

# Planning Effective Learning Activities

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## Planning Overview

- “It is the teacher’s classroom plans and organization, sensitivity and responsiveness to all the children, and moment-to-moment interactions with them that have the greatest impact on children’s development and learning” (National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009, p. 8)
- Successful learning activities result from careful, thoughtful and creative planning

## Planning Overview

- Different schools, head teachers, and teachers have different ways for planning effective learning activities
- As a new teacher, try out different approaches to planning to identify the one that works most effectively for you

### Activity Plan

Name of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Activity: \_\_\_\_\_  
Average Age of Pupils: \_\_\_\_\_  
Size of Group: A) Large B) Small C) Pairs D) Individual E) Learning Centre

**Learning Objectives**

**Brief Description of Activity**

**Procedure**

**Materials**

**Rules**

**Reflection**

## Learning Objectives

- “Unsuccessful lessons are often the result of teachers not being clear about their objectives” (Eggen & Kauchak, 2016, p. 522).
- **Step 1 in planning a successful learning activity is always:** Set the learning objective(s)
- Some learning activities meet only one learning objective; other learning activities meet multiple learning objectives

## Learning Objectives

- Children learn and develop through repetition and practice
  - Learning objectives for young children do NOT have to be behavioral
  - Learning objectives for young children NOT have to focus on mastery within the lesson
- Two types of learning objectives in ECE
  - **Development learning objectives:** Describe general skills that children will practice during the learning activity
  - **Specific skill learning objectives:** Describe specific concepts/skills that children will have learned by the end of the learning activity

## Development Learning Objectives

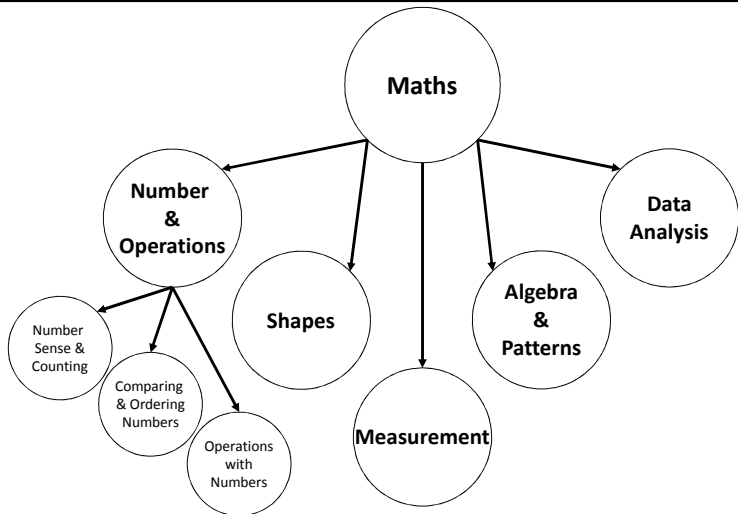
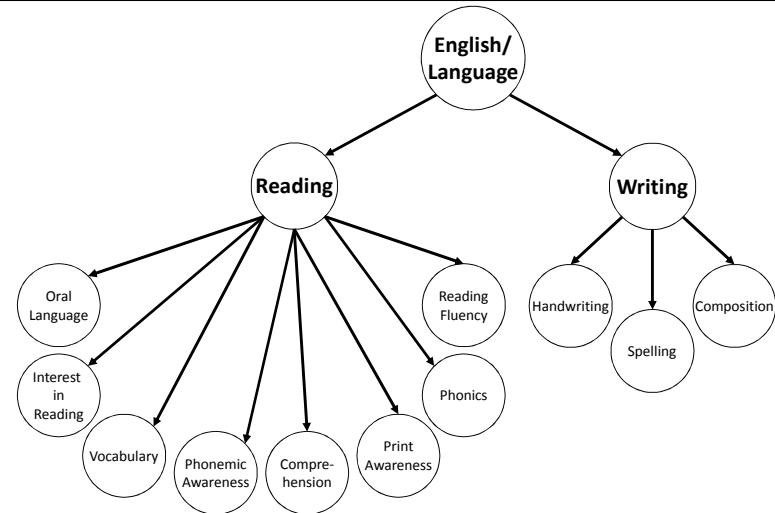
- **Cognitive:** Mental/thinking abilities
- **Physical:** Growth and health
- **Social:** Interactions with others
- **Character:** Behavior that reflects good morals and ethics
- **Spiritual:** Daily transformation in the image of God through faith and obedience

## Development Learning Objectives: Cognitive Domain

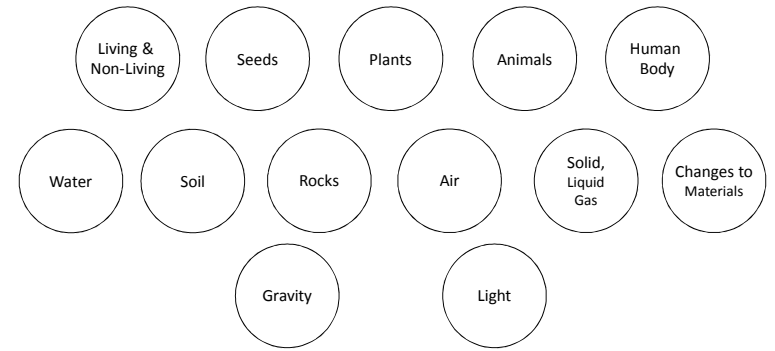
- Oral language
- Curiosity
- Problem solving skills
- Creativity
- Self Regulation
- Science Inquiry Skills
  - Observation
  - Description
  - Comparison
  - Asking questions
  - Predicting
  - Conducting an investigation
  - Reflecting on learning

### Specific Skill Learning Objectives

- The skills that young children should learn in the early years are much broader than many ECE teachers realize
- Regardless of the skill, the emphasis should be on **thinking** and **understanding**, not on memorization of concepts or facts
  - For example, compare the following:
    - A. Pupils will be able to name the shapes of triangle, rectangle, and square.
    - B. Pupils will be able to create a triangle, rectangle, and square out of sticks/toothpicks.
    - C. Pupils will be able to identify similarities and differences between a triangle, rectangle, and square.



### Science Content



## Example Learning Objectives

- Oral Language
  - **Development:** Children will develop their oral language skills.
  - **Specific:** Children will learn the meaning of the words *beautiful* and *charity*.
- Reading
  - **Development (Phonemic awareness):** Children will practice identifying the first sounds in words.
  - **Specific (Phonics):** Children will be able to identify the sound of the letter t.

## Example Learning Objectives

- Mathematics
  - **Development:** Children will practice creating patterns with bottle caps.
  - **Specific:** Children will be able to create the shapes of triangle, rectangle, and square.
- Science
  - **Development:** Children will practice their description skills by describing a flower.
  - **Specific:** Children will be able to classify animals based on where they live (land, air, water).

## Example Learning Objectives

- Cognitive Development
  - **Development:** Children will develop their creativity by using leaves and flowers to create a collage.
- Physical Development
  - **Development:** Children will develop their fine motor skills.
  - **Specific:** Children will be able to thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water.
- Social Development
  - **Development:** Children will practice sharing.
  - **Specific:** Children will explain how they can share with their siblings.

## Example Learning Objectives

- Character Development
  - **Development:** Children will develop their resilience.
  - **Specific:** Children will know one strategy for overcoming a challenge.
- Spiritual Development
  - **Development:** Children will develop wonder for God's creation
  - **Specific:** Children will learn the *Awesome God* worship song.

## Learning Objectives

- A learning objective should:
  - Represent an important developmental skill/concept
  - Challenge the children beyond their current level of development
  - Be clearly addressed in the learning activity
- Be realistic in the learning objectives that each learning activity addresses
  - Do NOT identify a learning objective if there is no clear way that the child will practice/learn the skill.
- There should be a clear part of the learning activity that addresses each learning objective

## Brief Description

- **Brief Description:** Write 1 to 3 sentences that summarize the learning activity and how the learning activity will meet each learning objective
  - It should be clear from the *Brief Description* how the activity will achieve the learning objectives
- **NOTE:** The Brief Description is for the teachers' use only. It will NOT be presented to the pupils
- **Example:**
  - *Learning Objectives*
    - Children will be able to identify three different types of birds.
    - Children will develop their fine motor skills.
  - *Brief Description*
    - Children will create stick puppets of three different types of birds. As children are coloring and cutting out their puppets, they will develop their fine motor skills.

## Procedure

- **Procedure:** Write a step-by-step guide of what will happen in the learning activity
- This is the **ONLY** part of the learning activity that the children will experience
- A substitute teacher should be able to implement the learning activity in your absence based only on what is written in the Procedure
- Include:
  - Directions given to children
  - Thought-provoking questions
  - Notes on key concepts (e.g., definitions of vocab words)
  - Summaries of stories/examples/illustrations that will be used

## Procedure

- ECE activities do NOT necessarily have to follow the traditional outline for secondary school activities of Introduction, Explanation, Questioning, Evaluation/Assessment
- However, the Procedures should:
  - Incorporate a playful/interesting element
  - Invite children's active involvement
  - Connect to children's knowledge and experiences outside of the classroom

## Materials

- *Ohun tí à ñ wá lo Sokoto, ó wà l' àpò sòkòtò*
  - What one is travelling to Sokoto to look for is inside the pocket of one's pair of trousers (sòkòtò)
- *Children play best with what they know best.*
- The best learning materials are those available in the child's environment

## Rules

- List any rules for children's participation in the learning activity
  - More important for Learning Centres
  - Many activities may not have rules beyond the normal classroom rules, so this section may not be necessary
- Examples:
  - Materials need to be shared with all children in the learning centre.
  - Only use scissors with a teacher's supervision.
  - The boundaries for the game are the edges of the football pitch.

## Reflection

- **NOTE:** Reflection is only done *after* the learning activity has been implemented
  - Was the learning activity successful?
  - Were children engaged in the activity?
  - Were learning objectives met?
  - What can be improved for the next time the learning activity is used?