



Set for Prep



***Supplementary
Guidelines: Students
with Disabilities of Prep
Eligible Age with
Significant Educational
Support Needs***

INTRODUCTION

The preparatory year (Prep) is part of *Education and Training Reforms for the Future*. It is the first year in the [Early Phase of Learning](http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/advice/earlychildhood) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/advice/earlychildhood>), which includes Prep to Year 3. Prep is designed to give children the very best start to school, be a foundation for lifelong learning and help them make a smooth transition to Year 1. The Prep year is not compulsory, though universally available.

For those students in the Prep year, who have a disability or suspected disability with significant educational support needs, the option of accessing [Early Childhood Development programs and services](http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr015/linka.html) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr015/linka.html>) continues to be part of the array of services provided by Education Queensland.

One of the major purposes of early childhood development programs is to provide opportunities for young students with disabilities to acquire the skills necessary to function in a range of current and future learning environments.

Early childhood intervention is defined by Carpenter in *Families in Context: Emerging Trends in Early Intervention and Family Support (2001)* as 'professionals working in partnership with parents of children with special needs to help their children develop their knowledge and skills to reach their potential'.

Prior to reaching Prep eligible age most students with a disability who have significant educational support needs access a program provided by Education Queensland through an Early Childhood Development Program (formerly known as Special Education Developmental Units/Classes). While a child is accessing this program a range of data will be collected to inform decisions to determine program and service options for the Prep year.

Those students with a disability who have significant educational support needs who do not attend an Early Childhood Development Program prior to Prep may enrol in Prep and engage in the Prep curriculum, while educators monitor and assess their learning regularly and access the array of student services (guidance officers, support teachers, behaviour support, advisory teachers, and curriculum co-ordinators) available at the school or within a district to assist in determining appropriate program options. This may include accessing an program as determined by the school team in conjunction with parents.

It is also anticipated that as the Prep year progresses there will also be children newly identified children with a disability or suspected disability or children with a disability who move from interstate and overseas.

Students who are being considered for additional support funded through an Early Childhood Development program and service will be required to undertake a screening process to determine eligibility for entry. Regions and districts will build on established processes to determine eligibility using these Supplementary Guidelines, within the context of their needs and regional program and service options.

Early childhood development programs and services focus on the cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical development of the individual child.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDELINES

- Prep is universally available to *all* students of eligible age.
- Prep is the first year in the [Early Phase of Learning](http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/advice/earlychildhood) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/advice/earlychildhood>), which includes Prep to Year 3. Prep is not viewed as being a stand alone program, but an important transition point in preparing students for attending school and becoming lifelong learners.
- Students with a disability, who are of eligible age to attend Prep, will be included in local Prep classes wherever possible. This reflects the Government's commitment to providing inclusive education for all students. Inclusiveness, as defined in [Queensland State Education 2010](http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/qse2010/pdf/strategy.pdf) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/corporate/qse2010/pdf/strategy.pdf>) is "providing the opportunity for students, irrespective of their personal circumstances, background and starting-point, to participate fully in the education and social experiences offered by schools and achieve outcomes according to their potential".
- Many students with disabilities will benefit from inclusion into regular settings. Inclusion can facilitate access to social interactions with peers, increase independence for students with disabilities, and allow students with special needs to access the support they need in the least restrictive environment possible. For additional information regarding inclusion for students with disabilities, please see [CRP-PR-009: Inclusive Education](http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/curriculum/crppr009/index.html) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/curriculum/crppr009/index.html>) and

[Practices for Inclusive Education.](#)

(<http://iwww.qed.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/curriculum/crppr009/practices.html>)

- Early Childhood Development programs and services for students with a disability of Prep eligible age will support those students whose impairment impacts significantly on their functioning to the extent that they require frequent educational adjustments and have significant educational support needs.
- A valid and comprehensive assessment of the impact of a disability on a child's functioning will include consideration of a variety of personal, clinical and social statements such as cultural and linguistic diversity, differences in communication and behavioural factors.
- Access to programs and services, and diagnostic processes is based on reliable, valid and accurate information.
- Access to a program is not solely determined by the diagnosis of a disability. It is determined by:
 - assessment of a child's strengths and needs;
 - the least restrictive environment in which the child's educational needs can be met; and
 - family desires and priorities.
- Families are informed about all available options and are significant partners in the decision making process.

BACKGROUND: EARLY YEARS FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

Policies

All students of Prep eligible age enrol in accordance with the enrolment procedures set out in [SMS-PR-027: Enrolment in State Primary, Secondary and Special Schools](#) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr027>) Students with a disability or suspected disability with significant educational support needs of Prep eligible age enrol into Prep on the same basis as their peers in line with the [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#) (<http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/ACTS/2006/06AC039.pdf>) and SMS-PR-027.

This document, *Supplementary Guidelines: Children Students with Disabilities of Prep Eligible Age with Significant Educational Support Needs*, has been written to assist Regions/Districts in conceptualising the development of service models, processes and procedures to respond to the educational needs of students attending Prep who have significant educational support needs arising from a disability.

Prep

Prep will give every young Queenslanders the very best start to school by setting them on the path to lifelong learning and helping them make a smooth transition to Year 1. Prep is part of primary schooling and will be provided through all state primary schools.

The starting age of compulsory schooling has increased by six months so that students must turn six by 30 June in the year they enrol in Year 1. Prep is 5 days a week and children stay all day. The [Prep Ready Reckoner](#) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/etrf/prep.html>) assists in finding out when a child is ready to start Prep.

The Early Years Curriculum

Prep uses the [Early Years Curriculum Guidelines](#) (http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/ey_cg_06.pdf) (EYCG) developed by the Queensland Studies Authority. The EYCG provides a framework to ensure continuity across the early phase of learning. Continuity of learning for students as they progress from pre compulsory schooling to compulsory schooling is fundamental to their continued success. The Prep curriculum recognises that, by the time students enter the Prep year, their development will already be influenced by many complex and interacting factors.

The processes and procedures developed by Regions/Districts will endeavour to promote a positive start to school for students with disabilities and significant educational support needs. They will reflect the array of services and programs available, and will take into account the availability of expertise, appropriate resources, flexibility of service delivery and reflect how the Prep program has been conceptualised at the local level.

DETERMINING SIGNIFICANT EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT NEEDS AND OPTIONS FOR PREP

Determining significant educational support needs and options for the Prep year, involves the detailed gathering of detailed information to identify a child's strengths and needs. As Prep is the first year of the Early Phase of Learning, all present and future settings must be considered.

This process may create a menu of options that allows for flexibility to meet the individual circumstances and needs of the child and their family over time as they prepare for the child to enter compulsory schooling.

Ensuring that the detailed information about young children is reliable and valid is a key issue for:

- formulation and evaluation of classroom adjustments
- determining the appropriateness of interventions
- informing diagnostic and verification processes to determine support for the years of compulsory schooling

Eligibility

In line with the enrolment policy [SMS-PR-027: Enrolment in State Primary, Secondary and Special Schools](http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr027) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr027>) and [SMS-PR-015: Early Childhood Development Programs and Services for Children with Disabilities - Prior to Prep](http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr015) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr015>) a student with a disability with **significant educational support needs** (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr015/linkb.pdf>) could be defined as:

- having a standard score at or below two standard deviations below the mean in at least one adaptive domain or the total adaptive behaviour composite on an adaptive behaviour assessment¹ **and/or** a significant sensory impairment (vision impairment, hearing impairment) and/or physical impairment diagnosed by a medical specialist and confirmed by the relevant advisory visiting teacher (AVT) or specialist support staff, where available.

Significant educational support needs reflect the need for a child, prior to Prep age, to access a program with a high frequency of adjustments to enable them to participate, build connections, achieve developmental milestones, develop play skills and engage and communicate with peers and adults in a variety of environments. High frequencies of adjustments are those that are required more than once a day for the child to participate effectively and achieve outcomes.

Establishing a Screening Process

Regions/Districts already have processes in place to approve access to Early Childhood Development programs and services both at the school and district level. Establishing a screening process to identify the significant educational support needs for a child with a disability will be an important amendment to these processes. This will include identifying the range of formal and informal assessments that will be used to determine significant educational support needs by school/district/regional support staff.

A team lead by the Principal Education Officer Student Services (PEO, SS) and including the Senior Guidance Officers, Speech-Language Pathologists-in-Charge, Early Childhood Development education specialists e.g. Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), Advisory Visiting Teachers and therapists and other district personnel, will need to determine which from the approved list which of the formal assessments will be used, dependent on the organisation of existing programs and services and the experience and skill level of specialists within the local area.

A profile of a child's support needs is obtained by incorporating information collected from various sources, including information from parents and caregivers, other agencies and professionals, formal and informal observations in a variety of settings, play-based and standardised assessments.

Adjustments, Supports and Services

For students with significant educational support needs arising from a disability, the attainment of educational outcomes requires well informed adjustments and ensuring supports and services are based on the child's identified strengths/needs. Anticipated learning outcomes need to be linked with necessary

¹ 2008 EQ approved adaptive behaviour assessments: Vinelands-II, ABAS, ABAS-II.

supports and adjustments. In this way the child can be prepared to participate in Prep to the maximum extent possible and achieve to his/her best ability.

Supports and services for students with significant educational support needs can be viewed in three general categories:

I. Services and supplementary aids and/or program adjustments or supports:

Services that may be available to support students in school include advisory visiting teachers, Early Childhood Development advisory teachers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, nurses, school transition officers, guidance officers and orientation and mobility teachers.

Aids, adjustments and other supports enable students with disabilities to be educated with their same aged peers in a mainstream setting (e.g. written materials in Braille, modification of the environment, modification of curriculum, behaviour support plan, visual comprehension and communication supports).

II. Specialised equipment or assistive technology devices and/or services:

Equipment or devices are any piece of equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified, or customised that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability (e.g. built-up grips, paper stabilisers, specialised seating and mobility equipment, voice output communication devices, visual schedules). Specialist support staff may be involved in prescribing and implementing the use of the equipment and assistive technology devices.

III. Support for school personnel on behalf of the child:

These are supports which help staff more effectively work with a child, e.g. information and training regarding specific disabilities, positive behavioural support management and communication systems training. For more information refer to:

[Professional Development Catalogues for Teachers and School Leaders](http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/bulletins/pdli_catalogues_bulletin.html)
(http://education.qld.gov.au/staff/development/bulletins/pdli_catalogues_bulletin.html).

Supports and services are determined by the individual child's strengths and areas of educational need. These supports and services should not be provided based on labels or categories of disability.

Contextual Factors and Contextual Fit

Contextual factors and contextual fit are important components of the process of making decisions about the type of program and/or service a child with significant educational support needs receives, particularly when considering a split program between Prep and an Early Childhood Development Program.

Contextual factors are defined as the complete background of an individual's life and living. The key to an assessment is the ability to see links between general factors affecting the child, their family, the educational setting(s) the child will be attending and regional/district processes and procedures. Determining specific contextual factors is accomplished by collecting information on the various conditions under which a child is most and least likely to be a successful learner

The context in which an assessment is carried out needs to be considered as it can have a direct effect on the interpretation of results and interventions. What has been demonstrated to be effective in one context can not be assumed to be effective in another. Evidence of contextual factors that have an impact, directly or indirectly, on a child's outcomes should be gathered and included when analysing data, interpreting results and determining appropriate options for the Prep year.

Contextual fit refers to the extent to which an assessment and proposed program or service option is compatible with the values and skills of the individuals who will be making the adjustments, and the extent to which it can be implemented given the resources and supports available.

The factors that need to be considered are:

1. Knowledge of the program
2. Available skills to implement the program
3. Consistency and alignment with values of all assessment team members including parents
4. Availability of resources – time, material and additional resourcing
5. Sustainability – more likely to result in long-term effective outcomes achieved

6. Uniqueness of the individual, and their environment
7. Responsiveness of the program to changes in the child's situation

It is critical to attend to variables that will increase the "contextual fit" between the child with significant educational support needs and the environment including those who will implement the program and/or services.

Prep Descriptors and Learning Statements

The Prep phase descriptors are used to describe how a child is learning when attending a Prep program. They give a clear outline of the behaviours and skills that would be shown by students in the program and can be used to assist assessment teams in providing a framework when considering the options available for Prep aged students with disabilities and significant education support needs.

The Prep descriptors are examples of student's behaviour in each of the four phases of learning described in the [Early Years Curriculum Guidelines](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/ey_cg_06.pdf) (http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/ey_cg_06.pdf) and [QSA: Quick Guide to the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/ey_cg_06_quick_guide.pdf) (http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/ey_cg_06_quick_guide.pdf). The four descriptors make up a continuum of learning and development. They are:

1. Becoming aware
2. Exploring
3. Making connections
4. Applying

The descriptors are a guide for Prep teachers when considering the phase of learning that best describes the child's learning and development at a point in time. **They are not a checklist of behaviours.** Students vary in their learning and will be at different phases for some learning statements, depending on their experience prior to starting Prep and their interest in the learning area.

Transition

Beginning school is a big step for all students and their families. It is a phase of intensified and accelerated developmental demands and may present many challenges for a child who has a disability, as well as for the child's family and teachers. Transition from one program to another is a process, not a single event. The speed and ease of adjustment for all concerned is facilitated through careful planning and preparation. The establishment of a co-ordinated, systematic and timely process to guide transition to school is a key priority.

Successful transitions are the key to supporting continuity of learning. As with students entering the early years of school, explicit links are made to the teaching and learning practices employed in settings prior to Prep to ensure smooth transitions occur.

Successful transition processes are flexible and responsive to the changing needs and interests of participants. It is important for parents and caregivers to know that their ideas, views and needs are valued, respected and taken into account when planning transition processes.

OPTIONS FOR PREP AGED STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

The full range of options for students with a disability with significant educational support needs are examined using a process that includes both formal and informal assessments. This process will determine if the child can be supported in the Prep class with access to specialised staff, if part of the child's program will be accessed via attendance at the Early Childhood Development Program or in a very small number of cases, that the child has a fully individualised program that is accessed full time at an Early Childhood Development Program.

Each option below identifies some points to be considered. They can be used to assist Regions/Districts to determine the array of programs and services that may be provided.

1. Full Time Prep Program

Students with disabilities access a Prep program in a Prep class along with all other students. From 2008, all special education programs and services will be identified as providing support to students in the Prep year.

The Queensland [Early Years Curriculum Guidelines](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/early/curriculum_guidelines/index.html) (http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/early/curriculum_guidelines/index.html) developed by the Queensland Studies Authority provides a framework for teachers in planning, interacting, assessing and reflecting on an effective preparatory year curriculum. Prep teachers will make adjustments for students with a disability to support their inclusion in the Prep program. Support from specialist staff from an Early Childhood Development Program or an Advisory Visiting Teacher may be part of the array of support services available. This support can be provided to the Prep teacher or in some cases, directly to the child while in the Prep class, depending on the child's needs.

2. Combined Prep Program and Early Childhood Development Program

This option includes a combination of enrolment in a Prep class at a state primary school or a non state primary school in addition to part-time attendance at an Early Childhood Development Program (formerly a SEDU/C), provided by staff specialising in services to students with a disability prior to compulsory school age. The full time equivalent (FTE) split between each site is determined on a case by case basis and may be adjusted through the year according to the educational needs of the child and within district allocation processes.

In 2008 a small number of students enrolled in non state schools will benefit from an enhanced level of support from Education Queensland, through an Early Childhood Development Program.

This service to non state school students will be provided in addition to the Advisory Visiting Teacher services provided to non state school Prep students with vision impairment, hearing impairment and physical impairment.

The provision of an AVT service or a dual enrolment in an Early Childhood Program of a non state school Prep student will be granted on the same basis that it is granted to State school students in 2008. The non state school and the state school are to complete the Modified Form D.

3. Individualised Program

For a small number of children parents may decide that the educational support needs of the child are significant and specialised in nature and the child will benefit by being enrolled in a full time Early Childhood Development Program. Their educational program will be fully individualised in response to the developmental needs of the child and will require frequent and complex adjustments. The program is delivered by staff with expertise in the provision of services to children with a disability of prior to compulsory school age.

An individualised program outlines educational priorities for the young child that is delivered by a transdisciplinary team. This team may include teachers, nurses, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech-language pathologists, teacher-aides and other specialist support personnel such as guidance officers and/or visiting specialists at the Early Childhood Development Program or Special Schools approved to provide early childhood development services² as identified in the [Directory of Special Education and Services in Queensland State Schools](http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/learning/disability/docs/sedirectory.xls) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/learning/disability/docs/sedirectory.xls>).

Though the program will be supportive of the Prep curriculum and will be highly modified, it may focus on aspects of the [Early Years Curriculum Guidelines](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/ey_cg_06.pdf) (http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/downloads/syllabus/ey_cg_06.pdf). This is not a preparatory program with an emphasis on school readiness; it is a specifically designed program for Prep aged students with a disability delivered by specialist teachers and therapists in consultation with parents and other specialist providing a service to the child and it will be designed and delivered to meet the child's specific needs.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Education Adjustment Program Beginning School Profile

For students with a disability, the Prep year will be the start of the data collection stage for verification and submission of a Beginning of School Profile (BSP).

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/disabilities/adjustment/profile/docs/eapbeginschprofile.pdf>.

² The Kumbari Avenue School, Mt Ommaney Special School, Ipswich Special School, Toowoomba West Special School, Burdekin School

A profile is able to be submitted following the state-wide verification of a diagnosis of disability, according to Department of Education, Training and the Arts criteria. The BSP is designed to record the frequency of adjustments that are made for students in a variety of education settings. Profiles should be completed when the student's program has been established and the educational team are comfortable with the consistency of practice.

Decisions regarding who takes key roles in the data collection process, case management role and systemic requirements for submission of the BSP need to be made in the early stages of determining the frequency and type of adjustments that need to be made to support a student with a disability. Refer to the Education Adjustment Beginning School Profile Manual for further information.

<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/disabilities/adjustment/profile/docs/eapbspmanualversion2-3.pdf> and [Beginning School Profile explained](http://education.qld.gov.au/students/disabilities/adjustment/profile/docs/eapbspmanualversion2-3.pdf)
(<http://education.qld.gov.au/students/disabilities/adjustment/faqs/bsp.html>)

Transport Assistance for Prep-aged Students

Transport assistance for students with disabilities is provided in line with policy [SMS-PR-009: School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities](http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr009) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr009>). For Prep aged students with a dual enrolment in a Prep class and an Early Childhood Development Program or Special School³, transport assistance to both programs may be considered by the Principal Advisor, Education Services on a case-by-case basis. However, transport assistance is only provided between home and school, not between schools. Therefore, a child would not be eligible for transport assistance to transfer between schools throughout the day.

Applications for transport assistance for Prep students enrolled in non state and state schools will be considered under the School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities to the State school only. The non state sector has its own transport assistance scheme and parents need to talk to the principal of the non state school about this assistance.

DEFINITIONS

Programs and Services

The array of Education Queensland programs and services provided to support students with disabilities is viewed as being in three phases:

1. Early Childhood Development - Prior to Prep age
2. Early Childhood Development - Prep age
3. Compulsory and Participatory school age

Educational programs and services are:

- a. appropriate to the needs of student with a disability; and
- b. additional to, or otherwise different from, educational programs and services generally available to persons of the relevant age who are not persons with a disability

Programs

An education program that occurs at approved schools as documented in the [Directory of Special Education Programs and Services in Queensland State Schools](http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/learning/disability/docs/sedirectory.xls) (<http://education.qld.gov.au/studentservices/learning/disability/docs/sedirectory.xls>) where high levels of different types of specialised educational supports are provided for students with disabilities with significant educational support needs by a transdisciplinary team with experience and/or qualifications in early childhood development.

Services

Services that may be available to support students with disabilities with significant educational support needs include advisory visiting teachers physical impairment, hearing impairment, vision impairment, intellectual impairment, Autism Spectrum Disorder, speech-language impairment and/or early childhood development advisory visiting teachers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, registered nurses, guidance officers and orientation and mobility teachers.

³ In Education Queensland Special Schools with an area of specialisation to accept children below compulsory school-age or by district negotiation under special circumstances

Changes in Terminology

Early Special Education	Early Childhood Development
AVT ESE	AVT Early Childhood Development
SEDU/C	Early Childhood Development Program
SEU/C	Special Education Program
ECDP	Early Childhood Development Program
Coding	Specialisation

References

Carpenter, B. (2001). *Families in Context: Emerging Trends in Early Intervention and Family Support*. London: David Fulton

APPENDIX ONE

ASSESSMENTS

An assessment is the process of gathering information to determine a child's strengths and needs.

It is important to consider what is actually being tested and distinguish between:

- what the child is able to do independently
- what the child can do when assisted
- what others believe the child could do but is unable to demonstrate

Each is an important element and helps build a clear picture of the child's capability, problem solving ability and underlying cognitive functioning.

Assessment needs to occur in optimum conditions to enable the child to demonstrate current skills, emerging skills and overall potential.

Formal assessments are performed by professionals (e.g. guidance officers, paediatricians). Informal assessments can be completed by a range of people including professionals, parents, teacher aides etc.

Parents and caregivers are vital partners in information gathering to inform both formal and informal assessments. No one spends more time with a child or knows them better.

The following types of assessments may be used to gather information and identify the best program options for a child with disabilities of Prep eligible age.

Formal Assessments

Formal assessment methods include standardised tests and systematic observations. Assessment tools may be norm-referenced or criterion-referenced and may measure one or more developmental domains.

Standardised Tests

Standardised tests are tests which are uniform in administration and scoring. Test items must be administered in a prescribed way to be valid. They are scored according to explicit procedures. These assessment tools may be norm-referenced or criterion-referenced and may measure one or more developmental domains.

Under non-standardised conditions of administration, results need confirmation by use of a multi-measure approach, using other assessment tools, as well as observational and interview data.

A norm referenced assessment compares a child's responses with those of a normative sample of same-age peers and can be used to establish developmental age levels. Test results are only meaningful when the child is similar to the comparison population.

Criterion referenced assessment tools are used to determine a child's level of functioning within a developmental domain. They evaluate a child's performance against a specific criterion. Skills are typically assessed according to a scale. The underlying assumption of criterion-referenced assessment tools is that skill acquisition follows a sequential pattern. They give a descriptive picture of the student's abilities without giving developmental age levels and can be a sensitive mechanism for measuring changes over time.

Informal/Natural Assessments

There is a greater rationale for using more informal assessment processes with children of a young age because they generally take place on a continuous basis and in natural classroom conditions. Informal assessments that provide specific information about a child's progress can be used in consistent and valid ways.

Play-Based Assessment

Play-based assessment is a tool used while a child is playing usually in his/her natural environment. The observer is able to see and record detailed data on the interactions between the child and peers as well as noting other abilities such as communication and motor abilities.

Checklists and Rating Scales

Checklists and rating scales are used to make judgments about children's behaviour. The two should be used in different settings to determine patterns in behaviour.

Parent Interviews

Parent interviews are judgements based upon the observations of significant people in the child's life.

Anecdotal Recordings:

Written records of descriptions of a child's behaviour in a particular situation, setting or interaction.

Screening Tools

Screening tools are used primarily to identify a suspected area of concern related to a child's development that may warrant further evaluation. These tools are *not* appropriate to use on their own for the determination of eligibility for access to programs and related services. Screening measures take a sampling of a few skills that may indicate a need for a diagnostic assessment.

Systematic Observations

Systematic observations are conducted by knowledgeable persons involving structured observations and recording of behaviour yielding *quantifiable* data.

Developmental Milestones and Developmental Domains

The acquisition of certain skills and abilities is often used to gauge children's development. These skills and abilities are known as developmental milestones. They are a set of functional skills or age-specific tasks that most children can do within a certain age range. Although each milestone has an age level, the actual age when a typically developing child reaches that milestone can vary. Every child is unique. Developmental milestones are behaviours that emerge over time, forming the building blocks for growth and continued learning.

Developmental domains and their components are overlapping and integrated in the whole child, as processes are complex and functions rarely occur in isolation. The different developmental domains have different stages of development within each child. This goes from easy to difficult, simple to complex, concrete to abstract, and general to specific. Children are learning and maturing across the domains throughout their growth and development.

Some children exhibit skills or behaviours that fall outside of the expected range of development. These may emerge in a way or at a pace that is different from their peers. Some children may show patterns of development that are unusual or are markedly different from their peers. Great care should be given to determining whether patterns of behaviour are reflections of children's personality, or whether they exemplify areas of concern.

Atypical behaviours should be noted and objectively recorded. They may be isolated events that have little or no impact on later development. They might, however, be early warning signs of later and more significant issues. Patterns of atypical behaviour can be useful in confirming areas of need.

There is a significant difference between a skill that is delayed and one that is disordered. Great care should be taken to distinguish between skills that are slow in emerging and those that are different in quality, form, and function.

Cognitive Domain

The cognitive domain relates to a child's ability to learn from past and new experiences. Developing skills may include verbal and non-verbal problem solving, symbolic play, memory, attention, discrimination, classification, sequencing, reasoning, judgment, concept development, visual perception, and visual-motor integration.

Physical Domain

This domain encompasses motor functioning including muscle control, body co-ordination and locomotion. This includes both gross and fine motor abilities as well as perceptual-motor functioning.

Gross motor skills may include rolling, creeping, crawling and balance and mobility in standing, walking, running, and hopping. Other aspects may include the child's range of motion and quality and integration of movement and muscle tone.

Fine motor skills include oral motor movement for eating, drinking and speech, manual grasp and release, and the ability to reach and to use small muscles for self-help skills, play, and tasks such as and drawing.

Communication Domain

This domain covers both verbal and non-verbal communication. It encompasses pre-intentional and intentional communication, speech development, receptive and expressive language development, gestures, body movements and postures, the expression of information, thoughts and ideas and social communication

and interaction. Differences in communication skills and levels between home and school or other less familiar surroundings should be noted and considered.

Social Emotional Domain

This domain includes the development of self-esteem and meaningful social interaction. Important components of this domain include the ability to interact with adults and peers, express feelings and emotions, develop self-awareness and self-worth and demonstrate self-regulation and coping strategies.

Adaptive Domain

Assessment of the adaptive domain takes into consideration the various abilities of a child to adapt and function within the environment (for example, self-help skills; interaction with toys, other objects, and family members and peers; activity level; attention span; and motivation).

Health and Safety Domain

Included in this domain are the skills necessary to meet personal needs, social responsibility or participation in developmentally appropriate situations. Development in this domain relates to the child's awareness of and ability to create and maintain a safe and healthy environment.

Learning Domain

This domain encompasses children's development of curiosity and active engagement in their surroundings. Children demonstrate engagement and persistence with problem solving and reasoning.