



MODULE

7

Ready for Practice

ESTIMATED STUDY TIME: 3 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: Bringing It All Together
- Lesson 2: Real-Life Workplace Scenarios

Session 2 (60 minutes)

- Lesson 3: Reflecting on Your Professional Journey
- Lesson 4: Building Strong Partnerships with Families
- Lesson 5: My Personal Action Plan

Session 3 (60 minutes)

- Lesson 6: Graduation and Looking Ahead
- Knowledge Check
- Final Programme Reflection
- Course Completion

*"Learning never stops. Every child you meet
will teach you something new."*

Why This Module Matters

You have completed six modules of learning.
Now it is time to bring everything together.

This final module will help you apply your knowledge, reflect on your professional journey and prepare to begin your work as an ECD Assistant with confidence.

By working through realistic situations, you will discover that you already have many of the skills needed to support young children and work effectively as part of an ECD team.

Learning Outcomes

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

- Apply your learning to real workplace situations.
- Demonstrate professional decision-making.
- Build positive partnerships with families.
- Reflect on your strengths and future goals.
- Develop a personal action plan for continued growth.
- Complete the programme with confidence.



Lesson 1

Bringing It All Together

Why This Lesson Matters

Throughout this programme you have explored the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to become an effective ECD Assistant.

Now it is time to see how these ideas connect in everyday practice.

Every interaction with a child is an opportunity to build relationships, encourage learning and create a safe, caring environment.

Looking Back

During this programme you learned about:

- the role of the ECD Assistant
- professionalism and teamwork
- child development
- learning through play
- health, safety and child protection
- working with families
- preparing for your first day in an ECD centre.

Each of these topics is connected.

Together they help you provide high-quality support for young children.



REMEMBER

Children do not experience your work one lesson at a time.
They experience it through your everyday actions.

What Does an Excellent ECD Assistant Do?

An excellent ECD Assistant:

- welcomes every child warmly
- works respectfully with colleagues
- values parents and caregivers as partners
- encourages learning through play
- keeps children safe
- observes children's development
- treats every child with dignity and respect
- continues learning every day.

Excellence is built through consistent daily habits.



IN PRACTICE

As Nomsa watches Thandi working with the children, she notices many small moments.

Thandi comforts a child who misses their parent.

She asks thoughtful questions during block play.

She encourages children to wash their hands before breakfast.

She welcomes a father collecting his daughter and shares something positive about the child's day.

At the end of the afternoon, Nomsa says,

"You are becoming a confident ECD Assistant because you remember that every moment matters."

Thandi smiles.

She realises that being an excellent ECD Assistant is not about doing one big thing well.

It is about doing many small things well every day

Bringing Your Learning Together

As you begin your career, remember to:

- put children's wellbeing first
- work as part of the ECD team
- communicate respectfully
- build partnerships with families
- stay curious and continue learning
- ask for help when you need it.

These habits will support you throughout your career.



SAFETY FIRST

No matter how experienced you become, children's safety and wellbeing must always remain your highest priority.

What This Means in Practice

The knowledge you have gained becomes meaningful when you apply it consistently in your daily work.

Small actions repeated every day create lasting positive experiences for children.

Activity 1

My Professional Strengths

Think about everything you have learned.

Write one strength you already have in each area.

Area	My Strength
Working with children	_____
Teamwork	_____
Communication	_____
Safety	_____
Professional growth	_____



Believe in the progress you have made.

You are not the same person who started this programme.

You have developed knowledge, practical skills and professional confidence.

Key Idea

Everything you have learned works together to help children feel safe, valued and ready to learn.

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will apply your knowledge to realistic workplace situations that every ECD Assistant may experience.

Lesson 2

Real-Life Workplace Scenarios

Why This Lesson Matters

Working in an ECD centre means making thoughtful decisions throughout the day. Every situation is an opportunity to apply your knowledge, work with your team and support children's wellbeing.

This lesson gives you the opportunity to practise professional decision-making before you begin your work.

Scenario 1 – A Nervous New Child

It is Sipho's first day.
He is crying and holding tightly onto his grandmother.

Think About It

- How would you help Sipho feel safe?
- How would you support his grandmother?
- How would you work with the ECD Practitioner?

Suggested Response

Welcome Sipho and his grandmother warmly.
Allow time for a calm goodbye, reassure both of them and help Sipho settle into an activity that interests him.
Share any important information with the ECD Practitioner and continue checking on Sipho throughout the morning.

Scenario 2 – A Playground Hazard

Before outdoor play you notice that a swing has a broken chain.

Think About It

- What should you do first?
- How would you protect the children?

Suggested Response

Prevent children from using the equipment, report the hazard immediately, ensure the area is made safe and continue supervising children while repairs are arranged.

Scenario 3 – A Curious Group

Several children become fascinated by a spider's web in the garden.

Think About It

- How could you turn this into a learning opportunity while keeping children safe?

Suggested Response

Encourage observation from a safe distance.

Ask open-ended questions such as,

"What do you notice?"

"Why do you think the spider built its web here?"

Support children's curiosity while ensuring they do not touch the spider or damage the web.

Scenario 4 – A Concerned Parent

A parent asks how their child is settling into the ECD centre.

Think About It

- How would you respond professionally?

Suggested Response

Share positive observations about the child's day, communicate respectfully and refer any information that is the responsibility of the ECD Practitioner to them.

Remember that parents and caregivers are important partners in every child's learning.

Scenario 5 – Including Every Child

One child is being left out of a group game.

Think About It

- What could you do?

Suggested Response

Encourage the children to include everyone, adapt the activity if needed and reinforce the importance of kindness, respect and belonging.

Support the child to participate with confidence.



REMEMBER

Professional judgement grows through practice.

Each experience helps you become a stronger ECD Assistant



SAFETY FIRST

When making decisions, always ask yourself:

"What is the safest and most supportive response for the child?"

What This Means in Practice

Good decisions are based on the same principles you have learned throughout this programme:

Protect children.

Respect children.

Support children.

Work as a team.

Partner with families.

Activity 2

What Would You Do?

Choose one of the scenarios above.

Explain how you would respond and why.



There may be different ways to respond to a situation.
The most important thing is that your decisions protect children, respect families and reflect professional practice.

Key Idea

Professional confidence comes from applying your knowledge thoughtfully and consistently.

Every situation is an opportunity to make a positive difference in a child's life.

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will reflect on your journey, celebrate your growth and prepare for the exciting future that lies ahead as an ECD professional.

Lesson 3

Reflecting on Your Professional Journey

Why This Lesson Matters

Learning does not end when a training programme is completed.

The most effective ECD professionals take time to reflect on their experiences, celebrate their successes and identify opportunities for continued growth.

Reflection helps you become more confident, thoughtful and responsive in your work with children, families and colleagues.

Looking Back

Think about where you were when you started this programme.

Perhaps you were excited, uncertain or wondering whether you would be able to work in an ECD centre.

Now think about what you have learned.

You understand:

- the role of an ECD Assistant
- child development
- learning through play
- health, safety and child protection
- teamwork
- working with families
- professional behaviour.

You have developed knowledge and practical skills that will support you every day.



REMEMBER

Confidence grows when you recognise how far you have come.

Reflecting Helps You Grow

Reflection means thinking honestly about your experiences.

Ask yourself:

- What am I doing well?
- What have I learned?
- What would I like to improve?
- How can I continue growing?

Reflection is not about being critical of yourself.

It is about becoming the best professional you can be.



IN PRACTICE

At the end of each Friday, Thandi spends a few minutes thinking about her week. She remembers a child who was nervous on Monday but smiled confidently by Friday.

She also remembers an activity that did not go as planned.

Instead of feeling discouraged, she asks herself,

"What could I do differently next time?"

Each week she becomes a little more confident and a little more experienced.

Celebrating Progress

Professional growth happens one step at a time.

Celebrate:

- learning a new skill
- building relationships with children
- working well with colleagues
- supporting families
- solving challenges professionally.

Every achievement matters.



SAFETY FIRST

Reflection should also include safety.

Ask yourself:

"Did I notice and respond to any risks today?"

Learning from everyday experiences helps keep children safe

What This Means in Practice

The best ECD professionals are lifelong learners.

They continue asking questions, reflecting on their work and looking for ways to improve

Activity 3

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Complete the sentences.

The most important thing I learned during this programme is:

One professional strength I have developed is:

One area I would like to continue improving is:



Every day is an opportunity to learn something new.
Be proud of your progress and remain open to new experiences

Key Idea

Reflection helps you become a more confident, thoughtful and effective ECD Assistant.

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will discover how strong partnerships with parents and caregivers help children learn, grow and thrive.

Lesson 4

Building Strong Partnerships with Families

Why This Lesson Matters

Parents and caregivers are a child's first and most important teachers.

Children learn best when families and ECD professionals work together with trust, respect and open communication.

As an ECD Assistant, you help strengthen this important partnership every day.

Families Are Partners

Every family knows their child in a unique way.

Parents and caregivers can share valuable information about:

- their child's interests
- favourite activities
- health needs
- routines
- cultural traditions
- languages spoken at home
- recent changes that may affect the child.

Listening carefully helps you provide better support.



REMEMBER

Families are partners, not visitors.

Treat every parent and caregiver with respect and kindness.

Communicating with Families

Positive communication happens every day.

Simple conversations can make a big difference.

For example:

- greeting families warmly
- sharing something positive about the child's day
- listening respectfully
- answering questions honestly within your role
- referring matters that require the ECD Practitioner when appropriate.

Good communication builds trust.

Working Together for Children's Learning

Children benefit when learning is supported both at home and at the ECD centre.

You can encourage families to:

- read stories together
- sing songs and rhymes
- talk about their day
- encourage independence
- celebrate children's efforts
- share special family traditions.

When children experience consistency between home and the ECD centre, they feel more secure and confident.



IN PRACTICE

One afternoon, Musa's father arrives to collect him.
Thandi smiles and says,
"Musa was very proud today. He poured his own water at lunch and helped another child tidy the block area."
His father smiles and replies,
"We've been encouraging him to do more things on his own at home too."
Together they celebrate Musa's growing independence and agree to continue encouraging him both at home and at the ECD centre

Respecting Every Family

Families come in many different forms.

Children may live with:

- parents
- grandparents
- aunts or uncles
- foster parents
- siblings
- guardians or other caregivers.

Every family deserves to be welcomed, respected and included.

Avoid making assumptions about children's home lives.



SAFETY FIRST

If a parent or caregiver raises a concern about a child's safety, health or wellbeing, listen respectfully and share the information with the ECD Practitioner according to the centre's procedures.

Confidential information should always be handled professionally

What This Means in Practice

Strong partnerships are built through many small conversations over time.

A warm greeting, a kind word and respectful communication help families feel welcomed and valued,

Activity 4

Working Together with Families

Read each situation.

Write how you would respond.

Situation 1

A grandmother tells you her grandchild did not sleep well the previous night.

My Response

Suggested Response

Thank her for sharing the information, let the ECD Practitioner know and provide extra support to the child during the day if needed.

Situation 2

A parent asks how they can support their child's learning at home.

My Response

Suggested Response

Suggest simple activities such as reading together, talking about the day, singing songs and encouraging play, while working in partnership with the ECD Practitioner.

Situation 3

A caregiver is worried because their child cries every morning at drop-off.

My Response

Suggested Response

Listen with empathy, reassure the caregiver that this can be a normal adjustment, explain the settling routine used by the centre and keep the ECD Practitioner informed.



READY FOR WORK

Every positive conversation with a family strengthens the partnership that supports a child's learning and wellbeing.

Key Idea

Children thrive when families and ECD professionals work together.

By building respectful relationships with parents and caregivers, you help create a strong foundation for every child's success.

Looking Ahead

In the next lesson you will develop your own personal action plan and identify the goals that will guide your professional journey as an ECD Assistant.

Lesson 5

My Personal Action Plan

Why This Lesson Matters

Completing a training programme is an important achievement.

The next step is to put your learning into practice.

A personal action plan helps you identify the professional habits you want to develop and the goals you would like to achieve as you begin your journey as an ECD Assistant.

Every small step you take will help you grow in confidence and competence.

Setting Professional Goals

Good goals are realistic, practical and meaningful.

Think about what you would like to achieve during your first few months in an ECD centre.

You might focus on:

- building positive relationships with children
- strengthening your communication with families
- improving your confidence during group activities
- learning more about child development
- developing creative learning activities
- becoming more organised.

Choose goals that are important to you.



REMEMBER

Professional growth happens one step at a time.

Small improvements made consistently lead to lasting success

My Action Plan

My Strengths

List three strengths that you will bring to your role.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My Goals

Write three goals you would like to achieve during your first six months.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

How Will I Achieve These Goals?

For each goal, write one action you will take.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____



IN PRACTICE

At the beginning of her career, Thandi wrote three simple goals.

- Learn every child's name during the first week.
- Read at least one story every day with enthusiasm.
- Ask Nomsa for feedback every Friday.

Six months later she looked back at her notebook.

She realised that those small goals had helped her become more confident, organised and effective.

Professional growth often begins with small, consistent actions

Keep Growing

As you continue your journey:

- ask questions
- welcome feedback
- observe experienced colleagues
- celebrate children's progress
- reflect on your own learning
- continue building your knowledge and skills.

Every day is another opportunity to grow.



No matter how experienced you become, always follow safety procedures and never hesitate to ask for guidance if you are unsure.
Children's safety and wellbeing must always come first.

What This Means in Practice

Your learning does not end today.

It continues every time you welcome a child, support a family, learn from a colleague or reflect on your work.

Activity 5

My Promise

Complete the sentences below.

As an ECD Assistant, I promise that I will:



Believe in your ability to learn.
Believe in the potential of every child.
Believe that your work matters.

Key Idea

The best ECD professionals are committed to continuous learning, kindness and excellence.

Your journey has only just begun.

Looking Ahead

In the final lesson of Starting Strong, you will celebrate your achievement and prepare to take your next step as an ECD Assistant.

Lesson 6

Graduation and Looking Ahead

Why This Lesson Matters

Today you have reached an important milestone.

You have completed Starting Strong and taken the first step towards becoming a confident and capable ECD Assistant.

You have learned about child development, learning through play, professionalism, teamwork, health and safety, child protection, inclusion and working with families. Most importantly, you have learned that every child deserves caring adults who believe in their potential.

Celebrate Your Achievement

Completing this programme shows your commitment to children and to your own professional growth.

Take a moment to celebrate how far you have come.

You are now better prepared to:

- welcome children warmly
- support learning through play
- create safe and healthy environments
- work respectfully with colleagues
- build partnerships with families
- continue growing as an ECD professional.

This is an achievement to be proud of.



REMEMBER

Every expert was once a beginner.

Keep learning.

Keep growing.

Keep believing in yourself and in every child you meet.

Continuing Your Professional Growth

As you begin your career, remember these simple commitments.

I will:

- put children first
- protect every child's safety and dignity
- treat every family with respect
- work as part of a team
- continue learning throughout my career
- create opportunities for every child to learn through play.

These commitments will guide your professional journey.



IN PRACTICE

On her first anniversary at Siyakhula ECD Centre, Thandi walks through the classroom and smiles.

The children greet her with excitement.

Families know her by name.

She remembers how nervous she felt on her first day.

She also remembers something Nomsa told her:

"Children do not need perfect adults.

They need caring adults who never stop learning."

Thandi realises that this is exactly the kind of ECD professional she hopes to remain

A Final Reflection

Think about the children you will meet in the future.

Some will be confident.

Some will be shy.

Some will learn quickly.

Others will need more time and support.

Every one of them deserves to be welcomed, encouraged and valued.

The kindness, patience and respect you show each day may influence a child's future in ways you may never fully know

A Message from Ripples for Change

At Ripples for Change, we believe that strong foundations create lasting change.

By choosing to work with young children, you have chosen a profession that shapes futures, strengthens families and builds communities.

As you begin this journey, remember that learning is lifelong, every child matters and every positive interaction creates a ripple that can extend far beyond the classroom.

Thank you for choosing to make a difference.

We wish you every success as you continue your journey in Early Childhood Development



You are ready to begin.
Go forward with confidence.
Continue learning.
Support your colleagues.
Partner with families.
Believe in every child.
And never forget that the smallest moments of
encouragement can change a child's life

Key Idea

A strong beginning creates endless possibilities.

You are now ready to begin your journey as an ECD Assistant and to make a positive difference in the lives of children every day.



Final Programme Reflection

Take a few moments to reflect on your learning.

The most important lesson I learned during *Starting Strong* is:

One strength I will bring to my work is:

One goal I have for my future is:

One way I will work in partnership with parents and caregivers is:

Programme Completion Checklist

- ☐ I have completed all seven modules.
- ☐ I have completed the activities and assessments.
- ☐ I understand my role as an ECD Assistant.
- ☐ I know how to support children's learning and development.
- ☐ I understand my responsibilities for safety, health and child protection.
- ☐ I value parents and caregivers as partners in children's education.
- ☐ I am committed to continuing my professional learning.



Certificate of Completion

This certifies that

_____ has successfully completed

Starting Strong

A Foundation Programme for ECD Assistants

Presented by

Ripples for Change

Date: _____

Facilitator: _____

Signature: _____

Congratulations!

You have completed Starting Strong.

As you begin your work as an ECD Assistant,
remember that every child deserves to feel safe,
valued, respected and inspired to learn.

Your knowledge, your kindness and your commitment
will help create brighter futures for children, families and communities.

Thank you for choosing to be part of that journey.