craft, music and discussions.

3-year-old class

6. To foster creativity and co-ordination of different parts of the body through art and craft activities, music and physical play.
7. To cultivate the power of concentration through observation, sensory activities, etc...

4-year-old class

6. To practise skills of crawling, turning, stretching, throwing and casting through physical play.

5-year-old class

6. To promote agility and the skills in pushing, pulling, twisting, and balancing, and through physical play.

Plants (3-year-old class)

- i. Differentiate between flowers and leaves and notice their shape, colour, size, scent, etc. through observation of common plants.
- ii. Water flowers in turn.
- iii. Games:
 - Distinguish leaves with are rough and smooth.
 - Distinguish real flowers from artificial ones (e.g. plastic flowers, silk flowers).

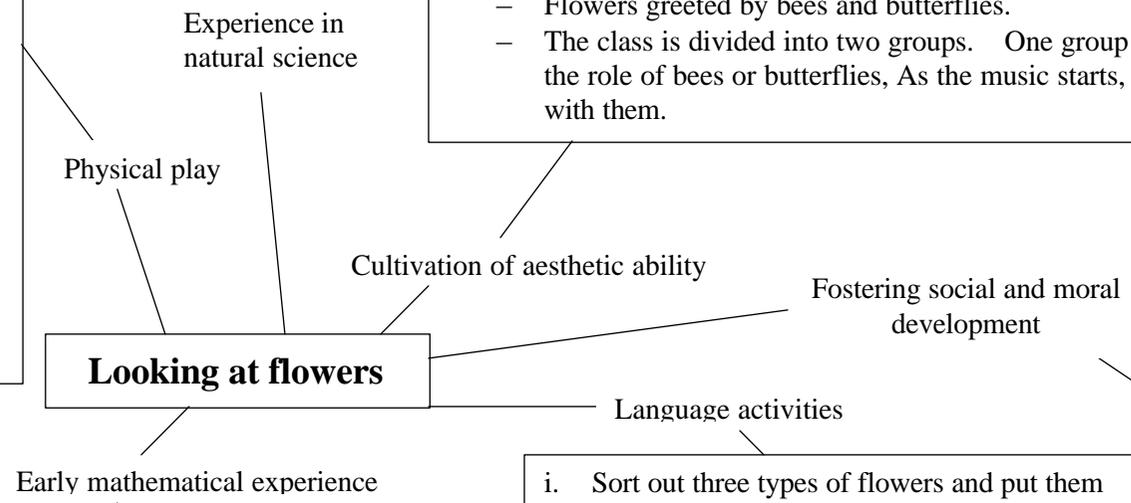
- i. The seed is growing up: squat on the mat with the body bent, then stand up slowly and stretch the arms upright.
- ii. Falling leaves drifting in the wind: lie on the mat, placing the arms beside the body, then roll on both sides on the mat.

- i. Sort leaves and flowers according to their colours and shapes.
- ii. Compare the size of leaves or flowers.
- iii. Count the number of leaves or flowers on a plant and match the correct numeral card to each of them.
- iv. Match leaves or flowers to pictures or photos.
- v. Add colour paper butterflies on flowers of the same colour.

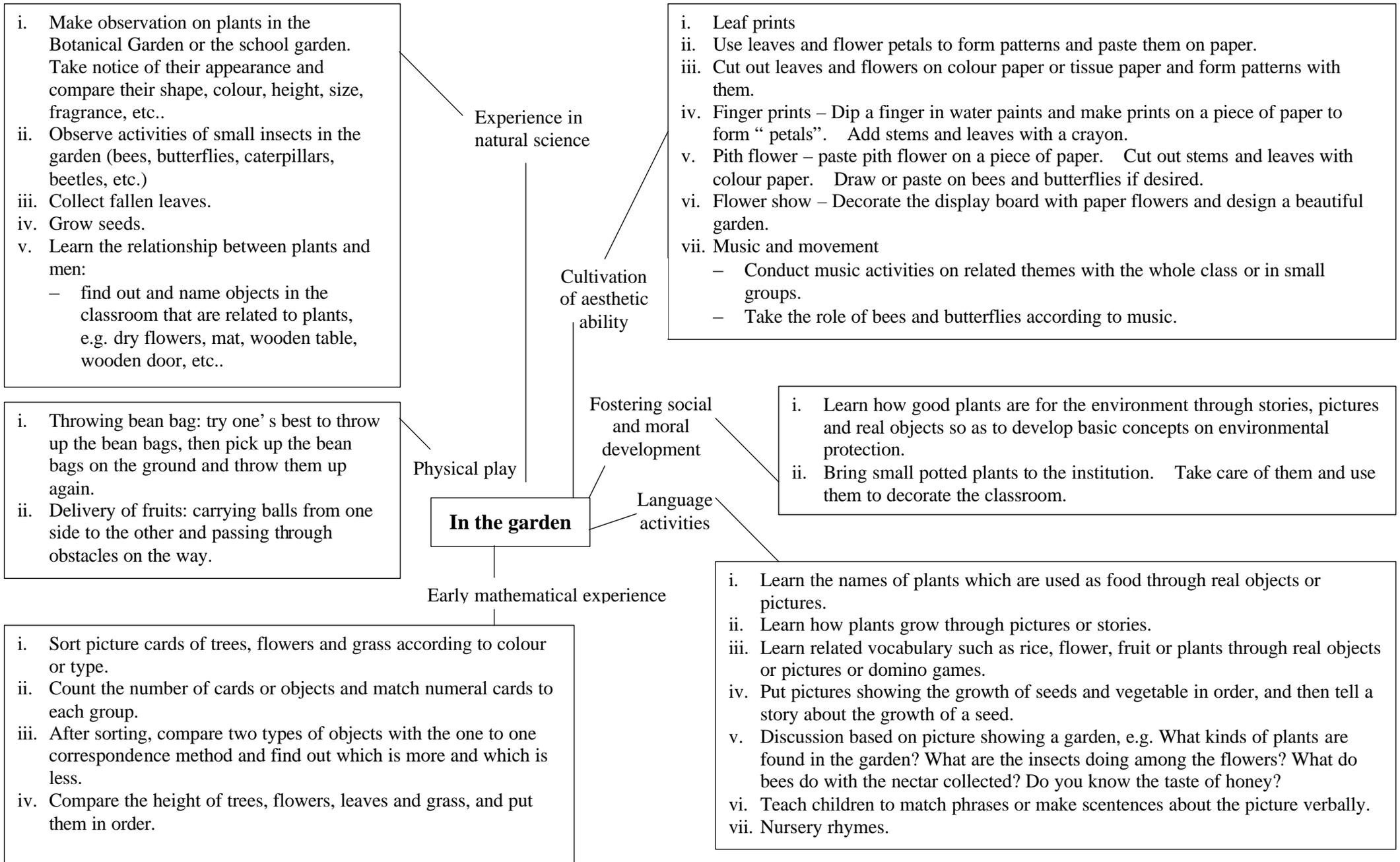
- i. Stamping – Dip different objects in water paint and stamp on the paper.
- ii. Place a paper on leaves and rub gently on paper with a crayon.
- iii. Flowers made with egg cartons – Roll bits of crepe paper into small grains and stick them on egg cartons which are cut into compartments. Add on stems and leaves.
- iv. Music and movement
 - Smell the fragrance of flowers: Take a deep breath when sound from a piano or cymbals is heard. Exhale when the sound stops.
 - The flower opens: Sit in a circle with others on the floor and sway to the music. The educator will play either a piece of music representing “the flowers wither”. Look up and stretch the hands upwards when the former is heard and drop the hands and curl up the legs whilst the latter is played.
 - Flowers greeted by bees and butterflies.
 - The class is divided into two groups. One group takes the role of flowers while the other takes the role of bees or butterflies, As the music starts, the butterflies fly among the flowers or dance with them.

- i. Learn to love flowers and plants as well as learning not to pick flowers or step on the grass in the park through simulation games, stories and pictures.
- ii. Take care of the potted plants in the nature corner.
- iii. Bring one’s favourite kind of vegetable or fruit to the institution and share it with others.
- iv. Bring flowers and potted plants to the institution for display and appreciation.

Looking at flowers



Plants (4-year-old class)



Plants (5-year-old class)

- i. Learn the names of different parts of a plant (e.g. root, stem, leaves, flowers, fruits) through real objects or pictures, and learn that some plants are edible.
- ii. Observe different parts of a plant in detail.
- iii. Collect leaves, flowers, grass, fir cones, etc. in the school garden or in the countryside.
- iv. Observe and make records on how seeds grow and discuss conditions under which plants will grow.
- v. Feed silkworms with mulberry leaves. Observe and make a record of their life history.

- i. Symmetrical picture; Design patterns of flowers and butterflies.
- ii. Wiping patterns.
- iii. Collage with leaves.
- iv. Making paper flower: Use all kinds of paper to make flowers and open a small flower shop.
- v. Printing with vegetable: Add details to the prints made. Craft vegetable into different animals or patterns and print with them.
- vi. Music and movement; Imitate planting and picking fruits to the music.

The little gardener

Experience in natural science

Cultivation of aesthetic ability

Physical play

Fostering social and moral development

Early mathematical experience

Language activities

- i. Rolling rattan hoops: push the hoop to roll forward and run along with the rolling hoop.
- ii. Balancing bean bags: sit cross-legged on the mat, place a bean bag on the head then, stand up (try not to use the hands to push up the body)

- i. Sort out pictures or real objects.
 - Put ingredients for vegetable soup into the pan, and ingredients for salad into the salad bowl.
 - Sort out all the seeds of fruits collected.
- ii. Matching: Use picture cards and match seeds with the fruits.
- iii. Comparing: Compare the weight of fruits with a scale and put them in order. Compare the size of different kinds of fruits of the same kind and put them in order.
- iv. Count the number of leaves or flowers collected and match the appropriate numeral card with each group.
- v. Count the number of petals and match with the appropriate numeral card.
- vi. Use the objects collected for games of simple computation.

- i. Report the growth of seeds in full sentences, e.g. “A shoot has grown”, or “The leaves grow bigger”.
- ii. Collect picture of trees and plants in magazines, newspaper or monthly calendars and paste them on cardboard. Write relevant words, phrases or sentences as captions.
- iii. Observe and describe the picture cards showing the different activities of men and animals in environment with or without trees.
- iv. Nursery rhymes.
- v. Draw pictures based on the content of the nursery rhymes and write sentences below. Paste them on display board in the classrooms.

- i. Learn the importance of plants through watching video tapes, listening to stories, reading posters or newspaper cuttings and learn how to take care of plants.
- ii. Help to take care of the plants in the school garden or the neighbourhood.
- iii. Respond to campaigns such as those on paper recycling or reusing paper bags.

Example 2

Topic: Who am I?

To enable a child to understand and adapt to society, we must start by helping him/her to know about “herself/himself”, and to make him/her realise the importance of being part of different organisations in society. A child must have a proper view of himself/herself before he/she can build up relationship with others in future and become an active member of society.

The objectives of designing different activities on the above topic are to enable a child:

1. to understand that he/she is a unique entity.
2. to build up a healthy self-image.
3. to be able to express his/her own feelings.
4. to be able to accept himself/herself, and then, to accept others.

CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITIES			
	2-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
I am unique	1. have one's name and appearance.	1. the shape of palms and feet are different from others. 2. have one's possessions	1. everyone has a unique body shape.	1. tell one's own story.
My body	2. learn the different parts of the body	3. body height and built.	2. know how to maintain good health.	2. growth and sex.
My emotions and needs	3. know how to express different emotions.	4. have one's own likes/dislikes.	3. know how to please oneself and others. 4. know that different people have different needs.	3. realise that one needs to be loved as well as to love others.

CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES OF ACTIVITIES			
	2-year-olds	3-year-olds	4-year-olds	5-year-olds
I am a useful person	4. can attempt to solve problems	5. will listen to others. 6. know that one has to do one's duties.	5. can help others.	4. pay attention to one's safety.
I am a member of the community and a good citizen	5. can help others do something.	7. can share one's possessions with others.	6. being a member of the family.	5. be a good citizen.

2-year-olds

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS			
		Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social & emotional
1. have one's name and appearance	1. Use a birth certificate to explain to children that when they are born, their parents have chosen a name for them. Then by means of the roll call, ask children to raise their hands or stand up to say "present" as soon as they hear their names being called.		✓	✓	
	2. Ask the toddlers to bring a 3R photo to the institution. The pre-primary educator can mix together several photos and let the children pick out their own photos in turn and tell their own names. (Start by mixing 2 photos and increase the number according to the children's abilities gradually.)			✓	✓
2. learn the different parts of the body	3. Ask children to stand in front of a full-length mirror and point to the different parts of the body, e.g. hair, eyes, ears, nose, hands, feet, etc., and perform some actions such as combing hair, blinking eyes, stepping feet, etc.	✓	✓	✓	
	4. Use velvet paper to make two blank faces and two sets of eyes, ears, mouths, nose, hair, etc.. Show one of the faces to children and put on the 5 sensory organs, hair, etc., and then ask them to tell the names of the organs in order as well as those parts that are missing. It is also possible to put all the sensory organs on the face first and ask children to close their eyes while taking away some of the organs. Ask them to open their eyes again and point out which parts are missing.		✓	✓	
	5. Ask children to spread out and stand properly. Listen to the instructions given by the pre-primary educator and touch different parts of their bodies or do exercises by using different parts of the body.	✓	✓	✓	
	6. Play various sensory games, e.g. to guess objects by touching or to look for objects through listening with eyes blindfold.		✓	✓	

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS			
		Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social & emotional
3. know how to express different emotions	7. To describe under what circumstances children will laugh or cry by telling a story (e.g. a child is celebrating his/her birthday and many people are singing songs. However, his/her cake is dropped on the floor or taken by others). Ask children to select a crying or laughing face to match the relevant situation.		✓	✓	✓
4. can attempt to solve problems	8. The pre-primary educator mentions different situations, e.g. falling down, a desperate call of nature, hungry, thirsty, not feeling well, etc., and ask children what they will do? The pre-primary educator expresses appreciation for children's proposed solutions and make appropriate amendments.		✓	✓	
5. can help others do something	9. Ask children to do things that they can do in the institution, e.g. giving out towels, throwing away rubbish, putting away toys, etc..	✓			✓
	10. Ask children to describe things that they can do in the institution or at home, e.g. "I will" or "I can....." etc., to make them feel that they are useful and worthy persons.			✓	✓
	11. Teach children to sing a nursery rhyme on "looking for a friend". The lyrics are "Where is xxx?" When the person is found, then sing "xxx is here." Stop the song with a child and ask him/her to do something for the children in the group, e.g. pull a chair for the pre-primary educator or pass some towels to other children.	✓	✓	✓	✓

3-year-olds

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS			
		Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social & emotional
1. the shape of palms and feet are different from others	1. The pre-primary educator should lead children to look at their palms and finger prints, and point out that the shape of the palms, finger prints and feet differ from person to person. Then ask children to print their finger, palms and feet on a piece of drawing paper to form a picture. The pre-primary educator can put down the children's name on the picture for identification.		✓	✓	✓
	2. Prepare the cake-mix with children. Ask children to place their hands on the floor mix and create their own patterns. Ask children to note carefully their own hand prints and then put the mix into the oven to bake a piece of hand-print cake. Let children observe and find out their own products before trying to eat them.	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. have one's possessions	3. Mix the belongings of several children, such as shoes, school bags and clothes together and ask them to pick out their own things. (The types and quantity of belongings to be mixed are subject to the abilities of the children.)			✓	
3. body height and built	4. Prepare a cardboard model and a full-length mirror. Let the child stand by the side of the cardboard model in front of the mirror. Ask the child to point out/tell who is taller and who is shorter. Then ask the child to stand in front of the cardboard model and ask him/her if he/she can see the head of the model in order to confirm who is taller and who is shorter.		✓	✓	
4. have one's own likes/dislikes	5. Show a picture of a laughing or crying child. Ask children to guess why he/she is happy/unhappy and let them discuss their pleasant/unpleasant feelings with one another.		✓	✓	✓

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS			
		Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social & emotional
5. will listen to others	6. The pre-primary educator introduce the rules of talking clearly, i.e. only one child can speak at one time, the other children have to listen. Choose a topic to start, e.g. holiday activities, things that I like/dislike, and ask children to speak. While one of the children is talking, the other children have to listen.			✓	✓
6. know that one has to do one's duties	7. Use a picture to motivate children to discuss things that they can do and ask them to practise at home. Draw pictures of the things that children can do, such as putting away toys and taking off shoes, and produce relevant leaflets. Distribute the leaflets to the children to take home and ask their parents to mark down those things that they are already doing at home. When the children bring back the leaflets on the next day, they can share those things that they are doing at home with other children and be commended accordingly.	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. can share one's possessions with others	8. Organise a "Toy-sharing" Day. Ask children to bring back one toy each to share and play with one another.	✓			✓

4-year-olds

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS			
		Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social & emotional
1. everyone has a unique body shape	1. Ask a child to lie on a large piece of drawing paper. The pre-primary educator or another child will outline the shape of his/her body. After touching up, display the drawings in the room and let the children compare and appreciate the different shapes of bodies. The pre-primary educator can also ask children to look at the body shapes and guess which body shape belongs to whom.		✓	✓	✓
2. know how to maintain good health	2. Prepare right and wrong pictures on nutrition, eating habits, personal hygiene. Ask children to pick out the correct ones and give the reasons for selecting them. The pre-primary educator may give explanations on the remaining wrong pictures.		✓	✓	
3. know how to please oneself and others	3. Put some suggestion cards on how to make people happy in a box, e.g. sing a song for a friend, tell a story, send a little present, kiss a good friend, etc.. Let children pick up the cards in turn and follow the instruction on the card by choosing somebody in the group to do the action.		✓	✓	✓
4. know that different people have different needs	4. Introduce the needs of different people by slides or pictures, e.g. people who use wheelchair/supporting frame/stick for walking, people who wear hearing aids, glasses, etc... Let children raise questions and discuss.		✓	✓	✓
	5. Ask children to blindfold their eyes and walk like a blind person or pretend that they cannot hear anything. Discuss the above feelings with children and ask them to suggest how to help people who are in need.		✓	✓	✓
5. can help others	6. Ask children do help with some simple jobs, such as giving out tea and snacks, towels, putting away toys, and water the plants, etc.. Let them discuss about the feelings of helping people.	✓		✓	✓
6. being a member of the family	7. Ask children to describe their family members, their occupations and the things that they will do together as a family, and let them share the photos on family life brought back by themselves.		✓	✓	✓

5-year-olds

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS			
		Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social & emotional
1. tell one's story	1. Ask children to bring back photos or pictures and tell stories about themselves. The pre-primary educator will jot down the story and compile a story book on "myself" together with the photos.		✓	✓	✓
2. growth and sex	2. Prepare a large board and write down the names of two groups of children, one for boys and one for girls. Let children measure their weights and heights, and the pre-primary educator will use pictures to compare the heights and weights of the two groups.		✓	✓	✓
	3. Use pictures or dolls to explain the differences between a male and a female. Lead children to tell the advantages of being a male or female and teach them to willingly accept their sexes.		✓	✓	✓
3. realise that one needs to be loved as well as to love others	4. Stick the photo or painting of the child onto the middle of a large piece of drawing paper. Ask the child to stick the photos or draw pictures of those people who love him/her around his/her own photo, or even the pictures of his/her pets. Let the child discuss and share his/her feelings and the pre-primary educator will help him/her to write down matching sentences and names.		✓	✓	✓

OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	MAIN DEVELOPMENT AREAS			
		Physical	Intellectual	Language	Social & emotional
	5. Ask children to design some friendship cards and give to those whom they care.		✓		✓
4. pay attention to one's safety	6. Explain the dangers that children will encounter in daily life by using pictures or stories. Let children discuss the solutions.		✓	✓	
5. be a good citizen	7. Read to children some current affairs and news which are related to good citizenship; allow them to discuss and express their feelings.		✓	✓	✓
	8. Design a chess board and designate the direction for moving the chess. In between the starting and finishing points, draw some pictures on a good citizen's behaviour (e.g. following the traffic lights when crossing the road, queuing up for boarding the bus, etc.) and a bad citizen's behaviour (e.g. throwing objects from height, crossing the road recklessly, taking others' belongings without permission, etc.). Children will throw dice to decide the number of spaces that they can move forward. If a child stops at a picture of a good citizen's behaviour, he/she may move forward one more time. If he/she stops at the picture of a bad citizen's behaviour, he/she should pick out an appropriate picture from a pick of cards on good behaviour. He/she can continue the game only after the picture selected is approved by the playmates. Let children play and see who will be the first one to reach the finishing point. (Initially, this class game should be played under the guidance of a pre-primary educator. When children are familiar with the rules of the game, they can be allowed to play the game by themselves).		✓	✓	✓

APPENDIX 5

Guidelines on the Implementation of the “Project Approach”

1. Introduction

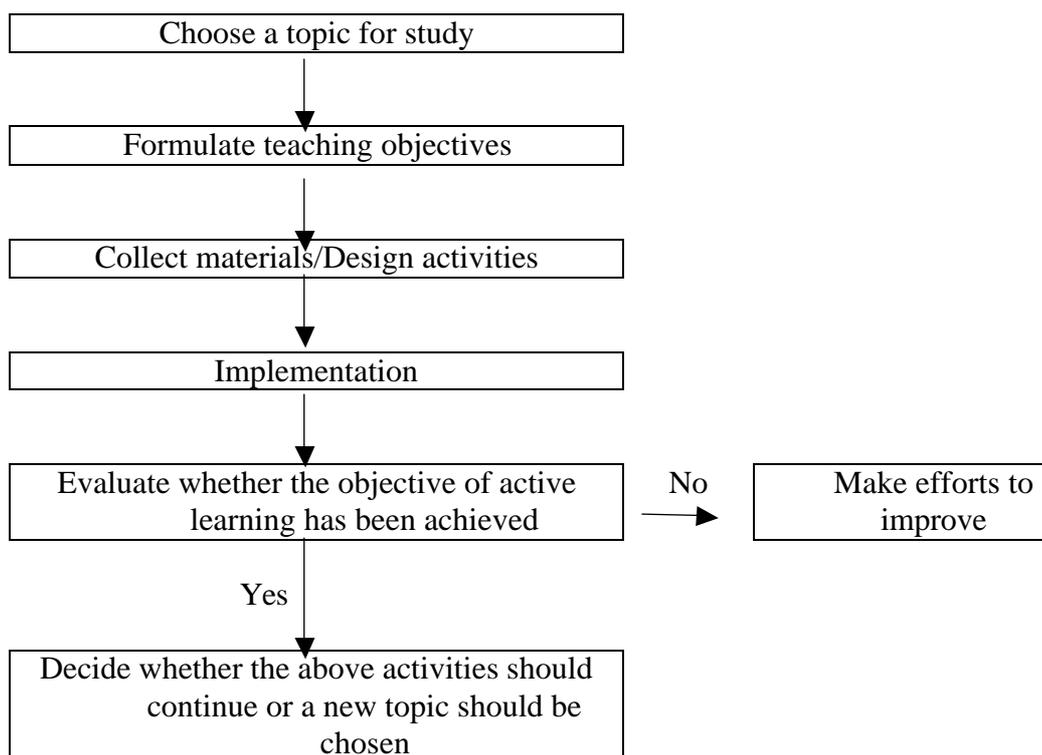
The “Project Approach” for pre-primary children is a child-centred approach. The idea behind this approach is that by making use of some common material resources, children will be able to acquire practical experience actively, to learn freely, to create happily and to mix with other people naturally in accordance with their own interests and abilities. In fact, the concept and spirit of the “Project Approach” are in line with those of the thematic approach; the only difference is that the former places more emphasis on the participation of children and the content of activities; the form and direction of the activities are pursued and modified entirely according to children’s interests, performance as well as suggestions. The pre-primary educator is no longer the sole person responsible for controlling the progress of an activity, but rather, she would act as a partner of children. Through arranging an environment for conducting activities, providing useful learning resources and giving appropriate guidance, the pre-primary educator can help children explore their own learning potentials and attain a balanced development in the moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects.

2. Selection of topics and preparation work

The selection of topics should be focused on things which are familiar to children. When a topic has been chosen, the pre-primary educator should first draft a programme outline based on the relevant situations as a reference for planning working strategies and making progress assessments. However, there are no established rules for the drawing up of a programme outline. Such an outline is only for initial reference and not something compulsory for children to learn. Provided that children are interested and the circumstances are safe, the pre-primary educator should encourage children to carry out the activities according to their own idea and should not influence them for the sake of achieving the expected outcome. Whenever a problem is encountered, the pre-primary educator and children may try to look for a solution together. Therefore, the process of implementing the “Project Approach” will tend to differ from the initial programme of study or even turn out to be an entirely different topic which the children may find more interesting.

3. Curriculum planning

As regards the arrangement of the curriculum, there is no specific order of beginning or end, i.e. any part of the programme of study can be the beginning of an activity. Flexibility in timing is allowed because the activity itself is not restricted by the progress of the curriculum. In view of the fact that the thematic approach is currently the main teaching approach in the pre-primary curriculum, it is believed that it will be more practicable to add in project work under different themes and to apply them with flexibility. However, it is also acceptable to add one or more independent projects to the curriculum planned for the year. With regard to the allocation of time, the project can last for a few days, a few weeks or a few months depending on the children's interest and degree of participation. Apart from providing sufficient information, a pre-primary educator should, at all times, try to guide children to make use of the time before lessons, interest groups, group activities or any other free time to select the activities they are most interested in without being placed under the pressure of achievements. Below is an illustration of the process of formulating the "Project Approach":



4. Form of activity

Activities should be initiated by children and should be flexible and diversified. To start with, the pre-primary educator can arrange a place which is suitable for the organisation of different activities, and should arouse children's interests in exploration and thinking. Strive for opportunities for joint study and co-operation with children. At the same time, efforts should be made to cope with children's age and needs so as to enable them to learn to communicate with other people through practical experiences, as well as to actively apply their skills in the use of language, words, and the production of practical objects. In addition, children's self-confidence and active involvement in activities can be strengthened through creative art work as well as designs in statistics, records, tables and bulletin board displays. If situation permits, some form of role-play, simulated games and site visits can be arranged. It will also be helpful if parents or experts can be invited to provide assistance or take part in the activities.

5. Assessment

The most ideal method of assessment is to make casual observations on children, collect data on their progress and then effectively record and analyse the information by appropriate means. It is also worthwhile to let children try to prepare their own record of assessment, such as written or pictorial descriptions of the process and their feeling of participating in an activity, or records of the number of times they have visited the interest corner each day. In addition, taking photographs and using cassette tapes are also convenient ways of recording activities. Not only can these records be used as reference for assessment, but they are also good materials for discussion, bulletin board displays and the production of self-compiled books.

6. The role of the pre-primary educator

The pre-primary educator should play the following roles in the course of promoting the "Project Approach":

- a. As a facilitator of the learning environment and atmosphere
 - choose a suitable topic for activities
 - prepare a suitable site and materials for conducting the activities
 - encourage children to participate and to discuss
 - liaise with parents closely
- b. As a partner in exploring with children
 - encourage children to take part in the planning process and in the layout of those projects which they may find interesting; avoid interfering children's creation because of scheduled plans in the curriculum
 - build up an environment for conducting the activities and lay down the rules and forms of games.

- c. As a friend who supports children to explore actively
 - respect children's decision
 - help children confront challenges
 - encourage children to adopt an objective attitude in dealing with matters
 - allow children to commit mistakes and encourage them to solve problems by themselves
 - encourage children to look at things from different angles
 - appreciate children's discoveries or originality

- d. As a model demonstrating the following characteristics
 - participating in activities wholeheartedly
 - inquiring for knowledge with an earnest attitude
 - adopting appropriate social manners and communication skills

7. Parental involvement

Parents should be encouraged to participate as far as possible. For instance, they can be asked to assist in making records or providing information. Moreover, opportunities may also be taken during daily contacts, e.g. talking to parents when they take their children to and from home, or about the projects by referring tactfully to children's individual records, so as to collect parents' views and to reinforce good connections.