



Ready for school toolkit: Supporting early growth

Early Development Instrument (EDI)
resources and activities

This resource provides simple and fun activities that support children's development across the five EDI domains. These activities can be done at home and help children build skills to do well in school and life. Doing them every day helps children feel strong, confident and ready to learn.

What is EDI?

The EDI helps assess children's readiness for learning in school. The EDI is a questionnaire used by teachers for all senior kindergarten (year 2) children.

The EDI measures children's skills for their age in five development areas:

- **Physical health and well-being:** Children are healthy, independent and rested each day.
- **Social competence:** Children can play and get along with others, share and show self-confidence.
- **Emotional maturity:** Children can concentrate on tasks, help others, show patience, and are not often aggressive or angry.
- **Language and cognitive development:** Children are interested in reading and writing, counting, and can recognize numbers and shapes.
- **Communication skills and general knowledge:** Children can tell a story and communicate with other adults and other children.



Activity 1: [Using playdough for number formation](#)

Physical health and well-being - Fine motor skills

Using playdough to fill number shapes helps children build hand and finger strength. It's fun and helps with:

- Finger strength (for writing, buttons, using forks).
- Hand-eye co-ordination (matching what they see with how they move).
- Using thumb and fingers together (for zippers and pencils).
- Understanding space and size.
- Using both hands together (for scissors or tying shoes).

Activity 2: [Gross motor activities](#)

Physical health and well-being - Gross motor skills

Simple games like jumping, skipping, or balancing on one foot help children grow strong and move with control. These games:

- Build muscle strength.
- Help children move better and stay balanced.
- Make them feel more confident.
- Prepare them for gym class and learning at school.



Activity 3: [Establishing a hand preference](#)

Physical health and well-being - Physical independence

Through tracing and cutting a variety of lines and shapes, children practice holding tools with control, developing an established hand preference, and coordinating small, precise movements. It helps them:

- Choose the hand that works best for careful tasks.
- Learn how to use one hand as the “working hand” (for holding a pencil or scissors) and the other as the “helping hand,” so each hand has a job.
- Follow straight, curved, or zigzag lines which helps them get ready for writing.
- Build confidence, as finishing a traced line or cutting along a path helps children feel proud and in control.

Activity 4: [Visual schedule](#)

Physical health and well-being - Physical readiness for the school day

Using a visual schedule encourages children to take part in daily self care tasks, understand what their bodies need to feel ready, and move toward greater independence. It helps them:

- Get ready more easily because the steps are clear and predictable.
- Feel rested, fed, dressed properly, and ready for their day.
- Understand the order of events and what they need to do before leaving home.



Activity 5: [Conversation card prompts](#)

Social competence: Overall social competence/responsibility and respect

Conversation card prompts help children learn how to cooperate, show respect, and use positive social behaviours while also practicing empathy, making friends, and solving problems. This helps children:

- Read cards about real-life situations, like helping someone who is alone or welcoming a new classmate, which teaches them to show respect for others.
- Talk about what they would do in each situation, helping them learn to take responsibility for their actions and think about how their choices affect others.
- Understand other people's feelings, which builds respect through empathy.

Activity 6: [Creating a visual calendar](#)

Social competence - Approaches to learning

A picture or list calendar helps children know what to do each day. It helps them:

- Feel safe and ready for the day.
- Be more independent.
- Learn to manage time.
- Understand what comes first, next and last.
- Remember things without being told.
- Practice reading and following steps.
- Feel proud when tasks are done.

Activity 7: [The experience critic](#)

Social competence - Readiness to explore new things

By rating and discussing past activities, children learn to recognize what they enjoy, feel proud of their choices, and build readiness to explore new experiences. This helps them:

- Learn to share their feelings in simple ways.
- Celebrate the things they do well.
- Continue to try new things.
- Reflect on their day and see themselves as confident explorers.

Activity 8: [Emotion scenario cards](#)

Emotional maturity – Prosocial and helping behaviour

Children examining a scenario card and identifying how someone is feeling will assist them in noticing when a peer may be upset, left out, or needing comfort. An example might be, “A peer called your friend a name that was not nice. How do you think he felt?” This also helps them:

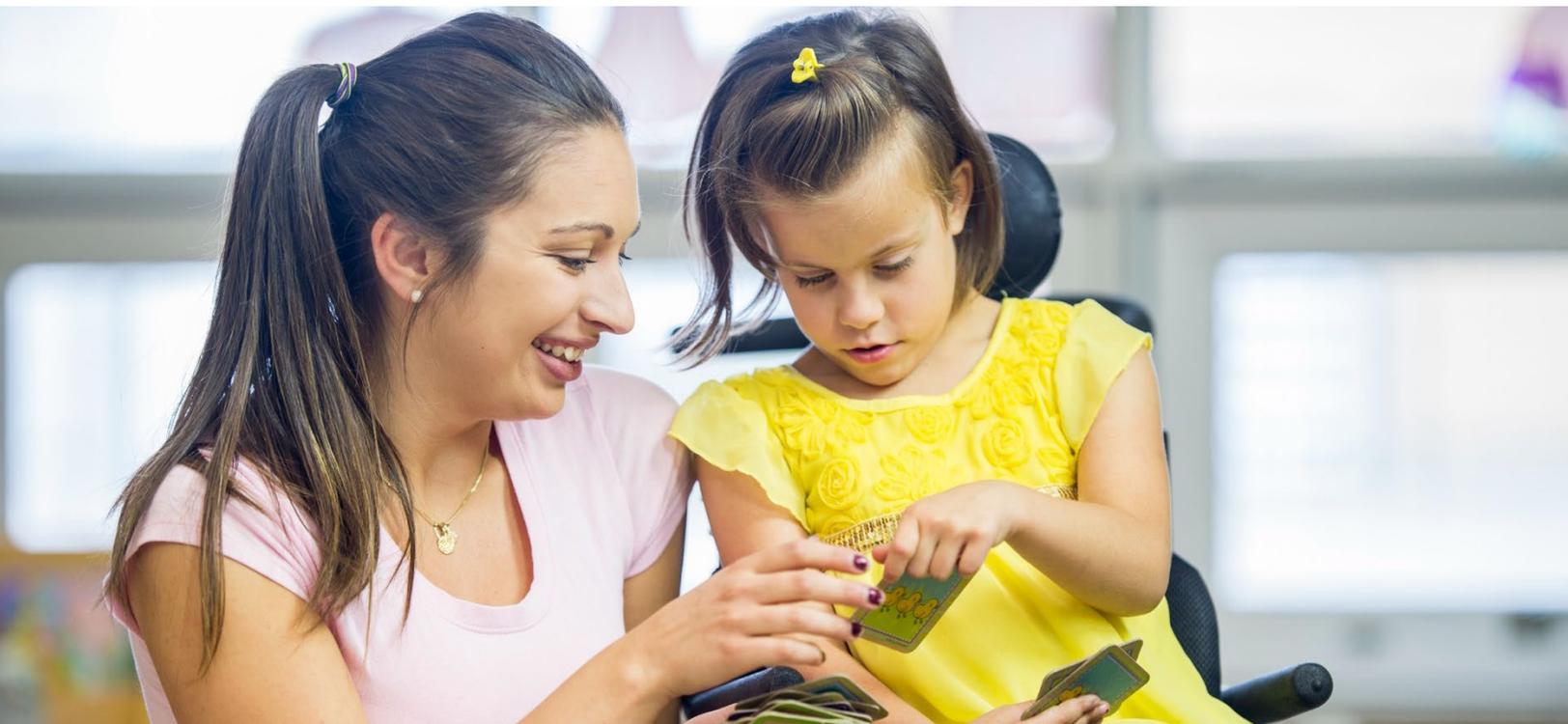
- Practice choosing kind ways to help someone who needs support.
- Learn to offer help on their own instead of waiting for an adult to tell them.
- Practice solving problems in fair and caring ways.
- Understand what others might be going through.

Activity 9: [Finger labyrinth](#)

Emotional maturity – Hyperactivity and inattention

This supports children’s emotional maturity by guiding them to create and use their own finger labyrinths. This process helps them slow down, think before acting, manage feelings in age-appropriate ways, and practice sustained attention and calm focus. This tool helps children:

- Stay focused as they follow the maze.
- Remain calm through slow, steady movements.
- Build patience as they need to move carefully and take their time.
- Practice mindful thinking.



Activity 10: [Calming cards](#)

Emotional maturity - Aggressive behaviour

These are small cards with pictures or ideas that help children calm down. They help children:

- Take a break before acting out.
- Choose a way to feel better (like deep breaths or stretching).
- Feel safe knowing what to do.
- Learn about their feelings.
- Pick what works best for them.

Activity 11: [The zones of regulation](#)

Emotional maturity - Anxious and fearful behaviour

The zones of regulation is a framework that helps children identify, understand and manage their emotions. This is a way to help children name their feelings using colours:

- Blue – Sad, tired or bored.
- Green – Happy, calm and ready to learn.
- Yellow – Silly, nervous or frustrated.
- Red – Angry or very upset.

All feelings are okay! Children learn:

- To spot how they feel.
- To manage emotions in a healthy way.
- To talk about their feelings clearly.
- To understand what makes them feel a certain way.



Activity 12: [Letter tracing](#)

Language and cognitive development – Basic literacy

Children can trace the alphabet in big and small letters to practice how letters are made and to see which hand they like to use. This helps them get ready for writing and reading and builds memory. They can also use the line at the bottom to practice writing words like their name by looking at the letters above. This helps children:

- Recognize letters and attach sounds to them.
- Build confidence in writing simple words (like their name).
- Practice following the top-to-bottom and left-to-right paths for reading and writing.
- Remember the order of the alphabet.

Activity 13: [Memory match game](#)

Language and cognitive development - Interest in literacy, numeracy and memory

In this game, players take turns flipping over two cards at a time to find matching pairs. The challenge is to remember where each card is and match all the pairs using as few attempts as possible. Matching cards helps children grow brain power. It supports:

- Remembering what they see.
- Keeping track of cards in their mind.
- Seeing patterns.
- Learning letters, numbers and words.
- Growing their vocabulary.
- Practicing counting.
- Learning early math ideas, like matching and sorting.



Activity 14: [Story sequencing](#)

Language and cognitive development – Advanced literacy

This support children's language and thinking skills by helping them put events in order, understand how a story works, and practice early reading and writing. When children use picture cards to sequence events and retell stories, they practice remembering what happened, noticing how events are alike or different, and using simple words or sentences to share their ideas. This is great for:

- Understanding how stories work.
- Building memory skills.
- Strengthening their vocabulary.
- Developing sentence skills.

Activity 15: [Counting time](#)

Language and cognitive development – Basic numeracy

Number cards can be cut out and children can put the numbers in order. This helps them learn that numbers go in a set order and that the last number they say tells them how many there are. You could also colour code the numbers to identify which numbers are even and odd. Counting to 20 helps children understand numbers, order, and simple problem solving. It also helps with:

- Basic counting skills.
- Understanding simple patterns, which builds early math skills.
- Understanding which numbers are larger or smaller.
- Recognizing written numbers.

Activity 16: [General knowledge board game](#)

Communication skills and general knowledge

A general knowledge board game is great for:

- Talking clearly and listening.
- Learning fun facts about the world.
- Thinking and solving problems.
- Learning new words.
- Taking turns and talking with others.
- Feeling confident sharing ideas.