

Developmental Domains

<i>Emotional domain</i>	<i>Social domain</i>	<i>Cognitive domain</i>	<i>Language domain</i>	<i>Physical domain</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to a range of elements of maturity centred around the individual relates intentions within general stages of development expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to a range of elements of maturity centred around the individual in relation to others relates objectives within general stage of development expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to a range of elements related to thinking and making sense of the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to elements of expression and articulation in communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> refers to elements related to gross motor, fine motor and bilateral coordination including spatial awareness also includes body image, health and nutrition
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-expression expression of needs and/or wants ability to describe or explain feelings or frustrations assertion speaking on behalf of oneself recognising needs verbalising opinions ability to question ability to reflect on self, strengths and challenges self-concept self-esteem self-competence resilience attachment, relationship maintenance and sustenance sense of identity trust autonomy independence and interdependence sense of initiative and industry decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> awareness of others acceptance of diversity interest in others relationship development initiating peer interaction parallel, associative, collaborative and cooperative interactions expressing thoughts and opinions with others working alongside others expressing needs to others sharing views and opinions with others recognising importance of interactions with others developing empathy for others developing respect for others ability to share space, resources and people with others as appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> creative thinking perspective taking lateral thinking reflective thinking problem solving risk taking planning predicting investigating processing information deductive thinking reasoning cause and effect questioning relationships between factors concepts of time positional language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> clarity of articulation grammar vocabulary speech volume of voice intonation expression through language oral language experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> movement around indoor and outdoor environments hand–eye coordination handedness clarification and consolidation muscle strength in hands, fingers and wrists left–right coordination in walking, skipping, marching, climbing, etc. pincer, palmer and mature tripod grips upper body coordination

Implementing the WLA in order to sustain the approach and to link successfully with all learning areas requires time and careful thought. These elements are strongly recommended:

The importance of leadership

- understanding the philosophy
- clarity of direction
- rationale for change
- timeline for implementation and strategies
- commitment to the philosophy
- support from leadership

Professional development

- discussion of values and beliefs about children, learning and teaching
- consideration of implications re: curriculum topics, reporting and assessment, timetabling
- introduction and overview of WLA
- whole-school overview to all staff (even those who are not in the year levels concerned)
- leadership meeting

Suggested professional development sessions

- child development theory
- implications of child development
- planning
- linking literacy and numeracy
- integrating the curriculum
- assessment

- reporting
- observation of developmental domains
- scaffolding at tuning in and reflection time
- setting up the learning environment

Other discussion points

- role of and planning implications for specialist teachers
- what happens to integrated curriculum?
- how and where does literacy and numeracy fit?
- types of play
- working effectively with parents
- setting up classrooms
- resources and budget considerations
- trialling the process
- mentoring and supports
- professional readings

Listed below are a number of the key elements of the WLA and implications for practice.

- Children's interests are used as the predominant means for learning experiences during investigations. Teachers may also add in other ideas and concepts.
- Children's interests are expanded, scaffolded and supported as a means of ongoing engagement in particular learning areas.
- Additional issues or concepts at a community or school level are incorporated within the planning document but not viewed or used as the 'topic' or 'theme' on which planning is based or all experiences are planned.
- Investigative play-based experiences are the major pedagogical tool for teaching and learning alongside formal instruction.
- The nature of experiences promotes creativity, imagination and scope for children to invent and create and avoid cloned art work, worksheets and stencils.
- Planning documentation identifies intentions for the children's development in the first instance and in addition, identifies key learning intentions and children's interests as a basis for planning learning experiences.
- The learning experiences emphasise active engagement, provide children with opportunities to explore processes (not just end products) and seek to encourage children to pursue some of their learning experiences into ongoing projects for either short or longer periods of time.
- Observation and documentation by teachers of key skills, needs, strengths and interests of individual children is used to further plan and implement appropriate experiences and set further learning and developmental objectives.
- Formal skill instruction sessions and small and large group times are still used within the classroom in literacy, numeracy and other areas of learning. These skills are also integrated within a range of learning experiences.
- Teachers must still direct, scaffold, extend or intervene with children in order to ensure that children are actively engaged and learning.

- The notion of integrated curriculum within the WLA refers to all learning areas being recognised as integrated and embedded in children’s learning and not as discrete parts of the day where a particular content or focus area is used.
- A balance is set by the teacher incorporating interests emerging from the child in response to experiences, and what the teacher wishes to introduce in relation to skill and content.
- In practice, the WLA uses a mix of active, hands-on investigative play-based work, alongside group times, personal reflection times, skill instruction and other learning experiences provided by the school each day.

Thank you for providing some of your time to our classroom. Your child will enjoy sharing some of their learning with you.

One of the main ways in which the children are learning is through opportunities for them to engage in investigations of interest to them. The teacher will have planned or directed aspects of these investigations with the children and while it may look like they are doing anything they choose, their work is purposeful and linked to literacy and numeracy.

In your time with us there are some key things that you can do to help the children in their learning:

- Read the developmental and learning intentions we have set for all children this fortnight. This will help you to know what types of learning we are concentrating on and you might see opportunities to talk about these things with the children in their investigations.
- Rather than just moving around the room, try to spend time with the same group of children or child for at least 15 minutes.
- The teacher may ask you to help support children in their particular investigations or in the outdoor learning areas.
- Attempt to make links for children with their learning. Instead of asking them, 'What are you making or doing?', try describing some of the things you observe. For example: 'I can see you have placed the round paper on top of the tower', or, 'Would you like to write a list of the things you have used?' This focuses on the learning and concepts of literacy and numeracy rather than just the activity.
- You can make suggestions at times for children who are not sure what to do next, or simply watch and listen to the language of the children.
- The teacher may ask you to talk with a small group about some of their investigations. This is like a small show-and-tell session where the children can model language to each other and share their learning and investigations.

You will notice that the teacher will bring the children back to a reflection time together at some stage during the day in order to help model some learning. Formal instruction time for helping children with spelling, writing or reading also occurs during the day and you may or may not be present for that. The teacher will help you to know what to do at those times. It may be listening to a child read or helping them with their work.

We hope you enjoy your time observing and participating in our classroom and we thank you for your help.

Sample reflection sheet

- Tell us about your investigations today?
- Did you make a plan or do a design brief before you started?
- What were you attempting to do?
- Why are you interested in this?
- Who was working with you?
- What do you plan to work on or do next with this?
- What have you discovered?
- What type of learning did you experience? It seems like you did measuring, writing (whatever was apparent).

Thank you for working in this classroom today. We use the Walker Learning Approach (WLA) which means some of the strategies listed below usually occur each day. The following is a general format for the day that you may like to follow.

Commencement of the day

Morning 'tuning in' with children (about 20 minutes)

There will be a focus child schedule on the noticeboard. Invite the focus children to share what they are currently or intending to be working on during their investigations. There will be a reporter and maybe a photographer—the teacher gives these children a task to report on and to photograph respectively. The tasks allocated to these children will be dependent on their stage of development and the learning intentions. At the end of the tuning in, the children to move off to the learning areas to start their investigations. The teacher disperses the children in small numbers and confirms with the children that they know where they are going and what they intend to investigate.

Investigating time (about 45 minutes)

Children can work in any of the learning areas by themselves or as small groups. They can choose where and what they are going to investigate. The teacher aims to scaffold the children from their interest so that they are supported and extended where appropriate. The teacher will spend the first half of investigations working with the focus children, reporter and photographer. Then the teacher will work with other children who need support, direction and or extension. Some children may need direction or suggestions for new ideas. Others will find their own work to do. The aim for the teacher is to sit and observe or support some of the children in their investigations.

Reflection with children (20 minutes)

As a whole group the teacher asks the reporter, photographer and the three focus children to reflect on what they were doing, learning or working on during investigations.

At the end of reflection the children will be asked to reset the learning environment for the next part of learning and for investigations the next day. This is planned, careful and calm. They do not necessarily have to pack everything away. Some of their work will be displayed or kept for later in the day or tomorrow.

Formal instruction sessions

After recess, if there are no specialists, you may like to provide a formal instruction session based on the learning intentions listed in the attached sheet.

This can be a whole-group experience but will enable children to work at their own level. If possible, introduce the formal teaching session by using one of the experiences of the children during investigations. This will help to engage the children and link the skill to something meaningful and relevant to the children. It can either be literacy or numeracy or both integrated together.

As much as possible, the WLA does not use cloned art work or worksheets that are the same for each child.

Later in the day

The children may return to their investigations later in the day or you may conduct some reading or writing for the children.

The final session

During the last two minutes, it is usual for the children to come together for a final reflection, a game or story together to finish the day.