



# Children

module

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# 1 PRE-BIRTH DEVELOPMENT

**B**iological life begins at the moment of conception. By four weeks, the **fetus** has a heart beat and two weeks later the brain reveals electrical impulses. The skin, the first and most important sense organ, is complete after seven or eight weeks of pregnancy. By seven weeks, the neuron cells begin to connect and the fetus, which is less than one inch long, begins to move spontaneously. At eight weeks, the baby is around one and half **inches** long and has already formed all organs. Every minute about 100,000 nerve cells begin to **sprout** until there are around one billion at the moment of birth. The sense of smell is ready to function by the second month of pregnancy, while the sense of taste is active by the third month. By ten weeks, fetuses are very active; they can suck their **thumb**, jump and scratch their head or play with their umbilical cord. The ear completes its structural development during the second to fifth month of pregnancy. We

do not know much about what a baby really experiences during the nine months in the mother's **womb**, but we do know that he/she responds to voices and sounds. According to experts who study the acquisition of language, the basis for learning one's mother tongue begins in the womb.

Many newborns are **tiny**, wet creatures when they first emerge. Their heads are quite big when compared to the rest of their bodies. But their appearance will change dramatically over the following weeks as they grow. Many parents are surprised to see how alert a newborn really is. Babies spend a lot of time studying faces – especially their parents'. They also use all of their senses, including smell and touch, to further identify and become attached to their parents.



## READING COMPREHENSION

● Answer the following questions.

- 1 When does biological life begin?
- 2 When does the fetus's heart begin to beat?
- 3 When does a fetus start to move?
- 4 How does a baby start to acquire language?

- 5 What does a baby experience in the mother's womb?
- 6 What does a newborn look like?
- 7 How does a newborn recognise his/her parents?

## ACTIVITIES



## VOCABULARY

● Read the text again and find the English equivalents of the following Italian terms.

- |                |            |
|----------------|------------|
| 1 Concepimento | 7 Saltare  |
| 2 Feto         | 8 Ventre   |
| 3 Gravidanza   | 9 Neonato  |
| 4 Neurone      | 10 Vivace  |
| 5 Succhiare    | 11 Olfatto |
| 6 Pollice      | 12 Tatto   |



ACTIVITIES



FILL IN THE TABLE

What are the most important steps in fetal development? Fill in the chart below.

AGE	WHICH ORGANS AND ABILITIES ARE DEVELOPED
4 weeks	
6 weeks	
7 weeks	
8 weeks	
2 months	
10 weeks	
3 months	
5 months	

TEXT COMPLETION

Fill in the gaps, translating the words in brackets into English.

ESTABLISHING A BOND WITH THE PARENTS

Infants need a small, consistent group of people whom they can learn to **1** (*conoscere*) and trust. Babies tell us about their feelings and **2** (*bisogni*) through their facial expressions and body movements, as well as by babbling and crying. Crying is the main form of baby communication. Their **3** (*pianto*) tells us that they want or need something to happen – perhaps a **4** (*pannolino*) change, a bottle, a nap, or a **5** (*abbraccio*). Even **6** (*prima*) they understand words, babies love to hear language and respond by making **7** (*suoni*) that gradually resemble adult speech. During the first two years of **8** (*vita*), children understand much more than they can say.

FIND THE TOPIC

Read the following text and match each of the headings below with the corresponding section.

A Medicines    B Food    C Weight Gain    D Planning Ahead    E Drink

RULES FOR A SAFE PREGNANCY

The nine months between conception and delivery are filled with anticipation, and with advice. Here's the latest thinking about a safe pregnancy.

**1**  
Most birth defects occur three to six weeks after conception. To be safe, women should begin taking a daily vitamin that contains at least 400 micrograms of **folic acid** and about 5,000 units of vitamin A two months before conception.

**2**  
Pregnant women must never eat for two. On the contrary, they should not increase their food intake in the first three months. Overweight women should gain no more than 15 to 25 **pounds**; average women, 25 to 35 pounds; thin women, 28 to 40 pounds.

**3**  
Calories must be spent wisely during pregnancy. High levels of mercury in shark, swordfish, and king mackerel may harm the baby's developing brain, and for this reason, this type of fish should be avoided by pregnant women. Soft, unpasteurised cheeses and uncooked hot dogs can carry listeria bacteria, which cross the placenta, while uncooked seafood can carry hepatitis A. Peanuts are a good source of folate and protein, but pregnant women with a family history of allergies may want to avoid them.

**Folic acid** is a vitamin which prevents anaemia and birth defects.  
A **pound** is a unit for measuring weight, equal to 0.454 kilograms.



4

Until researchers establish a safe level of alcohol consumption for pregnant women, mums-to-be should avoid it.

Women should also switch to decaffeinated coffee or limit intake to one or two cups a day.

5

"If you can avoid using **drugs** in pregnancy, avoid them," says Massachusetts General Hospital's Laura Riley, chair of the committee on obstetric practice for the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

(Adapted from *Time*)

### ACTIVITIES



The word **drug** has two main meanings in English. It may refer to a substance used as a medicine or to a habit-forming substance that affects the nervous system.

## SPEAKING

- Discuss the quotation of Rabindranath Tagore, national poet of India, "Every time a child is born it brings with it the hope that God is not yet disappointed with man" with the aid of the guidelines below.
  - What is birth associated to?
  - What is the relation between birth and God?
  - Why should God be disappointed with man?

# 2 NEWBORN CARE AND FEEDING

A child is generally considered a **newborn** from birth to four weeks; while a **baby** or **infant** is generally considered a very young child, between birth and one year old. **Routine care**, such as feeding a baby or changing a diaper, should be paid according to the baby's needs and not to a schedule. Baby's care includes two main areas of activity: hygiene and feeding.

### BABY'S HYGIENE

It is essential to keep a baby happy and healthy and to avoid infections. Beyond the obvious need for cleanliness (most newborns need about ten







nappies a day), babies have certain areas that need special care, such as the area around the umbilical cord. Two or three baths a week should be sufficient for the first year, as bathing too often may dry the baby’s skin. Baby’s nails must be constantly **trimmed** to prevent a baby from scratching himself/herself. Two other important body parts that need constant cleaning are the ears and the nose, in order to avoid ear infections and breathing obstruction.

BABY’S FEEDING

Choosing whether to **breastfeed** or **formula feed** a baby is one of the first decisions parents will make. Although there is no right or wrong choice, the *World Health Organization* (WHO) and many medical associations throughout the world recommend breastfeeding as the ‘perfect food’ for babies.

Breast milk not only contains all the nutrients babies need in an easily digested form, but it also contains antibodies which protect babies from all kinds of infections. Women who breastfeed may also feel a special **bond** with their baby and may be less likely to develop postnatal depression.

But breastfeeding may not be possible or preferable for all women. Infant formula milk is a good alternative for mothers who are unable to breastfeed or who decide not to.

Before seven months, very soft food in small amounts on the tip of a spoon should be introduced, to accustom the infant to its feel.

Self-feeding can begin as early as six months, as soon as a baby can pick up bits of mashed potato or banana, well-cooked, thin carrot slices, baby peas, or similar soft foods.

Once a baby begins using a spoon, offer sticky foods such as thick rice cereal and mashed potatoes, which will not slide off the spoon.



READING COMPREHENSION

● Answer the following questions.

- 1

What is the difference between a newborn and an infant?
- 2

Why is hygiene essential for a baby?
- 3

Which area should be kept especially clean?
- 4

What are the two possible feeding alternatives?
- 5

Why does WHO recommend breastfeeding?
- 6

What does breast milk contain?



TRUE OR FALSE

● Decide if the following statements are true or false and correct the false ones.

- 1

Newborns must have their diapers changed twice a day.

T

F
- 2

Babies should be bathed no more than three times a week.

T

F
- 3

Nails must be trimmed to avoid infections.

T

F
- 4

Formula milk contains antibodies.

T

F
- 5

Breastfeeding can help to prevent postnatal depression.

T

F
- 6

Soft food should be introduced after seven months.

T

F

## VOCABULARY

## ACTIVITIES



● Read the text again and find the English equivalents of the following Italian terms.

- 1 Cordone ombelicale
- 2 Pannolone
- 3 Timpano
- 4 Grattare

- 5 Latte in polvere
- 6 Anticorpi
- 7 Cucchiaino
- 8 Allattamento al seno

## SENTENCE COMPLETION

● Read the following passage and complete the notes below, matching the first with the second part of each sentence.

### NEWBORN EXAMINATION

A baby will receive a health examination in the first minutes after delivery. His/her heart rate will be monitored to ensure that the heart is properly functioning. A **sample** of blood will be taken from the newborn's **heel** to be tested, and a sample of umbilical cord blood will be taken to test for the baby's blood type. Newborns will be given an injection of vitamin K to improve their blood clotting **ability**, while his/her eyes will be treated with antibiotics to prevent infections. Delivery room nurses will also take bodily measurements of the new baby. These measurements will be very important to **assess** a newborn's rate of growth. The baby will be weighed again 24 hours later and given a more accurate examination.

- 1 The heart rate
- 2 The umbilical cord blood
- 3 Vitamin K
- 4 The baby

- A is weighed to assess the rate of growth.
- B is injected to increase blood coagulation.
- C is monitored to ensure the heart's proper functioning.
- D is tested to find out the baby's blood type.

## CLOZE EXERCISE

● Read the text and fill in the gaps with the following words: alcohol – infection – redness – pediatrician – diaper – cotton – urine.

### HOW TO CARE FOR A BABY'S UMBILICAL CORD

Clean the cord at each **1** change to help it dry out and to prevent **2** The area around the cord should be wiped with a **3** swab dipped in rubbing **4**.

Fold the baby's diaper below the navel area to keep the cord from being soaked with **5**. It can take several weeks for the cord stump to fall off. If you notice pus or **6** at the base of the cord stump, call your **7**, as this may signal an infection.



ACTIVITIES



FILL IN THE TABLE

● Place the following instructions for a baby’s hygiene in the section they belong to.

BASIC BABY HYGIENE RULES

- 1 In order to sponge-bathe a baby, you must place him/her on a **well-padded** surface in a warm room.
- 2 A nasal syringe may be used to remove excess mucus from a **runny** or congested nose in order to keep the airway free.
- 3 One hand must be kept on a baby at all times and only the area to be washed must be exposed. Wash the baby’s face without soap and use mildly soapy water for the rest of the body.
- 4 Before starting to change your baby, make sure you have everything you need – a clean nappy, cotton, a small basin with **lukewarm** water, and a washcloth.
- 5 Wash only the outer ear and the entrance to the ear canal and do not use a cotton swab, which could damage the eardrums.
- 6 Always take the baby with you if you have to step away from the changing table, even if it is just for a short time.
- 7 Baby’s nails are soft and easy to cut and you can trim them either with baby-sized nail clippers or with small scissors.
- 8 Watch for dried mucus that collects in the nose and can partially obstruct breathing.

BABY’S CARE	
Bathing a baby	
Changing the nappy	
Trimming the nails	
Cleaning ears and nose	

SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

● The following sentences go together to form a text on how to formula feed. Working in pairs put them into the right order.

HOW TO BOTTLE FEED WITH FORMULA MILK

- 1 Then, test the temperature of the milk by pouring a couple of drops of formula milk on your **wrist**. It should be lukewarm.
- 2 When bottle feeding, hold the bottle at an angle and keep the teat full of milk to prevent the baby from **swallowing** air with the milk.
- 3 The hole in the teat should allow the milk to flow in a continuous stream of several drops per second when the bottle is inverted. If the hole is too large, the baby will get too much milk too fast; on the contrary, if the hole is too small, the baby will get tired from sucking before he/she is satisfied.
- 4 Formula milk must be brought to room temperature. You can warm it by placing the bottle in a bowl or large mug of hot water for a few minutes.
- 5 Once milk is heated, it should never be reheated as this very rapidly increases the bacteria levels in the milk.





## LISTENING

- Listen to the following text and fill in the blanks with the words you hear.

### Sterilising Methods

Boiling is the traditional method of sterilising bottles. You should use a **1** that has not been used for any other purpose. Fill it with water and fully submerge the bottles inside. You will need to boil the equipment for at least **2** minutes. Steam sterilisers are an efficient way to ensure that bottle feeding equipment is **3** to use. They only take approximately eight minutes to work and, if **4**, can keep equipment clean for up to three hours.

Sterilising solutions take about half an hour to work and often allow you to leave **5** soaking for up to twenty-four hours if sealed, although you shouldn't leave them longer than this without changing the solution.

Steamers for use in the microwave are also available, although you cannot use them to clean equipment with **6** components. After you remove the baby's feeding equipment from your chosen sterilisation container you should fill it with **7** as soon as possible to avoid contamination. Current guidelines suggest that you continue sterilising a baby's bottle feeding equipment until he/she reaches **8** year of age.



## TRUE OR FALSE

- Decide if the following sentences are true or false and correct the false ones.

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1 Boiling bottles is not useful to sterilize them.                        | T | F |
| 2 Bottles should boil for at least ten minutes to be safely sterilised.   | T | F |
| 3 All equipment can be sterilised in steamers for microwave use.          | T | F |
| 4 Feeding equipment should be sterilised until the baby is two years old. | T | F |
| 5 Sterilising solutions need at least twenty four hours to work.          | T | F |

# 3 DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

**T**hough children grow and develop at different **rates**, they all pass a set of developmental milestones concerning four main areas: physical development; social and emotional development; cognitive development; language development.





## PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Since their birth, babies show the desire to **explore** the world around them, and they move their eyes and their bodies towards the people and objects that comfort them.

During their first year, they learn the basics of self-movement and improve the skills needed for holding objects.

They generally begin to roll **over**, to reach for and touch objects, to put them in their mouths, and to make discoveries. When they reach the age of one year, most children can walk alone, pick up toys from a standing position, push and pull objects, and move to music.

From two to three years, children become more comfortable with motion and coordination. Most begin to run forward, jump in place with both feet together, and kick a ball forward.

From three to four years, children's precision of motion increases significantly. They can run around obstacles, walk on a line and balance on one foot.

## SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

These skills are often harder to **pinpoint** than physical development. The milestones of social development reflect in the ability to pay attention, make transitions from one activity to another, and cooperate with others.

When they are one year old, children become more **aware of themselves** and their ability to make things happen. They imitate adults' behaviours and show intense feelings for parents and affection for other familiar people.

When they are two years old, children begin to think of themselves as more powerful, creative 'doers'. They show awareness of gender **identity** and begin self-evaluation, developing notions of themselves as good, bad, etc. They also experience rapid mood **shifts** and may show increased **fearfulness** and aggressive feelings and behaviours.





## Children

### COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Newborns begin right away to use and integrate their senses to explore what they see around them. They can see clearly within 13 inches and can focus on and follow moving objects, including human faces. From nine to twelve months most children respond to simple directions and questions with gestures, sounds, and sometimes words. Additionally, they start to **experiment purposefully** with the physical properties of objects and enjoy looking at picture books.

At the age of two, most children can distinguish between 'you' and 'me' and begin to match similar objects. When they reach the age of four, most children can understand concepts like grouping and matching as well as organising materials on their own.

### LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Long before children can say words, they are **active language learners**. Crying, in particular, is probably the first form of communication of a baby. Even small babies love to have 'conversations': they exchange sounds, facial expressions and gestures. Between six and nine months, children's vocalizations increase. Most babies of this age begin repetitive babbling and they associate gestures with simple words. By the age of two children can say a few words clearly and a few dozen additional words that family members can understand.

Good language development also depends on the language the child hears around him/her: an adult who talks and sings to the infant is also teaching him/her language. These four areas often **overlap**, as development in one area may be reinforced and **enhanced** by growth in others. Moreover, each child develops differently, and he/she may develop more quickly in one area than in another.

### TRUE OR FALSE

● *Decide if the following statements are true or false and correct the false ones.*



- |  | T | F |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Even newborns move their eyes and bodies.                            | T | F |
| 2 By the age of two, children show the ability to move to music.       | T | F |
| 3 Social skills include the ability to walk, jump and run.             | T | F |
| 4 When they are one year old, children start to match similar objects. | T | F |
| 5 Two-year-old children can show signs of fear and aggressiveness.     | T | F |
| 6 Newborns can't distinguish human faces.                              | T | F |
| 7 Crying is a form of communication.                                   | T | F |
| 8 Babbling reveals communication disorders.                            | T | F |
| 9 Talking to a baby is a good way to transfer language abilities.      | T | F |
| 10 All children grow and develop in the same way.                      | T | F |



ACTIVITIES



VOCABULARY

● Read the text again and find the English equivalents of the following Italian terms.

- 1

Abità
- 2

Pietra miliare
- 3

Sviluppo cognitivo
- 4

Movimento
- 5

Ostacolo
- 6

Crescita
- 7

Associare
- 8

Vocalizzazione

DEFINITIONS

● Match each term with its definition.

- 1

Infants
- 2

Babbling
- 3

Gestures
- 4

Explore
- 5

Coordination
- 6

Forward
- 7

Mood
- A

Ability to use different parts of the body efficiently
- B

Movements of parts of your body, especially hands or head
- C

Making a sound like water moving over stones
- D

Feeling or state of mind
- E

Towards the front
- F

Babies or very young children
- G

Search or examine by touch

TRANSLATION

● Translate the following sentences into Italian.

- 1

Parents play a crucial role in shaping the development of children.
- 2

Such factors as financial and emotional stress, social support, and parent personality may influence the nature of a parent-child relationship.
- 3

Building a positive relationship between parent and child is one task that requires work and effort to make it strong and successful.
- 4

Maintaining open communications helps parents and children to stay connected.

FILL IN THE TABLE

● Place the following abilities in the section they belong to.

- 1

Associating gestures with words
- 2

Looking at picture books
- 3

Babbling
- 4

Picking up toys
- 5

Showing affection
- 6

Balancing on one foot
- 7

Seeing within 13 inches
- 8

Organising materials
- 9

Touching objects
- 10

Making self-evaluations

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT	LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

## WRITING

- Write sentences which have the same meaning as the following.

- 1 During their first year, babies learn the basics of self-movement.
- 2 They show awareness of gender identity and begin self-evaluation.
- 3 Long before children can say words, they are active language learners.
- 4 Good language development also depends on the language the child hears around him/her.

## ACTIVITIES



## CLOZE EXERCISE

- Read the text below and fill in the gaps with the following words: ear – anyone – instincts – important – nature – allows – free – enjoy.

### CHILDREN'S GIFT OF PERCEPTION

Since it is completely **1** from prejudices and preconceptions, a child's mind is able to see and understand the real **2** of things. According to Romantic poets, perception is a childhood's natural gift which **3** the child to see and understand the perfection of nature better than **4** else. This happens because children are connected to nature; they are part of nature itself and live in a state of innocence. Nature is a sort of living entity which has an **5** role in acquiring meaningful insight into the human condition. Only an eye and an **6** that see and listen without any prejudices can **7** the beauty nature has to offer to mankind.

Children are provided with a sort of sacred power which helps them develop toward perfection. The renewal of the human world relies on the truth that is in the natural **8** of the child.



## IN OTHER WORDS

- Read the following short text. Then find and underline sentences with the same meaning as those listed below.

### SLEEP LIKE A BABY

Babies younger than four months old have very different sleep needs than older babies.

A newborn baby sleeps about sixteen to eighteen hours per day, and this sleep is generally distributed over six to seven brief sleep periods. Newborn babies have very tiny **tummies**. They grow rapidly and their diet is liquid, which digests quickly. For these reasons, they usually need to be fed every two to four hours – and sometimes even more often.

It is very natural for a newborn to fall asleep while sucking at the breast, a bottle or a pacifier. But what are the safest sleep positions for babies? Studies have revealed that placing a baby to sleep on his/her





back can reduce the incidence of SIDS (*Sudden Infant Death Syndrome* – the sudden and unexplained death of an infant under one year of age). This recommendation is just for newborns. Once the child is able to roll over, he/she will choose the sleeping position that is most comfortable for him/her. One way to encourage good sleep is to get familiar with the baby's sleepy signals and put him/her to sleep as soon as he/she seems tired.



- 1 It is necessary to feed a baby every two to four hours.
- 2 Babies can fall asleep while being fed.
- 3 Babies who sleep on their backs are less subject to SIDS.
- 4 Newborns sleep six or seven times a day, for a total of sixteen to eighteen hours.

## PICTURES TO MATCH

● Put the following phases of a child's development in chronological order. Then, associate each phase with the corresponding image.

- 1 A child has completed the first developmental steps and can go to school.
- 2 When a baby is beginning to walk, he/she is called a toddler.
- 3 When the baby is just born, he/she is called a newborn.
- 4 An infant is a baby under one year.



## SPEAKING

- To what extent can a child's personality be moulded by his/her parents? How much of a child's character is influenced by the context he/she lives in? Discuss it in pairs.



## LISTENING

- While listening to the following short text on language acquisition, fill in the blank spaces.

### Learning to Talk

Children generally learn to talk surprisingly **1**, and most of them, by the age of four, can talk on a wide variety of **2**, using a language that is rich in vocabulary and appropriate to the **3** and purpose. Children develop skills in **4** at the same time as they are developing knowledge of the use of words in different **5** to express meanings. They learn and use their knowledge of the pronunciation and **6** of the language in the course of conversation. But to participate in conversation in a way that appears to be **7** and natural requires skills that go beyond the ability to produce well-articulated grammatical **8** of words. These skills are referred to as conversation or **9** skills. As they grow, children become increasingly **10** to the different ways in which messages need to be constructed.

## TRUE OR FALSE

- Decide if the following statements are true or false and correct the false ones.

- |   |          |          |
|---|----------|----------|
| <b>1</b> Children learn to talk quite slowly.                                     | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| <b>2</b> When they are four, children have a very rich vocabulary.                | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| <b>3</b> Pronunciation and vocabulary skills are developed contemporaneously.     | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| <b>4</b> Discourse skills imply the ability to take part in conversations.        | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |
| <b>5</b> Children are not aware of the several ways a message can be constructed. | <b>T</b> | <b>F</b> |

# 4 A DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER: AUTISM

**A**utism is a complex **developmental disability** that typically appears during the first three years of life and is the result of a neurological disorder that affects the normal functioning of the brain, **impacting** development in the areas of social interaction and communication skills.

Autistic people are different from other people. We hear that all the time, but what does it really mean?

It is hard for children with autism to talk with other people and express themselves using words. People who have autism usually keep to **themselves** and many can't communicate without special help. They also may act or react to what is going on around them in unusual ways. They might **flap** their hands, say certain words over and over, have temper **tantrums**, or play only with one



particular toy. Normal sounds may really bother someone with autism – so much so that the person covers his or her ears.

Autism affects about one in every 150 children, but no one knows what causes it. Knowing the exact cause of autism is hard because the human brain is very complicated. For some unknown reason, some of the cells and connections in the brain of a child with autism – especially those that affect communication, emotions, and senses – do not develop properly or get damaged.

There is no cure for autism, but doctors, therapists, and **special teachers** can help children with autism overcome or adapt to many difficulties. Learning how to communicate is always an important first step. Most understand words better by seeing them, so therapists teach them how to communicate by pointing or using pictures or sign language.

Others need therapy to help them control their behaviour.

Students with mild autism sometimes can attend regular school. But most kids with autism need calmer, more **orderly surroundings**. Some children with mild autism will grow up and be able to live on their own. Those with more serious problems will always need some kind of help.



## READING COMPREHENSION

● Answer the following questions.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 What is autism?</li> <li>2 When does it appear?</li> <li>3 Why are autistic people 'different' from other people?</li> <li>4 How many people suffer from autism?</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 What is the cause of autism?</li> <li>6 How do we know if a child suffers from autism?</li> <li>7 Is there a cure for autism?</li> <li>8 How can we help autistic children?</li> </ol> |
|--|---|



## WORDS TO MATCH

● Match a term in the first column to a word in the second one. Then provide the Italian equivalents.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Developmental</li> <li>2 Neurological</li> <li>3 Sign</li> <li>4 Social</li> <li>5 Temper</li> <li>6 Communication</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A skills</li> <li>B disability</li> <li>C tantrums</li> <li>D disorder</li> <li>E interaction</li> <li>F language</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

## WORD CHOICE

● Complete the following sentences by choosing the correct word among those provided.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Autism compromises the correct (role/functioning/appearance) of the brain.</li> <li>2 Autistic people are (different from /the same as/just like) other people.</li> <li>3 People with autism show great difficulties in (playing/watching/talking) to other people.</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Autistic people may (like/ appreciate/not like) normal sounds.</li> <li>5 The cause of autism is (well known/debated/unknown).</li> <li>6 A first step to overcome autism is learning how to (interact/communicate/ discuss).</li> </ol> |
|--|---|



## TEXT COMPLETION

- Fill in the gaps translating the words in brackets into English.

## ACTIVITIES



## AUTISM: A COMPLEX CONDITION

Autism is a wide-ranging condition, about which there is still much to learn. Despite a great deal of empirical research in the past thirty years, the cause of autism is still **1** (*sconosciuta*).

In the majority of cases there is no identifiable medical cause. However, it is generally accepted that children with autism suffer from a basic cognitive deficit. This means they have **2** (*difficoltà*) in developing knowledge and understanding of other people and the world in which they **3** (*vivono*).

Our senses receive signals from the external world which are transmitted to various parts of the **4** (*cervello*) where they are organised and assimilated to construct a meaningful representation of the world and those who live in it.

People with **5** (*autismo*) may have 'islets of intelligence', showing exceptional skills in fields such as music or art which rely largely on auditory and visual **6** (*memoria*).

These children may feel threatened when other **7** (*persone*) attempt to occupy their 'space'. Children need to be motivated if they are going to make the effort to interact with others; they need to have a reason to communicate. It can be rewarding for the child if he/she **8** (*scopre*) different ways of controlling his/her world. As they learn how to put elementary structures together, such as pieces of puzzles, blocks, etc., they have more practice in learning the **9** (*significato*) and sound of words. Communication between parents and staff when the child goes to school is **10** (*fondamentale*).

# 5 PARENTING

**Foster care** is a system in which a minor is placed in an institution, group home, or private home of a state certified caregiver referred to as a 'foster parent'.

**T**he task of raising a child and supporting his/her physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development from infancy to adulthood is usually performed by the biological parents. Orphaned or abandoned children receive parental care from non-parent blood relations, or may be adopted or raised in **foster care**.

Parenting is one of the most fulfilling jobs in the world, but it might turn out to be very challenging and demanding, and first-time parents might sometimes feel unprepared.

There is not just one right way to be a good parent, and new parents get plenty of suggestions on how to raise their children. Below are some useful tips they should take into account while educating their children.

- **Self-esteem.** The tone of the parents' voice, their body language and expressions are absorbed by kids and affect their developing self-esteem. Approving their successful actions will make them feel proud; encouraging them to do things independently will make them feel capable and strong. On the contrary, **disparaging** comments will make kids feel **worthless**.
- **Communication.** Kids want and deserve explanations about what is allowed and what is forbidden. If adults don't take time to explain, kids will wonder about values and motivations they are asked to follow. Parents who discuss these things with their kids allow them to understand and learn in a nonjudgmental way. Kids who participate in decisions are more motivated to carry them out.



- **Limits and discipline.** Rules are necessary in every household, because they help kids understand adults' expectations and develop self-control. Some rules might include: no TV until homework is done, and no hitting, **name-calling**, or hurtful **teasing** allowed.
- **Quality time.** There is probably nothing kids would like more than spending time with their parents and having their attention. Working parents don't need to feel guilty; there are many little things they can do to connect with their children – making popcorn together, playing cards, taking a walk. Kids will remember simple but engaging activities carried out with their parents.
- **Role model.** Parents are constantly being observed by kids; the younger they are, the more they learn and take from their adult models. Therefore, it is important to model positive qualities in order to cultivate good characteristics in kids: respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness, tolerance. Parents should treat their kids the way they expect other people to treat them.



TRUE OR FALSE

● *Decide if the following sentences are true or false and correct the false ones.*

- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Parenting is exclusively performed by the biological parents.   | T | F |
| 2 | Parenting is a simple task.   | T | F |
| 3 | Kids learn to be self-confident if they can make things autonomously.                                 | T | F |
| 4 | Self-control is developed by respecting limits and rules.   | T | F |
| 5 | Name-calling is a positive behaviour and should be encouraged.  | T | F |
| 6 | Kids need to do extraordinary things with their parents in order to remember the time spent together. | T | F |
| 7 | Rules and limits must be explained in order to be understood.   | T | F |
| 8 | Kids are more likely to carry out decisions that they have previously discussed with their parents.   | T | F |





## SYNONYMS

● Read the text again and find synonyms of the following terms.

- |                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| 1 Sustaining   | 5 Difficult  |
| 2 Childhood    | 6 Assimilate |
| 3 Carried out  | 7 Regularly  |
| 4 Satisfactory | 8 Prohibited |

## ACTIVITIES



## FIND THE TOPIC

● Read the following parenting tips and match each skill with the corresponding section.

- |                           |                                    |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A Show unconditional love | B Recognise your limits            |
| C Be flexible             | D Praise your child for being good |

1

As your child changes, you'll gradually have to change your parenting style. What works with your child now won't work as well in a year or two.

2

How many times do you react negatively to your kids in a given day? You may find yourself criticizing far more often than complimenting. A more effective approach is to catch kids doing something right: "You made your bed without being asked – that's terrific!". These statements will encourage good behaviour more than repeated reproaches.

3

As a parent, you're responsible for correcting and guiding your kids. When you have to confront your child, avoid criticizing, or fault-finding, which undermine self-esteem and can lead to resentment. Instead, try to encourage your kids, making sure they know that although you want and expect better next time, your love is there no matter what.

4

There are no perfect parents. Everyone has strengths and weaknesses as a family leader. Recognise your abilities as well as your weaknesses. Try to have realistic expectations for yourself and your kids. Focusing on your needs does not make you selfish. It simply means you care about your own well-being, which is another important value to model for your children.

(Adapted from [www.kidshealth.com](http://www.kidshealth.com))

## CLOZE EXERCISE

● Complete the short text below with the following words: characteristics – exaggerated – childish – words – bond – intimacy – variety – utterances.

## BABY TALK

When adults speak with infants and young children, they are very likely to use a speech

1 known as 'baby talk' or 'motherese'. Baby talk is a simplified way of speaking, characterized by 2 intonation, basic grammar, repetitions and diminutives.

This speech variety is similar to what is used between adults to show 3 and affection.

Baby talk is not just a 4 way of speaking; studies have shown its effectiveness in at-

tracting an infant's attention and have demonstrated its role in creating a powerful

5 between child and parent. In order to communicate with the child during baby talk, a parent may intentionally transform existing 6 or fabricate new ones, and may pepper the speech with nonverbal 7.

Some researchers claim that baby talk is a universal phenomenon existing in many languages, although it assumes different 8.



## IN OTHER WORDS

- With reference to the Cloze exercise text, match each word in baby talk with its English equivalent.

- |               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1 Blankie     | A Brother   |
| 2 Dada        | B Dog       |
| 3 Brekkie     | C Blanket   |
| 4 Choo-choo   | D Dad       |
| 5 Wawa        | E Goodnight |
| 6 Doggy       | F Breakfast |
| 7 Bubby       | G Train     |
| 8 Night-night | H Water     |

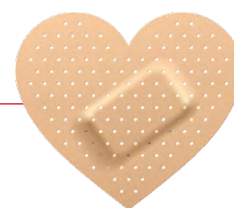
## ACTIVITIES



## SPEAKING AND WRITING

- Does Italian have baby talk too? Working in pairs, find examples of Italian baby talk and provide the English equivalents.

# The Care Set



## Getting a Baby to Nap

Napping is vital to a baby's health and well-being. According to the experts, **toddlers** between 2 to 3 years old should sleep at least 10 hours during the night, with an additional 1 to 2 hours during the day. Naps help toddlers to restore themselves and keep up with the efforts of physical and cognitive development. After a nap, a baby wakes up more alert, happier, and better prepared to learn about and explore his/her world.

Toddlers are usually ready to relax after lunch, but sometimes getting them to sleep may require some negotiation.

### The Nap Routine

In a nursery, where toddlers at different developmental stages and with diverse needs come together, the teacher should follow some basic rules in order to assure every child the rest he/she deserves.

- 1 Set a nap schedule: settle the children down every day at the same time and in the same place.
- 2 The napping room should be quiet, cool and dark. Switch lights off and block sunlight through heavy curtains or by closing the window-shutters.
- 3 By 3 months or so, the baby's ideal sleeping position is in a crib; by two years toddlers may be more comfortable in a cot with or without edges.
- 4 The cribs or cots should be suitably equipped with comfortable, firm mattresses.
- 5 For babies under 6 months old, the crib should be empty; for older babies, a single object may be added: a blanket, a soft pillow or the baby's favourite teddy.
- 6 Use crib mobiles or musical boxes to create a peaceful mood favourable to sleep.
- 7 In a quiet voice, tell a lullaby or read a fairytale from a storybook.
- 8 Soon, kids will associate the napping environment that has been established with sleep: sweet, sweet sleep.

## PICTURES TO MATCH

➔ Here are some useful accessories for creating a comfortable napping room. Match each word with the corresponding picture.

1 Crib

2 Storybook

3 Curtains

4 Teddy

5 Blanket

6 Crib mobile

7 Music box

8 Mattresses

A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H





# 6 EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: KINDERGARTENS

**E**arly childhood care and education is a diverse area of learning. It ranges, on the one hand, from formal pre-primary education, which is integrated with the national education system, through **kindergartens** where care, play and education are all included, to more informal and often home-based activities. The German word 'Kindergarten' refers to a variety of institutions providing **preschool** or **pre-primary education** to children aged between three and seven, depending on the country concerned. Kindergarten originated in Germany in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with the aim of developing young children's basic skills and social behaviour through games, music and simple **handicraft**. The German teacher Friedrich Fröbel opened the first kindergarten in a village in the German region of Thuringia. Fröbel, who was largely self-educated, dedicated his life to providing children with an education that could develop their spirits as well as their bodies by making use of their natural creativity. This type of preschool embodied Fröbel's philosophy of 'guided play' and was called 'Kindergarten' by Fröbel himself as to suggest that it was a sunny experience that could cultivate children like plants and let them bloom like flowers. Though this new philosophy soon became popular all over the world, the German government banned kindergartens fearing that they would not be rigorous and formal enough. In the 1850s, refugee teachers established kindergartens in England, where the German word was adopted without translation, while in the United States the first kindergarten was opened in 1856. Kindergarten provides an educational context in which children's creative instincts are organised in a constructive way through the use of songs, stories, games, and simple manual activities which stimulate social expression and co-operation. In this way, children learn to communicate, play, and interact with other children appropriately. For children who have previously spent most of their time at home, kindergarten may serve the purpose of training them to be part of a group while remaining calm without their parents. By playing and interacting with other children on a regular basis they can get their first idea of friendship. These characteristics of kindergarten have learning and behavioural benefits for children.





## READING COMPREHENSION

### ACTIVITIES



● Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is kindergarten?
- 2 Where did kindergarten originate?
- 3 What are the main goals of kindergarten education?
- 4 Who was Friedrich Fröbel?
- 5 Why did the German government ban kindergartens?
- 6 What do children learn in kindergartens?

## VOCABULARY

● Explain in your own words the meaning of the following terms.

- |                       |                     |            |
|-----------------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1 Preschool education | 4 Rigorous          | 7 Interact |
| 2 Social behaviour    | 5 Manual activities | 8 Benefits |
| 3 Self-educated       | 6 Anxiety           | 9 Rigorous |

## CLOZE EXERCISE

● Read the short text below on preschools and fill in the gaps with the following words: turns – skills – children – containers – task – learning – social – poetry.

### PRESCHOOL EDUCATION

The chance to interact with other **1** is the benefit of preschool. Interacting with other children means **2** how to wait, how to take **3** and how to listen. In this way, young children learn **4** skills, which are crucial to a developing personality. Moreover, preschools are the foundations for academic learning. Children listen to **5** and songs in order to further develop their speaking and reading **6**. Play may take place with water, sand, and **7** and forms the foundation for understanding some basic mathematical concepts. Finally, watching other children pursue a challenging **8** may be very helpful.

## SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

● The following sentences go together to form a text on childhood education in the United Kingdom. Working in pairs put them into the right order.

### CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN UK

- 1 Nursery schools generally give little formal education. The children spend most of their time in some sort of play activity, generally of an educational kind.
- 2 Education for the under-fives, mainly from three to five, is not compulsory and can be provided in nursery schools and nursery classes attached to primary schools.
- 3 A primary school usually takes children from five to eleven. Over half of the primary schools take the complete age group from five to eleven.
- 4 Compulsory education begins at the age of five in England, Scotland and Wales, and at the age of four in Northern Ireland.
- 5 The remaining schools take pupils aged five to seven – infant schools – and eight to eleven – junior schools.
- 6 Many children attend preschool playgroups, mostly organised by parents, where children go for a morning or afternoon a couple of times a week.

## SPEAKING

- Discuss the following quotation by British playwright Tom Stoppard: "If you carry your childhood with you, you never become older", with the aid of the guidelines below.
- Which values are associated with childhood?
  - In what sense can someone grow up without becoming older?



## LISTENING

### Elizabeth Peabody House

- *The first kindergarten in the United States was founded in Wisconsin by a German lady, Margarethe Meyer Schurz, who initially taught five children in her home, including her own daughter. However the first English-language kindergarten in America was opened in 1859 by Elizabeth Peabody. Listen to the following short text about the Elizabeth Peabody House and then answer the questions below.*
- 1 When and where was the Elizabeth Peabody House founded?
- 2 What did Elizabeth Peabody do in her life?
- 3 Where was her house originally located?
- 4 What kind of services did it originally provide?
- 5 What kind of services does it provide today?

# 7 APPROACHES TO CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Childhood care and education ranges from formal school and preschool education, which is integrated with the national education system through infant and elementary schools, to more informal activities.

**Psychologists, anthropologists** and educators have developed innovative educational philosophies that have sometimes been adopted by many school programmes.

## THE MONTESSORI METHOD

This revolutionary educational philosophy was developed in the 1920s by Italian **pedagogue** Maria Montessori and is based on the principles listed below.

- **No Passive Listeners:** the child is the leader and the teacher's job is not to lead and lecture, but to observe and follow, sensing when the child is ready to try something new and being ready to present it as close to the perfect time as possible. The learning style is very physical and a lot of emphasis is placed on actively pursuing tasks.
- **No Gold Stars:** Montessori discovered that rewards and punishments were not necessary for children to learn – or learn happily. Instead, the learning experience was successful when the child was allowed to **pursue** his/her own interests – whether it be washing a table, feeding the cat or learning the alphabet.
- **Learning from Other Children:** classroom children are grouped in mixed ages and abilities. There is a great deal of interaction between children of differing ages and a lot of socialising. Older children generally teach younger ones.
- **Character Education:** Maria Montessori believed that character education – teaching children to take care of themselves, each other and the world

A **psychologist** studies the human mind and how it influences people's behaviour.

An **anthropologist** studies people, their cultures and societies.

A **pedagogue** studies theories of teaching.



around them – was just as important as pre-academic skills such as phonetics and number recognition. Children are taught basic dressing skills as well as hygiene and other ‘practical life’ skills.

### THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH

The Reggio Emilia Approach is an early educational philosophy, developed in Reggio Emilia after World War II. Its philosophy is based on a trust in parents, teachers, and children to contribute in meaningful ways to the creation of school experiences. According to this method:

- children must have control over the direction of their learning;
  - they learn through experiences of touching, moving, listening, seeing, and hearing;
  - they must explore the world around them and have a relationship with other children;
  - they must be provided with endless opportunities to express themselves.
- Teachers are, first of all, learners, and their ideas and practices are in continuing evolution. Parents are viewed as collaborators within this educational framework. Teachers consider parents as each child’s first teachers and tend to involve them in every aspect of the curriculum.



The organisation of the **physical environment** is also crucial to Reggio Emilia’s programme: the school must be integrated with the surrounding community even from a physical point of view. The pre-schools are generally filled with indoor plants, classrooms open to a centre piazza, kitchens are open to view, and access to the surrounding community is assured through wall-size windows and doors to the outside in each classrooms. Windows should bring as much natural light as possible into the school building. Additionally, in each classroom there are studio spaces in the form of a large, centrally located atelier and other spaces designated for large and small-group activities. This arrange-

ment of space aims at creating opportunities for children to interact. Children are encouraged to depict their understanding through one of many symbolic languages, including drawing, music, sculpture, drama, and writing. The result is an atmosphere of community and collaboration, which is essential for the development of adults and children alike.

### READING COMPREHENSION

● Answer the following questions.

- 1 What are the principles of the Montessori Method?
- 2 What does character education consist of?
- 3 When is the learning experience successful according to the Montessori Method?
- 4 Why is interaction with other children important according to Maria Montessori?
- 5 When was the Reggio Emilia Approach developed?
- 6 What are the basic principles of this approach?
- 7 Why are parents an important component to this educational approach?
- 8 Which languages are children encouraged to use in the Reggio Emilia Approach preschools?

### ACTIVITIES







## VOCABULARY

- Explain in your own words the meaning of the following terms.

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1 Learning    | 5 Framework   |
| 2 Punishment  | 6 Curriculum  |
| 3 Socialising | 7 Environment |
| 4 Phonetics   | 8 Arrangement |

## ACTIVITIES



## SYNONYMS

- Read the text again and find synonyms for the following terms.

- |           |                 |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 1 Theory  | 5 Essential     |
| 2 Stress  | 6 Neighbourhood |
| 3 Prizes  | 7 Represent     |
| 4 Chances | 8 Sketching     |

## ROLE PLAY

- Imagine you are Maria Montessori. Present your educational method to a group of teachers.

## GROUP WORK

- What should a Reggio Emilia school look like? Working in groups, draw a hypothetical school plan. Don't forget to label classrooms, kitchen, ateliers, etc.

## WRITING

- Do you know any other alternative approaches to childhood education? Gather information and write a short report.

## TRANSLATION

- Translate the following sentences about Maria Montessori's life into English. The translation of the underlined words is already given.

- 1 Maria Montessori nacque in Italia nel 1870 e divenne la prima donna medico d'Italia. (*Italy's first doctor*)
- 2 All'età di 28 anni, accettò un lavoro come direttore di una scuola per bambini con disturbi mentali. (*mentally disabled children*)
- 3 Nel 1907 mise alla prova le sue teorie, occupandosi dell'educazione di un gruppo di cinquanta ragazzi disagiati del quartiere popolare di San Lorenzo, a Roma. (*tried out her theories*)
- 4 Alcuni anni dopo, la filosofia educativa di Maria Montessori venne riconosciuta e celebrata da intellettuali dell'epoca, come Thomas Edison e Sigmund Freud. (*was recognized and applauded*)
- 5 Nel 1918 allestì una dimostrazione all'esposizione internazionale di San Francisco, durante la quale gli spettatori potevano osservarla mentre lavorava con una classe di 20 bambini. (*she set up a demonstration*)
- 6 A partire dal 1920, l'interesse per le sue teorie crebbe e la sua fama si diffuse in tutto il mondo. (*throughout the world*)

# 8 EXPERIENCING REALITY THROUGH PLAY

**P**lay is defined as ‘the spontaneous activity of children’, and it is considered a key activity to every child’s well being. Through play, children learn about the world and practise the roles they will play later in life. The most authentic play experiences are child-initiated, freely chosen, and child-powered. Nevertheless experts identify the different categories of play as follows.

- **Functional play:** the repetitive play with objects through which children develop motor and practice skills. Good examples are **dumping**, filling, **stacking**, and water play. Functional play is typical of infants and toddlers up to the age of three. It can be either solitary or parallel (when another child is involved in a similar activity at the same time).
- **Constructive play:** the child creates or makes something and solves problems.

A **puppet** is a model of a person that you move by pulling wires or strings, or by putting your hands inside it.

Examples are building with blocks, playing with crafts and **puppets** and doing puzzles. About 50% of all activity for 4, 5 and 6-years-olds is constructive play. This type of play develops thinking skills and problem solving and stimulates imagination as well.

Children can play constructively alone as well as with others.

- **Pretend play:** by the age of four or five, children acquire the ability to represent experience symbolically and they assume different roles and identities while playing. In this complex type of play, children carry out action plans, take on roles, and transform objects as they express their feelings about the social world. Pretend play helps children process emotions and events in their lives, practise social skills and develop language skills.
- **Games with rules:** the most prominent form of play during middle childhood. It involves pre-set rules which guide children’s group behaviour. Game play is well-organised and generally involves two or more sides, competition, and agreed-upon criteria for determining a winner. Games with rules help children learn and practise co-operation, **mutual** understanding, and logical thinking.





When selecting a toy for a child, you should always think of what he/she will do with it. A toy should always have a purpose so as to stimulate the child’s imagination. Creative imagination is based on the quality of sensorial experiences in the real world. A rich imagination enables a child to picture a solution (solving a puzzle, for example) and to work towards it. The more experience a child has with purposeful activity and problem solving, the more useful, creative, and effective his/her imagination will become.

READING COMPREHENSION



- Answer the following questions.
- 1 Why is play so important for child development?
- 2 What are the characteristics of functional play?
- 3 Which skills does constructive play develop?
- 4 What are the benefits of pretend play?
- 5 When do children start to play games with rules?
- 6 How can a toy stimulate a child’s imagination?

FILL IN THE TABLE

Fill in the table below with information from the text above.

	AGE	ABILITIES DEVELOPED
1 Functional play		
2 Constructive play		
3 Pretend play		
4 Games with rules		

SYNONYMS

- Read the text again and find synonyms for the following terms.
- 1 Exercise (verb)
- 2 Genuine
- 3 Choosing
- 4 Things
- 5 Individual
- 6 Challenge
- 7 Aim
- 8 Inventiveness

TRANSLATION

Translate the following passage into Italian.

PLAY AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Child development experts agree that play is crucial in the learning and emotional development of all children. In play, children consolidate their understanding of themselves and others, their knowledge of the physical world and their ability to communicate with both peers and adults. Play also stimulates children’s creativity and imagination, and develops reading, thinking and problem solving skills as well as motor skills. Play also helps children learn social skills and develop ethical values.

PICTURES TO MATCH



● Which toys do you know and what can they be used for? Match each toy to the corresponding picture. Then provide the Italian equivalents.

- 1

Toy train

2

Toy airplane

3

Rattle

4

Toy abacus

5

Whirligig

6

Xylophone

7

Building blocks

8

Jack-in-the-box

9

Doll

10

Doll house

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J



## SPEAKING AND WRITING

### ACTIVITIES



- Look at the following pictures and try to identify the kind of play represented. What are children doing? What is their aim? How would you define each type of playing activity? While discussing, take some notes.



## SPEAKING

- With reference to the Speaking and Writing exercise, the name of the game in picture 4 is 'Blind Man's Buff'. Do you know any other similar games? Try to find out their Italian equivalents.

## FIND THE TOPIC

- Read the following text and match each of the headings below with the corresponding section.

- A Accessibility
- B Staff
- C Life skills
- D Chosen by children

- E Child development
- F Ownership
- G Improving quality of life
- H Local and free

### THE BENEFITS OF ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS

1

Adventure playgrounds are open access, meaning that children decide to use the playground themselves, when they choose. Adventure playgrounds are designed specifically to respond to the needs and wishes of children, rather than their parents, which makes them more popular with children than 'fixed' playgrounds.

2

The majority of London's adventure playgrounds are situated in deprived areas where children normally face problems in their families, housing or quality of life. Adventure playgrounds contribute to improving the children's play, learning and social opportunities.

3

Adventure playgrounds are mostly free to use and typically based within neighbourhoods, ensuring all children can visit often and without travelling far from home. Playgrounds have space for large numbers of children and welcome children and young people from a wide age range.

4

Many adventure playgrounds are accessible for wheel-chair users and non-disabled children alike. They enable disabled children to share in the sense of freedom and adventure.

5

Adventure playgrounds contribute to a child's growth and development, by encouraging them to discover and test themselves against the environment and with other children. Adventure playgrounds can be the first place where many children learn to climb, jump, swing and hang.

6

Using tools and materials to adapt the outdoor space is an important feature of adventure playgrounds. Activities include building camps and dens, cooking on open fires, digging gardens, tending animals, growing food and generally playing with and in the outdoor space.

7

Skilled, permanent playground staff are always on hand to ensure the safety of the children. The staff often become significant adults in the lives of many of the children, providing a stable and positive adult relationship.

8

Children play a part in the ongoing design and construction of their adventure playground. This gives children the space to explore, test, create, build and rebuild their play space, and encourages children to feel at home in the playground and treat it well.

ACTIVITIES



## 9 CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

According to the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (1989), “a child is any human being below the age of eighteen years, unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is **attained** earlier.” Children are particularly **vulnerable** and so they also have particular rights that recognize their special need for protection. When we talk about children’s rights, we mean the rights of children to associate with both biological parents, as well as the basic needs for food, universal state-paid education, health care and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child. Children have the right to be physically, mentally and emotionally free from abuse.

Despite that, children still suffer from poverty, **homelessness**, abuse, **diseases**, unequal access to education and justice systems that do not recognize their special needs.

The most common violations of children’s rights are the following.

- **Sexual violence**, that takes the form of sexual abuse, rape or sexual exploitation in **prostitution** or **pornography**. It can happen in homes, institutions, schools, workplaces, in travel and tourism facilities. Increasingly, the Internet and mobile phones also put children at risk of sexual violence.
- **Child labour**, that **harms** the physical and mental development of children and adolescents, interferes with their education and undermines national economies.

**Prostitution** is the act or practice of engaging someone in immoral sexual relations especially for money.

**Pornography** is the use of material (such as books, photographs, or videos) that shows erotic behaviour and is intended to cause sexual excitement.





- **Child trafficking**, that is the recruitment and transportation of children for the purpose of exploitation. Protecting trafficked children requires victim identification, placing them in a safe **environment**, providing them with social services, health care, psychosocial support, and reintegration with family and community.
- **Child marriage**, a harsh reality for both boys and girls, although girls are the most affected. About a third of women aged 20-24 years old in the developing world were married as children and this is most common in South Asia and the Sub-Saharan. Child marriage is also a strategy for economic survival as families marry off their daughters at an early age to reduce their economic **burden**.

(Adapted from [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org) and [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org))

## READING COMPREHENSION



● Answer the following questions.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 How does the <i>Convention on the Rights of the Child</i> define a child?</li> <li>2 What are children's basic rights?</li> <li>3 What are the most common violations of children's rights?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 Why is child labour very dangerous?</li> <li>5 How is child trafficking dealt with?</li> <li>6 To what extent is child marriage an economic strategy?</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## VOCABULARY

● Explain in your own words the meaning of the following terms.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Basic needs</li> <li>2 State-paid education</li> <li>3 Free from abuse</li> <li>4 Justice systems</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Rape</li> <li>6 Trafficked children</li> <li>7 Reintegration</li> <li>8 Harsh reality</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## FIND THE TOPIC

● Read the following text and match each of the headings below with the corresponding section.

- |                 |                       |               |               |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|
| A Main activity | B UNICEF's foundation | C Fundraising | D General aim |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|---------------|

## UNICEF

- 1** UNICEF was created by the *United Nations General Assembly* on December 11, 1946, to provide emergency food and healthcare to children in countries that had been devastated by World War II. In 1954, its name was shortened from the original *United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund* but it has continued to be known by the popular acronym based on this old name.
- 2** UNICEF's work for the protection of childhood is guided by the principles and standards established by the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. With the purpose of meeting children's basic needs and expanding their opportunities to reach their full potential, UNICEF helps to change the legal and policy framework of states and to improve understanding of the Convention itself at all levels of society.
- 3** Among other activities, UNICEF works in nearly 160 countries to support application of the Convention on the involvement of children in armed conflicts and on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. UNICEF draws attention to the duties of governments, families, communities and individuals to respect those rights and supports them in doing so.
- 4** UNICEF relies on contributions from governments and private donors; governments provide two thirds of the organization's resources, while private groups and some 6 million individuals contribute the rest.



### TRANSLATION

- Translate the following sentences into Italian.

- 1 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is seen as a basis for all international legal standards for children's rights today.
- 2 Children have the right to an adequate standard of living, healthcare, education, and play.
- 3 Children have the right to protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation and discrimination.
- 4 Violations of children's rights still occur today in both industrialized and developing countries.

### ACTIVITIES



### CLOZE EXERCISE

- Fill in the following guidelines on children's rights with the words given: millions – world – survive – future – conditions – capacities – school – years.

#### THE RIGHT TO GROW TO FULL POTENTIAL

What happens – or doesn't happen – to children in the earliest **1** of their lives is of critical importance, both to their immediate well-being and to their **2**.

If you receive the best start in your earliest years of life, you are more likely to grow up healthily, develop language and learning **3**, go to school and conduct a productive, rewarding life. Yet **4** of children around the world are still being denied the right to reach their full potential.

Every child must be ensured the best start in life, and indeed, the future of their communities, nations and the whole **5** depends on it.

Every year, tens of millions of infants around the world begin an extraordinary process, from defenseless newborns to proactive young children ready for **6**. And every year, countless numbers of them are stopped in their tracks, deprived, in one way or another, of the love, care, health, nutrition and protection that they need to **7**, grow and develop. Nearly 10 million children die before their fifth birthday each year and over 200 million children are not developing to their full potential, solely because they and their caregivers lack the basic **8** needed for young children to survive and blossom.



(Adapted from [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org))

### SYNONYMS

- With reference to the Cloze exercise above, find synonyms for the following terms.

- |                      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>1</b> Decisive    | <b>6</b> Weak        |
| <b>2</b> Initial     | <b>7</b> Innumerable |
| <b>3</b> Satisfying  | <b>8</b> Ways        |
| <b>4</b> Guaranteed  | <b>9</b> Only        |
| <b>5</b> Development | <b>10</b> Prosper    |

### WRITING

- Do you know any other organization involved in the protection of childhood? Gather information and write a short report about one of them.



## THE NOVEL

When dealing **with** a work of fiction you should consider some aspects such as the *narrative mode*, the *point of view*, the nature of the *characters*, the *setting* and the particular quality of the discourse.

### The narrative mode

There are three main types of narrative modes.

- ➔ **Narration:** when the events are simply related. In this case verbs of movement or action prevail.

**E.g.** *One evening, in the beginning of June, I had stayed out very late with Mary Ann in the wood; we had, as usual, separated ourselves from the others, and had wandered far: so far that we lost our way, and had to ask it at a lonely cottage, where a man and woman lived, who looked after a herd of half-wild swine that fed on the mast in the wood.*

(from Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*)

- ➔ **Description:** when people or places are described. In this case static verbs prevail.

**E.g.** *North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brother's School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground.*

(from James Joyce, *Dubliners*)

- ➔ **Dialogue:** when the personality of the characters is depicted through their words.

**E.g.** – *Bartleby, – said I, – when those papers are all copied, I will compare them with you.*  
– *I would prefer not to.*  
– *How? Surely you do not mean to persist in that mulish vagary?*

(from Herman Melville, *Bartleby, The Scrivener*)

### The point of view

The point of view coincides with the perspective of the narrator, the 'persona' who tells the story. If the narrator is inside the story (*first-person narrator*), the point of view is restricted. If he/she is outside the story (*third-person narrator*), his/her perspective is wider.

## THE READER'S CORNER

### Characters

The characters are the imaginary inhabitants of the world of fiction.

A writer can *show* characters (through their dialogues) or can *describe* them.

Some characters develop in the course of the narrative (*open characters*), while others do not undergo any change (*closed characters*).

### Setting

The setting is the chronological, local and social dimension of a text.

It is the background of a story and can be described in detail or coincide with a more general atmosphere.

### Discourse

Literary language is more complex than ordinary language.

When analysing language you will focus on the *syntax* (length of sentences, hypotaxis, parataxis, cohesion) as well as on the *lexis* (abstract/concrete nouns; archaisms/neologisms; compounds; derivatives; dynamic/stative verbs; modal/local/temporal adverbs, etc.).

Literary language is often figurative and makes use of such rhetorical devices as *similes*, *metaphors* and *symbols*.

- ➔ A simile is a comparison.

**E.g.** Your face is as bright as the sun.

- ➔ A metaphor is the use of a word to indicate something different from its literal meaning.

**E.g.** You are my sun.

- ➔ A symbol is an image or object that suggests something else. The cross, for example, is the symbol of Christianity.



## The Gift of Imagination

**I**magination is the ability to dream, create, improvise and entertain oneself anywhere and anytime. Imagination is an essential gift for children as it allows them to express their true authentic self and improves their ability to deal with feelings and problems. Due to an active imagination, words often evoke unusual associations in the mind of children.

In this passage from *The Songlines*, Bruce Chatwin recalls how, during his childhood, the word 'Australia' used to call to his mind a series of strange-looking creatures and was always associated to the idea of movement and travel which were to become the primary goals of his adult life.



**BRUCE CHATWIN**  
(1940-1989)

Bruce Chatwin is a British writer known for his novels and travel essays. As a young boy he created his first job as a guide to

Shakespeare's monument and tomb. When he was fourteen, he travelled alone to Sweden, living there with a family to whom he taught English. He worked as a columnist for the *London Times* and was particularly interested in the study of nomadic cultures. His first book *In Patagonia* (1977) consists of a hundred short chapters relating the author's adventures in Patagonia, while *The Songlines* (1987) was inspired by Chatwin's travels among aboriginal nomads in Australia. He died in 1989 at age 48.

### Before Reading

What kind of books did you like reading/looking at during your childhood?

## An Incessant Red Country

**I**n my childhood I never heard the word 'Australia' without calling to mind the fumes of the eucalyptus inhaler and an incessant red country populated by sheep. My father loved to tell, and we to hear, the story of the Australian sheep-millionaire who **strolled into** a Rolls-Royce showroom in London; **scorned** all the smaller models; chose an enormous limousine with a plate-glass panel between the chauffeur and passengers, and added, **cockily**, as he counted out the cash, 'That'll stop the sheep from breathing down my neck.' I also knew, from my great-aunt Ruth, that Australia was the country of the Upside-downers. A hole, bored straight through the earth from England, would **burst out** under their feet. 'Why don't they fall off?' I asked. 'Gravity,' she whispered.

She had in her library a book about the continent, and I would gaze in wonder





Koala



Kookaburra

at pictures of the koala and kookaburra, the platypus and Tasmanian bush-devil, Old Man Kangaroo and **Yellow Dog Dingo**, and Sydney Harbour Bridge.

But the picture I liked best showed an Aboriginal family on the move. They were **lean**, angular people and they went about naked. Their skin was very black, not the glitterblack of negroes but matt black, as if the sun had sucked away all possibility of reflection. The man had a long **forked** beard and carried a **spear** or two, and a spear-thrower. The woman carried a **dilly-bag** and a baby at her breast. A small boy strolled beside her – I identified myself with him.

I remember the fantastic homelessness of my first five years. My father was in the Navy, at sea. My mother and I would shuttle back and **forth**, on the railways of wartime England, on visits to family and friends.

All the **frenzied** agitation of the times communicated itself to me: this **hiss** of steam on a **fogbound** station; the double *clu-unk* of carriage doors closing; the **drone** of aircraft, the searchlights, the sirens; the sound of a mouth-organ along a platform of sleeping soldiers.

Home, if we had one, was a solid black suitcase called the Rev-Robe, in which there was a corner for my clothes and my Mickey Mouse gas-mask. I knew that, once the bombs began to fall, I could **curl up** inside the Rev-Robe, and be safe.

## READING COMPREHENSION

● Answer the following questions.

- 1 Which senses are highlighted in the first paragraph? Give examples from the text.
- 2 Why is Australia defined as the country of the 'Upside-downers'?
- 3 Why do you think young Bruce is fascinated by Ruth's book about Australia?
- 4 Which was the most impressive picture in Ruth's book according to young Bruce?
- 5 Chatwin makes a sort of parallelism between the Aboriginal family in the picture and his own family. What do they have in common?
- 6 What was the Rev-Robe? What did it contain?

## TEXT ANALYSIS

● Following the guidelines above, answer the questions about Chatwin's novel.

- 1 What kind of narrator is employed in the passage?
- 2 Which narrative mode prevails?
- 3 Which characters are mentioned?
- 4 Are characters described or not?
- 5 What kind of language is used?
- 6 When is the passage set?
- 7 Is the setting described in detail or not?





## TELEPHONE LANGUAGE

Here are some typical phrases that you can use in a telephone conversation. Informal expressions can be used with family and friends, while in a working situation formal speech is preferred.

- **Answering the phone**
  - Hello?
  - Daisy Kindergarten. Good morning. Helen speaking. How can I help you? (formal)
- **Introducing yourself**
  - Hi, It's Nora calling, I am Kelly's mother. (informal)
  - Hello, this is Mary Brown, the head teacher.
- **Asking to speak to someone**
  - Can I talk to the teacher, please?
  - May I speak to Mr. Roberts, please?
- **Confirming you are the person the caller asked to speak with**
  - Yes, this is he/she.
  - Speaking.
- **Connecting someone**
  - Hang on one second. (informal)
  - Please hold on and I'll put you through.
  - One moment, please.
- **Taking a message for someone**
  - Jane is not in. Who's this? (informal)
  - I'm afraid the school manager is not here at the moment. Would you like to leave a message?
  - He's busy right now. Who is calling, please?
- **Leaving a message with someone**
  - Thanks, could you ask him to call James when he gets in?
  - No, that's okay, I'll call back later.
- **Listening to an answering machine**
  - Hello. You've reached 345-69594. Please leave a message after the tone. Thank you.







- Thank you for calling Primrose Kindergarten. Our hours are 9 am-5 pm, Monday-Friday. Please call back during these hours, or leave a message after the tone.

## WORDS TO MATCH

✓ Look at the following phone expressions and match them with their Italian equivalents.

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 1 Wrong number.                    | A Richiamo più tardi.                                 |
| 2 Please, don't hang up!           | B Sono io.  |
| 3 Dial the number.                 | C La linea è occupata.                                |
| 4 Can I leave a message, please?   | D Glielo/a passo.                                     |
| 5 I'll call back later.            | E Ha sbagliato numero.                                |
| 6 I'd like to make a collect call. | F Chi parla?  |
| 7 Operator.                        | G Posso lasciare un messaggio, per favore?            |
| 8 Who's calling?                   | H Componga il numero.                                 |
| 9 Speaking.                        | I Non riattacchi!                                     |
| 10 I'll put you through.           | J Centralino.   |
| 11 The line is engaged/busy.       | K Resti in linea, per favore.                         |
| 12 Hold the line, please.          | L Vorrei fare una chiamata a carico del destinatario. |

## CLOZE EXERCISE

✓ Complete the following phone conversations with suitable words.

- A** – Rosie's nest Kindergarten. Good morning. Jane can I **2** you?  
– Hello. This **3** Mr. Clancy. May I speak **4** Ms. Ferrara, please?
- B** – Hold on a **5**, please. I'll put you **6**.
- C** – Hello. Is this Tom?  
– Yes. **7** is calling?  
– It's Paul here. Can I **8** to Sally, please?
- D** – Hello, Liam speaking.  
– This is John Howell calling. Is Jonathan in?  
– I'm afraid he's out at the moment. Can I **9** a message?  
– No, thanks. I'll call back **10**.
- E** – Hello. You've reached **666**. Please **11** a message after the **12**.

## HOW TO WRITE AN E-MAIL

**E-mail** writing has become an important part of modern communication, particularly in business. Here is a list with some tips for writing e-mails.

- E-mails are generally more informal than traditional letters.
- Be concise. Business e-mails should be short (4-5 short paragraphs at most), with no repetition.

## Children

- In the section **Subject line** sum up the content of the e-mail in an effective way.
- The two other boxes at the top of your e-mail are **Cc:** (carbon copy) and **Bcc:** (blind carbon copy). Any e-mail address you add to the Cc box will receive a copy of the message, and the person you are writing to directly (the **To** box) will be able to see the e-mail address that you sent a copy to. Any e-mail address you add to the Bcc box will receive a copy of the message, but in this case, the person you are writing to directly will not see it.
- Use contractions (*we've, they're, I'd*, ecc.).
- Keep your line lengths short.
- Get to the point and make your request clear.
- You should always write a quick introductory sentence so the addressees know why you're sending the e-mail: e.g. *In answer to your last question...*
- Skip lines between paragraphs.
- Make it easy to read; use paragraphs that are quick to scan, use bullet points when you can, and break up the information into easy-to-read chunks.
- Sign off briefly and put your name at the end.
- You can also add further information like your address, telephone and fax.
- Before you hit the **Send** button, re-read the e-mail and check grammar and spelling.

### EXAMPLE

Next year's educational program

A: theplaygarden@intermail.uk

Cc:

Oggetto: Next year's educational program

Da: Carol Owen <carolowen>

Firma: Nessuno

Dear Sir/Madam,

my son is turning four next year and I am considering the idea of enrolling him in your kindergarten.

I would like him to experience an interactive and stimulating atmosphere and I am contacting you to find out more about your educational programme and its general philosophy. In what way do you incorporate play into your classes? What activities do you normally offer in your classes?

Would I be able to visit the school in the next few months?

Thanking you in advance,  
Best Regards  
Carol Owen

## WRITING

- ✓ Write appropriate e-mails for the following situations.
- 1 You are a teacher at 'The Playgarden' Kindergarten. Reply to the e-mail above, providing the requested information.
  - 2 You are doing research about the Montessori School in your hometown. Write an e-mail to the school's headmaster asking for information about the school's organisation.
  - 3 You haven't been able to attend the last English lesson. Write an e-mail to your teacher to ask him/her for your homework.
  - 4 You work at a kindergarten. Write an e-mail to a group of mums to invite them to the school's open day with their children.



# GRAMMAR WORKSHEETS

In inglese esistono due forme verbali per parlare di azioni nel tempo presente: il *present simple* e il *present continuous*.

- Il **present simple** (presente semplice) si usa per parlare di azioni abituali o sempre vere. Lo schema di coniugazione è riportato di seguito.

FORMA AFFERMATIVA	FORMA NEGATIVA	FORMA INTERROGATIVA
I WORK	I (DO NOT) DON'T WORK	DO I WORK?
YOU WORK	YOU DON'T WORK	DO YOU WORK?
HE/SHE/IT WORKS	HE/SHE/IT DOESN'T WORK	DOES HE/SHE/IT WORK?
WE WORK	WE DON'T WORK	DO WE WORK?
YOU WORK	YOU DON'T WORK	DO YOU WORK?
THEY WORK	THEY DON'T WORK	DO THEY WORK?

## AZIONI NEL PRESENTE

- Es.** I usually go to work at eight o'clock. → Di solito vado al lavoro alle otto.  
Where do you work? → Dove lavori?  
I am a nurse. → Faccio l'infermiera.  
She likes pop music. → Le piace la musica pop.

- Il **present continuous** (presente continuato) si riferisce, invece, ad azioni in corso di svolgimento e si forma con il verbo *to be* seguito dalla forma in *-ing*. Questa forma verbale non viene usata per i verbi che esprimono uno stato o un possesso (come *to be* o *to have*), un sentimento, un'emozione, un'opinione, una volontà o uno stato mentale (come *to love*, *to know*, *to think*, *to want*, *to understand*, ecc.).

- Es.** What are you doing at the moment? → Che cosa stai facendo in questo momento?  
I am writing an e-mail. → Sto scrivendo un'e-mail.

Ricorda che il *present continuous* viene usato anche per parlare di piani futuri.

- Es.** I am leaving for New York tomorrow. → Domani parto per New York.  
Where are you going next summer? → Dove andrai l'estate prossima?

1 Put the verb into the correct tense: present simple or present continuous.

1	(she – like) fishing?	7	My little sister	(have) a pink bicycle.
2	I	(come) from Spain.	8	John can't answer the phone because he (take) a shower.
3	They	(travel) through Europe this summer.	9	They usually (drink) wine at dinner.
4	(Paul – watch) TV now?	10	What (you – to have) for lunch today?	
5	Jason	(go) to the library every afternoon.		
6	Jane is in her room. She	(write) an e-mail to her boyfriend.		



**2** Put the following sentences into negative and interrogative forms.

**1** She is looking for a job in the social services.

(n)

(i)

**2** The train leaves at eight o'clock.

(n)

(i)

**3** Tom is going to France next Saturday.

(n)

(i)

**4** You often take the bus to work.

(n)

(i)

**5** We usually have dinner at my parents' home.

(n)

(i)

**6** They always watch TV after dinner.

(n)

(i)

**3** Here are the answers. Write the questions.

**1**  
On Sundays we go to the cinema.

? **4**  
No, I can't. I go to music lessons on Fridays.

**2**  
No, they don't. They prefer listening to music.

? **5**  
Because I don't know the way.

**3**  
She's helping her mother.

? **6**  
They are getting married next summer.

**4** Describe your daily routine.

Every day





## 5 *Translate the following sentences.*

- 1 Fate spesso jogging? Sì, due o tre volte alla settimana.
- 2 Emily sta provando un abito per la festa.
- 3 Tua madre ama cucinare.
- 4 Che lavoro fai? Sono un musicista.
- 5 Ti piace viaggiare?
- 6 Sto imparando il russo.
- 7 Che cosa stanno facendo? Stanno guardando un film.
- 8 Johnny non va mai a letto tardi perché si alza molto presto.
- 9 Che cosa fa Emma nel tempo libero? Suona il pianoforte.
- 10 Jane non guarda mai la TV dopo cena.
- 11 Che cosa fa tuo padre? È medico pediatra.
- 12 Dove abita Lindsay? Abita a Los Angeles.