



INDABA
INSTITUTE

COMMUNITY ROOTED EDUCATION · CORE

Indaba Caregiver Training Program

Facilitator Training Manual & Developmental Milestones Appendix

EDITION

Version 01

PROGRAMME

20 days · 23 modules

PUBLISHED

October 2026

Programme at a Glance

A twenty-day, hands-on training programme that prepares caregivers to work with young children in the home through the lens of Montessori philosophy — from understanding how the child develops, to preparing the environment, nourishing the body, communicating with families and caring for the planet.

FORMAT	Facilitated, in-person training days running 09:00–17:00, each opening with stillness and reflection and closing with journalling and gratitude.
STRUCTURE	20 training days organised into 23 modules across six strands: Montessori foundations, the role of the adult, child development, daily living & the home, professional practice, and nutrition & earth stewardship.
DAILY RHYTHM	Morning reflection · Session 1 · tea · Session 2 · lunch · Sessions 3–4 · reflection, journalling & gratitude · closing.
APPENDIX	Four developmental milestone reference tables: movement, language, social & emotional, and cognition.
JOURNALLING	Ruled spaces throughout the manual are for participants' own notes and reflections.

NOTE ON VERSION 01

Day 20 (Digital Storytelling) appears in the programme outline; its session content is still in development and will be added in a later version.

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DAY

01

MODULE 01 PART 1 OF 2

Maria Montessori Life and Legacy

DURATION · 4 HOURS

SESSION 1

09:00

Icebreaker

OBJECTIVE

To help participants feel welcomed, build trust in the group, and highlight the value of each individual's experiences.

ACTIVITIES**INSTRUCTIONS**

Pair up with someone you don't know. Ask each other the questions below. You will then introduce your partner to the group using what you've learned.

Suggested Questions to Ask Your Partner:

1. Do you currently work with children? In what setting?
2. Are you training to become a caregiver, or already working as one?
3. How many children have you cared for or do you hope to work with?
4. What age group do you enjoy working with most, and why?
5. What's one skill or quality you think makes a great caregiver?
6. What's one thing you're hoping to learn or improve during this training?
7. What's a fun or interesting fact about you that's not childcare-related?
8. Do you have a favorite childhood memory or activity you'd love to share with the children you care for?
9. What motivates you to work with children?
10. How do you relax or take care of yourself after a long day?

Next Step: Introduce your partner to the group using 3–4 highlights from your conversation. Encourage warmth and positivity!

KEY POINTS

- Everyone in this room brings something **unique and valuable**.
- We are all both **learners and teachers**—this is a space to share and grow together.
- This journey is not just about childcare—it's about building **confidence, connection, and community**.

10:00

Course Overview

OBJECTIVE

To welcome participants into the learning space, introduce the structure and purpose of the training, and create a collaborative, respectful learning environment centered on Montessori principles and essential caregiver competencies.

ACTIVITIES**1. Meet the Trainers**

- A warm introduction to the facilitators: who we are, our backgrounds, and our passion for early childhood development and caregiver training.
- Share your “*why*”—why this work matters to you, and how this course was designed to empower participants.

2. Purpose of the Program: What You’ll Gain

- A strong foundation in **Montessori philosophy**, including:
 - The prepared adult
 - The child’s developmental milestones
 - Respect for the child
 - How to adapt your home environment to the child’s needs
- **Key Competencies You’ll Develop:**
 - Communication with parents
 - Professionalism
 - Time Management
 - Safety
 - Nutrition & Meal Prep

3. Structure & Daily Rhythm

- Overview of the **training schedule**:
 - Daily start/end times
 - Morning Reflection
 - Tea and Lunch times
 - Reflection/Journaling/Gratitude

4. Participation Expectations

- This is an **interactive and respectful** learning space. We ask that participants:
 - Stay curious and reflective
 - Listen actively and speak from experience
 - Honour different opinions and backgrounds
 - Bring their full selves into the room
 - Maintain confidentiality and support one another’s growth

5. Emphasis on Collaboration

- “*We are not empty cups waiting to be filled—we are a circle of learners and teachers.*”
- Every participant brings value: whether you’re a mother, caregiver, community leader, or new to childcare, your experience matters.
- We encourage peer learning and sharing throughout.

Closing Activity (Optional)

Invite participants to:

- Share one thing they hope to learn
- Share what excites or worries them about the journey ahead

This sets a tone of openness, curiosity, and mutual support.

11:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 2

11:30 Maria Montessori – Her Life & Legacy

OBJECTIVE

To introduce participants to the life, work, and legacy of Dr. Maria Montessori, helping them connect her journey with their own and understand the roots of the Montessori approach.

ACTIVITIES

Watch video: short biography - [See PowerPoint Day1 Introduction](#)

Group discussion:

- What stood out to you from the video?
- What surprised you about her life or work?
- Did anything resonate with your own experience or goals?

Key Milestones in her Life:

- Born in 1870, first female doctor in Italy
- Worked in psychiatry and with children considered “unteachable”
- Developed her method from observation, not theory
- Opened the first Casa dei Bambini in 1907
- Spread her work globally, even during exile
- Nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 3 times

Link her medical background to her scientific approach to children

- Connect her medical and scientific training to how she approached education: as an observer and researcher.
- Introduce the idea of the “prepared environment” as a reflection of scientific observation.
- Highlight her belief in following the child, not controlling them.

FACILITATOR PROMPT

Why might a medical background help someone understand children better?

Reflection prompt: How does Montessori’s story relate to your own path

12:15 The Story of the Seed**OBJECTIVE**

Explore the metaphor of the child's potential and it being the seed.

ACTIVITIES

Watch video: Prenatal development. [See PowerPoint Day1 Introduction](#)

- Group discussion:
 - What stood out to you?
 - What resonated or surprised you?
- Introductory lecture to the story of the seed
- Group discussion on what the participants think the metaphor means.
- Q&A session
- Potting seeds into containers, watering and nurturing them.

13:00 · LUNCH

DAY

01

MODULE 02 PART 2 OF 2

Planes of Development

DURATION · 4 HOURS

*Notes & reflections***SESSION 1****13:45****Four Planes of Development (1 st & 2 nd planes)****OBJECTIVE**

To understand the different needs as we develop from birth to maturity

ACTIVITY

See PowerPoint: Day 2 Four Planes of Development

Similarities between the stages of development in human & a butterfly.

Butterfly needs a different environment, different food, they look different.

Humans have different developmental needs at each phase, so it's important to know how best to support them.

The four planes of development are:

- Birth-6 yrs Infancy
- 6-12 yrs Childhood
- 12-18 yrs Adolescence
- 18-24 yrs Maturity

We will cover an overview of all of the four planes.

The 1st & 3rd planes are broken into sub-divisions.

Note: Throughout development we will see outward expressions of development & other times are more internal, where new information is being internalised. Both are important.

- **1st Plane: Birth-6 yrs Infancy**

The major task of this plane is to construct one's self.

In the 1st subdivision the child acquires many skills.

In the 2nd subdivision the child consolidates & expands on the skills learned.

- **0-3yrs (1st sub plane)**

Characteristics:

- Initial adaptation to the world around them, through absorption/taking in all the information around them. They construct themselves.
- The head is disproportionate to the rest of the baby's body, at birth, it is $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the body.
- The child at this age has an inner guide that makes them particularly interested in:
 - the language
 - co-ordinating their movement
 - routines, customs, the culture

The environment:

- The home
- The infant is building a basic trust in themselves and their environment

Our role:

- Support the infant to feel safe & supported
- Build healthy attachments to their care givers, slowly building outwards
- Rich language model for the child:
 - "serve & return, from the beginning.
 - Talking about what you are doing
 - Hearing conversations
 - Singing, reading for the baby
- Allow for freedom of movement and exploration
- Observe the child's needs
- Provide opportunities to support their development
- **3-6 yrs (2nd sub plane)**

Characteristics:

- Sensory exploration
 - Sensory experiences are interpreted, ordered and classified in the brain.
- Order
 - Explores and learns about their environment, building up knowledge of the order of it and how it works.
- Social behaviour
 - Builds relationships, learning about how to interact socially. The child begins to exercise their will at around 3 yrs, as they become conscious of themselves as a separate entity.
 - The child's plea in this plane: "Help me to do things myself!". It is important for the child to complete his own activity himself.
- Co-ordination of movement
 - Learning to throw & catch, hop, skip & jump where they have control over the whole body.
- Language
 - The ability to speak using clear, confident & meaningful language, asking and answering questions.
 - Frustration at around 2 ½ - 3 yrs because they can't find the words to express themselves.

- We call these Sensitive Periods

The environment:

- Still the home
- Includes the wider environment, like shops, parks & pre-school.

Our role:

- We are the child's role model for all the areas of their development.
- The child's experiences will colour the way they see the world.
- We are the embodiment of the culture the child will absorb and adapt to.
- Living the family's values is very important.
- Support the child in building trust in himself and the environment, doing things for themselves.
- Allow for plenty of repetition, as this is how the child learns.

• 2nd Plane: 6-12 yrs Childhood

Characteristics:

- This child wants to explore information in more abstract ways.
- Concerned with moral issues, right from wrong, gaining a sense of justice, often tell-tailing in order to find out what is/isn't acceptable.
- They want to feel valued, needed.
- The "Why" period
- "Nobody knows" – maybe you'll find out (imagining what they don't know, based on what they do know)
- They are fascinated by myths, legends, space, the unknown, the mysteries of life.
- Need to be part of a group, a peer group, a sense of belonging
- Learning loyalty, responsibility for others in their group.
- Growth is uniform, steady, the body lengthens.
- Love to test their physical skills, also enjoying team sport.
- Want to show their ability to look after themselves - let them do this.

Environment:

- The home provides support, but this child needs their peers and group learning, joining clubs & societies

Our role:

- Spark their imagination to find out about the world.
- Answer questions! Make time to answer questions.
- If you need to research further, do so.

15:00 · TEA BREAK

15:15 Third & Fourth Planes

- 3rd Plane: 12-18 yrs Adolescence
- Challenges in the 3rd plane can often be traced back to the 1st.

- The child becomes a member of the wider group, of society.
- **12-15 yrs (1st sub plane)**
 - Marked by the beginning of puberty & tremendous bodily change.
 - Not as physically strong, robust, immunity is not as strong
 - Clumsiness and awkwardness
 - Insecurity may set in, may become self-conscious.
 - Time of experimentation.
 - Self is expressed through dress, music, people you identify with.
 - Close friends are confided in, the social circle narrows.

- **15-18 yrs (2nd sub plane)**

Characteristics:

- Political/social/worldly & environmental issues are important
- Independence is very important, especially economic independence.
- Want to live their ideals.
- Self-expression is very important, through writing, art, dance, music, etc.
- Protest against arbitrary authority & institutions.
- Must feel like they can contribute & make a difference.
- Respect is very important.

Environment:

The wider adult world, seeking employment and a place in the world.

Adult role:

There is an enormous adjustment needed on the part of the adult.

The home becomes a hotel.

Give them adult-type responsibilities, so they feel respected and treated as young adults.

Establish family contact times and discuss their responsibility to/within the family.

Help them to feel their value within the family.

As the emotional level is changing the intellectual capacity is not as vigorous as it was in the 2nd plane.

In this plane they need to learn self-reliance, sociability, making a contribution to society, responsibility. (Maria Montessori's Erd Kinder concept)

- **4th plane 18-24 yrs Maturity**

Provided the young adult with what they'll need to work with in this plane.

Characteristics

Should be feeling that they are partaking, involved, finding ways of benefiting not only themselves, but the wider world too. The self becomes secondary.

At around 24 they re-assess and either carry on or change paths.

The environment:

The wider environment of university and society, working to provide for economic independence.

Our role:

We need to support young adults to reach this stage and not to get stuck in one of the other planes.

From looking at the planes of development we can see the different planes or stages we go through and how absolutely different we are in each of the stages and very importantly how different support is required at different times.

Balancing children of different ages:

It is very important that we have knowledge of the different planes of development, as we see that a child in one plane needs a certain type of support and a child in another stage, needs something completely different. Often in a family there will be children of different ages and that is why it is so important to have this understanding so we can support the children differently according to their different developmental needs/planes of development.

Observation is key, as this is how we are going to become aware of the child's needs/interests and the support we can give to each.

16:30 Introduction to reflection and journalling**OBJECTIVE**

To explore and understand why it is important to reflect on the work and why journalling is such a crucial element of the learning journey

ACTIVITIES

"Journaling is a simple way to connect with yourself, reflect on your experiences, and grow in your work. You don't need to be a 'good writer'—just honest and present.

Describe a moment you've had with a child that taught you something about them—or about yourself. Why do you think that moment stuck with you.

DAY
02

MODULE 03 PART 1 OF 2

The Child's Unique Mind

DURATION · 4 HOURS

*Notes & reflections***09:00 Morning Reflection**

SESSION 1

09:30 The Brain**OBJECTIVE**

To understand the functioning of the brain

ACTIVITIESSee PowerPoint Day 2 Brain Development**What is the brain?**

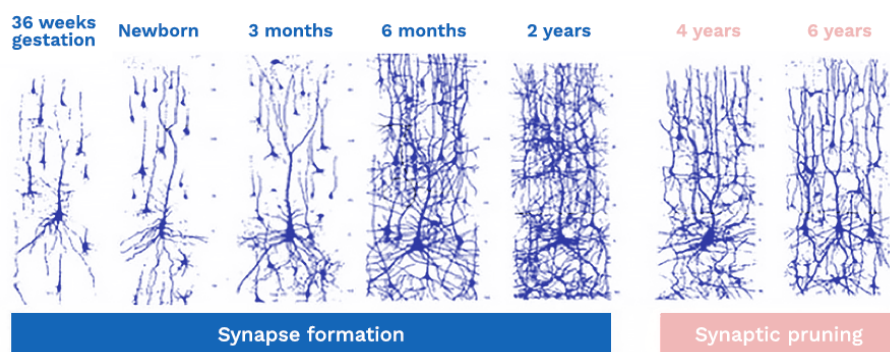
The brain is a complex organ that controls thought, memory, emotion, touch, motor skills, vision, breathing, temperature, hunger and every process that regulates our body.



Show video

Discussion after the video, to include the following info:

- Experience shapes the brain
- Billions of neurons form circuits (that become the architecture of the brain)
- Circuits & connections are reinforced by repeated use
- Link to examples of repetition
- Experiences in the environment dictate which connections get more use
- Connections that get used less fall away (pruning)
- Simple circuits form the foundation for more complex ones to build on
- Neurons form connections for:
 - Emotions
 - Motor skills
 - Behavioural control
 - Logic
 - Language
 - Memory
- With repeated use, the circuits become stronger & connect to other areas of the brain
- They support one another
- Like building a house (what comes first forms the foundation for the rest to be built on)



The increasing development of dendrites in the brain over the first two years and pruning.

Myelination

The axons in the newborn's brain are initially in a raw state. For them to send impulses effectively the axons must be insulated with myelin.

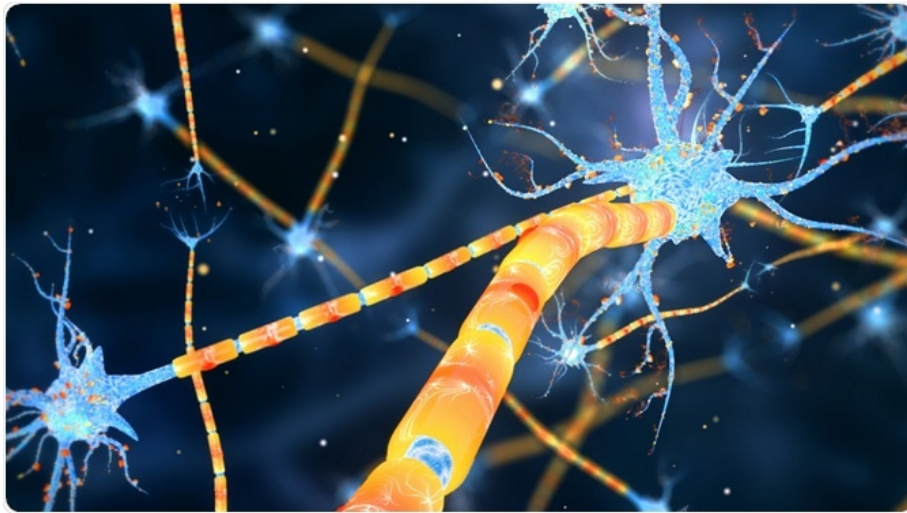
The thicker the insulation, the quicker and more efficient the transference of the impulse along the axon.

It consists of two systems:

- From head to feet
- From the centre outwards

This process of myelination is what makes it possible for the infant to move from making involuntary movements at birth to making voluntary movements.

Breastfeeding is very important for myelination, it provides more of the fats that are necessary for myelination.



11:00 · TEA BREAK

11:30 The Absorbent Mind

OBJECTIVE

To understand the concept of the Absorbent Mind

ACTIVITIES

The Absorbent Mind

Maria Montessori said the child from birth to six years has an absorbent mind.

Absorbs unselectively - A mind able to absorb knowledge quickly and effortlessly from the environment, by living in it, taking in everything he encounters. They do not discriminate; they simply take in info.

The absorbent mind thus assists the infant in **adapting to their environment**, making sense of it.

The absorbent mind is guided by the child's strong need to master language, co-ordinate their movement, to experience through the senses, to make sense of the world around them and to adjust to the social behaviour of the group. We call these **Sensitive Periods**, periods of sensitivity to a particular aspect of the environment to build that skill.

It has been likened to a **camera**, that takes a photo recording all the detail, completely & unselectively. They child takes in everything they are exposed to... good or bad. The child is formed by the experiences that they have and things that they are exposed to, by all the photos they store. Nothing can be removed!

During this time, the child **learns effortlessly**, through their experiences. But if their experiences are limited, cannot move their body, hear minimal speech etc., they will struggle and won't form the many connections and firing patterns needed for brain development. This work will be much harder later on, after the Absorbent mind phase.

The Absorbent mind is **not replaced** by a different mind, it simply recedes.

This places a huge **responsibility** on us, as the child takes in all – good & bad and this forms the basis of their memory and human personality. Whatever he absorbs, he becomes.

All the information that the absorbent mind receives is through the **senses**. It is through this experience that the child integrates his environment.

The absorbent mind is **unconscious** up till around 3 years. From 3 to 6 it is more **conscious**, the child becomes aware of themselves and their actions, now acting with the will and conscious thinking & abstract thinking. At this time the child orders & classifies information to further build on.

The work of the absorbent mind is **internal work**, the results of which are displayed later.

SESSION 2

12:15 The senses

OBJECTIVE

To understand the interplay between the senses and the brain

ACTIVITIES

See PowerPoint Day 2 The Senses

How the brain receives signals/information

The brain receives signal/information which is taken in through each of the senses or sense organs and it interprets them to give us a sense of what is happening around us and how to respond.

The five senses are thus the tools through which we experience the world, sending information to the brain and through which we understand/make sense of the world.

Imagine a toddler in the kitchen while a care giver is cooking

They are receiving information around how the food and ingredients look, smells & tastes, different sounds.

We are reliant on our senses all the time

We use them to balance our bodies, to see, taste, smell, feel pain & temperature and touch. The entire way we operate depends on them.

The five senses:

Taste

The taste receptors are the thousands of taste buds, situated in the tongue. The signals are sent to the gustatory cortex.

There are 5 tastes, situated at different places on the tongue.

Smell

The smell receptors are the hairs in the upper part of the nose.

The olfactory cortex receives & processes smells.

Sight

The sight receptors are in back of the eyes, a place called the retina.

Vision is processed in the occipital cortex of the brain.

Hearing

The hearing receptors are in the inner ear, in a spiral shaped cavity called the cochlea. The signal is sent to the auditory cortex of the brain.

Touch

The touch receptor is the skin, the body's largest organ.

It has millions of touch receptors, that respond to touch, pressure, pain & temperature. The touch receptors are more in certain places like the fingertips, lips, eye lids.

How can we support the child's sensory experience and resultant brain development?

We must provide the child with as many rich sensorial experiences as possible, so that they can refine their senses and order their impressions/experiences, thereby making sense of the world around them.

Between 3 - 6 yrs the child is particularly ready to order the many sensations & experiences. At this time, we offer lots of sensory exploration that is clear & defined and we attach specific language to it. Experiences and language like large & small, heavy & light, rough & smooth, loud & soft, sweet, sour, bitter & salty, the names of different smells.

Adaptation

The young child has a **special power** that can be called the power of adaptation. This power is a process whereby the young child **uses the environment to develop and, in so doing, becomes a part of that environment**. The young child absorbs the **culture of her time and place, taking in all the spirit, the customs, the ambitions/aspirations and attitudes of a society as well as the movements & language** simply by living in that society. This is the big work that the child is doing. The **absorbent mind** is a great help to this young child, in their work of adaptation to the world, unselectively taking/absorbing information about the world around them.

13:00 · LUNCH

DAY
02

MODULE 04 PART 2 OF 2

Freedom and Limits

DURATION · 4 HOURS

13:45 Introduction & Overview

OBJECTIVE

Introduce the concepts of developing self- discipline and what Freedom and limits really means.

Ask participants what they think self-discipline is? Ask for feedback.

- Explain: Oxford dictionary: the ability to control one's feelings and overcome one's weaknesses.
- Cambridge dictionary: **the ability to make yourself do things you know you should do even when you do not want to**
- When we are talking about a young child, we are referring to their ability to gain mastery for their will, to resist urges and to make responsible choices.
Ask participants if they think we are born with self-discipline? And how is self-discipline developed in a child?
Ask for their feedback?
- Interactive lecture: Explain that children are not born with self-discipline. Self-discipline is something that children will have to build within themselves and this is done through their own experience in their home environment (with the support of the adults around them).
- Before we can go into this subject, we must remind ourselves of what a newborn comes into this world with: a baby is born with very little actual control (physically) and it takes a period in which the baby learns by his own experience to adapt to his environment and create his human characteristics such as movement, language, emotions, intellect etc.
- A baby is born with certain potentials though that assist him in this work of adapting to his environment:
- Millions of neurons in his brain firing messages to his muscle fibers
- A special absorbent mind making it easy for him to absorb sensory impressions from his environment
- Certain tendencies like a tendency to communicate, or to work and repeat things in order to master them
- Also, he is born with certain special sensitivities that make him especially interested in the characteristics he is to build e.g. language.
- *All of these special potentials are within the child from the very beginning and they all work together to assist the child in becoming a member of their family or culture. Their family is their very first unit, and so the family becomes the microcosm for the larger community. It is through their experience in their family that children grow to learn about the rules and laws of their society.*

Session 2

14:15 Freedom & Limits**OBJECTIVE**

Understand that discipline and freedom are closely linked.

ACTIVITIES

- Interactive lecture: In order to understand how we support children in developing their own self-discipline, we must understand that Freedom plays a role in this. We have mentioned Freedom during the course, so you may know the word.
- But what does Freedom mean to you? Ask participants for feedback.
- Oxford dictionary: Freedom is.... the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants.
- Cambridge dictionary: **the condition or right of being able or allowed to do, say, think, etc. whatever you want to**, without being controlled or limited
- When we are talking about children's development, we are not talking about total Freedom to do whatever they want. The freedom we are talking about is the type of freedom that allows the child to explore their environment at their will without unnecessary interference from the adults around them.
- The freedom to move
- The freedom to communicate & express themselves
- The freedom to work uninterrupted
- The freedom to develop their will and eventually self-discipline
- The freedom to make age appropriate choices
- We must keep in mind though that this sort of Freedom can only exist in a well-prepared and orderly environment. The child's safety is always the most important factor!
- And a very young child is not yet able to understand this freedom themselves, so they need a framework in place that helps them to understand this freedom. We call these **limits**. A young child cannot properly benefit from freedom without an adult who is able to put down limits for them.
- These limits are put in place to protect the wellbeing of the whole group (the family). So the limits remind the child that they cannot ever:
 - Harm themselves
 - Harm someone else
 - Harm their environment
- How do we implement these limits?
- By role modelling the desired behaviour – we show our children that we care for the members of our family, we never infringe on other people's freedom and space, we never hurt other. We role model respectful interactions with other. We ask for turns, we wait for a response. All the behaviour we want to see in our children must first be role modelled by the adults around them.
- We are consistent. Limits are always limits, no matter what the situation so we must be clear that the limits stay in place no matter what. It is only through repeated consistency that the child will be able to internalise those limits and understand them properly.
- We are kind when we put limits in place. Adults must be able to be firm but kind at the same time.

- We put these limits in place for the young child while they are not yet able to put them in place for themselves with the understanding that through their own development they will eventually be able to do this for themselves.

15:00 · TEA BREAK

15:15 Preparing the environment

Interactive lecture: Explain the role that a specially prepared, orderly environment that includes plenty of purposeful work plays in the development of self-discipline.

15:45 Obedience & self/inner discipline

Interactive lecture: Explain that true obedience that we are working toward with children is when a child does something that someone else requests out of their own free choice and NOT to be confused with subservience where the other person is forcing them to do it i.e. they are exerting their will over that child in order for the child to do it.

- It is really important that give the child the opportunity to reach this point of true obedience themselves by being given the space to develop it within themselves (as they are not born with this ability).
- **Obedience in children typically develops in 3 stages.**
 - 1st stage: develops in the child from birth to 3 or 3.5 years. They are born with a strong drive to explore and their urges are very strong so we cannot have an expectation of these young children being able to exercise much of their own self-discipline. This is why the adult has to put limits in place in order to support the child's ability to explore. It is difficult for them to accept external guidance. That is why we must put limits down with consistent, firm KINDNESS.
 - 2nd Stage: develops in the child between 3.5-4.5 years where the child becomes more conscious and starts to understand the rules of the family/community. These children are becoming better able to stick to the limits/rules of their family/ environment of their own accord SOME of the time BUT not all of the time. It is a process of practice within an environment that is favorable to making mistakes and learning from their natural consequences.
 - 3rd Stage: develops in the child from 4.5 years onwards (and developing further over the person's whole life). As this child develops their self-discipline they become able to make a decision to do what is asked of him even if it is not what he wants to do right now, but he is aware of the needs of the group/family and is able to hold the good of the group above his own needs.
- **Self/Inner discipline** then draws on the development of the child's will, to be able to resist urges/impulses, and the ability to make responsible choices.
- Inner discipline then is the foundation for a child's independence which also builds within the child in an environment that s properly prepared for them.
- **We nurture this process** by:
 - Following the child's interest in the environment
 - Allowing the child to explore and have active experience in their environment
 - Allow the child to repeat activities in the environment and through this repetition build their ability to concentrate

- Provide opportunities for the child to develop their will (and in the process learn how to resist urges and make wise choices) especially by offering purposeful work (activities for daily living etc.) which help the child integrate the mind, body and will.
 - Provide consistency and order in the environment
 - Provide the necessary limits consistently, firmly and with kindness.
 - Observe the child (with our understanding of child development in mind)
 - Reflect on our observations and make change to the environment in order to support the development
 - Allow natural consequences to transpire. The child must come to understand that their choices have consequences. We allow these natural consequences to transpire so that the child can come to understand what is involved in the choices that they make. Give an example of a natural consequence.
- The adults in the family working with the child must be able to put all of the above in place in order for the child to truly develop self/inner discipline. This will be transformational for our society.....to raise children who have self-discipline and grow up to further refine this ability as responsible adults.

16:30 Gratitude/Journalling/Reflection

17:00 Closing

DAY
03

MODULE 05

The Role of the Adult

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00 Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30 Preparation of the Adult

OBJECTIVE

In a Montessori home environment, the adult plays a vital, intentional role—not as a traditional teacher, but as a guide, observer, and environment shaper. Here's a breakdown of that role:

ACTIVITIES

For each of the headings mentioned below, ask the participants what the concept means to them before explaining the meaning.

1. The Prepared Adult

- Just as the environment is prepared for the child, the adult must prepare themselves—emotionally, mentally, and practically—to **support the child's independence and development**.
- This means being **patient, respectful, and mindful**, always modeling the behaviors they wish to see.

2. Creating a Prepared Environment

- The adult ensures that the home is **orderly, accessible, and child-sized** so the child can engage independently in daily tasks.
- Materials are chosen **intentionally**—not overstimulating, and ideally based on real-life, hands-on learning.
- The adult takes care of the psychological environment:
 - A caring, accepting, respectful environment
 - Daily routines
 - Child's pace
 - Freedom to move, talk, to choose and repeat activities
 - A community life where each child is an active participant
- Link the child to their environment by creating opportunities to participate, e.g. preparing a meal, sweeping the room, unbuttoning a cardigan, etc.

3. Observer and Guide

- The adult steps back to observe the child's interests, developmental needs, and readiness for new skills.
- Rather than direct or correct, they **guide subtly**, offering support only when needed to allow the child to build confidence and competence.

4. Fostering Independence and Confidence

- They encourage the child to try, fail, and try again—without rushing to intervene.
- Practical life activities (pouring, dressing, cleaning, cooking) are introduced as part of everyday life, allowing the child to **contribute meaningfully** to their world.

5. Modeling Respectful Communication

- The adult uses **clear, calm, and respectful language**, helping the child build emotional regulation and communication skills.
- They validate the child's feelings, guide them through problem-solving, and model **empathy and collaboration**.

6. Holding Space for the Whole Child

- They support not only intellectual growth but also emotional, social, and physical development.
- The adult embraces **slow rhythms**, celebrates curiosity, and allows space for creativity, nature, and reflection.

In short, the adult in a Montessori home doesn't do **for** the child what the child can do **for themselves**—instead, they create the conditions for the child to thrive with dignity, purpose, and joy.

11:00 • TEA BREAK

11:30 Attributes of the Prepared Adult

OBJECTIVE

What are the personality traits or attributes of the Prepared Adult?

ACTIVITIES

Ask the participants what personality traits are important to be prepared for and create a nurturing learning environment for the child?

Go through each of the traits and unpack why that trait would be important by thinking about how it would play out in a day-to-day way.

The **Prepared Adult** in a Montessori home environment embodies a unique blend of **mindset, character, and presence**. Their role isn't just about what they do—but how they **are** with the child.

Here are the key **personality traits and attributes**:

1. Patient

- Allows the child to work at their own pace without rushing or interrupting.
- Resists the urge to “fix” or “do” for the child too quickly.

2. Observant

- Watches without judgment.
- Picks up on subtle cues about the child's interests, needs, and readiness for new challenges.
- Uses observation to guide—not control—what comes next.

3. Respectful

- Treats the child as a capable, whole person.
- Speaks and acts with kindness, clarity, and consistency.
- Honors the child's autonomy, voice, and choices within limits.

4. Self-aware

- Understands their own triggers, expectations, and conditioning.
- Practices emotional regulation and models calm responses.
- Committed to their own personal growth and reflective practice.

5. Intentional

- Chooses words, materials, and routines purposefully.
- Avoids unnecessary clutter—both in the space and in interactions.
- Prioritizes quality over quantity in the child's learning environment.

6. Flexible

- Adapts to the child's changing needs and rhythms.
- Lets go of rigid plans or expectations in favor of being responsive.
- Embraces mistakes and moments of chaos as learning opportunities.

7. Clear Communicator

- Sets consistent boundaries in a calm, loving way.
- Explains things simply and honestly, using real words and tone.
- Models how to resolve conflict and express emotions respectfully.

8. Loving but Unattached

- Offers warmth, encouragement, and connection without over-praising or over-controlling.
- Trusts the child's natural drive to grow and learn—without needing to manage every outcome.

In essence, the **Prepared Adult** brings a calm, grounded presence—like the roots of a tree—allowing the child the freedom to grow upward, outward, and at their own pace.

Bottom of Form

SESSION 2

12:30 Observation**OBJECTIVE**

Unpack the meaning of observation in a Montessori environment

ACTIVITIES

Get everyone to put their shoes in the front/middle of the room. The facilitator then points to each pair of shoes and asks the group to identify who the shoes belong to.

Discuss how observation played out in this game and why it's important. Can they think of other examples of how being observant has been useful in different circumstances?

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK (45 MINS)

13:45 Observation ctd.**OBJECTIVE**

Understanding what observation is and why it's important.

ACTIVITIES

At its core, observation is: A mindful, intentional act of watching the child to understand their needs, interests, development, and readiness—so we can better support their growth.

Why is observation so important in Montessori?**1. To understand the child's unique development**

- Every child grows at their own pace. Observation helps us track milestones *without comparing* to others.

2. To follow the child's interests

- Rather than planning based on assumptions, we respond to what the child is showing us in real time—this is the essence of “follow the child.”

3. To guide rather than direct

- Observation allows the adult to step back and *only intervene when necessary*, promoting independence and confidence.

4. To prepare the environment

- Watching how the child uses the space helps us adapt the environment to better meet their developmental needs.

Montessori said

“The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, ‘The children are now working as if I did not exist.’”

Observation is what enables that kind of respect and trust. In short, **observation is the Montessori adult's superpower**—quiet, respectful, intentional watching that leads to meaningful, individualized support.

Observation Activity: The Fruit Exercise

Duration: 20–30 minutes

Purpose: To practice observing without judgment, projection, or rushing to conclusions—skills crucial when observing children.

Materials Needed

- A piece of fruit for each participant (e.g., apple, banana, orange)
- Pen and paper

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Quiet Preparation (2 mins)

Invite participants to sit quietly with their fruit. Ask them to **slow down and shift into a mindful state**. No phones. No talking. Just breathe and focus.

Step 2: Silent Observation (10 mins)

Ask them to:

- Look at the fruit closely. Notice color, shape, texture, marks, imperfections.
- Smell it. What do they notice?
- Touch it. How does it feel? Heavy? Smooth? Soft? Cold?
- Listen. What sounds (if any) does it make when handled?

Important: Instruct them not to write yet—just **observe silently** without naming, judging, or rushing.

Step 3: Record Observations (5–7 mins)

Now, ask them to write down everything they noticed—**strictly objective facts**, not opinions.

Example: “There is a soft brown spot near the stem.”

Avoid: “It looks gross,” “I think this fruit is old,” or “This is the best apple I’ve ever had.”

Step 4: Reflect (5–7 mins)

Ask:

- How did it feel to slow down and really observe?
- Was it hard not to make assumptions or jump to conclusions?
- What might this teach us about how we observe children?

Connect It to Child Observation

Wrap up by drawing parallels:

“Just like the fruit, children show us things all the time—if we are still enough to notice. The more we practice objective, non-judgmental observation, the better we understand how to support their growth.”

15:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 3

15:15 Mindfulness**OBJECTIVE**

To unpack the meaning of mindfulness and explore different techniques to achieve mindfulness for the adult.

ACTIVITIES**Definition**

Mindfulness is the practice of **being fully present**—aware of your thoughts, emotions, and surroundings—**without judgment**.

In the Montessori environment, the **prepared adult** is not only responsible for the external environment, but also for their **inner landscape**. Mindfulness helps the adult cultivate a **calm, grounded presence**, which in turn supports the child's sense of safety, order, and freedom.

Why Mindfulness Matters in Montessori

- **Children absorb the adult's emotional state**—a calm adult supports a calm child.
- Mindfulness helps the adult **respond rather than react**, especially in challenging moments.
- It deepens **observation skills**, allowing the adult to better understand the child's needs.
- Supports the adult in creating an environment filled with **intention and respect**.

Practices for Daily Mindfulness

Here are simple, practical ways to cultivate mindfulness as a Montessori adult:

1. Mindful Breathing

- Take 3–5 slow breaths before starting the day or entering the child's space.
- Inhale for 4 counts, hold for 2, exhale for 6.
- Use this technique anytime you feel tension rising.

2. Grounding Check-ins

- Ask: *"What am I feeling right now? Where do I feel it in my body?"*
- Briefly pause to return to the present moment.

3. Single-Tasking

- Montessori values deep concentration. Practice doing one thing at a time—washing a dish, preparing a snack, tying a shoe—**with full attention**.

4. Mindful Transitions

- Instead of rushing between tasks, pause. Smile. Make eye contact with the child.
- Be present during "in between" moments—like putting on shoes or cleaning up.

Activity: Do a guided meditation with participants. Get them to talk about it afterwards. How did they feel? What was difficult/easy? How did they cultivate stillness?

16:30 Reflections/Journalling/Gratitude

What stood out to you?

What benefits would this have for you and children?

How do you think you could implement this?

Do you have any questions?

DAY

04

MODULE 06

Development of Movement: Gross Motor Development

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00 Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30 Gross Motor Development

See PowerPoint presentation: Gross Motor Development

Movement milestones detail – see Appendix Table 1: Movement Milestones (involuntary and voluntary movement)

11:00 · TEA BREAK

11:30 Gross motor development (continued)

See PowerPoint presentation: Gross Motor Development as per detail in milestone table below (involuntary and voluntary movement) and which developmental aids to offer support for this developmental plane.

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

13:45 Discussion – Gross motor Development

Participants to divide into small groups. Each group is given an example of two different children with a description of where they are at with their gross motor development. The participants in the group should discuss the child e.g. what do I see this child doing a lot of? What is the child working towards mastering? How can I best support this development? What should I offer the child? How should I respond? Where is this child moving towards? What could hamper this development? What is the child's interest? What is my role? What is the role of the environment?

15:00 Toilet Break

15:15 Discussion Feedback

Each team to give feed back to the larger group on what their findings are. Facilitator to assist by directing them with comments and questions.

16:30 Reflection & Gratitude

17:00 Closing

DAY

05

MODULE 07

Development of Movement: Fine Motor Development

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00 Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30 Fine Motor Movement

See PowerPoint presentation called Fine Motor Development

Movement milestones detail – see Appendix Table 1: Movement Milestones (involuntary and voluntary movement)

11:00 · TEA BREAK

11:30 Fine Motor Movement (continued)

See PowerPoint presentation: Fine Motor Development

Movement milestones detail – see Appendix Table 1: Movement Milestones (involuntary and voluntary movement)

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

13:45 Discussion – Fine Motor Development

Participants to divide into small groups. Each group is given an example of two different children with a description of where they are at with their fine motor development (including images). The participants in the group should discuss the child e.g. what do I see this child doing a lot of? What is the child working towards mastering? How can I best support this development? What should I offer the child? How should I respond? Where is this child moving towards? What could hamper this development? What is the child's interest? What is my role? What is the role of the environment?

Discussion Feedback: Each team to give feed back to the larger group on what their findings. Facilitator to assist by directing them with comments and questions.

15:00 Toilet Break

15:15 Importance of Art to the Child

See PowerPoint presentation: Importance of Art the Child

See PowerPoint presentation: How to prepare a space for art

16:30 Reflection & Gratitude

17:00 Closing

DAY
06

MODULE 08

Activities of Daily Living

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00 Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30 Activities of Daily Living

See PowerPoint presentation on Day 6 Practical Life

Presentations:

Facilitator to set up a grooming table. This is a way to explain how the progression of wiping/blowing your nose would be presented at different developmental levels. Also to explain how we prepare the environment.

11:00 · TEA BREAK

11:30 Activities of Daily Living continued

See PowerPoint presentation on Day 6 Practical Life

Presentations:

Food prep presentation- cutting an apple. To illustrate what type of utensils to use and how to present the activity to the child.

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

13:45 Activities of Daily Living continues

Presentations

Scrubbing a table. How to set the activity up and how to present it to the child. Facilitator to discuss analysis of movement.

14:15 Practice

Participants to split up into two's and practice Analysis of Movement and presenting an activity to a child. (Facilitator to set up various examples of activities for participant to practice with).

15:00 Toilet Break

15:15 Practice Feedback

Participants to give feed back to the larger group on what they presented, how it felt to do the presentation, how to present this activity to a younger child or an older child. How would it be different?

16:30 Reflection & Gratitude

17:00 Closing

DAY
07

MODULE 09

Language Development and Culture

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00 Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30 Introduction to language

OBJECTIVE

To define and explain the purpose and importance of language for the young child. To enrich language, vocabulary and communication through materials and activities in the home environment.

ACTIVITY

Question to participants:

- What is language? (Give examples)

See PowerPoint presentation: Day 7 Language

See Appendix Table 1: Language Milestones

- Stages of Language Development
 - Receptive and Expressive
- Relationship between Language and Culture
 - Brief overview
- Milestones
 - In Utero to 3 months
 - Cover receptive, Expressive, Environment and Culture

11:00 · TEA TIME

11:30 Language continued

- Milestones
 - 4 months to 18 months
 - Cover receptive, Expressive, Environment and Culture

13:00 · LUNCH

13:45 Language continued

- Milestones
 - 19 months to 3 years
 - Cover receptive, Expressive, Environment and Culture

15:00 · AFTERNOON TEA

15:15 Language continued

- Milestones
 - 4 years to 6 years
 - Cover receptive, Expressive, Environment and Culture

16:30 Gratitude, reflection and Journaling

17:00 Closing

DAY
08**MODULE 10**

Language Development and Culture

DURATION · 8 HOURS**09:00** **Morning Reflection****09:30** **Introduce three period lesson****OBJECTIVE**

Introduce a concept or vocabulary and demonstrate the purpose of a material.

ACTIVITIES

- Introduce the concept of a three-period lesson
 - Watch Video – *See PowerPoint presentation Day 7 Language (slide 40)*
- Present a three-period lesson with objects
- Practice in pairs

11:00 · TEA TIME

11:30 **Oral Language Activities****OBJECTIVE**

To enrich language, vocabulary and communication through materials and activities in the home environment.

ACTIVITIES

Demonstration of how to present oral language activities

- Sound Games
 - Presentation
 - Practice in pairs

13:00 · LUNCH

13:45 **Continue language activities**

- How to introduce oral stories/Story about an object
 - Presentation

- Introducing Command games
 - How to have purposeful conversations
- Introducing the Question game
 - Presentation
- Demonstrate how to handle a book, discussion types of books
 - Presentation
- Questions and Feedback

15:00 · TEA

15:15 Positive Communication

OBJECTIVE

To develop the ability to express their needs and feelings clearly, actively listen to others, show empathy, and engage in respectful interactions with peers and adults, fostering healthy relationships and positive social interactions.

ACTIVITIES

- Group discussion on “what is positive communication?”
- Role Play (in pairs or small groups)
- Feedback

16:30 Gratitude, reflection and Journaling

17:00 Closing

DAY

09

MODULE 11

Social & Emotional Developmental Milestones · Grace and Courtesy

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00

Stillness/Reflection

SESSION 1

09:30

Introduction and Overview

OBJECTIVE

To highlight the social/emotional developmental milestones and connect them to activities that support this development.

ACTIVITIES

- Welcome and icebreaker – True/false quiz
- Introduction: What do you understand/consider to be the developmental milestones from birth to six years for socio-emotional development?

Session 2

10:30

Socio-emotional development

OBJECTIVE

Deep dive into Social and emotional development from birth to six years

ACTIVITIES

- *See PowerPoint Day 9 Social and Emotional Development*
- Group discussion: What activities in the home support this development?
- Q&A session

11:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 3

11:30

Grace and Courtesy

OBJECTIVE

To gain an understanding of grace and courtesy lessons to foster everyday living in community social and behavioural skills.

ACTIVITIES

- See PowerPoint Day 9 Grace & Courtesy
- Small group discussion: What do you understand grace and courtesy to mean?
- Video about grace and courtesy in the home: <https://youtu.be/jNu5ybZy398?si=LAKs96Uk6urrCkSy>

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK (45 MINUTES)

SESSION 3

13:45 Grace and Courtesy continued

OBJECTIVE

As above

ACTIVITIES

- Reflective journaling: How am I role modeling grace and courtesy?

15:00 · TEA BREAK (15 MINUTES)

Notes & reflections

SESSION 4

15:15 Socio-emotional development and Grace & Courtesy

OBJECTIVE

To link social/emotional development and grace and courtesy to understand how the two are linked

ACTIVITIES

- Interactive lecture: How grace and courtesy can aid socio-emotional development.
- Role play in small groups (no bigger than 3 per group) on desired grace and courtesy behaviours.

16:30 Reflection and Gratitude

- How did you feel?
- What stood out for you?
- What did you learn today?

17:00

Closing

DAY 10	MODULE 12 Cognition DURATION · 8 HOURS
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09:00 Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30 Cognition Birth to 2 years

OBJECTIVE

To understand how all the different areas of learning come together to form cognitive skills.

ACTIVITY

See PowerPoint presentation Day 10 Cognition

11:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 2

11:30 Cognition 2 to 4 years

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 3

13:45 Cognition activity/discussion

OBJECTIVE

To help the caregivers consolidate what they have learned in the morning and to think about the older child and what cognition milestone the older child may reach (as these have not been covered yet).

ACTIVITY

Invite practitioners to break up into groups and each group discuss & present where the child is in terms of cognition at each age group and the support one would give, e.g.. 1-4 months, 4-8 months, 1-12 months, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years.

SESSION 4

14:15 Cognition 4 to 5 years

15:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 5

15:15 Supporting Cognitive development

OBJECTIVE

To create an understanding of the important aspects of supporting cognition

ACTIVITY

See PowerPoint presentation Day 10 Cognition

16:30 Reflections/Journalling/Gratitude

- What stood out to you?
- What benefits would this have for you and children?
- How do you think you could implement this?
- Do you have any questions?

DAY

11

MODULE 13

Sensorial & Maths

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00

Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30

Sensorial exploration

OBJECTIVE

To understand the importance of sensorial exploration and refinement of the senses and to discuss various ideas for this.

ACTIVITY

See PowerPoint Day 11 Sensorial Exploration, inviting discussion & suggestions about how to go about Sensorial exploration & sensory refinement in the home.

11:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 2

11:30

Presentations & practice (Colour Tablets)

Additional materials needed:

- Homemade Colour Tablets for matching:

1 x wool & cardboard

1 x paint chips

1 x bottle tops

- Homemade Colour Tablets for grading:

1 x wool & cardboard

1 x paint chips

OBJECTIVE

To learn how to do present the Sensorial materials & to practice the presentation

ACTIVITY

- Show presentation of matching homemade colour tablets
- Invite caregivers to practice matching with the various homemade colour tablets (made from wool & cardboard, paint chips, & bottle tops)
- Show presentation of grading colour with homemade colour tablets
- Invite caregivers to practice grading with the various homemade colour tablets (made from wool & cardboard, paint chips)

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 3

13:45 Maths Group Discussion

OBJECTIVE

To explore the caregivers personal experience of maths.

ACTIVITY

- Invite the caregivers to write down 5 words associated with their own experience of mathematics and to read them out.
- Discuss our experiences in mathematics. Ask if someone would like to share their maths experience or feelings about whether they enjoyed the area. Did this have anything to do with the teacher one had, or how maths was taught abstractly, on a blackboard?

SESSION 4

14:00 Mathematics

OBJECTIVE

To understand the child's mathematical mind, how to support this in an incidental way & Montessori maths activities for the home.

ACTIVITY

See PowerPoint presentation Day 11 Mathematics, inviting discussion & suggestions about how to go support incidental maths learning & Montessori maths for the home.

15:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 5

15:15 Presentations & practice Lego Number Rods

Additional materials needed:

- 2 x Lego Number Rods cards
- 2 x Spindle Tubes (with spindles/ice cream sticks)

OBJECTIVE

To learn how to do present the Lego Number Rods & cards and the Spindle Tubes and to practice the presentation.

ACTIVITY

Show presentation of Lego Number Rods & cards and Spindle Tubes

Invite Caregivers to practice the presentation of Lego Number Rods and Spindle Tubes

16:30**Reflections/Journalling/Gratitude**

- What stood out to you?
- What benefits would this have for you and children?
- How do you think you could implement this?
- Do you have any questions?

17:00**Closing**

DAY

12

MODULE 14

Home Environment

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00

Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30

The Home Environment

OBJECTIVE

To create a safe, stimulating, and supportive space that fosters the child's growth and development.

ACTIVITY

- Brief overview of home environment (The young child)
- *See PowerPoint presentation Day 12 Home Environment*
- *Pose question: What do you think this young child needs in the environment.*
- *Discuss and feedback*
 - Birth to 6 months
 - Cover 4 areas
- Questions and feedback

11:00 · TEA TIME

11:30

The Home Environment continued

- *Discuss and feedback*
 - 6 to 18 months
 - Cover 4 areas and materials
 - *Pose question: What materials can you think of for the 6 – 18 month old child?*
- *Discuss and feedback*
 - 18 months to 36 months
 - Cover 4 areas and materials
 - *Pose question: what materials can you think of for the 18 to 36 month old child?*
- Questions and feedback

13:00 · LUNCH

13:45 The Home Environment continued: The Older Child**OBJECTIVE**

To create a safe, stimulating, and supportive space that fosters their growth and development.

ACTIVITY

- Brief overview of home environment (The older child)
- Break into 5 groups and ask each group to come up with how room can be setup for the child 3 to 6 years. (Ideas)
- Discuss and feedback

15:00 · 15H15: AFTERNOON TEA

15:15

- Cover areas in the home by rooms
 - Entrance
 - Kitchen
 - Bathroom
 - Bedroom
 - Outdoor
- Divide into groups and come up with ideas on how to use items in each room for the child's stimulation
- Feed back to the group
- *Questions and feedback*

16:30 Gratitude, reflection and Journaling**17:00 Closing**

DAY

13

MODULE 15 PART 1 OF 2

Sleep & Toileting

DURATION · 4 HOURS

09:00

Morning Reflection

Notes & reflections

SESSION 1

09:30

Sleep

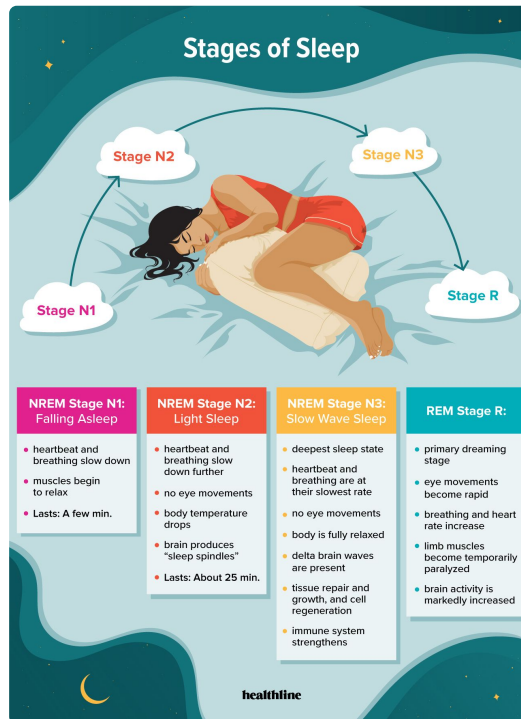
What is sleep?

- Ask participants for feedback.
- According to the Oxford Dictionary - Sleep refers to the natural state of rest where our eyes are closed, the body is not active, and the mind is not conscious.
- And the Collins dictionary – Sleep is a periodic state of physiological rest during which consciousness is suspended and metabolic rate is decreased

Why do we need sleep?

- Ask participants for feedback.
- Sleep plays a vital role in good health and well-being throughout your life. The way you feel while you are awake depends in part on what happens while you are sleeping. During sleep, your body is working to support healthy brain function and maintain your physical health.
- In babies & children, sleep also helps support growth and development. It can also affect how well they think, react, work, learn, and get along with others.

The stages of sleep



There are four stages:

Non-Rapid Eye Movement (NREM) Sleep:

(Stage 1): This is the lightest stage, characterized by drowsiness and a transition from wakefulness to sleep. Brain waves slow down, and the individual may experience brief awakenings. About 5% of adult sleeping time.

(Stage 2): Deep sleep, but still relatively light. Heart rate and breathing slow, body temperature drops, and muscle tension decreases. Brain waves continue to slow down. Sleep talking & teeth grinding are typical at this stage. Much more difficult to wake someone up during this stage of sleep. About 45% of adult sleeping time.

(Stage 3): Deepest sleep stage, characterized by slow, high-amplitude brain waves (delta waves). It's harder to wake someone in this stage, and they may feel disoriented for a short time if awakened. Complete loss of bodily awareness. Typically when sleep walking, night terrors & bed wetting occurs. Very difficult to wake someone from this stage, About 25% of adult sleep time.

2. Rapid Eye Movement (REM) Sleep:

REM (Stage 4): Brain activity becomes similar to wakefulness, with rapid eye movements, increased heart rate and breathing, and temporary paralysis of the muscles. (Active mind & paralyzed body). This is when most vivid dreaming occurs (usually lost to memory upon awakening). Facilitates memory processing – reinforcing long term memories.

Progression of sleep

- A typical sleep cycle begins with Stage 1, progresses through Stage 2 & 3, then into REM sleep.
- Once in REM, the cycle begins again, often returning to either Stage 2 or Stage 1, and repeating.
- A full night's sleep typically involves several cycles of this progression, with the amount of time spent in deep sleep and REM sleep varying throughout the night.

How much sleep do we need?

The amount of sleep needed is different for each individual, but typically speaking we can look at the ideal amount of sleep per day needed in terms of age.

- Newborns 14–17 hours
- 3-12 months 11-15 hours
- Toddler (just walking to 2 years) 12–15 hours
- 2-5 years 10-13 hours
- Primary – adolescent 9-11 hours
- Adolescent – adult 8-10 hours
- Adults ` 7-9 hours (no more than 10)
- Over 65 years less than 7-9 hours

Why do newborns need so much more sleep?

- Ask Participants what they think.
- Newborns need a lot of energy to facilitate the development needed at birth. They are born with very little voluntary motor development and or ability to speak. This all needs to be developed from within. This takes a great amount of energy and therefore a great amount of rest to recharge the baby.
- However, this does not mean that the newborn will sleep for long periods of time in one go. Their nervous system is still developing, meaning that they will require almost constant closeness to caregivers for assistance with self regulation. Their breast feeding is digested quickly and their stomachs are still tiny (only holding a small amount of food at a time). Therefore frequent feeding is necessary. This means that they will need to wake up frequently for feeding and consolation. But will also need many regular periods of sleep during the course of the day and night.
- As children grow older and their systems develop, they are able to sleep for longer periods at a time. They will still wake up to feed and move but these periods of rest in between will increase in length and become less frequent.

Independent sleeping

It is important to trust that a baby will naturally know how much sleep they need and when sleep is needed. Just the way we do with feeding. It is baby led or child led.

This is why we recommend the low bed for a baby and child. Once they are independently moving, it is easier for them to access their bed when they feel sleepy and they can get up on awaking.

Training babies to sleep for longer periods (particularly during the night) is not necessarily in the child's best interest.

Research suggests that babies rouse during their sleep for their own protection. When it comes to sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), one potentially risky stage of sleep for babies is deep sleep or "slow wave sleep". In this stage, babies can suddenly stop breathing. A healthy infant will rouse. But a baby with risk factors may not.

This research states that prematurely pushing a baby towards longer, deeper sleep, therefore, can increase SIDS risk.

Another example is putting a baby to sleep on their stomach, or "prone". While this does seem to help babies sleep more deeply, it also makes SIDS much more likely. Apparently, after campaigns around the world told parents to put babies to sleep on their backs, SIDS rates plummeted.

Trust your baby's natural rhythms and let their sleep develop naturally.

Understand how your child's motor/emotional/cognitive development might affect their sleep

- Learning a new skill, like crawling or walking, can excite babies enough to wake more at night.
- An infant may have started to develop object permanence and realise that family members continue to exist when they leave the room, so call for them rather than fall asleep
- Changes in sleep can also sometimes reflect medical issues, such as reflux.
- Always observe your child throughout the day in order gain a deeper understanding of their sleep schedules.

How to help a child to fall asleep.

- Set up reference points. Create area for sleep, including a low bed.
- Create a sleep routine.
- Encourage falling asleep independently but give support where needed.
- ALWAYS be responsive to a baby or child who asks/cries for assistance at any time during the sleep cycle.
- How we respond tells the child a lot about how the world works and what it means to be human.
- If the child needs some assistance with going to sleep, sit quietly next to the child and pat their back or if lying on their back pat their side or leg.
- Other suggestions would be to be in the room with the child/baby and do chores like folding washing. That way the child feels your presence but does not need direct contact with you in order to fall asleep
- Ask participants for other suggestions.

11:00 · TEA BREAK

11:30 Toileting Independence

- Objective: To understand the caregivers's role in supporting the development of toileting independence
- Discussion: toileting and achieving independence in toileting is a completely natural process. The child has to attain a certain amount of physical maturity (myelination) and a certain amount of psychological maturity in order to successfully achieve independence.

Our role is not to teach, reward or punish the child in this path to development. Our role is to facilitate this natural development by understanding the process, setting up the environment, observe the child and plan accordingly, and most importantly to have a positive attitude towards the process.

- Discussion around the language or terminology we use covering: The correct terminology is key here....this is a positive, natural progression for the child and our language should reflect that. We use the following terminology when speaking about gaining independence in his area:
- Toileting
- Toilet Learning
- Toileting independence
- Toileting awareness

This is a natural process that needs to unfold. The child is learning to take control of a physical process. We are simply following and facilitating their natural process.

Please don't use:

- Toilet training
- Potty training
- Accidents
- Discussion - Understanding "control". In the early years a child is able to control 3 main areas of their life:
- Sleeping, eating, toileting
- In order to facilitate the child's ability to gain healthy, natural independence in these areas we must ensure the following:

Respect for the child

Trust the child's natural development and natural endowments

Refine our observation skills

Create an open, collaborative & trusting relationship with the child

Create an inviting toileting space.

- Further discussion around:
- Experience in the environment
- Stages of awareness
- Preparing the environment
- Adult attitudes/rolemodelling
- Obstacles to independence
- Toileting outside of the home
- Support changes once independence is achieved.

Recommended Reading: "Toilet Awareness" Sarah Moudry

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

DAY

13

MODULE 16 PART 2 OF 2

Professionalism

DURATION · 4 HOURS

SESSION 1

13:45

Professionalism for Montessori Caregivers

OBJECTIVE

Creating an understanding of the level of professionalism that this role requires. Being professional in your role as a Montessori Caregiver extends beyond understanding child development and the Montessori way. It includes important aspects like confidentiality, punctuality, communication, and reliability.

ACTIVITIES

- *Interactive discussion. Break into 3 small groups to discuss each of the following 10 topics related to Professionalism. Facilitator leads these discussions by allowing 20 minutes for each point. Take an hour to discuss fully. Give each group a piece of flip chart paper to record their feedback and make a poster about Professionalism. Each small group to select a group member to give feedback to the whole group after tea.*

1. Confidentiality

- Respect Privacy
- Share Information Appropriately
- Secure Communication
- Respect Boundaries

2. Punctuality and Time Management

- Arrive on Time
- Plan for Delays
- Time Management During Shifts

3. Clear and Professional Communication

- Be Transparent
- Be Respectful and Polite
- Keep a Log/Journal
- Mutually agree on communication channels
- Ensure emergency procedures are clear
- A humble approach to communication

4. Accountability and Responsibility

- Take Ownership of Your Role

- Prepare for the Day Ahead

5. Appropriate Boundaries

- Professional Boundaries with the Family
- Work-Life Balance

6. Respect for the Family's Parenting Style

- Align with Their Values
- Consistency is Key

7. Professional Appearance and Attitude

- Dress Appropriately
- Have a Positive, Can-Do Attitude

8. Reliability and Flexibility

- Be Reliable
- Adapt to Change

9. Professional Development

- Continuous Learning
- Seek Feedback

10. Documentation and Organization

- Keep Clear Records
- Professional Contracts and Agreements

11h00: Mid Morning Tea Break

SESSION 2

15:00 · TEA

15:15 Professionalism for Montessori Caregivers (continued)

ACTIVITIES

Feedback Session. Spokesperson from each small group gives feedback based on their group's discussions, using the poster that they collectively made. The rest of the group can back the spokesperson up if anything is not covered. Facilitator acknowledges and elaborates on their feedback. Facilitator sums up discussion and ensures to include any points that were not mentioned.

Wrap up: By incorporating these professional habits, you will strengthen your role as a trusted Montessori Caregiver and ensure a positive, harmonious working relationship with both the children and the families you serve.

16:30 Reflections and Gratitude

17:00 Closing

DAY

14

MODULE 17 PART 1 OF 2

Confidentiality & Trust

DURATION · 4 HOURS

09:00

Stillness & Recap

SESSION 1

09:30

Understanding Confidentiality and Trust

OBJECTIVE

To help caregivers understand the importance of confidentiality and trust in maintaining a professional and respectful relationship with parents.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Defining Confidentiality** – Explain what information should remain private, such as family matters, child behaviour, and household routines.
2. **Building Trust Through Professionalism** – Discuss how consistency, honesty, and discretion create a strong, trusting relationship between caregiver and employer.
3. **Handling Sensitive Information** – Teach caregivers how to respond if they witness personal family issues, emphasising the importance of not sharing details with others.
4. **Respecting Boundaries** – Encourage caregivers to ask parents for clarification when unsure about what information can be shared, reinforcing open and honest communication.

SESSION 2

10:00

Photos & Videos

OBJECTIVE

To ensure caregivers understand the legal, ethical, and professional responsibilities related to capturing and sharing videos of children under their care.

1. Legal Considerations

- **Parental Consent is Mandatory:**

You **must have explicit, written permission** from the parents or legal guardians before taking any photos or videos of their children. This applies even if the images are meant for personal memories.

- **Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA):**

South Africa's **POPIA** regulates how personal information, including photos and videos, is collected, stored, and shared. Photos of children are considered **sensitive personal information**. Sharing them without consent can be a violation of the law, leading to fines or legal action.

- **No Sharing on Social Media Without Permission:**

Posting pictures or videos on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp without **clear, written consent** is illegal and could breach both **POPIA** and the **Children's Act**.

2. Ethical and Professional Boundaries

- **Respect for Privacy:**

Even if the parents give permission, be mindful of sharing content that may compromise the child's dignity or safety. Avoid photos in vulnerable settings (e.g., during bath time or in minimal clothing).

- **Employer Policies:**

Some families may have strict household rules regarding photography. Always discuss this during the hiring process or contract negotiation. **When in doubt, don't take photos.**

- **Sharing with Third Parties:**

Never share photos with friends, other family members, or third parties (including other parents or caregivers) unless explicitly authorized.

3. Practical Best Practices

- **Clarify Intentions:**

If you want to take photos for keepsakes, updates for the parents, or to document milestones (like a first step), **ask for permission in advance** and clarify how the photos will be used.

- **Secure Storage:**

If you have permission to take photos, ensure they are stored securely—preferably on a password-protected device. Do not upload them to cloud services unless permitted.

- **End-of-Employment Protocol:**

Upon leaving the job, **delete all photos and videos** from your devices unless the parents request otherwise.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

- **Legal Action:**

Unauthorized sharing can result in **legal action** under POPIA and potential criminal charges, especially if the child's safety is compromised.

- **Loss of Employment:**

Breaching trust in this way can lead to immediate termination and damage to your professional reputation.

When You Can Take Photos Without Parental Consent:

The only exception would be in **emergency or legal situations**, such as documenting injuries for legal or medical purposes. Even then, the images should be shared **only with appropriate authorities** (e.g., doctors, social workers, or police).

Bottom Line: Always seek **explicit, written permission** and err on the side of caution. Respect for the family's privacy and the child's dignity should always come first.

Make time for Q&A.

10:30

Misconduct and/or abuse of children: how to report it

OBJECTIVE

To ensure caregivers understand the legal, ethical, and professional responsibilities related to capturing and sharing videos of children under their care.

ACTIVITIES

If you suspect or witness child abuse while working as a caregiver in South Africa, it's crucial to act responsibly and in accordance with the law to protect the child. South African law places a legal obligation on certain individuals, including people working closely with children, to report suspected abuse.

Legal Responsibilities Under South African Law:**1. Mandatory Reporting:**

Under **Section 110 of the Children's Act 38 of 2005**, any person who works with or cares for children—including caregivers, teachers, doctors, and social workers—is *legally obligated* to report any reasonable suspicion of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation. Failing to report can result in legal consequences.

2. What Constitutes Abuse:

Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual, or involve neglect. Even witnessing signs like frequent unexplained injuries, extreme fearfulness, withdrawal, or lack of basic care (food, hygiene, supervision) can constitute reasonable suspicion.

Steps to Take:**1. Ensure Immediate Safety:**

If the child is in **immediate danger**, call **10111** (South African Police Service) or your local emergency number right away.

2. Document Your Observations:

- Write down specific details: dates, times, and descriptions of what you saw or heard.
- Avoid making assumptions—focus on observable facts.

3. Report to Authorities:

- **Department of Social Development (DSD):**

Contact your local DSD office. They are responsible for child protection services.

- **Child Protection Organizations:**

- **Childline South Africa:** Call **116** (free from any phone) or visit their website.
- **SAP Child Protection Units:** Available via **10111**.

- **South African Police Service (SAPS):**

If you're unsure whom to contact, the police can direct you to the correct channels.

4. Remain Confidential:

Your report will be handled confidentially. You are protected from any legal repercussions when reporting in good faith.

What Not to Do:

- **Do not confront the parents directly**, as this might escalate the situation and place you or the child in greater danger.
- **Do not delay** reporting, even if you are unsure. Authorities are trained to investigate further.
- **Do not ignore** the situation due to fear of losing your job; the child's safety is the top priority, and the law protects those who report abuse.

Support for You:

Witnessing abuse can be traumatic. You may want to seek support for yourself after reporting:

- **Childline South Africa (116)** offers counseling for concerned adults.
- Speak to a trusted friend, family member, or counselor to process your emotions.

Q&A

11:00 · TEA BREAK

DAY

14

MODULE 18 PART 2 OF 2

Conversations with Parents

DURATION · 4 HOURS

SESSION 1

11:30 Preparing for an Interview**OBJECTIVE**

To equip prospective caregivers with the skills and confidence to successfully navigate an interview with potential employers, ensuring professionalism, effective communication, and a strong understanding of family expectations.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Role Plays** – Participants will engage in mock interviews, taking turns as both the interviewer and interviewee to practice responses and build confidence.
2. **Questions & Answers Practice** – Discuss common interview questions and develop thoughtful, personalised responses.
3. **Dress Appropriately** – Guide participants on appropriate interview attire to create a professional first impression.
4. **Punctuality Matters** – Emphasise the importance of arriving on time and strategies for ensuring promptness.
5. **Professionalism & Etiquette** – Reinforce the importance of being polite, respectful, and demonstrating good manners during the interview.
6. **Interacting with Children** – Encourage participants to engage with children appropriately during interviews, demonstrating warmth, patience, and attentiveness.
7. **Asking Questions** – Teach participants to ask relevant questions that show initiative and understanding of the family's needs. Examples include:
 - What values are important to you that you would like the caregiver to reinforce?
 - Are there any religious practices you would like to be observed?
 - What is your approach to discipline?
 - What are your expectations for behavior?
 - What is a typical daily schedule for the children?
 - What time do they usually wake up, eat meals, and go to bed?
 - How do you handle bedtime routines?

13:00 · LUNCH

SESSION 2

13:45 How to have conversations with parents on expectations**OBJECTIVE**

To equip caregivers with the skills to have clear, professional, and proactive conversations with parents about their role, responsibilities, safety protocols, and discipline approaches to ensure alignment and a positive working relationship.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Setting Clear Expectations** – Teach caregivers how to initiate a conversation with parents about their overall role and daily responsibilities. Key topics to discuss include:
 - Daily tasks (childcare, meal prep, light housekeeping, etc.)
 - Scheduling and routines
 - Boundaries around personal vs. professional responsibilities
2. **Tips for preparation**
 - Prepare your points beforehand (write down a list)
 - Choose the right time and setting – try to have a child-free environment if possible
 - Use factual information
 - Focus on solutions
3. **Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities** – Guide caregivers in asking clarifying questions to avoid misunderstandings. Example questions:
 - What specific duties do you expect me to handle beyond childcare?
 - Are there any household tasks you would like me to assist with?
 - What activities do you encourage for your child (outdoor play, reading, structured learning, etc.)?
4. **Discussing Safety and Emergencies** – Train caregivers on how to bring up safety expectations and emergency procedures, including:
 - Asking for a list of emergency contacts
 - Understanding medical needs/allergies
 - Establishing protocols for accidents, illnesses, or unexpected situations
 - Knowing when and how to contact parents in case of emergency
5. **Understanding Discipline Preferences** – Help caregivers navigate conversations about discipline to align with the parents' approach. Include a discussion on Montessori principles of discipline. Encourage questions like:
 - How do you typically handle tantrums or misbehavior?
 - Do you have any specific rules or consequences you use?
 - What strategies work best for comforting or redirecting your child?
 - Are there any disciplinary methods you do not want to be used?

SESSION 3

14:30 Responding to Emergencies as a Caregiver**OBJECTIVE**

To equip caregivers with the knowledge and confidence to respond effectively in emergency situations, ensuring the safety of the child and maintaining clear communication with parents and emergency services.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Understanding Emergency Procedures** – Teach caregivers how to assess an emergency situation and take immediate action. Discuss key steps, including:
 - Staying calm and assessing the situation quickly
 - Determining the level of emergency and appropriate response
2. **Contacting Emergency Services and Parents** – Role-play different scenarios where caregivers must call for help. Reinforce the importance of:
 - Calling the appropriate emergency agency (ambulance, fire, police)
 - Contacting the parents immediately
 - Knowing who to call next if the parents are unavailable (e.g., relatives, emergency contacts)
3. **Ensuring Child Safety** – Train caregivers on how to protect the children during an emergency, including:
 - Staying with the affected child at all times
 - Securing other children in a safe space away from danger
4. **Observing and Reporting** – Discuss the importance of noting key details in an emergency situation, such as:
 - Any environmental hazards or triggers (e.g., sharp objects, allergies, unsafe play areas)
 - The child's condition and any changes before help arrives
5. **Maintaining Communication** – Emphasize the need for ongoing contact and reassurance, such as:
 - Keeping in touch with parents and emergency responders
 - Providing updates on the child's condition and actions taken
6. **Being Present Until Excused** – Ensure caregivers understand the importance of staying until the parents arrive and formally excuse them.

15:00 · LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 4

15:15 Observation and Feedback**OBJECTIVE**

To equip caregivers with the skills to provide clear, constructive, and empathetic feedback to parents about a child's well-being, behaviour, and development, fostering open communication and trust.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Establishing a Feedback Routine** – Discuss how often feedback should be shared and the different formats:
 - **Quick Check-Ins:** Brief updates during drop-off or pick-up for immediate concerns or positive moments.
 - **Scheduled Meetings:** Longer discussions for more in-depth observations, concerns, and developmental progress.
2. **Providing Factual Information** – Train caregivers to give feedback based on observations rather than assumptions. Encourage them to:
 - Note specific behaviors and patterns
 - Avoid exaggeration or subjective opinions
3. **Using Empathy in Feedback** – Guide caregivers in delivering feedback with sensitivity by:
 - Acknowledging parents' perspectives and feelings
 - Framing observations in a supportive, understanding way
4. **Addressing Concerns Thoughtfully** – Teach caregivers how to share concerns without causing alarm, including:
 - Stating concerns factually
 - Offering reassurance and focusing on solutions
5. **Being Non-Judgmental** – Emphasise the importance of avoiding criticism or blame by:
 - Keeping an open mind
 - Using neutral language
6. **Preparing Potential Solutions** – Encourage proactive problem-solving by:
 - Suggesting strategies or adjustments
 - Collaborating with parents to find the best approach
7. **Using a Monthly Report Template** – Provide a structured way to document observations, including:
 - Developmental milestones
 - Behavioral patterns
 - Any concerns and suggested actions

SESSION 5

16:00

Discussing Personal Issues with your Employer**OBJECTIVE**

To equip caregivers with the skills to discuss personal challenges and uncomfortable family dynamics with their employers in a professional, respectful, and solution-oriented manner.

ACTIVITIES

1. **Knowing When to Speak Up** – Help caregivers identify situations that may require a conversation with their employer, including:
 - Personal issues affecting work performance
 - Uncomfortable or challenging family dynamics
 - Workplace conditions that impact well-being or job satisfaction

2. **Approaching the Conversation Professionally** – Train caregivers on how to initiate a respectful and constructive discussion:
 - Choose an appropriate time (not during busy or stressful moments)
 - Request a private meeting rather than bringing up concerns spontaneously
 - Keep the conversation focused and professional
3. **Expressing Concerns Clearly and Respectfully** – Teach caregivers how to communicate their needs without being confrontational:
 - Use "I" statements (e.g., "I feel uncomfortable when...")
 - Be factual and avoid making assumptions
 - Offer context but keep the discussion concise
4. **Discussing Uncomfortable Environmental Factors** – Guide caregivers on how to address sensitive family dynamics, such as:
 - Household tension or conflict affecting work
 - Excessive workload beyond agreed responsibilities
 - Unclear boundaries between personal and professional expectations
5. **Being Solution-Oriented** – Encourage caregivers to:
 - Suggest possible adjustments or compromises
 - Ask for employer input on resolving the issue together
 - Be open to feedback and finding a middle ground
6. **Maintaining Professionalism and Confidentiality** – Reinforce the importance of:
 - Keeping emotions in check during discussions
 - Respecting the family's privacy while advocating for themselves
 - Knowing when to seek external support if issues persist

16:30 Reflection/Gratitude/Journalling

17:00 Closing

DAY

15

MODULE 19

Time Management

DURATION · 8 HOURS

09:00

Reflection

SESSION 1

09:30

Introduction and Overview to Time Management

OBJECTIVE

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of timekeeping

ACTIVITY

Discuss the following.....

What is time management?

Ask the Caregivers what this means to them, with the following suggestions in mind...

Time management allows the Caregiver to create a structured yet flexible environment & routine, based on an understanding of the expectations to ensure that the child's needs are met, the parents' goals are respected, and the Montessori philosophy is upheld.

Why is time management important?

Understanding time management expectations is important for the following reasons:

1. Aligns with Montessori Philosophy

Montessori caregiving is not just about watching the child—it's about guiding them toward independence, self-discipline, and a love for learning. By understanding expectations, a caregiver can:

Create an uninterrupted work cycle for deep concentration.

Encourage freedom within limits (not too strict, not too lenient).

Foster respect for the child's autonomy in everyday tasks.

2. Supports the Child's Development

Every child has unique needs, routines, and abilities. Knowing what is expected:

Helps the caregiver observe and adapt to the child's natural learning pace.

Ensures a balance of practical life, sensory, and outdoor activities.

Creates a predictable yet flexible schedule that nurtures emotional security.

Identifying and focusing on the most important tasks and goals

3. Strengthens Communication with Parents

Clear expectations prevent misunderstandings and ensure the caregiver's approach aligns with the family's values. Understanding expectations means:

Following the parents' rules for screen time, meals, nap times etc.

Being consistent in routine, so the child doesn't get mixed messages.

4. Improves Time Management & Organisation

Knowing what is expected helps a caregiver structure the day efficiently. It allows for:

A well-prepared environment with Montessori materials ready for use.

Seamless transitions between meals, play, and work periods.

A balance between child-led learning and necessary adult guidance.

5. Creates a Trusting Relationship

Children thrive on consistency and trust. When a caregiver understands expectations:

The child feels safe and knows what to expect each day.

There's less conflict over transitions, discipline, and activities.

The caregiver can model respect, patience, and gentle guidance.

Things that will help with time management

- *Have a clear understanding of what the working hours will be.*
- *Ask if there will be an allocation for specific breaks.*
- *Have a clear idea of being able to discern between the child wanting attention (during a break) and needing attention (has hurt themselves)*
- *Discuss a good time to take breaks, perhaps at a natural time in the child's day, like rest time/sleep time or during an extramural/ when a parent is home.*
- *Discuss if there is an expectation that you will work late if a parent is running late.*
- *Discuss if there is a last-minute request to stay for the evening, perhaps due to a last-minute evening function.*
- *Babysitting after hours - will this be expected? If planned...*
- *Factoring in enough time to leave to go out/to extra murals*

- *Discuss the parent's view on the balance between child-lead work & necessary adult guidance, ascertaining the balance. This should be based on the needs of the child, parents, and the Montessori philosophy—ensuring a smooth, supportive, and effective caregiving experience.*

- Discuss balancing the child's needs and the needs of the home/parents (chores that need to be done, like laundry/dishes/cooking etc). Ascertain the parents' priorities on this.
- Incorporating breaks and self-care to prevent burnout.

SESSION 2

10:15

Potential stressors and Self-regulation

OBJECTIVE

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of potential stressors and self-regulation

ACTIVITY

Discuss the following by breaking into groups and identifying potential stressors in each of these categories.

Potential stressors for the Caregiver?

Emotional & Mental Stressors

- Managing Big Emotions in Children.
- High Expectations from Parents
- Feeling Undervalued
- Guilt Over Screen Time or Non-Montessori activities
- Isolation

Physical Stressors

- Constant Movement – Montessori caregiving requires a lot of physical activity (bending, lifting, setting up materials, outdoor play).
- Lack of Personal Breaks – With no nap time and a full day of supervision, it can be hard to find moments to rest.
- Sensory Overload – Noise, mess, and managing multiple tasks at once can be overwhelming.

Professional Stressors

- Clear Boundaries with Parents
- Explaining Montessori Methods
- Lack of Montessori Materials

Potential stressors for the child

A Montessori caregiver who understands a child's stressors can adapt their caregiving style to provide emotional security, encourage independence, and promote a peaceful learning environment. This approach aligns with Montessori principles of respect, observation, and individualised support, ensuring the child thrives both emotionally and developmentally.

Here's how this understanding benefits both the child and the caregiver:

- *Supports Emotional Regulation*
- *Encourages Independence Without Overwhelm*
- *Prevents and Manages Behavioral Challenges*
- *Creates a Calm & Supportive Environment*
- *Strengthens Connection & Trust*
- *Supports Development & Learning*

Effective regulation methods for Caregiver (and child):

Physical Regulation

- Breathing Techniques – Try box breathing (inhale for 4, hold for 4, exhale for 4, hold for 4) to quickly reset in stressful moments.
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation – If you feel tension building, take a moment to consciously relax different muscle groups.
- Movement Breaks – Even small movements like stretching, walking in place, or rolling your shoulders can help release tension.

Emotional Regulation

- Pause Before Reacting – Before responding to a frustrating moment, take a deep breath and remind yourself of the child's developmental stage.
- Reframe Challenges – Instead of "This child is being difficult," try "This child is struggling with self-regulation, and I can guide them."
- Gratitude Practice – Reflect on positive moments in your day, even small ones, to shift your mindset.

Sensory Regulation

- Calming Scents – Essential oils like lavender or chamomile can help create a peaceful atmosphere.
- Soft Music – Playing gentle background sounds can help regulate emotions and maintain a Montessori-style calm environment.
- Singing songs, reading or telling stories - can help to regulate big emotions and diffuse situations
- Tactile Grounding – Holding a smooth stone, playing with a piece of fabric, or pressing your hands together can help you refocus.

Mental Regulation

- Mindful Mantras – Simple reminders like "I am calm, I am capable" or "This moment will pass" can help during challenging times.
- Journaling – Reflecting on difficult moments can help you process emotions and find solutions for the future.

- Set Realistic Expectations – Remember that Montessori values independence, but young children will still struggle and need guidance.
- Quick 3 minute mini meditation in a quiet spot to just release jumbled thoughts or feeling of being overwhelmed, creates a sense of calm again

Social & Environmental Regulation

- Take Mini Breaks – If possible, step away for a few minutes when feeling overwhelmed. Even just focusing on a different task can help reset.
- Stay Hydrated & Nourished – Hunger and dehydration can worsen stress, so keep snacks and water nearby.
- Seek Support – Whether from fellow caregivers, Montessori educators, or parents, talking about challenges can help you feel less alone.

11:00 · TEA BREAK

SESSION 3

11:30 **Prioritising**

OBJECTIVE

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of prioritising.

ACTIVITY

Discuss the following.

The ability to prioritise in the moment

When plans change, how does one respond and re-evaluate what is important/takes priority?

Why it is important to prioritise:

It ensures that you can respond effectively to the child's needs while maintaining a balanced, peaceful, and productive environment. Here's why this skill is so important:

- *Responding to the Child's Needs in Real Time*
- *Balancing Structure & Flexibility*
- *Maintaining a Calm & Orderly Environment*
- *Managing Multiple Responsibilities*

How to balance priorities:

Balancing the parents' expectations & priorities, the child's needs, and your own well-being as a Montessori caregiver requires clear communication, flexibility, and boundaries. Here's how you can harmonise all three while maintaining a smooth routine:

• Understanding & Aligning Priorities

Parents' Priorities – They may focus on structure, discipline, education, or specific routines (e.g., bedtime at 8:00 PM, meal choices).

Child's Needs – Children thrive on predictability but also need flexibility to explore, learn, and regulate their emotions.

Your Needs – You need breaks, realistic expectations, and boundaries to stay energized and effective.

• Structuring the Routine with Flexibility

The key is finding a middle ground between a structured schedule (for predictability) and child-led exploration (for independence).

How to Balance:

Keep a basic structure (mealtimes, sleep, outdoor play) but allow flexibility within it.

Use transition cues to help the child move between activities smoothly.

Respect the child's pace—if they are deeply engaged in an activity, allow extra time rather than forcing a transition.

• Communicating with Parents Openly & Regularly

Parents may not see the daily challenges you face, so regular updates help keep everyone on the same page.

They also need reassurance that Montessori methods support their child's growth.

How to Balance:

Offer brief daily or weekly updates on what worked well and any concerns.

Ask for feedback: "Is there anything you'd like me to adjust in the routine?"

If something isn't working (e.g., meal struggles, bedtime resistance), suggest gentle tweaks rather than rigid changes.

How to discuss priorities with parents:

When discussing parents' priorities, a Montessori caregiver should approach the conversation with clarity, respect, and collaboration to ensure alignment in caregiving. Here are some key pointers to guide the discussion:

- *Prepare Beforehand*
- *Ask Open-Ended Questions*
- *Clarify Expectations on Key Topics*

Make sure you discuss:

- Daily Routine & Flexibility – Bedtime (e.g., 8 PM), meal choices, screen time, outdoor play.
- Discipline & Boundaries – How they prefer you to handle emotional outbursts, conflicts, or challenging behaviors.
- Independence & Learning Goals – Do they want a strong focus on Montessori activities, or are they flexible?
- Household Responsibilities – Are there expectations beyond childcare (e.g., light cleaning, meal prep)?
- *Respect Their Parenting Style While Educating on Montessori*
- *Find Common Ground*
- *Set Up Ongoing Communication*

SESSION 4

12:00 Taking breaks

OBJECTIVE

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of taking breaks

ACTIVITY

Have a group discussion on how to take the most restful and effective breaks. Note down the caregivers' responses.

Advice on taking breaks

Taking breaks during the day is essential for a Montessori caregiver to maintain patience, energy, and emotional balance. For a child who doesn't nap, it's even more important to find creative ways to recharge while staying engaged. Here are some practical strategies:

- *Incorporate Breaks into the Child's Routine*
- *Use Practical Life Activities as a Break Opportunity*
- *Mindful Micro-Breaks*

Deep Breathing – Take 3 slow, deep breaths when you feel overwhelmed.

Stretching – Do small shoulder rolls or neck stretches while watching the child play.

Hydration & Snack Check – Low energy can come from dehydration or hunger—have water and small snacks throughout the day.

- *Alternate Active & Passive Activities*

If you've had an energetic activity (running, jumping), transition into something calmer (reading, puzzles) to allow a natural reset for both of you.

Rotate between high-energy involvement (like dancing) and more observational roles (like storytelling while seated).

- *Communicate with Parents About Breaks*
- *Practice Self-Compassion*

SESSION 5

12:30 Routines

OBJECTIVE

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of routines

ACTIVITY

Discuss the following.

Routines, how to set up a rhythm for the day

What is your understanding of a routine?

A routine is following the same order each day, where possible. So that the child and adult can predict what comes next.

Key Principles for a Montessori Routine:

Predictable, but Flexible – A structured flow helps the child feel secure, but you can adjust based on their needs.

Child-Led Learning – Include time for independent work and exploration.

Balance of Activities – Rotate between physical, creative, and quiet activities.

Encourage Independence – Incorporate practical life tasks (e.g., dressing, meal prep, cleaning up).

Align the routine with the parents' expectations – having already discussed them.

Keep record and clear communication (Observation)

Consider the following when making a routine for the child:

- *Child's Age: How old is the child/children you care for?*
- *Wake-up & Bedtime: What time do they usually wake up and go to sleep?*
- *Nap Time (if applicable): Do they take naps? If so, when and how long?*
- *Meals & Snacks: What time do they eat?*
- *Preferred Activities: Any specific Montessori activities or interests (e.g., practical life, sensory play, art, nature walks)?*
- *Outdoor Time: How much time do they spend outside, and do you have a garden/park nearby?*
- *Activities that must be attended: (eg; library visits, OT appointments, extra murals).*
- *Any Special Needs or Considerations? (e.g., transition difficulties, sensory sensitivities, extra-curriculars).*

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

SESSION 7

13:45 Multi-tasking

OBJECTIVE

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of multi-tasking

ACTIVITY

Discuss the following.

Montessori caregiving requires being present, fostering independence, and managing multiple responsibilities at once. While traditional multitasking can feel chaotic, a Montessori caregiver can balance tasks mindfully by using strategic planning, child-led independence, and efficient routines.

Tools for multi-tasking

- *Prioritise Tasks & Plan Ahead*
- *Encourage Independent Play & Practical Life Skills*
- *Combine Tasks Thoughtfully*
- *Use Smooth Transitions to Avoid Chaos*
- *Set Up the Environment for Success*
- *Take Breaks & Avoid Burnout*
- *Final Takeaway: Smart multitasking in Montessori caregiving isn't about doing everything at once—it's about blending tasks naturally, fostering independence, and keeping the flow peaceful.*

SESSION 8

14:15 Flexibility with working hours

OBJECTIVE

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of flexibility in working hours

ACTIVITY

Discuss the following.

How to show flexibility around working hours

Flexibility is a key trait for a Montessori caregiver, as families may have changing needs due to work schedules, travel, or unexpected events. However, balance is important to ensure flexibility doesn't lead to burnout. Here's how you can be adaptable while maintaining clear boundaries:

Communicate Openly with Parents around flexibility

Discuss flexibility expectations upfront – Some families may need occasional extra hours, while others prefer a fixed schedule.

Ask about priority times – Find out which parts of the day are most important for your presence.

Set a system for last-minute changes – Clarify how much notice is needed for early starts, late finishes, or schedule shifts.

Q&A

15:00

Break

SESSION 9

15:15

Communicating sickness, lateness**OBJECTIVE**

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of the importance of communicating sickness, lateness

ACTIVITY

Failing to plan is planning to fail. Planning is NB!!

Plan for traffic in getting to work/ going out etc. It is therefore important to communicate needs clearly and in a timely manner.

Effective communication between a Montessori caregiver and the employing family is essential, especially regarding matters like sickness and lateness. Clear guidelines and mutual understanding help maintain trust and ensure the well-being of the children. Here are some recommendations:

Establish Clear Policies

- Sick Leave: Define the number of paid and unpaid sick days annually
- Notification Procedures: Specify how and when the caregiver should inform the family about absences or delays.

Plan for Contingencies:

- Backup Care: Families should have alternative childcare options in place for unexpected absences.
- Buffer Times: Consider building a small buffer into the schedule to accommodate occasional delays. For example, if the caregiver is expected at 8:30 a.m., suggesting an arrival by 8:20 a.m. can help prevent scheduling conflicts.

Regular Check-Ins:

- Feedback Sessions: Schedule periodic meetings to discuss any concerns, review schedules, and adjust expectations as needed.

Document Agreements:

- Written Contracts: Clearly outline policies regarding sick leave, punctuality, and communication protocols in a written agreement. This ensures both parties have a mutual understanding and reference point.

SESSION 10

15:45

Overtime**OBJECTIVE**

To assist caregivers in gaining a deeper understanding of overtime

ACTIVITY

As a caregiver in South Africa, it's essential to understand the regulations and best practices concerning overtime to ensure a harmonious and lawful working relationship with your employing family. Here's what you need to know:

• *Understanding Overtime Regulations:*

Standard Working Hours: You are permitted to work up to 45 hours per week, with a maximum of 9 hours per day if working a five-day week, or 8 hours per day if working a six-day week.

Overtime Limits: Overtime is voluntary and should not exceed 15 hours per week. Additionally, you should not work more than 12 hours in a single day, including overtime.

Overtime Compensation: Overtime hours are compensated at 1.5 times your regular hourly wage. For work on Sundays or public holidays, the rate is double the normal wage.

• *Best Practices for Managing Overtime:*

Clear Communication: Discuss and agree upon your working hours and potential overtime with your employer in advance. Ensure that any overtime is mutually agreed upon and documented.

Maintain Records: Keep a detailed log of your working hours, including any overtime. This practice helps in tracking your time and ensures accurate compensation.

Know Your Rights: Familiarize yourself with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) and any sectoral determinations relevant to domestic workers. This knowledge empowers you to advocate for fair treatment and compensation.

Open Dialogue: If you find yourself consistently working beyond agreed hours, initiate a conversation with your employer to address scheduling and workload concerns.

By adhering to these guidelines, you can ensure that your working conditions are fair, legal, and conducive to providing the best care in line with Montessori principles.

16:30 **Journaling, reflection & gratitude**

17:00 **Closing**

DAY

16

MODULE 20

Nutrition and Meal Preparation

DURATION · 16 HOURS

09:00 Stillness & Recap

09:30 Introduction and Overview

OBJECTIVE

To bring awareness to nutrition and meal preparation with and without the child's involvement.

ACTIVITIES

- Icebreaker – Food group sorting quiz
- Introduction: What we are going to discuss regarding nutrition, meal preparation and how to prepare healthy menus and what activities we can involve the child in.
- Lecture: The importance of role modeling healthy eating habits, good hydration and table manners/etiquette taking into consideration that this looks different for different cultures

What does a growing child need?

- A growing child needs a well-balanced diet with the correct amount of nutrients to support physical growth, brain development, immune development and overall health.
- Understanding how good nutritional health affects the child's sleep

Notes & reflections

09:45 Breastfeeding

Ask participants why they think breastfeeding is best for a young baby.

Discuss:

- Good for bonding and sucking which has benefits to mom and baby
- Boosts baby's immunity – milk contains quality anti bodies keeping baby free of infections and allergies
- High in proteins- needed for brain development
- Growth hormone concentrated
- 50% unsaturated fat – needed for brain growth & myelination.
- The perfect balance of minerals and many more vitamins than in cows milk
- Better for digestion

10:00

Weaning

OBJECTIVE

To understand the weaning process and the baby's natural development and how best to support it.

ACTIVITIES

- Discuss when to introduce seasonal, natural fruit juice and how to introduce it.
- Discuss what to offer at the end of the fourth month (1 or 2 tsp of egg yolk or boiled white fish). Offering a piece of bread at this stage too (& how to offer it).

Sensitive period for weaning

First formal meal and how to present it. What this meal means to baby (and Mom/ caregiver).

Slow increment of solid meals. What baby can eat from 7 or 8 months.

When to give up offering breastmilk?

Notes & reflections

11:00 · TEA BREAK

Notes & reflections

11:30

Understanding components of food

OBJECTIVE

To broaden the understanding of the components of food, why each component is important and in what ration to serve.

ACTIVITIES

- Small group activity: Participants break into small groups (maximum 3 per group) and discuss what they think the main components of food are.
- Group activity: Whole group feedback on above small group discussion.
- Lecture: The components of food (carbohydrates (complex and simple); proteins; fats; vitamins; minerals and water.

- Planetary plate (provide printed picture to participant) explain and show proportion of different food groups)



Examples of what a well-balanced diet looks like for a growing child:

- Carbohydrates- good source of energy, complex carbohydrates are healthier than fast burning carbohydrates
- Protein – for growth and repair. Helps build muscles, bones, brain development and a strong immune system.
- Healthy fats: essential for brain development, hormone production, healthy skin and cell growth.
- Calcium and Vitamin D – builds strong bones and teeth, calcium helps the body to absorb vitamin D needed as a natural immunity booster.
- Iron – Prevents anaemia, boosts energy levels, supports brain development and concentration.
- Fiber: Prevents constipation and promotes healthy gut digestion. Helps regulate blood sugar.

Vitamins and minerals

- **Vitamin A** – Good for vision and immune health (carrots, sweet potatoes, eggs)
- **Vitamin C** – Boosts immunity and helps heal wounds (oranges, strawberries, bell peppers).
- **B Vitamins** – Support energy production and brain function (whole grains, eggs, meat).

Water

- Water – Keeps the body hydrated, aids in digestion, essential for temperature regulation, nutrient and oxygen transport.
- Creative activity: Participants draw a plate showing a well-balanced meal for a growing child.

Notes & reflections

12:30 How to Read a Food Label**OBJECTIVE**

To understand the importance of reading food labels so that healthier choices can be made by understanding what is in the food we are consuming.

ACTIVITIES

- Lecture on the following topics:

How to read a food label:

Reading food labels can help you make healthier choices by understanding what's in your food. Here are the basics to focus on:

- Serving size and serving per container/item
- Calorie content
- Nutrients
- The ingredients in the food you are buying and consuming.

Examples to look out for on food labels to make good choices are:

- Higher protein and fiber
- Low sugar content
- A shorter recognisable ingredients list

Examples to look out for on food labels to avoid poor choices are:

- High sugar content and use of artificial sweeteners
- High sodium and MSG (monosodium glutamate)

Ingredients that you don't understand e.g. E-codes. Products containing E-codes have a higher chance of causing health issues such as:

- High blood pressure
- High glucose levels leading to diabetes and stroke
- Can cause headaches, dizziness, nausea and IBS (irritable bowel syndrome)
- May lead to overeating due to artificial flavouring enhancements.
- Brain function and metabolism may be impaired and become sluggish.
- May be carcinogenic

Examples of some harmful E-Codes

- **E102 (Tartrazine)** – Artificial yellow dye, linked to hyperactivity in children.
- **E211 (Sodium Benzoate)** – Preservative, can form **benzene**, a potential carcinogen, in acidic drinks.
- **E250 (Sodium Nitrite)** – Used in processed meats; linked to increased risk of cancer.
- **E951 (Aspartame)** – Artificial sweetener, controversial for its potential effects on the brain and metabolism.
- Q&A session

Notes & reflections

13:00 · LUNCH

Notes & reflections

13:45 What is considered as Fast Food & processed food?

OBJECTIVE

To bring awareness about what fast foods really are, how to avoid them when possible and how to make healthier choices when consuming fast foods.

ACTIVITIES

- Small group discussion: What do the participants think is fast food and what do they think is not fast food & Processed food.
- Whole group discussion: Feedback on above
- Lecture: Where do we find fast foods & processed foods: Supermarkets; restaurants; drive throughs and take aways.

Examples of fast foods: fried chicken; pizza; shakes with high sugar content; carbonated high calorie sodas; takeaway burgers & fries, hot dogs, sweetened yoghurts etc.

Characteristics of fast food: High in calories; excessive saturated fats; sugars; sodium; high in preservatives and colourants etc.

Solutions to making healthier options when consuming fast foods.

- Q&A session
- Creative activity: Participants make a list of fast foods and then come up with a healthier option

Notes & reflections

14:45

Portion Control

OBJECTIVE

Understanding portion control for the child and how to include the child in meal preparation.

ACTIVITIES

- Small group discussion: What do participants think is a decent portion for a child to eat?
- Whole group discussion: Feedback on above discussion.

Lecture: **Recommended Portion size for children between 1 and 6 years of age**

- **Carbohydrates (Energy Foods)**
- **Bread, rice, pasta, cereal 1-2 child-sized handfuls** ($\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 slice of bread, 2-4 tbsp cooked rice/pasta)
- **Potatoes 1-2 small egg-sized portions**
- **Protein (Growth & Repair)**
- **meat, poultry, fish Child's palm-sized portion** (30-50g or 1-2 tbsp)
- **Eggs $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 egg**
- **Beans, lentils, tofu 2-4 tbsp**
- **Dairy (milk, cheese, yogurt) 100-150ml milk, a matchbox-sized piece of cheese, or 2-3 tbsp yogurt**
- **Fruits & Vegetables (Vitamins & Minerals)**
- **Vegetables 1-2 child-sized handfuls per meal** (about 2-3 tbsp cooked veggies)
- **Fruits $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 small fruit (or a handful of chopped fruit)**
- **Fats (Brain & Energy)**
- **Healthy oils, butter, or nut butter 1-2 tsp**
- **Avocado or nuts 1-2 tbsp mashed avocado or a small handful of nuts (if safe)**
- **Drinks (Hydration)**
- **Water 1-1.5 liters per day** (5-7 cups)
- **Milk 300-500ml per day**

Portion Control Tips for Young Children:

- **Let them eat until they feel full** – Forcing food can lead to overeating habits.
- **Serve small portions first** – They can always ask for more.
- **Make meals colourful & varied** – Ensures balanced nutrition.
- **Avoid distractions while eating** – Helps children listen to hunger cues.
- Q&A session

15:15 · TEA BREAK

Notes & reflections

15:30 Involving my child in meal preparation

OBJECTIVE

To get the participants to think of creative ways to involve the child in growing food gardens and preparing meals and menus.

ACTIVITIES

- Small group discussion: Participants break into small groups and discuss ways that they think children can be involved in gardening for food and preparing meals.
- Whole group discussion: Feedback on the above topic.
- Interactive session: Mind map of feedback given (to be done on a whiteboard whilst participants are giving whole group feedback).

Notes & reflections

16:30 Daily Reflection & Gratitude

DAY

17

MODULE 21

Nutrition and Meal Preparation

DURATION · 16 HOURS

09:00 Stillness & Recap

09:30 Understanding food sensitivities and allergies

OBJECTIVE

To learn about food sensitivities; allergies and how to avoid these when preparing meals.

ACTIVITIES

- Lecture: Food Sensitivities/intolerances and Allergies (focus on how to tell the difference between these two)

Food Allergies (Immune System Reaction)

- A food allergy occurs when the **immune system mistakenly attacks harmless food** as a threat, causing **serious reactions**. Symptoms usually appear **within minutes or hours** after eating.

Common Food Allergens in Children Under 6

- **Peanuts** – One of the most severe allergies; can cause anaphylaxis.
Tree Nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, etc.) – Different from peanuts but equally risky.
Milk (Dairy Allergy) – Different from lactose intolerance; can cause hives, vomiting, or breathing problems.
Eggs – Can trigger skin rashes, stomach pain, or breathing issues.
Wheat (Gluten Allergy - Rare) – Can cause hives or digestive issues (different from celiac disease).
Fish & Shellfish – Less common in young children but can be severe.
Soy – Found in many processed foods; may cause digestive or skin reactions.
- **Symptoms of a Food Allergy**
 - Hives, swelling (face, lips, tongue)
 - Vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps
 - Difficulty breathing, wheezing
 - Anaphylaxis (severe, life-threatening reaction)
- **If a child has trouble breathing or severe swelling, call emergency services immediately!**

Food Intolerances (Digestive System Reaction)

- Food intolerance means the **body has trouble digesting a certain food**, but it **does NOT involve the immune system** or cause life-threatening reactions.
- **Common Food Intolerances in Young Children**
- **Lactose Intolerance** – Trouble digesting milk sugar, causing bloating, diarrhea, and gas.
Gluten Sensitivity (Non-Celiac) – Can cause stomach pain, fatigue, and bloating (but not an autoimmune reaction like celiac disease).
Artificial Additives & Preservatives – Some kids react to food dyes (e.g., Red 40), MSG, or artificial sweeteners with hyperactivity or digestive issues.

- **Symptoms of Food Intolerance**
- Stomach pain, bloating, or gas
Diarrhoea or constipation
Mild skin irritation (not hives)
Headaches or fatigue
- **Tip:** Unlike allergies, small amounts of food may be tolerated.

Celiac Disease (Autoimmune Reaction to Gluten)

- Celiac disease is a **serious autoimmune condition** where eating gluten (found in wheat, barley, and rye) **damages the small intestine**.
- **Symptoms in Young Children**
- Chronic diarrhoea or constipation
Poor growth, weight loss
Stomach pain, bloating
Fatigue or irritability
- **Diagnosis:** Requires a doctor's test; gluten must be completely removed from the diet.

What to Do If You Suspect a Food Allergy or Intolerance?

- **Keep a food diary** – Track symptoms after meals.
- **Elimination diet** – Temporarily remove the suspected food and see if symptoms improve.
- **Visit an allergist or doctor** – They may do **skin prick tests, blood tests, or food challenge tests**.
- **Always have an emergency plan** – If an allergy is confirmed, carry an **EpiPen** (if prescribed) and inform caregivers

Notes & reflections

10:30 Discussion on different food preparation according to religion and cultural customs

OBJECTIVE

Dive into cultural and religious practices around food and meal preparation

ACTIVITIES

- **Icebreaker** – Participants to break into pairs with someone who is culturally and/or religiously different to them. They “interview” their partner to find out what their cultural and religious practices are around food.
- **Whole group discussion:** Participants stand up and tell the group what they learnt about their partner during the above icebreaker.
- **Feedback** on anything that stood out or needs clarity on the previous day's topics

Cultural and religious concerns (e.g. do not bring pork into a Jewish home) Cultural and religious beliefs play a **major role in food choices** around the world. Many traditions, customs, and religious practices influence what people eat, how they prepare food, and even when they eat.

- Lecture: depending on what cultural/religious demographics of the group are a lecture on how to respect and adhere to the requirements of food consumption and preparation.
- Here is a guideline on our most prominent religious and cultures in South Africa (these can be changed to wherever the programme is being offered in the world)

Islam (Halal Food)

Halal (Permissible) – Meat from animals slaughtered in a specific way (Zabiha).

Haram (Forbidden) – Pork, alcohol, and improperly slaughtered meat.

Fasting – During **Ramadan**, Muslims fast from **dawn to sunset**.

Judaism (Kosher Food)

Kosher (Permissible) – Meat from animals that chew cud and have split hooves (e.g., cows, sheep).

Non-Kosher – Pork, shellfish, and mixing dairy with meat.

Fasting – Observed on holidays like **Yom Kippur**.

Christianity (Fasting & Food Traditions)

- **Catholicism** – Avoids meat on Fridays during **Lent**.
- **Orthodox Christianity** – Observes fasting periods, avoiding meat and dairy at certain times.

Hinduism & Buddhism (Vegetarianism)

- Many Hindus and Buddhists **follow a vegetarian or vegan diet** due to beliefs in **ahimsa (non-violence)**. **Beef is strictly avoided** in Hinduism, as cows are considered sacred.
- Q&A session
- Creative activity: Share a recipe in accordance to your specific culture and/or religion (these recipes can be put into a usb/booklet/pdf document to share with participants)

Notes & reflections

11:00 · TEA

Notes & reflections

11:30**Mindful practices around food and meal preparation****OBJECTIVE**

To bring mindfulness and awareness around people's relationships with food, nutrition and meal preparation.

ACTIVITIES

- Small group discussion: Participants break into groups of three and have a discussion on what they think mindfulness around the above objective looks like.
- Whole group discussion: Participants give feedback on above discussion whilst facilitator makes a mind map of what gets shared during this session on a whiteboard.

Mindfulness

- Mindfulness surrounding every person's personal relationship with food. We need to be respectful and conscious of everyone's differences.
- It is impolite to impose your views on food on other people, just as it is impolite for them to do so to you.

Some ideas on how to be mindful surrounding food and meal prep in the home you are working in are:

- Ask ahead of the time – with regard to dietary requirements and religious customs surrounding food and meal preparation.
- Offer choices: Try to have choices within reason that accommodate dietary requirements such as: vegetarian, gluten-free, wheat free, Halaal etc.
- Be mindful of body weight and sensitivities surrounding this topic.
- Promote body positivity: No shaming or judging or ridiculing.
- Don't pressure or push anyone to eat anything that they are uncomfortable to eat.

• Q&A

- Creative activity: Participants to journal on their relationship with food and ask the following questions:
 - Was there a time during my childhood where I felt someone else imposed their beliefs on me?
 - How did I feel when this happened?
 - Have I ever felt judged regarding my cultural and religious practices around food?
 - How did that make me feel?
 - Have I ever (unintentionally or intentionally) imposed my views surrounding food on to others?
 - How do I feel about that now that I understand these practices better?

*Notes & reflections***12:15****Respecting the child's right to say no to food****OBJECTIVE**

To develop respect and honour for the child's right to say no to food.

ACTIVITIES

- Small group discussion: Practitioners break into groups of three and discuss the following questions:

Has a child ever refused food that I have offered them?

What was my reaction?

Why do I think I had this reaction?

Could I have handled the situation more respectfully?

- Whole group discussion: Feedback on the above SGD
- Lecture: How can I respect and honour the child's right to say "no" to food:

Respecting a child's right to say "no" to food is an important aspect of promoting **healthy eating habits** and building a **positive relationship with food**. It's essential for parents and caregivers to approach this in a way that fosters **autonomy** while ensuring the child's nutritional needs are met. Here are some tips on how to respect a child's right to say no to food:

- Avoid putting pressure on children to eat or try new foods they are uncomfortable with.
- Give them a choice (options) of healthy alternatives to try until you find the foods they tolerate and enjoy.
- Recognize hunger cues and respond
- Encourage a positive mealtime atmosphere
- Be a good role model – Children will look to the adult to see their eating habits, their body choices and the language they use around food.
- Avoid negative associations with food – If you do not enjoy a certain type of food, don't push your dislikes/ ideas on to the child.
- Teach self-regulation and respect for their body – when they get the signal that they are full, we respect that so that they can respond to these cues.
- Trust your child's appetite. They will let you know when they are full, when they require more and when they like something
- Offer smaller portions of food – they can always dish up more if they want more.
- Don't stress about skipped meals. Often adults overfeed and become stressed when trying to force food onto an already full child.

Notes & reflections

13:00 · LUNCH BREAK

Notes & reflections

13:45 Using food as rewards and punishments

OBJECTIVE

Understanding the dangers of using food as rewards and punishments and what the long-term effects of this could look like.

ACTIVITIES

- Reflective journaling: Participants to individually spend time journaling and answering the following questions:

Have I ever had someone use food to reward or punish me?

How do I think this affects me now as an adult?

Have I ever used food as a reward or punishment for the children in my care?

How do I think this may have affected their relationship with me and with food?

- Whole group discussion: participants give feedback on the above questions.
- Lecture: Rewards and Punishment around food and what the repercussions are:
- Avoid putting pressure on children to eat or try new foods they are uncomfortable with.
- Give them a choice (options) of healthy alternatives to try until you find the foods they tolerate and enjoy.
- Recognize hunger cues and respond
- Encourage a positive mealtime atmosphere
- Be a good role model – Children will look to the adult to see their eating habits, their body choices and the language they use around food.
- Avoid negative associations with food – If you do not enjoy a certain type of food, don't push your dislikes/ ideas on to the child.
- Teach self-regulation and respect for their body – when they get the signal that they are full, we respect that so that they can respond to these cues.
- Trust your child's appetite. They will let you know when they are full, when they require more and when they like something
- Offer smaller portions of food – they can always dish up more if they want more.
- Don't stress about skipping meals. Often adults overfeed and become stressed when trying to force food onto an already full child

Notes & reflections

14:15 Fundamentals of growing food gardens

OBJECTIVE

To deeper the participant's understanding of growing productive food gardens and how to implement these in the areas/homes in which the live.

ACTIVITIES

- Interactive Lecture: How to successfully grow a food garden and how to involve the child in this process:

Growing your own vegetable garden:

- Selecting your plants
- Preparing your beds
- Planting
- Monitoring and harvesting
- Choose easy-to-grow vegetables to start with
- Ensure that the vegetables and fruits you are planting are seasonal.

Ideas for easy to grow vegetables:

- **Cherry tomatoes** – Sweet and fun to pick
- **Carrots** – Easy to pull from the soil
- **Lettuce & spinach** – Quick-growing for fast results
- **Radishes** – Grow in just a few weeks!
- **Green beans** – Fun to pick and snap into pieces
- **Pumpkins** – Great for a long-term project

Have child-sized gardening tools:

- Watering cans
- Gloves
- Shovels
- Rakes
- Wheelbarrows
- Basket or bucket for harvesting
- Composting

Importance of water:

- Using the ideas/lesson plans in the Earth Stewardship module, reiterate the importance of water for:
- Hydration for humans
- Water needed to tend to gardens
- Water needed in cooking exercises

15:15 · TEA BREAK

15:30 Planning my food garden**OBJECTIVE**

To get the participants to think of creative ways to plan and implement their own food gardens.

ACTIVITIES

- Creative activities: Participants are encouraged to think about their spaces and how they can create a food garden. They draw up a plan of how their garden will look and what they will grow in these spaces.
- Whole group feedback: Participants share their ideas on their plans for their garden/planter box etc.

16:30 Daily reflection/Gratitude

17:00 Closing

DAY

18

MODULE 22

Earth Stewardship

DURATION · 16 HOURS

09:00

Stillness & Recap

09:30

Introduction and Overview

OBJECTIVE

To deliver a transformative and healing experience for the participants that encourages them to both act as stewards for the earth and develop awareness and practices for personal flourishing. We hope that the participants will come to understand the importance of earth stewardship in relation to their own wellbeing, the wellbeing of the child and the broader wellbeing of our community and the environment.

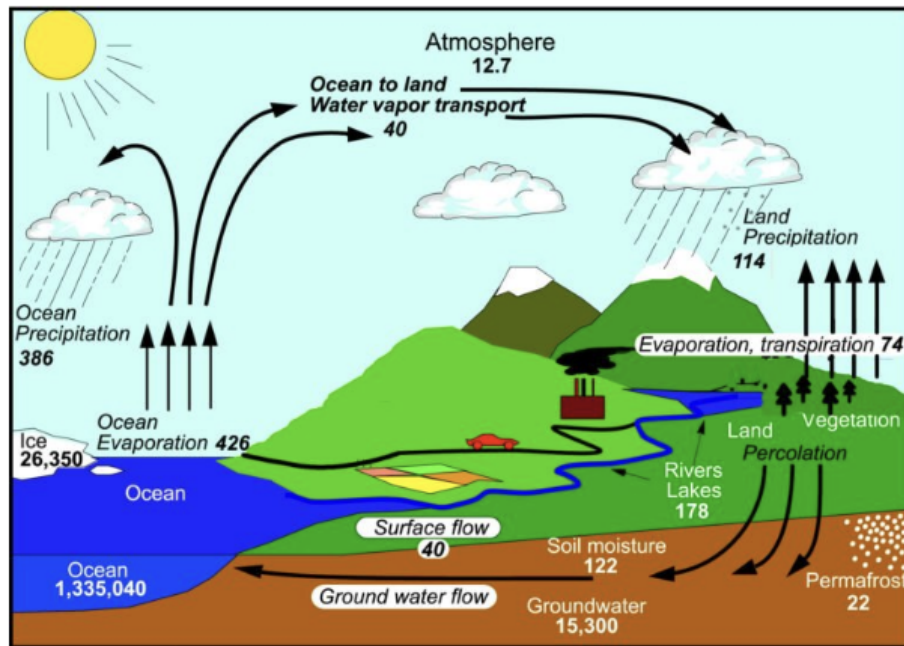
ACTIVITIES

- Icebreaker – Breathwork: Body Scan
- Introduction: What is Earth Stewardship and what will we be covering in this module?
- Question: Reflect on your relationship with nature. What role has nature played in your upbringing?
- Group discussion: A discussion where participants share their reflections on the above question.

10:00

Water

- Brief presentation – Water is Life
- Water cycle (brief presentation on the water cycle)



- Water saving
- Interactive lecture: Hard Facts on Hydration (water within one)
- Hydration and Dehydration (what are the signs of these two conditions?)
- What measures can I put into place to keep myself hydrated?
- What measures can I put into place to keep my children hydrated?

10:30 Oxygen & breathing

- *Oxygen – The link between effective breathing*

- What does oxygen help with:
- Reduce blood pressure; increases energy levels; reduces stress; improves the immune system; helps with digestion of food; decreases lactic acid build up; aids in peaceful sleep.

- *Group discussion: Participants share their initial thoughts or questions on the importance of oxygen and breathing*

11:00 · TEA

Notes & reflections

SESSION 2

11:30 Healthy Soil, Healthy Humans**OBJECTIVE**

Begin building an understanding of the importance of creating an environment that facilitates the meeting of needs.

ACTIVITIES

- *Link to nature: Nature Walk (take a walk outside and observe what you see, take in the fresh air, connect with what you are seeing; hearing; smelling; feeling)*
- *Journaling based on the nature walk activity*
- *Interactive lecture: Healthy Soil = Healthy Humans (connection to soil & nature)*

SESSION 3

12:00 Healthy Humans**OBJECTIVE**

Bring awareness to our relationship with earth and how to look after her.

ACTIVITIES

- *Breathwork: Hand on belly and hand on heart – deep inhale/exhale, feel if we are breathing correctly (lungs inflate on inhale/deflate on exhale)*
- *Individual reflective question: What do we need to survive?*
- *Let's think about our physical, cognitive, emotional and social needs*
- *Group discussion: Participants to give some feedback on what came up when they were thinking individually on what we need for survival.*
- *Interactive lecture: Max Neef's Fundamental Human Needs*

Human Needs Matrix

After Manfred Max-Neef

	Being	Having	Doing	Interacting
Subsistence	Health, adaptability Sense of humour	Food, shelter, work	Feed, procreate, rest, work	Social setting, environment
Protection	Care, equilibrium, solidarity	Rights, social security, family	Cooperate, plan, help	Living space, dwelling
Affection	Self-esteem, respect, passion	Friendships, family, relation with nature	Make love, share, cultivate, appreciate	Privacy, intimacy, home, togetherness
Understanding	Critical conscience, curiosity, discipline	Literature, education teachers	Investigate meditate experiment,	Groups, community, schools, family
Participation	Dedication, respect, receptiveness	Rights, responsibility duties, work	Cooperate, dissent, agree on, interact	Associations, churches, family
Idleness	Curiosity, tranquility, imagination	Peace of mind, games, parties	Day-dream, relax remember, brood	Privacy, intimacy, free time, landscape
Creation	Passion, intuition, imagination,	Abilities, skills, method, work	Work, invent, build, compose, design	Productive settings, workshops, time
Identity	Sense of belonging, self-esteem	Language, symbols, religion, values	Commit oneself, grow, recognise	Social rhythms, maturation stages
Freedom	Autonomy, boldness, passion	Equal rights	Dissent, choose, disobey, run risks	Temporal/ spatial plasticity

13:00 · LUNCH

Notes & reflections

13:45 Flourishing

- *Group discussion: The concept of flourishing: What does it mean to flourish?*
- *The difference between flourishing and surviving.*
- *Flourishing in our caregiver/childcare role. What does it look like to us?*
- *Reflective journaling: What are our hopes and dreams for the children in our care?*

Do we want them to merely survive or to flourish?

- *Group activity: Discussion of the above reflections*

- Q&A session

15:00 · TEA BREAK

Notes & reflections

15:15 Connecting healthy humans to healthy soil

OBJECTIVE
Learn and practice about self-care and how nature/earth heals us

ACTIVITIES

- Activity Breathwork: Box breathing
- Brief presentation: Story of Master Soil
- Interactive Lecture: How is soil made?
- How can we improve the health of our soil?
- Compost making

16:30 Reflection & Gratitude

17:00 Closing

DAY

19

MODULE 23

Earth Stewardship

DURATION · 16 HOURS

09:00

Stillness & Recap

09:30

Permaculture Basics

OBJECTIVE

To begin to understand permaculture as a practice. To begin to understand that we grow in community and not in isolation. Apply permaculture to their lives in the home.

ACTIVITIES

- *Interactive lecture: What is permaculture?*
- *Permaculture ethics: Earth Care, People Care, Be Fair*
- *Explain that at the heart of permaculture is a sense of community: we don't grow in isolation but rather each contribute to a greater whole. Often, we have special talents that we overlook. Explain that this morning we are going to do something called an Appreciative Inquiry, which is a reflective activity that will help us remember everything that we can do so that we can find the space to share our talents with those around us. Sometimes we also forget how capable we are, and this will help remind us.*
- *What can you do with your hands, heart & mind*
- *Group discussion on above topics*

11:00 · TEA BREAK

11:30

WE Person

OBJECTIVE

We spend a lot of time giving of ourselves to others. While it may bring us joy it can also deplete us and so it is very important that we also take time to nourish ourselves.

ACTIVITIES

- *Reflective journaling: Think about all the roles you play in your community.*
- *Group discussion: Feedback on the above reflection*
- *Reflective journaling: It is also good to accept help from others. Make a short list of people that could help you. Include what they could help you with.*
- *Group discussion: Feedback on the above reflection*
- *Reflective journaling: self nourishment. What are your stressors? What are your regulators? How do we build a practice to keep us happy, healthy and fulfilled.*
- *Group discussion: Feedback on the above reflection*
- *Reflective journaling: My pledge to myself.*

13:00 • LUNCH

Notes & reflections

13:45 Care for Planet and Self
OBJECTIVE

Maintain practice and simulate the interconnectivity of systems on earth. Introduce the concept of human nature connection, indigenous wisdom and the gifts of the earth.

ACTIVITIES

Group discussion:

- Introduction: My connection with the earth
- Have you had a “meadow moment” before?

- Give a brief description of what a “meadow moment” is before participants make some reflective notes on this point. (A “meadow moment” can refer to several things, but generally it describes a special or memorable experience or feeling that occurs in or is inspired by a meadow, a field of grass and wildflowers. It can be a moment of tranquility, a time to connect with nature, or even a source of inspiration for art or reflection).
- Do you feel connected to the earth?
- Do you think our children feel connected to the earth?
- Our human/earth relationship (what gifts does earth give us and what do we gift earth?)
- Individual reflections on the above discussion

Notes & reflections

15:00 · TEA BREAK

15:15 Caring for our planet

- Reflective journaling: How do I care for the planet?
- Reflective journaling: How can I encourage children to care for the planet?

Notes & reflections

16:30 Daily reflection & Gratitude

17:00 Closing

Notes & reflections

Follow-Up and Additional Resources

Post-Session Assignment: Creating a permaculture garden in the home (depending on what the individual homes look like this will look different for each household).

- If in a high-rise apartment, they may do this in a grow box on a balcony
- If living in a community (council estate etc.) they may have access to a communal garden area.
- If they live in a free-standing house or on a farmland/small holding, they could go all out with the space they have.

APPENDIX

Developmental Milestones

Four reference tables tracing the typical developmental journey of the young child — and the environmental and human support that helps each milestone unfold.

TABLE 1	Movement Milestones
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TABLE 2	Language Milestones
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TABLE 3	Social & Emotional Milestones
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TABLE 4	Cognition Milestones
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APPENDIX · TABLE 1

Movement Milestones

Age	Involuntary/Reflexive movement	Voluntary Movement	Hand	Physical Environmental Aids	Human Environmental Aids
1 month	Many reflexes becoming integrated into the baby's movement patterns around 3-4 months. Can continue up to 6 months. • Turns head when on back • Holds chin up when on stomach		• Hands fisted near face • Reflexive grasp can bring hand to head/face • Sucks fingers or thumb	• Limited use of containers • Mobiles • Movement mat/mirror • Crib/low bed • Topponcino • Clothing not too loose/tight • Natural lighting	• Symbiotic Relationship • Preferential relationship: basic trust • Reference points: sleep, movement, changing, feeding • Breastfeed • Rhythmic language: sing, read • Direct comms: label what you're doing
2 months	• Head bobs when held in sitting position • Lifts chest when on stomach	Child can move head side-to-side by 2 months • Sticking tongue out • Gazing • Bring knees up • Can turn 360* Starting to lift head shakily by end of 2 months	Hands unfisted 50% of the time Bring hands together Opens and closes hands Retains object in hand		
3 months	Many reflexes becoming integrated into the baby's movement patterns around 3-4 months.	Rolls to side Props on forearms when on stomach	Inspects fingers or watches hand Bats at objects	• Limited use of containers • Low bed Grasping mobiles, Ring on ribbon, Batting mobiles/clutch ball, Silver rattle, Grasping beads, Cylinder with bells, Interlocking rings, Ball with protrusions, Cube with bell, Interlocking circles • Movement mat & mirror • Toys for moving: balls • Put toys out of reach • Music box	Role model fluid, smooth movements with purpose. Breastfeeding Rhythmic language, sing, read
4 months	There are many reflexes present from birth: Moro/Startle: 0-6 months Hands unfisted 50% of the time	Holds hands up in prone Begins to lift shoulders Visual tracking Bending/kicking legs Attempts to roll over	Starts looking at their hands Holds on with grasp Start raking grasp		
5 months	Moro/Startle: 0-6 months	Rolls back to front Can push body up off mat (regressed push up) Plank Start getting bottom up and on their knees & forearms on the ground	Grasp in the palm - Palmer grasp without the thumb Start to bring hands together: reaching eye-hand coordination	Limited use of containers Batting Movement mat & mirror Weaning table & chair (intro to 1 st taste) Punch ball, interlocking circles, balls, gourds, cylinder bells, slow moving materials	A lot of language & labelling Have the baby on your hip & label everything from 4 months, all actions in the kitchen & around the household.

Age	Involuntary/Reflexive movement	Voluntary Movement	Hand	Physical Environmental Aids	Human Environmental Aids
		Sit with support		Hanging, holding your own weight	
6 months		When on stomach, bears weight on one hand Pivots on stomach Sits briefly without support	Reaches with one hand Transfers objects from one hand to another Holds 2 objects simultaneously		
7 months	Morro/Startle reflex is ongoing	Rolling over quickly Sit independently Up on all 4 points (knees & hands) Rocks Pushes backwards before forwards Creeping	Grasping including the thumb Thumb in opposition 2 hands work together Waving Blowing a kiss Clapping Start to feed themselves	- Limits use of containers - Secure the environment - Remove the mat once baby starts to move - Drop boxes – intentional release - Rings on rocking base - Wider rings on peg - Pull-up bar - Spinning top & other toys that make sounds - Intro potty at transition times – after waking up start this routine, sitting them on a potty/toilet - Weaning chair & table	- A lot of language - Labelling - Rich language environment - Appropriate clothing
8 months					
9 months	Morro/Startle Reflex is ongoing	- Pull themselves up to stand - Can get into sitting position on their own, usually from a standing position, plonking backwards - Pull up to stand and can bend at the knee - Cruising around furniture	Can cross the midline Intentional release Hand to hand transfer	Ottoman Heavy furniture Stairs Wagon can be introduced Kiosk Bracchiation Tracker Weaning chair & table Metre square table	- A lot of language - Labelling - Rich language environment - Singing - Reading - Objectivation
10 months					
11 months		-Stand independently -Start to stand freely in the middle of the room -Bend their knees & straighten again -Typically take a few steps when holding an adult's hand -Have the strength but ideally do not want to do this -Must achieve this independently	-Primitive pincer -Attempts tower of 2 blocks -Crops objects in cup -Scribbles after demonstration	-Bracchiation -Pushing -Pulling -Climbing -Balancing bikes -Quadbike (no pedals) -Tricycle -Sliding -Pegbox	Allow the child to make these milestones on their own. Be aware of your responses. -A lot of language -Labelling -Rich language environment -Singing -Reading

Age	Involuntary/Reflexive movement	Voluntary Movement	Hand	Physical Environmental Aids	Human Environmental Aids
12 months		-Take their 1st steps by 12 months depending on experience -Pushing/pulling -Exert maximum effort		-Slotted box with chips -Puzzles with knobs	
12 – 18 months		-Exert maximum effort -Walking independently -Run -Climb -Pushing/pulling -Will choose to carry, push, pull heavy objects	Mature pincer Rotation of the wrist	-Will now walk with the wagon -Pushing & pulling equipment -Lock & key -Latches -Stereognostic materials -Sorting -Furniture for them to move around -Practical life -Care of person -Care of environment -Dressing & Undressing -Toileting -Sewing -Gluing -Opening & closing -Threading - More complex puzzles -Art -Music -Food prep -Puzzles	-Language -Finger rhymes -Rhythmic language -Rich language environment
18 months – 2.5 years		Run, climb, carry heavy objects, maximum effort, jumping, kicking, dancing, throwing, riding	Further refinement	Cutting, scooter, balance beams, trampoline, running track	
2.5 years onwards	Movement will become graceful, coordinated, and empower the child aiding his confidence & self esteem	Coordinated, fluid movement	Further refinement		

APPENDIX · TABLE 2

Language Milestones

Age	Receptive	Expressive	Environment/Adult
Birth – 3months	Mother has been talking to this child since in utero – recognises parents' voices, the mother's voice in particular. Rhythm and musicality of her voice, focusses on sounds and gestures.	Crying (as communication, not language yet), facial expressions & body language, responding to sounds. Babies start reacting to loud sounds, quieting when spoken to, and making various noises, including cooing and crying. They also begin to recognize familiar voices and turn towards sounds, establishing early communication and attention skills.	Creating a language-rich environment through consistent talking, reading, and engaging in interactive play. This includes talking to the baby frequently, making eye contact, and responding to their vocalizations. Talk to your baby: Engage in regular conversations, even if you're just narrating your actions during diaper changes or feeding Sing nursery rhymes or create your own baby songs to expose your baby to different sounds and rhythms Show a range of emotions through your face to stimulate your baby's visual and auditory senses Engage in this simple game to help your baby develop their understanding of object permanence and build a foundation for social interaction Play music, use sound-making toys, and expose your baby to the sounds of nature to stimulate their auditory senses, respond to your baby's sounds: When your baby gurgles, laughs, or babbles, respond by making sounds back
4 months	Starting to recognise different people's voices and attribute them to the relevant person. Starting to recognise own name. Reacting to familiar sounds and tones.	Crying (as communication, not language yet), cooing (babbling vowel sounds, practising undifferentiated vocal sounds), social smiling, squealing, imitating sounds and intonation they hear. Respond to their name with facial expressions and body language	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Explaining what we are doing while handling the child (e.g. when changing a nappy) and naming part of their body. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Mimic baby sounds to show we are interested in their efforts (incorporate the sound within a sentence). Clear articulation. create a stimulating environment rich in verbal interactions, sensory experiences, and opportunities for interaction. This includes talking, singing, reading, and engaging in playful activities like peek-a-boo or simple rhymes.
6 months	Focus intently on the mouth movements of a person speaking, especially in an unfamiliar language or unusual sounds. Widen perception of their family's language and sounds. Baby sign language – always accompanied by speech. Tracks sound visually, understands basic commands (No), recognize and respond to changes in your voice's tone	Communication cues regarding satisfying internal needs. Early babbling and vocalisation (vowel sound p, w, m) as well as consonant vowel sounds (ba, dee, ma) Try to engage adults in conversation using motor movements & vocal sounds. Emotional expression- show dislikes/joy etc. Start following sounds. Blowing raspberries to practice using the lips and other parts of the vocal apparatus. typically appears between 4 and 7 months old. It's a playful way for babies to explore their mouths and experiment with sounds, aiding in the development of language skills and facial muscle control	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Explaining what we are doing while handling the child (e.g. when changing a nappy) and naming parts of their body. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Mimic baby sounds to show we are interested in their efforts (incorporate the sound within a sentence). Clear articulation. Engage in conversations with your baby, narrating daily activities and describing objects. Sit up to read books together and have dialogue about them. Naming everything we can see. Respond to your baby's babbles and sounds, imitating them to show that communication is a two-way process. When talking to your baby, maintain eye contact to help them see how lips move and facial expressions to aid in emotion Sit up to read books together and have a dialogue about them. Playing games (Where is the...?). Naming everything we see.
7 – 8 months		Shift from undifferentiated to differentiated babbling and begin to show word meaning comprehension. Imitation of sounds including simple syllables and words. Back and	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Explaining what we are doing while handling the child (e.g. when changing a nappy) and naming parts of their body. Singing, stories,

Age	Receptive	Expressive	Environment/Adult
	Shift from undifferentiated to differentiated babbling and begin to understand many more word meanings. Begin to understand the meaning behind sounds and gestures. Understanding gestures such as waving bye-bye or nodding head	forth vocalisation. Gestures and body language such as waving, pointing, wanting to be picked up. First words "mama", "Dada". Will use language to get attention, express needs, and engage in simple conversations.	poetry, rhymes. Mimic baby sounds to show we are interested in their efforts (incorporate the sound within a sentence). Clear articulation, respectful. recognition. react with enthusiasm and delight to your baby's smiles, sounds, and gestures to show that you are listening and encourage further communication. When you're feeding, bathing, dressing, or playing, describe what you're doing and how you feel. Create a stimulating and interactive environment that encourages communication and engagement. This includes talking to your baby regularly, responding to their vocalizations, reading together, playing games, and exposing them to diverse sounds and experiences.
8 – 9 months	Comprehension of words expands and improves further. Understand different commands. Respond to own name. Start to recognize the sounds of familiar objects and animals. Follows simple instructions with visual cues.	Babbling back of the throat & middle sounds (dada) now. Only making differentiated sounds they hear in the environment now. Engaging in conversations more. Use more inflections in expressive communication. Able to respond to commands (by looking or moving as able). Vocalises loudly using most vowels and consonants - sounding like conversation	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Clear articulation. Create a stimulating environment filled with language-rich interactions, play, and opportunities for exploration. Encourage talking, listening, and responding to your baby's babbling, reading together, and engaging in interactive play. Read books regularly, pointing out pictures and discussing the story, as this fosters early literacy skills. Sing songs: Sing nursery rhymes and other songs, as this helps develop a love for language and music.
10 – 12 months	Know people's names and will anticipate their arrival. Understanding familiar words, following simple commands, start to associate words with the objects or actions they represent, start to use gestures on their own to communicate their needs or wants, like pointing to something they want. Engaging in Social Games	Show understanding of words more clearly to adults because of more motor control. Responds to simple words and phrases like "Go bye-bye" and "Look at Mommy. Start to combine sounds into longer sequences.	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Explaining what we are doing while handling the child (e.g. when changing a nappy) and naming parts of their body. Clear articulation. Playing games (where is the...?) Naming everything we see. Nido: nomenclature objects. Talk Frequently: Talk to your baby about everyday activities, using descriptive language and varying your tone of voice. Read Aloud: Choose age-appropriate books with engaging pictures and stories, pointing to words and characters as you read. Singing is a great way to introduce new sounds and words, and nursery rhymes can help with rhythm and vocabulary. Engage in interactive games like peek-a-boo, turn-taking games, and pretend play to encourage communication and mimicry. Use facial expressions and gestures to convey emotions and add meaning to your language. Pay attention to your baby's vocalizations, gestures, and expressions, and respond enthusiastically to their attempts to communicate. Use simple, clear sentences and expand on your baby's utterances to help them learn new words and phrases. Give your baby opportunities to explore their environment and interact with objects, using language to describe their actions and feelings.

Age	Receptive	Expressive	Environment/Adult
13 – 18 months	Understanding of word meanings and concepts continue to develop and their ability to follow simple instructions grows. Expanding vocabulary, follow instructions with two key words, like "get the ball and give it to me". Understanding questions and some prepositions like "on" or "under".	Shift from prelinguistic phase to linguistic phase. First intentional word. One word can mean a whole sentence, generalisation of nouns. Understanding Words- they often understand a much larger vocabulary, including simple commands and questions. Imitates play sounds and words. Can point to self and a few objects/familiar people when named.	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Explaining what we are doing while handling the child (e.g. when changing a nappy) and naming parts of their body. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Clear articulation. Respectful. Playing games (where is the...?). create a language-rich environment and engage in activities that foster communication and vocabulary development. This includes talking to your child frequently, reading aloud, singing, and playing interactive games like peek-a-boo or animal sound games. Encourage pointing and naming objects, and respond to their babbling and attempts at speech.
19 -24 months	Understanding of word meanings and concepts continue to increase. Understanding 50+ words. Understands me/you. Refers to self by name. Responding to "wh" questions: Children may start to understand simple "wh" questions like "what," "where," and "who". Understanding categories. around 18 months, period of rapid vocabulary growth and increased communication skills in toddlers.	Single nouns shift to noun and verb, then verb and adverb, noun and adjective. Generalisation of verb tenses ("I goed tomorrow"). Use lots more gestures (pointing, shaking head) to give more meaning to their limited words. 50-word threshold is reached with an explosion of words and learn 9 new words a day. Beginning of using "No". use language more actively in social situations, asking questions, requesting help, and engaging in pretend play. start combining words into two-word phrases	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Explaining what we are doing while handling the child (e.g. when changing a nappy) and naming parts of their body. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Playing games (where is the...?) Naming everything we see. Nido: nomenclature objects. Dialogic reading. objects, identical objects and cards, similar objects and cards. Questioning exercise once the child starts speaking.
2-2.5 years	Understanding of words meanings and concepts continue to increase. typically involves understanding simple directions (like "put it in the box"), answering questions (like "who's that?"), and understanding opposites (like "big/little")	Simple, complete sentences (every language has little bits added to sentences). Start using personal pronoun "I" (was using "me" and "my" before). use a vocabulary of around 450 words and can form sentences with 2-3 words. Understanding more words than they can use. Talking in sentences, learning to say new words quickly, and having a vocabulary of several hundred words. Recites parts of well-known story/fills in words	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Clear articulation. Playing games (where is the...?) Naming everything we see. Nido: nomenclature objects. Engaging language activities should be playful and focus on expanding vocabulary and comprehension through everyday interactions. Activities like reading, singing, storytelling Sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes Play "name this thing" by pointing to objects around the house and naming them
3 years	Understanding a wider range of words and concepts. This includes understanding two-part requests, recognizing names of colours and shapes, and grasping concepts like "two" and gender differences. Descriptive Words: Understand descriptive words like "big" or "bumpy", understands family names. A child learns to make subtle distinctions between objects and relationships. Also, the child can understand multi-step requests.	Typically have an expressive vocabulary of around 1,000 words and can form sentences of four to five words. Can structure sentences of 3-4 words. Grammar: They start to use plurals ("s"), verbs with "ing" ("walking"), and pronouns (e.g., "I," "me," "my") more consistently. Questioning: They ask basic "who," "what," "where," and "why" questions. Conversation: They can engage in simple conversations with at least two back-and-forth exchanges. Follow directions and start to tell stories	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Playing games (where is the...?) Naming everything we see. Engaging language activities should be playful and focus on expanding vocabulary and comprehension through everyday interactions. Activities like reading, singing, storytelling Sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes Play "name this thing" by pointing to objects around the house and naming them. Conversation game, Question game, poetry, Command game , Classified cards
4 years		Have a vocabulary of around 1500-1600 words. Able to use words correctly in sentences, including plurals, past	

Age	Receptive	Expressive	Environment/Adult
	Understanding Complex Questions-Can understand questions that require more than simple answers. Can follow directions that involve two or more steps. Understanding Spatial Concepts-uses words like "behind," "next to," and "between". Understanding Abstract Concepts-Can start to grasp more abstract concepts like time (yesterday, tomorrow) and emotions. Can listen to longer stories and answer questions about them. Continues to expand vocabulary by listening to and learning from new experiences. Can differentiate between objects and their relationships, for example, understanding the difference between a cat and a dog or the relationship between a parent and child.	tense, and pronouns. Learn words that explain more complex emotions like "confused," "upset," and "delighted. Expressing ideas and feelings. Children are getting better at conversations. They can use longer sentences and take turns speaking.	Engaging language activities should be playful and focus on expanding vocabulary and comprehension through everyday interactions. Activities like reading, singing, storytelling Sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes Conversation game, Question game, poetry, Command game, Books Sound games, Classified cards, positive communication
5 - 6 years	Children at this age can articulate most speech sounds, including those like "r," "l," and "th," with greater accuracy. They also develop proficiency in consonant blends and clusters. Enhanced speech skills, vocabulary expansion, and improved understanding of grammar and sentence structure. Their vocabulary expands to include a broader range of words. They begin to use more complex grammatical structures and sentences, demonstrating a growing ability to express themselves clearly and accurately. They also understand that words can have multiple meanings. Uses imaginative language in play - likes to pretend and act out stories Tells several attributes about an object	Using 2,000-7,000 words, forming complex sentences with 5-8 words, and developing good communication skills. They can form complex sentences, with an average length of 5-8 words, and use various sentence types, including compound and complex sentences. Can correctly use pronouns, possessive pronouns, plurals, past tense verbs, and possessive. Can tell stories with at least two events and begin to use narrative structure to organize their thoughts. Can write simple stories and begin to recognize and understand the sounds of letters. They develop an understanding of rhyming and the sounds of letters, which supports reading and spelling skills. They understand and respond appropriately to humour, sarcasm, and figurative language.	Rich language environment. Language directed to the child. Model two-way communication. Singing, stories, poetry, rhymes. Engaging language activities should be playful and focus on expanding vocabulary and comprehension through everyday interactions. Activities like reading, singing, storytelling Sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes Conversation game, Question game, poetry, Command game, Books Sound games, Classified cards, positive communication, word games, memory games

APPENDIX · TABLE 3

Social & Emotional Milestones

1 month	• Can differentiate mother's voice from other voices in the environment • Calms when held or comforted • Stares at faces that are $\pm$ 30cm from their line of vision • May briefly make eye contact	• A mother/caregiver who has a preferential attachment to the baby. • Present adult • Munari Mobile • Cestina
2 months	• Opens mouth at the sight of breast or bottle • Smiles reflexively • Looks at people more than objects • Starts to smile (social smile replaces reflex smile) • Shows pleasure when interacting (cooing, wriggling etc.)	• Adult who is present and aware and who understands the importance of connection during breast/bottle feeding (no distractions, phones; TV etc.)
3 months	• Visually follows a moving person who is in the same room • Brings hands to mouth • Expressions of disgust/distaste (sour taste; loud sounds/noises; bad smell etc. • Smiles back when someone smiles at them. • Enjoys watching others, may try to mimic facial expressions • Communicates simple emotions through facial expressions	• Cestina (so that the baby can easily see and follow the adult moving in their environment/room) • Hands and feet open (not covered in socks/mittens etc.) • Adult who is present and can identify/observe these moments
4 months	• Stops crying when they hear their parent's voice • To and fro alternating vocalisations ("chatting") • Smiles spontaneously • Briefly holds onto breast or bottle • Enjoys interactions like peek-a-boo • Laughs out loud • Cries or fusses to signal needs	• Adult who is present and responds to the baby's cries and tends to their needs. • Adult who is comfortable to have a "conversation" (interaction) with a baby not yet able to speak but who is making sounds with their voice. • Adult who can play social games like peek-a-boo •
5 months	• Watches faces closely • Begins to distinguish between familiar and unfamiliar people (stranger danger) • Expresses happiness or distress clearly	• Adult who is available to hold and interact with the baby by focussing on them so that they can focus on the adult's face. • Movement mat in a safe space where the baby can move freely and can also see other people as they move through their day • Adult who talks to the baby, bringing up words like 'Oh, you're frowning, what's the matter, did you get a fright?' etc.
6 months	• Can hold a bottle to feed themselves • If assisted can start to feed themselves • Develops a strong attachment to caregivers	• Adult who can assist the child only as needed to hold their bottle and be there as a 'safety net' for when the bottle is dropped/released

	• May show signs of stranger anxiety • May reach arms out to be picked up • Responds playfully to reflections of faces/people in a mirror	• Caregiver who the baby has developed a preferential attachment to, this adult will tend to all the baby's needs (cleaning; feeding; changing; comforting etc.) • Wall mounted full length mirror in the movement area so that the child can clearly see their reflection and body as they move.
7 months	• Responds differently to familiar and unfamiliar people • Shows more awareness of social environment • Babbling changes from undifferentiated to differentiated babbling (mimicking the sounds heard in spoken language around them)	• Adult who is not offended by the baby showing weariness/distrust of someone they perceive as unfamiliar. • Adult who can pick up the differences between the two stages of babbling • Adult who is comfortable to interact with the baby, imitating/mimicking the facial expressions and sounds that the baby makes.
8 months	• Clings to caregiver in unfamiliar settings • Shows interest in other babies • Uses facial expressions to communicate emotions	• Caregiver who understands preferential attachment and is there to comfort the baby if they feel unsettled. • A place where the baby can have the opportunity to see and spend time with other babies (walk to the park; moms & tots' classes etc.) • Adult who is expressive, can communicate with the baby non verbally as well as verbally.
9 months	• Uses voice to get attention • Separation anxiety may start now • Follows things pointed out to them (Oh! Look there!) • Recognises known people visually • Waves bye-bye • Participates in social games (like peek-a-boo) • Has favourite people to interact with	• Adult who is present and aware of the baby's attempts to get attention vocally. • Adult who is comfortable and who enjoys interacting with the baby, pointing objects out in the home, on a nature walk, during a shopping trip etc. • Adult who plays games with the baby (peek-a-boo) • Adult who consciously interacts with the baby by waving to them and encouraging them to wave at other people. • Adults who will not take offence to a baby who is not too keen on them.
10 months	• Starts to manage feeding themselves with finger foods • Seeks comfort from familiar adults • Imitates gestures and facial expressions • Shows preference for certain people	• Safe place for the baby to sit comfortably (weaking table & chair is a better alternative to a highchair.) • Adult who isn't stressed by messy eating. • Adult who is comfortable/open to imitation as a means to communicate with the baby.
11 months	• Tries to gain attention by calling or making a noise/specific sounds • May offer toys to others • Begins to test limits (watches caregiver's reaction when doing something they shouldn't/forbidden)	• Receptive adult • Age-appropriate toys/materials for the baby to examine and pass on to someone to interact with them. • Adult who can stay calm, put strict boundaries in and adhere to them.
1. months	• Cries when a caregiver leaves (starts with separation anxiety may come back at this time as they start to move more independently) • Expresses a range of emotions such as fear, anger, happiness • Hands objects to others or tries to share • Dresses in collaboration (helps to hold nappy during change; sticks out arm or leg to get clothes on/off) • Has favourite toys	• Adult who understands the crises of development for object permanence • Toys that encourage object permanence development, such as posting an object into a container/box for the child to retrieve. • Prepared environment (bathroom or bedroom) where the child can sit comfortably and work out how to remove and put on clothing. • Adult who is in tune with the child and understands their connection to a particular object.

13-14 months	- Enjoys being around other children - Parallel play takes place - May look concerned when others are upset - Starts to show empathy - May show defiance (the power of the word “no” is discovered)	- Outings/opportunities for the baby to be in the company of others, especially young children, preferably in the same age range as the baby so that they can have those moments of interaction. - Adult who role models empathy and other feelings with the baby.
15 – 18 months	- Moves around the house without an adult being within sight - Begins to show remorse if they have hurt or upset someone (may cry themselves) - Enjoys sensory input of gross motor play	- Adult who understands the developmental crises of self-affirmation (the “no” phase has crept in here.) - Adult who can role model correct social behaviours such as when bumping into someone etc. - Practical life activities can be set up and the child should have freedom to explore/work for as long as they want to.
18-20 months	- Begins to mask emotions for social etiquette - Spoken language is well into development, can use two-to-three-word sentences - Points to objects they are interested in or want to show you/explore etc.	- Adult who can observe and read the child’s social cues to see if they are struggling or coping - Rich language environment (objects and language experiences around the home and surrounds) - Adult who talks to the child in full sentences and has the patience they need to help this little one.
20 -24 months	- Language explosion takes in and uses new words enabling clearer communication - Likes to copy/mimic other adults and children - Gets excited when they are with other children - Is more independent - Is more defiant	- Adult who is willing to talk to and listen to this child and give them their full attention. - Adult who is not uncomfortable with a child who copies/mimics them. - Social visits from friends or activities in communal places (trip to the library etc.) - Time to work uninterrupted on practical life activities that the child can do independent of an adult. - Patience when a child gets belligerent goes through the “no” phase
24 – 30 months	- May start to pack away when finished using an activity/object - Imitates adult activities (practical life) - Imitates parents; caregivers and peers in social play	- Clearly defined spaces where activities are kept and the child can have the opportunity to pack their things away. - An adult who role models packing away. - Social games to encourage imitation and mimicking (action songs; stories; games etc.) - Time to socialise with children within their tier learning stage (e.g. children from around 14 to 36 months old)
3 years	- Begins to play in collaboration with others - Starts to share without being prompted or asked - Fear of the unknown (imaginary things monsters etc.) - Imaginative play - Enjoys rough and tumble play with others - Uses objects for multiple pretend ideas	- Activities that children can work together on (setting a table; playing social games; - Providing realistic experiences for them to build their imagination on - Adult who stands back and allows the child the freedom to engage in imaginative play at their own discretion
4 years	- Goes to the toilet on their own and can manage wiping etc. - Has a preferred friend/s - Can vocalise feelings: happy; sad; angry; frightened etc. - Starts to play in groups - More capable of “taking turns”	- An adult who trust and has faith in the child’s emerging capabilities and independence - Plenty opportunity for social interaction through preschool, playdates and outings - An adult who can have a respectful conversation with this child regarding their interests. - Being fully present during interactions with the child

	• Attempts more challenging activities • Prefers play with other children more than playing on their own	
5 years	• Plays out drama with stuffed animals or “imaginary friends” • Plays “house” older children direct who plays in each role • Creates scripts for pretend objects and games • Begins to portray multiple characters with feelings •	
6 years	• Has “best friends” of the same gender as themselves • Starts to distinguish fantasy from reality • Wants to be like their group of friends for acceptance into a social group	

APPENDIX · TABLE 4

Cognition Milestones

	Birth to 4 months • Absorbs information through the senses • Smiles and laughs • Looks towards direction of sounds • Recognises familiar voices • Recognizes differences between people • Eyes track slow moving target for brief period • Looks at faces and shapes/patterns with light/dark contrast • Imitates adults tongue movements & facial expressions • Repeats actions but unaware of ability to cause actions • Observes hands • Reaching to touch mobiles/what is in your hand • Begins to categorize, reason and abstract • Begins journey of how to self-regulate	• Visual mobiles • Batting mobiles • Rattles (hand grasping manipulable) • Freedom to move • Mirror • Mirroring sounds • Reciprocal communication • Singing • Music • Simple books • Experiences in the outdoors	• Safe, secure environment especially during Symbiotic period (0-8 weeks). • Skin to skin contact when in distress. • Set up reference points (area for eating(feeding)/sleeping/moving(working)/changing(toileting) • Responsive adults who attend to baby's/child's needs with sensitivity and compassion. • Adults role modelling consistent calm responses and self-regulation. • Establish strong bonds through trusting relationships – allowing your child to feel safe & secure • Provide varied social interaction at all ages - will help with impulse control • Provide appropriate activities to promote free exploration (ensure physical safety) • Never interrupt concentration • Allow for freedom of movement • Provide opportunity for maximum effort • Stand back and allow your child to problem solve • Allow plenty of repetition without interruption • Allow self-chosen & self-directed activities • Give choices • Provide a rich language environment • Provide a rich sensory environment • Label and give language to sensory experiences • Promote sustained joint attention (esp. in first year until it is in place) • Work towards independence • Create an environment with order • Follow their interest • Be consistent in daily routines so child can anticipate what is next • A child learns best when they are calm and relaxed • Be aware of the effect of external stress on the child • Allow freedom with limits
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4 to 8 months	• Swipes at dangling objects • Shakes and stares at toy placed in hand • Reaches for ring/object • Repeats accidentally caused actions that are interesting • Enjoys games such as “peek-a-boo” and “Pat a cake” • Will search for partly hidden object • Able to co-ordinate looking, hearing and touching • Enjoys toys, banging objects, scrunching paper • Explores object by looking at, manipulating and mouthing them • Develops preferences for food • Explores objects with mouth • Touches reflection in mirror and vocalizes • Some inhibitory control becoming evident • Can begin to refuse food. • Recognises name	• Batting/grasping mobiles • Kicking ball • Basket of balls • Further grasping manipulables • Weaning table & chair • Introducing new tastes • Box with ball • Punchball • Mirroring sounds • Reciprocal communication • Singing • Peek-a-boo etc. • Music • Simple books • Experiences in the outdoors • Naming objects, actions	
8 to 12 months	• Moves obstacles to get at desired toy • Bangs 2 objects held in hands together • Pulls string/ribbon to obtain ring • Responds to own name • Makes gestures to communicate and to symbolize objects, e.g. points to something they want • Seems to understand somethings parent or familiar adults say to them • Drops toys to be retrieved, handed back then dropped again/looks in direction of dropped toy • Smiles at image in mirror • Likes playing with water • Shows interest in picture books • Understands gestures/responds to “bye-bye” • Listens with pleasure to sound making toys and music • Notices difference and shows surprise	• Pulling up bar/ottoman • Wagon • Stacking toys • Box with ball to push • Reciprocal communication • Singing • Peek-a-boo etc. • Music • Simple books • Naming objects, actions • Experiences in the outdoors	
12 to 24	• Repeats actions that lead to interesting/predicable results e.g. banging spoon on saucepan • Points to objects when named • Knows some body parts • Recognises self in photo or mirror	• Slotted box with chips • Mailbox/shape-sorter • Push/pull wagon • Locks & keys • Nuts & bolts	

	• Mimics household activities e.g bathing baby or sweeping floor • May signal when s/he has finished their toileting • Stacks and knocks over items • Selects games and puts them away • Calls self by name, uses I, mine, "I do it myself" • Will search for hidden toys • Matches pairs of objects	• Bead stringing • Inset puzzles • Sorting • Drawing • Painting • Clay • Gluing • Sewing • Activities of daily living • Singing , action songs • Music & movement • Short story books • Naming objects, actions • Question games, conversations • Experiences in the outdoors • Bikes • Brachiation • Climbing, sliding • Running, jumping • Ball games	
2 to 3 years	• Builds tower of 5 to 7 objects • Lines up objects in train like fashion • Recognises and identifies common objects by pointing • Enjoys playing with sand, water, dough (sensorial exploration) • Uses symbolic play e.g. uses a block as a car • Identifies picture as a boy or girl • Engages in make believe or imaginative play • Begins to count • Recognises similarities and differences • Imitates rhythm and animal movements • Becoming aware of space through physical activity • Can follow 2 or more directions • Can complete simple inset puzzles • Matches objects to pictures • Shows use of familiar objects in context • Sorts objects • Points to small details in pictures	• Snipping • Activities of daily living • Sandpit play • Bead stringing • Inset puzzles • Sorting • Drawing • Painting • Clay • Gluing • Sewing • Singing , action songs • Music & movement • Naming books • Short story books • Naming objects, actions • Question games, conversations • Language cards	

		• Experiences in the outdoors • Bikes • Brachiation • Climbing, sliding • Running, jumping • Ball games • Sterognostic bags	
3 to 5 years	• Understands opposites and positional words • Knows own gender and age • Uses objects and materials to build or construct things • Builds towers 8 to 10 blocks • Answers simple questions • Counts • Has a longer attention span • Talks to self during play (to help guide what he or she does) • Follows simple instructions • Follows simple rules • Enjoys helping • May write some numbers and letters • Engages in dramatic play taking on pretend character roles • Recall events correctly • Counts by rote having memorized numbers. • Touches objects to count – starting to understand relationship between numbers and objects • Can recount a recent story • Copies letters and may write some unprompted • Can match and name some colours • Draws person with progressive detail •	• Activities of daily living • Drawing • Painting • Cutting • Clay • Sewing • Puzzles • Bead stringing • Building blocks/Lego etc • Tracing geometric shapes in the environment and colouring • Activities for refining the visual sense (exploring colours, shapes, dimensions, memory game) • Activities for refining the tactile sense (Exploring textures, temperatures and weight, sorting) • Activities for refining the auditory sense (Exploring sound matching, grading, rhythm activities, music appreciation) • Activities refining the olfactory sense (exploring different smells, matching) • Activities refining the gustatory sense (Exploring different tastes, matching) • Stereognostic sense (sorting, mystery bag) • Counting (knives/forks, ingredients, days in week, stairs in apartment) • Number symbols (fridge magnets, flashcards, sandpaper numbers) • Quantity & symbol (Lego blocks and number cards, spindle tubes, numbers & counters) • Zero game • Memory game • Number and counting books • Number and counting songs • Measuring (pouring juice, ingredients in baking, bubble bath) • Judging & estimating (sharing sweets with friends, angles for pouring, throwing stones, how many scoops of dog biscuits to fill the bowl) • Introduction to operations (bringing these terms into conversation: adding, taking away, timsing, sharing)	

		• Intro to fractions (cutting fruit into fractions, counting the pieces and naming the fraction, sharing) • Bikes • Brachiation • Climbing, sliding • Running, jumping, hopping skipping • Ball games, hoops, beanbags • Cultural conversations • Command game • Sound games • Question game • Sandpaper letters • Moveable alphabet • Reading story books • Cultural books	
6 years	• Draws a 12 to 14 part person • Number concepts to 20 • Understands seasons • Understands simple addition and subtraction	As above • Writing numbers and letters (menu's place names, shopping lists) • Writing sums • First reading (home cards, puzzle words, action words etc)	



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