



MODULE

1

Welcome to the World of Early Childhood Development

ESTIMATED STUDY TIME: 2½ HOURS



Learn
with purpose



Apply in
real life



Keep children
safe



Grow with
confidence



Become
work-ready

Suggested Study Plan

Session 1 (45 minutes)

- Lesson 1: What is Early Childhood Development?
- Lesson 2: What is an ECD Centre?

Session 2 (45 minutes)

- Lesson 3: Why the Early Years Matter
- Lesson 4: Who Works in an ECD Centre?

Session 3 (60 minutes)

- Lesson 5: A Day in an ECD Centre
- Lesson 6: Working Together as a Team
- Activities
- Knowledge Check
- End-of-Module Assessment

"Every child deserves a safe place to learn, play and grow."

Why This Module Matters

Every day in an ECD centre provides opportunities to help children learn, explore and feel valued.

Before you can become an effective ECD Assistant, it is important to understand what Early Childhood Development is, why the early years are so important and how ECD centres work in partnership with families to support children's learning, development and wellbeing.

This module introduces you to the world of Early Childhood Development and the important role you will play as part of the ECD team.

By completing this module, you will build a strong foundation for everything that follows. The knowledge and skills you develop here will help you understand children's learning, development and your important role within an ECD centre.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

- Explain what Early Childhood Development means.
- Describe the purpose of an ECD centre.
- Explain why the early years are important.
- Describe the different roles within an ECD centre.
- Explain why parents and families are children's first and most important teachers.
- Describe a typical daily routine in an ECD centre.
- Explain why teamwork is important.
- Recognise your role in supporting children's learning, safety and wellbeing.



Lesson 1

What is Early Childhood Development?

Why This Lesson Matters

The early years are a time of remarkable growth, learning and development. Understanding Early Childhood Development (ECD) will help you recognise why your role as an ECD Assistant is so important. Every positive interaction you have with a child can support their learning, confidence and wellbeing.

Why This Lesson Matters

Early Childhood Development, often called **ECD**, refers to the care, learning, growth and development of young children from birth until they enter formal schooling.

Children grow and learn every day through caring relationships, play, good nutrition, positive experiences and opportunities to explore the world around them.

Learning does not happen only during planned activities.

Children learn while talking, playing, eating, singing, listening to stories, solving problems and interacting with other people.

As an ECD Assistant, you help create these learning opportunities every day.



REMEMBER

Every interaction with a child is an opportunity to support learning and development.

The Five Developmental Domains

Children develop in many ways at the same time.

Physical Development

Developing movement, balance, coordination and control of the body.

Cognitive Development

Learning to think, remember, solve problems and understand the world.

Language Development

Learning to listen, understand, communicate and express ideas.

Social Development

Learning to build relationships, cooperate, share and work with others.

Emotional Development

Learning to understand feelings, develop confidence and manage emotions.

All five developmental domains work together.

For example, when children play a ball game together, they are developing physical skills, language, social skills, thinking skills and confidence at the same time



IN PRACTICE

Sipho is building a tower with recycled boxes.

As he builds, he counts the boxes, talks to his friend about his ideas and tries again when the tower falls over.

Although Sipho is playing, he is also developing thinking skills, language, coordination, persistence and confidence.

This is why play is such an important part of Early Childhood Development

Every Child Develops at Their Own Pace

Every child is unique.

Some children learn certain skills earlier than others.

Some children need more time or additional support.

As an ECD Assistant, your role is to encourage every child, celebrate progress and provide support without comparing one child to another.

Activity 1

Growing Every Day

Look at the four pictures provided by your facilitator or in the learner guide.
For each picture, write one skill the child is developing.

List the skills being developed



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Suggested responses

Possible answers include:

- Reaching and grasping
- Walking or running
- Speaking and listening
- Looking at books
- Problem solving
- Playing with other



SAFETY FIRST

Always check that the learning environment is safe before children begin their activities.

Always be aware of possible hazards in the environment and report any concerns immediately.

Looking Ahead

Now that you understand what Early Childhood Development is, the next lesson explores the important role ECD centres play in helping children learn, develop and thrive.

Lesson 2

What is an ECD Centre?

Why This Lesson Matters

An ECD centre is much more than a place where children spend the day. It is a place where children are cared for, protected and encouraged to learn through play, relationships and everyday experiences. It is also a place where families and ECD professionals work together to support each child's growth and development.

Understanding how an ECD centre works will help you become a confident and effective member of the ECD team.

What is an ECD Centre

An **Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre** is a place where young children receive care and opportunities to learn and develop.

Children attend ECD centres for many different reasons. Some parents or caregivers work during the day. Others choose an ECD programme because they want their children to learn, play and spend time with other children.

A quality ECD centre provides:

- a safe and welcoming environment
- caring and responsive adults
- opportunities to learn through play
- healthy daily routines
- nutritious meals or snacks, where provided
- opportunities for children to develop socially, emotionally, physically, cognitively and through language.

Although ECD centres differ in size, resources and location, every quality programme aims to provide children with safe, caring and meaningful learning experiences.

Some are large and well resourced. Others are small community-based centres with limited resources.

Some are in cities, some in towns and others in rural communities.

Although ECD centres may look different, they all share the same purpose: helping children learn, develop and thrive.



REMEMBER

Quality Early Childhood Development is not measured by expensive buildings or toys.

It is measured by caring relationships, thoughtful teaching and meaningful learning experiences.

Families and the ECD Centre

Parents and families are children's first and most important teachers.

Children begin learning long before they attend an ECD centre. They learn through everyday experiences with their parents, caregivers, grandparents, brothers, sisters and other family members.

An ECD centre builds on this foundation.

When families and the ECD team work together, children receive consistent support at home and at the ECD centre.

As an ECD Assistant, you help strengthen this partnership by:

- greeting families warmly
- treating everyone with dignity and respect
- listening carefully
- sharing information with the ECD practitioner when appropriate

recognising that families know their children best



IN PRACTICE

Every morning, Amina's grandfather brings her to the ECD centre.

He tells the ECD practitioner that Amina has become very interested in birds and enjoys watching them in the garden at home.

Later that morning, the practitioner and ECD Assistant encourage the children to observe birds in the outdoor play area and talk about the different colours and sounds they notice.

Amina is excited to share what she already knows.

By listening to her grandfather, the ECD team was able to build on Amina's interests and strengthen the connection between home and the ECD centre.



Think About It: *How did listening to Amina's grandfather help create a meaningful learning experience?*

Learning Happens Throughout the Day

Many people think children learn only during planned activities. In fact, children learn from every experience.

During a typical day they may:

- greet their friends
- choose activities
- build with blocks
- paint and draw
- listen to stories
- sing songs
- enjoy outdoor play
- wash their hands
- share meals
- solve problems
- help tidy the classroom.

Each of these experiences helps children develop important knowledge, skills and attitudes.



SAFETY FIRST

A safe environment allows children to learn with confidence.

As an ECD Assistant, always look out for possible hazards.

These may include:

- wet floors
- broken equipment
- unsafe gates
- exposed electrical cords
- sharp objects
- hot food or drinks within children's reach
- unsafe toilet areas.

If you notice something that could place a child at risk, take immediate action if it is safe to do so and report the concern to the ECD practitioner or the appropriate person.

Young children should always be appropriately supervised, especially near water, cooking areas, roads and toilet facilities

Activity 2

What Makes an ECD Centre a Good Place for Children?

Imagine you are visiting an ECD centre for the first time.

Tick the things you would expect to see.

- ☐ Children being greeted warmly.
- ☐ Adults speaking respectfully to children.
- ☐ Clean learning and play areas.
- ☐ Children washing their hands before meals.
- ☐ Safe indoor and outdoor play spaces.
- ☐ Adults supervising children carefully.
- ☐ Children playing, talking and exploring.
- ☐ Learning materials that children can use independently.

Suggested responses

You should have ticked every item.

All of these contribute to a quality ECD programme.

A good ECD centre is not only clean and safe. It is also welcoming, respectful and encourages children to learn through meaningful experiences



REMEMBER

Children thrive when they feel safe, valued and encouraged to explore.

As an ECD Assistant, you help create that environment every day

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will discover why the early years are so important and how the experiences children have today can influence their future learning, health and wellbeing.

Lesson 3

Why the Early Years Matter?

Why This Lesson Matters

The early years of a child's life lay the foundation for future learning, health and wellbeing.

As an ECD Assistant, you may not always see the long-term impact of your work. However, every conversation, every story, every game and every caring interaction helps children develop the skills they need for life.

Every Day Matters

From birth, children are learning about the world around them.

They learn when they are spoken to.

They learn when they are comforted.

They learn when they play.

They learn when they explore.

They even learn through everyday routines such as eating, washing their hands and getting dressed.

Young children are naturally curious. They learn best when they feel safe, loved and encouraged to explore.

This is why the work of an ECD centre is so important.



REMEMBER

Children are learning all the time, not only during planned activities.

Every interaction is an opportunity to support a child's development.

Learning Happens Through Relationships

Children learn from the people who care for them.

Parents, caregivers, grandparents, brothers, sisters and other family members are a child's first and most important teachers.

Long before a child attends an ECD centre, they have already learned many things at home. They have learned to recognise familiar faces, respond to voices, communicate their needs and begin exploring the world around them.

When a child starts attending an ECD centre, the learning continues.

The ECD practitioner and the ECD Assistant work in partnership with families to build on the strong foundation that has already been laid.

When families and the ECD team work together, children benefit



IN PRACTICE

Every morning, Ayanda's grandmother brings him to the ECD centre. She tells Nomsa that Ayanda has started counting the steps outside their house.

Nomsa smiles and says, "That is wonderful. Today we are going to play a counting game with bottle tops."

Later that afternoon, Nomsa tells Ayanda's grandmother how much he enjoyed the activity and suggests another simple counting game they can play at home.

Ayanda is learning both at home and at the ECD centre.

His family and the ECD team are working together to support his development

Every Child Can Learn

Every child is unique.

Children develop at different rates.

Some children need more time to learn new skills.

Some children need additional support.

Some children learn best by watching.

Others learn best by trying things for themselves.

A caring ECD team recognises and respects these differences.

As an ECD Assistant, your role is to encourage every child, celebrate effort and support each child to develop at their own pace

Activity 3

Small Actions, Big Difference

Read each situation.

Write one way an ECD Assistant could respond positively

Situation 1

A child is nervous on their first day at the ECD centre.

My Response

Suggested Response

Welcome the child with a warm smile and speak in a calm, friendly voice. Stay close to the child, introduce them to other children and reassure them that their parent or caregiver will return later. Help the child join an activity they may enjoy.

Situation 2

A child proudly shows you a drawing they have made.

My Response

Suggested Response

Give the child your full attention. Smile and thank them for sharing their work with you. Say something specific, such as, "I can see you used lots of bright colours," or, "Tell me about your picture." This shows the child that you value their effort and ideas.

Situation 3

A child is trying to put on their shoes but is finding it difficult.

My Response

Suggested Response

Encourage the child to keep trying. Offer gentle guidance without doing the task for the child immediately. For example, you could say, "You are working hard. Let us see if we can do the next step together." Praise the child's effort, even if the child still needs some help.



REMEMBER

Young children learn confidence when caring adults encourage them to try, practise and keep learning.

Supporting a child does not always mean doing the task for them.

Key Idea

Small actions can make a big difference.

Greeting a child warmly.

Listening carefully.

Reading a story with enthusiasm.

Encouraging a child to keep trying.

Celebrating effort.

Working together with families.

These everyday moments help children feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

Key Takeaway

The experiences children have during their early years help shape their future learning, health, relationships and wellbeing.

Every caring interaction matters.

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will learn about the different people who work in an ECD centre and how they work together to support children and their families.

Lesson 4

Who Works in an ECD Centre?

Why This Lesson Matters

An ECD centre is a team.

Every person has an important role in creating a safe, caring and stimulating environment where children can learn and grow.

Understanding the different roles will help you work confidently and respectfully with your colleagues and build positive relationships with children and their families

Working together or The Children

Children benefit when the adults around them work together.

No one person can meet all the needs of young children on their own.

Every person in an ECD centre contributes in a unique way. Although responsibilities may differ, everyone works towards the same goal: helping children feel safe, valued and ready to learn.



REMEMBER

The most important person in an ECD centre is the child.

Every role exists to support children's learning, development and wellbeing.

The ECD Practitioner

The ECD Practitioner leads the learning programme.

Some of the practitioner's responsibilities include:

- planning learning experiences
- preparing the daily programme
- observing children's learning and development
- communicating with families
- creating a safe and stimulating learning environment
- guiding the work of the ECD Assistant
- keeping records, where required.

The practitioner leads the programme, but quality ECD is always a team effort

The ECD Assistant

The ECD Assistant works alongside the practitioner to support children's learning, care and wellbeing throughout the day.

Your responsibilities may include:

- welcoming children and their families
- preparing learning areas and resources
- supporting children during activities
- encouraging learning through play
- helping with meals, handwashing and rest time
- observing children and sharing important information with the practitioner
- helping keep the environment clean, organised and safe
- building warm and respectful relationships with children.

Although your responsibilities are different from those of the practitioner, your contribution is valuable and important.

Every day you will have opportunities to encourage children, build positive relationships and support their learning through everyday interactions. Never underestimate the difference your role can make.



IN PRACTICE

Nomsa has planned a painting activity.

Before the children arrive, Thandi helps prepare the tables, places aprons where children can reach them and pours paint into small containers.

During the activity, Nomsa encourages the children to talk about the colours they are using.

Thandi moves around the room, encouraging children who need support and praising their efforts.

After the activity, they work together to help the children wash their hands and tidy the classroom.

Each person has a different role, but together they create a positive learning experience for the children.



Think About It: *How did Nomsa and Thandi's teamwork help create a positive learning experience for the children?*

Families are a Team

Parents, caregivers and families are valuable partners in a child's learning and development. Families know their children best.

They understand their children's interests, routines, strengths and personalities. When families and the ECD team communicate openly and respectfully, children receive consistent care and support.

As an ECD Assistant, you help build these partnerships by:

- greeting families warmly
- listening respectfully
- treating personal information as confidential
- sharing important information with the practitioner when appropriate

recognising that every family deserves dignity and respect.

Other People Who Support Children

Many ECD centres also have other people who contribute to children's wellbeing.

These may include:

- the principal or centre manager
- cooks or food handlers
- cleaners
- administrators
- volunteers
- health professionals
- social workers
- therapists.

Each person contributes in a different way, but everyone shares the responsibility of creating a safe and caring environment for children



SAFETY FIRST

Always respond immediately when you notice something that could place a child at risk.

If you notice something that could place a child at risk, do not assume someone else has seen it.

Take appropriate action immediately if it is safe to do so and inform the ECD Practitioner or the appropriate person.

Children depend on adults working together to keep them safe.

Activity 4

Who can help?

Read each situation.

Decide who you would speak to first.

Situation 1

A child has been unusually quiet for several days and does not seem interested in playing.

My Response

Suggested Response

Share your observations with the ECD Practitioner. Explain what you have noticed so that the practitioner can decide what support or follow-up may be needed.

Situation 2

A parent tells you that their child did not sleep well the previous night.

My Response

Suggested Response

Thank the parent for sharing the information. If it may affect the child's wellbeing during the day, make sure the ECD Practitioner is informed.

Situation 3

You notice water on the classroom floor where children are walking.

My Response

Suggested Response

Act immediately to prevent anyone from slipping. Clean the spill if it is safe to do so, or make sure someone does so straight away. Tell the ECD Practitioner if further assistance is needed. Children's safety always comes first.

Key Idea

Strong ECD teams communicate well, support one another and always keep the needs of children at the centre of every decision.

When adults work together respectfully, children feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will follow a typical day in an ECD centre and discover how everyday routines become valuable opportunities for learning, care and relationship-building.

Lesson 5

A Day in an ECD Centre

Why This Lesson Matters

Young children feel safe and confident when they know what to expect.

A daily routine helps children understand what will happen next. It provides opportunities for learning, play, healthy eating, rest and caring relationships throughout the day.

As an ECD Assistant, you help children move through the day in a calm, positive and organised way.

Every Day Begins Before the Children Arrive

The work of an ECD Assistant begins before the first child walks through the gate.

Preparing the learning environment helps the day begin smoothly and safely.

Before children arrive, the ECD team may:

- open and prepare the classroom
- check that learning areas are clean and safe
- prepare learning materials
- wash hands before handling food
- check the outdoor play area for hazards
- make sure toilets and handwashing facilities are clean and ready for use
- prepare for children's arrival.

These small tasks help create a welcoming environment where children can learn and play safely.

Careful preparation helps children arrive in an environment where they feel welcome, secure and ready to learn.



SAFETY FIRST

Before children arrive, always check for anything that could place them at risk.

Look out for:

- broken equipment
- unsafe gates
- sharp objects
- wet floors
- unsafe toilet areas
- anything that could cause injury.

If you identify a hazard, report it immediately and take appropriate action if it is safe to do so.

Welcoming Children and Families

A warm welcome helps children feel that they belong.

It also helps families feel confident that their children are entering a caring environment. Greeting each child by name, smiling and speaking kindly can make a big difference, especially for children who are feeling nervous.

Every child deserves to feel welcomed and valued



IN PRACTICE

It is just before 8:00 in the morning at Siyakhula ECD Centre.

Nomsa and Thandi have already prepared the classroom.

The books are neatly arranged.

The block area is ready.

The outdoor play area has been checked for safety.

As children begin to arrive, Thandi greets each child by name.

"Good morning, Naledi. We are happy to see you today."

Naledi smiles and walks to the puzzle table.

A little later, Sipho arrives holding tightly onto his mother's hand.

Thandi kneels so that she is at Sipho's eye level.

"Good morning, Sipho. We are glad you are here. Would you like to help me feed the class fish before we start?"

Sipho nods and slowly lets go of his mother's hand.

His mother smiles as she leaves, knowing her son feels safe.



Think About It: *Which small actions helped Sipho feel safe and welcome on his first day?*



REMEMBER

The way you welcome children and families helps build trust from the very beginning of the day.

Learning Happens Throughout the Day

Children learn during every part of the daily routine.

The table below shows how ordinary routines become learning opportunities.



ARRIVAL	Confidence, independence and social skills
FREE PLAY	Creativity, problem solving and language
GROUP TIME	Listening, speaking and taking turns
SNACK OR MEAL TIME	Healthy habits, conversation and independence
OUTDOOR PLAY	Balance, coordination and teamwork
STORY TIME	Language, imagination and listening
TIDYING UP	Responsibility and cooperation
HOME TIME	Routines, communication and a sense of belonging

As an ECD Assistant, you help children learn during all of these everyday experiences.

Supporting Smooth Transitions

A transition is the time when children move from one activity to another.
Some children find transitions easy.

Others need reassurance and support.

You can help children by:

- giving a gentle warning before changing activities
- using a familiar song or rhyme
- speaking calmly
- encouraging children who need more time
- praising children for cooperating.

Calm and predictable transitions help children feel secure and reduce unnecessary stress during the day

Activity 5

Learning Throughout the Day

Complete the table below.

Daily Routine	What Children Can Learn
Washing hands	
Story time	
Outdoor play	
Snack time	
Packing away toys	

Suggested Response

Washing hands - *Healthy hygiene habits and independence*

Story time - *Listening, language and imagination*

Outdoor play - *Balance, coordination, confidence and teamwork*

Snack time - *Healthy eating habits, conversation and good manners*

Packing away toys - *Responsibility, cooperation and caring for resources*

Key Idea

A daily routine is much more than a timetable.

It creates opportunities for children to feel safe, develop independence, build relationships and learn through everyday experiences.

As an ECD Assistant, you help turn ordinary moments into valuable learning opportunities.

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will learn why teamwork and respectful communication are essential in an ECD centre. You will discover how adults who work well together create the best possible environment for children and their families.

Lesson 6

Working Together as a Team

Why This Lesson Matters

Children learn and develop best when the adults around them work together.

Good teamwork creates a calm, organised and welcoming environment where children feel safe, supported and ready to learn.

As an ECD Assistant, you are an important member of the ECD team. The way you communicate, cooperate and support others helps create positive experiences for children and their families.

Teamwork Begins with a Shared Purpose

Every person working in an ECD centre has different responsibilities.

However, everyone shares the same purpose:

To provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment where every child can learn and thrive.

Effective teamwork creates a positive environment where everyone feels supported, including children, families and colleagues



REMEMBER

A successful ECD team does not ask, "Whose job is this?"
Instead, they ask, "What do the children need right now?"

Good Communication

A Working well together begins with good communication.

Good communication means:

- listening carefully
- speaking respectfully
- sharing important information
- asking questions when you are unsure
- offering help when someone needs support
- thanking colleagues for their assistance.

Clear communication helps prevent misunderstandings and supports children's wellbeing.



IN PRACTICE

It is outdoor play time at Siyakhula ECD Centre.

Nomsa notices that Lethabo seems unusually tired and is not interested in joining the other children.

She quietly says to Thandi,

"Please keep a close eye on Lethabo while the children are outside. I am going to phone his grandmother to find out whether he has been unwell."

While Nomsa makes the call, Thandi stays close to Lethabo and encourages him to sit in a shaded area with a book until he feels better.

Later, Thandi tells Nomsa that Lethabo ate very little during snack time.

By sharing information and working together, they are able to respond quickly to Lethabo's needs.



Think About It: *Why was it important for Nomsa and Thandi to share information about Lethabo?*

Respect Builds Strong Teams

Respect is shown through everyday actions.

You show respect when you:

- greet people warmly
- listen without interrupting
- speak politely
- arrive on time
- keep your promises
- offer help when someone needs support
- appreciate the ideas and contributions of others.

Children notice how adults treat one another.

When adults model respect, children learn to treat others with kindness and consideration



SAFETY FIRST

If you notice something that could place a child at risk, act immediately if it is safe to do so.

Never assume that someone else has already noticed the problem.

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

Families Are Part of the Team

Parents, caregivers and families know their children best.

By working in partnership with families, the ECD team gains valuable information about each child's interests, routines, strengths and needs.

As an ECD Assistant, you help build trust by:

- greeting families warmly
- listening respectfully
- maintaining confidentiality
- sharing important information with the ECD Practitioner when appropriate
- recognising that families are valued partners in every child's learning journey.

Strong partnerships help children feel secure and supported both at home and at the ECD centre.

Activity 6

Working Together

Read each situation and decide what you would do.

Situation 1

Your colleague is comforting a child who is upset.

Another group of children needs help preparing for snack time.

My Response

Suggested Response

Offer to help prepare for snack time or assist the children so that your colleague can continue comforting the upset child. Team members support one another to meet the needs of all the children.

Situation 2

A parent asks you about a child's learning progress, but you are not sure of the answer.

My Response

Suggested Response

Thank the parent for the question and explain that you will discuss it with the ECD Practitioner so that they receive accurate information.

Situation 3

You notice that the safety gate leading to the outdoor play area has been left open.

My Response

Suggested Response

Close the gate immediately if it is safe to do so. Then inform the ECD Practitioner or the colleague responsible. The priority is always children's safety.

Key Idea

Quality Early Childhood Development is built on relationships.

Children benefit when practitioners, assistants and families communicate well, respect one another and work together with the child's best interests at the centre of every decision.

Looking Ahead

You have now completed all the lessons in Module 1.

Next, you will review what you have learned through the Knowledge Check and End-of-Module Assessment before moving on to Module 2.

MODULE 1 SUMMARY

Congratulations on completing Module 1. You have taken an important first step towards becoming a knowledgeable, caring and professional ECD Assistant. The knowledge and skills you have gained in this module provide the foundation for everything you will learn throughout the rest of this programme.

In this module you learned:

- what Early Childhood Development (ECD) is
- why the early years are so important
- the purpose of an ECD centre
- the different people who work in an ECD centre
- why parents and families are children's first and most important teachers
- how daily routines support children's learning and development
- why teamwork, communication and safety are essential.

You have also begun to see that being an ECD Assistant is much more than helping in a classroom. It is about building caring relationships, supporting children's learning and working together with families and colleagues to give every child the best possible start in life.

Key Messages

As you prepare to move on to the next module, remember these important ideas.

- Every child deserves to feel safe, valued and respected.
- Parents and families are children's first and most important teachers.
- Children learn through play, relationships and everyday experiences.
- Every interaction with a child is an opportunity for learning.
- Working together creates the best outcomes for children.
- Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

Small actions can make a big difference



Knowledge Check

Complete these questions before reading the Suggested Answers.

Question 1

Choose the correct answer.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is:

- ☐ A place where children are cared for during the day.
- ☐ The care, learning, growth and development of young children.
- ☐ Teaching children to read before they start school.
- ☐ Looking after children while parents are at work.

Question 2

True or False

Children learn only during planned activities.

Answer: _____

Question 3

Who are children's first and most important teachers

Answer: _____

Question 4

List three things an ECD Assistant can do to help children feel welcome at the beginning of the day.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

Question 5

Circle the activities that help children learn.

Story time

Outdoor play

Handwashing

Snack time

Packing away toys

All of the above

Question 6

True or False

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

Answer: _____

Suggested Answers

Question 1

The correct answer is:

✓ The care, learning, growth and development of young children.

Question 2

False.

Children learn throughout the day during play, routines, conversations and everyday experiences.

Question 3

Parents and families.

Question 4

Possible answers include:

- Greeting children warmly.
- Smiling and speaking kindly.
- Helping children settle into an activity.
- Learning and using children's names.
- Creating a welcoming environment.

Question 5

✓ All of the above.

Children learn during everyday routines as well as planned activities.

Question 6

True.

Every adult has a responsibility to help keep children safe.

End-of-Module Assessment

These questions will help you apply what you have learned.
There may be more than one good answer.

Scenario 1

It is Sipho's first day at Siyakhula ECD Centre.
He is crying and does not want his grandmother to leave.
Describe three things you could do to help him feel safe.

Scenario 2

A parent tells you that their child slept badly the night before and may be tired.
What should you do?

Scenario 3

While children are playing outside, you notice that the safety gate has been left open.
What should you do first?

Scenario 4

A child is sitting alone while the other children are playing.
How could you encourage the child to join in without forcing them?

Suggested Answers

Scenario 1

Possible responses include:

- Welcome Sipho warmly.
- Speak calmly and reassuringly.
- Stay close until he feels secure.
- Introduce him to an activity he may enjoy.
- Reassure his grandmother that you will support him.

Scenario 2

Thank the parent for sharing the information and make sure the ECD Practitioner is aware of it. Observe the child during the day and provide additional support if needed.

Scenario 3

Close the gate immediately if it is safe to do so. Make sure children are safe and inform the ECD Practitioner. Never ignore a safety risk.

Scenario 4

Sit with the child for a few moments, encourage them gently, invite another child to play with them or introduce an activity that matches their interests. Respect the child's feelings while helping them become involved.

My Learning Journal

Take a few minutes to think about your learning

The most important thing I learned in this module was:

One idea that changed the way I think about children is:

One thing I will do when I begin working in an ECD centre is:



Ready for Work Checklist

Before moving to Module 2, ask yourself:

- ☐ I can explain what Early Childhood Development is.
- ☐ I understand why the early years are important.
- ☐ I know that parents and families are children's first and most important teachers.
- ☐ I understand the purpose of an ECD centre.
- ☐ I understand the role of the ECD Practitioner.
- ☐ I understand the role of the ECD Assistant.
- ☐ I know why teamwork is important.
- ☐ I understand that keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.
- ☐ I am ready to continue my learning.

Glossary

Key words you will use throughout this Module.



Early Childhood Development (ECD)

The care, learning, growth and development of young children.



ECD Centre

A place where young children learn, play and receive care.



ECD Practitioner

The person who leads the learning programme in the ECD centre.



ECD Assistant

A member of the ECD team who supports children's learning, care and wellbeing.



Daily Routine

The order of activities during the day.



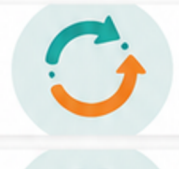
Development

The way children grow, learn and gain new skills over time.



Teamwork

People working together towards a shared goal.



Transition

Moving from one activity to another.



Partnership

Working together for a shared purpose.

Looking Ahead

In Module 2 you will learn what it means to work as an ECD professional.

You will explore the roles and responsibilities of the ECD Practitioner and the ECD Assistant in greater detail. You will also learn about professional behaviour, communication, working with families and the everyday habits that help create a positive learning environment for children.



CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed Module 1 of Starting Strong.

Every lesson you complete is another step towards becoming a confident ECD Assistant. The knowledge, skills and attitudes you develop throughout this programme will help you create safe, caring and meaningful learning experiences for young children.

Take a moment to celebrate your progress before beginning Module 2.