

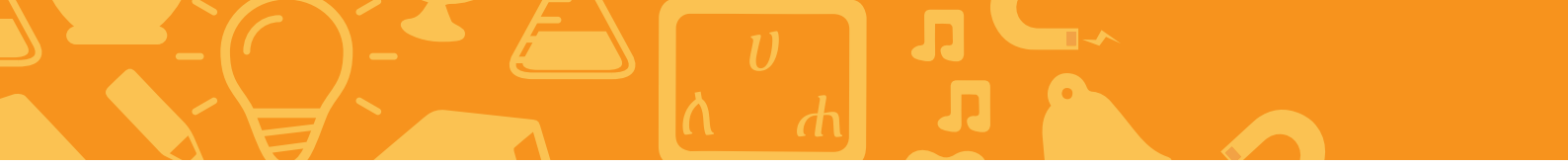
# Assessment and Support for Students with Special Needs in Pre-primary Schools



Federal Ministry of Education  
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia  
2017



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND





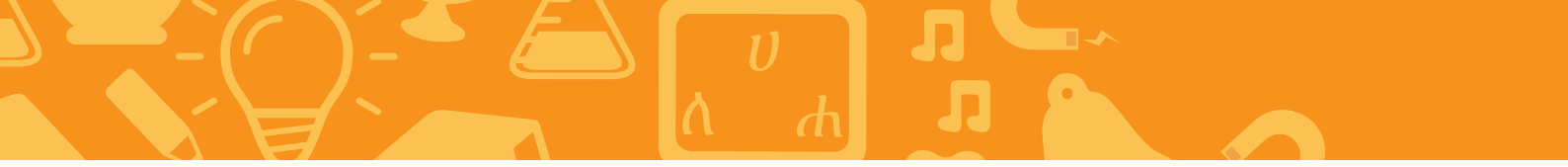
## Acknowledgments:

This work presented has been carried out by Dr. Yirgashewa Bekele Abdi and edited by Dr. Jan Šiška.

Insights and feedback have been received from Mohammed Abubeker, Solomon Gizachew, Degefa Abdi, Aemiro Tadesse, Ali Sani, Aleymayehu Woldekirkos, Tamrat Woldegebriel, Meseret Bekele, Bultossa Hirko, Bonsa Tola, Mulualem Mekonen, Olani Wakjira, Alemayehu Teklemarram, Berhanu Dendenea and Dr. Julie Beadle-Brown.

Layout designed by Kaleb Belete

Supported by Bilateral Cooperation Project between Ethiopia and Finland  
“Enhancing Capacity of Teacher Education and Resource Centers in Ethiopia  
2013-2017”





# Table of Contents

Background.....	7
Identification in the classroom.....	8
How to use the toolkit.....	9
Purpose of the toolkit.....	10
Objectives of the toolkit.....	11
Identification and support of children with delayed motor development...12	
Assessment and support for delay gross motor development.....	12
Assessment and support for delay fine motor development.....	15
Assessment and support of speech and language development.....	18
Assessment and support of delay speech development.....	19
Assessment and support of delay language development.....	20
Assessment and support of cognitive development.....	23
Assessment and support of delay social and emotional development.....	27
Literacy and numeracy Orientation.....	30

## List of Tables

Table 1, Indicators of delay gross motor development.....	13
Table 2, Indicators of fine motor delay.....	15
Table 3. Indicators of delay speech development.....	18
Table 4. Indicators of delay language development.....	21
Table 5. Indicators for delay cognitive development.....	24
Table 6. Indicators of delay social and emotional development.....	28



# I. Background

The trend in low socioeconomic countries is for less attention to be paid to helping children to access pre-primary education. Research has ascertained that pre-primary education is fundamental in promoting the overall development of children and is an inexpensive way of investing in education (Calman and Tarr-Whelan, 2005). It has been suggested that investing in pre-primary education is not only of benefit to the children but also paves the way for future contribution to the nation's economic development where this group will be taxpaying citizens rather than being dependent on the State (Calman and Tarr-Whelan, 2005). High quality early education facilitates better functioning at school, lays the foundations for children to be able to earn money in the future and reduces the likelihood that they will show behavioral problems in their life (Ingleson and Lambert, 2007; Calman and Tarr-Whelan, 2005). The pre-primary years are important for stimulating development and children who get access to quality pre-primary education are less likely to fail in their future education (Hurlock, 2006). In contrast, children who don't get early schooling were found to fall behind and become less successful (Calman and Tarr-Whelan, 2005).

The first few years of life (from 1-6 years of ages) are crucial for all children because the foundations for development such as physical, mental, language, social and emotional are laid during this developmental age (Cariappa and Dang, 2005). It is also pointed out that access to pre-primary settings stimulates the development of children in general and social, language, literacy and numeracy skills in particular. This then lays the foundation for successful schooling and has vital benefit to children at-risk of learning difficulties (Ingleson and Lambert, 2007). Exposure to pre-primary setting provides an opportunity for children to identify their basic values, attitudes, skills, behaviors and habits which can have a long-lasting and positive impact on their future life. These children will be less likely to need special needs education services in their further schooling (UNESCO, 2008).

One of the indicators of high quality early education is the provision of identification, assessment and appropriate support where all children benefit from the service. In the absence of such basic services, children miss the opportunity for early identification of developmental barriers and related supports. In the absence of early intervention, it is harder to help children to achieve their maximum potential

and reach their maximum development and succeed in their education. Missing the crucial time for development also in turn affects their future livelihood and makes them dependent and less productive citizens.

The trend in Ethiopia is for teachers working with pre-primary age children to be poorly equipped to identify learning needs and potential and to addressing those needs. As a result, most pre-primary age children with special needs don't get the opportunity to attend a pre-primary setting and even those who attend don't get the necessary support. Hence, this toolkit aims to support teachers to identify, assess and support children with special needs.



## Good teachers inspire hope and instill love of learning

### 1.1. Identification

Teachers can identify delay in development during their interaction with children and by observing the performance of children during their participation in various activities. Interacting with children informs teachers on the status of language development, speech production and socialization and related behaviors. In addition, teachers need to observe children when they are interacting and playing with their peers. The observation also informs teachers on the situation of gross and fine motor development and coordination. Generally, teachers working at pre-primary setting need to be a critical and purposeful observer so that they can get the opportunity to identify children with special needs who can benefit from appropriate assessment and provision of the necessary support. It is also important to have a portfolio for each child and record children's background history collected from family as well as teachers' observations and concerns that may require further assessment and support.



## 1.2. How to use the toolkit

The toolkit intended for use in pre-primary settings and it is an instrument that helps teachers to build new skills on how to identify developmental delay and ways of supporting the child. The toolkit relies on the developmental expectations for pre-primary age children (age 5-6). The toolkit also helps teachers to stimulate and accelerate the basic developmental foundations of children such as physical, language, cognitive, social, literacy and numeracy skills.

The toolkit contains four major developmental domains, and fourteen sub-components and related indicators of delayed development. The major four areas contain physical, language, cognitive, and social and emotional concerns to be identified and supported for improvement. The specific sub-components under each major area help teachers to locate specific developmental features that need teachers' attention as a call for further assessment and support. Each developmental area included has its own focus of assessment and related support. If a child is identified as having more than one need (multiple disabilities), each need can be assessed separately according to the procedure stated in this toolkit. Procedures and contents used for one particular developmental need may be different from other needs but it is important to know that delay in one development area can affect the development of the other. Hence, although step-by-step addressing each need is vital based on priority, which means when the improvement of one skill helps the improvement of the other skill, give priority for such dominate skill provision.

Therefore, please note that you should follow the following steps on how to support children with special needs. First, identify the children's difficulty by observing, interacting with the children or interviewing the parents and also talk to other teachers who have experience of the focus children. Second, make some notes about the features of developmental delay that attracts your attention (the teacher). Third, refer to the toolkit and identify the major developmental area with which the children's need is associated (check Tables 1-6). Fourth, find out to which specific sub-components the needs are related from the table and list of characteristics). Fifth, refer to the assessment and support part of the toolkit for the need identified. Sixth, provide assessment and support as required. One or more

indicators of delay may require assessment and support. Please pay attention to every indicator of developmental delay and each learning need stated in the toolkit.

Use parents as additional sources of information about each child and use various forms of assessment, such as observation, interview, interaction with the child, assessing performance, etc. Please remember that every child has his/her own unique potential, so it is important to identify the potential or special ability of each child so that you can strengthen those skills and abilities and use them to address any challenges in development or learning. If you believe that some children need individual planning for support, please find attached a template for an individual educational plan.



**Note:** Teachers are creative and may find innovative approaches, use your potential and skill to add more techniques that helps accelerating development. Work with parents or care givers and other teachers for continuous support.

Ethical consideration is the primary professional commitment that teachers should follow. Dear teachers would you please keep records of your students' with special need confidential and to be used only for improving educational achievement of the children. Thank you!

### 1.3. Purpose of the toolkit

The purpose of this toolkit is to empower teachers to be able to identify students' strength and learning needs and to support students with special needs so that they get the opportunity for appropriate education and become successful. Further, effective application of the toolkit will contributes to the quality of education provision, increases attendance and participation, and decreases drop out and repetition of students with special needs in education.



# Teaching is preventing failure

## **I.4.The objective of the toolkit is:**

- To empower pre-primary school teachers by equipping them with the knowledge and skill necessary for working inclusively in a preschool setting.
- To facilitate identification of the needs of children and provide support in a preschool setting
- To reduce the challenges of learning by providing support at an early age
- To help pre-primary school teachers with the assessment of strengths, skills , needs and barriers to learning
- To guide pre-primary school teachers to provide support for pre-primary children.
- To help pre-primary teachers to know how to refer children with serious conditions for further assessment.



## Teachers are visionaries

### **2. Identification and support for children with delay motor development**

Motor development relies on two major domains; fine motor and gross motor skills. Children naturally show step-by-step development and as their age increases the ability and skill to use the two motor skills help them to function independently. However, some children for various reasons may show a delay in motor development. Hence, identification, assessment and provision of the necessary support are vital for their future competence in education and their future life.

#### **2.1. Assessment and support of delay gross motor development**

Gross motor development relates to functioning and coordination of limbs (legs and arms), associated muscular strength and body balance. Some children may show delayed gross motor development that affects their mobility and general motor functioning needed for various daily activities appropriate to their age. Hence, teachers working in pre-primary settings need to pay attention to and identify the nature of any delay in the development of gross motor skills so that they can plan ways to promote children's strength and coordination. Table 1 contains indicators of delay in gross motor development that indicates a need for assessment and support.

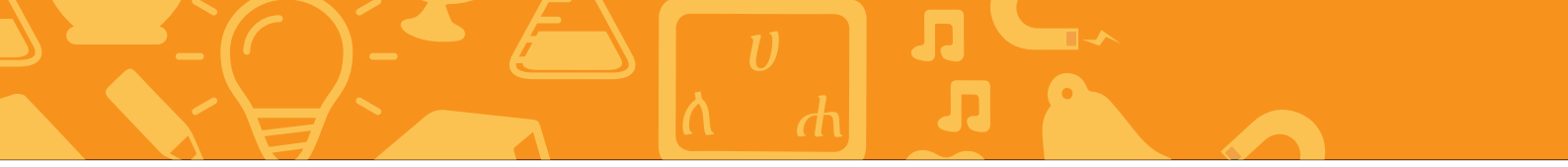
**Table 1. Indicators of delay gross motor development**

Motor area	Delay in specific skill	Yes observed	Not
Gross motor	Unsteady walk		
	Poor body balance		
	Uncoordinated running		
	Difficulty jumping over small objects		
	Difficulty walking up or down on stair		
	Fail when changing direction during running		
	Need assistance to walk		

The nature of motor difficulties can vary greatly. Some children might have difficulties in walking or using their hands or arms – in this case physiotherapy could help them strengthen their physical ability. Other children with mild to moderate delays may have some limits to their mobility and may have poor gross motor coordination. Teachers who are teaching sport or music have the opportunity to identify the indicators as these subjects often require physical participation.

During sports lessons children may be expected to run, play football or skip. During music lessons they may be expected to dance. These activities illustrate children’s physical ability or any delay. Teachers can also informally observe the target children during break time while they are playing. Children with a delay in gross motor development often fall during physical activities, loses their balance or bump into objects around. Sometimes they can walk but not rhythmically (an unsteady walk) and they might hurry in an uncoordinated manner. They might try to jump but be unable to jump over things that you would expect them to be able to jump over. When trying to walk up or down stairs, they tend to use their hands to support themselves. They may miss the ball when they are expected to kick it. They often trip over objects and fall. .

Children with gross motor delay need to receive skills training as part of play activities so that they are motivated to try. Some examples of training: stretch rope on the ground from one end to the other. Let children walk while keeping the line of the rope on the left and then on the right side alternating the side, keep the rope in between their legs while walking without stepping on the rope. Draw one bold line and let children learn to walk, stepping



on the line. . Help children to exercise standing on one leg, however, first allow them to practice standing near a wall and lean on a wall or table with one hand. Gradually, let them practice taking off the hand for a second until they can stand on one leg (alternating the left and right leg) without leaning on objects.

Place a ball on the ground close to the children where they stand initially, let them kick the ball from where they stand and after successful completion on the first task, then put the ball about one meter far from the children and let them walk and immediately kick the ball as they approaching. Place the ball further and further from the child on each attempt so that ultimately they learn to kicks the ball by running from some distance. This activity can also help sensory motor coordination (seeing, estimating and kicking). Hold the hand of the children and start running at a slow pace for a short distance. Let two children run short distances holding each other's hands and then help each child to run a short distance independently.

Show children to jump slowly on the spot where they stand. Initially don't insist to jump over objects or distance. Once they master the first, draw a line on the floor and let children learn to jump over the line, add one more line at a short distance and let children try to jump both lines at once. As you realize their ability, increase the distance considering their age and provide training to jump over small objects. Increase the size of the object as they achieve the simplest level but limit the size to what is appropriate for age and physical ability of each child. Provide training on how to walk up or down stairs. First, let children practice on a small box by standing with one foot for a few second and take off the foot and change to the other foot. Once they master this first skill take children to the stairs and practice step- by-step from one level of the stair to the second and so forth. However, when children show difficulty to perform independently holds their hand and walk up and down the stairs with them.

Some children may fall down when changing direction while walking or running. Start by getting them to practice turning their face and body from left to right, without moving their feet from where they are standing. Train them to walk around the table or chair once or twice, but pay attention since some children may fall due to balance problems. Provide training to turn to look back while walking by calling their name.

Instruct children to go and pick objects up from the floor and come back. Help them to take part in cultural dances that will also help to strengthen their coordination and fitness. Teachers are encouraged to use their creativity and curiosity to discover more techniques that are suitable to the age of children and the severity of their disability. If a child shows severe gross motor difficulties, suggest or advise parents' to take the child to the professional physiotherapy service or recommend that parents seek medical opinion on what kind of exercise would match the needs of the children.



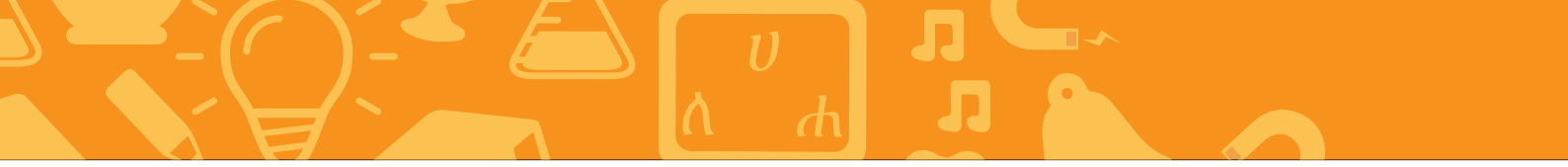
**No one describes best about children than their teachers**

## 2.2. Assessment and support of delay fine motor development

Fine motor development relates to manual dexterity (using hands or fingers for various activities effectively and independently). Pre-primary school children use their hands to perform various activities during play or school tasks. Teachers need to be good observers to identify the existence of a delay in fine motor development. Table 2 contains indicators of fine motor delay.

**Table 2. Indicators of fine motor delay**

Motor area	Specific skill	Yes observed	Not
Fine motor	Difficulty holding ball (appropriate size) by one hand		
	Difficulty throwing objects, ball		
	Poor catching ability		
	Difficulty bouncing ball		
	Difficulty shifting object from one hand to the other		
	Poor on holding pencil		
	Complain pain during tasks at hand.		
Appears clumsy on task requiring fingers role.			



Teachers can observe different types of delay fine motor development. The following section helps teachers to identify and support children with a delay in fine motor development. Fine motor skills help children to play, hold a pencil, hold their book or exercise book, clap and other many tasks. Hence, observing children's performance on fine motor tasks helps the provision of intervention for those who need. Some children may show a delay in fine motor development which may affect their school based performance. Some children show difficulty to hold small objects appropriate to their age such as ball, book, bag, and lunch box or be unable to hold a pencil properly or objects that they are expected to handle independently. These children often show fine motor clumsiness and weak functioning of their fingers or frequently complain that they have pain at their fingers when performing tasks using their hands.

Hence, exercise to strengthen fine motor skills is vital. Training on using their fingers helps to strengthen hand function. Example: spin/rotate objects such as a ball, pencil, cents, round objects. Turning an increased number of pages of books, frequently stretching and contracting fingers, bouncing ball with fingers of both hands at a time or interchangeably. Train children how to hold writing tools whether they started learning to write or not because this skill needs to be mastered earlier than the actual writing task. Use small balls to help children learn to catch things when throwing to them and let them practice throwing small objects to others. Throwing and catching helps various development dimensions; fine motor, visual functioning, and estimating the distance and direction that indicates cognitive performance.

In addition, passing a small ball/object from one hand to the other using their palm has also multiple advantages such as sensory motor coordination related to visual efficiency, eye- hand coordination and keeping patterns of moving ball/object from one hand to the other. Children with motor clumsiness can also benefit from fine motor exercise or frequent exposure to the tasks that require age appropriate fine motor involvement such as; volleyball, exploring materials of different textures, painting, drawing, pushing or pulling small objects by their fingers and combing hair. Some children may have cramp in their fingers when working with objects and writing tools or may have difficulty in estimating the



amount of force they need to apply with their fingers when doing tasks. Hence, it is important to provide exercise on gentle involvement in fine motor tasks so that they don't experience pain in their fingers during required activities.

There are children who show poor sensory motor coordination. Some of the indicators are: poor eye-hand coordination where they may not be effective in tasks that require visual and fine motor involvement at a time such as zipping or buttoning clothes, putting on socks or tying shoe laces (if applicable). There are children who have difficulty in coordinating their sensory ability with their fine motor ability for example, combining hearing ability (for those who are not hearing impaired) with both visual ability and fine motor skills. Children can listen to an instruction while at the same time observing what is going on around them.

Support the child to become more independent in dressing by developing fine motor skills: use (child-sized) scissors to practice cutting pages following a set line; practice picking up small items such as small stones or coins; assemble simple puzzles produced at schools; practice copying simple shapes, like a circle or square, painting or coloring in the picture; and practice drawing real objects. Teachers are expected to help to work out to what they should pay attention to when trying to, for example, listen and do a physical/manual task at the same time. The teacher might stand at the back of the classroom and inform children not to look at them but rather to look at what is presented on the blackboard such as a picture and ask them about the picture. Children listen to their teachers and at the same time look at the picture to answer the question then teachers can remove the picture and present different objects and repeat the experience. Instruct children to draw the picture or do tasks simultaneously while listening the order given from their teachers.



## Teachers invest worthy resource

## 2.3. Assessment and support of speech and language development

Speech and language are the most valuable communication tools for human beings and amongst everything else it is crucial that pre-primary age children develop this skill at the expected level since at this age (5-6) children need to learn their environment more through language use than by other means. Hence, identifying and supporting delays in speech and/or language development is a key in alleviating or reducing its negative impact on the academic, social and future life of children. The toolkit helps teachers to be aware about the indicators of delays in speech and language development and related support. Table 3 contains indicators of delays in speech development

**Table 3. Indicators of delay speech development**

Area of communication	Specific skill	Yes observed	Not
Speech articulation	Difficulty producing the expected speech sounds Example: distorting sounds, substituting sounds, omitting sounds, adding unnecessary sounds.		
Speech fluency	Difficulty producing smooth speech flow, speech flow interrupted. Example: sound repetition, pausing, sound prolongation etc.		
Speech voice	Producing speech voice inappropriate to the age / gender and expectations Example: very high or low pitch, nasal		

### **2.3.1. Assessment and support of delay speech development**

Speech is considered as a physical production of language and some delay in speech development is common during early childhood and is considered as part of the developmental process which is expected to improve as the age of the child increases. As the time children have reached 5 years of age, it is expected that speech production becomes less affected by articulation errors, excessive interruption of speech flow or fluency and unexpected voice to the age and gender. Identifying delay in each of these three of areas is discussed separately.

Delay in speech articulation shows one or more indicators. Speech sound distortion is when the children try to produce certain sounds where it slightly changes from the intended sounds. Some children show a mild level of speech error and the listener can understand it but it sounds wrong. In severe cases the sound may seem foreign to the language the children are speaking. Some children may omit some sounds as they find it difficult to produce or recognize that particular speech sound. Some children may substitute speech sounds that resemble the original sound but is still clearly different. There are also children who add unnecessary sounds in their speech which is not common for users of the language.

Once the teachers identify the existence of one or more articulation errors as outlined above, support provision is vital for improvement. Please note that, in case of distortion on some speech sound, identify the particular sound and help children practice the proper speech sound. Provide models, when children produce distortion error in their speech, take corrective action immediately in a positive way that does not harm children. Improvement is most likely is support is given early. In the case of the omission of speech sounds, some children may have difficulty to discriminate the particular sound in their speech or in the speech of others.

When supporting the child to eliminate the omission of speech sounds, teacher need to first of all identify the type of sound children are omitting. Initially auditory discrimination of such omitted sounds is important therefore, encourage the children to listen to the sounds attentively followed by training on producing that particular speech sound separately and then use it in words. Substitution of speech sound often happens when children have difficulty to produce the sound. Some speech sounds may require vocal cord vibration or effort of the tongue with the support of jaws which

may be difficult for some children. As a result, some children may have challenges with auditory discrimination where they have difficulties in identifying sounds that are similar but yet different, such as (Λ:Λ:η:η). Hence, working on auditory discrimination on the identified sounds is important. Once, children are able to identify the difference in the sounds by listening, then they can try producing the sounds by themselves. Regarding addition of unnecessary speech sounds, teachers can help children not to produce the sound by continuous monitoring their speech production.

Speech fluency is another important skill required which helps children to smoothly produce their speech. There are children who produce interrupted speech flow due to stuttering or cluttering. Stuttering children show involuntary repetition of sounds, involuntary pauses at the beginning of their speech, prolongation of some sounds and as a result slow production of speech. Stuttering children can be greatly affected and stuttering can be aggravated by negative discrimination, judgment, bullying or teasing. Stuttering involves involuntary speech musculature rigidity and has the affected child has difficulty with relaxed breathing during speaking. Hence, teachers need to provide training for children on how to relax their diaphragms and thus their breathing and then gently increase vocal fold tension at the beginning of words and reduce articulator pressure. Once they start speaking smoothly, help them to increase the rate of speaking to the level accepted. Encourage and motivate the children to interact with their peers. Raise awareness that negative discrimination increases stuttering and avoid bullying or teasing from peers and teachers.



## Teaching is tolerance, patience and hope

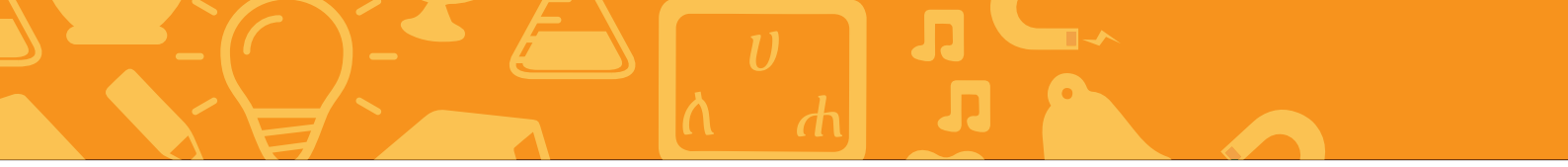
### 2.3.2. Assessment and support of delay language development

Children at age 5-6 are expected to interact orally using their first language. However, some children may have delay in language development and may have difficulty communicating effectively. Hence, it is vital to identify the nature of

the language difficulty and support improvement. There are two major area of language skill expected to develop; the receptive and expressive ability. Some children may have receptive ability but may not be able to orally express due to various reasons while others may have receptive difficulty which also affects their expressive ability. Those with difficulties in receptive language are often mistakenly labeled as deaf, since they don't understand or have difficulty in understanding what others say to them. Many studies agree that as play skills develops so do language skill. As such develops pre-primary teachers should pay attention to the way children communicate during play or during interaction in the class room. These help teachers to identify children with language delay and note what methods of communication they are currently using. Table 4 helps teachers to identify which type of language difficulty the children may have.

**Table 4. Indicators of delay language development.**

Area of language delay	Specific skill	Yes observed	Not
Expressive difficulty	Understand what others said to them but don't speak		
	Seems deaf but have hearing ability example (turn face when name called from back)		
	Do what others tell them to do but don't produce speech.		
Receptive difficulty	Don't understand or have difficulty to understand what others say to them.		
	They hear sounds from their surrounding or speech of others but don't discriminate the message hold.		



At pre-primary setting children with expressive or receptive difficulties are not recognized due to various reasons: the teachers lack awareness and skill to identify and support these difficulties; teachers may assume some children don't want to speak at school due to shyness or other behavior. As a result, these children may not get the necessary support. The children are often labeled as deaf because of a lack of oral communication. To identify expressive difficulty, call the children's name from behind and if they turn their face but don't say yes to your calling, this can be taken as one indicator. Ask them to do a task but without using any gestures or signing to indicate what they should do. If they perform correctly although they don't speak, it indicates that the child can hear and understand but not speak. Hence, the support needs to focus on primarily helping speech production.

Once the teachers identify the nature of the difficulty, providing support for improvement is important. For children with expressive language difficulty, train vocal cord vibration; let children touch the teacher's neck where vibration happens during speaking and tell them to try by themselves until they feel vibration that will help them to produce sound although it may seem meaningless at the beginning. Once they learn sound production, teach them words to increase vocabulary mastery; first individual sounds in words then the whole words. Support awareness of classroom peers and avoid bullying or teasing. Since assistance from peers is vital, assign volunteer students who can help the children with expressive difficulties. Encourage play sessions that initiate oral conversation where children narrate some events and others listen and try to interact orally.

Children with receptive language delay on the other hand may have the ability to produce speech but due to a delay in receptive skills they may have difficulty with comprehension of spoken language and vocabulary development. As a result, the children with receptive language delays also show expressive difficulty. The children can hear but have difficulty to understand the message when someone talks to them. To identify these children, tell them orally to do an easy task but don't show any non-verbal indicators (gestures, eye gaze, etc.). They may show confusion or do something different than what you are expecting. Example: if you tell them to come to the front seat they may stand still or walk out of the classroom. Although they have expressive potential they may not produce speech or produce meaningless speech, since expression can be affected by receptive skill level.



## Teaching is loving, sharing and creating

Children with receptive language difficulty often show expressive difficulty as well however, the focus of the support needs to be initially on the receptive ability. Pictures with written words and related verbal explanation are one accepted approach to enhance understanding. For example; a picture of bread and say the word “bread”. Presenting real objects and teaching the names of objects. Once the children understand certain words encourage them to name the object and when mastery takes place, move to other new words and meanings. It is a step-by-step task which starts from teaching words and meanings supported by flashcards, pictures or even real objects if possible and then move on teaching two words with meaning and so forth. Teachers can use various examples to enhance language comprehension ability. Identify the strengths of children and use them for your support strategy.

### **2.4. Assessment and support for children with delay cognitive development**

Cognition is defined as someone’s ability to learn and understand, think and solve problems. Cognitive ability is highly dependent on children’s cognitive potential and the extent of the environmental stimulation. Children who show a delay in cognitive development are likely to have difficulty with academic learning. Assessment of cognitive development needs to consider the children’s culture and language and it should be age appropriate. Hence, children at age 5-6 can benefit a lot from cognitive stimulation which promotes their understanding and learning. Difficulty to understand age appropriate concepts which relates to children’s culture and language is highly susceptible to cognitive delay. Table 5 helps teachers to find out about the indicators of cognitive delay

**Table 5. Indicators of delay cognitive development.**

<b>Cognitive indicators</b>	<b>Specific skill</b>	<b>Yes observed</b>	<b>Not</b>
Short attention span	Easily distracted by other event around		
	Tend to leave tasks at hand shortly		
Memory (short term)	Forget what they were told or shown shortly (within an hour time or less)		
Imitation	Poor imitation skill from what others are doing well		
Language	Slow language development as compared to their age group and expectation for their age.		
Poor understanding	Shows difficulty to understand simple concepts appropriate to their age where their peers can easily understand		

The teachers may have concerns about some children in relation to some of the issues listed in table 5. In such cases, teachers need to assess further to confirm the existence of cognitive delay. It is important to assess all five components of cognitive indicators listed above since it strengthens the decision on what support to provide. Assessment related to the existence of attention span difficulties can be made during interaction in your classroom. Keep a notebook with you at all times in the classroom. Get the attention of all the children in your classroom, show a picture which uses concepts already familiar to the child and give and give explanation. While doing this observe the child about whom you are concerned to see whether he/she is watching and following what you do or whether they are doing something else, distracting others, talking about other events. Even after you try to draw their attention they may become distracted more easily than other children due to poor attention span. These children can only focus on event in the short term and don't stay focused for long, easily giving up on what they have been asked to do.



To assess the existence of poor short term memory the following example may help teachers. Example: show the child a red marker and tell him/her to look at it, wait for approximately 3 to 4 seconds and then hide the marker and mix with other two other markers of different colors and after ten minutes ask the child to choose the marker that you show him/her earlier. Check if the child identifies the marker correctly or not. Repeat similar examples and if the child chooses the wrong one repeatedly consider him/her as having a short term memory difficulty. Tell them a very short story orally and ask them to retell it. Show them picture cards and bring back the picture with other picture cards and ask the children to identify the picture you showed them earlier. Use your own creativity to do similar assessments.

Regarding poor imitation, most children often imitate what their teachers or other peers are doing and then try by themselves such as cleaning their nose, sitting properly in the classroom, respecting teachers, welcoming teachers, table manners, etc. However, some children may have poor imitation skills so that they have to be told or shown how to do it. Some may not do it easily unless repeatedly shown how to do so. In addition, they may show delayed language development – they may have poor vocabulary development, make grammatical errors or may confuse singular with plural. Example: Mom dad is coming, mom give candy yesterday.

Regarding assessing the level of their understanding, age appropriate concepts can be used. Because of lower cognitive capacity, these children don't understand most age appropriate concepts including concepts included in the pre-primary curriculum. Example: identifying and categorizing colors based on similarity or differences, ordering objects presented from smaller to the biggest, categorizing objects presented according to their shape (circle, triangle, square...). Ask them about what will happen if people do not drink water (or eat food) for a long time? Such type of questions may require thinking about results and consequences on what they were asked, which assesses the understanding of the children. If children fail to do this activity and also fail other similar activities, then consider them as needing some support to strengthen their understanding.



**Teachers identify potential and ability of children than any person close to children**



**Note:** Children with severe cognitive delay may also show poor physical development, advise parents to visit health institution to bring what kind of physical activities can support strengthening physical development and functioning. This is because these children may have health problem such as heart and breathing that requires consultation of health institutions. If there is community- based rehabilitation (CBR) organization, please consult them as they provide free service for such children.

To stimulate and strengthen cognitive ability considering the above difficulties, the following ideas help the teacher to support children with a delay in cognitive development.

- Facilitate peer support by pairing the students with others who perform better.
- Arrange small group activities where the child contributes like any other group member and encourage equal and active participation in the group.
- Give problem solving tasks depending on the ability level of the target children. Example: sorting mixed objects by its identity, small rocks from sand; Wheat from bean mix etc.
- Break down longer or complicated new tasks into small steps. Introduce or show each step separately.
- Watch when the students do the first step and give feedback. If correct allow the next step and so on.
- Reduce long verbal directions and accompany verbal instructions or explanations with other methods such as showing pictures, models, flash cards or any other tool appropriate to the concept presented.
- Watch where the students are focusing and reduce/eliminate distractor around.
- Life skills are crucial for students with a delay in cognitive development, introduce life skills to encourage the students to perform independently. Example: toilet use, washing face and hand, dressing, proper eating and steps



they use etc.

- Teach the children social skills. Example: friendship, loving each other, supporting each other, respecting each other, respecting elderly etc.
- Identify the strengths of children and encourage them by involving them and allowing them the opportunity to demonstrate in the classroom.
- Facilitate good learning by performing a task “hands-on.” Example: show picture or real object, provide drawing materials and encourage drawing the picture or the object presented.
- Use visual aids since children with delayed cognitive skills learn best by doing where they can see, touch or do.
- Encourage classmates to clearly tell a student if there is a behavior they don’t like, rather than teasing about it. For example, suggest that the classmate explains, “I don’t like it when you bang the table,” rather the child should ask politely rather than banging the table or that the classmate should explain rather than just asking politely.

## **2.5. Assessment and support of delay social and emotional development**

The social and emotional development of children is crucial since human beings are, by nature, expected to socialize, interact together, and express one’s emotions. During the early years developing social skills help children to play and establish friendships. On the other hand, some children may show delays social and emotional skill development. Hence, early identification and support helps children reduce difficulties in their future social and emotional development.

The social skill development among children can easily be observed by the teachers in pre-primary setting. Observations when children interact or do social activities such as play can inform the status of their social skills. Table 6 contains indicators to check the existence or absence of a delay in social and/or emotional development.

**Table 6. Indicators of delay social and emotional development.**

Indicators	Specific skill	Yes observed	Not
Social	Beating peers		
	Insulting others		
	Poor turn taking play		
	Difficulty establishing friendship or work/ play in group		
	Shy		
	Introverted		
	Lonely		
Emotion	Unhappy		
	Sadness		
	Low self-esteem, Example: (other are better than me, I am ugly)		
	Aggression		
	Fear		
	Often alone		
	Low affective expression		

Pre-primary schools are essential to help children regulate their behavior to what is expected by the school and by their peers, promotes individual overall growth, perpetuates social expectations and promotes good emotional development. To master such skills, the role of the pre-primary setting and the skill of the teachers are fundamental. Children with poor social skills tend to fight with their peers, have difficulties to remain calm and peaceful in group play or activities, and are often rejected by peer group. On the other hand, there are children who find it hard to be close to other children, prefer to stay alone, or are very shy. They have difficulties expressing their emotions such as telling someone (their teachers, parents, siblings) that they love them, how they are, feeling or expressing their happiness, smiling.

Teachers are expected to be good role models so that children can imitate them - it is quite natural for children to imitate adults. Teachers need to be aware that children watch the way they dress, how they present themselves, the way they walk, talk, behave or socialize. Hence, teachers need to be good models to help children imitate appropriate behavior. Those with a delay in social and emotional development can benefit from their teachers socializing behavior and emotional expression. The following can help teachers to approach the task of improving the social and emotional development of children.

- Have a smile on your face when talking to children.
- Talk to them about the friends you have; that you love your friends, playing with friends, sharing, and supporting each other when needed.
- Don't influence or expect children to tell you about what you told them – it is an opportunity for them to learn from your experiences rather than something you are specifically teaching them.
- Inform them about the rules of playing with others, such as respecting turn taking when necessary, not fighting but express verbally what they want to do.
- Teach children how to communicate respectfully, give them examples. Example: (would you please, thank you, etc...)
- Appreciate their effort whatever the level attained, because that performance and teachers feedback are the stepping stone for further improvement.
- Encouragement is also one means of accelerating skill development; encourage them. Example: (keep it up, good performance, hope to see more...)
- Teach them on the importance of appreciation, Example: (I like it, you look great, you are clever, you are so kind, this is very kind of you...).
- Let children discuss what it means by happiness and listen and share your view of happiness with them and the importance of feeling happy
- Let children discuss what it means by sadness and listen and share your view of sadness with them and when people feel sad.
- Talk to them how happiness or sadness affects people and how reducing sadness is important to the health of people.
- Talk to children about fear and what they fear and when, this helps teachers to know if there is a need to help reduce fear and its causes.
- Tell them that you love them and ask them to love you; this may not be easy for some children to respond to immediately but it can help children learn how to express their emotions.
- Play games with the children.
- Show your affection to children; be close to them, hug them, etc...

- Don't show disappointment in front of children.
- When children do something wrong, inform them of the correct way of doing it and don't emphasize their mistake.



**Note:** Teachers and valuable models to be imitated by children at school, try to be a good model both socially and emotionally. Being a role model by itself is a good teaching or training incidence.

### 3. Literacy and numeracy Orientation

As children reach the upper level of the kindergarten program (at age 6) and prepare to start formal primary school in the following year, it is vital to introduce literacy and numeracy awareness and to assess the difficulties in mastering these skills. The following helps teachers on orienting and introducing basic skill that helps preparation to start primary school education. Dear teacher would you please help the children in developing the following skills before they start primary school education;

- Writing from left to right
- How to hold a pencil
- How to keep with the lines in an exercise book
- Use of pages in an exercise book and keeping a page margin
- Help proper body position while writing.
- Reading from left to right
- Introduce letters and related letter names to be used by children.

- Introduce numbers and related names to be used by the children.
- Help them to orally memorize numbers at basic level (up to 100)
- Help them to orally count numbers and how one number is bigger or smaller than others; present real objects to orient number issues such as stick, pencils, and rulers.

Dear teacher, inform the children that texts have messages and read them a story supported by text and picture; read them the story and then show them the picture about the story and narrate the pictures since it holds similar story to what you read.



**Children are hopes of our future and teachers are the best investors of our future.**

## References

- Alberta Education (2006). *Effective Student Assessment and Evaluation in the Classroom*. Edmonton, Alberta
- Calman, J. L. and Tarr-Whelan, L. (2005). *Early Childhood Education for All: A Wise Investment*. Legal Momentum, New York, NY
- Cariappa, M. & Dang, G. (2005) *Meeting Early Challenges: Special Step for a Special Child*. New Delhi: UBSPD CfBT, (2014).
- Davies, A. (2002). The social component of language teacher education. In H. Trappes-Lomax, & G. Ferguson (Ed.), *Language in Language teacher education* (pp: 49-66). Amsterdam: John Benjamin's B.V.
- Hooten, G. R. (2009). *The effect of handwriting, spelling, and T-units on holistic scoring with implication for dysgraphia*. ProQuest LLC. UAS.
- Hurlock, E.B. (2006) .*Child Development (6th Ed)*. New York: Tata McGraw-Hill com.
- Ingleson, L. and Lambert, K. (2007). *Supporting Early Childhood Teachers through the use of Professional Learning Communities. Linking People and Resources*, Norfolk.
- UNRWA (2013). *Teacher's Toolkit for Identifying and responding to Student's Divers Need*.
- Center for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching.
- UNESCO, (2008). *The Contribution of Early childhood education to a sustainable society*. France, Paris



**Annex**

Individual Educational Plan form (IEP)

Academic year \_\_\_\_\_

**Student's Profile**

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_ : Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Achievement level or rank. . \_\_\_\_\_

Medical History \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_

Special Needs History and previous service provided. \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual Educational plan**

Student's Strength \_\_\_\_\_ .

Student's Needs \_\_\_\_\_ .

Regular class service needs \_\_\_\_\_

Resource room service needs. \_\_\_\_\_ .

Type of service needed. \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_

Education. \_\_\_\_\_

Health. \_\_\_\_\_

Social. \_\_\_\_\_

Resource needed : \_\_\_\_\_

Others role \_\_\_\_\_

