SECTION 2
Chapter 3 • Values and Beliefs

This chapter contains:
• Values and Beliefs that Underpin Strong Beginnings
• Early Years Framework Principles
• Northern Territory Curriculum Framework Principles
• National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc Quality Improvement and Accreditation Principles
• Values Education and Valuing the EsseNTials

Values and Beliefs that Underpin Strong Beginnings

Our own values and beliefs have a critical impact on the way we make decisions, design programs and conduct ourselves. It is important to be clear about our personal values and beliefs and those shared as a group when working with others, making decisions that impact on others or undergoing changes. When an individual’s, or the shared, group values and beliefs are challenged by others, we are asked to justify or account for our behaviour or when there is conflict about someone else’s behaviour.

The Early Years community have a common, shared set of agreed core values and beliefs. These values and beliefs include:
• The foundation skills of lifelong learning are acquired in the Early Years
• Children feel secure, supported and valued in cooperative and collaborative learning environments
• Optimal learning occurs when learning experiences cater to individual learning styles, developmentally appropriate and authentically child-centred
• Confidence, competence and a positive self-identity come from valuing, including and supporting children’s diverse knowledge, skills and cultural understandings
• Children learn best in environments that are responsive to their needs and strengths that allow them to feel safe, secure and nurtured
• Play is an essential method of learning for young children that optimises the use of natural curiosity and inquiry
• Effective learning for children promotes the use of all their senses
• Higher order thinking and language skills require explicit teaching and modelling in the Early Years
• Quality Early Years environments provide flexible and secure organisation of time and space to accommodate the needs and natural flow of child-centred activities.

High expectations for professional standards including Early Years qualifications, expertise and sense of vocation, are critical to quality Early Years programs.
When these values and beliefs are practised, Early Years educators will:

- determine the unique needs and learning styles of each child using a range of appropriate tools
- establish specific outcomes for learning
- include students in design decisions
- utilise a variety of approaches and methods
- plan, prepare and use a wide range of appropriate strategies to achieve outcomes including using safe and developmentally appropriate resources
- authentically assess student achievement against outcomes and realistic indicators
- evaluate the program and planning including self-reflection
- ensure that the individual and team values, beliefs and attitudes are congruent with actions, communication style and mode used, and check on clarity of “message”
- provide optimal but flexible time, space and experiences to support effective learning.

These shared values and beliefs of Northern Territory Early Years educators strongly and directly underpin why Strong Beginnings promotes the Relationships, Environments, Active Learning and Language Development pedagogy framework, play-based approaches and curriculum domains focused on child development.

While developing their fine motor skills, children also explore and expand their awareness of the world around them.
Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:
We believe that the Early Years are the foundation of lifelong learning.

The principles that underpin this are:
• provision of quality Early Years pedagogy
• resilience
• high level of professionalism and partnerships with
  – parents
  – wider community
  – colleagues.

The links to NTCF principles are:
• developmental pathways
• high expectations
• expanded opportunities.

The practices that are congruent with this core are:
• resourcing including human resourcing
• specialised early childhood knowledge
• clarity of roles
• ongoing provision of relevant professional development
• resources such as purpose-built buildings including age-appropriate furniture, effective
  work areas, materials
• indoor and outdoor equipment
• storage facilities
• model actions and attitudes to children
• nurture feelings of self-reliance
• provide opportunities to learn to work effectively in a group
• play-based activities
• learning centres
• quiet and active areas defined
• visually pleasing (but no clutter)
• the child is an active decision-maker
• encourage and promote collaboration
• constructive and purposeful play
• encourage and promote independence
• hands on learning
• safe and secure learning environment
• stimulating and supportive
• time to learn and explore understandings
• authentic assessment for early childhood
• parent education – library and professional development
• parent friendly
• promoting our work in the wider community
• excursions (include parents)
**Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:**

Children learn best when individual learning styles are catered for at the appropriate developmental level.

**The principles that underpin this are:**

- decisions about developmental pathways should also account for individual learning styles and preferences.

**The links to NTCF principles are:**

- diversity
- child-centred approaches
- developmental pathways.

**The practices that are congruent with this are:**

- integrate activities in meaningful contexts
- develop individuals’ full potential
- evaluate programs
- include and communicate with parents in child’s progress
- provide scaffolding for learning
- encourage parent, carer and community participation
- developing confidence to take risks
- program for success
- multi-sensory approach
- opportunity to revisit and consolidate understanding
- positive role modelling
- secure and supportive environment
- valuing diversity
- develop self-esteem and respect especially for others
- open-ended tasks and questions
- choice and variety of task
- catering for and valuing different learning styles
- use real life experiences, shared experiences, child-directed, interest-based, build on prior knowledge, experiences and strengths, authentic, challenging activities
- track and record to indicate progress
- celebrate achievement and success.
Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:
We value and utilise the knowledge, skills, cultural understandings and diversity that the child has developed in their family. You learn best in an environment where you feel valued.

The principles that underpin this are:
- genuine partnerships between community and school
- recognise and include the diverse range of learning styles of students
- teach student about how to learn in a school setting.

The links to NTCF principles are:
- advocate for appropriate developmental approaches including recognition of diversity in standardised testing
- understand and give agency to inclusivity
- actively value all diversity in the classroom.

The practices that are congruent with this are:
- bringing appropriate staff into the classroom
- include local community
- ESL specialist
- home visits
- parent nights
- setting up classroom with appropriate resources
- electronic reports
- ESL teaching practices
- teaching school routines
- making expectations very clear
- all forums
- teaching students to critically evaluate practices from many communities
- Incorporate elements of all cultures in the classroom
  - celebrations
  - stories
  - visitors
  - costume
  - food
  - music
  - language
  - sport
  - religion
  - daily practices
  - life.
**Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:**

We believe that all children learn best when learning experiences are developmentally inclusive and authentically child centred.

**The principles that underpin this are:**
- laying the foundations with appropriately sequenced learning
- learning experiences will be meaningful, “hands on”.

**The links to NTCF principles are:**
- expanded opportunities
- developmental pathways.

**The practices that are congruent with this are:**
- higher order thinking skills
- play based
- multiple intelligences
- talk talk talk talk
- creativity
- exploration
- equity
- collaborative and cooperative
- friendly supportive and safe stable
- support risk taking
- Tribes TLC
- resources
- resourcing
- encouraging independence.
Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:
We believe that children learn best in quality environments that are responsive to their needs.

The principles that underpin this are:
- supportive environment
- facilitate knowledge
- nurturing
- stimulating
- inclusive
- scaffolding.

The links to NTCF principles are:
- EsseNTial Learnings
- inner, constructive, collaborative, creative
- developmental pathways.

The practices that are congruent with this are:
- safe environment
- knowledge of children’s development
- planning
- sharing and caring (appreciation of others)
- inviting environment for children, parents and carers
- plan opportunities and activities to facilitate the positive learning experiences
- create an environment conducive to taking risks
- facilitate sharing of knowledge
- encourage risk-taking
- challenging
- welcoming, comfortable
- play-based
- dynamic
- fun and enjoyable
- provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences.
Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:
We believe play is an essential (central) aspect of learning for young children.

The principles that underpin this are:
- Play is the natural way for children to construct their meaning of the world and follow their natural curiosity
- Children learn through fun, play-based experiences.

The links to NTCF principles are:
- active learning approaches
- developmental pathways.

The practices that are congruent with this are:
- catering for individual learning styles
- catering for diversity
- open-ended experiences
- hands on
- meaningful context
- actively involved in the learning
- play-based activities
- learning centres
- quiet and active areas defined
- visually appealing (but no clutter)
- the child is an active decision maker
- encourage and promote collaboration
- constructive and purposeful play
- encourage and promote independence
- curriculum and methodology are often student directed
- hands on learning
- safe and secure learning environment
- stimulating and supportive
- time to learn and explore understandings
- authentic assessment for early childhood.
Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:
We believe that children learn effectively through the use of all their senses.

The principles that underpin this are:
- we use input from all our senses to process information
- people have a preferred sense or senses through which they learn best.

The links to NTCF principles are:
- expanded opportunities (explicit teaching)
- developmental pathways (individual differences).

The practices that are congruent with this are:
- provide activities through which the children identify and develop their senses
- establish an environment that children can learn through their senses (a sensory rich environment)
- sight
  - charts
  - pictures
  - compic
  - sign, gesture, body language
  - demonstrating
  - looking at books
  - drawing, writing and painting
  - role play
- hearing
  - tapes (story, auditory discrimination, talking)
  - discussion
  - music
  - storytelling
  - instructions
  - whispering
  - rhyming
  - alliteration
- smell and taste
  - food preparation and eating
  - gardening
  - science eg. smelly jars
  - tuning into nature
- touch
  - playing music
  - finger painting
  - rice play
  - play dough
  - sand or water
  - threading
  - fine and gross motor activities
  - tinkering box
  - dress ups
- hands on concrete objects
  (manipulative play – puzzles, bubbles, modelling, constructing)
The learning environment includes:
- dramatic play (dress ups, puppets, role play, hospital, shop, cubby house)
- sensory play (rice, dough, gloop/goop, sand/water)
- manipulative play (puzzles, stacking, threading)
- physical play (bikes, balls, climbing, trampolines)
- constructive play (Lego, Duplo, boxes, junk, blocks)
- musical play (instruments bought and school made, dance, listening to music, moving to music, singing, chanting)
Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:
We believe that students need to develop higher order thinking.

**The principles that underpin this are:**
- resourcefulness
- metacognition
- expanded opportunity for students to think creatively
- teacher as facilitator
- flexibility and high expectations.

**The links to NTCF principles are:**
- EsseNTial Learnings, especially constructive and creative learning eg to question “what if“ and discover possibilities
- learning technology outcomes of design, critiquing and presentation.

**The practices that are congruent with this are:**
- question, action, reflection, brainstorming, self evaluation
- De Bono’s six thinking hats
- rubrics
- Bloom’s Taxonomy
- questioning
- learning styles
- multiple intelligences
- open-ended learning tasks
- planning
- collaboration
- direction
- presentation of evaluation
- flexibility with time and space
- re-evaluation
- IT integration such as Talking Books
- explicit modelling of reflective practice and problem solving.
Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:
Children learn best when provided with time and space to develop and consolidate their learning.

The principles that underpin this are:
- every child has a right to succeed - this will take different times and opportunities for different students
- children succeed at their own rate.

The links to NTCF principles are:
- acknowledge that individuals need different learning provision
- a supportive environment where students can take risks with their learning.

The practices that are congruent with this are:
- use a buddy system
- lots of varied experience and environment
- supported practice (scaffolding) and modelling
- opportunity to choose from the activities according to preferences
- continuing access to resources over an extended time period eg activity permanent centres
- provide a wide variety of resources
- developmentally sequence activities to ensure success at every stage
- portfolios for evidence collation over time
- groups of children doing things in lots of different ways (multiple intelligences)
- provide spaces for long-term projects and displays.
## Our core value and belief about quality pre-compulsory education is:

We believe that early childhood contexts should be staffed by people who have early childhood specific knowledge and expertise and a sense of vocation.

### The principles that underpin this are:
- professionalism and commitment to ongoing learning
- quality practice pedagogy
- provision of quality Early Years programs
- a sound understanding of the whole child across all domains of development
- resilience
- inclusion of all stakeholders
  - parents
  - wider community
  - colleagues.

### The links to NTCF principles are:
- developmental pathways
- high expectations
- expanded opportunities.

### The practices that are congruent with this are:
- physical environment
- emphasis on social, communication, emotional
- not just the three Rs
- good role model – appropriate language and ways to interact
- seeks advice, creates working relationships with other childcare professionals
- behaviour management
- model positive actions and attitudes to children
- nurture feelings of self-reliance
- provide opportunities to learn to work effectively in a group
- innovative – be open-minded
- open-ended explorative experiences
- confident and open communication with parents
- advocating for little people where ever you go
- activities are purposeful
- appropriate outcomes
- research and information gathering (current knowledge and applications)
- build relationships with children, families, carers, peers, community
- reflection on your own actions
- fun, joy, children happy to be there
- recognising and acting upon observed differences in children and needs for specialist intervention.
Early Years Framework Principles

The overarching guiding framework for community and government agencies for children aged zero to eight promotes the following principles, which strongly align with the shared values and beliefs of teachers. While language or phrases may vary between professions, community and contexts, the intent is consistent. The Early Years Framework is available at www.deet.nt.gov.au.

The Early Years Framework Principles state:

- Early Years are critical in establishing a person’s self esteem, resilience, healthy growth and capacity to learn
- Families are the most important people in children’s lives. Supporting and involving families is the best way of supporting and protecting children
- Child and family support is enhanced when services are designed to support needs in an integrated way. Strong and effective partnerships among families, service providers, community members and children are needed to achieve this
- Services and programs that are inclusive and embrace diversity, including ability, culture, linguistic, socio economic and geographic contexts, provide good outcomes for children
- Programs for children and families focusing on early health, care, development and learning interventions, significantly improve children’s educational and life outcomes
- The broader community, including levels of employment and crime, housing standards and access to services, has a considerable influence on the development of children.

Northern Territory Curriculum Framework Principles

Educators familiar with the NTCF will recognise that the principles described below are embedded within Strong Beginnings: An Explicit Guide to Quality Practice in the Early Years and link with the values, beliefs and principles of Early Years practice listed above.

When practice is based on developmental approach, EsseNTial learnings and partnerships, lifelong learning is achieved – through flexibility and inclusivity.

Principles Underpinning the NT Curriculum Framework
National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc Quality Improvement and Accreditation Principles

For long day care services, there are seven quality areas and 33 principles.

Quality Area 1 Staff Relationships
- Principle 1.1: Staff interact with each child in a warm and friendly way
- Principle 1.2: Staff guide each child’s behaviour in a positive way
- Principle 1.3: Staff initiate and maintain respectful communication with each child
- Principle 1.4: Staff respect each child’s background and abilities
- Principle 1.5: Staff treat all children equitably
- Principle 1.6: Staff communicate effectively to promote respect and professional teamwork.

Quality Area 2 - Partnerships with Families
- Principle 2.1: Staff and families communicate effectively to exchange information about each child and the centre
- Principle 2.2: Staff encourage family participation and involvement in the centre
- Principle 2.3: The centre has orientation processes for children and families.

Quality Area 3 - Programming and Evaluation
- Principle 3.1: The program reflects a clear statement of centre philosophy
- Principle 3.2: Each child’s learning is documented and is used in planning the program
- Principle 3.3: The program assists each child to be a successful learner.

Quality Area 4 - Children’s Experiences and Learning
- Principle 4.1: Staff encourage each child to make choices and participate in play
- Principle 4.2: Staff promote each child’s ability to develop and maintain relationships
- Principle 4.3: Staff promote each child’s language and literacy abilities
- Principle 4.4: Staff promote each child’s problem solving and mathematical abilities
- Principle 4.5: Staff promote each child’s enjoyment of and participation in the expressive arts
- Principle 4.6: Staff promote each child’s physical abilities.
Quality Area 5 - Protective Care and Safety
- Principle 5.1: Staff act to protect each child
- Principle 5.2: Staff supervise children at all times
- Principle 5.3: Staff ensure that potentially dangerous products, plants and objects are inaccessible to children
- Principle 5.4: The centre ensures that buildings and equipment are safe
- Principle 5.5: The centre promotes occupational health and safety.

Quality Area 6 - Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing
- Principle 6.1: Staff promote healthy eating habits
- Principle 6.2: Staff implement effective and current food safety and hygiene practices
- Principle 6.3: Staff encourage children to follow simple rules of hygiene
- Principle 6.4: Staff ensure toileting and nappy changing procedures are positive experiences
- Principle 6.5: Staff support each child’s needs for rest, sleep and comfort
- Principle 6.6: The centre acts to control the spread of infectious diseases and maintains records of immunisations.

Quality Area 7 - Managing to Support Quality
- Principle 7.1: Written information about the centre’s management is readily available to families
- Principle 7.2: Written information about the centre’s management is readily available to staff
- Principle 7.3: Staffing policies and practices facilitate continuity of care for each child
- Principle 7.4: Management provides professional development opportunities for staff.
Values Education and Valuing the EsseNTials

The National Framework for Values Education in Australian Schools was distributed to all Australian Schools in February 2005.

This framework sets out

• an underpinning vision for improving values education in Australian schools
• eight guiding principles to support schools in implementing values education
• key elements and approaches providing practical guidance to schools in implementing values education
• nine values for Australian schooling
  – freedom
  – respect
  – responsibility
  – integrity
  – understanding, tolerance, inclusion
  – care and compassion
  – honesty and trustworthiness
  – fair go
  – doing your best.

These nine values emerged from surveys done with school communities around Australia. The Northern Territory Department of Employment, Education and Training has developed a document entitled “Valuing the EsseNTials” that outlines NT schools’ responsibilities in implementing values education and provides links to the EsseNTial Learning section of the NTCF. This document also demonstrates how values education can integrate with existing national initiatives and DEET programs such as Tribes, MindMatters, Rock and Water, Restorative Justice and Habits of Mind. There are some very useful resources for educators interested in exploring values in their setting at: www.curriculum.edu.au/values.

The following values and beliefs for Early Years Teaching and Learning were compiled by a group of dedicated and experienced NT educators. The important link between values or beliefs as why we do particular things, and the principles of quality practice as how we design Early Years programs, and finally the actions as what we do, are made clearer in these diagrams.
Chapter 4 • REAL and Child Development

This chapter explicitly links the beliefs and values about early child development with the teaching framework of Relationships and Partnerships, Quality Environments, Active Learning and Language Development (REAL).

This chapter contains:

• Links Between Developmental Pathways and REAL Learning
• A Snapshot of Children by the Age of Three
• A Snapshot of Children by the Age of Five
• A Snapshot of Children by the Age of Eight

Links Between Developmental Pathways and REAL Learning

As children grow and develop they gain increasing confidence and competence in their abilities and understanding of their world. Children develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically along individual developmental pathways. No two children, even from the same family, are identical.

The pace and pattern of each child’s development is influenced by many factors including:

• the child themselves
• their experiences and opportunities provided by their family and the broader community
• ante and post natal health and nutrition
• family circumstances and structures
• community resourcing and environment.

General characteristics for children up to the ages of three, five and eight are summarised below and are linked to REAL Learning.

This developmental information is to be considered as a guide only, as each child is unique and must be considered on an individual basis and in terms of their unique set of family, cultural and linguistic experiences. However, children who are experiencing delays or obvious difficulties require comprehensive observation, analysis and referral to trained professionals in the area of concern, eg speech pathologists, occupational therapists, behavioural experts, paediatricians, physiotherapists, Advisory Teachers Early Intervention, psychologist or special needs teachers.

Each of the three sections listed below is written in the same format:

• The general description provides a snapshot or summary of children within the stated age range, with examples only to provide guidance to any adult unfamiliar with children in this age range
• Learners and Learning describes the types of skills the child is developing at this stage, and links the types of experiences to general needs of learners at this stage of development
• Teacher and Teaching describes the types of relevant and meaningful activities an astute early childhood educator might offer, if he or she used elements of REAL Learning to cater for the learners’ needs.
A Snapshot of Children by the Age of Three

**General Description**

By the age of three years, children's horizons are expanding as they experience life and learn about relationships. They are becoming more independent and are beginning to satisfy their own needs. They are developing skills in making choices and solving problems and are learning to enjoy activities outside of their home environment. They can use short sentences and hold simple conversations. Their memory is developing and they have developed an awareness that those who are not present continue to exist and are elsewhere. Pretend play increases and children practise skills and imitate everyday situations they see around them.

**Learners and Learning**

Children by this age continue developing enough language to follow simple directions, and use short sentences of two to three words about people and places. They can remember and retell about recent events. They can concentrate for short periods of time and may begin to play independently. Three-year-olds enjoy the company of others, but often cannot see another point of view, (making it difficult to share). Usually they can run and stop, stand on tip-toes, catch a large ball, walk over rough ground, rocks or sand without losing balance and are beginning to undress independently. Generally self care is evident and they can feed with a spoon, follow simple directions and point to body parts. They can scribble and draw lines, dots and circles, but cannot draw complete pictures yet. Most three year old children are toilet trained but accidents may still happen from time to time.

Children of this age enjoy playing in structured and unstructured settings, individually or collaboratively with:

- outdoor equipment and tools
- art and craft equipment and tools, eg paint and paper, crayons, markers, glue, and simple craft activities
- manipulative activities including eye-hand coordination activities, eg threading, simple jig-saws, play dough and clay
- a variety of toys and equipment, eg stacking toys, pull apart toys, simple construction and building equipment (boxes, blocks, construction kits)
- listening to stories individually or as part of a small group
- playing with sounds and words
- playground equipment, eg simple obstacle courses (under, through, around), swings, slides, climbing platforms, see-saws, and merry-go-rounds
- perceptual motor activities eg balancing, climbing, moving through, around, over, below objects, rolling, throwing and catching balls, jumping, rolling, crawling
- make believe props such as dolls, puppets, animals, cubby-houses, tents, box construction (puppet theatre, truck, boat, buildings)
- music, singing and dancing games from various cultures.
Teachers and Teaching

Early childhood educators, parents and carers can link developmental needs to effective programs that include the following:

**R - RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS**
- observe each child as they play and interact
- talk to the child and their carers to find out about their likes, dislikes, fears, challenges and joys
- recognise the importance of the information that parents share about their child
- develop a good relationship with parents, caregivers and extended family members and encourage them to share their concerns and joys with staff
- invite parents to be involved in the program by negotiating tasks within the classroom that are genuine, real and necessary.

**E - ENVIRONMENTS**
- provide different areas that encourage exploration, play and inquiry, eg “care corner” (animals or plants), make and create area (craft, art, technology and design, manipulative materials like blocks/Lego/Mobilo)
- areas for a wide variety of pretend play like home, shop, clinic, train station, boat ramp, airport
- book-corner with books relating to children’s current interests, likes and dislikes
- have places for loud energetic play as well as quiet careful play
- visit different places, eg park, beach, museum, swimming pool, library, shops, playgroup, “big school”

**A - ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACHES**
- create and set up different play areas and activities, eg construction areas, “thematic” areas such as changing seasons, collection corners
- develop obstacle courses and describe the time relationships (before, after) and spatial relationships (over, under, through, on, up, down)
- provide many hands-on activities that involve the child in learning through the senses
- elicit answers from the children to their many questions, by asking who, when and where questions (how and why come later) – look for answers together, encourage questioning of the world around them
- provide a variety of sensory materials for children to freely choose in art, construction, sport, dramatic play, eg coloured playdough can have food flavouring or essences added along with tactile material like beans, lentils, glitter, sifted sand, cooked or uncooked pasta.
L - LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
- sing, dance and play together
- involve children in everyday activities with much talk in context
- teach children how to be active listeners
- model and verbalise appropriate actions, sequences and names of classroom tools and equipment and actively teach new vocabulary – use new words in sentences to support meaning and repeat them with the known or familiar word, eg – “he returned from…” “he came back from…”
- model new ways of using familiar language and scaffold children’s language to build more sophisticated ways of expression
- describe sounds you hear and talk about things you see or things you and the children are doing
- discuss and verbalise solutions to everyday problems, eg “I wonder what we will need to take outside if it starts to rain?”
- show genuine enjoyment in children’s discoveries and successes.

A Snapshot of Children By the Age of Five

General Description:
By the age of five years, children are usually confident, curious and physically able. They have begun to discover their place in the wider world, and can speak up and express their ideas. They can be independent but also enjoy being part of a group and solving problems by cooperation. They begin to understand and follow rules and often need structure and routines to feel safe. Language ability and creative imagination is developing and they can talk about what they have done. They can make friends and have fun interacting with peers.

Learners and Learning
Children of this age can now understand and ask complex questions, eg “how” and “why”. They know basic mathematical concepts such as general shapes and counting orally, and understand about time passing. They can take turns when playing with other children, but might not be cooperative all the time. They can move independently, starting to hop, skip or gallop, as well as run. They are developing good eye-hand and eye-foot coordination, and have enough control to draw, paint, paste, etc. Most five year olds have decided on a dominant hand, and use that same hand for different tasks, eg throwing a ball, cutting, reaching. They can dress unaided, but might not be able to do things like laces. They are beginning to understand signs around them they see regularly eg stop signs and may have begun to practice writing. They are developing their sense of humour and enjoy silly jokes, especially toilet jokes.

Children of this age enjoy playing individually or collaboratively, in structured and unstructured settings with:
- simple pair or small group games, eg board games, indoor and outdoor games, computer games, naming, rhyming and counting games
- outdoor equipment and tools, eg water play and swimming, sand play and building and gardening
- art and craft equipment and tools, eg paint and paper, crayons, markers, glue, simple craft activities
- manipulative activities, eg sorting, matching, building, constructing, deconstructing and taking apart
• a variety of toys and equipment, eg stacking toys, pull apart toys, simple construction and building equipment (boxes, blocks, construction kits)
• listening to stories individually or as part of a small group
• playing with sounds, words, rhymes, finger plays
• playground equipment, eg simple obstacle courses (under, through, around), swings, slides, climbing platforms, see-saws and merry-go-rounds
• physical activities, eg riding a bicycle, climbing frames, ball games, trampoline
• make believe props such as dolls, puppets, animals, cubby-houses, tents, box construction (puppet theatre, truck, boat, buildings)
• music, singing and dancing games from various cultures
• perceptual motor activities, such as climbing, rolling, moving through, around, over, below objects
• literacy and numeracy activities, eg writing, reading, counting
• structured and unstructured play, eg role play, dramatic play

Teachers and Teaching
Early childhood educators, parents and carers can link developmental needs to effective programs that include the following:

R - RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS
• recognise the importance of the information that parents can share about their child
• invite parents, caregivers and extended family members to be involved in the program by negotiating tasks that are genuine, real and necessary
• ensure that children have many opportunities to interact with a variety of people
• include a range of people from the community in meaningful and authentic ways.

Finding out about our community helpers and learning from the experts. Learning about safety and well being is paramount.
E - ENVIRONMENTS
- visit different places, eg park, beach, museum, swimming pool, library, shops, playgroup, ‘big school’
- ensure that the environment supports hands-on learning
- have places for loud energetic play as well as quiet careful play.

A - ACTIVE LEARNING
- link programs to the EsseNTial Learnings of the NT Curriculum Framework
- create and set up different play areas and activities, eg construction areas, ‘thematic’ areas such as changing seasons, collection corners, science experiments
- set up activities that encourage cooperative and collaborative play, model appropriate behaviours where necessary and where appropriate
- take turns telling stories from experience or from shared books or create own books
- answer the children's many questions, look for answers together, encourage questioning of the world around them
- provide a variety of materials for children to freely choose from, for art, construction, sport, dramatic play.

L - LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT
- speak in sentences that are longer and more complex
- ask lots of questions including ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’, ‘why’ and ‘how’
- plan activities that encourage discussion with a broad range of people
- critically share books, stories and poems and verbalise and model the thinking processes embedded within the text, eg personalise the author, ensure his or her thinking during the writing processes is obvious, share genre features and characteristics
- allow multiple opportunities for sharing the writing process, eg practising with paper and pencils, linking thoughts to written symbols and letter-like shapes
- have fun with silly or nonsense words
- play a variety of phonological awareness games that promote understanding of rhyming, initial sounds, syllables.

A Snapshot of Children by the Age of Eight

General Description
At the age of eight years children's horizons continue to expand as they actively explore relationships with others. They are developing a strong awareness of themselves as an individual and can differentiate between the adult world and the child's world. Logical thought is developing and they are able to use 4 – 5 items of information. There is also an emergence of abstract thought. Children have better control of their gross motor skills and are able to manage a variety of complex tasks. Fine motor skills are constantly being refined. At this age children engage in co operative play often with the same sex.

Learners and Learning
Children of this age have a developing sense of humour enjoying jokes and riddles. They are able to orally sequence, predict and recall events, use correct grammar and question to seek clarification. Conversation can be sustained with a variety of audiences but understanding is often greater than the ability to use complex vocabulary. They can now distinguish between lateral, vertical, horizontal lines, letters and numbers.
can devise and share complex ideas to problem solve and they like making their own decisions. Attention span is increasing and logical thought is developing. They are sharing and taking turns and are more aware of the needs and feelings of others. Adult approval is important, but gratification can be delayed. They often have a rigid understanding of right and wrong. Play is cooperative with others and can be make believe. By this age children’s energy levels are high but they are more able to control their movements and stay in one position longer. Grip is strengthened with dominant hand apparent. Many specific skills associated with particular learning areas are emerging. Physical skills are important to self-confidence and social status.

Children of this age enjoy structured and unstructured opportunities to collaboratively or individually play with:

- simple pair or small group games, eg board games, indoor and outdoor games, computer games, word games
- a variety of outdoor equipment and tools, eg gardening, building
- greater variety of art and craft equipment and tools
- manipulative activities, eg simple robotics, construction, jewellery
- playground and sporting equipment, eg gymnastics, sport
- physical activities with playground and sporting equipment and resources
- make believe props appropriate to age, eg assembly items, plays, 3D story boards and maps
- music, singing and dancing games from various cultures
- literacy and numeracy activities
- role play, dramatic play, focused play
- electronic equipment and games, eg radios, compact discs, DVDs and tapes

**Teachers and Teaching:**

Early childhood educators, parents and carers can link developmental needs to effective programs that include the following:

**R - RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

- reading to them
- providing opportunities for children to practise their social skills, eg allowing time for play by themselves and with others
- talking about other people in the community and their role within the community, eg identifying significant people such as police, early childhood educators, health professionals
- widening the range of children’s experiences and talking about the types of behaviours appropriate at each activity, eg excursions, attending concerts, riding the bus, listening to talks by people of the community.

**E - ENVIRONMENTS**

- provide children with a wide range of experiential learning and purposely plan activities that use all five senses
- ensure the environment caters for different types of learners, eg auditory, visual, kinaesthetic
- ensure the environment provides spaces and places to reflect, actively collaborate with others, work independently when necessary, or research and trial different ideas.
A - ACTIVE LEARNING APPROACHES

- provide opportunities for physical activity including skipping, catching, throwing, balancing, tip-toeing, walking forwards and backwards, and kicking
- identify the needs of individual learners, and plan accordingly, eg an integrated curriculum with a hands-on approach to learning
- act as a facilitator to the learning – allow children to develop their own understandings within a framework of mutual respect and self-determination.

L - LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- ensure that you have identified the language capabilities of each child, but don’t confuse those with their cognitive level. Planning may be more involved as you cater for both, and may involve the ESL teacher
- provide many opportunities for the children to develop and share their understandings with other children and adults
- identify parts of lessons that may need to be explained explicitly, or specific vocabulary that may need to be used
- provide a scaffolding framework in class that caters for the development of complex or higher order thinking.