



# **Foundation Curriculum**

**for**

# **Early Years Education**

**in**

# **Qatar**

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**Developed by Dr Anne Meade, Jan Ballantyne and Patricia Fenton**

# Foundation Curriculum for Early Years Education

## ***Introduction***

Many countries recognise the need to develop a different sort of curriculum from the traditional ones where children obediently work through textbooks, subject by subject.

It is no longer enough to ‘train’ our future workers to be obedient, punctual and loyal. They will also need to know how to be more self-reliant, critical, and creative in their thinking, and be willing to use their initiative. They will need to recognise their personal limitations and be willing to keep on learning (Riegle, 2005).

Several countries are preparing a curriculum for early childhood education. They are seldom based on core subjects, as the learning outcomes for children in kindergartens are different from schools—they emphasise personal qualities, such as initiative, more than they do about knowing facts. Early years curricula concentrate more on learning processes—learning how to learn—than on memorising items of information. The State of Qatar has prepared an early years curriculum too, called the *Early Years Education Foundation Curriculum*. Its learning areas, goals and learning outcomes are in line with international early childhood curricula; it too focuses mainly on educating a well-rounded child through enjoyable hands-on experiences and on helping young children learn how to learn.

The writers of the *Early Years Education Foundation Curriculum* are from Cognition Consulting Limited, New Zealand (a wholly owned subsidiary of the Multi Serve Education Trust) on contract to the Education Institute, Supreme Education Council of Qatar.

The *Foundation Curriculum* is created for young active learners and includes pedagogical guidance for their teachers. The curriculum conveys an image of the young children as active and competent learners and joyful with it. The pedagogical information in the Questions for Reflection show this image of the child—they include phrases about being creative, extending thinking, finding scientific answers, and fun and enjoyment.

The EYE curriculum covers a big agenda including the social and cultural domains, physical/motor development, and the academic domain in a developmentally-appropriate way. This breadth recognises the role of EYE in developing the whole child.

The *Foundation Curriculum* is future oriented, attending to the qualities and characteristics needed in young citizens in 2020 in the State of Qatar. The curriculum is aligned with the vision of *Education for a New Era*. This vision is for schools to educate students who will make a positive contribution to society—namely, be literate and numerate, be an effective communicators in Arabic and English, creative and critical thinkers, have the dispositions and strategies to explore and inquire, work well in teams and demonstrate pride in being Qatari. Therefore, the *Foundation Curriculum* favours knowledge-in-action well ahead of the transmission of facts. Most of the learning outcomes are expressed in terms of enjoyment, understanding concepts, exploring and discovering, growing awareness, increasing knowledge and skills, engaging with literacy, and so on. That is, it is about learning progressions, not memorising facts. It assumes that literate children will use ICT to find facts as and when they need them. Time in the vital early years is better spent in meaningful conversations, play and inquiry.

There are consequences for assessment that flow from this type of curriculum. It is not appropriate or possible to test for the majority of the learning outcomes in this curriculum—say—for listening attentively or showing curiosity. But they can be observed and recorded in the everyday life of an early years classroom or outdoor environment. Observation is also the appropriate assessment approach when a teacher wants to note how learning is broadening or deepening, or how understanding of, say, managing friendships is becoming more complex. Advice on assessment can be found in the *Good Practice Guide*.

The *Curriculum Standards* (other than for Arabic) are integrated into the *Foundation Curriculum*. Learning outcomes are often expressed in mastery terms so that a teacher can check their achievement; e.g., the child can “track the direction of print.” Even so, observation should be used, as it is the developmentally-appropriate way to assess a young child’s mastery of a standard.

## ***Learning areas***

There are four learning areas in the *EYE Foundation Curriculum*:

- Communication (encompassing Arabic and English)
- Exploration (encompassing Science and Mathematics)
- Creative expression
- Managing self, developing identity.

### **Learning Area – Communication**

#### **Background**

Communicating, from infancy onward, is one of the most pleasurable and rewarding experiences for children. Young children learn through daily interactions and experiences with other children, adults and the world. The more interactive conversations and play

young children are involved in, the more they learn. They are avid and able learners of language/s. Teachers reading books, playing word games, repeating rhymes, talking to children and providing opportunities for the language associated with art, drama, movement, rhythm, music, technology and mathematics in KGs increase children's vocabulary. Teachers fostering non-verbal communication in diverse situations round out children's communication skills.

To maintain Qatari culture, and to enhance cognitive development, it is essential that EYE teachers give priority to the children's first language, Arabic. A strong first language is also key to developing bilingualism—competency in a second language grows and develops when used with activities that are real and meaningful to children. Young children's motivation to communicate in either language depends a lot on their relationship with the speakers.

Communication skills are vital for children to be able to contribute their strengths and interests; explore, inquire and create; find out what they want to know; and take an increasing responsibility for their own learning and care.

### **Communication Goals**

*Children experience a learning environment where they:*

1. *gain confidence and competence in comprehension and the use of their first and second languages;*
2. *learn to use verbal interaction effectively for different purposes, such as to express feelings and ideas, inquire, gain information, achieve social purposes and solve problems;*
3. *learn to take turns, listen attentively and respond appropriately to other speakers;*
4. *increase their knowledge and skills in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar through natural conversations in Arabic and English;*
5. *engage with and enjoy reading and writing simple Arabic and English.*

### **Learning Area – Exploration**

#### **Background**

All aspects of the environment – the natural, social, physical and material worlds – are part of the context of learning. Enabling young children to explore, learn from and make sense of the world through interactions in all of these worlds will enable them to develop working theories, and test them out. For life-long learning, it is critical that children build conceptual understandings through play and inquiry, not just memorise and recite facts that are likely to be out-of-date by the time they leave school.

Learning through exploration assists children to ask questions, build on what they already know, experiment, manipulate, test their theories, develop self confidence and enjoy learning through play. Children learn scientific facts and concepts as they experiment

with new situations and relate the new information to ideas familiar to them. Children who are guided, encouraged and challenged by adults and other children will continue through their schooling being creative, inquisitive and original thinkers

### **Exploration Goals**

*Children experience indoors and outdoors learning environments where they:*

1. *are encouraged to show curiosity and ask questions, evaluate information, and seek understanding;*
2. *can initiate and undertake inquiry projects, experiment and persevere to find solutions;*
3. *have opportunities to manipulate, group and re-group, observe and describe, identify differences and similarities in people and objects, and compare quantities re length, mass, capacity in the material world;*
4. *develop concepts and are encouraged to theorise about objects, living things, and the environment. They also learn to communicate their ideas and theories with confidence and growing competence.*

### **Learning Area – Creative Expression**

#### **Background**

Hands-on experiences—using the senses, the mind, the body, and enjoyment—is a defining feature of high-quality early years teaching and learning. The obvious benefits of creative expression are the opportunities it provides for raising awareness of and nourishing Qatari culture. Other obvious benefits are improved symbolic, innovative and creative thinking. There are many less obvious, yet important benefits, such as improved spatial awareness when children listen to music, sing and move to rhythm regularly, enhanced attitudes to academic learning, and better scores in reading and writing and mathematics later in school when the creative arts (music, movement, drama, painting) have been connected to learning areas. Why? It entails trial and error inquiry and different thinking pathways as children use their imaginations, rather than following adult instructions.

Children experience the potential of communicating with the whole body through movement and pretend play; and their motor skills improve. They enhance their skills in communicating and cooperating with others through art, music and drama. Creative arts provide joyful experiences that cultivate positive attitudes toward others.

#### **Creative Expression Goals**

*Children experience indoors and outdoors learning environments where they:*

1. *discover different forms of creative expression (drama, movement, music, the visual arts, creative play);*

2. *explore using different forms of creative expression and learn to respond positively to diverse creative opportunities;*
3. *increase their creative skills and ability in expressing themselves through visual art, music, movement and dance, and/or dramatic performances; and show appreciation for the creative work of others.*

## **Learning Area – Managing Self, Developing Identity**

### **Background**

Nourishing Qatari culture and Arabic language helps young children feel a sense of belonging as they start school. Children learn best where programmes recognise and build on their special strengths and interests, and children feel confident that their contributions will be valued. Feedback is particularly important for children with individual needs. Children who are allowed time to explore new concepts that excite them and to share their findings with others will concentrate for longer periods of time, take pride in sharing their ideas and develop increasing ability. Children's personal, social, physical and emotional well-being are strengthened by adults who support and encourage them. They will demonstrate a positive attitudes towards learning and thinking that last through childhood when EYE teachers create learning environments that are loving and enjoyable, yet challenging.

### **Managing Self, Developing Identity Goals**

*Children experience learning environments where they:*

1. *develop an appreciation of their Qatari identity and awareness of belonging to different social groups (family, kindergarten, community, religious);*
2. *are encouraged to make friends, build and practice respectful relationships, and resolve conflict peacefully;*
3. *are introduced to and accept rules and procedures necessary for the group to function successfully;*
4. *develop self-esteem along with an increasing ability to make their own choices, ask for support when they need it, express feelings, and adapt to changes;*
5. *enjoy being physically active every day, and develop an increasing knowledge of healthy bodies, and how to stay safe.*

Specific goals and learning outcomes for each of the *Foundation Curriculum* Learning Areas are detailed below. The questions for reflection contain guidance for teachers' practice within them; e.g., more one-to-one interactions and fostering imaginative play.

## **Communication**

### **Communication Goal 1**

*Children experience a learning environment where they gain confidence and competence in the comprehension and use of their first and second languages.*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- an understanding that the Arabic language is valued;
- confidence and competence in Arabic as their first language (see the *Curriculum Standards for Arabic*, until they are integrated into this *Foundation Curriculum*);
- positive attitudes about listening to and using spoken English;
- familiarity with some simple stories from and literature about Qatar and be able to re-tell them, as well as retell some stories in English.
- enjoyment from returning to favourite books and be able to answer questions about the text;
- the ability to use rhymes, songs and short spoken monologues in English and in Arabic.

#### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

In what ways does the programme provide opportunities for one-to-one language interaction, especially between adult and child?

What opportunities are there for children to participate in listening to stories, poems, chants and songs? How well do these connect with Qatar culture?

What strategies do adults use to extend conversations with children, and how effective are these strategies in extending their thinking?

### **Communication Goal 2**

*Children experience an environment where they have opportunities to talk effectively for different purposes, such as to express ideas, inquire, gain information, achieve social purposes and solve problems.*

## **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- an understanding that verbal communication provides information, expresses a range of feelings such as amusement, anger, sadness and happiness and can be used to effectively communicate ideas and information and solve problems;
- an increasing ability to express meaning through volume and tone of voice supported by gesture;
- different ways of expressing and communicating imaginative ideas in Arabic;
- an understanding that there is range of media available for different communication purposes, and an ability to select the media suitable for their tasks.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are adults using a wide range of verbal and non verbal communication strategies when speaking and reading to children?

What written and digital resources have been made available that will excite children's interest in the topic/theme they are working on?

How are adults encouraging children to express their own ideas?

### **Communication Goal 3**

*Children experience an environment where they have the opportunity to take turns to listen attentively and respond appropriately to other speakers.*

## **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- sharing skills such as turn-taking and offering thoughts;
- an ability to express their feelings and emotions in a range of verbal and non verbal ways;
- the confidence and ability to respond appropriately to adults and children they know well and a growing ability to respond appropriately to others they do not know so well;
- skills in listening to others, including in reflective discussion with others;

- confidence and competence in asking questions of their peers and adults, processing information and communicating ideas to others;
- the ability to follow teachers single-step instructions and imperatives.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are adults positively encouraging children who take turns, rather than focusing negatively on children who are still learning these skills?

Are adults noticing children's non verbal communications and responding appropriately?

Are children supported by their peers and the adults around them to talk when meeting new people?

### **Goal 4**

*Children experience an environment where they increase their knowledge and skills in using pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar through natural conversation in Arabic and English.*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- a vocabulary of at least 70 active words in both Arabic and English, correctly pronounced;
- language skills for increasingly complex purposes, expressing feelings and attitudes in natural exchanges: asking others about feelings and attitudes; negotiating, predicting, planning, reasoning, guessing, story-telling;
- increasing knowledge and skills, in the use of language rules in Arabic and English and how these change the meanings of some words and sentences.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are adults modeling the correct use of vocabulary, tone, pronunciation and grammar?

Are adults providing a range of material (books, displays, posters, song charts etc.) to facilitate increasingly complex language, first in Arabic and then in English?

Are children provided with opportunities to practice basic handwriting skills in Arabic and then in English without pressure to be perfect before they are developmentally ready?

## **Communication Goal 5**

*Children experience an environment where they engage with and enjoy reading and writing simple Arabic and English.*

### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- knowledge of letter/character names and the alphabet in Arabic and English;
- basic reading skills in relation to distinguishing print from pictures, and tracking text from right to left in Arabic and left to right in English identifying spaces between words, and understanding basic book concepts;
- the ability to read simple Arabic and English, for example, their own names and the names of those they love most, 25 key words, captions for pictures, and simple sentences in a variety of contexts and for a range of purposes;
- skills in choosing some words for their own creative stories;
- skills in reading and writing numerals up to 10;
- knowledge about words to do with time, and using words such as today, tomorrow, the days of the week;
- enjoyment in their developing writing skills in Arabic and English, e.g., writing their own name and captions for their work, and showing skill in basic handwriting patterning;
- knowledge about how numbers are used by exploring the use of numbers in activities that have meaning and purpose for children;
- experience with using other symbols; such as logos and music.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are adults encouraging children's efforts to produce writing with more emphasis on effort rather than accuracy?

In what ways have children been helped to integrate reading and writing into their play?

## ***Exploration***

### **Exploration Goal 1**

*Children experience indoors and outdoors environments where they are encouraged to show curiosity and ask questions, evaluate information, and seek understanding.*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- concepts;
- positive attitudes to observing and experimenting to find out about living things and their environment;
- the attitude that they are prepared to “have a go”, make a mistake and try again;
- the attitude that finding out is part of the process of learning and being motivated to learn is important;
- the ability to ask questions of peers and adults about objects, living things and the environment;
- the ability to process the information they receive and communicate it to others;
- evaluative thinking skills, e.g., in relation to their inquiry projects.

#### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

How has the environment been set out to provide resources that are accessible and inviting to children?

How often do adults encourage children to ask questions and predict outcomes?

Do adults positively support children “having a go” at tasks or making a guess at what will happen?

## Exploration Goal 2

*Children experience indoors and outdoors environments where they are encouraged to initiate and undertake inquiry projects, experiment and persevere to find solutions.*

### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- a range of ways to solve simple practical problems involving numbers, shapes or objects;
- knowledge from making things with common materials (e.g. empty packets), and making structures during their play with sand, clay, and blocks;
- explore changing materials by mixing, dissolving, heating, cooking;
- knowledge about the properties of materials and objects through play using their senses;
- skill in using technology to enhance their learning through the senses;
- the ability to recall prior knowledge and relate it to new information to assist them to discover solutions to problems;
- confidence in using different strategies and resources to discover things about the living and material worlds around them, choosing what resources they need to proceed with a task, extending their experience in looking for patterns, making comparisons, observing and participating in reflective discussions;
- motivation to sustain work on tasks or projects for a relatively long period of time;
- competence in explaining how they solved a problem (mathematic, scientific and/or social) and the reasons for their chosen methods;
- the ability to communicate about their projects and their discoveries to others using a range of media.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are children provided with an environment rich with resources for them to explore patterning, same and different?

Are children guided to use a range of different formats for sharing their projects—wall display, sculpture, photographic images, charts, graphs and diagrams?

Can children begin a project and work on it over a sustained period, e.g., is it kept safely over several days so the children can go back to add to the work?

### **Exploration Goal 3**

*Children experience indoors and outdoors environments where they have opportunities to manipulate; group and re-group; observe and describe; identify differences and similarities in people and objects; and compare quantities re length, mass, capacity in the material world.*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- practical mathematical language, such as words related to numbers, length, weight, volume, shape and pattern;
- an understanding of order and use whole numbers up to 20, in real or play situations;
- the ability to count to 50;
- understandings about 2 and 3 dimensional objects, i.e., flat and solid;
- the ability to recognise and name types of lines and shapes, and use them to make models, pictures, patterns;
- observational skills to compare, classify, and group objects according to common characteristics;
- skill in comparing length, weight or capacity of objects;
- skill in understanding about speed and direction;
- the ability to recognise and use relevant mathematical symbols;
- working theories of the natural world around them through play, exploration and asking questions;
- intuitive concepts of weight, volume and density of materials;
- a knowledge of significant features of the land they know such as the desert and the sea.

#### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Were a wide range of resources set out in a number of different areas so that the children can readily access materials that support their learning?

Have adults encouraged children to test their ideas for themselves, rather than adults answering the children's questions straight away?

Were children given opportunities to explore the world around them by having access to books, taking excursions, viewing videos, accessing the internet?

## Exploration Goal 4

*Children experience indoors and outdoors environments where they are develop concepts, and are encouraged to theorise, about objects, living things, and the environment. They also learn to communicate their ideas and theories with confidence and growing competence.*

### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- a range of thinking/cognitive processes, including intuitive ideas;
- a range of ways to work out how their theories can be tested to establish a likely answer;
- competence and comprehension from repeating tasks, trying new things, finding different answers and confirming their beliefs;
- confidence as they practice new inquiry skills and achieve positive outcomes;
- increasing skills in using a wide range of tools and media, including ICT, for exploration, and for presenting their theories and findings from their inquiries.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are adults encouraging children to test their theories by providing support and relevant conversation alongside the resources?

Have children been provided with access to a wide range of tools and media, including ICT, for presenting their findings?

Are children being encouraged to discuss their findings with each other and take time to develop them further?

## Exploration Goal 5

*Children are given indoors and outdoors experiences where they develop a sense of responsibility for helping to care for the environment in Qatar.*

### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- observation skills about the living world, and how growth and change occur over time;
- knowledge about common plants, birds and animals found in Qatar and how to recognise their forms, shapes and sizes;
- a growing understanding that children share in the responsibilities to care for the environment (in developmentally-appropriate ways);
- increasing delight in seeing the world around them as a place where they can take pleasure and enjoyment by observing it and from participating in it.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

How do adults provide opportunities for children to learn about caring for the environment in a meaningful way?

Are children encouraged to put things they use away and to clean up the area they have been working in before moving on to other spaces or tasks?

## ***Creative expression***

### **Creative Expression Goal 1**

*Children experience an environment where they discover different forms of creative expression (drama, movement, music, art, creative play).*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- an increasing familiarity with examples of the visual art, craft, songs, music and stories which are valued in Qatar culture;
- knowledge of the many ways they can be creative in art, music and movement;
- competence in sustaining creative play with others;
- an understanding of the difference between make believe and real life;
- an appreciation of different forms of expression and the skills used in performance;

#### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are children being exposed to opportunities in both languages where they can listen to and practice songs, rhymes, and simple stories with pictures that support the text?

Are adults having meaningful discussion with children about the concepts of make believe versus real life?

Are children being provided with opportunities to watch and listen to a wide range of different types of performances, especially those related to Qatari culture?

### **Creative Expression Goal 2**

*Children experience an environment where they can explore different forms of creative expression and learn to respond positively to diverse creative opportunities.*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- increased enjoyment from participating in creative thinking through drama, music, the visual arts, and creative play;
- appreciation of different forms of expression;
- confidence as they become more skilled when participating in new forms of creative expression;
- appreciation of others' skills and how working creatively together in a group can be fun and rewarding;
- increasing skills in planning and discussing with other children and adults how a performance or display will be presented to others.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are children encouraged and supported to have fun and enjoyment while trying out new movement and language use to demonstrate the concepts they wish to convey to an audience?

Do adults set up the environment in ways that excite children's imagination and expression about the world around them?

Are there examples of Qatari visual arts displayed in the classroom?

### **Creative Expression Goal 3**

*Children experience an environment where they increase their creative skills and ability in expressing themselves through art, music, movement and dramatic performances.*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- communication skills in planning and discussion with peers and adults to decide how a performance or display will be presented to others;
- enjoyment in working creatively in a group and helping others to develop creative expression skills;
- increasing performance skills in drama, song and music, and growing confidence when presenting to others;
- knowledge about professional artists in their local environment and the wider world around them

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Have adults planned for children to perform for themselves, other classes and grades in the school, parents and wider audiences?

Were children involved in planning and developing performances about the topic or theme being studied and or encouraged to develop impromptu performances?

Are local professional artists being brought into the classroom to demonstrate and talk about their art with children?

## ***Managing self, developing identity***<sup>1</sup>

### **Managing Self, Developing Identity Goal 1**

*Children experience indoors and outdoors learning environments where they develop an appreciation of their Qatari identity and awareness of belonging to different groups (family, culture, kindergarten, community, religion)..*

#### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- pride in being Qatari;
- an increasing understanding of Islamic values and knowledge;
- skill in connecting home and school;
- an awareness of the different groups that they are connected to and that exist within the wider community in Qatar;
- an ability to verbalise their understandings about the roles of individuals within the groups they belong to and to illustrate this by using various media and resources;
- a sense of belonging within their EYE setting;
- knowledge about how they connect to and interact with other groups they are involved with.

#### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are children given opportunities to talk about or draw on their experiences in their family or other groups they belong to?

Are communications between the classroom and family established and ongoing so that children recognise this connection as important and positive?

### **Managing Self, Developing Identity Goal 2**

*Children experience an indoors and outdoors environment where they are encouraged to make friends, build and practice respectful relationships, and resolve conflict peacefully.*

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<sup>1</sup> It is anticipated that the learning outcomes for this learning area will change when the Curriculum Standards for Social Studies have been developed.

## **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- confidence in making new friends and relating to children they already know;
- an understanding about friendship and that they can also have interests in common with some children that they may not be friends with;
- an awareness of and consideration for others' feelings, needs and aspirations;
- an ability to ask for what they want in appropriate ways, and knowledge that sometimes they need to wait their turn;
- an increasing ability to play cooperatively indoors and outdoors with others and take into account others' opinions before taking action;
- an increasing ability to problem solve when conflict occurs between children;
- an awareness that others may need more support to achieve success and that they could provide that support without adult direction;
- an appreciation of children in their kindergarten and the wider community for their individual strengths.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are adults providing positive role models of respectful relationships?

Are children encouraged through discussion and story telling to naturally include and support children with individual needs so that they have equal opportunities to achieve success?

Are opportunities provided to help children understand that everyone is a competent learner?

Have adults learned about and agreed on positive behaviour management strategies to be consistently used with children?

### **Managing Self, Developing Identity Goal 3**

*Children experience an environment where they are introduced to and accept rules and procedures necessary for the group to function successfully*

**Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1:  
Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- knowledge about acceptable behaviour in different environments and increasing ability to behave appropriately within them;
- values to do with respect, consideration, and support for others;
- an understanding that their actions impact on others around them;
- a sense of the appropriate time for speaking up in class and increasing enthusiasm for participating in discussion in groups;
- an understanding and acceptance of basic class/school rules and procedures related to rights and fairness;
- an increasing awareness that rules and procedures help to frame the way a society works and that rules and procedures are necessary for groups to function positively.

**Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Do adults involve children in making decisions about rules that help their group to function well?

Are children encouraged to learn through play about teamwork and cooperation?

Are there rules that respect children's projects so they can continue them over time?

**Managing Self, Developing Identity Goal 4**

*Children experience environments where they develop self-esteem along with an increasing ability to make their own choices, ask for support when they need it, express feelings and adapt to changes.*

**Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1:  
Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- pride from being competent and confident learners;
- increasing pleasure in their ability to make choices and communicate them;
- an understanding that the environment and people around them will continue to change and offer new challenges;

- skills in communicating to others about how they feel in new situations and asking for support when they need it.
- confidence in making decisions and carrying out innovations secure in the knowledge that they will be encouraged and supported;
- the capacity to work on projects over several days, building on the ideas and planning.

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are children rewarded for their effort, rather than for the result?

How are children involved in discussions when rules for behaviour are established?

Do adults ensure that all children have opportunities to speak up? Are they listened to?

## **Managing Self, Developing Identity Goal 5**

*Children enjoy being physically active every day, and develop an increasing knowledge of healthy bodies, and how to stay safe.*

### **Learning outcomes for children by the time they move from KG2 to Grade 1: Knowledge, skills and attitudes**

Children develop:

- a love of regular physical activity;
- skill with, for example, ball games, riding trikes/scooters, running and skipping games;
- a growing understanding of the parts of their body and how the body functions;
- confidence in caring for themselves when going to the toilet, washing hands, eating food and resting;
- knowledge about when they should say “no” and confidence to stay out of situations where they might feel unsafe;

### **Questions for reflection**

Examples:

Are children given extended time outdoors learning environment or in the hall to enjoy being physically active and to improve their motor skills?

# APPENDICES: CURRICULUM IN ACTION

## **Appendix 1: SAMPLE UNIT PLAN for 3 YEAR OLDS**

**Unit title: All that I can do**

**Classes:**

**Theme: Ourselves**

**Teachers:**

**Learning Areas:** Managing Self, Developing Identity; Exploration; Creative Expression

**Dates:** From/to (approximately 6 weeks)

**Age range:** 3- 4 years

### **Key Understanding:**

I can do many things that help me learn and have fun.

### **Learning Objectives:**

The children will understand that they can:

- accomplish many things independently
- do other things with the help of an adult
- make decisions and choices
- gain pleasure and enjoyment from the things they can do.

The children will develop the **concepts** of independence, causation, reflection, capabilities, connections.

The children will become more skilled in:

- using oral language to talk about the things they can do
- asking questions, requesting resources
- communicating ideas through creative art, drama and music activities
- participating creatively in imaginative play
- choosing activities and resources that they enjoy
- sustaining their involvement in chosen activities.

### **Resources:**

Imaginative play area with changing themes and resources e.g. a supermarket, a hospital, an airport

Art and craft materials – easels, paper, paints, crayons, marker pens, clay, plasticine

Construction materials – blocks, Lego, plastic containers

Water – Assorted plastic containers

Sand – buckets, spades, diggers, metal toy vehicles

Play-dough

Outdoor play equipment  
Wide selection of children's picture books  
The community around the school  
Digital camera, video recorder  
Collection of stand-up people models (adults and children)  
Design and Technology – glue, scissors, staplers, tape, string, wood, woodwork tools  
Computer.

### **Structuring the Inquiry**

*(The inquiry will extend in different directions, according to the questions and interests of the children. The main focus of the unit is to ensure that children gain confidence and pleasure from their experiences.)*

#### **Focusing questions -**

*What can we do with our hands?*

Model some things that you can do with your hands (make shadows, clap, hold a paintbrush ...). Ask the children to show what they can do with their hands. Make notes about children's responses. Invite children to reach out their hands and take a pencil. What else can we do with our hands?

*What can we feel with our hands?*

Give the children soft toys or a small pet (bird, rabbit) to hold. How does it feel? Encourage children to use adjectives such as soft, warm, tiny, to describe what they are holding

*What can we do with our legs?*

Play lively music and invite children to dance

*What can we do with our eyes?*

Show examples of art work that includes bright colours and bold images.

*What can we do with our whole bodies?*

The teacher introduces an action song such as "Head, shoulders, knees and toes" and invites the children to participate.

*What do you like to do?*

The teacher asks the children to think about what they enjoy doing, then engages groups of children in self-selected activities. She takes photos. In a day or two, the teacher makes a class book or wall display with the photographs of what the class likes to do.

The teachers continue to encourage children to repeat, "I like to..." (expressing themselves in more than one language.)

*What new things would you like to do at kindergarten?*

The teacher invites children to make suggestions for the future of things they could do or resources they would like to have. The teacher manages the expectations to identify things that are feasible. She follows up on some of the children's suggestions

*What can we do with this?*

The teacher provides junk materials – cardboard boxes, plastic containers, packaging materials, string, etc and invites the children to create their own constructions.

The teacher provides visual art materials and encourages children to express their ideas.

*How can we solve the problem?*

Present real-life challenges and invite children to help to find solutions; e.g., the block box is too heavy to move around. The children may decide to transfer all the blocks into an trolley or cart.

*How can we make this good to eat?*

Provide many different opportunities for children to prepare food: cutting up fruit for fruit salad, making sandwiches, making unbaked sweets (combine cookie crumbs, raisins and melted butter or rice breakfast cereal with melted chocolate).

## **Assessment**

*(A good assessment task is also a good learning experience.)*

*Examples of baseline assessment*

At the beginning of the unit, the teacher observes children and makes notes of the way they play and interact, their physical capabilities and their attitude to the new learning environment. Take photographs to show what children are able to do. The teacher adds photographs with written comments about them in children's portfolios.

The teacher asks children to draw pictures of themselves, showing something that they like to do. The date is recorded and pictures are added to individual portfolios, with written comments, e.g., Ali said: "I like to play football. That is my best thing."

The teacher comments on the child's current achievement and identifies new challenges.

*Examples of formative assessment*

As children play and interact, the teacher talks with them about their play, prompting them to go further. She notes their responses on paper, and files with each child's records to add to the next report to parents.

The teacher encourages children to set new challenges for themselves and attempt new activities. She writes a sentence about several individuals' responses for their records.

Photographs of children's art work and construction as well as videos (CDs) showing their physical achievements or a transcript of their oral language can be included in their

portfolios. This cumulative record shows growth over time and reveals children's individual "learning stories."

*Examples of summative assessment:*

The children draw pictures of themselves doing something new. These pictures are added to portfolios, including date and written comment; e.g., Ali said: "I can kick a goal now." The teacher gives children feedback on their new achievements.

**Reflection/ evaluation of the unit**

Did the children enjoy the unit?

Did they learn the concepts that were in the plan?

Did they show the identified skills?

How adequate were the resources?

What was successful about the unit? Why?

What was not successful? Why?

What changes will you make to improve the unit in the future?

## **Appendix 2: SAMPLE UNIT PLAN for 4 YEAR OLDS**

**Unit title: Our Kindergarten**

**Classes:**

**Theme: Our Communities**

**Teachers:**

**Learning Areas:** (Main focus) Communication, Socialization, Self-awareness

**Dates:** From/to (approximately 6 weeks)

**Age range:** 4-5 years

### **Key Understanding:**

People do many jobs to make our kindergarten a place where we can live, learn and play together.

### **Learning Objectives:**

The children will understand that:

- the KG community is a group of people who share a place
- members of the KG community (children, parents, teachers, administrators) perform different roles
- children have rights and responsibilities as members of the KG community
- the KG cannot function well unless everyone carries out their job.

The children will develop the **concepts** of community, rights, responsibilities, inter-dependence.

The children will be able to:

- use oral language to describe the roles of different members of the school community
- ask questions, listen and respond to gain information
- communicate ideas using art and drama
- participate positively in imaginative play.

### **Resources:**

An office/school reception/miniature classroom in the imaginative play area

Teachers' equipment for children to play with - whiteboard, marker pens, roll book, record book

Office equipment – desk, phone, computer, pens, paper

Children's books about schools and kindergartens

The kindergarten and its community

Digital camera

Video recorder

Audio recorder

Collection of stand-up people models (adults and children)

Website: <http://yahooligans.yahoo.com> (Child-safe search engine with links to many topics)

## **Structuring the Inquiry**

*(The inquiry will extend in different directions, according to the questions and interests of the children.)*

### **Focusing questions –**

#### **What groups do we belong to?**

At the beginning of the unit, the teacher introduces the idea of *community* to the whole class by telling the children about the different groups she belongs to and identifies with, e.g.: extended family, fitness club. The teacher asks the children to think about the groups they belong to. If necessary, she prompts them to think about the kindergarten as a group that they belong to.

The teacher asks the children what they can say about their kindergarten: Who comes to the kindergarten? Why do they come? What does it mean to belong? What would happen if there was no kindergarten? (See Baseline Assessment)

#### **What makes our kindergarten a *community*?**

#### **What jobs do people do in our KG community?**

#### **What do you want to know about the people who work in our KG?**

Take the children on a tour. Allow time for them to observe the work that different people are doing. Take photographs whenever possible. When the children return to the classroom, ask them to decide whose work they would like to know more about. Help them to develop questions to gain more information. A group of children may decide to interview the principal. Each child could prepare a question; e.g., “What do you like best about your job?” “What do you do when children do something bad at school?” “What do you do when you go home?” With the teacher’s help, children write to the principal, requesting an interview time. During the interview, if possible, take an audiotape of the interview so children can revisit the event and analyze the responses to their questions.

Draw or paint pictures to show the different jobs that people do in the kindergarten.

#### **What would happen if people didn’t do their jobs?**

Leave the children alone for a short time. Watch from a safe distance. Ask the children what they thought when they couldn’t find the teacher. Take photographs of the cafeteria after the children have eaten their lunch but before it has been cleaned.

Ask what would happen if the bus driver didn’t drive his bus.

Through discussions, lead the children to the understanding that everyone must fulfill their role so that the kindergarten can function successfully.

Make a class book – “*Everyone has a job to do*”.

Children draw pictures and the teacher writes the script in large print – one day in Arabic, another day in English.

**What is it like to be a teacher? (principal, guard, Grade 1 student, secretary)**

Invite the children to join in imaginative play about the KG and the people who work in it. Provide desks, books, pens, paper, computer, telephone and other similar resources. Engage the children in conversations and extend their understanding by asking questions about the roles they are taking.

**What can we do to make our KG better?**

The children make decisions about ways in which they agree to contribute to the KG community. They draw pictures and the teacher writes the text, then each child signs his/her contract. (See Formative Assessment)

**How do people work together to make KG a place where children learn?**

The children draw pictures of members of the school community and describe their role. They explain what might happen to the kindergarten if this person did not do his/her job. For example: We would have no lunch if the cafeteria staff did not do their job. We would have no money to pay for books and things for our classroom if the accountant did not do his/her job. (See Formative Assessment)

**Assessment**

*(A good assessment task is also a good learning experience.)*

*Examples of baseline assessment*

The teacher asks the children what groups they belong to. (The children may or may not mention the kindergarten. Accept and record whatever responses the children give. There are no right and wrong answers.

Ask children what they can tell about their kindergarten. Who comes to the kindergarten? Why do they come? What does it mean to belong? What would happen if there was no kindergarten? The teacher makes anecdotal records of the children's responses. (These provide insight into children's level of understanding.)

*Examples of formative assessment:*

The children are invited to play "kindergarten" taking the roles of various members of the kindergarten community. The teacher engages them in conversation about their roles, asking them what it is like to be the principal, the guard or a teacher. The teacher takes note of the children's perceptions and interactions.

The children make decisions about ways in which they agree to contribute to their KG community. They draw pictures and the teacher writes the text, then each child signs his/her contract. For example: I agree to put my rubbish in the bin at lunchtime. I will never drop rubbish on the floor. Signed: \_\_\_\_\_"

*Examples of summative assessment:*

The children draw pictures of members of the school community and describe their role. They explain what might happen to the KG if this person did not do his/her job. For

example: We would have no lunch if the cafeteria staff did not do their job. We would have no money to pay for books and things for our classroom if the accountant did not do his/her job. The teacher assesses children's understanding of the concepts of "responsibility" and "inter-dependence." (Children need to understand the *ideas* or *concepts*, not the words.)

### **Reflection/ evaluation of the unit**

Did the children enjoy the unit?

Did they learn the concepts that were in the plan?

Did they show identified skills?

How adequate were the resources?

What was successful about the unit? Why?

What was not successful? Why?

What changes will you make to improve the unit in the future?

### **Appendix 3: SAMPLE UNIT PLAN for 5 YEAR OLDS**

**Unit title:** Feathers, Fur and Scales

**Classes:**

**Theme:** Our Living World

**Teachers:**

**Learning Areas:** (Main focus) Exploration, Communication, Creative expression

**Dates:** From/to (approximately 6 weeks)

**Age range:** 5-6 years

**Key Understanding:**

Animals of different kinds have different needs to stay alive and healthy.

**Learning Objectives:**

The children will understand that:

- animals can be grouped in different ways according to similarities
- different types of animals need different conditions need to stay alive and healthy
- humans have a responsibility to provide for the needs of farm animals
- humans have a responsibility to take care of natural habitats of wild animals.

The children will develop the **concepts** of needs, responsibility, habitats, similarities, differences, classification.

The children will be able to:

- communicate their growing understanding using oral language
- communicate ideas and images using pictures and diagrams
- gain information from observations, discussions, books, DVDs and the Internet
- create models of animal homes using creative skills (designing, painting, sculpting) and technical skills (cutting, constructing, gluing, modeling).

**Resources**

Variety of posters, charts and pictures showing animals and their habitats

A vet's clinic or zoo in the imaginative play area

A wide selection of children's books about different kinds of animals, and DVDs

Visit to a farm or zoo, and/ or classroom pet (bird, goldfish or small animal)

Collection of stand-up plastic animals

Animal puppets

Animal picture cards

Rhymes and songs – Five Little Ducks, Old McDonald had a Farm, Ten Little Monkeys

Children's own toy animals and pets

People who work with animals – vet, farmer, zoo keeper

Website: <http://yahooligans.yahoo.com> (Child-safe search engine with links to topics)

Website: <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com>

## **Structuring the Inquiry:**

*(The inquiry will extend in different directions, according to the questions and interests of the children.)*

### **Focusing questions –**

#### **What animal names do you know?**

Children brainstorm all the animals they can think of and the teacher records the names on large charts.

#### **What would you like to know about animals?**

The teacher provides a wide range of resources to stimulate children's interest and prompt enquiries. The teacher reads selected books to the class and discusses different types of animals. The class visits a farm or zoo.

Children have many opportunities to familiarise themselves with the unit, selecting books, playing games with toy animals and formulating their own enquiries, for example: "Where do tigers live?" "What happens when animals get sick?" "I wonder why fish make bubbles" The teacher writes the children's enquiries on large sheets of chart paper and displays them.

With the teacher's guidance, children begin to seek answers and gain information from books, DVDs and websites.

#### **How are animals the same? How are they different?**

Children group and re-group animals to show ways in which they are alike, for example, they belong together because they are all big, they all live on farms, they are all soft.

The teacher prompts the children to think about ways in which animals are different. The children begin to discuss differences – different sizes, different ways of moving, different baby stages, different external coverings. The teacher introduces the terms: feathers, fur, and scales.

#### **Which baby animals hatch from eggs? Which baby animals drink their mother's milk? Which animals live in water?**

Children gain information from first-hand observation (zoo or farm visit, classroom pets, own pets) and from books and the Internet. The teacher guides their discussion and children begin to build up charts to show what they are learning. (See Formative Assessment.) The teacher may introduce the terms "mammals" and "laying eggs."

#### **What does your pet/your friends pet/our class pet need to stay alive and healthy?**

Children make Pet Care Booklets, drawing pictures to show, page-by-page, everything a pet needs. Children dictate the text to the teacher, e.g.

My bird needs a bird cage

My bird needs a perch to sit on and sleep on  
My bird needs seed to eat  
My bird needs me to clean his cage

**What is it like to be a bear? (a camel, a mouse, a rabbit ...)**

Children participate in role play and imaginative play about animals, imitating movements, eating and sleeping habits and thinking about what it would be like to be the chosen animal.

**What animals live around here? Why don't polar bears live in the desert? How can camels live in the desert? How can we find out about animals?**

Invite farmers, vets, camel-herders and environmentalists to talk to the children about animals that live in the local region. Discuss ways that human beings are responsible for taking care of their habitats. (Explain the meaning of "habitat.") Invite parents to bring pets to school for a set period. (Maximum of one hour. Avoid causing excess stress to the pet.) Ask pet owners – children and parents to tell how they care for their pets.

The teacher reads one reference book and one fictional book about animals then asks the children what they notice about the two books. Guide children to the understanding that the reference book provides information about real animals and the fiction book tells a story about imaginary animals.

**What animal stories can we tell? What pictures can we paint? What colours will we need?**

Invite children to tell their stories – real and imaginary. Provide art materials for children to mix colours and create textures that they see in animals.

**What animal games can we play?**

Provide resources (different types of toy animals, large cardboard boxes, building blocks, feeding bowls, marker pens for making signs) and involve children in creating a zoo, a farm or a vet clinic inside or outside the classroom.

Provide extended play periods when children are able to develop their own stories and ideas. Listen to children's conversation, ask questions and make suggestions to extend their thinking, e.g.,: "I see you put the lions next to the tiger, why did you put them side-by-side? Do you think there are other animals that could go over there? Shall we make a sign for these animals?"

**Assessment**

*Examples of baseline assessment:*

At the beginning of the unit, ask the children to name all the animals they can think of. Record all the names the children suggest, on large chart paper. Display the charts. Ask the children who has a pet at home. (Record this information so that parents can be asked to bring pets to school)

Make a graph to show the number of pets of each type (birds, fish etc) owned by members of the class. Ask children what kind of pet is the most popular. Make anecdotal records of children's responses to show levels of interest and existing understanding.

Ask the children what they want to know about animals. Record their initial inquiries.

*Examples of formative assessment*

Provide pictures of birds, reptiles and mammals. Encourage the children to look carefully at the cards. Ask which ones they think belong together. There are no right and wrong answers – they may group them in many different ways. Observe and record responses.

Throughout the unit, observe and record children's enquiries. What questions do they ask? What are their comments and "wonderings." E.g. "I wonder how snakes can move without legs?" "I think that chickens lay eggs." "How do fish breathe?" (Teachers will need to conduct their own research in order to answer children's questions accurately.)

Ask the children to draw pictures and gradually build up comparison charts:

Looks like	Lives in	Eats	Moves	Covered with	Babies

*Examples of summative assessment:*

Ask the children to create an animal home for a chosen animal. (Use empty cardboard boxes, stones, sand, twigs, leaves and other natural materials. Make animals from plasticine or use plastic models.

Describe the animal – what is it covered with (feathers, fur or scales) where does it live?

How big is it? (in real life) What colour is it?

Show what the animal needs to survive and stay healthy

Explain to the class what is in the model animal home and how it provides for the animals needs.

**Reflection/ Evaluation of the unit**

Did the children enjoy the unit?

Did they gain the desired understandings?

Did they show identified skills?

How adequate were the resources?

What was successful about the unit? Why?

What was not successful? Why?

What changes will you make to improve the unit in the future?