Developmental milestones

and the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards

The *Early Years Learning Framework Practice Based Resources* project has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The resources have been developed by Community Child Care Co-operative Ltd (NSW) to provide support for early childhood educators to implement the *Early Years Learning Framework*.

ISBN: 978-0-9873543-3-4

Introduction

The EYLF outlines that:

> "Children's learning is ongoing and each child will progress towards the outcomes in different and equally meaningful ways. Learning is not always predictable and linear. Educators plan with each child and the outcomes in mind."
>
> (*Early Years Learning Framework*, p.19)

With this in mind we encourage educators to use this reference as a source of information rather than as a prescriptive checklist. A sound understanding of developmental milestones will support you to effectively assess children's play and learning. Intentional teaching, planning and evaluation should be based on sound professional knowledge.

Links to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) outcomes and the National Quality Standards are given as examples. The examples should serve to support you in your reflection about how sound professional knowledge supports your evaluation of the EYLF outcomes. A sound knowledge of developmental information (as well as ongoing professional learning about theories of play and development) will enrich and inform your understanding of and support for the learning and growth of the children in your care.

It is our belief that when educators embed the practices and principles of the EYLF into their daily practice, the EYLF outcomes will follow, as will the capacity to meet the National Quality Standards.

Each age category includes a list indicating when to seek advice. If you are concerned about a child's development, you should:

- Talk with your colleagues and with the service director.
- Support families to make an appointment with their local family health nurse who will carry out a full developmental check.

Developmental milestones and the EYLF/NQS

Birth to 4 months

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Physical	• moves whole body • squirms, arms wave, legs move up and down • eating and sleeping patterns • startle reflex when placed unwrapped on flat surface/ when hears loud noise • head turns to side when cheek touched • sucking motions with mouth (seeking nipple) • responds to gentle touching, cuddling, rocking • shuts eyes tight in bright sunlight • able to lift head and chest when laying on stomach • begins to roll from side to side • starts reaching to swipe at dangling objects • able to grasp object put into hands	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency. E.g. "display delight, encouragement and enthusiasm for children's attempts." (p.22) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6**
Social	• smiles and laughs • makes eye contact when held with face about 20cm from face of adult looking at them • may sleep most of the time • alert and preoccupied with faces • moves head to sound of voices	**EYLF Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing. E.g. "promote children's sense of belonging, connectedness and wellbeing." (p.31) **NQS: Areas 1, 4, 5, 6**
Emotional	• bonding • cries (peaks about six to eight weeks) and levels off about 12-14 weeks • cries when hungry or uncomfortable and usually stops when held • shows excitement as parent prepared to feed	**EYLF Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners - Children resource their own learning through connecting with people. E.g. "provide opportunities and support for children to engage in meaningful learning relationships." (p.37) **NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6**
Cognitive	• smiles and laughs • looks toward direction of sound • eyes track slow moving target for brief period • looks at edges, patterns with light/dark contrast and faces • imitates adult tongue movements when being held/ talked to • learns through sensory experiences • repeats actions but unaware of ability to cause actions	**EYLF Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners - Children transfer what they have learned from one context to another. E.g. "Develop ability to mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others, either immediately or later." (p.36) **NQS: Areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 6**

Birth to 4 months *continued*

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Language	• expresses needs • cries • when content makes small throaty noises • soothed by sound of voice or by low rhythmic sounds • imitates adult tongue movements when being held and talked to • may start to copy sounds • coos and gurgles	**EYLF Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators - Children interact verbally and non-verbally for a range of purposes. E.g. "engage in enjoyable interactions with babies as they make and play with sounds." (p.40) **NQS: Areas 1, 3, 5**
Seek advice if:	• is floppy or stiff • cries a lot • arches his/her back • is not responding to sounds • is not showing interest or responding when played with • is not feeding as expected • is not starting to make sounds • is not responding to familiar faces	**NQS: Areas 1, 2, 6, 7**

Developmental milestones and the EYLF/NQS

4 to 8 months

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Physical	• plays with feet and toes • makes effort to sit alone, but needs hand support • raises head and chest when lying on stomach • makes crawling movements when lying on stomach • rolls from back to stomach • reachs for and grasp objects, using one hand to grasp • eyes smoothly follow object or person • crawling movements using both hands and feet • able to take weight on feet when standing • watch activities across room - eyes move in unison • turns head to sound of voices	**EYLF Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners - Children develop dispositions for learning such as ….persistence… E.g. "Persevere and experience the satisfaction of achievement." (p.34) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6**
Social	• reacts with arousal, attention or approach to presence of another baby or young child • responds to own name • smiles often and shows excitement when sees preparations being made for meals or for bath • recognises familiar people and stretches arms to be picked up	**EYLF Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators - Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes. E.g. "are attuned and respond sensitively to children's efforts to communicate." (p.40) **NQS: Areas 1, 5**
Emotional	• becoming more settled in eating and sleeping patterns • laughs, especially in social interactions • may soothe self when tired or upset by sucking thumb or dummy • begins to show wariness of strangers • may fret when parent leaves the room • happy to see faces they know	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect. E.g. "initiate one-to-one interactions with children, particularly babies and toddlers during daily routines." (p.24) **NQS: Areas 1, 4, 5, 6**
Cognitive	• swipes at dangling objects • shakes and stares at toy placed in hand • becomes bored if left alone for long periods of time • repeats accidently caused actions that are interesting • enjoys games such as peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake • will search for partly hidden object • able to coordinate looking, hearing and touching • enjoys toys, banging objects, scrunching paper • explores objects by looking at and mouthing them • develops preferences for foods • explores objects with mouth	**EYLF Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners - Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity… E.g. explore and "express wonder and interest in their environments"(p.34) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3**

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Language	• enjoys games such as peek-a-boo or pat-a-cake • babbles and repeat sounds • makes talking sounds in response to others talking • copies sounds • smiles and babbles at own image in mirror • responds to own name	**EYLF Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators - Children interact verbally and non-verbally for a range of purposes. E.g. "engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language." (p.40) **NQS: Areas 1, 5**
Seek advice if:	• is not learning to make sounds • is not responding to familiar faces • is not learning to roll when playing on floor • is not responsive to carers • is not babbling and making sounds • is not playing with feet/swapping objects between hands	**NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6, 7**

Developmental milestones and the EYLF/NQS

8 to 12 months

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Physical	• pulls self to standing position when hands held • raises self to sitting position • sits without support • stands by pulling themself up using furniture • stepping movements around furniture • successfully reach out and grasp toy • transfers objects from hand to hand • picks up and pokes small objects with thumb and finger • picks up and throws small objects • holds biscuit or bottle • crawls • mature crawling (quick and fluent) • may stand alone momentarily • may attempt to crawl up stairs • grasps spoon in palm, but poor aim of food to mouth • uses hands to feed self • alerts peripheral vision • rolls ball and crawls to retrieve	**EYLF Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. E.g. "engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patters." (p.32) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3**
Social	• shows definite anxiety or wariness at appearance of strangers	**EYLF Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing. E.g. acknowledge children's stage of emotional development and support them to develop resilience. **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 5**
Emotional	• actively seeks to be next to parent or principal caregiver • shows signs of anxiety or stress if parent goes away • offers toy to adult but does not release it • shows signs of empathy to distress of another (but often soothes self) • actively explores and plays when parent present, returning now and then for assurance and interaction	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency. E.g. "demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation." (p.22) **NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6**

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Cognitive	• moves obstacle to get at desired toy • bangs two objects held in hands together • responds to own name • makes gestures to communicate and to symbolise objects, e.g. points to something they want • seems to understand some things 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	**EYLF Outcome 4:** Children are confident and involved learners - Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating. E.g. "Provide babies and toddlers with resources that offer challenge, intrigue and surprise, support their investigations and share their enjoyment." (p.35) **NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6**
Language	• responds to own name being called, family names and familiar objects • babbles tunefully • says words like 'dada' or 'mama' • waves goodbye • imitates hand clapping • imitates actions and sounds • enjoys finger-rhymes • shouts to attract attention • vocalises loudly using most vowels and consonants - sounding like conversation	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities. E.g. "share children's successes with families." (p.23) **NQS: Areas 1, 5**
Seek advice if:	• is not responsive to carers • is not babbling and making sounds • is not beginning to sit, crawl, or pull to stand • is not playing with feet, swapping objects between hands • is not interested in holding toys • is not learning to eat solids	**NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6, 7**

Developmental milestones and the EYLF/NQS

1 to 2 years

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Physical	• walks, climbs and runs • takes two to three steps without support, legs wide and hands up for balance • crawls up steps • dances in place to music • climbs onto chair • kicks and throws a ball • feeds themselves • begins to run (hurried walk) • scribbles with pencil or crayon held in fist • turns pages of book, two or three pages at a time • rolls large ball, using both hands and arms • finger feeds efficiently • begins to walk alone in a 'tottering way', with frequent falls • squats to pick up an object • reverts to crawling if in a hurry • can drink from a cup • tries to use spoon/fork	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency. E.g. "Be open to new challenges and discoveries", "Motivate and encourage children to succeed when they are faced with challenges." (p.22) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**
Social	• begins to cooperate when playing • may play alongside other toddlers, doing what they do but without seeming to interact (parallel play) • curious and energetic, but depends on adult presence for reassurance	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect. E.g. "organise learning environments in ways that promote small group interactions and play experiences" appropriate to children's development. (p.24) **NQS: Areas 1, 3, 5**
Emotional	• may show anxiety when separating from significant people in their lives • seeks comfort when upset or afraid • takes cue from parent or principal carer regarding attitude to a stranger • may 'lose control' of self when tired or frustrated • assists another in distress by patting, making sympathetic noises or offering material objects	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children feel safe, secure and supported. E.g. "acknowledge and respond sensitively to children's cues and signals."(p.21) **NQS: Areas 1, 3, 4, 5, 6**

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Cognitive	• repeats actions that lead to interesting/ predictable results, e.g. bangs spoon on saucepan • points to objects when named • knows some body parts • points to body parts in a game • recognises self in photo or mirror • mimics household activities, e.g. bathing baby, sweeping floor • may signal when s/he has finished their toileting • spends a lot of time exploring and manipulating objects, putting in mouth, shaking and banging them • 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	**EYLF Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world - Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation. E.g. Broaden their understanding of the world in which they live. (p.26) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6**
Language	• comprehends and follows simple questions/ commands • says first name • says many words (mostly naming words) • begins to use one to two word sentences, e.g. "want milk" • reciprocal imitation of another toddler: will imitate each other's actions • enjoys rhymes and songs	**EYLF Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators - Children interact verbally and non-verbally for a range of purposes. E.g. "model language and encourage children to express themselves through language in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes." (p.40) **NQS: Areas 1, 4, 5, 6**
Seek advice if:	• is not using words or actions to communicate such as waving or raising arms to be lifted • is not wanting to move around • is not responding to others • is not seeking attention of familiar people	**NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6, 7**

Developmental milestones and the EYLF/NQS

2 to 3 years

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Physical	• walks, runs, climbs, kicks and jumps easily • uses steps one at a time • squats to play and rises without using hands • catches ball rolled to him/her • walks into a ball to kick it • jumps from low step or over low objects • attempts to balance on one foot • avoids obstacles • able to open doors • stops readily • moves about moving to music • turns pages one at a time • holds crayon with fingers • uses a pencil to draw or scribble in circles and lines • gets dressed with help • self-feeds using utensils and a cup	**EYLF Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. E.g. "show enthusiasm for participating in physical play and negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others." (p.32) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 5**
Social	• plays with other children • simple make believe play • may prefer same sex playmates and toys • unlikely to share toys without protest	**EYLF Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world - Children become aware of fairness. E.g. "Engage children in discussions about respectful and equal relations such as when a child dominates in the use of resources." (p.28) **NQS: Areas 1, 5**
Emotional	• shows strong attachment to a parent (or main family carer) • shows distress and protest when they leave and wants that person to do things for them • begins to show guilt or remorse for misdeeds • may be less likely to willingly share toys with peers • demands adult attention	**EYLF Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing. E.g. "Talk with children about their emotions and responses to events with a view to supporting their understandings of emotional regulation and self-control." (p.31) **NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6**

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Cognitive	• builds tower of five to seven objects • lines up objects in 'train' fashion • recognises and identifies common objects and pictures by pointing • enjoys playing with sand, water, dough; explores what these materials can do more than making things with them • uses symbolic play, e.g. use a block as a car • shows knowledge of gender-role stereotypes • identifies picture as a boy or girl • engages in making believe and pretend play • begins to count with numbers • recognises similarities and differences • imitates rhythms and animal movements • becoming aware of space through physical activity • can follow two or more directions	**EYLF Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators - Children engage in a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts. E.g. "Take on roles of literacy and numeracy users in their play." (p.41) **NQS: Areas 1, 3, 5**
Language	• uses two or three words together, e.g. "go potty now" • 'explosion' of vocabulary and use of correct grammatical forms of language • refers to self by name and often says 'mine' • asks lots of questions • uses pronouns and prepositions, simple sentences and phrases • labels own gender • copies words and actions • makes music, sing and dance • likes listening to stories and books	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children feel safe secure and supported. E.g. "children initiate interactions and conversations with trusted educators." (p.21) **NQS: Areas 1, 3, 5, 6**
Seek advice if:	• is not interested in playing • is falling a lot • finds it hard to use small objects • is not understanding simple instructions • is not using many words • is not joining words in meaningful phrases • is not interested in food • is not interested in others	**NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6, 7**

Developmental milestones and the EYLF/NQS

3 to 5 years

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Physical	• dresses and undresses with little help • hops, jumps and runs with ease • climbs steps with alternating feet • gallops and skips by leading with one foot • transfers weight forward to throw ball • attempts to catch ball with hands • climbs playground equipment with increasing agility • holds crayon/pencil etc. between thumb and first two fingers • exhibits hand preference • imitates variety of shapes in drawing, e.g. circles • independently cuts paper with scissors • toilet themselves • feeds self with minimum spills • dresses/undresses with minimal assistance • walks and runs more smoothly • enjoys learning simple rhythm and movement routines • develops ability to toilet train at night	**EYLF Outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing. E.g. "Promote continuity of children's personal health and hygiene by sharing ownership of routines and schedules with children, families and the community." (p.32) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 6**
Social	• enjoys playing with other children • may have a particular friend • shares, smiles and cooperates with peers • jointly manipulates objects with one or two other peers • develops independence and social skills they will use for learning and getting on with others at preschool and school	**EYLF Outcome 1:** Children have a strong sense of identity - Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect. E.g." express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively." (p.24) **NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6**
Emotional	• understands when someone is hurt and comforts them • attains gender stability (sure she/he is a girl/boy) • may show stronger preference for same-sex playmates • may enforce gender-role norms with peers • may show bouts of aggression with peers • likes to give and receive affection from parents • may praise themselves and be boastful	**EYLF Outcome 2:** Children are connected with and contribute to their world - Children respond to diversity with respect. E.g. "plan experiences and provide resources that broaden children's perspectives and encourage appreciation of diversity." (p.27) **NQS: Areas 1, 2, 5, 6**

DEVELOPMENTAL AREA	OBSERVE	EXAMPLES OF LINKS TO EYLF/NQS
Cognitive	• understands opposites (e.g. big/little) and positional words (middle, end) • uses objects and materials to build or construct things, e.g. block tower, puzzle, clay, sand and water • builds tower eight to ten blocks • answers simple questions • counts five to ten things • has a longer attention span • talks to self during play - to help guide what he/she does • follows simple instructions • follows simple rules and enjoys helping • may write some numbers and letters • engages in dramatic play, taking on pretend character roles • recalls events correctly • counts by rote, having memorised 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	**EYLF Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators - Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media. E.g. "use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts, and ideas." (p.42) **NQS: Areas 1, 5**
Language	• speaks in sentences and use many different words • answers simple questions • asks many questions • tells stories • talks constantly • enjoys talking and may like to experiment with new words • uses adult forms of speech • takes part in conversations • enjoys jokes, rhymes and stories • will assert self with words	**EYLF Outcome 5:** Children are effective communicators - Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking. E.g. "Provide children with access to a range of technologies." (p.44) **NQS: Areas 1, 5, 6, 7**
Seek advice if:	• is not understood by others • has speech fluency problems or stammering • is not playing with other children • is not able to have a conversation • is not able to go to the toilet or wash him/herself	**NQS: Areas 1,5,6,7**

Developmental milestones and the EYLF/NQS

References

Faragher, J & McLean, J 1983, *Children's Stages of Development (birth to 2 ½ years)*, Collingwood, TAFE Publications Unit.

Faragher, J 1985, *Children's Development (3-5 years)*, Collingwood, TAFE Publications Unit.

Guide to Children's Growth and Development, NSW Department of Community Services:

www.community.nsw.gov.au/docswr/_assets/main/documents/par_development.pdf - accessed 20/01/2012.

Love, Talk, Sing, Read, Play - Families NSW in the Sydney metropolitan area have produced resources for parents to provide advice and information on the social and emotional development of their child and how parents can help nurture this important part of child development. The *Love, Talk, Sing, Read, Play* child development flipchart has now been translated into four major community languages (Korean, Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese.)

Families NSW also produced radio messages on the themes love and play for Aboriginal mums and dads; and the *Deadly Tots* project has produced an adaptation of the flipchart for Aboriginal families - *Love, Yarn, Sing, Read, Play*.

www.families.nsw.gov.au/resources/love-sing.htm - accessed 20/01/2012.

Nixon, D & Gould, K 1996, *Emerging: Child Development in the First Three Years (2nd ed.)*, Katoomba, Social Sciences Press.

Nixon, D & Aldwinkle, M 1997, *Exploring: Child Development from Three to Six Years*, Katoomba, Social Sciences Press.

Nixon, D & Gould, K (Eds.) 2000, *Extending: Child Development from Five to Twelve Years*, Katoomba, Social Sciences Press.

Notes

Notes