Preschool Education Program 2004
Programa de Educación Preescolar 2004
THIS IS A NON-OFFICIAL TRANSLATION

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Foreword

This document contains Mexico’s new nationalized preschool program. It was developed after studying the current status of preschool education in Mexico as well as
different educational approaches past and present in the education of children under the age of six. Especially important factors in the development of this program were:

a) The identification of the most common teaching practices in preschools and the most frequent problems identified by teachers. The involvement of curriculum specialists and teaching teams from all over Mexico was essential in the development of this project. Their cooperation allowed for the organization of regional and national conferences, discussions, personal interviews, and direct observation in many preschool classrooms around the country.

b) A review of preschool education in Mexico since the 1920s (when preschool was first made official), the current program used by a National Council for Equal Access to Education (Conafe), the indigenous educational program, and program proposals prepared in five states of Mexico.¹

c) The analysis of several educational models currently applied in other countries at the early childhood level.

d) The revision of recent research on child development and education.

Mexico’s preschool educational reform began in 2002. The analysis of a proposal for a new program started in October 2003 with the distribution of a document called *Foundations and Characteristics of a New Curriculum Proposal for Preschool Education*. Three previous versions of this program were reviewed by early childhood curriculum specialists from all states and different Secretary of Public Education (SEP) departments.

This new program incorporates the comments and suggestions, both general and specific, made by early childhood school administrators, curriculum specialists, teachers, and educational researchers from Mexico and other Latin American countries.

Opinions received in this process varied in nature. Some opinions referred to theoretical aspects outside the scope of curricular documentation. Other opinions referred to theories of learning and educational principles and proposals while still others referred to methodological practice and assessment. Processing these different opinions was a challenge for the coordinating team but was a necessary step in the preparation of this program.

Needs identified by teachers in the curriculum revision process became the starting point for the design of this program. Teacher opinion on the subsequent preliminary versions was gathered in different ways. The regional conference called “Dialogues on Preschool Education” held in June of 2004 provided a special opportunity for the collection of ideas. This event brought together 1500 attendees comprised of

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¹ Colima, Distrito Federal, Nuevo León, Querétaro and Tabasco.
preschool teachers and administrators from many areas, educators for indigenous and at-risk communities, as well as professors of preschool education. Feedback generated in this conference was helpful in the preparation of the new preschool program.

The program will be effective as of the 2004-2005 school year. Simultaneously, SEP’s Preschool Educational Renewal Program will: implement a staff development program for teachers and administrators, develop and distribute educational materials for students and support materials for teachers, design and implement an informative campaign aimed at the community (particularly parents), and work towards improving the organization and operation of preschool centers.
Introduction

A review of the history of preschool education, social and cultural changes, breakthroughs in the study of child development, and the inclusion of preschool in compulsory education confirms the social importance of education at this level. This acknowledgement revalidates the beliefs defended by generations of teachers who in the past struggled to establish and extend an educational service to young children. Even though there is still progress to be made in educating the public about the importance of preschool education, the idea that education for young children is merely entertaining or limited to caretaking, yet lacking in educational content, is gradually being overcome.

Quality education, at all levels, depends on many factors. Student learning is influenced by school organization, school operation, school requirements, and school support systems. However, teachers’ educational practices, methods, and the relationships teachers form with their classes play a critical role in student learning. Educational practice is influenced by curriculum, educational goals, teaching styles and skills, and the explicit and implicit ideas teachers have about children (what young children are like, how they learn).

As with other educational levels, preschool education includes a wide range of educational practices. In many instances, a teacher will use innovative strategies to answer students’ questions and encourage students to look for their own answers. This fosters student interest in problem solving and asks students to think reflectively. There are other instances, however, where teaching practice remains unquestioned and children’s interests and current events are ignored. Sometimes the majority of the short school day is devoted entirely to routines. These routines – not necessarily successful – are limited to teaching courtesy, order and hygiene, or to improving fine motor coordination. In extreme cases, the activities have no educational purpose and are intended only to keep a class focused and quiet.

One of the most important aspects of preschool education is the development of a child’s learning potential. This new program starts by acknowledging the positive qualities of early childhood education and takes on the challenge of improving problem areas. Curriculum revision has been done with the following ends in mind:

a) First, to improve the quality of student learning during the early years. To do this, the program starts by acknowledging young children’s abilities and learning potentials. It also establishes fundamental objectives expressed via competencies that students will develop based on what they already know and are able to do. This respect for who children are when they enter school encourages educators to pay attention to diversity within their classrooms.
b) Secondly, to align preschool education with elementary and secondary education. The fundamental objectives set forth in this program complement the country’s nationalized elementary and secondary educational objectives. Teacher practice is key to students reaching the fundamental objectives of the program. Teachers create the environment, plan instruction, and motivate and awaken student interest by involving students in activities that develop their competencies. Rather than leaving student interest aside, teachers must acknowledge that children learn best when they have a say about what they will learn.

This program’s curriculum revision seeks to strengthen the role of teachers within the educational process by encouraging teachers to design and select the most appropriate methodology to teach based on their class make-up and context as well as the fundamental objectives and competencies set forth in the program.

The program is broken into the following areas: I) Basic Principals: quality preschool education for all, II) Program Features, III) Fundamental Objectives, IV) Educational Principals, V) Learning Domains and Competencies, VI) Organization of the School Year, VII) Assessment.
I. Basic Principles: Quality Preschool Education for All
1. Early Learning and the Importance of Preschool Education

The first years of life have a remarkable impact on a child’s personal and social development. Children begin to form their identity, acquire fundamental social skills that help them get along with others, and become members of society.

Developmental research and the study of how young children learn have identified a great number of abilities that children develop from a very early age and confirm a child’s enormous learning potential\(^2\). Language development is just one example of a higher level thinking skill attained during the earliest years in a child’s life. Rapid progress is being made in brain research showing a period of vast production and stabilization of neural connections during early childhood. Research in neuroscience is growing everyday and affirms that the brain benefits from diversity and an environment rich in experiences. There is no evidence, however, that proves certain activities have a direct effect on neural connections. And this compels us to carefully analyze early stimulation proposals that may inappropriately use or even abuse sound scientific knowledge.

There is now a more optimistic idea of what children know and can learn between the ages of four and five (and even earlier), if they are involved in interesting educational experiences that challenge their thinking and abilities. This idea differs from the one that prevailed in educational circles until two decades ago, when the focus was on what children could not do based on Piaget’s pre-operational theory (egocentrism, centration, transduction, irreversibility, and a lack of conservation).

The early years in a young child’s life are an intense learning and developmental period influenced by a child’s genetic constitution and his/her social experiences with adults and other children. Young children’s social experiences are key to how a child will approach learning in the future. This is also true for those children with developmental challenges due to inherited or acquired conditions. A child’s social experience helps form his/her disposition to learning and can include the following: self-perception (self-assurance, confidence, recognition of one’s own abilities), social interactions with others, and an eagerness to explore one’s surroundings (curiosity, focus, observational skills, the ability to form questions and hypotheses, memory, information processing abilities, imagination, and creativity.)

Social interactions – most importantly play – whether within the family or in other settings provide children with fundamental knowledge and competencies that allow them to become increasingly independent and knowledgeable about their surroundings. However, a child’s experiences do not always provide the proper conditions to develop a child’s potential to the fullest.

Social and cultural factors influence a child’s experience. Cultural norms including attention to a child’s needs, verbal interactions between children and adults, whether or

\(^2\) The term potential refers to learning possibilities that may require a systematic educational approach.
not children’s expressions, questions, and ideas are considered important, and the role of each individual family member all have an impact on a child’s behavior and approach toward learning. These social and cultural factors influence a child from a very early age and shape a child’s language and critical thinking skills, two elements irrevocably related to one another.

Opportunities for hands-on-learning with everyday materials and/or exploration in the natural world broaden children’s knowledge and simultaneously develop cognitive abilities such as observing, remembering, asking questions, challenging previous ideas, inferring or generalizing, and forming conclusions - in brief - learning.

Opportunities to share experiences, play, and interact with other children greatly influences a child’s learning and development. Peer relationships help build a child’s personal identity and strengthen his/her social-emotional competencies. Ideas, explanations, questions, or doubts are shared in such relationships through language. This is done when children name and describe objects, explain social and natural theories or phenomena, and share doubts and a desire for knowledge. Through interactions with peers, children’s theories are challenged in a natural way. This is a powerful motivator for learning.

Preschool education intervenes precisely during this productive learning period allowing children to move from their family environment to a more diverse social environment with new and different demands.

Preschool, by its very nature, is a favorable setting for children to interact with peers and adults and to participate in communicative activities that are richer and more varied than in the family setting. Preschool promotes learning experiences related to social interactions that contribute to increased autonomy and socialization skills. Besides these learning experiences that have a value in themselves, preschool education may be an unique chance to develop a set of thinking skills that provides the grounds for life-long learning and social skills as it purposefully develops abilities and potentials through specific educational experiences.

Thus, preschool education, not only prepares children for being successful in primary school, but may also have a lasting influence on children’s personal and social lives.

2. Social Changes and the Challenges of Preschool Education

The importance of receiving a preschool education is increasing not only in Mexico, but also in other countries worldwide, in part, due to societal changes. Social and economic issues (population growth and distribution, increased poverty, and social inequality) as well as cultural changes call for the strengthening of social institutions that provide childcare and education. During the last three decades of the twentieth
The expansion of preschool services over the last three decades of the twentieth century has resulted in the diversification of the population served. Boys and girls from very different social strata, particularly from rural, indigenous, and excluded urban sectors have gained access to preschool education.

Including children from poor families (whose parents may have little or no formal education and unique traditions and ideas about raising children) in preschool settings implies a series of pedagogical challenges to the educational practice that has been established during decades of preschool education. These challenges, which have not been sufficiently addressed in the recent past, will require more attention as a consequence of preschool becoming compulsory for children ages three to five.

Today’s societal and cultural changes provide powerful reasons for the expansion of quality preschool education. Quality care requires adequately addressing diversity, the difference between boys and girls (individual, familiar, societal), and major cultural differences such as ethnicity. In educational practice, this challenge implies overcoming the belief that a classroom of children may be considered as a homogeneous whole.

Preschool is of primary importance for all children’s learning and development but it is of greatest importance for children living in poverty, especially for children who, either due to family reasons or cultural factors, receive little attention from their parents.
For children “at risk,” this first school experience may have a most favorable impact in the development of children’s abilities to face, overcome, and recover from hard situations stemming from family or societal problems. Preschool environments can teach children to negotiate obstacles, which may help prevent future school and social failure. Preschool education performs a similar function by integrating children with special educational needs who frequently lack a safe and stimulating environment.

Thus, preschool education fulfills a democratic purpose as an educational setting where all children are provided with learning experiences aimed at developing their potential and strengthening their abilities regardless of their gender, origin, social, and/or cultural status.

On another level, changes taking place worldwide such as: global economics, information and communication technologies, the role of knowledge in the development of societies, environmental deterioration, and an increase in unequal growth opportunities for different countries requires fundamental changes in the orientation of educational systems at all levels.

In response to these challenges, education must develop critical thinking skills and a desire for life-long learning, as well as teach values and attitudes that allow for the advancement of democracy and humanity. Preschool education, the first step in a child’s formal education, cannot avoid those challenges. Children enrolling in preschool during the next few years will need to be prepared to enter a rapidly changing world when they finish their formal education. Teaching students to face future challenges must be a priority for educators.

3. The Right to Quality Preschool Education: Legal Foundations

a) Education: a Fundamental Right

Education is a fundamental right guaranteed by Mexico’s constitution. The third article of the constitution states that education dispensed by the federal government “will be aimed at harmoniously developing an individual’s potential while instilling a love for his/her country and an awareness of international solidarity, independence, and justice.” To achieve this goal the article sets forth the following principles indispensable to education: to be free of charge, secular, national, and democratic in nature, to be appreciative of an individual’s dignity, to promote equality before the law, to combat discrimination and unfair privileges, to protect society’s common interests, and to support an international solidarity based on independence and justice.

Due to the importance acknowledged to education as a means for individual and social progress, the aforementioned article establishes education as a public service of social interest and is consequently regulated by congressional laws that aim to unify and coordinate a nationalized education throughout Mexico.
During the past few decades, other definitions have been incorporated into the Constitution that enrich the values and aspirations set forth in its third article. Amongst these definitions is the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of Mexico’s indigenous people (article two). The federal, state, and municipal governments must promote equal opportunities for indigenous people and seek to remove discriminatory practice. In education, this translates to favoring bilingual and intercultural education and promoting respect and knowledge about the different cultures existing in Mexico.

These principles have arisen from the social and political evolution of the Mexican people and express collective values and aspirations deeply rooted in Mexican society. They help provide congruency in the country’s educational actions.

The criteria and principles set forth in the Constitution are ratified and detailed in the General Education Law that establishes the purposes of education provided by the federal government, de-centralized organizations, authorized private schools, and schools with an official accreditation. These principles must be represented in all programs, plans, and curriculums.

b) Compulsory Preschool Education

The span of what levels constitute compulsory education has gradually increased during Mexico’s history. In November of 2002, article 3 and 31 of Mexico’s Constitution established that preschool education would become compulsory. Consequently, compulsory education now covers twelve school grades.\(^3\)

The constitutional reform in 2002 addressed the ambiguities that still prevailed in connection to preschool education. Some major implications are:

- Confirmation of the government’s duty to provide preschool education, a measure established since 1993.
- Obligation of parents and guardians to enroll their child or charge in preschool education in public or private schools.
- Requirement that preschool education – as a three-grade cycle - be completed for entry to primary school under the terms and with the exemptions set forth in the same decree.
- Obligation of private schools teaching preschool education to obtain authorization to provide this service.

c) Determination of Programs and Curricula

By making preschool education compulsory, the legislative branch confirmed in Constitutional Article three, fraction II, the national nature of preschool education

\(^3\) Elementary school was made official in 1867 covering three school years. In 1940 elementary school was extended to six years. In 1993, three years of secondary school was made official.
programs and curriculum set forth herein: “For full compliance of paragraph two, and fraction II⁴, the Federal Executive Power will determine the curriculum of all preschool, primary, secondary, and teacher education programs in the country. For such purposes, the Federal Executive Power will take into account the opinion of state governments and different educational organizations pursuant to the terms set forth in the law.” The Secretary of Public Education issues the following Preschool Program in compliance with this command.

⁴ From Article Three in the Constitution
II. Program Features
In order to attain a quality preschool education for all children, this program has been designed with fundamental objectives that take into account cultural and regional diversity. This program is flexible in its application based on circumstances particular to each region and location in Mexico.

1. A Nationalized Curriculum

The Mexican government has made this new preschool program compulsory for all preschools in the country, whether public or private. Both the program’s general orientation and specific components promote an educational practice that fosters an appreciation of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue.

2. Fundamental Objectives for Preschool Education

The program begins by recognizing that preschool education, as a foundation for basic education\(^5\), must contribute to the development of the whole child. To do this preschool must guarantee that children participate in educational experiences that allow them to develop affective, social, and cognitive competencies.

Since there are no fixed patterns for when a child should master the program’s learning objectives, it sets fundamental objectives to be met by the end of preschool. Considering that fundamental objectives have been set for preschool education as a whole, each grade will design activities with different levels of complexity that will take into account a child's achievements and learning potential and should be met by the end of preschool. In this sense, the fundamental objectives constitute the exit profile of preschool education.

3. Competency Based Approach

Unlike programs that establish general topics as educational content, this program focuses on competencies children should develop.

A competency is a set of abilities, which include knowledge, attitudes, skills, and dexterities attained through the learning process and used in different situations and contexts.

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\(^5\) Translators’ note: Basic education in Mexico includes three grades of preschool, six years of elementary school, and three years of secondary school.
This curricular decision is aimed at turning school into a place that contributes to the integral development of children by providing learning opportunities where children can apply previous knowledge and put it into practice in real life situations. The competencies selected in this program were chosen based on the certainty that children come to school with experience and knowledge obtained from their family and social environments and that all children possess enormous learning potential. The role of preschool education is to promote the development and strengthen the competencies of each child.

It is important to remember that competencies are not acquired in a final way, but are broadened and enriched through experience, through challenges faced by an individual over time, and in the way s/he solves problems in different situations. Due to their fundamental nature, systematic work towards developing a child’s competencies (for example, the ability to dispute a point or solve problems) starts in preschool but is also an objective for elementary education and subsequent educational levels. As the competencies are valuable in themselves, they serve as the basis for future learning and personal development.

Focusing on competencies implies that teachers will design learning situations that challenge children and help them gradually develop complex levels of achievement (thinking, expressing themselves through different media, proposing solutions, discriminating, explaining, challenging, comparing, working collaboratively, showing favorable dispositions towards work and interactions). This is done to help children learn more about the world and become confident, autonomous, creative, and engaged.

4. The Program is Flexible

Due to the way that children under the age of six develop and learn, it is extremely hard, and even unfair, to set a detailed sequence of specific goals, learning situations, or subjects to be taught. This is the reason why the program does not establish a sequence of activities or situations to be consecutively performed with children.

In this sense, the program is flexible, meaning the teacher will be in charge of selecting or designing learning situations to help students develop the proposed competencies and attain fundamental objectives. The teacher is free to choose any strategy (workshops, projects) and select any topic, problem, or project that may interest students and foster learning. This way content will be relevant and connected to the fundamental objectives of the program and pertinent in children’s cultural and linguistic context.
5. Program Organization

Fundamental objectives are key in defining the competencies to be developed by students during early childhood. They are categorized in the following learning domains:

- Personal and Social Development
- Language and Communication
- Mathematical Thinking
- Science and Social Studies
- The Arts
- Physical Development and Health

In order to help meet the fundamental objectives, the program includes a series of educational principles and criteria to be considered for planning, developing, and assessing educational work. The relationships between the program components are detailed in the following chart.
Learning Domains

- Personal and Social Development
- Language and Communication
- Mathematical Thinking
- Science and Social Studies
- The Arts
- Physical Development and Health

Competencies

Educational Principles

Approaches to Teaching and Evaluation approaches
III. Fundamental Objectives
Fundamental objectives define the mission of preschool education and express desired outcomes for young children. At the same time, they are the foundation for all educational intervention.

These objectives, used as a guideline for educational practice, are best developed through everyday activities. They are presented here in a way that shows their relationship with each learning domain. Since children typically use knowledge and experiences that cannot be related exclusively to one specific learning domain, these objectives will be developed in a dynamic and integrated way, subject to the environment created within the classroom and school.

Recognizing our country’s linguistic, cultural, social, and ethnic diversity as well as children’s individual characteristics in any of the nation’s programs – general, indigenous, or communal – children are to be provided with experiences that contribute to their development and learning process, so they may gradually:

- Develop a positive self-concept; express their feelings; begin to take initiative and act independently; control emotions; show a positive attitude towards learning, and acknowledge individual or group achievements.
- Be able to assume different roles; work collaboratively; support classmates; solve conflicts through dialogue; recognize and respect classroom, school, and outside rules.
- Gain self-assurance in expressing themselves; talk and discuss in their native language; improve their listening capacity; broaden their vocabulary and enrich oral language by communicating in an array of situations.
- Understand the uses of written language as well as some of the conventions of writing.
- Realize that people have different cultural traits (language, traditions, lifestyles and behavior); share experiences from their own family life and learn about their own culture and other cultures through different sources of information (other people, media, printed materials, electronic media).
- Build mathematical concepts through situations demanding the use of such knowledge, establish notions of correspondence, quantity, location, estimation, counting, recognizing attributes, and making comparisons.
- Develop the ability to solve problems creatively through play using reflection, explanation, personal strategies, and procedures; compare personal problem solving strategies to those used by others.
- Find interest in observing natural phenomena. Participate in experiments that foster inquiry, predictions, and comparisons. Record, explain, and exchange opinions about the transformation of the surrounding natural and social environment. Develop good attitudes towards the care and preservation of our environment.
• Grasp the values and principles necessary for community life by showing respect to others as a basis for action; be responsible, just, and tolerant; recognize and appreciate gender, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity.
• Develop sensitivity, initiative, imagination, and creativity in artistic expression (music, literature, graphic arts, dance, drama) as well as to appreciate artistic and cultural expressions in immediate surroundings and other contexts.
• Increase body awareness; act and communicate through body language; enhance coordination, control, and movement in free and organized play as well as physical exercise.
• Understand that the body changes when it is active and growing; practice individual and collective health routines to preserve and promote healthy lifestyles as well as prevent risks and accidents.
IV. Educational Principles
An educational program can only meet its goals if applied in a suitable environment using educational practices consistent with the program’s objectives. For this reason, it was considered necessary to include a set of educational principles in this program that will support teachers’ everyday work with children. These principles will:

a) Provide a knowledge base about boys and girls and how they develop and learn in order to organize teaching practice and assessment as well as to foster learning.

b) Highlight conditions that favor efficiency in teaching and an improved organization of school practice. In this sense, teachers can reflect upon their own teaching practice using these educational principles.

Teachers play a fundamental role in providing equal opportunities for girls and boys to have access to cultural codes and develop competencies that will allow them to become fully involved in the society’s functioning.

By sharing and committing to these principles, it is easier for teachers to exchange and coordinate information and support school management.

Educational principles are outlined below. They have been categorized for organizational purposes in three areas as shown in the following chart. The description of each principle will help teachers evaluate which principles are covered in their daily practice and how to best incorporate those principles that are missing or weak.
### Educational Principles

#### a) Child Characteristics and Learning Processes

1. Children come to school with knowledge and skills that serve as a basis for further learning.
2. It is a teacher's responsibility to encourage and maintain children's eagerness, interest, and motivation to learn.
3. Children learn by interacting with their peers.
4. Play promotes child development and learning.

#### b) Diversity and Equality

5. School should offer children learning opportunities of a similar quality regardless of socio-economic and cultural differences.
6. Teachers, schools, and parents/guardians should work to integrate children with special educational needs into regular classrooms.
7. School, as a setting for social interaction and learning, should promote equality between boys and girls.

#### c) Educational Intervention

8. School and classroom environments should encourage attitudes that promote trust in students’ ability to learn.
9. In order to obtain good results, educational intervention requires flexible planning based on the competencies and the fundamental objectives outlined in the program.
10. Cooperation and familiarity between school and family favors child development.

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#### a) Child Characteristics and Learning Processes

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1. *Children come to school with knowledge and skills that serve as a basis for further learning.*

Children come to school with knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions with regards to their surrounding world, personal relationships, and behavior expected of them. Children have developed – each to a different degree – competencies that will be essential in their school career.

Current learning theories agree that human beings of all ages construct knowledge by relating new experiences to previous understandings. This process varies and may include the following: confirming a previous idea, expanding and deepening its scope, changing some elements of the idea if they are found to be insufficient, and/or realizing the erroneous nature of an idea and adopting a different notion with more coherence. It is in this way that we increase our comprehension and incorporate new knowledge in our thinking allowing us to face new cognitive challenges and interact with others.

Implementing a constructivist ideology represents a professional challenge for teachers, as they are asked to be constantly observing and inquiring into what each of their students is experiencing in the classroom. When dealing with any subject, when developing any activity, teachers must try to understand what their students are experiencing and ask themselves some questions that are not easily answered: What do students know or think about what others want them to learn? Are they understanding? What has been added to their previous knowledge? What resources or strategies will help the students own the new knowledge?

This approach requires a more stringent practice and can sometimes show slower progress than what was previously expected. However, this is the only way to encourage actual and long-lasting learning. Research shows that when one’s previous knowledge is not put into play and used to form new knowledge, the new knowledge may only be remembered for a short time. If these new ideas are not used and incorporated into one’s previous understanding, a person may continue to apply old ideas - that were not tested or modified - during the rest of his/her life.

2. *It is a teacher’s responsibility to encourage and maintain children’s eagerness, interest and motivation to learn.*

Curiosity and searching for explanations are human qualities especially intense in children. This interest permits children to learn about new phenomena and situations through their interactions with the environment. Interest is characterized by focused, prolonged, and voluntary attention accompanied by feelings of pleasure and concentration. In younger children this interest is situational; that is, fostered by the characteristics of certain stimuli. This interest is dynamic, evolving, and flourishes as a result of novelty, surprise, complexity, and anything implying uncertainty resulting in
motivation, which supports learning.

Notwithstanding, incorporating children’s interests into the learning process is not as simple and automatic as “answering their questions.” There are problems and challenges that children face that will need to be resolved through teacher mediation taking into consideration that:

- Children are not always able to identify and express what they want to know from all the options available or about something that they do not know.
- Issues or problems that children care about are sometimes responses to superficial and short-lived interests arising, for example, from a current popular television show.
- On the other hand, sometimes children ask deep questions that are beyond the class’s comprehension. For example, how did the world begin? Why are there bad people?
- Class interests will, of course, be different and sometimes incompatible.

To solve such problems, teachers need to act as facilitators determining, channeling, and negotiating children’s interests towards educationally important and rich topics. Teachers must make sure that topics and activities they introduce are relevant, will foster children’s interest, rouse their curiosity, and encourage a willingness to learn by keeping them cognitively and emotionally active in school experiences.

To do this teachers must reflect on and assess which of their students’ interests should be chosen to foster learning and facilitate children’s progress using as a reference the previously stated preschool competencies and fundamental objectives.

3. **Children learn by interacting with their peers.**

In preschool there are some educational interventions that are based on an idea that education is the result of a relationship between adults that know and children that do not know. However, research in cognitive psychology has begun to highlight the role of peer relationships in children’s learning. In regards to this, two notions should be mentioned: *mental processes* as a result of exchanges and relationships with others and *development* as an interpretative and collective process to which children actively contribute in a social environment filled with meanings defined by the culture in which they interact.

When children face situations in which they simply listen and follow instructions, the possibilities to perform mental operations, communicate ideas, test solutions, and exchange points of view are limited. Conversely all challenging situations that require children to cooperate, discuss, try different procedures, and make decisions foster reflection, conversation, reasoning, and contribute to cognitive and language development.

Teachers should arrange for activities that allow children to experience different and dynamic relationships in school. Sometimes teachers will plan for competencies to be
addressed through peer interaction (in small groups and/or the whole class). Other times, a teacher will identify exchanges resulting from the children’s own initiative and intervene to encourage fluidity and positive learning outcomes.

On these occasions children find it easy to support each other and learn to work cooperatively.

4. Play promotes child development and learning

Play is a natural impulse for children and has multiple expressions and functions. Play allows children to express their energy, their need to move, and may take complex forms that foster the development of competencies.

Play can vary in meaning, complexity, and forms of participation. There are individual activities (where an individual may attain high levels of concentration, elaboration, and “internal verbalization”), pair games (the closer and more compatible the individuals, the better), and collective games (requiring more self-control and acceptance of rules and results). Children may utilize all forms of play at any age, although the younger the child, the more s/he engages in individual or small group play that tends to be less regulated.

During preschool education, play encourages socialization and auto regulatory skills as a result of the many opportunities children have to interact with peers and adults. Play allows children to explore and exercise their physical competencies and think of and rebuild social and family situations where they perform and exchange roles. Children exercise their imagination by assigning common objects a different symbolic meaning and freely rehearse their oral, graphic, and aesthetic expression.

Symbolic play offers multiple possibilities. Situations “acted out” by children result in more complex organization and longer sequences. Roles and plot unfolding become objects of an intense exchange of proposals, negotiation, and agreement among participants.

During play, the following skills are used at levels comparable to that of other learning activities: language, attention, imagination, concentration, impulse control, curiosity, problem solving, cooperation, empathy, and teamwork.

In preschool, directing children's natural impulse to play is a very useful teaching practice. In this way, children are able to have fun while acquiring the competencies they should develop.

Play may reach complex levels both due to the initiative of children and the direction provided by the teacher. Sometimes, a teacher’s suggestion will guide the focus of the play, while other times a teacher’s intervention should be limited to providing opportunities for play to flow spontaneously in the natural balance of physical, intellectual, and symbolic play sought by children.
b) Diversity and Equality

5. School should offer children learning opportunities of a similar quality regardless of socio-economic and cultural differences.

All children have individual characteristics but share typical developmental milestones and an analogous potential for learning.

Personal differences stemming from the socio-economic and cultural conditions in which children have been brought up and live call for special attention by schools and teachers. When we take into account the different influences on children’s cognitive, linguistic, emotional, and social development we must overcome the idea of children as a homogeneous group and see that children are multifaceted and influenced by society.

A high percentage of Mexican children belong to low-income families with unfavorable living conditions, supported by unstable and poor paying jobs and little access to public services. These difficult living situations frequently subject families to high levels of stress, particularly the most vulnerable members. Children in these families, whose learning potential may be scarcely attended to within the family, desperately need a good quality education and a sensible, non-patronizing educational approach that stimulates their competencies and encourages a sense of self-assurance and accomplishment.

Mexico is a country of multiple cultures; culture being understood as a system of beliefs and values, forms of social interaction, customs, and forms of expression that characterize a social group. Cultures may be linked to an ethnic group but may also be linked to a region or to ways of living and working. Ethnic groups have a central feature, that is, a language of their own in different degrees of preservation and of coexistence with Spanish.

Acknowledgment and respect for cultural diversity are principles of coexistence outlined by human rights, particularly children’s rights in preschool education. In order for this principle to be fully applied, a teacher must develop understanding and empathy toward her students’ cultural background, which frequently differs from her own.

Based on this empathy, teachers can try to imagine how their students perceive school and plan learning activities that incorporate a child’s everyday reality and culture without changing the educational principles of the program. By doing so, students will be included in the school system and their culture valued. That will be the basis for students to learn about each other, and for the classroom to host a true intercultural dialogue.

By being proactive in considering socio-economic and cultural differences, preschools may advance equality beyond mere school access and prevent early forms of discrimination and inequality, which will have long-lasting effects.
6. Teachers, schools, and parents/guardians should work towards integrating children with learning disabilities into regular classrooms.

Article 41 of the General Education Law states that the aim of special education is to serve each student with social fairness in the way that best fits the student’s particular situation. Article 41 establishes that young children with disabilities should be integrated into regular classrooms. Education for children with disabilities should include counseling for parents/guardians as well as for teachers and all other school staff serving children with special requirements.

The concept set forth in the General Education Law implies that children with disabilities (intellectual, sensory, physical) will be able to find a learning environment that will help them develop their abilities at school.

Schools and teachers can make changes to the regular program that enable children with special needs to adapt and thrive when offered opportunities to interact with other children, thereby broadening their possibilities for social relationships, and enhancing their independence and self-assurance. The successful integration of children with special needs in regular classrooms combats attitudes of exclusion that even these children’s parents or guardians may harbor with the intention of protecting children or due to personal and social prejudices.

The willingness of both the teacher and school is essential in serving children with disabilities. This implies that support needs to be given to helping the class, the parents/guardians, and the school integrate children with special needs.

Willingness is essential but not sufficient. Schools must develop specific strategies and staff must receive counseling, support, and training. An effective link with staff and specialized institutions must also be established.

7. School, as a setting for social interaction and learning, should promote equality between boys and girls.

During a child’s development, boys and girls learn and assume ways of being, feeling, and acting that may be considered either feminine or masculine by society. Through family relationships and socializing, young children internalize ideas and models of what the family expects from them according to their gender.

Whether we are aware or not, adults often act based on stereotypes and prejudices that have been transmitted through generations. These prejudices translate into attitudes that promote unfairness and discrimination and boys and girls begin to internalize how society expects them to express feelings and participate in social responsibilities.

Gender equality means all people have the same right to develop their potential and abilities, with equal access to opportunities notwithstanding biological differences (gender).
From this perspective, preschool – as a setting for socializing and learning - plays an important role in the development of positive attitudes and recognition of children's abilities independent from gender. Equality is achieved when educational practices promote fair participation by children in all kinds of activities. Playing with balls, running during recess or at other times, climbing, organizing classroom materials, contributing at clean-up time, handling tools and instruments, assuming different roles during play, making decisions, and most importantly, talking and expressing ideas during class are among the things that women and men should be able to do equally well. These kinds of experiences encourage interaction, solidarity, tolerance, cooperation, anti-discrimination, and a critical attitude toward social stereotypes.
c) Educational Intervention

8. School and classroom environments should encourage attitudes that promote trust in students’ ability to learn.

Equal development of girls’ and boys’ competencies requires a stable classroom environment. This demands that teachers are consistent and model unbiased attitudes when planning educational interventions and when modeling and guiding peer relationships among students.

Environments that are both safe and challenging allow students to develop attitudes and perceptions about themselves and the purpose of schoolwork. This provides the grounds for valuable learning and makes it easier for children to develop values and attitudes that can be used in all learning activities. This sense of purpose, if encouraged by the teacher and shared by the children, turns the class into a learning community.

By taking part in this community, children will come to trust their ability to learn and may understand that their achievements are a result of both individual and collective work. Young children tend to think that the results of an activity - whether good or bad - depend on luck or the intervention of other people. It is desirable however, that children gradually learn to take a close look at their working process and assess different results. Teachers' opinions and group interactions have an influence on this process. If a child notices that his/her performance and work and the performance and work of his/her peers are assessed based on fairness, consistency, respect, and acknowledgment of the effort made, the child will agree that assessment is a form of cooperation, not discrimination.

This type of environment encourages a willingness to explore solutions to problems - individually or collectively - and assess progress in order to persist in or amend a task. Children will learn to ask for and offer advice and help. They will learn that by acting and making decisions, they may fail or make mistakes, but this does not diminish their effort and should not affect their confidence.
Educational interventions are essential to teaching because they allow teachers to set educational objectives, organize work, plan for resources, and establish clear guidelines for the assessment of children’s learning.

Planning is using a set of well-founded suppositions that the teacher considers to be pertinent and viable in order for children to learn established objectives. Planning cannot be rigid and unvarying for even the most meticulous planning cannot account for all the situations that may arise during a process as alive as teaching. Consequently, teachers should be ready to re-direct and adjust their plans as a result of continuous assessment.

Competencies, defined in brief as the ability to use knowledge obtained to learn, act, and interact with other individuals, are a reference for how one organizes one’s teaching.

An educational intervention aimed at favoring the development of children’s competencies must be fully flexible in order to allow teachers to define the way they will organize their teaching and the types of activities they will use.

In order to clarify the previous ideas, let us take a typical activity as an example. Suppose a teacher has decided to work in the language and communication learning domain and after assessing her students, she believes improving their narrative abilities to be a priority. Different teaching options are available: she can start by reading a children’s book or ask one of her students to begin by telling something that caught his/her attention. Before selecting and designing the activity, the teacher will have to consider various points, for example, the level of comprehension and expression of her students will help her decide whether the story should be about a real situation or a more complex fictional story. The degree of heterogeneity of the class will also be a deciding factor in planning. Student interest about a certain topic is yet another point among many variables. Having taken these variables into consideration, the teacher may design and plan activities (timing, resources, results, action, sequence, and assessment).

There is not one correct teaching method, but various resources and ways to work that should be selected based on their pertinence and usefulness to children’s learning. Another issue a teacher should consider is the role she will play during the activities. Sometimes, students will need to have the teacher close and providing directions, while other times she will do better to let the activity flow and stay "in the background." A teacher may change her role according to how the activity develops and the involvement of the students.
A child’s preschool experience will have a greater and more solid impact on the child’s development if the child’s family provides experiences that reinforce and supplement the program’s different learning goals.

This meeting of school and family is an old and worthy ambition that as of today has been insufficiently and only partially met. Much of the time, it is limited to minor aspects of the educational process. This relationship can face obstacles and resistance, some created by schools, other resulting from family’s structures. School administrators and teaching staff must take the initiative to reduce this divide as much as possible. With this in mind, schools should systematically communicate and persuade parents and other family members to provide educational support to children.

A primary goal is that families understand the educational objectives of the school and the purpose of the daily activities aimed to promote students’ development. Although many families visit their children’s school, attend meetings, and take part in special activities and ceremonies, a smaller number of families are clear about the educational function of these activities. Establishing an understanding about the value of preschool activities is especially important at this level because there are many common biases and unfounded expectations. Some parents think that children only play in preschool and others expect their children to complete elementary level homework.

Understanding preschool objectives is the basis for a family’s cooperation, from guaranteeing that children have good attendance to more profound issues such as a willingness to read to children. Parents should talk with children and answer their questions as well as support them in the management of interpersonal and behavior issues; in brief, instilling in children the idea that their involvement and success in school is important to the family. Establishing a relationship with each family for the benefit of the child requires the school administration and teaching staff to be sensitive and thoughtful and to recognize the socio-economic and cultural conditions of each family. It should be clear that the school does not attempt to teach parents how to educate their children much less replace them. All discrepancies between the school’s objectives and the family’s culture and related beliefs should be handled with this in mind.

Economic contributions and personal work required from families by the schools are delicate issues. Many families donate generously but other families find it difficult to contribute due to precarious financial situations and other necessities they have. Good judgment and considerate teachers and school administrators must prevent families from feeling that school is a never-ending source of unwarranted requests unrelated to children’s well being and learning.
V. Learning Domains and Competencies
Child development and learning processes are integral and dynamic in nature and based on the interaction of internal factors (biological, psychological) and external factors (social and cultural). Developmental aspects or domains may be categorized separately only for analytical or methodological reasons as they actually influence one another. For example, when babies start crawling or walking, their ability to explore the world expands and influences their cognitive development. The same happens when they begin to speak, language allows children to interact and socialize more, influencing the rapid development of language.

By taking part in learning experiences, children use abilities of a distinct nature that reinforce one another (emotional and social, cognitive and linguistic, physical and motor).

In general, concepts that children learn usually include distinct areas of human development simultaneously. Nevertheless, according to the type of activities the child is engaged in, learning may focus specifically on one domain.

It is important to note that competencies established in each learning domain will be developed in young children during the three years of their preschool education. At the beginning of a child’s school experience, students require a flexible and dynamic methodology that includes activities where play and communication act as leading conduits to cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Due to young children’s vitality, preschoolers need to be allowed to be active. Taking into consideration the set of learning domains and expected competencies, the teacher will decide what type of activities are most suitable for the students, helping them develop competencies and integrate to the school community.

With the aim of identifying, addressing, and monitoring the distinct learning and developmental processes of children, as well as contributing to the organization of a teacher’s work, competencies that should be developed in children have been categorized into six learning domains. Each domain is arranged with two or more aspects describing competencies to be fostered in children. This chart depicts the organization of the learning domains:
Grouping competencies into learning domains facilitates the identification of clear educational goals and avoids ambiguity and vagueness – a vagueness some argue is justified because of the integral nature of a young child’s learning and development. Learning domains help identify expected outcomes for different activities and experiences in which children participate, identifying aspects of development and learning in which the teacher will focus (language, mathematical thinking, science and social studies). Learning domains are not to be thought of as “courses” or “subjects” to be dealt with separately.

Learning domains are presented with the following components included:

a) A brief outline of a child’s development and learning processes related to each domain along with achievements children may have attained by the time they enter preschool.

b) Competencies that correspond to the units in which each domain is organized.

c) A column next to each competency lists ways in which they can be promoted and are demonstrated by children. This column serves various educational purposes:

- It offers choices for designing or selecting lessons or activities.
- It lists exit objectives for each learning domain.
• It guides the assessment of individual children’s progress. Information in this column will help a teacher identify necessary actions for reinforcing, strengthening, and challenging students in each learning domain.
1. Social and Personal Development

This domain refers to the attitudes and abilities related to the process of constructing one’s personal identity as well as developing one’s emotional and social competencies. Understanding and controlling one’s emotions and the ability to establish interpersonal relationships are closely linked processes that support children in their personal and social development.

The development of one’s identity, emotional, and social skills begin in the family. Recent research shows that beginning at a very early age children are able to understand intentions and emotional states of others and act accordingly in social contexts. For instance, children who at first cry when in need of something learn to express their feelings and desires in different ways once they have learned that these needs will be understood and satisfied by the adults in their life.

Language plays an important role in this process. As children develop language skills, they become increasingly able to make mental representations, express and give a name to what they sense, feel, and understand other people to mean, as well as what others expect from them.

During preschool, children compile a broad and intense emotional repertoire that allows them to identify different emotions in themselves and others: rage, embarrassment, sadness, happiness, fear - gradually developing the emotional skills needed to become more independent or autonomous in their thinking, reactions, and feelings.

Understanding and controlling one’s emotions imply learning to interpret and express these emotions while giving them meaning, and controlling impulses and reactions in specific social contexts.

This process reflects the understanding of oneself as well as a developing social awareness through which children gradually internalize and accept individual and social norms.

Emotions, behavior, and learning are individual processes influenced by family, school, and other social environments in which children grow. It is through these processes that children learn different ways to interact, develop ideas about what it means to be part of a group, and learn ways to take part and collaborate by sharing experiences.

Establishing interpersonal relationships helps children gain self-control of their emotions and fosters pro-social behaviors where play is extremely important due to its potential to support verbal abilities, control, interest, conflict resolution, cooperation, empathy, and teamwork.

Interpersonal relationships involve communication, reciprocity, bonding, a willingness to accept responsibilities, and the exercise of one’s rights. These elements influence the development of social competencies.

The development of a personal identity requires that each child develop a sense-of-self (an understanding that one develops in connection to his/her physical features, qualities, limitations, image, and body) and self-esteem (the recognition and appreciation of one’s characteristics and abilities) especially when the child is able to experience satisfaction.
while completing a challenging task.

Through the development of self, children begin to understand things that make each one of them unique: to recognize themselves (in the mirror, or photographs), to note characteristics that make each one of them special, to understand traits that make men and women different (physical, biological, or behavioral) and those that make them similar, to compare themselves with other children, to explore and appreciate their culture and the culture of others, to express ideas about themselves and listen to others, to identify different ways of working and playing when interacting with peers and adults, and to learn forms of behavior and relation.

Children come to preschool already influenced by the social environment of their family and their role within the family. Socialization in preschool presents children with two new roles (not present in their home life) that help build their self-identity. The first, being their role of a student learning from systematic activities and subject to organization and rules demanding new forms of behavior. The second, being a member of a group of peers with equal status yet different, without previous experience together, but now united by the learning process and their relationship with other adults (especially the teacher - a new figure with great influence on the children).

The competencies in this learning domain are encouraged by a set of experiences and relationships that children live in the classroom and that should create a favorable climate for the development of the whole child.

The classroom learning environment is fundamental in contributing to a child’s emotional welfare and important in establishing positive dispositions for learning.

The personal and social development of children as a part of a preschool education is, among other things, a process of gradual transition from cultural and family patterns towards expectations of a new social context that may or may not reflect the culture of home, where the relationship of the child with his/her peers and the teacher play a key role in the development of communication skills, supporting one another, solving problems, and getting along with others.

The development of competencies pertaining to this learning domain depends fundamentally on two interrelated factors: the teacher as role model and an environment that favors the development of interactions and learning experiences between the teacher and children; among children, and among the other teachers in school, parents, and children.

Personal and social development is gradual. Three-year-old children may find it more difficult to integrate into a new environment and the younger the child, the more variable individual differences in adjusting may be. A teacher in charge of young students must devote more time to understanding the way her students express their needs and desires in accordance to their family or cultural practices, and to introduce children to a new classroom environment by making sure they find the environment comfortable and familiar so that any anguish resulting from the change in the type of attention children receive diminishes rapidly as they begin to trust and appreciate the new space and relationships offered by the classroom environment.
A child’s emotional well-being is essential for learning. A child’s failure to learn should be analyzed in connection to possible feelings of low self-worth, which may express itself through difficulties in the child relating to others, mental blocks, isolation, lack of attention and concentration, and aggressiveness.

This learning domain is arranged in two strands: *Personal Identity and Autonomy* and *Interpersonal Relationships*. The competencies children are expected to develop in each of the strands and how they can be encouraged are outlined in the following chart.
Personal and Social Development

Strands in Which the Learning Domain is Organized

**Personal Identity and Autonomy**

- Distinguishes personal qualities and abilities from those of classmates.
- Becomes increasingly aware of personal needs, opinions, and feelings, and is sensitive to the needs, opinions, and feelings of others.
- Understands there are external criteria, rules, and conventions that govern behavior in different settings.
- Gains gradual autonomy.

**Interpersonal Relationships**

- Accepts classmates as they are and understands that others have the same rights and responsibilities.
- Understands that people have different needs, points of view, cultures, and beliefs that deserve respect.
- Learns about the importance of friendship and understands the value of trust, honesty, and mutual support.
- Internalizes norms for relationships and behaviors based on equality and respect.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child...</th>
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| Distinguishes personal qualities and abilities from those of classmates. | - Talks about personal feelings.  
- Talks openly about him/herself, home, and community (likes, dislikes, routines, feelings about home and school).  
- Supports and offers suggestions to others.  
- Shows curiosity and an eagerness to learn by exploring and asking questions.  
- Shows satisfaction in achievements.  
- Acknowledges when a greater effort is required to attain goals; considers suggestions and demonstrates perseverance. |
| Becomes increasingly aware of personal needs, opinions, and feelings, and is sensitive to the needs, opinions, and feelings of others. | - Expresses feelings and increasingly controls impulsive behaviors that affect others.  
- Avoids bothering classmates and other people verbally or physically.  
- Demonstrates personal care and self-respect  
- Supports those believed to be in need. |
| Understands that there are external criteria, rules, and conventions that govern behavior in different settings. | - Takes other people into account (waiting for a turn, working in groups or sharing materials).  
- Uses language to communicate, express feelings, negotiate, and debate.  
- Accepts and takes part in games following established rules.  
- Accepts and proposes rules for social interaction, work, and play. |
Gains gradual autonomy.

- Takes care of personal belongings at school.
- Becomes actively involved in group activities.
- Shows persistence.
- Gains control of impulses and the need for immediate gratification (when wanting a toy, book, or other material that is being used by someone else).
- Accepts and shares responsibility.
- Commits to individual and group activities agreed upon collectively or personally.
- Takes initiative, makes decisions, and can express reasons for doing so.
- Learns to recognize risky situations and takes adequate actions to prevent or avoid risks.
- Faces challenges and looks for problem solving strategies (for example, how to build a car by selecting, organizing, and assembling material).
## Interpersonal Relationships

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Competencies</strong></th>
<th><strong>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child...</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accepts classmates as they are and understands that others have the same rights and responsibilities.</td>
<td>- Accepts different roles independent of gender (in play, and in school and home activities).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Learns that both boys and girls can participate in all types of activities and that collaboration is important when a task is shared (building a bridge with blocks, exploring a book, realizing an experiment).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands that people have different needs, points of view, cultures, and beliefs that deserve respect.</td>
<td>- Talks about family customs and traditions.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- Recognizes and respects differences between people, their cultures, and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Becomes aware of taking part in different social groups and performing specific roles in each one of them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns about the importance of friendship and understands the value of trust, honesty, and mutual support.</td>
<td>- Takes part and cooperates with adults and peers in different activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Establishes friendships with others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internalizes norms for relationships and behaviors based on equality and respect.</td>
<td>- Considers the consequences of his/her own words and actions as well as those of others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Explains what s/he perceives as fair and unfair and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands and takes part in games with rules; accepts and recognizes winning and losing without requiring adult supervision.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
2. Language and Communication

Language is an activity that is communicative, cognitive, and reflective. It is at the same time a fundamental tool for integrating oneself into one’s own culture as well as in getting to know other cultures, to interact in society, and in the biggest sense, for learning.

Language is used to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships, express feelings and desires, state, exchange, confront, defend, and propose ideas and opinions as well as to appreciate the ideas and opinions of others. Language is also used to obtain and provide diverse information and to attempt to convince others. With language one can build knowledge, represent the world, organize thought, develop creativity and imagination, and reflect upon one’s own discourse and intellectual creations as well as those of others.

In the first interactions with their mother and other adults around them, children hear words and expressions and experience sensations as a result of how they are treated. Even though they do not yet know the meaning of all words, children understand that their mother or other people are speaking to them and react by smiling, crying, babbling, and making faces. These interactions familiarize young children with phonetics, rhythm, and the tone of their native language as well as the meaning of words and expressions.

As children develop and learn to speak, they construct increasingly complete and complex phrases and sentences, incorporating new words into their vocabulary and appropriating the forms and rules of syntax in different language contexts (talking with family about a TV show or an important development, playing, listening to a story, during a party).

As children are given more opportunities to communicate verbally, they develop competencies that broaden their understanding of language functions and characteristics. When children talk about their experiences, ideas, what they know, and listen to what other children say, they learn to interact and realize that language is a means to meet both personal and social needs.

Mastery of verbal language is not only dependent on the possibilities of oral expression, but listening – understood as an active process aimed at building meaning. Learning to listen helps children reinforce ideas and understand concepts.

Some children may make themselves understood and use a comprehensible vocabulary to communicate at the age of three, four, or five years. However, other children demonstrate a reduced vocabulary, in addition to shyness, and an inability to express themselves and relate to others. These differences do not necessarily result from language impairment; quite the contrary, most of the time it is a consequence of not having a challenging environment that fosters the development of expressive skills. School is a perfect environment for children to enrich language and expression and consequently, to
develop cognitive skills through a systematic involvement in language activities. The creation of this type of situation is particularly important for children coming from environments that fail to provide opportunities for communication.

Even though the process of language acquisition is governed by guidelines, each child is a unique case with regards to his/her pace and rate of development, influenced by cultural behavior expectations and individual family relationships. The care and attention devoted to children in each family, the type of involvement and roles children have within the family, and the opportunities to talk to adults and other children vary from one culture and social group to another and have a great influence on the development of verbal expression.

When children come to preschool, they generally have the ability to communicate. They talk using characteristics of their culture, they know the linguistic structure of their mother tongue and most of the guidelines and grammatical patterns required to make themselves understood. Children know that they can use language for different purposes (expressing needs, obtaining something, talking about themselves, knowing things about others, creating imaginary worlds through fantasy and drama).

School requires children use a language whose references are broader than those used in the family environment and with a complexity that provides children with an increasingly accurate vocabulary that is rich in meaning; it also brings them face to face with a larger number and range of speaking and listening partners. This is what makes school such a convenient environment to learn new ways of communication. Children pass from a situational language (linked to immediate experience) to a language recalling past developments whether real or imaginary. The progress in verbal language use helps children build longer and better articulated sentences and encourages their comprehension and reflection – what they say, how they say it, and for what reason. Oral expression is a need for children. It is the school's task to provide opportunities for children to talk, learn how to use new words and expressions, manage to build wholesome and coherent ideas, and enhance the ability to listen.

For all the reasons explained above, the use of language – particularly verbal language – is a top priority of early childhood education.

Children's speaking and listening skills improve as they are given opportunities to use language for different purposes:

- **Narrate** an event or story (real or invented) including descriptions of things, people, places, time, and provide a description as faithful and detailed as possible. Narration develops observation, memory, imagination, creativity, the use of accurate vocabulary, and verbal sequences.
- **Converse and dialogue** about situations that children observe or receive information about (while carrying out an activity requiring collaboration or searching for solutions to a problem). Conversation and dialogue involve understanding, waiting turns, asking precise questions, and providing coherent answers. In this way interest, exchange, and expression are encouraged.
- **Explain** ideas or knowledge about something in particular – the steps to follow
in a game or experiment, personal opinions about a topic, problem, or natural event. Explanations involve reasoning and a search for expression that allows children to show what they think, gives them a chance to agree or disagree, and make decisions based on experience. This provides the conditions necessary for argumentation.

Children’s participation in situations requiring verbal expression for different purposes and for different audiences provides an opportunity for children to improve their ability to speak and listen. It also impacts emotional development by allowing children to gain confidence and self-assurance as they are able to integrate into different social groups. This is valid for all children regardless of one’s native language (indigenous or Spanish). The use of language is an essential tool in improving one’s cognitive and expressive skills, as well as fostering knowledge about one’s specific culture and language.

In addition to verbal language, preschool education requires familiarization with written language through situations that require children to express and interpret various texts.

Just as with verbal language, children come to preschool having acquired knowledge of written language from their environment (observing and inferring messages from media, contact with text in the family environment). They know that written signs say something and are able to interpret some images that accompany text. They also have developed ideas about the functions of written language (tell or narrate, recall, send messages or advertise events or products).

Children learn by witnessing or participating in reading and writing activities such as hearing others read aloud, watching someone read or write, or by listening to someone commenting on something read. Likewise, even though children may not read or write proficiently, they can depict ideas through different forms of graphic expression and describe what they think a text may be about.

Some preschool children are more knowledgeable than others about written language based on the types of experiences they may have had in their family environment. The more children are exposed to written materials and witness a wide range of reading and writing activities the more opportunities children have to learn. Situations should be created where children see how text has a specific function and thus begin to understand why we write. Having these opportunities at school is even more important for children who have not been exposed to written language in their homes.

Interacting with text sparks children’s interest in the meaning of written words and helps them understand the purpose of reading even before they learn to read. Children find meaning in text using different strategies such as observing and forming hypotheses and ideas, reflecting an ability to draw explanations from what they “read” and what they think a text means. This is the foundation of learning to read and write.

Listening to text read aloud, watching teachers and adults write, playing with language to discover sound similarities and differences, recognizing that there is a difference between asking for permission verbally or in writing, attempting to read and write based on one’s previous knowledge about the writing system, and gradually increasing
experiences with language requires children to use all of their cognitive skills in order to better understand the meaning and uses of written language and, therefore, learn to read and write.

Watching and taking part in reading and writing activities allows children to notice, for example, the directionality of writing, that one reads text rather than illustrations, the differences between language used in stories compared to informative documents, the graphic arrangement of text, and the differences between letters, numbers and punctuation marks.

Experiences such as writing names on belongings, recording attendance in class, keeping record of important dates, updating school and extracurricular schedules on a calendar, dictating a list of things required to organize a party, listing the ingredients for a recipe, noting the instructions for a cooking procedure, or creating a group story to be written by the teacher and edited by all are experiences that allow children to discover the characteristics and functions of written language.

By taking part in the interpretation and production of text, children learn not only about the functional use of written language but enjoy its expressive function. When they listen to literature or write with the assistance of a teacher they express their feelings and emotions and are transported to another time and place through the use of their imagination and creativity.

Writing involves reflection, organization, production, and the representation of ideas. Children learn to write by writing messages for authentic purposes. As writing is a means of communication, sharing their writing helps children learn from each other. Children attempt to write by drawing pictures, creating letter like symbols, or using actual letters. These attempts are a fundamental part of the writing process.

Before beginning preschool and learning to read and write in a conventional manner, children have already discovered a lot about the writing system (it’s function, organization, and relationship to oral language). These discoveries allow children to test and amend their hypotheses, as their concept of language develops.

Based on the aforementioned, it is necessary to emphasize that preschool education is not about teaching students to read and write using a conventional approach and therefore no one reading and writing method is suggested. Preschool education should provide an environment where children have many and varied opportunities to become familiar with different printed materials and begin to understand some of the characteristics and functions of written language. It is possible that by using the guidelines in this learning domain some children will begin to read, which is a major achievement. This should not be expected from all children at the preschool level.

In preschool, the many opportunities that children are given to explore and learn about different types of writing used in daily life and in school and to participate in the way writing is used in diverse social situations will encourage children’s development in this area. In this way children are exposed to authentic text rather than isolated syllables or letters without meaning.

Due to the social nature of language and the cognitive process involved in writing, the
use of handwriting worksheets and fine motor exercises to prepare children for writing are meaningless as they do not address the communicative use of language. Besides, these activities do not present children with any conceptual challenge. The learning of written language is an intellectual task, not a motor activity.

Using language to encourage communication skills in children should be a priority in preschool education and therefore must be included as a specific and intentional activity in this learning domain and all school activities. According to the competencies proposed in this domain, opportunities should always be provided that foster communication among children.

This learning domain is arranged in two strands: Oral Language and Written Language. The competencies children are expected to develop in each of the strands and how they can be encouraged are outlined in the following chart.
## Language and Communication

### Strands in Which the Learning Domain is Organized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral Language</th>
<th>Written Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discusses mood, feelings, emotions, and experiences through oral language.</td>
<td>Recognizes different forms of written communication and identifies their function.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses language to regulate behavior in different types of interactions with others.</td>
<td>Interprets or infers the meaning of text based on a knowledge of different forms of written communication and conventions of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obtains and shares information through different forms of oral expression.</td>
<td>Expresses ideas graphically and dictates stories with help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listens to and tells stories that are part of an oral tradition.</td>
<td>Identifies conventions of writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciates the linguistic diversity of one’s own region and culture.</td>
<td>Knows characteristics and functions of written text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates mood, feelings, emotions, and experiences through oral language.</td>
<td>- Provides personal and family information (names, characteristics, information about where s/he lives).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicates what may cause joy, sadness, fear, and astonishment through increasingly complex expressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Explains preferences for games, toys, sports, television shows, stories, movies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Remembers and explains activities carried out (during a specific experience, during part or all of the school day).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recalls events (individual or social) and talks about them using increasingly accurate vocabulary with references to space and time (here, there, close to, today, yesterday, this week).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses language to regulate behavior in different types of interactions with others.</td>
<td>- Uses dialogue to settle personal conflicts with others or between classmates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Asks for a turn to speak and respects others’ turns to speak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Proposes and listens to ideas in order to reach agreements that facilitate activities in and outside the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands and explains steps involved in games, experiments, building toys, and food preparation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands and formulates instructions to organize and carry out different activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Asks for and provides help in realizing activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Obtains and shares information through different forms of oral expression.

- Asks for and provides increasingly complex explanations of events or topics.
- Talks with other children and adults focusing on a topic for increasingly longer periods of time.
- Asks questions about things s/he wants to know when talking with family and others.
- Presents information on a topic with an increasing organization of ideas using graphics and objects from the environment.
- Exchanges opinions and explains reasons for agreement or disagreement.
- Uses greetings and farewells to mark the beginning and end of a conversation, interview, or presentation.
- Uses different forms of expression to address adults and other children in different situations.
- Seeks classmates' attention and pays attention to what others say.

Listens to and tells stories that are part of an oral tradition.

- Listens to anecdotes, stories, tales, legends, and fables; explains what parts caused joy, fear, or sadness.
- Narrates anecdotes, stories, tales, legends, and fables following a sequence and an order of ideas; uses intonation and volume to help listeners understand.
- Creates – individually or collectively – stories, songs, rhymes, tongue twisters, riddles, and jokes.
- Distinguishes fact and fiction in stories and provides explanations based on previous knowledge or information in the story.
| **- Performs or acts out daily situations, stories, and plays using body language, intonation, voice volume, and other resources required for a character’s performance.** |
| **- Listens to, memorizes, and shares poems, songs, rhymes, riddles, tongue twisters, and jokes.** |
| **- Uses an increasingly accurate description of people, characters, objects, places, and phenomena to enrich the telling of events whether real or imaginary.** |
| **- Identifies rhythm and rhyme in short poems through games, varying the speed and intensity of speech and using body movements accordingly.** |

**Appreciates the linguistic diversity of one’s own region and culture.**

| **- Realizes there are people and groups who speak different languages.** |
| **- Knows terms used in different parts of the country and their meaning (words, expressions used by classmates, heard in songs, or introduced in books).** |
### Written Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes different forms of written communication and identifies their function.</td>
<td>- Explores stories, comics, posters, newspapers, letters, instructions, magazines, and dictionaries; talks about the type of information contained in each one based on what s/he sees and supposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies parts of text that provide information: cover, title, headings, back cover, illustrations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Requests or selects texts based on interests and/or purpose and uses them in guided activities or independently.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Differentiates between texts based on their graphic features and language (a tale from a recipe, a letter from an invitation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interprets or infers the meaning of text based on a knowledge of different forms of written communication and conventions of writing.</td>
<td>- Establishes with a teacher’s or classmate’s help the purpose for reading (looking for information, understanding a story, confirming predictions).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Expresses ideas regarding the contents of texts to be read aloud (inferred from the title, illustrations, recognized words, or letters).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Asks about words or fragments not understood during reading and asks for parts to be read again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Listens to parts of a story and predicts what may happen next.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Confirms or verifies information about a text’s content based on the re-reading of parts or the full text by the teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Justifies interpretations made about the contents of a story (based on the relationship between illustrations and text and some letters or recognizable words).
- Relates events told or read aloud with personal or family experiences.
- Comments on stories with others (characters’ attitudes, other ways to solve the problem, interesting facts, what could be changed in the story).
- Understands that text, not illustrations, are read and that one reads and writes from left to right.
- Identifies the function of some graphic elements (illustrations, tables, diagrams, forms, and symbols such as numbers, signs, parenthesis) that are included in written text.
- Identifies his/her name written in various contexts: badges, posters, and attendance rosters.

Expresses ideas graphically and dictates stories with help.

- Knows the social function of written language and uses graphics or letters with a purpose (to express feelings, to inform) and explains what s/he has written.
- Dictates to a teacher individually or collectively taking into consideration the nature, purpose, and audience.
- Corrects dictations taken by the teacher (confirms that the dictation communicates what was intended, identifies repeated words, suggests ways to improve the text).
- Differentiates between oral storytelling and written dictation.

Identifies conventions of writing.

- Recognizes his/her own written name and those of some classmates.
- Writes his/her name and some classmates' for various purposes (labeling papers and belongings, recording participation, signing out library books).
- Knows the relationship between the initial letter of his/her name and the corresponding initial sound gradually establishing similar relations with other names and words (by playing oral games, tongue twisters, rhymes).
- Compares the physical characteristics of the letters in his/her name and other names and words.
- Uses the knowledge of letters in his/her name and other names and words to write words.
- Identifies repeating words in rhymes, songs, and poems and discovers that they are always written the same way.
- Begins to recognize word attributes (short or long, many or few letters) and to identify some letters (those with which a word begins, ends, or those included in the word).
- Exchanges ideas in connection to the spelling of a word (provides or accepts information on the letter name, written form, letter order, letter sound).
- Identifies the conventional writing of numerals and their function in written text.
- Knows the format of a calendar and identifies the conventional writing of numerals and days of the week when recording – with teacher’s help – personal and group events.

- Recreates stories modifying, changing, or adding characters and events.
- Uses appropriate words and expressions in text with the aim of producing some effects on the reader: fear, joy, sadness.
- Uses literary conventions such as: “Once upon a time,” “Far, far away,” “Happily ever after,” “The End.”
- Assigns attributes to characters (bad, brave, shy, sleepy, selfish, clever, kind) and identifies objects that characterize each of them or grants them powers or virtues (magic wands, rings, capes).
- Writes – dictating to the teacher – stories, riddles, rhymes, and songs.
- Identifies and uses linguistic conventions used in literary texts such as rhyme in a poem.
3. Mathematical Thinking

Using spontaneous and informal math activities in which children engage naturally and develop reasoning is the starting point for educational intervention in this learning domain.

The foundation of mathematical thinking is present in children from a very early age. Children develop numerical, spatial, and temporal concepts as a result of development and experiences while interacting with their environment. Such notions pave the path for the development of more complex mathematical concepts.

From a young age, children can tell if there are more or less objects, they learn that “adding makes more” and “taking away makes less,” and they can differentiate between large and small objects. Their judgments seem to be quantitative and are expressed in different ways in everyday situations.

The natural, cultural, and social environment in which they live provides young children with experiences in counting, a basic tool of mathematical thinking. In play and other activities children separate objects – distributing candies or toys among their peers – and when they do this, though they may be unaware, they begin using concepts of counting in an implicit and incipient way:

- **One–to–one Correspondence:** Counting all objects in a set only once, establishing a correspondence between the object and the number that applies in the numerical sequence.

- **Number Order:** Counting requires repeating the names of the numbers in the same order each time. This means that the order of a numerical series is always the same (1, 2, 3...).

- **Cardinality:** Understanding that the last number named is the one that tells how many objects are contained in a set.

- **Abstraction:** The number in a series is independent from the traits of the objects being counted. This means that the rules for counting similar objects are the same as when counting objects different in nature (marbles and stones, or shoes, socks, and shoe laces).

- **Conservation of Number:** The order in which elements are counted does not change the resulting number of objects in a set (counting from right to left or vice versa).

Numerical abstraction and numerical reasoning are two basic skills in this learning domain that young children may acquire. Numerical abstraction refers to the process by which children grasp and represent the numerical value in a set of objects. Numerical reasoning and transferring numerical data serve children in analyzing the problem situation upon which they are working.

For instance, children are able to count the elements of an arrangement or set and somehow show that it contains five objects (numerical abstraction). They can infer that...
the numerical value of a series of objects does not change because the objects are dispersed, but it does change – increases or decreases – when one or more elements are added or removed from a series or set. Thus the ability of abstraction helps children establish numerical value and numerical reasoning allows them to manipulate numbers.

In a situation where “I have five marbles and someone gives me four marbles, how many marbles do I have?” numerical reasoning has to do with adding the five marbles I have and the four that I was given. In other words, add the four marbles that I was given to the five that I already have.

When exploring counting techniques, children use the oral numerical series to say numbers in the right order (number order), list the words of the number sequence (label), apply each to one element of a set (one–to–one correspondence), realize that the last label uttered represents the total number of set elements (cardinality), and manage to know, for instance, that eight is more than five and six is less than ten.

In preschool, games and problem solving activities contribute to the use of counting (numerical abstraction) and counting techniques (numerical reasoning). This helps children gradually build the concept and meaning of numbers.

During this process, it is also important that children become aware of the ways in which numbers are used in everyday life, for instance, by starting to recognize that besides counting, numbers are used as codes (telephone numbers, license plates, sport jerseys) or ordinals (to mark the location of an element in an ordered series).

Young children think of space as unstructured and subjective, linked to emotions and experiences. Early explorations of their environment allow children to locate themselves by means of their senses and movements. As they develop, they learn to move at a certain pace, avoiding obstacles, and gradually forming a more organized and objective mental representation of the space in which they interact.

Spatial awareness is demonstrated in the reasoning skills children use to establish relationships with and among objects – relationships that result in recognizing attributes and beginning to compare – thus forming a basis for understanding concepts such as space, shape and size. These processes result in the development of specific abilities: estimating distances, recognizing and naming objects and their geometric qualities (figure, shape, size) in the child's immediate environment, and using references to locate something within a space.

Constructing concepts of space, shape, and measurement in preschool is closely linked to experiences that favor the manipulation and comparison of materials of different types, forms, dimensions, the representation and reproduction of geometrical shapes, objects and figures, and the recognition of their properties. Drawing, sculpting, and measuring with non-conventional units (a glass for capacity, a shoelace for length) are fundamental resources for these experiences.

When given the challenge of explaining how to measure a window, children can use intellectual tools to propose measuring units (a pencil, a shoelace), measure the object using these tools, and explain the result (marking the size of the unit as many times as
necessary to see how many times the unit fits into what is being measured and then explain: “this measures eight pencils and a little more”) establishing a relationship between the size of the object and it’s measurement (how many times the pencil or shoelace was used).

When providing experiences in this learning domain, mathematical language should be used in situations that give meaning to “new” words children learn (rectangular shape of a window, spherical shape of a ball, half of a cracker, result of a problem).

Mathematical thinking is encouraged by problem solving:

- A problem is a situation for which the child has no pre-conceived solution. Problem solving provides opportunities for children to build math skills. Problems are meaningful for children when they can understand them even if they do not know how to solve them. The search for a solution turns into an intellectual challenge that allows children to use their reasoning and communication skills. When children understand a problem, work towards a solution, and manage to find one or more solutions by themselves they gain confidence as they realize they have the ability to face and overcome challenges.
- Problems used in preschool should provide children with a chance to manipulate objects as a support for reasoning. Materials should be made available but children should decide how the materials will be used to solve problems. Problems should offer an opportunity for children to represent their spontaneous and individual reasoning abilities. Children are always willing to search and find answers to questions such as: How do we know…?, How can we build…?, How many …… are there in…?
- Solving mathematical problems requires an intervention that gives children time to think about and decide upon their actions, and talk about and search for individual problem solving strategies. In order for the teacher to be supportive, she should observe activities and intervene when students need her. The process is undermined however, as soon as the teacher tells the children how to solve the problem. When children realize that one of their problem solving strategies worked effectively, they will use it in other situations where they identify it as appropriate.

The development of reasoning skills in preschool is fostered when children exercise their skills to understand a problem, reflect upon what is being researched, estimate possible results, search for different solutions, compare results, express ideas and explanations and share and compare their ideas with those of their classmates. This does not mean the formal learning of mathematics should be introduced earlier in preschool, but instead that mathematical thinking in young children should be scaffolded to provide a strong base for future schooling.

Working with mathematics helps children understand basic ideas and reflect upon new information, verbalize and communicate their reasoning, review their own work,
and become aware of what they accomplish or discover during learning experiences. This also contributes to developing positive attitudes towards collaborative work, exchanging ideas with classmates, considering other’s opinions compared to one’s own, acquiring a joy of learning, gaining self-esteem, and leaning to trust one’s own abilities. It is for these reasons that work should be organized in small groups (two, three, four, or a few members more) as required by the educational activity and the needs of children.

This learning domain is arranged in two strands: *Number* and *Shape, Space, and Measurement*. The competencies children are expected to develop in each of the strands and how they can be encouraged are outlined in the following chart.
## Mathematical Thinking

### Strands in Which the Learning Domain is Organized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Shape, Space, and Measurement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Uses numbers in varied situations bringing into play the principles of counting.</td>
<td>• Recognizes and names characteristics of objects, figures, and geometric shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• States and solves problems in familiar situations using strategies that include adding, collecting, subtracting, matching, comparing, and one-to-one correspondence.</td>
<td>• Creates points of reference to understand spatial relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Gathers, graphically represents, and interprets information.</td>
<td>• Uses non-conventional units to solve problems by measuring (length, capacity, weight, and time).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifies patterns based on repetition and sequencing.</td>
<td>• Identifies the use of measuring tools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Competencies and Their Form of Expression

#### Number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses numbers in varied situations bringing into play the principles of counting.</td>
<td>- Uses instant recognition to identify small sets (the dots on the face of a die) and identifies larger sets by counting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Compares sets either by one-to-one correspondence or counting and establishes if two sets are equal or unequal (“more than,” “less than,” “the same as”).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rote-counts in ascending order starting at number one or at another number increasing the counting range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies the place of an object within a series (first, third).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rote-counts in descending order gradually increasing the counting range.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands how numbers are used in daily life (addresses, telephone numbers, clothing size).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recognizes the value of coins and uses them in play (what can you buy with...).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies the use of numbers in various texts (magazines, stories, recipes, advertisements).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses objects, invented symbols, and numbers to represent amounts in different situations and for different purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies the order of numerals in school and familiar situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>States and solves problems in familiar situations using strategies that include adding, collecting, subtracting, matching, comparing, and one-to-one correspondence.</td>
<td>- Interprets, understands, and estimates when solving number problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses individual strategies to solve number problems and represents answers with objects, drawings, symbols, and/or numbers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Uses counting strategies (lining objects up, pointing to each object, removing objects already counted, adding objects, passing out objects) and counting on (counting starting from a certain number in a collection such as starting from five and continuing to count elements of another set: six, seven...).
- Explains how a problem was solved and compares procedures and strategies with those used by classmates.
- Identifies a suitable strategy to solve a problem (I have ten pesos and I must spend it all at the store. What can I buy?).

Gathers, graphically represents, and interprets information.

- Sorts objects according to qualitative and quantitative attributes (shape, color, texture, use, amount, size).
- Gathers qualitative and quantitative data from the environment, illustrations, or people (shape, color, description, what they are doing, how many children there are in a group, how many students have a pet).
- Proposes personal or conventional codes for the representation of data.
- Organizes and records information in simple graphs and charts using manipulatives or illustrations.
- Interprets and explains information recorded in graphs and charts by asking and answering questions that help compare recorded data (which is more, which is equal, which is less).

Identifies patterns based on repetition and sequencing.

- Sorts by similarities (shape and color).
- Arranges objects in an ascending or descending order according to size, colors/shades, and sounds/tones.
- Arranges sets considering their quantity: "one more" (ascending order), "one less" (descending order), "two more," "three less" and records the numbers resulting from each arrangement.
- Recognizes and reproduces patterns in the
environment (on walls, on clothing).
- Completes – concretely and graphically – patterns with different levels of complexity based on a given model.
- Anticipates what is next in a pattern and identifies missing elements.
- Explains the sequence in different patterns.
# Shape, Space, and Measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes and names characteristics of objects, figures, and geometric shapes.</td>
<td>- Creates objects and figures with some help using various materials (boxes, packages, manipulatives, clay, tangrams).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Describes similarities and differences in objects, figures, and geometric shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Observes, names, draws, and compares geometric shapes, describes their attributes in his/her own words, and gradually learns a more conventional language (flat/round faces, flat/round sides, long/short sides).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recognizes and represents figures and geometric shapes from different perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Anticipates and confirms changes that a shape will experience by bending or cutting, joining or separating parts, by overlapping the same shape several times, or by combining it with different shapes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Creates symmetric shapes by bending and cutting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates points of reference to understand spatial relations.</td>
<td>- Uses personal points of reference to locate places.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Establishes spatial relationships between his/her body and objects and between objects themselves considering their placement (towards, from, until), orientation (in front, behind, up, down, right, left), proximity (close, far), and closure (within, without, open, close).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Communicates positions and movement using words such as: in, out, up, down, on top, near, far, in front.
- Explains how objects and people are seen from different spatial perspectives: up, down, far, close, front, side, back.
- Moves body following instructions.
- Describes the movement and path of objects and people using personal references (next to the tree, passing by).
- Designs and represents both graphically and concretely trails, mazes, and pathways using different types of lines and codes.
- Identifies the direction of a movement or path and sets reference points.
- Draws and interprets simple maps.
- Interprets graphic directions to draw or build a toy or other object.
- Reproduces mosaics with various colors and shapes to cover a specific area with material.

- Estimates and compares measurable characteristics of individuals, objects, and spaces.
- Uses correct terms to describe and compare measurable characteristics of individuals and objects (big, long, heavy, smaller than, cold, hot, tall, full, empty).
- Verifies estimates of length, capacity, and weight using an intermediary (a ribbon, shoe, water, sawdust, scales).

Uses non-conventional units to solve problems by measuring (length, capacity, weight, and time).
- Chooses and explains what can be used as an instrument to compare magnitudes and knows which object is larger or heavier, smaller or lighter, more or less spacious.
- Establishes a sense of time and describes daily routines or events in which s/he participated (an experiment, field trip, school day) and uses words such as before, after, at the end of, yesterday, today, tomorrow.

- Distinguishes the correct instrument to measure different things (a meter stick for height, scales for weight, thermometer for temperature when someone has a fever, a watch for time).
- Uses the names of weekdays and months to locate and organize daily activities (school days, holidays, the month of his/her birthday) identifying these dates on a calendar.
4. Science and Social Studies

This learning domain is focused on encouraging reflective abilities and attitudes that allow children to learn about natural and social environments through personal experiences.

The definition of this domain is based on the idea that direct contact with natural and family environments develops reasoning abilities in children and helps them understand and explain the things they observe happening around them.

Children’s spontaneous and limitless curiosity and their ability to be amazed lead them to ask how and why natural phenomena and other events occur. Children observe and explore their world with any means available.

From an early age, children create ideas about their immediate environment, both in connection to nature and social activities. These ideas help children gain an understanding and begin to make fundamental distinctions such as natural from unnatural, living from non-living, plants from animals. They recognize the roles of different family members, routines that characterize their lifestyle, and media, among other things.

Beliefs that shape these concepts are not isolated but interconnected in a set of mental representations that children create about everyday occurrences and events in which they take part.

Among the abilities that children gradually develop, the creation of categories and concepts is a powerful mental tool for comprehending the world, for it is through the process of categorizing that children discover regularities and similarities in different elements. This is a result not only of perception but also of inferences drawn from information children already posses. (Sergio, a three-year-old, sees a parrot in a cage and says: “Look, Mommy, a big bird.” The reasoning that explains Sergio’s expression is: if it has feathers and a beak – and is in a cage – then it is a bird.) Ideas like these which children spontaneously create may serve as the starting point for a genuine learning experience based on their interests.

Few experiences are as exciting for the development of intellectual and emotional skills in children as being in contact with nature and having opportunities to learn new things about natural phenomena and elements; the way events occur, the reasons why they occur, the relationships children discover among similar events, and so forth.

Attentive and increasingly focused observation, expressing concerns, comparing, asking pertinent and imaginative questions, and providing explanations and inferences based on situations that help children get a deeper knowledge and understanding of the world are competencies students are expected to develop in this learning domain.

Being in contact with the natural environment, family, and community, and having opportunities to discuss aspects of their lives provide children with a chance to reflect, clearly explain ideas, develop attitudes of care and protection toward the environment,
and begin to understand that social groups have different habits, traditions, and ways of life which distinguish them from others. These abilities help children get to know themselves better and draw interpretations increasingly closer to reality as a basis for continuous learning.

Working in this learning domain helps children use observational abilities, ask questions, solve problems (through experiments or inquiries), and draw explanations, inferences, and arguments. These are supported by experiences that allow children to grow and learn new things on the basis of what they already know and the new information they have acquired.

Children learn to observe as they experience situations that require attention, concentration, and the identification of elements in the natural environment. As they become more observant, they learn to discriminate relevant from irrelevant information. An important educational intervention in strengthening children’s observational abilities is the use of questions and instructions that promote the identification of details, the description of observations, and the comparison of elements. This may result in the creation of explanations based on what was observed. (What is a centipede, spider, grasshopper like? How are canaries and hummingbirds similar or different? Look at the shapes and movements of clouds, the patterns on a zebra.)

These interventions not only direct children’s attention to occurrences to be observed, but encourage discussion and the exchange of opinions, asking children to form new questions that lead to deeper thinking.

Children should be provided with opportunities to compare qualities and characteristics of elements, living things, and phenomena under different conditions and points in time. Making predictions and inferences, or giving explanations about factors involved in change (that occurred or not) imply a major cognitive effort: understanding information (or part of it), organizing and relating ideas and evidence, and making oneself understood by others. This also provides a basis for acquiring new knowledge and concepts that become more comprehensive and complex, as well as in developing a positive attitude toward lifelong learning.

This process is not limited to direct experiences, for children can broaden their previous knowledge with scientific information. Depending on the accessibility of information, a teacher may involve children in researching books, scientific reviews, videos, bulletins, and other available resources guiding them through the observation and interpretation of images and providing children with explanations to expand their knowledge.

The level of knowledge and understanding children obtain about nature makes them more environmentally aware, encourages reflection upon the importance of a reasonable use of natural resources, and guides their involvement in the care and preservation of the environment.

In regards to a child’s knowledge and understanding about social environments, this learning domain is aimed at what children learn in connection to family culture and
community. An understanding of cultural, linguistic, and social diversity (traditions, forms of speaking, and communicating) and of factors that make social life possible (social norms, rights and responsibilities, services, and work) is gained through pedagogical work in this learning domain.

Children enjoy talking about themselves, their family, and about what they do everyday and on special occasions. The information they provide reflects the specific traits of their culture. When they are given opportunities to share, they start comparing their traditions with those of their peers, and consequently, begin to recognize similarities and differences between cultures. This serves as a basis for becoming aware of cultural diversity and learning to respect and accept others.

Children are also interested in what people in their community do and how everyday materials are used. Experiences that show the importance of work in the functioning of society – specifically how this work benefits people, families, and the community – are valuable.

In addition to understanding their own way of life, children may approach other unknown cultural contexts through different means in order to build their cultural identity.

Young children learn a lot about the past through information provided by their family (testimonials, anecdotes, and legends) as well as through realia that helps them relate to the past (photos, films, and remnants of community life). Comparing what family members used to do as compared to what they do now (the way the community used to be and the way it is now, services that used to be available and currently existing services) are ways that help us understand that things and people change over time.

As a whole, what children are expected to learn will contribute to the development and use of social skills. Respecting cultures and working collaboratively are, among others, attitudes that children are expected to acquire and that demonstrate they are developing.

This learning domain is arranged in two strands: The Natural Environment and Culture and Community. The competencies children are expected to develop in each of the strands and how they can be encouraged are outlined in the following chart.
### Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Environment</th>
<th>Culture and Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observes living things, the natural environment, and natural phenomena.</td>
<td>Establishes relationships between the past and present of his/her family and community using objects, daily routines, and cultural practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asks questions that express curiosity and an interest in learning about living things and nature.</td>
<td>Identifies and explains characteristics of his/her culture and other cultures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiments with different elements, objects, and materials that are safe in search of solutions to problems and answers to questions about the natural environment.</td>
<td>Recognizes that human beings differ from one another, that we are all important, and are all capable of participating in society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulates explanations about observable natural phenomena, characteristics of living things, and the natural environment.</td>
<td>Recognizes and understands how human beings work to improve family, school, and community life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes inferences and predictions about nature based on his/her knowledge, beliefs, and personal experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates in conservation of natural resources and proposes ways to preserve the environment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competencies</td>
<td>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Observes living things, the natural environment, and natural phenomena. | - Expresses curiosity for learning about living things and nature in diverse settings.  
- Describes characteristics of elements and living things (color, size, texture, consistency, parts of a plant or animal).  
- Compares and identifies traits of living things that set them apart from non-living things (they are born from another living being, they develop, they have basic needs).  
- Describes what s/he sees when observing natural phenomena (cloud movement, rain, cyclone, strong wind, plant movement with and without natural light, leaves falling from the trees).  
- Classifies natural elements and living things according to their characteristics (animals by their number of legs, land or ocean animals, crawling animals, ornate and edible plants).  
- Represents the results of observations through drawings, diagrams, tables, charts, and images.  
- Recognizes that plants are living things.  |
| Asks questions that express curiosity and an interest in learning about living things and nature. | - Asks questions resulting from personal reflections and doubts (why are things as they are, how do they function, what are they made of).  
- Makes questions based on previous knowledge and observations of natural elements or events (what kind of animal or plant is…, why does it rain, quake, why do leaves fall from the tree).  |
- Develops questions that may be answered through experiments or research (what would happen if..., what happens when..., how can we know more about...).

- Follows safety rules when using materials, tools, and instruments.
- Handles and examines available objects (stones, sand, mud, vegetables).
- Tests and combines elements (water, dirt, powdered solids) and identifies various reactions.
- Proposes and uses the appropriate resources when performing experiments (microscope, magnifying glass, thermometer, scale, ruler, scissors, dropper, tweezers, light and heat lamps, sieve).
- Suggests procedures for answering questions and solving problems.
- Makes connections between materials and their use (things that hold liquids, things that offer shade and protect against the sun, things to cook with).
- Recognizes and describes changes that occur during/after an experiment or study based on data collected from different sources (how an animal changes from birth, how water turns into steam or ice, how food is transformed by cooking or combining, how fabrics and paper are dyed and discolored).
- Recognizes that there are reversible transformations (for example, mixing and separating water and sand, changes of water: liquid-solid-liquid again) as well as irreversible transformations (burning, cooking).

Experiments with different elements, objects, and materials that are safe in search of solutions to problems and answers to questions about the natural environment.
| - Identifies and uses available sources to obtain information (observations, records, samplings, interviews, audio, video, and written data).
| - Communicates the results of experiences.

| - Explains and defends personal theories of how and why natural phenomena occur and compares and contrasts these theories to those of classmates.
| - Obtains and organizes information from different sources to help support explanations.
| - Shares and exchanges ideas about discoveries regarding nature.

| Formulates explanations about observable natural phenomena, characteristics of living things, and the natural environment. |
| Makes inferences and predictions about nature based on his/her knowledge, beliefs, and personal experiences. |
| Participates in conservation of natural resources and proposes ways to preserve the environment. |

| - Demonstrates confidence in his/her ideas.
| - Explains what s/he thinks will happen in a given situation based on personal ideas and collected data.
| - Identifies and reflects upon basic characteristics of natural elements and phenomena.
| - Checks initial ideas against observations during a natural phenomena or experiment and amends ideas accordingly. |

| - Identifies required conditions for plant and animal life (water, light, nutrients).
| - Understands s/he is part of an environment that needs protection.
| - Proposes and practices measures to care for water.
| - Identifies and explains positive and negative consequences of human interactions with the natural environment.
| - Identifies environmental factors that affect school life. |
- Searches for solutions to environmental problems in the school and community.
- Proposes and practices measures to care for and improve recreational and meeting areas.
- Enjoys and appreciates outdoor areas.
- Values and respects lifestyles that differ from his/her own.
### Culture and Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establishes relationships between the past and present of his/her family and community using objects, daily routines, and cultural practices.</td>
<td>- Inquiries into personal and family history.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Obtains information from adults about the community and how they lived as children.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Retells anecdotes from his/her personal background based on stories told by family members, if possible, supported by photos and personal diaries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies and explains ways in which his/her parents' and grandparents' lives have changed based on everyday objects (household items, tools and ways of working, means of transportation, and communication) and traditions (games, clothing, holidays, food).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Represents different events from personal, family, and community life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Imagines the future and expresses ideas about what s/he would like to do as a member of society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies and explains characteristics of his/her culture and other cultures.</td>
<td>- Shares knowledge of family and community traditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies similarities and differences between one’s family culture and that of classmates (family roles, ways of living, linguistic expressions, festivities, celebrations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Recognizes everyday objects that are used by different communities to meet similar needs (utensils, transportation, clothing).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recognizes that s/he belongs to different social groups (family, school, friends, community).
- Recognizes and respects different linguistic expressions in his/her culture and others.
- Understands the meaning of important traditional and commemorative celebrations in his/her community.
- Establishes a basic idea of what historical commemorations refer to and mean (through accounts, testimonials, museum materials, paintings).
- Respects national symbols.
- Participates in the organization of cultural events and national and local festivities (civic commemorations and other celebrations).

Recognizes that human beings differ from one another, that we are all important, and are all capable of participating in society.

- Interacts and cooperates with classmates.
- Knows the values that foster improved relations: cooperation, respect, honesty, and tolerance.
- Recognizes that individuals and cultures are identified by individual and group characteristics (physical, gender, linguistic, and ethnic).
- Understands that everyone has responsibilities and shares the same rights that are exercised daily.
- Knows his/her rights and speaks out when s/he thinks they are not respected.
- Proposes new rights according to one’s needs.
- Appreciates the individual and collective effort required by any task.
- Values the existence of rules for group interaction.
Recognizes and understands how human beings work to improve family, school, and community life

- Associates people with their jobs and the benefits that each job provides to the community.
- Recognizes technological resources available in the environment and explains their function, advantages, and risks (electric appliances, work tools, communication devices).
- Identifies public institutions in the community and knows what services they supply, and how his/her family can access these services (health care centers, libraries, recreation centers, schools, post offices).
- Makes the most of the benefits offered by public institutions in his/her community.
5. The Arts

This learning domain focuses on increasing children's sensitivity, initiative, curiosity, spontaneity, imagination, appreciation for the arts, and creativity through experiences that favor different means of expression as well as developing abilities required for the interpretation and appreciation of art.

Artistic expression is rooted in the need to convey feelings and thought that translate into music, images, words, and corporal expressions among other languages. Art involves interpreting and representing (“reading”) elements in one’s reality or imagination. Communicating through art calls for a combination of sensations, colors, forms, compositions, transformations, analogies, metaphors, improvised movements, and so forth. The development of these abilities can be fostered in children from an early age building on a child’s innate potential.

The development of expressions babies use to communicate needs, the familiarization with body and environment through the exploration of space and manipulation of objects, and the mental representations that babies gradually make of their surrounding environment results in a growing knowledge of oneself and the world.

Beginning in the first months, babies play with their bodies, focus visual and auditory attention on colors and sounds, react emotionally towards music and singing, and express themselves by crying, laughing, and using their voice.

As babies grow and are stimulated, they join others in singing, repeat final syllables and familiar words, sing and make up songs, move confidently to music, imitate movements and sounds of animals and objects, act out real or imaginary situations, impersonate characters, and transform objects (a long stick may be used as a horse and a box as a TV set) through symbolic games.

Most children start singing by spontaneously inventing songs or repeating fragments of familiar tunes. When children are three or four years old, spontaneously invented songs are replaced by their culture’s traditional songs. Children detect when music is rapid or slow, if pitch is low or high, and if a song includes long or short pauses between tones. Even if they are not able to hold an exact note, they can learn the lyrics, changes in pitch, and melody of a song. Children also use instruments to accompany their singing.

As a part of their earliest experiences, children use tools (if they are made available) to draw lines and shapes. They start using these tools to explore their surrounding environment focusing first on physical movement rather than the marks they’ve made. They later pass from scribbling to more organized and controlled shapes. As they grow, they become increasingly able to create recognizable representations of objects in their environment. Shape prevails over color and color does not normally have a connection to the object represented. Young children may choose a color because it is available to them or they prefer it.
Around age four, children tend to become more interested in lines, shapes, and colors than the physical movements in which they previously focused. Process is usually considered more important to the child than an actual product.

Body image develops in children as they discover possibilities of movement, travel, displacement, corporal expression, and body control (in games such as “freeze tag”). Self-control and self-regulation are favored by corporal expression and dramatic play games.

Through dramatic play, children integrate thought and emotions. Using oral and body languages as tools, children negotiate and assume roles, imagine scenarios, and create and portray characters (real life or fictional) with original or improvised characteristics.

The aforementioned experiences create bases for preschool education to further develop children’s creative and personal expression (what children feel, think, imagine and invent) as well as artistic appreciation. When given the opportunity to observe and discuss works of art, children’s sensitivity is awakened. Images, sounds, movement, and scenery give rise to diverse sensations. As observers, children make an effort to understand the meaning of art (music, sculpture, theater, and the visual arts), interpret and inquire about an artist’s intentions and methods, and focus on what is most attractive for them.

Teaching artistic expression and appreciation in preschool consists in providing opportunities for children to create, observe, and discuss their own work and the work of others. Artistic activities contribute to children’s integral development due to the following:

- Children learn to express and control their feelings and emotions and recognize that they can express and handle both negative feelings and joy through positive actions.
- Children practice and exhibit greater control of muscles and visual-motor coordination. They learn to use instruments (scissors, brushes, crayons, puppets, and other objects) and acquire abilities that support further development. They develop perception (of shape, color, line, and texture) as a result of what they observe, hear, touch, and try to represent through art (painting, sketching, singing, dancing, modeling, and acting).
- Children have an opportunity to choose and determine colors, building strategies (for a puppet or a toy) and experiment with ways to attach clay pieces.
- Children realize that other people have different points of view and express themselves differently even with the original motive being the same. As they learn that their form of expression is unique, they come to appreciate diversity.
- Children understand that art is a way of conveying culture. When they have a chance to appreciate art from the past they are able to better understand their history and themselves.
• Children experience success. Since art is open to all, young children can enjoy the satisfaction of their creations. This is why artistic activities are particularly valuable for children with special learning needs.

For the development of the competencies categorized under this learning domain, art activities should take into consideration each child’s individual characteristics. Children need time to play, sing, dance, and listen to different types of music. This enriches language, develops the ability to sense rhythm and harmony, as well as enhances memory, attention, listening, body expression, and one’s interactions with others.

Opportunities provided for children to manipulate materials (clay, sand, play dough, paints, brushes) allows children to discover the endless possibilities inherent in the materials (colors, shapes). Children gradually acquire the skills to handle sculpting tools and begin experimenting with basic art techniques (using finger paints, brushes, crayons).

Besides the contributions mentioned above, drama related activities are an excellent means to combine music, the fine arts, dance, and literature depending on the way teachers organize the work with children. It is important that children be given opportunities to prepare and take part in the building of sets, distribution of roles, creation of costumes or characters (puppets), rather than participating exclusively in a performance.

When doing artistic activities the teacher must consider that young children need time to play, express themselves freely, manipulate objects and textures, among other things. Movement and exploration are vital needs that should not be neglected by demanding children's attention for long periods of time.

This learning domain is arranged in four strands: Music Expression and Appreciation, Dance Appreciation and Movement, Fine Arts Expression and Appreciation, and Dramatic Play and Theater Appreciation. The competencies children are expected to develop in each of the strands and how they can be encouraged are outlined in the following chart.
The Arts

Strands in Which the Learning Domain is Organized

**Music Expression and Appreciation**

- Interprets and creates songs and accompanies them with conventional or home-made musical instruments.
- Communicates sensations and feelings produced by songs and music.

**Movement and Dance Appreciation**

- Uses body movements as a form of expression in different situations accompanied by music and song.
- Dances to express sensations and feelings.
- Explains and shares sensations and thoughts that emerge when dancing or watching dance.

**Fine Arts Expression and Appreciation**

- Communicates and expresses creative ideas, feelings, and fantasies through graphic arts using different techniques and materials.
- Communicates feelings and ideas that emerge from contemplating paintings, sculptures, architecture, and photographs.

**Dramatic Play and Theater Appreciation**

- Represents real or imaginary characters or situations through play and dramatization.
- Identifies and discusses motive, topic, or message, as well as characteristics of main characters in literary and theatrical works.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competencies</strong></td>
<td><strong>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Interprets and creates songs and accompanies them with conventional or home-made musical instruments. | - Listens to and sings songs; takes part in games and rounds.  
- Follows the rhythm of songs with palms, feet, or musical instruments.  
- Invents and interprets short songs accompanying them with rhythm.  
- Changes the rhythm of familiar songs.  
- Interprets songs of varied complexity (due to rhythm, length, harmony, and lyrics).  
- Understands and follows a conductor's gestures when performing an orchestral melody or song. |
| Communicates sensations and feelings produced by songs and music. | - Identifies different sound sources (from nature, musical instruments, or other sources in the environment).  
- Reproduces rhythmical sequences with body or instruments.  
- Recognizes the sound of different instruments in a piece of music.  
- Describes what s/he imagines, feels, and thinks when listening to a melody or song.  
- Invents stories based on a melody.  
- Recognizes different versions of a song or musical production.  
- Identifies musical pieces from distinct eras, regions, countries, and explains reasons for preferences.  
- Recognizes the name of melodies from different genres (classical, pop, folk), sings, and dances to them.  
- Names and identifies melodies and songs by listening to fragments of music. |
## Dance Appreciation and Movement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses body movements as a form of expression in different situations accompanied by music and song.</td>
<td>- Dances freely to music.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Dances spontaneously using objects (handkerchiefs, ribbons, percussion instruments, balls, batons).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Expresses him/herself in group activities by moving through space and using diverse objects.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Uses the body to imitate preferred animals, objects, and story characters.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses body movements to express emotions awakened by songs, literature, and music.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Discovers and creates new ways to express him/herself using the body.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Uses paralinguistic language (gestures, looks, attitudes, postures) in body movements and dance.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Communicates ideas and feelings that result from participating in free expression individually or with peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dances to express sensations and feelings.</td>
<td>- Improvises movements when listening to a melody and imitates the movements of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Invents ways to represent the movement of natural phenomena (rain, clouds, waves).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Coordinates and adjusts movements to start, stop, or change based on the rhythm of music in group activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Dances to express sensations and feelings.
- Controls and conveys certain movements to express emotions when dancing.
- Sequences body movements in space to dance.
- Incorporates creative dance movements to express diverse notions of spatial relations (in/out, close/far, in front/behind, up/down, in a circle, straight, diagonal, zigzag, spiral, spinning).

Explains and shares sensations and thoughts that emerge when dancing or watching dance.

- Describes feelings and thoughts when watching or performing a dance.
- Acquires a growing appreciation of dance seen in the community or media.
- Communicates what s/he believes to be happening in a dance (what do movements suggest, what traits can be identified in characters).
Fine Arts Expression and Appreciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencias</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicates and expresses creative ideas, feelings and fantasies, through</td>
<td>- Manipulates and explores the possibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>graphic arts using different techniques and materials.</td>
<td>of different sculpting materials (clay, paint,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>plaster, sand).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Draws, paints, engraves, and models scenes,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>landscapes, and objects – real or imaginary –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>based on experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Explains and shares ideas about what s/he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>attempted to express in artistic creations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(drawing, painting, modeling).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Observes and interprets classmates'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>creations and finds similarities and</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>differences between their work and his/her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>own when based on the same situation (for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>example, a story or a fieldtrip).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Experiments with graphic art techniques,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>materials, and tools and selects preferred</td>
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<td></td>
<td>techniques among those available for</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>personal creations.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Uses individual techniques with color:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>values or ranges, blends, contrasts, shades,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and tones in art work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Observes artwork from different times and</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cultures and explains what details caught</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>his/her attention and why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Reflects upon and shares ideas and feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>when looking at paintings, models,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sculptures, architecture, and photographs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Exchanges opinions provoked by printed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and electronic images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies the name of artists s/he</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appreciates as well as what inspired their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>work.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Dramatic Play and Theater Appreciation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Represents real or imaginary characters or situations through play and dramatization. | - Uses his/her body as a resource for setting a scene (wind, night sounds) and represents objects (tree, pendulum) or characters when taking part in symbolic play.  
- Uses objects to portray characters in dramatic play (hats, shoes, garments, jackets, masks, gloves).  
- Sets and follows shared codes and rules in dramatic play with small groups of peers.  
- Represents literary works or oral stories in free play.  
- Improvises situations when given a topic.  
- Narrates and represents yesterday’s or present day events.  
- Invents stories, characters, and settings in games created and shared with peers.  
- Creates stories incorporating the description of sensations caused by stimulus (hearing thunder, looking at a rainbow, smelling aromatic herbs, experiencing different textures).  
- Creates a group story based on the imaginary transformation of an object or place making the story more detailed as it goes along.  
- Tells stories and tales and recites short poems changing the tone of his/her voice and mimicking.  
- Creates and participates in simple plays.  
- Represents simple plays with puppets made with different techniques (glove, string, stick). |
Identifies and discusses motive, topic, or message, as well as characteristics of main characters in literary and theatrical works.

- Listens to and recites poems and rhymes, narrates oral and written stories that have been passed down by adults (tales, myths, fables and legends), and follows established storylines.
- Invents tales, riddles, songs, and poems.
- Offers opinions after watching a play (about characters, clothing, forms of speech, what s/he sensed on the stage).
- Creates a distinct story from one watched or previously heard by changing character traits, the beginning, the end.
- Participates in designing and preparing a group play performance.
6. Physical Development and Health

Physical development is a process in which factors such as genetics, fine and gross motor experience, health, nutrition, diet, and emotional well being play a role. The influence of these factors as a whole becomes apparent in each individual’s growth. Movement and locomotion, stability and balance, manipulation, and projection and reception are involved in the physical development of children.

During the first years of life remarkable changes are produced in connection to one’s motor skills. Children gradually stop being totally dependent and become increasingly autonomous, passing from uncontrolled and uncoordinated movement to more controlled movement by focusing physical activity and attention on specific tasks. These changes are related to the brain’s development and each individual’s experiences and environment.

Both gross and fine motor skills develop quickly as children gain awareness of their own body and what they are able to do. Children enjoy moving and running. They “dare” to face new challenges and test their abilities (for instance, they experiment jumping from different heights, perform acrobatics). These exercises broaden their physical skills, reward them with feelings of achievement, and show them the value of perseverance. These processes engage motor skills as well as cognitive and emotional skills.

When children reach preschool, many have achieved high levels of motor skills. They coordinate the movements of their body: balance, walk, run, climb, handle some objects and instruments with dexterity, build toys and objects (with building pieces of different sizes and materials), represent and create images and symbols with pencil or paint, and trace with a twig in the sand. Notwithstanding, teachers should remember some children have limited opportunities for play and interaction with peers in their family environment – maybe they are alone most of the time or spend their time in very small living quarters watching television, or they go with their mother or father to work and help them, or they have special learning disabilities. School is an ideal and safe place for children to play, move, and share.

The starting point in planning the appropriate activities for children to gain strength is to acknowledge that each child has developed motor skills on his or her own at home or other places outside of school with a varying degree of achievement, and take into consideration that children’s family environments differ notably in characteristics, pace, and conditions.

Educational intervention in connection with physical development is aimed at having children broaden their control and body-awareness (identify and use different parts of the body and understand their functions) and experience different types of movement and body expression. Offering games that demand increased focus, planning and team decision-making (with the aim of performing tasks, playing roles, assuming
responsibilities, and abiding by the rules agreed upon) are challenges children enjoy and may overcome in collaboration.

Children with special learning or motor disabilities – even if it requires an intervention – should be included in games and activities and provided the support needed to take part to the best of their abilities. The teacher must show a positive attitude and encourage all children to take part in activities as a way to help them overcome inhibitions and fears, feel increasingly able and self-assured, and become aware of their achievements.

It is important to point out that motor skills in children are not related to practice drills or exercising for the sake of exercise itself. If a teacher thinks children need better fine motor coordination, she should plan lessons requiring movement and intellect (playing with puzzles, building with toys that include small pieces). This is better than asking children to repeat one activity over and over supposing this will help them gain better coordination (going over the outline of a shape, filling in a shape with pasta, seeds, or balls of tissue paper). Children tend to get tired of these repetitive activities, as they are time consuming and do not allow them to move freely.

All the learning domains include opportunities to do activities which foster children’s physical development: dance, drama, the fine arts (drawing, modeling, and painting), games that encourage spatial awareness, and experimenting with the natural world.

Due to the connection existing between physical development and health, this learning domain includes some basic aspects in which school intervention is important to help children become conscientious about the actions they can take to stay healthy and become active in the care and preservation of the environment.

Health, defined as a condition of physical, mental, and social wellness is fostered by the care we provide ourselves and others, from our ability to make decisions and control our lives, to making sure the community in which we live offers all of its members opportunities to be healthy. Promoting a healthy lifestyle requires children learn from a young age to take actions to improve and control their own health and to acquire some basic knowledge to pursue healthy personal and social lifestyles in the future.

Creating a healthy lifestyle calls for a responsible and committed relationship with the environment – cultivating everyday habits that avoid and prevent damaging the environment and causing problems that affect personal and community life. If we want children to understand that the environment can only be effectively taken care of through our actions, teachers should help children learn to use natural resources rationally everyday in addition to participating in specific programs (recycling campaigns, tree planting, trash collection).

Although the school cannot directly modify the family, economic, and social conditions in which children live and which have a great influence on children’s health, the school can promote safety measures and personal and collective health. With the school’s influence, children will understand the importance of good health and learn to make decisions to prevent illnesses and accidents and to take care of and avoid putting
themselves at risk.

Talking and learning about topics such as lifestyle, environmental health hazards in the community, common illnesses (their causes and ways to prevent or avoid them), and the importance of good personal hygiene help children become aware of the importance of health. The scientific information they are provided with should be easy for them to understand and reflect their reality. Books, magazines, videos (if available and appropriate), or any other resources with images that children can review to obtain information about common childhood diseases (their symptoms and prevention) can be used with teacher’s support. When children understand why hygiene is important, they integrate it into their routines making the habits no longer meaningless tasks imposed by adults.

Based on understanding health issues, children may think of and propose actions in which they are able to take part and encourage the involvement of others (talking with their family, creating posters with their own proposals, routinely implementing healthy habits).

Promoting wellness in children means not only encouraging physical health but also helping them understand that some situations may put their personal integrity at risk. Children’s willingness to explore and experience and their vulnerability to unfavorable or unsafe environments should be considered when helping them understand what attitudes and actions may be implemented as means to prevent accidents at home, school, and in the street. This way they will learn to be cautious.

Even though the state of mind of young children depends mostly on their family environment, the teacher may become a major figure and someone to trust in case children suffer mistreatment or violence. If teachers manage to establish good rapport with small children and create open spaces for discussion in the classroom (individually, in small groups, or with the whole class) regarding feelings and emotions that children may have when interacting with some adults or in situations where they do not feel safe, children become aware of things that make them feel scared or uneasy and know what they can do if they think they are in danger.

Besides teaching children about physical development and health, preschools should build relationships with families by providing information and implementing actions aimed at the promotion of social health. Teacher intervention is important since the communication that is established with parents will help prevent the mistreatment and abuse of children and improve family habits and routines that have an impact on the child's school success, avoiding future social problems.

This learning domain is arranged in two strands: Coordination, Strength, and Balance and Health. The competencies children are expected to develop in each of the strands and how they can be encouraged are outlined in the following chart.
## Physical Development and Health

### Strands in Which the Learning Domain is Organized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordination, Strength, and Balance</th>
<th>Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Maintains balance and control of movements implying strength, resistance, flexibility, and impulse in physical games and activities.</td>
<td>• Follows basic health and safety measures to maintain good health and prevent accidents in and out of school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses objects and tools to problem solve and carry out diverse activities.</td>
<td>• Participates in health and safety precautions, environment protection, and the care of natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recognizes situations that provoke feelings of pleasure, well-being, fear, distrust, or uneasiness and expresses these feelings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Competencies and Their Form of Expression

### Coordination, Strength and Balance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Maintains balance and control of movements implying strength, resistance, flexibility, and impulse in physical games and activities. | - Participates in games by moving in different directions: climbing, rolling, or sliding (right-left, up-down, in-out, forward-backward).  
- Shows control and balance in free-play or when exploring a physical environment (getting on a seesaw, swinging on a swing, hanging from monkey bars, climbing ropes and trees).  
- Takes part in games that require standing still for a period of time (“statues,” “freeze tag”).  
- Takes part in organized games that require estimating distances, speeds, etc. (“stop,” relays).  
- Proposes ways to make a physical game more complex and plays the game with classmates.  
- Controls body movements and location alternating speed, direction, and position using objects that may be held, pulled, pushed, rolled, and caught (walking or running at different speeds while rolling a tire, stopping after pulling a car, sliding a heavy object across the floor).  
- Takes part in indoor and outdoor games of strength, resistance, and flexibility (pushing or pulling and changing directions to avoid obstacles).  
- Combines actions in activities that require more complex levels of coordination such as following instructions and rules and facing challenges (run and throw, run and jump, run and turn, run/throw and catch). |
- Agrees upon strategies with classmates regarding how to attain a goal implying a cooperative physical effort (carrying a large and heavy object, rolling a toy with wheels, games with opponents).
- Senses changes in his/her body after participating in a physical activity (body temperature, sweat, heartbeat, rapid breathing, thirst, accelerated pulse).
- Perceives the physical effort s/he can carry out without exceeding personal limits.
- Recognizes the importance of rest after physical exercise.

- Explores and handles objects, instruments, and tools freely and knows how they are used and what they are for.
- Selects and uses the right object, instrument, or tool for a chosen task (a brush for painting, scissors for cutting, screwdriver for carpentry).
- Plays freely with different materials and discovers their different uses.
- Builds and creates objects.
- Builds using interconnecting and construction parts (boxes, counters, and other available objects).
- Builds objects according to a plan agreed upon with classmates (children describe what they are going to do and assign tasks).
- Assembles puzzles of varying degrees of difficulty (number of pieces, shape, color, shade, or size).
- Moves objects of varying weights and sizes and find ways to reduce the effort (uses a lever, pulls objects, and asks a classmate for help).

Uses objects and tools to problem solve and carry out diverse activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies</th>
<th>Encouraged and demonstrated when the child…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follows basic health and safety measures to maintain good health and prevent</td>
<td>- Uses measures of personal hygiene to help prevent illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accidents in and out of school.</td>
<td>(washing hands, brushing teeth, cutting fingernails,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bathing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Follows safety rules and avoids putting him/herself or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>others at risk when playing or working at school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Knows measures to prevent disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Practices and promotes measures to prevent common</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>infectious diseases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Applies available hygiene measures when eating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understands the importance of vaccines and knows the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>consequences of not receiving them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies which foods are part of a balanced diet from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>those available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Follows and promotes safety measures at home and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in case of an emergency (earthquake, fire, flood).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Takes part in establishing safety rules at school and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>encourages compliance among classmates and adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participates in health and safety precautions, environment protection, and</td>
<td>- Talks about environmental problems in the community and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the care of natural resources.</td>
<td>their health consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identifies diseases caused by local environmental problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and knows how to prevent them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Explains potential risks of living with a domestic animal or pet if it is not taken care of properly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Implements and promotes basic health measures and care required by domestic animals or pets.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Protects and cares for domestic animals, plants, and other natural resources in the community.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Recognizes situations that provoke feelings of pleasure, well-being, fear, distrust, or uneasiness and expresses these feelings. |

| Comments on sensations and feelings (pleasant or unpleasant) caused by some people or experiences. |
| Talks about trusted adults and knows how to get in touch with them in case of an emergency. |
| Knows personal contact information of one or more adults who could help him/her if needed. |
| Identifies risks within the family, on the street, at school, and talks about what s/he is supposed to do should one of these situations present itself. |
| Explains how to act under certain circumstances (if alone or with strangers). |
| Knows basic health and protection services in the community. |
VI. Organization of the School Year
The flexible nature of this program helps teachers address students’ individual learning needs. It is imperative that the teacher fully knows her students and has a profound understanding of the program, which will guide her work.

A teacher masters the program when she is able to make necessary changes and adjustments to her lessons and teacher-student relationships, use activities to address specific competencies, make long and short term plans, and use the school, different environments, and other resources effectively. Mastery of the program will provide the teacher with a basis for planning activities that allows her to better understand her students.

1. The Beginning of the School Year: Understanding Students and Establishing the Working Environment

a) Understanding Students

Getting to know and understanding students is a continuous process. During the school year there are opportunities to observe and interact with children in many situations in and out of the classroom. It is essential to implement a series of activities at the beginning of the school year aimed at getting to know one’s students – what they know and can do – in order to identify areas requiring more systematic work.

Understanding students allows a teacher to differentiate lessons and approaches to best fit her students: their mastery of each competency, their personalities (confidence, ability to express oneself, ability to relate to others), and their learning rhythms. It is also the basis in identifying who requires closer guidance, who has special needs, and who may need further detailed assessment. These strategies are aimed at designing individual educational plans that include activities designed to reinforce learning. Otherwise, if the teacher does not know what a student knows and can do, the effectiveness of her activities is left to chance; one activity may prove interesting and challenging for some and repetitive and dull for others, thus lacking meaning.

An initial assessment of the group helps a teacher get to know her class but most importantly the characteristics of each student:
- What the student can do in regards to the competencies outlined in the program.
- The student’s physical health (visual, auditory) – information that can be obtained by screenings commonly used in preschools.
- The student’s home environment (family dynamics, routines, personal interactions, preferences, fears).
Information about these issues may be obtained through free play, organized play, symbolic play, direct observation, parent interviews, and by interviewing the student.

The initial assessment will be developed as each school day unfolds during the first few weeks of the school year. The difference between work in these first weeks and the rest of the year is that lessons are prepared with the aim of observing and documenting children’s actions and motivations for these actions. Teachers implement activities designed to explore children’s proficiency in each competency corresponding to the different learning domains. (The right hand column next to each competency in the charts included in this program serves as a guide for activity selection.)

Information gathered will be included in each student’s file. This record will allow a teacher to document the student’s learning and development (progress, difficulties).

If the teacher has previously taught the same students, this task may be simpler and take only one or two weeks. However, if the class is new for the teacher or if it is the first grade of preschool, the task may take up to one month.

Program mastery and knowing the characteristics and needs of the class is necessary for teachers and directors to reach agreements, improve school practices, and establish an action plan to involve parents in the education of their children.

**b) The Working Environment**

Preschool requires an environment where children feel safe, respected, supported, and where they can feel free to express their concerns, questions, feelings, and ideas. Children will also begin to accept and understand new rules and ways of interacting, which may differ from those at home.

It is important that children are aware that school is a place to learn and grow. This idea, absolutely obvious to adults, is not as obvious to children. They have to see for themselves that school is not only a pleasant and enjoyable place, but by getting involved in school activities, they can learn about things they did not know about before and become able to do things they could not do before.

Exploring similarities and differences between home and school, touring the school environment, discussing what school can offer, and having older children share their experiences may help younger children – especially new students – feel safe at school, integrate into the school community, and understand reasons why they have to attend school. The youngest students require special attention because their integration may be more difficult and complex than for children attending other grade levels.

When establishing this aspect of the environment in the classroom, teachers should consider the following elements:
• Confidence in the classroom teacher: a caring environment requires that children feel their teacher is patient, tolerant, supportive, encouraging and stimulating. A teacher should show children that she listens to them, and that they can trust her. Educators need to encourage self-confidence in students so that they begin to solve conflicts on their own. Children that remain distant and apart from their peers and those that join the class for the first time should receive special care.

• Interactions between classmates: interactions with others – even of the same age – who have different temperaments, preferences, and personalities are a challenge for some children. For this reason, it is important to establish a simple set of classroom rules that promote respect between classmates (avoiding aggression and violence), a respect for classroom materials, and a shared responsibility for classroom upkeep. Abiding by these rules teaches self-control and community values.

• Physical environment: classroom arrangement and material layout are indicators of a classroom’s vitality. The fact that materials are within reach of children and well organized helps create a friendly learning environment by teaching children when and how materials are used (care of materials, turn taking with materials).

The unfolding of activities intended to explore competencies and students’ personalities will build the foundation of the desired classroom environment. Activities may include games related to the personal and social learning domain. From scenarios listed in this learning domain (“Talks about personal feelings,” “Expresses feelings and increasingly controls impulsive behaviors that affect others,” “Accepts and shares responsibilities”) the teacher may choose activities that favor a positive classroom environment.

Student involvement in the arrangement and use of materials as well as in setting rules about when and how different areas of the school can be accessed is necessary for the children to feel comfortable and develop positive expectations for their time at school.

Establishing a good school environment starts at the beginning of the school year and continues through daily interaction between children and teachers.

2. Planning

In conjunction with establishing a good classroom environment, the first few weeks of school are also dedicated to assessment activities (learning activities) to help the teacher get to know her students. Understanding one’s students, as well as the program, is fundamental in planning the school year.
Fostering communication, cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development is not subject to a preset sequence or specific teaching method. Children develop and use many competencies in their day-to-day activities. The purpose of preschool is to foster development based on students’ proficiency in the competencies.

The attainment of some competencies (“interprets or infers the meaning of text” or “uses numbers in varied situations”) requires specific and continuous activities. Conversely, the attainment of other competencies (compliance with rules or the development of self-esteem and independence) is subject more to relationships and the classroom environment.

Both experience and the latest research in the area of pedagogy show there is no one method or program that meets all needs when working with young children. There are many strategies that contribute to learning: teacher-led instruction, student-initiated study, learning through play or structured activities, and working with peers from other classes and/or grade levels.

An organized game, a problem to solve, an experiment, watching a natural phenomenon, and using written language turn into learning experiences. These learning experiences should be understood to mean a set of activities that involve relationships among children, content, and teachers, with the objective being to foster a co-construction of knowledge. Important criteria that should be considered when planning learning experiences are:

- Children should find the situation interesting and understand its purpose. Instructions and assignments must be clear.
- The situation should address children’s previous knowledge in order for them to expand their knowledge.

Learning experiences may take the form of a project, workshop, or unit. These activities can be singular lessons or long-term studies.

Based on her knowledge of the group, the teacher will decide how to plan learning experiences, foster her students’ competencies, and meet the fundamental objectives of the program. Conditions that should be met are the following: a) learning activities should have a well defined educational purpose and promote one or more competencies; b) all learning domains should be addressed within a determined period of time (a month, for instance); c) one’s teaching should be consistent with the educational principles supporting the program.

Considering these conditions, there are several options to plan and implement instruction depending on a teacher’s knowledge, experience, and creativity. Planning should be based on the competencies the teacher is looking to develop in her students. Learning experiences, themes, problem-solving activities and the teacher’s choice of resources should serve this educational purpose.

If competencies provide the starting point for planning, the first question to be asked is: In which order should such competencies be addressed? This question allows for many answers.
One option for planning is based on an initial assessment. The teacher should list competencies in the order in which she thinks they will be best addressed considering the following:

- Children may show low levels of mastery.
- A certain competency is a prerequisite for further learning.
- The chosen competencies are closely related.

Competencies may be selected from one or various learning domains. “Science and Social Studies” or “Language and Communication” are learning domains especially useful in serving as an axis of educational planning. They allow for articulation and a comprehensive view when utilizing competencies from other learning domains. The important thing is that competencies are always the starting point for planning.

Once a sequence of competencies is established, how can teachers make sure all learning domains are addressed within a determined period of time? How can a teacher take advantage of the interrelationships between competencies from different learning domains? The following procedure may provide an answer to these questions:

a) List competencies in the order they should be addressed based on an initial assessment and students’ progress.

b) Select or design learning experiences (a set of interrelated lessons) for the first competency in the previously mentioned list. These situations can be: a problem, an inquiry or study of a topic, an experiment, or the construction of artifacts.

c) Once these lessons are designed, it is necessary to review related competencies being addressed in the same lesson. Children may call on many different skills and attitudes and gain knowledge from different learning domains in one lesson. It is important to remember that the development of several competencies depends upon elements such as: the environment, work methods, and opportunities for play and interaction.

d) Follow steps (a, b, c) with each competency on the list. It can be useful to check if a competency has been sufficiently covered in previously designed lessons. The teacher should continue to go down the list in such a manner.

e) Once a learning experience has been designed for each competency on the list, the experiences should be reviewed to see that they include competencies from all the learning domains. If this is not the case, specific lessons should be designed for unattended areas.

f) At the end, a sequence will be obtained that will address all of the competencies in all domains, including those areas requiring specific attention or addressed through a trans-disciplinary approach.
The time required for the development of each lesson and set of learning experiences needs to be considered. We suggest one month of work as a unit, but activities planned may well span into longer or shorter periods. A teacher’s working plan should be able to accommodate permanent activities as well as unforeseen events that may call for adjustments.

**Permanent Activities**

Teachers should plan for recurrent activities (daily, twice, three times a week) aimed at addressing competencies considered important to the class and the fundamental objectives. These activities should be related to communication and cognitive competencies; some activities may be carried out daily to favor verbal expression (riddles, tongue twisters, child led discussions) and reading (stories or other type of texts children may like); likewise, experiments with various materials – and the recording of results obtained – may be carried out periodically. Activities may differ in nature from one month to another, but they will always be aimed at promoting competencies in children.

**Emergent Curriculum**

A lesson plan is made in anticipation. However, in the development of the educational process unexpected situations arise that should not be neglected because they can be used to generate interest and foster opportunities for learning. These are some examples:

- Questions children ask in connection to what they are doing and learning may lead to a more in-depth study and consequently will require more time than originally planned. Notwithstanding, teachers must bear in mind that sometimes children ask questions or make comments that do not necessarily relate to the study. The teacher should listen but prevent children from losing focus from the original topic.

- A natural phenomenon (rain, the formation of a rainbow, an eclipse) or extraordinary events occurring at school, in the community, or in the media may evoke questions that provide the grounds for important learning. Paying attention to unexpected interests enriches lessons plans and can do so without leaving previous activities unfinished.

If learning is the most important aspect of education, amending one’s plan for unexpected situations should not be a problem. Commenting on or researching these types of situations provides an opportunity for children to learn about things that are interesting to them and, therefore, develop intended competencies. In this way, a strong relationship is established between everyday life and school activities.
A teacher is always creating conditions to further develop activities going on in the classroom depending on which competencies she wishes to emphasize. It is essential that the teacher guides activities, gives explanations during experiments, inspires students to reflect and ask questions, and provides timely and pertinent information in order to broaden children's understanding. Learning depends upon these actions.

The procedure described above may seem complicated but will become practical in as much as it is used. This is not a rigid procedure but a proposal or a key for educational planning. It does not require recording each and every step of the way (even though this might be helpful) nor creating formats for administrative control of teacher's work.

It is important to reiterate that planning is an individual, flexible, dynamic mental process; a plan is a guide for work and is always modifiable; a plan may always be improved.

The conclusion of the planning process: the lesson plan

When planning, a teacher must first reflect in order to anticipate challenges she may face helping children reach the expected competencies. She should analyze and organize her work according to the fundamental objectives, the characteristics of the class, and her professional experience. These are some basic questions to be asked during this process: What are the children supposed to achieve? What are they supposed to know and be able to do? What activities may contribute to their success? How can the physical environment be used? What materials are necessary and pertinent? How should the activities be organized and for how long? Which areas require family support?

This reflection – an intellectual, mental process – is the most important part of planning; it results in a lesson plan. Although teachers are not required to record each step of the thinking process, they are in fact required to record the result: a lesson plan.

The practical nature of the plan

The lesson plan has a practical purpose. It helps a teacher get a clear and accurate idea of her intentions, arrange and systemize her work, and review or contrast her educational plans with what actually happens in the classroom. Planning does not need to be complicated but should contain the following:

a) Competencies to be addressed,
b) A brief description of the learning experiences,
c) An anticipated, flexible timeline.
The Duration of the Lesson Plan

Addressing the learning domains through competencies requires scheduling reasonable periods of time in order to develop one’s plans. A month is a reasonable period of time for planning a unit of study keeping in mind the characteristics of one’s students. When planning one should consider how to address a set of competencies within the learning domains, the order in which competency will be addressed, and the activities to be performed within the classroom, school, and (if appropriate) out of school. A month is also a reasonable period of time to assess student progress and perform a global review of what has been attained individually.

The monthly plan will serve as a basis for staff, including the program’s director, to agree on activities they may implement as a team (for example, organizing workshops for children of different classes and grade levels) to address the fundamental objectives of preschool education.

Daily Work

According to the program’s approach and focus on competencies it should not be assumed that there is a pre-determined period of time for daily work. Teachers will decide how to use classroom time based on their knowledge of their students and particular circumstances in order to make the most of the school day. The criteria below may help teachers decide how to allocate time during a school day:

a) Taking into consideration the monthly plan, the teacher should decide which situation or situations may be included in one school day and which will require more days of work.

b) Thinking about the activities that usually happen during the school day will help identify routines that may be substituted for innovative activities more interesting to students. What purpose does the activity serve? How much time is devoted to each activity? How does the activity benefit children with regards to the competencies? These are questions that should be considered. Here we must point out that routines, especially for young children, are a way to organize time and help children understand that some activities must be performed regularly. It should not be construed, however, that such activities be unnecessarily repetitive or lacking valuable educational purposes.

c) Based on the above, the teacher must decide which activities should be performed daily, which ones will be done once or twice a week, and the best time during the school day to implement the activities. Teachers must also consider the time that is assigned to art and PE activities led by special
teachers (if the school has this service). This does not mean the head teacher will not provide attention to these learning domains.

By the end of the school day, the teacher should record brief entries about class experiences in her class log. Assessing each day’s work will allow teachers to make necessary adjustments.
VII. Assessment
a) Purposes and Functions of Assessment

The assessment of learning is the process of comparing or evaluating what children know and can do (their competencies) with respect to where the children were at the beginning of a school year, a term, or a sequence of activities taking into account the objectives set forth in the curriculum at each grade level. Such assessment or judgment is based on information teachers collect, organize, and interpret at different times during a school day or school year.

In preschool education, assessment has three major and closely interrelated purposes:

- Confirming what students have learned – achievements and difficulties found when pursuing competencies set forth in the learning domains – is one criteria in designing activities that best fit students’ characteristics, situations, and needs.
- Identifying factors that have an impact on children’s learning, including teaching practices and the circumstances in which educational work is performed as a basis to assess if they are appropriate or need to be modified.
- Improving – based on the above – the school’s educational action which includes teaching and other aspects of the school system.

Thus, assessment of learning provides a basis for the teacher to systematically make decisions and changes required in teaching or in school systems – most importantly the conditions in the classroom – that are within her reach.

Unlike other educational levels such as elementary or middle school education, where assessment is the basis for allocating grades and deciding upon the accreditation of a grade level or the certification of an educational cycle, in preschool assessment plays a role that is essentially and exclusively formative as a means to enhance the learning process, not to determine if a student has proven a certain degree of proficiency in one grade level as a condition to enter the next. Therefore, we must point out that the advancement of students in the three grade levels of preschool shall not be subject to a passing grade on the report card. The student will advance grade levels as a result of having completed the grade and received proof of completion.

One of the purposes of assessment is to provide the teacher of the subsequent grade level or the elementary school teacher receiving children from preschool with information to design and plan her work based on the characteristics of her new students.

This idea of assessment – the emphasis on its formative function – implies the need to implement practices that allow a teacher to focus on how individual children learn during school activities and how these children develop their competencies. Assessment is not only based on children’s achievements at the end of the school
Effective assessment should not limit itself to what students have learned while excluding other factors that have an impact on the learning process. The means and instruments of assessment should be diverse and the information obtained from this process should be used fully.

Assessment is meaningful when the information and the conclusions obtained serve to elicit teacher’s thinking, change aspects of school systems that hinder learning, strengthen those that favor it, or design and test new ways of working toward the fundamental objectives. Likewise, the results of the assessment should be one of the major elements for a collective reflection by teachers and for communication with parents.

b) What Should be Assessed?

• Students’ Learning

Identifying each child’s progress periodically using the fundamental objectives and competencies included in the learning domains is the major purpose of assessment, but is not limited to this.

Parameters for assessment are the competencies outlined in each of the learning domains representing how fundamental objectives are encouraged and demonstrated. The actions in which competencies may become apparent (included in the column next to each competency) allow teachers to specify and record children’s progress.

Assessment must take into consideration not only what a teacher can actually observe but also how children progress and how new competencies can be achieved with support.

Although assessment may not provide information about all school and external factors that can influence students’ learning it can be used to help reflect upon such factors. Thus, based on the results of learning assessments, these factors and settings may turn into objects of further assessment. A main reason for assessing a learning experience – in addition to the results obtained about that specific activity – should be to reflect on how the activity supports the educational principles found in the basis of this program.

• Classroom Organization and the Learning Process

Learning is an individual achievement but the learning process is realized mainly in relationship with others. Class dynamics have a highly important influence on each child’s learning. The relationships that children establish with other children during the school day, the role that each child plays within the class, the way activities are organized (individual, small teams, collective), the opportunity for students to be actively involved, the teacher’s interventions, her interaction with students, and the
classroom rules create an environment – a climate – that impacts learning. All these elements should be checked for obstacles and opportunities for improvement. Other factors related to classroom organization that should be reviewed are: the use of time, space, and materials.

• **Teaching**

Teacher intervention plays a key role in students' learning. Teachers make decisions before and during the school day that affect their instruction. These decisions are based on their preparation, pedagogical traditions, or conceptions – explicit or implicit – about what is important for children to learn, how children learn, and the activities children should perform. Teaching is also influenced by personal traits, teaching styles, and the way a teacher communicates with and treats her students.

Teaching may be efficient, challenging, and stimulating, or inefficient, dull, and discouraging. The improvement of both the learning process and results requires a teacher to continuously reflect upon and critically review her decisions regarding her teaching: the way she promotes (or does not) children’s work, the way children are encouraged to cooperate among themselves, and the beliefs that sustain her classroom interventions.

To help this reflection, teachers may ask themselves: What objectives do I consider most important? What types of activities do I use most frequently? What strategies or activities work best? What practices have not been efficient? What factors hinder the attainment of the fundamental objectives? Do these factors result from the types of activities I choose or my teaching? Which children require more attention or other type of activities? What actions can I implement to improve? Am I making the most of the resources available in the classroom and school?

• **School Organization and Performance Including the Relationship with Student Families**

Children’s education is not the responsibility of one teacher but rather a task shared by all teaching staff. Students’ school experience occurs not only in the classroom but also in all the environments within the school setting. Students interact in these environments and learn attitudes, values, and different ways to relate. In addition, school organization, operations, and traditions influence teacher performance.

The school’s organization and functions that influence learning should be reviewed by taking into consideration learning achievements and difficulties encountered by students. Aspects to be considered include: school priorities, the fulfillment of professional responsibilities, the relationships between educators, the role of administration, the use of school time, and the relationships established with parents (communication, involvement, and counseling). This process should include a periodic review of school facilities, organization, and use of school space.
The systematic and periodic analysis of the learning process and its results carried out by the teaching staff and coordinated by the school administration and area supervisor will allow for individual classroom progress to be monitored, children with specific needs to be identified, successful experiences to be shared, and teaching strategies to be assessed. This analysis becomes a means to transform school management by strengthening actions that are productive, eliminating or improving approaches that are inefficient, and designing new ways to work. This set of decisions based on an internal assessment (in which the assessment of learning is the starting point) along with individual and collective reflections are needed to integrate an educational improvement plan in each school.

c) Who Assesses?
The results of the assessment process are an interpretation made by those who assess regarding specific issues that have been investigated. Even though such interpretations are based on analysis of available information, they also include the evaluator’s personal point of view, making them subjective. Therefore, it is important that the opinions of all involved in the educational process (children, parents, and colleagues – physical education teachers, music teachers, and support specialists) are integrated in the assessment of learning and other aspects of school life. Everyone involved can contribute their point of view making conclusions more objective and closer to reality.

• The Teacher’s Role
Teachers are the ones who most clearly understand a student’s progress and proficiency in different competencies as well as the student’s potentials and difficulties. Knowledge gained when teachers interact with students as well as design, organize, coordinate, implement, and revise the educational experience is key to a teacher’s role. Documentation of these aspects via student work samples, journal entries on the development of activities, notes on individual students and their learning processes are sources of information that need to be continually assessed in order to understand and address individual student progress and improve one’s teaching.

• Children's Involvement in Assessment
Small children reflect on their own abilities and achievements during the learning process when they experience success or when they identify their mistakes. They also have an opinion regarding the activities they do during the school day.

The students’ assessment of the teacher’s practice as well as their own learning is expressed when activities are in process or soon after. This is when children can talk
about the way they felt about an activity, whether they liked the activity or not, why they could or could not feel successful at it, what was difficult about it, and so forth. Listening and considering students’ comments is a way to foster oral expression, discourse, and participation. It is also a way to obtain information needed to review and improve the teacher’s work.

Children’s involvement in assessment – besides contributing valuable information – elicits children’s involvement in their own learning as well as an awareness of what they have learned and how they learned it. This competency is to be encouraged in preschool.

• **Parents’ Involvement in Assessment**

The success of preschool requires a strong collaboration between the school and parents. A condition for this strong collaboration is to share common goals. For this to happen, the school needs to communicate well about school activities and their purpose. At the same time, the school should be willing to listen to and take into account parents’ opinions regarding teaching and school. The assessment process is an opportunity for school-parent communication.

Listening to parent opinion about children’s progress and what parents hear their children saying about school at home, as well as parent’s comments about what they see happening at school, is essential in reviewing the way a school is operating and the work of teachers in the classrooms. Parent involvement in the assessment processes serves to establish a collaborative relationship in regards to domains such as affective and interpersonal relations, communication, ways of expression, or in other areas where a child may require a specific family support to continue progressing at school.

• **Administrative and District Involvement**

The core functions of school authorities (school administration or area supervision) include: securing the conditions for an appropriate development of teaching, coordinating teachers’ work around the fundamental objectives, and promoting professional collaboration. This is the reason why school administration and area supervision are agents of assessment. Due to the very nature of their jobs, they must promote and coordinate a regular assessment of preschools.

In the assessment of a school, the mission of preschool education must be the key reference. The basis for an administrator’s contribution to assessment lies in an in-depth knowledge of curriculum objectives as well as their implications in children’s learning and teacher’s work.
d) When to Assess?

This program focuses its interests on children’s abilities, the diversity of ways in which these abilities are made apparent, and the various levels of proficiency showed by children of the same age. The progress attained by students in each of these competencies is shown by the way they act in both school and extracurricular situations. A teacher can notice children’s progress, difficulties, and needs for specific support when observing students’ involvement in activities, the relationships they establish with peers, and when listening to their opinions and proposals. This is why we emphasize that assessment of learning should be continuous. The goal is that teachers adopt a habit of observing students and their learning so they can better implement educational strategies and decisions.

This idea does not exclude the need to carry out specific assessments at certain times of the year in order to synthesize the achievements and difficulties of each student. It may be necessary to perform specific activities with certain students in order to obtain more information. Teachers should make sure that children understand directions and feel comfortable with the assessment in order for it to reflect how children will act in concrete situations. An assessment should be used mostly to show student progress rather than to compare students to general criteria that can be arbitrary.

The assessments performed at the beginning and at the end of a school year are examples of specific recommended assessments:

- The initial assessment or diagnosis, as we have already mentioned, is a starting point for teachers to organize school work, set forth a specific sequence for addressing competencies, and distinguish students’ specific needs. This is further described in Chapter VI: Organization of the School Year.

- At the end of the school year a teacher should record her students’ achievements, breakthroughs and limitations in development, as well as causes and situations that may have contributed to this development. This will provide teachers with valuable information about what children know, experience, do, and who they are by the end of a school year or educational level. The teacher of the subsequent grade level can use this information to prepare for the following school year.

e) How to Collect and Organize Information?

Close observations of students and their work, dialogue with students and parents, and the interview with parents at the beginning of the year are the best means to obtain information on which assessments are based.
The unfolding of the school day is the most important source of information. While a teacher is working with students, generating their interest, attending questions, and listening to their reasoning, she is able to observe how these competencies are developing. The development of these competencies is the main objective of preschool education. As these actions occur simultaneously, it may be difficult to record and organize this information for future use. To make this task easier, a series of tools are provided below and grouped as: student’s individual files and the teacher’s journal.

**A Student’s Individual File**

In order to have diverse and substantial data on student learning, individual student files should be made for a teacher to report on and gather valuable information about her students’ personal histories. These files should include the following tools: a school registration card and photocopy of the child’s birth certificate, interviews with the mother, father, or guardians, notes on the child’s achievements, development, and learning difficulties, an interview with the child and any work samples collected in this interview, and in the case of a student with special educational needs, a psycho-pedagogical assessment.

Students’ individual files become a support for orienting individuals in charge of children’s education for they contain key information about who a child is and his/her progress.

Each teacher or teaching team may decide how to organize class and school files. District supervisors and other authorities may offer suggestions for handling student files and registration forms, but no specific format should be imposed.

1. **Registration card and photocopy of birth certificate**

These documents contain students’ personal information. The registration card should include information related to health conditions that require special attention such as allergies or prohibited medicines.

2. **Interviews with the student’s mother, father, or guardian**

An initial interview should collect and make use of information families have on their children: who the child is, what the child finds difficult, what the child finds interesting, the way the child relates to adults and other children, and how the child interacts with his/her environment. All of this is necessary in order to understand the way a child interacts with the world and how s/he relates to school.
This interview between the teacher and the student’s parents or guardians is a resource in building comprehension and collaboration between teachers and parents and can provide coherence in interventions adults make in children’s education.

When preparing the interview, the teacher must consider that the first meeting with parents is an opportunity to establish a friendly relationship permitting continuous communication. Therefore, it is important that parents understand that the information they provide will contribute to their children’s education. The trust the teacher may gain in this interview will be essential in having the families involved in school.

3. **Student achievements and difficulties**

Part of a teacher’s responsibility is to record achievements and difficulties encountered by students when developing competencies. To do this, the teacher will need to have “key” information. This is not a detailed description, but rather noting situations in which achievements or difficulties were made apparent, and support the child needed to be able to progress.

It is also advisable that the teacher record points such as the following: Does the student concentrate during activities? How does the student react in difficult situations? When does s/he ask for help? Does the student explore alternatives?

4. **Student interview**

Besides the opinions expressed by students during school activities, teachers should find time to listen to each child in order to learn about her/his expectations and needs, the way s/he thinks of her/himself, the opportunities the child has available at home, situations that are a source of dissatisfaction or anguish, and the student’s relationship with parents and siblings, among other issues. If the teacher does not have information about the child’s school experience, the interview may also include such aspects as: the student’s relationship with peers, what the student likes or dislikes about school activities, and/or the teacher’s instruction.

From the initial interview about the student’s family life, the teacher can obtain information that may show the existence of serious problems calling for an immediate conversation with parents or referral to an institution for specialized attention. In this way, the school will support the healthy and balanced development of children.

In order to learn a student’s opinion, it is necessary to have an attitude and use words that gain the student’s trust, be encouraging, and let the child know s/he will be listened to and considered. It is advisable to ask the student questions and provide clues that will help the child express her/his opinion until a fluid dialogue is attained.

During this conversation, teachers should pay attention not only to the child’s words, but her/his gestures and body language. The interview is not always
successful at first and when a child is not in the mood for talking it would be wise to reschedule.

It is best to schedule individual conversations. It may be that because of classroom observations a teacher will see the need to pay more attention to some students. This decision is part of how teachers address the individual differences of their students.

5. Students’ work

Work samples from students are valuable evidence of student learning. Including these in the student file allows one to observe student progress during the course of a school year. Samples should document progress in the different learning domains and include information such as the student’s name, date, and a brief comment on the circumstances in which the work was realized and the progress attained by the student.

6. Psycho-educational assessment

Psycho-educational assessment is an interdisciplinary assessment for children with special educational needs that involves the teacher, support service staff, and parents or guardians. In these cases, the evaluations and assessments made by the specialized staff from CAPEP, USAER, CAM (or other equivalent entities)\(^6\) should be integrated into the student’s personal file. Only staff from the specialized institutions supporting regular education will apply formal and standardized tests.

Medical reports and other professional documents considered pertinent may also be included in the student’s personal file.

Beside the regular assessment of competencies pertaining to the learning domains and the psycho-educational assessment, the following aspects that impact development and learning will also require special consideration for these children: the classroom and school environment, the social and family environment, as well as the students’ interests and motivation for learning.

In cases where no CAPEP, USAER or CAM staff is available, the Technical Advisory Board\(^7\) of each school will establish a comprehensive assessment to learn about these students’ abilities. This must incorporate specialized information from the institutions that may have previously supported the student and information provided by the parents. The goal of this assessment is to define appropriate strategies for working with each student.

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\(^6\) Translators’ note: CAPEP (Centro de Atención Psicopedagógica de Educación Preescolar), USAER (Unidades de Servicio de Apoyo a la Educación Regular), and CAM (Centro de Atención Múltiple) are Mexican institutions that help schools provide support to children with special educational needs.

\(^7\) Translators’ note: Technical Advisory Board is the school faculty.
Teacher’s journal

A teacher’s journal is an instrument for recording brief narratives about the school day and, when necessary, other circumstances that may influence the development of daily life in the classroom. Teachers are not asked to record every activity that takes place but rather information that will allow a teacher to reflect on her practice.

• Lessons: organization and development, surprises or concerns.
• Reactions and opinions of children related to the activities and their own learning: Were they interested? Was everyone involved? What did they like or dislike? How did they feel during the activity? Was it difficult or easy for them?
• A general evaluation of the day’s work including a brief self-assessment: How would I rate this day? How did I do? Did I forget something? In what other way could I have intervened? What should I change?
• Circumstances that may have affected the development of the day or created a situation in which the children had to stop an activity, act quickly, report an incident.

A diagram describing the characteristics of the assessment process follows as a summary.
Assessment

- Confirm learning
- Identify influencing factors
- Improve educational action

- Learning
- Educational process of the group / classroom organization
- Teaching practice
- School organization

**What for?**

**What?**

- Observation
- Dialogue
- Interview

**How?**

**Who?**

- Teacher
- Children
- Parents
- Administration

**What instruments?**

- Child's personal file
- Teacher's journal

**When?**

- Initial
- On-going
- Final
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