



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (376) CHAPTERWISE NOTES



EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION

Sl. No.	Module	Chapters (Public Examination)	Marks
1	Module 1 : Early Childhood Care and Education	L-1 ECCE: Meaning and Significance	20
		L-2 Early Childhood in India	
		L-4 ECCE Policies, Schemes and Programmes	
2	Module 3 : Curriculum, Practices and Progress	L-10 Care of Children in Early Years	25
		L-11 Play and Early Learning	
		L-13 How Children Learn	

Component	Details	Marks
Public Exam (Selected Modules 1,3)	Total Chapters : 6	45
Practical Exam	Practical	20
TMA	Tutor Marked Assignment	16
Final Possible Marks		81 Marks

Content Of Table

1	Early childhood care and education: meaning and significance
2	Early Childhood in India
3	ECCE Policies, Schemes and Programmes
4	Care of Children in Early Years
5	Play and Early Learning
6	How Children Learn

1

Early childhood care and ducation: meaning and significance

Introduction

Early childhood represents the most critical years of life. During this period, the development of a child's brain occurs at the most rapid pace. The primary goal of ECCE is the **holistic development** of the child so that they are prepared for school and life.

Meaning and Importance of ECCE:

- **Early Childhood:** This refers to the stage of life from birth to 6 years of age.
- **Foundation Years:** These are called the 'Foundation Years' because the groundwork for physical, cognitive, and social development is laid during this time.
- **Neuroscience:** Research shows that during this age, connections between brain cells (synapses) are formed very quickly.

Components of ECCE:

ECCE is composed of three main elements:

1. **Early Childhood:** The period from birth to 6 years.
2. **Care:** This includes the child's health, nutrition, hygiene, and safety.
3. **Education:** This does not mean formal textbook learning; rather, it means learning through play, exploration, and activities.

Objectives of ECCE:

- To ensure the holistic development (physical, mental, social, emotional) of the child.
- To develop good habits and social qualities in children.
- To prepare children for formal schooling (Grade 1).
- To encourage a child's natural curiosity and creativity.



Importance of Early Intervention

- **Early Intervention:** This means identifying any delay or deficiency in development early and taking steps to correct it.
- If a child has issues with hearing, speaking, or vision, the chances of improvement are highest during these early years.

ECCE in Indian and Global Context:

- **ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services):** In India, this is the world's largest program providing ECCE through Anganwadis.
- **National Education Policy (NEP 2020):** ECCE is now considered an integral part of school education under the 5+3+3+4 structure.

Important Questions and Answers

Q1: Why is early childhood called the 'Foundation Years'?

Answer - The age from birth to 6 years is called the foundation years because 85-90% of a child's brain development occurs during this time. The foundation for a child's behavior, learning capacity, and health is established at this stage, which impacts their entire life.

Q2: What do you understand by 'Holistic Development'?

Answer - Holistic development means giving equal attention to all areas of a child's development. This includes physical, cognitive (mental), social, emotional, and language development. Learning is not just about memorizing letters; it is about the child being healthy and active in every aspect.

Q3: What is the importance of 'Care' in ECCE?

Answer - Care means providing a child with a safe environment, nutritious food, timely immunization, and love. If a child's physical care is neglected, their brain will not be ready to learn. A healthy mind resides in a healthy body.



Q4: Why is Early Intervention necessary?

Answer - Some children may have a slower pace of development or special needs. Through early intervention, these issues can be identified early to seek help from doctors or teachers at the right time, enabling the child to lead a normal life.

Q5: State two main objectives of ECCE.

Answer - To provide a safe and stimulating environment where a child can learn through play. 2. To develop essential school-readiness skills (such as communication, coordination, and focus) so that the child is prepared for primary education.



Early Childhood in India

Early Childhood

- The period from birth to 6 years is a time of rapid growth and development.
- During this phase, the foundation for a child's physical, mental, and emotional development is laid.
- The first three years of life are particularly significant.
- Proper care, nutrition, and a stimulating environment are necessary for optimal growth.

Status of Children in India

- **Population:** There are approximately **15.8 crore children** in the 0-6 years age group in India.
- **National Importance:** The survival, protection, and development of children are vital for the future of the nation.
- **Vulnerable Sections:** A large portion of these children belongs to economically and socially weaker sections of society.

Fundamental Rights

- **Article 14:** Equality before the law. Everyone in India receives equal legal protection.
- **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth. The State has the power to make special provisions for women, children, and backward classes.
- **Article 17:** Abolition of 'Untouchability' and prohibition of its practice in any form.
- **Article 19(1):** Freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peacefully, to form associations, and to settle anywhere in India.
- **Article 21:** Right to life and personal liberty.
- **Article 21A:** Right to free and compulsory education for children aged **6 to 14 years**.
- **Article 24:** Prohibition of employment of children below the age of **14 years** in factories, mines, or any hazardous work.



Directive Principles of State Policy:

- **Article 39:** Prevention of exploitation of children and providing opportunities for development in a free and dignified environment.
- **Article 42:** Provision for just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief.
- **Article 45:** Effort to provide free and compulsory education for children until they complete 14 years of age (within 10 years of the Constitution's commencement). Note: This was later updated to focus on ECCE for children below 6 years.
- **Article 46:** Protection of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other weaker sections.
- **Article 47:** Improvement of the level of nutrition, standard of living, and public health of the people.

Key Government Policies and Programs

- **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) :** Launched in 1975, this scheme provides a package of services including supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-ups, and pre-school education.
- **National Policy for Children, 2013 :** Reaffirms the government's commitment to children's rights regarding survival, health, nutrition, and development.
- **National ECCE Policy, 2013 :** Aims to ensure universal access to quality early childhood care and education for children below 6 years.

Factors Affecting Early Childhood Development

- Heredity and Environment
- Physical Exercise
- Gender of the Child
- Nutrition and Family Influence
- Geographical Influence
- Socio-economic Status
- Immunization
- Maternal Health



Important Questions and Answers

Q1: Briefly describe the current status of children in India.

Answer - India has a very large child population. There are approximately 15.8 crore children in the 0-6 years age group, which accounts for 13.1% of the total population. Most of these children live in rural areas and belong to economically weaker sections, requiring special attention for their development.

Q2: How does malnutrition affect a child's development?

Answer - Malnutrition causes problems such as 'stunting' (low height for age) and 'wasting' (low weight for height). It stunts their physical growth, slows down mental development, and weakens their immune system, which impacts their entire life.

Q3: State any three benefits of the ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services) scheme.

Answer - The three main benefits of the ICDS scheme are:

- Providing supplementary nutrition to children and pregnant women.
- Facilitating timely immunization and regular health check-ups.
- Preparing young children for informal pre-school education before they start formal schooling.

Q4: What provision does Article 45 of the Constitution make regarding ECCE?

Answer - Article 45 of the Constitution directs the State to endeavor to provide early childhood care and education (ECCE) for all children until they complete the age of six years. It recognizes the development of children in their early years as a government responsibility.

Q5: What are the main objectives of the National Policy for Children, 2013?

Answer - The primary objective of the National Policy for Children, 2013, is to prioritize every child's right to life, health, nutrition, education, and protection. This policy ensures that children get an environment where they can stay safe and achieve holistic development.



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ECCE POLICIES, SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

Introduction

The Government of India has initiated and implemented many policies, schemes, and programmes to cater to the welfare of all children. These initiatives serve as pathways for creating a conducive environment and facilitating children during their early stages of development and learning. Ensuring access by all children to quality care and early childhood development is a priority.

National Policies and the Place of ECCE

- **National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986:** This policy focuses on the overall development of young children and visualizes ECCE as an important factor strengthening primary education. It stresses a child-centred and play-based ECCE programme and discourages formal methods like the 3Rs at an early stage.
- **National Nutrition Policy, 1993:** Formulated to tackle under-nutrition and malnutrition, it states the need to expand Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) to cover the entire population of children in India.
- **National Policy for Children (NPC), 2013:** It declared children as a "supremely important asset" for the nation. It identifies survival, health, nutrition, development, education, protection, and participation as undeniable rights.
- **National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Policy, 2013:** Commits to universal access to quality early childhood education for all children under six years of age. Its vision is to achieve holistic development and active learning capacity through joyful and inclusive opportunities.
- **India Newborn Action Plan (INAP), 2014:** Launched to reduce preventable newborn deaths and stillbirths. It defines six pillars of interventions, including pre-conception, antenatal, and care during childbirth.
- **National Health Policy (NHP), 2017:** Aims to shape health systems through investments in health, organization of healthcare services, prevention of diseases, and promotion of good health.



Health and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

- **National Health Mission (NHM), 2013:** Envisages achievement of universal access to equitable, affordable, and quality health care services that are responsive to people's needs.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), 2030:** Goal 4.2 states that by 2030, all girls and boys should have access to quality early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

Plans and Missions (2016-2018)

- **National Plan of Action for Children (NPAC), 2016:** Focuses on reaching and serving the 'Last Child First'. It gives priority to children most vulnerable due to socio-cultural, economic, or geographic exclusion.
- **POSHAN Abhiyan (National Nutrition Mission), 2018:** Launched with a vision to ensure India is free of malnutrition by 2022. Its aim is to reduce under-nutrition, stunting, and anaemia through the convergence of various schemes.

Programmes and Schemes

1. **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):** Launched in 1975, it is one of the world's largest programmes for early childhood care and development. It provides **six services:**
 - Supplementary nutrition.
 - Pre-school non-formal education.
 - Nutrition and health education.
 - Immunization.
 - Health check-up.
 - Referral services.
2. **Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), 1995:** Launched to improve the nutritional status of children in primary classes. In 2007, it was extended to cover upper primary classes (VI to VIII).
3. **Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY):** Launched in 2005 as a safe motherhood intervention to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality by promoting institutional delivery.



4. Assistance for Working Mothers: Crèche Schemes :

- **Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme:** Helps establish crèches and provide quality daycare for children of working mothers below six years of age.
- **Maternity Benefit Act 2017 Guidelines:** Makes crèche facilities mandatory for every establishment employing 50 or more employees.

Important Questions and Answers

Q1: What is the contribution of the National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 to ECCE?

Answer - The NPE 1986 visualizes ECCE as an important factor for strengthening primary education and human resource development. It emphasizes a child-centred and play-based approach, discouraging formal teaching methods like the 3Rs at an early stage.

Q2: What is the main objective of the 'Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme'?

Answer - The objective is to provide quality daycare facilities and care for children (below six years) of working mothers across all socio-economic groups in both organized and unorganized sectors.

Q3: State any two main goals of the National ECCE Policy 2013.

Answer - Two Main Goals Of The National ECCE Policy 2013 :

1. To commit to universal access to quality early childhood education for all children under six years.
2. To implement a National ECCE Curriculum Framework to ensure quality standards across the country.

Q4: What are the major components of the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) programme?

Answer - The major components include supplementary nutrition, immunization, health check-ups, and pre-school non-formal education for children aged 0-6 years.



Q5: Describe the standards set for a quality ECCE center.

Answer - Quality standards include safe and secure infrastructure with sanitation facilities, a developmentally appropriate curriculum with joyful learning methodologies, and the professional development/training of human resources. It also emphasizes parent and community engagement.



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CARE OF CHILDREN IN EARLY YEARS

Principles of Caregiving for Children Under Three Years

1. Supportive and Responsive Environment

- Young children need an environment where they receive love, security, and attention.
- When a child acts or gives a signal, the caregiver should respond immediately.
- This fosters healthy mental, physical, and emotional development.

2. Responsive Relationships and Easy Life Skills

- Caregivers promote healthy brain development through love and interaction with the child.
- Children learn new things through everyday activities like playing, speaking, and walking.
- This helps develop self-confidence, language, and social skills in the child.

3. Reducing Sources of Stress

- Children should be kept away from fear, neglect, violence, or excessive pressure.
- A calm and secure atmosphere keeps the child healthy and happy.
- Lower stress levels allow both the child's brain and body to develop better.

Importance of Fulfilling Physical Needs

Meeting physical needs is crucial for proper development. If food, sleep, health, and hygiene are managed correctly, the child grows healthy and strong.

1. **Nutritious Diet :** Mother's milk is considered the best and most complete food for a newborn. For the first six months, only breast milk should be given as it contains essential nutrients and protects against diseases.
2. **Safety, Adequate Sleep, and Exercise :** Children require a safe environment and plenty of sleep. Newborns sleep for about 18 hours, and sleep duration decreases as they grow. Playing and moving their bodies also serve as exercise.



3. **Immunization and Promotive Health Care :** Timely vaccination is necessary to protect children from diseases. Vaccines increase immunity and provide protection against several serious illnesses.
4. **Cleanliness and Hygiene :** Cleanliness is vital for a child's health. The child's body, clothes, and surrounding environment must be kept clean to prevent infections and diseases.

Types of Caregiving Environments: Familial and Non-Familial

Childcare can take place in two types of environments:

1. **Familial Care:** When the child is cared for by parents or family members.
2. **Non-Familial Care:** When the child is cared for in a day-care, nursery, or child care center.

In both circumstances, children must receive a safe and collaborative environment.

Early Years as the Foundation for Future Learning: Methods of Quality Care

Early childhood is the foundation for a child's entire life development. If a child receives good care and proper guidance during this time, their future becomes brighter.

- **Interest, Curiosity, and Motivation:** Young children are naturally curious. They want to see and understand new things. Encouraging them to learn increases their interest and learning capacity.
- **Building Relationships:** Strong relationships with parents, family, and teachers are essential. These build confidence and social skills in children.
- **Play and Joyful Interaction:** Play is a vital medium for development. Through play, children learn language, thinking abilities, and social behavior.
- **Consistency and Care:** A regular routine is very important for children. When mealtime, playtime, and bedtime are consistent, the child feels secure, leading to better development.

Important Questions and Answers

Q1: Why is 'continuity of care' essential for children under three years of age?

Answer - Continuity in care is necessary for children because it helps develop a deep sense of trust and 'attachment' between the child and the caregiver. If the caregiver changes frequently, the child feels insecure and remains fearful. Continuity provides the child with emotional stability and a feeling of safety.



Q2: What is the significance of sensory stimulation in the early years?

Answer - Children understand the world through their five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste).

- **Base for Curiosity:** Sensory stimulation ignites curiosity and the motivation to learn in children.
- **Brain Development:** When we show children colorful things or sing lullabies, their brain cells become active and form neural connections.
- **Learning:** These experiences form the foundation of children's thinking and understanding abilities, which help them in their future schooling.

Q3: Explain the role of immunization for children's health.

Answer: Immunization is an effective way to protect children from life-threatening diseases (such as Polio, Measles, Whooping Cough, and Tetanus). Since children's immunity is low in the early years, getting vaccinated on time provides them with protection. It not only prevents the child from getting sick but also ensures their healthy physical and mental development. Immunization is an essential 'safety shield' for a child's life.

Q4: Why is collaboration between 'parents and teachers' necessary for childcare?

Answer: Coordination between the home and the ECCE center is vital for the holistic development of the child.

- **Exchange of Information:** The teacher should be aware of the child's home habits, and parents should be informed about the child's progress at the center.
- **Consistency:** If the method of care is consistent at both home and school, the child will not be confused and will learn better.
- **Identification of Problems:** Through mutual communication, any developmental delays or behavioral issues in the child can be identified early.
- **Trust:** It increases parents' trust in the center, which in turn makes the child feel safe in that environment.



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PLAY AND EARLY LEARNING

Introduction

Children are explorers and curious by nature. If provided with the right environment, their physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development occurs very rapidly through play.

Meaning of Play

1. **Voluntary and Enjoyable:** Play is a creative process chosen by the child and provides joy.
2. **Focus on Process:** In play, the child's focus is on the process of playing rather than the result or externally imposed goals.
3. **Self-Motivated:** A child plays based on intrinsic motivation, without any external reward or pressure.

Importance of Play

Play plays the following roles in the holistic development of a child:

- **Physical Development:** Running, jumping, and catching strengthen muscles and improve body balance and coordination.
- **Cognitive Development:** Solving puzzles and arranging things in order increases reasoning power and memory.
- **Social and Emotional Development:** During play, children learn to share, wait for their turn, and control their emotions.
- **Recreational Value:** Play activities bring enjoyment, relaxation, and prevent boredom while providing emotional satisfaction.



Types of Play

The main types of play are as follows:



Levels of Play According to Piaget

Piaget divided play into three parts based on the stages of development:

- **Practice Play (0 to 2 years):** Matches the sensorimotor stage where physical senses play a major role, such as putting objects in the mouth or blowing spit bubbles.
- **Symbolic Play (2 to 7 years):** Children use objects as symbols, such as pretending a piece of wood is a phone. This includes imaginative and make-believe games.
- **Games with Rules (7 to 11 years):** Play becomes more social and structured as children understand and accept complex rules.

Play Skills According to Smilansky

Smilansky divided play skills into four stages:

- **Functional Play:** The first stage where children play with objects and use motor skills.
- **Constructive Play:** Children use objects to create or build something, such as a tower of blocks, showcasing their creativity.
- **Games with Rules:** Children understand the concept of rules and participate in competitive games.

Social Levels of Play According to Parten

Parten emphasized that play helps in building social skills and identified 6 levels:

- **Unoccupied Play (0 to 2 years):** The child is not actively playing with others but observes surroundings or moves their limbs.
- **Solitary Play:** The child plays alone with different toys and shows no interest in others, which develops creative power.



- **Onlooker Play (2.5 to 3.5 years):** The child observes others playing but does not join in, attempting to learn more about the game.
- **Parallel Play (2.5 to 3.5 years):** Children play side-by-side with similar toys but do not engage with each other directly.
- **Associative Play (3 to 4 years):** Children start playing together and exchange toys, but they do not have a common collective goal.

Role of the Teacher in Play

1. **Facilitator:** The teacher provides a safe space and diverse play materials like blocks, toys, and clay.
2. **Observer:** The teacher observes children while they play to understand their interests and pace of development.
3. **Guide:** Where necessary, the teacher joins the play and suggests new ways to interact.

Important Questions and Answers

Q1: State any two main characteristics of play.

Answer - Two Main Characteristics Of Play

1. Play is completely voluntary, meaning the child chooses it of their own will.
2. It is enjoyable, and the focus is on the process and fun rather than a specific goal.

Q2: Explain the role of play in cognitive development.

Answer - Play stimulates the child's brain. When children build structures with blocks or solve puzzles, their thinking, understanding, and problem-solving abilities develop. Through play, they easily understand complex concepts like classification, shape, color, and quantity.



Q3: Why is group play necessary for social development?

Answer - Group play teaches children the rules of living in a society. Through this, children learn cooperation, waiting for their turn, and sharing. It develops leadership qualities and respect for others' feelings.

Q4: Give examples of suitable activities for the cognitive and psychomotor domains.

Answer - Examples Of Suitable Activities For The Cognitive And Psychomotor Domains :

- **Cognitive:** Puzzles, story completion, memory games, and simple science experiments.
- **Psychomotor:** Stringing beads, clay modeling, tearing and pasting paper (collage), running, and jumping.

Q5: Why is 'Dramatic Play' (Imaginative Play) important for children?

Answer: Imaginative or Dramatic play is extremely important for the holistic development of children:



1. **Imagination and Creativity:** It develops the child's thinking power and creativity. Children use their imagination to create something from various objects.
2. **Social Understanding:** By playing different roles (such as a shopkeeper or family member), children understand various social behaviors and rules of society.
3. **Emotional Relief:** It provides children with a safe medium to express their feelings. It helps children give way to pent-up emotions and provides emotional satisfaction.
4. **Language Skills:** While acting or role-playing, children learn to use language more effectively and develop a better vocabulary.



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HOW CHILDREN LEARN (EARLY LEARNING AND TEACHING)

Indicators of Children's Development and Learning

- **Brain Development:** Children's brains develop through use; 'use it or lose it'.
- **Developmental Milestones:** Gaining neck control, crawling, standing, and making sounds are key indicators of development.
- **Identifying Progress:** Progress is identified by observing the changes occurring in children, which shows they are learning.

How Do Children Learn?

- **Ways of Learning:** Some children learn by seeing, some by hearing, and some by doing tasks themselves.
- **Importance of Play:** In the early years (birth to 6 years), learning is most effective through play, stories, conversations, and songs.
- **Active Participation:** Children learn better by actively engaging with their environment and asking questions (e.g., "Why?").

Domains of development and learning areas

All domains of development influence each other, and a single experience can impact multiple domains.

- **Physical-Motor Development:** This includes gross motor skills (running, jumping) and fine motor skills (coordination of fingers).
- **Language Development and Communication:** This includes listening, speaking, enhancing vocabulary, and early literacy (letter and sound recognition).
- **Cognitive Development:** This includes skills like curiosity, asking questions, classification, and problem-solving.



- **Development of Art and Aesthetic Appreciation:** Expression and appreciation through various art forms, dance, and music.
- **Personal, Social, and Emotional Development:** This includes self-identity, self-control, cooperation, and understanding others' feelings.

Promoting Learning

- **Child-Centered Approach:** Teaching strategies should be based on children's interests, abilities, and social context.
- **Active Engagement:** Children must remain physically and mentally active during activities.
- **Importance of Play:** Play arouses curiosity, encourages creativity, and develops emotional balance.

Important Questions and Answers

Q1: What is the importance of fine motor skills?

Answer - Fine motor skills relate to the control of the small muscles of the fingers and hands. These are very important for children because through these, a child learns to write, draw, button clothes, and eat independently. Without these, a child cannot perform small and intricate tasks of daily life.

Q2: Define cognitive development.

Answer - Cognitive development is a mental process through which a child understands the world around them. It includes focusing attention, remembering, imagining, solving problems, and making decisions. This development helps the child to think logically and learn.



Q3: What does the 'interdependence' of domains of development mean?

Answer - It means that all domains of development (physical, mental, social) are interconnected. A deficiency or progress in one domain directly affects another domain; for example, physical illness can reduce a child's interest in learning.



Q4: Describe the various stages of language development in children.

Answer - Language development in children is a gradual process:

- **Listening and Understanding:** First, the child begins to listen to and recognize sounds and words.
- **Oral Expression:** They start by making sounds (like cooing or babbling) and then learn to speak short words and subsequently sentences.
- **Literacy:** After this, they learn to recognize (read) pictures and letters, and finally to write them. A rich linguistic environment accelerates this process.

Q5: How do the different domains of development depend on each other? Explain in detail with examples.



Answer - All domains of development (physical, cognitive, social, linguistic) are not independent; rather, they function in an integrated manner. If development slows down in one domain, it impacts the other domains as well.

- **Example 1:** If a child is physically unwell, they will not be able to participate in sports or play. This will affect both their social development (mingling with friends) and cognitive development (learning through play).
- **Example 2:** Language development is directly linked to social development. If a child does not learn to speak, they will not be able to express their needs, which can make them irritable or emotionally unstable. Therefore, the goal of ECCE should not be focused on just one domain, but on the 'holistic development' of the child, as all these threads are part of the same fabric.

Q6: Explain the difference between Gross Motor and Fine Motor development and suggest some activities for their development.

Answer - Difference Between Gross Motor and Fine Motor Development :



Basis of Difference	Gross Motor Development	Fine Motor Development
Definition	 <p>It involves the use and control of the large muscles of the body.</p>	 <p>It involves the coordination of the small muscles of the hands and fingers.</p>
Main Objective	To maintain body balance and achieve proficiency in large movements .	To develop precise hand-eye coordination.
Activities	Walking, running, jumping, crawling, climbing, swinging, and throwing a ball.	Threading, tearing paper, cutting, drawing, coloring, and clay work.

