



MODULE

# 5

## Keeping Children Safe, Healthy and Thriving

ESTIMATED STUDY TIME: 4 HOURS



Learn  
with purpose



Apply in  
real life



Keep children  
safe



Grow with  
confidence



Become  
work-ready

# Suggested Study Plan

## Session 1 (60 minutes)

- Lesson 1: Creating a Safe and Healthy Environment
- Lesson 2: Health, Hygiene and Nutrition

## Session 2 (60 minutes)

- Lesson 3: Supporting Children's Growth Through Good Nutrition
- Lesson 4: Preventing Accidents and Responding to Emergencies

## Session 3 (60 minutes)

- Lesson 5: Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Lesson 6: Inclusion and Supporting Every Child

## Session 4 (60 minutes)

- Lesson 7: Responding to Emergencies and Everyday Incidents
- Knowledge Check
- End-of-Module Assessment
- My Learning Journal

*"Every child has the right to grow, learn and thrive in a safe, healthy and caring environment."*

# Why This Module Matters

Children can only learn well when they feel safe, healthy and cared for. Every adult working in an ECD centre shares the responsibility of protecting children from harm, promoting healthy habits and creating an environment where every child feels secure and included.

As an ECD Assistant, your daily actions help prevent accidents, support children's wellbeing and build trusting relationships with children and families.

This module will help you understand your important role in keeping children safe, healthy and thriving every day.

By completing this module, you will develop the knowledge, awareness and confidence to help create environments where children feel safe, healthy, protected and included. Every action you take to prevent harm or respond appropriately to a concern helps children learn and thrive.

## Learning Outcomes

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

- Help create a safe and healthy learning environment.
- Promote good hygiene and healthy habits.
- Support children's nutrition and wellbeing.
- Supervise children effectively during daily routines.
- Recognise and report concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.
- Support inclusive practices that value every child.
- Respond appropriately to emergencies and everyday incidents.



# Lesson 1

## Creating a Safe and Healthy Environment

### Why This Lesson Matters

Children are naturally curious.

They learn by moving, exploring and trying new things.

This curiosity helps children grow and learn, but it also means they depend on adults to create environments that are safe, clean and well organised.

As an ECD Assistant, you play an important role in preventing accidents before they happen.

### What Is a Safe Learning Environment?

A safe learning environment is one where children can explore with confidence because adults have taken steps to reduce unnecessary risks.

A safe environment includes:

- clean classrooms
- secure gates and doors
- safe furniture and equipment
- clear walkways
- age-appropriate learning materials
- careful supervision
- clean drinking water
- hygienic toilet and handwashing facilities.

Children should feel physically and emotionally safe throughout the day.



#### REMEMBER

The safest ECD centres are not accident-free by chance.

They are safe because adults remain alert, prepared and attentive every day.



## Looking for Hazards

One of your daily responsibilities is to notice anything that could place a child at risk.

Before children arrive, check for hazards such as:

- broken equipment
- loose electrical cords
- slippery floors
- broken glass
- sharp objects
- unlocked cleaning cupboards
- unsafe outdoor equipment
- open gates
- standing water
- damaged toys.

If you find a hazard, act immediately by removing it, making the area safe or reporting it to the ECD Practitioner.

Never assume that someone else has already noticed the problem.

Develop the habit of carrying out a safety scan every day. Looking carefully before children arrive can prevent accidents before they happen.



### IN PRACTICE

Thandi arrives at Siyakhula ECD Centre before the children.

While checking the outdoor play area, she notices that one of the climbing tyres has come loose.

She immediately tells Nomsa and places a temporary barrier around the area so that children cannot use the equipment until it has been repaired.

Later that morning, the children enjoy outdoor play safely because the hazard was identified before anyone was injured.

# Creating an Emotionally Safe Environment

Safety is not only about preventing physical injuries.

Children also need to feel emotionally safe.

You help create emotional safety when you:

- greet children warmly
- speak kindly and respectfully
- comfort children who are upset
- encourage children to express their feelings
- treat every child fairly
- respond calmly to challenging behaviour
- celebrate effort and progress.

Children who feel safe are more willing to explore, learn and build relationships.

Children who feel emotionally safe are more willing to explore, ask questions, build friendships and participate in learning activities



## SAFETY FIRST

Safety checks should happen every day.

Pay particular attention to:

- classrooms
- playground equipment
- entrances and exits
- kitchens
- cleaning materials
- sleeping areas
- toilets and handwashing areas.

Remember that toilet areas require careful supervision. In some communities, long-drop toilets may present serious risks to young children. Children should never use these facilities without appropriate supervision and the safety measures required by the ECD centre

## What This Means in Practice

Develop the habit of asking yourself:

"Is this environment safe for children right now?"

If the answer is no, take action immediately.

Small actions can prevent serious accidents.

# Activity 1

## Spot The Hazard

Read each situation.

Write what the hazard is and what you would do.

### Situation 1

You notice a puddle of water near the classroom door.

**Hazard**

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**My Action**

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### Situation 2

The outdoor gate has been left open after a delivery.

**Hazard**

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**My Action**

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### Situation 3

You find a bottle of cleaning liquid on a low shelf where children can reach it.

**Hazard**

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**My Action**

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## **Suggested Response**

### **Situation 1**

Hazard: A slippery floor could cause someone to fall.

Action: Clean up the water immediately or make sure the area is made safe until it can be cleaned.

### **Situation 2**

Hazard: A child could leave the ECD centre without being noticed.

Action: Close and secure the gate immediately and inform the ECD Practitioner if necessary.

### **Situation 3**

Hazard: Children could be exposed to harmful chemicals.

Action: Remove the cleaning product immediately and store it safely in the designated locked area.



The best way to respond to an accident is to prevent it.

Every hazard you remove today could prevent an injury tomorrow. Stay alert, think ahead and act promptly.

## **Key Idea**

Creating a safe and healthy environment is everyone's responsibility.

By staying alert, carrying out daily safety checks and responding quickly to hazards, you help create a place where children can explore, learn and thrive with confidence

## **Looking Ahead**

In the next lesson you will learn how good hygiene, healthy nutrition and everyday health practices support children's growth, wellbeing and readiness to learn.

# Lesson 2

## Health, Hygiene and Nutrition

### Why This Lesson Matters

Healthy children are better able to learn, play and enjoy their day.

Good hygiene, nutritious food and healthy daily routines help protect children from illness and support their growth and development.

As an ECD Assistant, you play an important role in helping children develop healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

### Promoting Good Health

Young children depend on adults to create healthy environments.

You can help by:

- encouraging regular handwashing
- keeping learning areas clean
- cleaning toys and equipment regularly
- following the ECD centre's health procedures
- encouraging children to drink clean, safe water
- noticing when a child appears unwell.

Healthy habits protect both children and adults.



#### REMEMBER

Healthy habits are learned through daily practice.

Children learn by watching the adults who care for them

### Different Types of Play

Handwashing is one of the simplest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of illness.

Children should wash their hands:

- before eating
- after using the toilet
- after outdoor play
- after coughing or sneezing into their hands
- whenever their hands are dirty.

Teach children to:

- wet their hands
- use soap
- rub all parts of their hands for at least 20 seconds
- rinse well

## Handwashing

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- after outdoor play
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- whenever their hands are dirty.

Teach children to:

- wet their hands
- use soap
- rub all parts of their hands for at least 20 seconds
- rinse well
- dry their hands with a clean towel or other suitable method used by the ECD centre.

Turn handwashing into a positive learning experience by singing a simple handwashing song.

## Healthy Nutrition

Good nutrition supports children's growth, learning and wellbeing.

During meal and snack times:

- encourage children to try healthy foods
- provide opportunities for children to drink water
- create a calm and enjoyable mealtime environment
- encourage independence when appropriate
- be aware of any food allergies or dietary requirements identified by the ECD Practitioner or the child's family.

Never give a child food that has not been approved by the ECD centre.

Mealtimes are also valuable opportunities for conversation, social learning and developing healthy lifelong habits.



### IN PRACTICE

Before snack time at Siyakhula ECD Centre, Thandi notices that Sipho forgets to wash his hands.

Instead of correcting him sharply, she smiles and says,

"Come with me. Let us wash our hands together before we enjoy our snack."

As they wash their hands, they sing the classroom handwashing song.

Soon the other children join in.

A simple routine becomes a healthy habit

## Recognising When a Child May Be Unwell

You may notice that a child:

- has a fever
- seems unusually tired
- has a persistent cough
- is vomiting
- has diarrhoea
- develops a rash
- is unusually quiet or irritable.

Do not try to diagnose the illness.

Report your observations to the ECD Practitioner immediately and follow the centre's health procedures.

Early reporting helps ensure that children receive the care and support they need while protecting the health of others in the ECD centre.



### SAFETY FIRST

Follow universal hygiene practices whenever you are dealing with blood, vomit or other bodily fluids.

Wear protective equipment if it is available, follow the ECD centre's procedures for cleaning and disinfecting, and wash your hands thoroughly afterwards

## What This Means in Practice

Healthy routines become lifelong habits.

Every time you encourage handwashing, healthy eating or good hygiene, you are helping children protect their health now and in the future.

# Activity 2

## Building Healthy Habits

Read each situation.

Write one way you would encourage children during each routine.

Before snack time

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### **Suggested Response**

Encourage children to wash their hands and prepare for the meal calmly.

After outdoor play

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### **Suggested Response**

Encourage children to wash their hands, drink water and settle for the next activity.

After using the toilet

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### **Suggested Response**

Support proper handwashing with soap and encourage independence while supervising as needed.





## READY FOR WORK

Healthy routines should always be calm, respectful and consistent. Children are more likely to develop lifelong healthy habits when adults encourage rather than rush them.

### **Key Idea**

Good health, hygiene and nutrition create the foundation for children's learning and wellbeing.

As an ECD Assistant, your everyday actions help children grow, learn and thrive

### **Looking Ahead**

In the next lesson you will discover how careful supervision and everyday safety practices help prevent accidents and protect children throughout the day.

# Lesson 3

## Supporting Children's Growth Through Good Nutrition

### Why This Lesson Matters

Good nutrition is one of the foundations of healthy child development. During the early years, children need nutritious food to help their bodies grow, their brains develop and their immune systems stay strong. Healthy eating also gives children the energy they need to play, learn, explore and participate in daily activities.

As an ECD Assistant, you are not responsible for planning meals or deciding what children eat. However, you play an important role in creating positive mealtime experiences, encouraging healthy eating habits and noticing when a child may need additional support. Every healthy meal is another opportunity to help children grow, learn and thrive.

### Learning Outcomes

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

- Explain why good nutrition is important during the early years.
- Describe healthy eating habits for young children.
- Identify ways an ECD Assistant can support positive mealtimes.
- Recognise when a child's eating habits may need to be reported to the ECD Practitioner

### What Is Good Nutrition?

Good nutrition means eating a variety of foods that provide the energy and nutrients children need to grow, develop and stay healthy.

Children need foods that help them:

- build strong bones and muscles
- develop healthy brains
- stay active throughout the day
- fight illness and infection
- concentrate during learning activities.

Healthy eating also includes drinking enough clean, safe water every day.

Every family is different. Encourage healthy food choices using nutritious foods that are available, affordable and appropriate for the local community



#### REMEMBER

Good nutrition supports children's growth, learning, health and wellbeing.

# Why Nutrition Matters During the Early Years

The first years of life are a time of rapid growth and development.

Children's brains develop quickly, their bodies grow rapidly and they are constantly learning new skills.

When children receive good nutrition, they are more likely to:

- have energy to play and learn
- concentrate during activities
- develop strong muscles and bones
- stay healthier
- recover more quickly from illness
- participate confidently in daily routines.

Children who are hungry or poorly nourished may become tired, struggle to concentrate or find it difficult to participate in learning activities.

Healthy nutrition helps children reach their full potential.

## Healthy Eating Habits

Healthy eating is about more than the food children eat.

It is also about creating positive routines that help children develop lifelong healthy habits.

Good mealtime practices include:

- washing hands before eating
- sitting together in a calm environment
- encouraging children to drink water regularly
- offering a variety of healthy foods
- encouraging children to try new foods without forcing them
- allowing children enough time to eat
- encouraging independence during meals where appropriate
- enjoying positive conversations while eating.

Mealtimes should be relaxed, respectful and enjoyable.

They are valuable opportunities for learning language, social skills and independence.

## Your Role as an ECD Assistant

As an ECD Assistant, you help create positive experiences during meals and snack times.

Your role may include:

- preparing children for meals
- encouraging handwashing
- helping create a calm eating environment
- sitting with children during meals
- encouraging good manners
- supporting children as they learn to feed themselves
- praising children's efforts rather than criticising them
- observing children's eating habits
- sharing concerns with the ECD Practitioner.

Remember that every child develops at their own pace.

Some children eat quickly.

Others need more time and encouragement.

Patience and kindness help children feel safe during mealtimes

## Supporting Positive Mealtimes

Children learn from the adults around them.

You can help create positive mealtimes by:

- speaking calmly and kindly
- encouraging conversation
- recognising children's efforts
- respecting cultural food traditions
- creating an atmosphere where every child feels welcome.

Avoid comparing children or putting pressure on them to eat.

Positive encouragement is far more effective than criticism



### IN PRACTICE

It is lunchtime at Siyakhula ECD Centre.

Thandi notices that Ayanda has eaten very little for several days.

Instead of forcing Ayanda to finish her meal, Thandi quietly encourages her to eat what she feels comfortable eating and continues observing her over the next few days.

She shares her observations with Nomsa, who speaks respectfully with Ayanda's family to find out whether anything has changed at home or whether there are any health concerns.

By working together, they are able to provide the support Ayanda needs

## When Should You Be Concerned?

Sometimes children eat less because they are tired, unwell or adjusting to a new environment.

However, repeated concerns should always be shared with the ECD Practitioner.

Report your observations if a child:

- regularly refuses meals
- appears unusually tired or lacking energy
- frequently says they are hungry
- struggles to eat or swallow
- appears to be losing weight
- becomes unwell during or after meals.

Your role is to observe, support and report concerns.

It is not your role to diagnose health or nutrition problems



### SAFETY FIRST

Always check whether children have food allergies or special dietary requirements.

Never offer food that has not been approved by the ECD centre.  
Young children should always be supervised while eating to reduce the risk of choking.

If you are unsure about any food or dietary requirement, ask the ECD Practitioner before giving it to a child

## What This Means in Practice

Healthy eating supports every area of child development.

Mealtimes are not simply times to eat.

They are opportunities to build independence, language, social skills, healthy habits and positive relationships.

Every encouraging interaction during a meal helps children feel safe, respected and ready to learn

# Activity 3

## Healthy Mealtimes

Read each statement.

Write **Yes** if it *supports* healthy eating habits or **No** if it does *not*

| Statement                                                     | Yes / No |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Children wash their hands before eating.                      | _____    |
| Children are rushed to finish their meals.                    | _____    |
| Children are encouraged to drink clean water.                 | _____    |
| Adults speak kindly during mealtimes.                         | _____    |
| Children are forced to finish every bite of food.             | _____    |
| Children are encouraged to feed themselves where appropriate. | _____    |

## Reflection

Think about your own childhood.

What is one positive mealtime experience you remember, and how could you help create a similar experience for the children in your care?

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### READY FOR WORK

Mealtimes are about more than food.

They are opportunities to build healthy habits, independence, confidence and positive relationships.

Every encouraging word and every caring interaction helps children feel valued.

## Key Idea

Good nutrition is one of the foundations of healthy child development.

As an ECD Assistant, you play an important role in encouraging healthy eating habits, creating positive mealtime experiences and supporting every child's health and wellbeing.

## Looking Ahead

In the next lesson, you will learn how to identify potential hazards, prevent accidents and respond appropriately to emergencies, helping to create a safe environment where children can learn and explore with confidence.

# Lesson 4

## Preventing Accidents and Responding to Emergencies

### Why This Lesson Matters

Young children are naturally curious.

They explore, climb, run, investigate and sometimes take risks without recognising danger.

Children rely on caring adults to supervise them closely and create safe opportunities for exploration.

Good supervision is one of the most important responsibilities of every ECD Assistant.

### What Is Active Supervision?

Active supervision means more than simply being present.

It means that you are:

- watching children carefully
- listening to what is happening
- anticipating possible risks
- positioning yourself where you can see all children
- moving around the learning environment
- responding quickly when needed.

Good supervision helps prevent accidents before they happen



#### REMEMBER

You cannot supervise children effectively if your attention is on your mobile phone or other distractions.

Children deserve your full attention

### Supervision During Daily Routines

Some parts of the day require extra vigilance.

Pay particular attention during:

- arrival and departure
- outdoor play
- meal and snack times
- transitions between activities
- rest time
- toileting
- water play.

Children should never be left unsupervised

## Toilet and Sanitation Safety

Toilet routines should always be safe, respectful and appropriate for children's ages.

As an ECD Assistant:

- supervise children while respecting their privacy and dignity
- encourage proper handwashing after toileting
- report damaged or unsafe toilet facilities immediately
- keep toilet areas clean and dry
- follow the ECD centre's procedures for assisting children who need help.

In some communities, children use outdoor or long-drop toilets.

These facilities require additional safety measures.

Young children should never use long-drop toilets without appropriate adult supervision and the safety measures required by the ECD centre.

If you believe a toilet area is unsafe, report the concern immediately and do not allow children to use it until it is safe

## Water Safety

Children can drown in surprisingly small amounts of water.

Always supervise children closely around:

- buckets
- paddling pools
- water play activities
- ponds
- streams
- dams
- any other open water.

Empty buckets and water containers after use unless they are needed and safely managed.

Never leave children unattended near water.

## Playground Safety

Before children begin outdoor play:

- inspect equipment for damage
- check that surfaces are safe
- remove hazards
- ensure gates are closed
- position yourself where you can see the whole play area.

Encourage children to play safely while still allowing them to enjoy active play.

Safe playgrounds encourage confident exploration. The goal is to manage risks without preventing children from enjoying active play.





## IN PRACTICE

During outdoor play at Siyakhula ECD Centre, Thandi notices two children walking towards the toilet block.

She accompanies them and waits nearby while respecting their privacy.

Before they return to play, she reminds them to wash their hands and checks that the pathway back to the playground is clear and safe.

Her supervision allows the children to be independent while keeping them safe

## Responding to Hazards

If you notice a safety concern:

- act immediately if you can do so safely
- remove children from danger if necessary
- inform the ECD Practitioner
- report the hazard according to the centre's procedures
- continue to monitor the area until the problem has been resolved.

Never assume someone else has already reported the hazard



## SAFETY FIRST

Children's safety always comes before completing a task.

If you must choose between finishing a routine and responding to a safety concern, respond to the safety concern first.

## What This Means in Practice

Good supervision is active, not passive.

Stay alert, move around the environment and think ahead.

Many accidents can be prevented because a caring adult notices a potential danger before it becomes an emergency

# Activity 4

## What Would You Do?

Read each situation and write your response.

### Situation 1

You notice that the lid covering a long-drop toilet is damaged.

**My Response**

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#### **Suggested Response**

Prevent children from using the toilet, report the hazard to the ECD Practitioner immediately and ensure the area is made safe before it is used again.

### Situation 2

Children are playing near a bucket that has been left full of water after cleaning.

**My Response**

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#### **Suggested Response**

Move the children away from the area, empty or secure the bucket according to the centre's procedures and continue supervising the children.

### Situation 3

A gate has been left open while children are playing outside.

**My Response**

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#### **Suggested Response**

Close and secure the gate immediately, check that all children are safe and inform the ECD Practitioner if required.

### **Suggested responses**

Bottle tops - *Counting, sorting or pattern making*

Cardboard box - *Building a house, bus or shop*

Leaves - *Nature collage or sorting by size*

Egg carton - *Counting game or colour matching*

Fabric scraps - *Dressing dolls, texture exploration or pretend play*



### **READY FOR WORK**

The best supervisors are always thinking one step ahead.

Ask yourself regularly:

"What could happen next, and how can I prevent someone from getting hurt?"

## **Key Idea**

Careful supervision protects children.

By staying alert, identifying hazards and responding quickly, you help create an environment where children can explore, learn and thrive safely.

## **Looking Ahead**

In the next lesson you will learn about safeguarding and child protection, including your responsibility to recognise concerns, respond appropriately and always act in the best interests of the child.

# Lesson 5

## Safeguarding and Child Protection

### Why This Lesson Matters

Every child has the right to grow up free from abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence. Children depend on the adults around them to protect them, listen to them and respond when something is wrong.

As an ECD Assistant, you have an important responsibility to recognise concerns, share information with the ECD Practitioner and always act in the best interests of the child. Protecting children is everyone's responsibility.

### What Is Safeguarding?

Safeguarding means creating an environment where children are protected from harm and where their rights, wellbeing and dignity are respected.

Safeguarding includes:

- preventing harm before it happens
- recognising when a child may need protection
- responding appropriately to concerns
- following the ECD centre's child protection procedures
- working with families and professionals to support children's wellbeing.

Safeguarding is part of your everyday work



#### REMEMBER

If you are worried about a child, do not ignore your concern.  
Share your observations with the ECD Practitioner immediately

### Recognising Possible Concerns

Sometimes children tell us directly that something is wrong.

At other times, we notice changes in their behaviour or appearance.

You may notice that a child:

- has unexplained injuries
- becomes unusually withdrawn or fearful
- shows sudden changes in behaviour
- is often hungry or poorly cared for
- seems frightened of a particular person
- speaks about situations that make you concerned.

These signs do not always mean that a child is being harmed. However, they should never be ignored.

## What Should You Do?

If you are concerned about a child:

- remain calm
- listen carefully if the child wants to talk
- do not promise to keep secrets
- avoid asking leading questions
- record what you observed or what the child said, according to the centre's procedures
- report your concern immediately to the ECD Practitioner.

Do not investigate the situation yourself.

Your role is to observe, support and report.

Remaining calm helps children feel safe and ensures that important information is shared accurately with the ECD Practitioner



### IN PRACTICE

One afternoon, Thandi notices that Sipho, who is usually cheerful, has become very quiet.

When helping him with his jersey, she notices bruising on his upper arm.

Later, Sipho quietly says,

"I do not want to go home today."

Thandi remains calm, listens without asking leading questions and reassures Sipho that he has done the right thing by talking.

She immediately shares her observations with Nomsa, who follows the centre's child protection procedures.

By responding calmly and promptly, Thandi helps ensure that Sipho receives the support he needs

## Child Protection Records

Some child protection concerns may need to be formally recorded in line with South African legislation and the ECD centre's policies.

As an ECD Assistant, you are not responsible for deciding whether a child's name should be placed on the Child Protection Register or for making legal decisions.

Your responsibility is to:

- observe carefully
- record factual information when requested
- report concerns promptly
- maintain confidentiality
- cooperate with the ECD Practitioner and other authorised professionals.

Always follow your centre's child protection procedures



### SAFETY FIRST

If you believe that a child is in immediate danger, inform the ECD Practitioner without delay and follow the centre's emergency procedures.  
Children's safety must always come first.

## What This Means in Practice

You are not expected to investigate or prove that abuse has occurred.

Your responsibility is to notice, respond appropriately and report concerns through the correct channels.

Acting early can help protect a child.

# Activity 5

## Responding to Concerns

Read each situation.

Write what you would do.

### Situation 1

A child tells you they are afraid to go home.

**My Response**

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#### **Suggested Response**

Listen calmly, reassure the child, do not promise to keep secrets and report the concern immediately to the ECD Practitioner.

### Situation 2

You notice unexplained bruises on a child's arms over several days.

**My Response**

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#### **Suggested Response**

Record your observations according to the centre's procedures and report your concerns immediately.

### Situation 3

A colleague says,

"It is probably nothing. Do not worry about it."

**My Response**

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#### **Suggested Response**

Remember that concerns about a child's safety should never be ignored. Follow the centre's child protection procedures and report the concern.



## READY FOR WORK

If something does not feel right, trust your professional judgement.

Observe carefully.

Report promptly.

Acting promptly and professionally can make a lasting difference in a child's life

## Key Idea

Every child deserves to be protected.

By recognising concerns, responding appropriately and following child protection procedures, you help create a safer future for children.

## Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will learn how to create an inclusive environment where every child feels welcomed, respected and supported.



# Lesson 6

## Inclusion and Supporting Every Child

### Why This Lesson Matters

Every child is unique.

Children come from different families, cultures, languages and communities. Some children may have disabilities or require additional support to participate fully in everyday activities.

Every child deserves to feel welcomed, respected, included and valued.

As an ECD Assistant, you help create an environment where every child can learn, play and thrive.

### What Does Inclusion Mean?

Inclusion means ensuring that every child has opportunities to participate, learn and belong.

It means recognising each child's strengths while providing support where it is needed.

In an inclusive ECD centre:

- every child is welcomed
- differences are respected
- activities are adapted when necessary
- children learn from one another
- everyone is treated with dignity.

Inclusion benefits all children.



#### REMEMBER

Do not focus on what a child cannot do.

Notice their strengths and build on them

## Supporting Children with Different Needs

Some children may need additional support because of:

- a physical disability
- a visual or hearing impairment
- a developmental delay
- a medical condition
- emotional or behavioural needs
- language differences.

Every child deserves patience, encouragement and meaningful opportunities to participate. Every child learns best when adults focus on strengths, remove barriers to participation and provide encouragement that builds confidence.

## Working with Families

Parents and caregivers know their children best.

Listen carefully to the information they share about their child's strengths, interests and support needs.

Work together with the ECD Practitioner and families to help each child succeed.  
Respect families' knowledge and experience

## Handwashing and Personal Care

Handwashing is an opportunity to teach healthy habits.

Talk with children about:

- why we wash our hands
- when we wash our hands
- how to wash our hands properly.

Encourage children to become increasingly independent while providing support when needed.



### IN PRACTICE

At Siyakhula ECD Centre, three-year-old Ayanda has a hearing impairment. Before group time begins, Thandi makes sure she is facing Ayanda when she speaks. She uses simple gestures, pictures and facial expressions to support communication. She also encourages the other children to include Ayanda during games and activities. Soon Ayanda is participating confidently alongside her friends. Small adjustments have helped create a welcoming and inclusive learning environment.

# Creating an Inclusive Classroom

You can promote inclusion by:

- greeting every child warmly
- using respectful language
- adapting activities when needed
- providing different ways for children to participate
- encouraging friendships
- celebrating different cultures and languages
- choosing books and learning materials that reflect diversity
- preventing teasing or exclusion.

Children learn kindness by watching the adults around them.

Small adjustments often have a big impact. Inclusion is created through everyday actions that help every child feel that they belong.



Some children may require additional supervision, specialised equipment or individual health plans.

Always follow the guidance of the ECD Practitioner and the child's care plan to help keep every child safe.

## What This Means in Practice

Inclusion is often achieved through small, thoughtful actions.

A simple adjustment, a kind word or a different way of presenting an activity can make a child feel that they truly belong.

# Activity 6

## Including Every Child

Read each situation.

Write one way you could help the child participate.

### Situation 1

A child using a walking aid wants to join an outdoor game.

**My Response**

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### Situation 2

A child who speaks a different home language is sitting quietly during story time.

**My Response**

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### Situation 3

Two children tell another child, "You cannot play with us."

**My Response**

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### Suggested Response

Situation 1

Adapt the activity where possible, ensure the environment is safe and encourage the other children to include the child.

Situation 2

Use pictures, gestures and simple language, encourage participation and make the child feel welcome.

Situation 3

Support the children to include everyone, talk about kindness and respect, and help them find a way to play together.



Every child should leave the ECD centre feeling safe, respected and included.  
The way you welcome children each day helps create that sense of belonging

## **Key Idea**

Inclusion means recognising the value and potential of every child.

By creating welcoming environments, adapting activities and working closely with families and the ECD Practitioner, you help every child learn, participate and thrive

## **Looking Ahead**

In the final lesson of this module you will learn how to respond calmly and confidently to emergencies and everyday incidents. You will discover how preparation, teamwork and clear communication help keep children safe.

# Lesson 7

## Responding to Emergencies and Everyday Incidents

### Why This Lesson Matters

Even in the safest ECD centres, emergencies and everyday incidents can happen.

A child may fall while playing, become ill, have an allergic reaction or experience another emergency.

As an ECD Assistant, you are not expected to manage every emergency on your own.

Your role is to stay calm, respond appropriately, seek help immediately and follow the ECD centre's procedures.

Being prepared helps protect children and supports the whole ECD team.

### What Is an Emergency?

An emergency is any situation where a child's health, safety or wellbeing is at immediate risk.

Examples include:

- a serious fall or injury
- difficulty breathing
- severe bleeding
- choking
- seizures
- an allergic reaction
- a missing child
- fire or another emergency requiring evacuation.

Some incidents are less serious but still need attention and reporting.



#### REMEMBER

Stay calm.

Children look to adults for reassurance during difficult situations

# Your Role During an Emergency

If an emergency happens:

- remain calm
- ensure the area is safe
- call the ECD Practitioner immediately
- follow the centre's emergency procedures
- comfort the child
- keep other children safe and calm
- never leave children unsupervised
- record the incident according to the centre's procedures.

Do only what you have been trained and authorised to do.

## Everyday Incidents

Not every incident is an emergency.

Examples include:

- a small scrape
- a minor bump
- a torn piece of clothing
- spilled water causing a slip
- a child feeling unwell.

Even minor incidents should be reported according to the ECD centre's procedures.

Good communication helps ensure that children receive appropriate care and that families are informed when necessary.



### IN PRACTICE

During outdoor play at Siyakhula ECD Centre, Kabelo trips while running and scrapes his knee.

Thandi stays calm and reassures him.

She calls Nomsa, moves the other children away from the area and follows the centre's procedures.

Later, the incident is recorded and Kabelo's family is informed according to the centre's policy.

Because the adults responded calmly and worked together, Kabelo felt safe and supported.

## Preparing for Emergencies

Preparation helps everyone respond more effectively.

Know:

- where emergency contact numbers are kept
- where the first aid kit is stored
- who is trained in first aid
- the evacuation procedure
- the assembly point
- your responsibilities during an emergency.

Practise emergency procedures whenever the ECD centre conducts a drill.

Confidence during an emergency comes from preparation. Regular practice helps adults respond quickly, calmly and effectively.

## Communicating After an Incident

After an incident:

- share factual information with the ECD Practitioner
- complete any required records honestly and accurately
- maintain confidentiality
- avoid discussing the incident with people who are not authorised to receive the information.

Professional communication builds trust with families.

Families value honest, respectful and professional communication. Accurate records also help the ECD centre learn from incidents and improve safety practices



### SAFETY FIRST

Never give medication unless you are authorised to do so and it is in line with the ECD centre's policies and procedures.

If you are unsure what to do, seek guidance immediately

## What This Means in Practice

Preparation builds confidence.

Knowing the centre's emergency procedures before an incident occurs helps you respond calmly when it matters most



# Activity 7

## What Would You Do?

Read each situation and explain how you would respond.

### Situation 1

A child begins choking during snack time.

**My Response**

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### Situation 2

You discover that a child is missing during outdoor play.

**My Response**

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### Situation 3

A child falls while climbing and appears to have injured their arm.

**My Response**

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### **Suggested Response**

#### Situation 1

Call the ECD Practitioner immediately, alert the trained first aider, follow the centre's emergency procedures and keep the other children calm.

#### Situation 2

Alert the ECD Practitioner immediately, follow the centre's missing child procedure without delay and work as a team until the child is found.

#### Situation 3

Keep the child as comfortable as possible, avoid moving the injured arm unnecessarily, call the ECD Practitioner immediately and follow the centre's emergency procedures.



## READY FOR WORK

You do not need to know every answer.

You do need to stay calm, communicate clearly, follow procedures and ask for help when it is needed.

## Key Idea

Emergencies require calm, prepared and professional responses.

By following procedures, working as a team and putting children's safety first, you help protect the wellbeing of every child in your care.

## Looking Ahead

You have now completed all the lessons in Module 5.

Next, you will review what you have learned before moving on to Module 6, where you will prepare for your first day as an ECD Assistant.

# MODULE 5 SUMMARY

Congratulations on completing Module 5.

In this module you learned how to create safe, healthy and inclusive environments where children can grow, learn and thrive.

You explored the importance of health, hygiene, nutrition, active supervision and everyday safety. You also learned about safeguarding, child protection, inclusion and responding appropriately to emergencies and everyday incidents.

Most importantly, you discovered that every adult in an ECD centre shares the responsibility of protecting children and acting in their best interests

## Key Messages

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

- Every child has the right to be safe, healthy and protected.
- Safety is everyone's responsibility.
- Good hygiene and nutrition support healthy development.
- Active supervision prevents many accidents.
- Report child protection concerns immediately through the correct procedures.
- Every child deserves to feel welcomed, respected and included.
- Preparation and teamwork help us respond effectively to emergencies.



# Knowledge Check

Complete these questions before reading the Suggested Answers.

## Question 1

True or False

Keeping children safe is only the responsibility of the ECD Practitioner.

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

## Question 2

List three daily safety checks you should carry out before children arrive.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

## Question 3

Why is active supervision important?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Question 4

What should you do if you are concerned about a child's safety or wellbeing?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Question 5

Name two ways you can create a more inclusive learning environment.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Suggested Answers**

### Question 1

False.

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

### Question 2

Possible answers include checking gates, playground equipment, unsafe outdoor toilets, classrooms, hazardous materials, walkways and learning equipment.

### Question 3

Active supervision helps prevent accidents, allows adults to respond quickly and keeps children safe while they learn and explore.

### Question 4

Report your concern immediately to the ECD Practitioner and follow the centre's child protection procedures.

### Question 5

Possible answers include adapting activities, welcoming every child, respecting different cultures and languages, encouraging inclusion and working closely with families..

# End-of-Module Assessment

These questions will help you apply what you have learned.

There may be more than one good answer.

## Scenario 1

While checking the playground before children arrive, you notice that the gate is open and a long-drop toilet has a damaged safety cover.

What should you do before allowing children outside?

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## Scenario 2

A child tells you they do not want to go home and you notice unexplained bruises on their arm.

How should you respond?

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## Scenario 3

A child who speaks very little English has recently joined the ECD centre.

How could you help the child feel included and participate in activities.

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## Scenario 4

During water play, you notice another adult has stepped away to answer a phone call, leaving children unattended.

What should you do?

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## **Suggested Answers**

### **Scenario 1**

Prevent children from entering the area, secure the gate, report the damaged toilet immediately, ensure the area is made safe and follow the ECD centre's safety procedures before outdoor play begins.

### **Scenario 2**

Remain calm, listen carefully, avoid asking leading questions, report your observations immediately to the ECD Practitioner and follow the centre's child protection procedures.

### **Scenario 3**

Use simple language, pictures and gestures, encourage friendships, include the child in activities and work with the family and ECD Practitioner to support communication.

### **Scenario 4**

Return immediately to supervise the children, ensure they are safe, inform the ECD Practitioner if necessary and remind colleagues that children must never be left unsupervised around water.

# My Learning Journal

Take a few moments to reflect on what you have learned

The most important thing I learned about keeping children safe is:

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One safety habit I will practise every day is:

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One way I will help every child feel safe, healthy and included is:

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## Glossary

Key words you will use throughout this Module.

| Word               | Meaning                                                                     |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Safeguarding       | Protecting children from harm and promoting their wellbeing.                |
| Child Protection   | The actions taken to respond to concerns about a child's safety or welfare. |
| Active Supervision | Watching, listening and responding to children to keep them safe.           |
| Inclusion          | Ensuring that every child is welcomed, respected and able to participate.   |
| Emergency          | A situation requiring an immediate response to protect health or safety.    |





# Ready for Work Checklist

**Before moving to Module 6, ask yourself:**

- ☐ I can identify common hazards in an ECD centre.
- ☐ I understand the importance of health, hygiene and nutrition.
- ☐ I know how to supervise children actively.
- ☐ I understand my role in safeguarding and child protection.
- ☐ I know how to support inclusion.
- ☐ I understand the emergency procedures at my ECD centre.
- ☐ I am ready to continue my learning.

## Looking Ahead

In Module 6 you will prepare for your first day as an ECD Assistant.

You will learn about daily routines, teamwork, time management, professional confidence and practical strategies that will help you begin your new role successfully



# CONGRATULATIONS!

You have completed Module 5 of Starting Strong.

Children depend on caring adults to keep them safe, healthy and protected. Every hazard you remove, every healthy habit you encourage and every concern you report contributes to a safer and more nurturing environment where children can learn with confidence. Be proud of the important role you play as you continue your journey into Module 6.