

Cognition

Children at this very early stage need to experience the same activities over and over again, in both the same and different contexts if they are going to be able to learn from them. Using an on-off or burst-pause pattern with each activity can help the child begin to anticipate what will happen next. As children begin to develop the understanding that they can have an effect on their world, they can be offered a much wider range of activities and objects to explore. When cause and effect has been established, early problem solving can begin.

The programme of learning is divided into 4 areas (the opportunities suggested are roughly in developmental order but should not be treated as steps to be mastered one after another).

Awareness Up to Gateway 1	Exploration – understanding cause and effect Gateway 1-2	Control of the environment and early problem solving Gateway 2-3 & 3-4	Sequence and Pattern Gateway 4-5 & 5-6
<p>Recognise an obvious change happening very close to self (eg: stills when hand is massaged or when sees a bright flashing light)</p> <p>Recognise when a stimulus starts and stops (eg: stills, moves limbs, turns after the stimuli start or stop)</p> <p>Accept stimuli for an increasing amount of time (eg: will hold objects or allow feet to be in the foot spa)</p> <p>Respond to a widening range of stimuli (eg: turns to a range of flashing objects)</p> <p>Anticipate stimuli that occur over and over again (eg: smile before being pushed on the swing after several pushes)</p>	<p>Use their senses to register interesting events around them (eg: listen to drum, watch moving toy, touch gloop)</p> <p>Locate moving stimuli (eg: track a florescent ball or moves head to sniff perfume as it passes from one side to the other)</p> <p>Turns to objects and sounds that are activated but in one place (eg: turns head to locate flashing light)</p> <p>Make things happen when they move randomly (eg: the space blanket crackles when the child wriggles or arm movement activates a hanging bell)</p> <p>Activate toys that provide an interesting effect randomly and without connecting the cause to</p>	<p>Make things move deliberately with gross movement (eg: knock mobile, kick bells swish water)</p> <p>Make things move deliberately with finer movements (eg whole hand or head to activate switch or swipe objects that give a strong reward)</p> <p>Persist in making simple toys do something (eg: keep swiping wobble toys or pressing a switch to keep the toy active)</p> <p>Operate a toy that requires a single action (eg: button on Jack-in-the-box, switch for bubble tube)</p> <p>Activate toys deliberately, using different movements for different toys (eg: shaking bells and banging drum)</p>	<p>Take turns in repetitive games where adult stops to wait for a response (eg: Intensive Interaction, action songs)</p> <p>Anticipate routine events – that is see a pattern in the event (eg: action songs, eating, being hoisted)</p> <p>Recognise familiar places (eg: look up at the lights in sensory room, go straight to a favourite object in the hall)</p> <p>Explore objects that are used in familiar routines (eg: spoon, cup, hair brush, drum)</p> <p>Take turns actively (eg: rolling ball to partner, passing objects backwards and forwards)</p> <p>Choose between two or more motivating toys</p> <p>Respond to object cue (eg: sits down for a drink when sees the cup)</p>

<p>Respond to a range of stimuli that are quieter/ less obvious (eg: smile at quiet singing)</p> <p>Attend to stimuli further away (eg: hears music a few feet away or smells lunch as the trolley comes in)</p> <p>Transfer attention from one stimulus to another (eg: look at jumping dog and when it finishes looks at moving car)</p> <p>Attend to stimuli in a busy classroom (eg: watch another child moving around)</p> <p>Locate a specific stimulus against a busy background (eg: find favourite toy in a box of several toys or turn to name in a noisy room)</p>	<p>the effect (eg: pats a BigMac switch and something motivating happens or kicks the keyboard and sounds happen)</p>	<p>Shift attention between different objects/ actions (eg: different actions on an activity centre)</p> <p>Manipulate objects purposely (eg: empty and fill containers, stacking and building blocks)</p> <p>Press buttons to make toy work (eg: keyboard, musical toys)</p> <p>Look for favourite objects when sees them hidden (eg: toy in box, under material)</p> <p>Look for favourite objects in a box of similar items (not deliberately hidden)</p> <p>Open containers to find objects (eg: lift lid, press buttons, pull top off)</p> <p>Use objects and materials according to their function (eg: brush for hair, shoes on feet, paint on paper)</p>	<p>Select appropriate resources for a familiar routine (eg: spoon for eating, ball for game, shoe after soft play)</p> <p>Assist in putting away resources used in a familiar routine</p> <p>Operate toys that require more than one action to complete (eg: bubble tube controlled by latched switch, CD player knobs)</p> <p>Operate toys that need to be pulled apart and put together (eg: stickle bricks, Duplo)</p> <p>Follow objects that move within the toy (eg: cars down a slop, balls in a tube)</p> <p>Put objects into a container one at a time (eg: balls down a tube or helter skelter)</p> <p>Select preferred objects from a mixture of objects (eg: in a box)</p> <p>Look at the bottom of a sliding/ tumbling toy for the object to appear when it can't be seen travelling down)</p> <p>Use objects that require two or more actions to complete (eg: posting shapes or simple form boards)</p> <p>Use early problem solving for a familiar event (eg: selecting a car or ball to roll down the slope rather than a piece of material or paper)</p> <p>Solve simple problems where understanding the pattern is important (eg: when there are 4</p>
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			pegs to a toy and 3 are in place, look for the fourth if out of sight
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Switches and eye gazers

When planning to use switches/eye gazers remember to keep the cognitive process you are encouraging firmly in mind. Learning to use a switch is not the target.

Communication and Interaction (Should interaction go here or with personal development and independence?)

Pre-intentional - Children at a very early stage of developing communication require people around them to be responsive to any attempts at communication. Interpreting behaviour as potentially meaningful is one important adult response this forms the basis of Intensive Interaction.

Intentional - Some children will be more intentional in their communication but not yet able to use conventional language. A responsive environment provided by staff should include a widening range of motivating activities upon which children can ‘comment’.

Conventional - Some children will be beginning to use conventional communication, understanding or even using a few single words/photos/signs/symbols such as ‘more’, ‘finished’ and perhaps names of familiar people and objects.

It is important to know the level each child is working at. Using the communication matrix can help to work this out. Once this has been assessed the appropriate programme and activities can be determined. The programme is divided into three areas.

Receptive Communication (to social events and activities)	Expressive Communication	Interacting (with others) Does this need something about working with peers/turn taking?)
respond when basic needs and desires are met (eg: stop crying when discomfort is removed or relax when gently rocked)	Show preferences for objects, activities and events (eg: responding with interest to those they like and turning away from those they don't)	interact with familiar people (eg: smiling, turning, giving eye contact)
respond to stimuli presented in on/off pattern (burst-pause) (eg: still, widen eyes, increased movement)	indicate ‘more’ and ‘no more’ consistently through their responses to objects, activities and events (eg: looking expectant or smiling to indicate ‘more’ and pushing away or moving away to indicate ‘no more’)	Show they can work co-actively with familiar people (eg: join in ‘row the boat’ or allow their hands to be used for eating)
respond to nearby person (eg: still to sound of voice or search with eyes or increased movement)	communicate a choice of object or activity (eg: by making sounds, gestures or pointing, giving picture as in PECs)	show anticipation of familiar social activities and events (eg: start to rock for ‘row the boat’ or lean forward to be lifted up)
respond to consistent and predictable social routines (offered in the same order in the same environment on a daily basis) (eg: by relaxing, stilling, widening eyes or mouth, increased movement)	attract someone’s attention (eg: by making sounds or gestures)	Show they have had enough of a social interaction (eg: by turning away or looking down)
		show preference for particular people, objects and activities

<p>respond to their own names (stilling, turning, increased movement)</p> <p>respond with consistent positive and negative reactions to a range of social activities (eg: smiling or turning head away)</p> <p>respond to people talking around them (eg: by looking at the speaker or making sounds)</p> <p>respond in different ways to familiar and unfamiliar adults</p> <p>respond to familiar sounds and early words such as brrrm/ woof/ mum (eg: smile and locate sound)</p> <p>respond to familiar sounds and words, showing understanding of their meaning (eg: look at 'mum' or the dog)</p>	<p>make simple meaningful gestures (eg: pointing or using simple signs, photographs)</p> <p>use their voices to join in a 'conversation' (eg: babbling)</p> <p>attempt simple words/use single symbols/signs and phrases in imitation (eg: mumma, woof, all gone, bye bye, more)</p> <p>use a few words/signs/photos/symbols appropriately (eg: more, names, yes, no, mumma – whatever is appropriate for that child)</p>	<p>respond with interest in the actions of others close by (eg: make eye contact, turn towards, reaching out, vocalising)</p> <p>engage actively in familiar social activities and events (eg: join in action songs or hold up arms for coat)</p> <p>share joint attention in an object or activity (eg: looks at object and at person or looks where person is pointing if object close by)</p> <p>actively seek out attention from others (eg: vocalise or reach out)</p> <p>actively play with another person (eg: hand person a toy or pull at the person's hands)</p> <p>Lead an interaction game (eg: start 'Row the boat' or rolling a ball backwards and forwards)</p>
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Personal Care and Independence

In this area of the curriculum, children with PMLD need to learn the skills that typical children learn at home before starting school. Learning to use the toilet, clean your teeth, get dressed and undressed, eat with a spoon are all vitally important areas and not be considered as activities to be completed as quickly as possible between lessons.

The programme is divided into six areas. The skills in each are on the whole developmental although there are some exceptions.

Eating and Drinking	Dressing and Undressing	Using the toilet	Cleaning teeth	Washing and Showering	RSE
Show a response to food and drink (eg: by moving the food around the mouth and swallowing)	Show a response to being dressed and undressed (eg: by eye or limb movement)	Show a response to having their pads changed (eg: by or limb eye movement)	Show a response to teeth being cleaned (eg: by eye blinking, pulling a face)	Show a response to being washed and dried - usually hands, face and bottom – or being showered (e.g. by eye movement or limb)	Expressing a preference using a preferred method of communication.
Being helpful when being supported to eat and drink (eg: by opening the mouth for the spoon/ cup or turning to spoon/ cup)	Be helpful when being undressed and dressed (eg: relax limbs)	Be helpful when having their pads changed (eg: relax limbs or lift bottom)	Be helpful when their teeth are being cleaned (eg: opening mouth)	Be helpful when being washed and dried/ showered (eg: hold out hands or turn up face)	Positive and negative reactions to stimuli.
Eat and drink pureed food/ thickened drink	Offer limbs (eg: when putting on a coat/ trousers/ shoes)	Sit on toilet seats regularly (usually after completing a toileting chart to find any patterns in times for urination or defecation)	Hold a toothbrush in their mouth but probably only on front teeth	Wash and dry their hands in the sink / shower	Experiencing different types of touch (tacpac, aromatherapy, massage, etc.).
Drink a variety of drinks (eg: milk, squash, tea)	Finish taking off clothes once the process has been started by an adult (eg: wriggle out of shoes once they have been loosened/ pull sock off toes after they have been pulled down)	Transfer from chair to toilet or from standing to toilet	Use a conventional brush (or electric toothbrush) (probably on front teeth first, gradually learning to include all teeth)	Wash and dry their faces in the sink/ shower	An introduction to Public and Private language and signs
Eat mashed food (usually each food mashed separately)	Take off their clothes (probably starting with shoes and coats and progressing to other items of clothing)	Use toilet appropriately if taken by an adult regularly	Put the paste on the toothbrush (beginning with just squeezing the toothpaste but then learning to twist the top off and on)	Wash and dry their bodies whilst taking a shower	An introduction to the correct names for male and female private parts.
Eat chopped food		Indicate the need to change their wet/soiled pads (eg: cry with discomfort)		Complete the whole showering sequence (probably with adult supporting and prompting each step)	Saying “no” i.e. developing communication skills around public and private parts of the body/ assertiveness.
Eat finger food		Move to the changing table when shown their pad	Swill and spit with mouthwash		Friendships.
Use a spoon to eat (maybe move on to using a fork)	Pull up pants/ trousers (eg: after using the toilet)	Stand to have their pad/ sanitary towel changed			Acceptable touch (doctor, support staff providing personal care).
Use a two handled cup to drink (probably first with a lid, then perhaps a slanted cup before progressing to a conventional open cup)	Put on their clothes when handed the correct item (probably starting with shoes and coats)	Recognise the word/ symbol/ sign ‘toilet’ in context			

<p>Use a single handled cup to drink</p> <p>Use a beaker (with no handles) to drink</p>	<p>Put clothes on the right part of the body in the correct orientation</p> <p>Put their clothes on a peg/ on a chair or in a locker</p> <p>Put clothes on in a sensible order (eg: socks before shoes)</p> <p>Choose the correct clothes for an activity (eg: coat to go outside, swimsuit for swimming)</p> <p>Put PE/ swimming kit into a bag</p> <p>Put socks together/ put shoes together</p> <p>Recognise basic clothing vocabulary/ sign/ symbol in context (probably coat and shoes)</p>	<p>Indicate a need to use the toilet (eg: go to the door or use sign/ symbol)</p> <p>Take themselves to the toilet when they need to use it</p> <p>Flush the toilet</p> <p>Shut the toilet door</p> <p>Complete the whole toilet sequence (probably with adult support and prompting each step)</p> <p>Wipe their bottoms</p>			<p>Appropriate behaviour.</p> <p>Personal Hygiene.</p> <p>Growing up, changing bodies.</p> <p>Feelings and emotions.</p>
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Physical Development

Children who are physically impaired or who are still learning to move need lots of opportunities to move around both supported and freely. They may require a range of equipment for lying, sitting, standing, walking. As part of the physical programme, children should have a range of different positions in which they can be comfortable.

The programme is divided into four areas: Body Awareness, Mobility, Fine and Gross motor skills

Body Awareness It is hoped that passive 'allowing' will become more active 'enjoying' where movement is encouraged at any level/. The ultimate aim is that they will be as aware of their body as possible and as independent in their movements and mobility as they can. Remember that in this programme, the emphasis is on the physical movement, not on the understanding of the use of that movement.	Mobility		
<p>Show a response to massage of hands/ feet/ arms/ legs (maybe with aromatherapy oils), and various sensory stimulation on different parts of the body (eg: foot spa, silk material, fan)</p> <p>Show a response to a range of total body movements (eg: floating, rolling)</p> <p>Show a response to a range of different body orientations (eg: flat, bunched up, upside down, side lying)</p> <p>Show a response to a range of pace of movement (eg: slow, quick, jerky, smooth)</p> <p>Show a response to their limbs to being moved (eg: stretching in exercises or as part of action songs)</p> <p>Show a response to objects in designated spaces to touch different parts of the body when moving even if only slightly (eg: Lillie Neilson Little Room)</p> <p>Move their hands and arms with hand-under-hand support/ hand-over-hand support and/ or co-actively</p>	Indoor (in no particular order) Starting positions could be: On mat supported Supported sitting Independent sitting Standing 4 point kneeling	Outdoor (In sequential order) – is this worth having in as we don't have facilities for most of these	Water During swimming look for responses to changes in environment.
	Crawl or bottom shuffle Slide on back/ tummy (maybe in a blanket) Roll (eg: across a mat) Rock/ row backwards and forwards (eg; Row Your Boat) Push and pull (people and objects) Bounce (on trampoline) Throw and roll objects (balls, beanbags) Catch objects (from bigger to smaller) Move forwards and backwards Move in and out of objects (eg: tunnel, den, tent) Move slowly and quickly (maybe being pulled in a blanket at different speeds)	Walking/moving outdoors Move over a range of different outdoor surfaces (eg: woodland trail, shopping precinct, grass, shingle, cobbles) Use playground/ adventure equipment to swing, slide, rotate, climb, ride Ride bikes (eventually pushing the pedals themselves)	Enter the pool as independently as possible Get out of the pool as independently as possible Achieve vertical balance in the water Back float Front float with support Move from back to vertical Rotate in the water – from back to front and front to back Control unwanted rotations Move arms in the water Move legs in the water Jump when in the water

<p>them) – one hand/ both hands/ midline/ left/ right</p> <p>Reach for objects and grasp them (whole hand)</p> <p>Reach for objects and grasp them (pincer grasp)</p>	<p>Hold objects using a pincer grip (increasing amount of time)</p> <p>Move at the wrist whilst holding objects</p> <p>Rotate arms (hands up and hands down) while holding objects</p> <p>Hold onto a bar (eg: to hold themselves up) (increasing amount of time)</p> <p>Hold objects and put them in contact with another (eg: bang two objects together, put objects in a box, bang drum with stick)</p>					
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