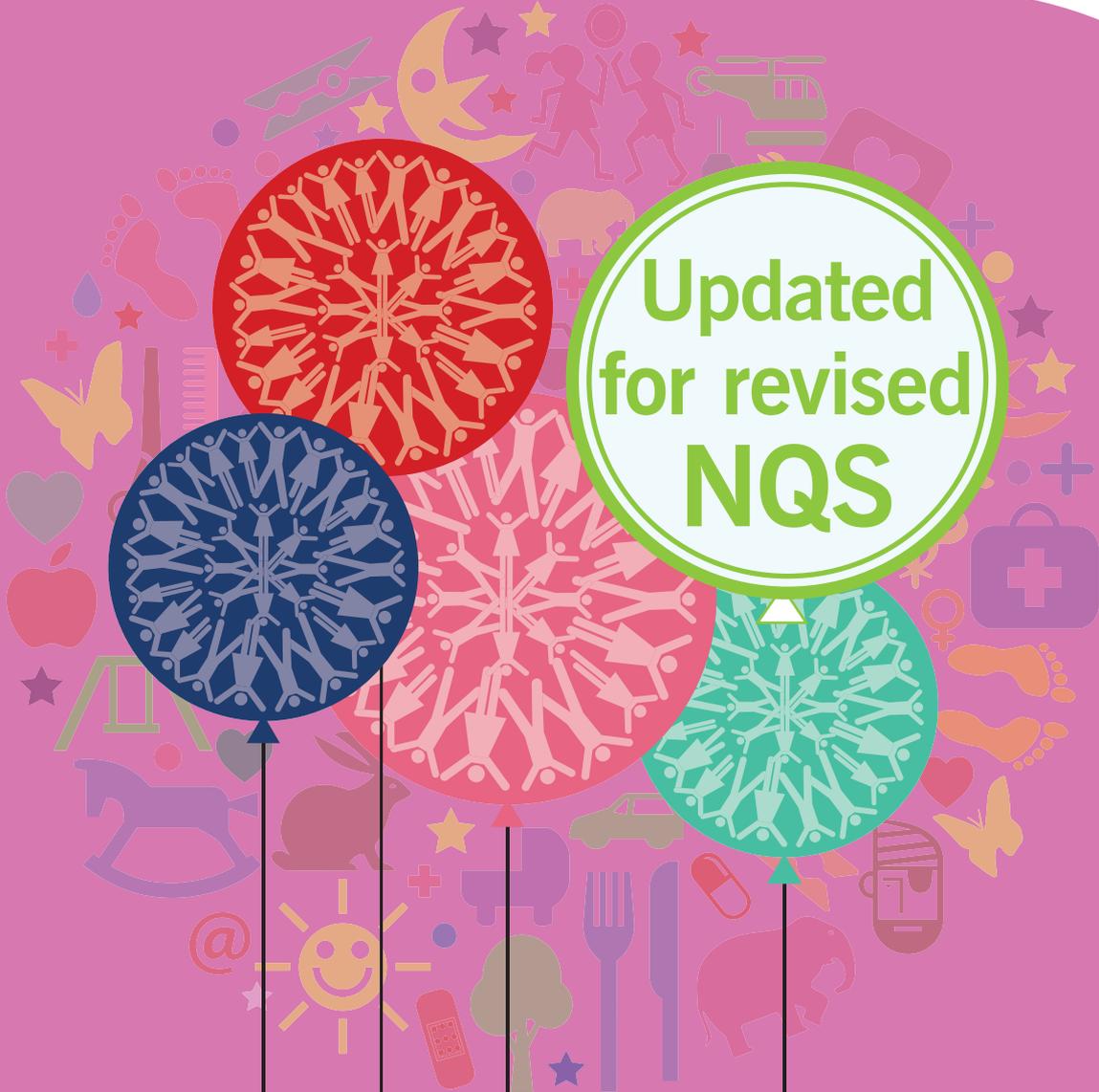


CHCECE023

Analyse information to inform learning



Updated
for revised
NQS

Learner guide



aspire
learning resources

CHCECE023

Analyse information to inform learning

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1



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CHCECE023 Analyse information to inform learning, Release 2



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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE023 Analyse information to inform learning*, Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help 
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A Observing and gathering information about children**

- 1B Following recording guidelines**

Gathering and documenting information about children

Observing and gathering information is part of the ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning. These processes help you form an appropriate curriculum and demonstrate pedagogy that is responsive to children.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

1A Observing and gathering information about children

Observing children as they go about their activities, and gathering detailed information about them from their parents and families helps you build a picture of how children are learning and developing. Parents, guardians and those who care for children can provide information that helps you make better sense of what you observe. Collecting information by observing children and asking families will help you to provide a better learning environment for children and contribute to your own ongoing learning and reflective practice, an aspect of the national learning frameworks.



Reasons for gathering information

The National Quality Standard (NQS), *Being, belonging and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTO) provide the foundation for collecting, recording and analysing information. Make sure you are familiar with the sections that guide educators. Here are some relevant examples:

- ▶ EYLF Practice: Assessment for learning and MTO Practice: Evaluation for wellbeing and learning – These practices refer to the process of gathering and analysing information as evidence about what children know, can do and understand. It is part of an ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning.
- ▶ NQS Element 1.1.2 – Each child's current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
- ▶ NQS Element 1.3.1 – Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.

The information you gather will help you build a comprehensive picture of a child's interests and abilities so you can plan effective play experiences that extend their development.

When looking at children's development, you can identify their progress towards the five main EYLF/MTO outcomes:

- ▶ The child's sense of identity
- ▶ The child's connection to their world
- ▶ The child's sense of wellbeing
- ▶ The child as a confident and involved learner
- ▶ The child as an effective communicator

You can also use the information you gather to:

- ▶ record changes in the child's strengths, interests and levels of development
- ▶ communicate a child's skills, needs, interests, cultural practices and progress to others
- ▶ link learning to outcomes and identify children who need additional support
- ▶ evaluate the effectiveness of the activities and learning experiences you provide
- ▶ reflect on your pedagogy, and how well it matches the needs of the children and their families.

Observation and information-gathering are about identifying a child's strengths, skills and understanding.

To make sure you are on the right track when gathering information, ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Do I have enough information?
- ▶ Is the information useful?
- ▶ Does this information lead me to provide more learning experiences for the child?
- ▶ Do my methods allow the child's learning to become visible to others, including other educators and the child's parents?

Seeking permission

Always follow your service's policies on gaining parental approval. These policies explain how a child may be observed or photographed to record learning and development. Generally, approval will be given during the enrolment and orientation process, but you may need to develop your own permission form for particular projects.

A typical permission form covers:

- ▶ your position or title
- ▶ why you want the information
- ▶ how you will use the information
- ▶ where the information will be stored
- ▶ how the parents will be involved in the process
- ▶ whether the parent allows you to include photographs of their child in your records
- ▶ whether the parent agrees that you can share the information with other educators
- ▶ how you will maintain confidentiality (for example, by following service policies and procedures, and the service and industry code of ethics).

Making observations

Most observations are made while you are immersed in the child's environment. You could be supervising experiences, participating in play, helping with an activity or interacting with children during mealtimes. Sometimes you will need to set aside time to observe, particularly if you want to make specific observations of a concerning behaviour or a social interaction between children.

Notice what the children are doing and make mental notes or jot down points for more detailed recording later. Keep an eye out for meaningful details that will help you provide further learning for the child. These details are referred to as ‘points of evidence’, as they provide evidence of how a child is progressing in relation to developmental goals or outcomes. See the EYLF Practice: Assessments for learning or the MTOP Practice: Evaluation for wellbeing and learning to read more about information that forms evidence.

Some points of evidence you gather may include:

- ▶ the way a child is involved in a project
- ▶ the skills the child uses
- ▶ how the child interacts with others
- ▶ the child’s interests and ideas.

The following table illustrates how an observation might be used to develop a greater understanding of a child. Linking to the EYLF and MTOP clarifies what is occurring in this situation and allows you to see how the child’s needs are being met.

Link to EYLF	Example
Point of evidence	An infant is cuddling up to an educator. The educator is talking quietly to the infant and the infant is smiling up at the educator.
Outcome 1	Children have a strong sense of identity
Sub-outcome	Children feel safe, secure and supported
Overall goal	Belonging and being
Principle 1	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
Practice	Responsiveness to children

Link to MTOP	Example
Point of evidence	A child and educator are talking quietly while they sit at the snack table. They are discussing the events of the weekend and the child is explaining how they celebrated a religious event. The educator is showing interest by asking questions and telling the child how interested they are in the event.
Outcome 1	Children have a strong sense of identity
Sub-outcome	Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
Overall goal	Belonging, being and becoming
Principle 1	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
Practices	Collaboration with children Cultural competence

Learn to recognise points of evidence and share them with others as part of the story you and your colleagues develop about the child.

A challenge for many people when observing, identifying and recording information is to concentrate on assessments 'for' learning, rather than assessments 'of' learning. This means that your points of evidence (the things you choose to observe and record) should demonstrate areas in which you can support the child with new learning opportunities, not simply record what the child can already do. Try observing and recording emerging skills to identify assessments for learning. The following table demonstrates this difference.

Assessment	Description
Assessment <i>of</i> learning	Jericho made a construction using boxes. He managed the masking tape competently and glued using a glue stick.
Assessment <i>for</i> learning	Jericho made a construction using boxes. He managed the masking tape competently and glued using a glue stick. He attempted to use the stapler, but the pressure he applied was not forceful enough. I offered to guide him verbally and physically, but Jericho refused, saying, 'Don't, I want to do it!'

Recording methods

There are many methods and sources an educator can use to gather and record information. Although the NQS directs your actions, it leaves a number of factors up to your judgment, such as:

- ▶ how many observations you need to collect
- ▶ the recording methods you should use.

Secondary sources

The information you gather from secondary sources contains details of behaviour that was observed or written down by someone else.

Some common secondary sources are:

- ▶ enrolment forms
- ▶ discussions with parents, family members, guardians and carers:
 - at orientation
 - at pick-up and drop-off times as you ask questions and listen to the details parents share with you, such as behaviour exhibited by the child at home
 - during telephone conversations
 - during planned care review meetings
 - when parents participate in an activity
- ▶ incident reports from co-workers
- ▶ specialist reports that contain developmental or behavioural information, and strategies for management and support.

Secondary sources often contain a range of points of interest and opinions about children, some of which you may be unaware of. All information is valuable, as together it creates a full picture of the child.

Diaries, journals, logs and communication books

The diaries, journals, logs and communication books that educators use to record events form a communication link between home and the service. The events are written in brief notes and a number of people may contribute to them in various ways. These records may relate to one child or to a group of children.

Samples of work

Keeping samples of children's work helps you to build a clear record of progression or development of an interest. You can collect originals or create photocopies; always ask the child before you take their work and respect their wishes if they refuse. Samples can be used to make special portfolios that show a child's progress and become keepsakes for parents.

Jottings

Many educators use simple reminder methods, such as jottings, during their day to gather details of observations that they can extend on later to produce a record of observation. Jottings are quick reminders, perhaps on a sticky note or in a pocket notebook. When you take quick notes for later extension, remember to add details such as names, date and time.

Example

Making a jotting

Julie is overheard talking about how her dad is going into hospital. Her educator makes a jotting to remind her to find out more about this. She writes: 'Julie, dad, hospital, Tues 15, 9 am'.

Anecdotal information

Anecdotal information is a simple point of interest that is documented. It is a brief description, often written from memory. Anecdotal records do not record every detail of the environment or observed behaviour – the focus is just on the point of interest that you observe.

Example

Recording anecdotal information

Regina wants to document Timothy's physical skills, particularly his ability on the ladder. She decides to create the following anecdotal record.

Recorded by: Regina

Child: Timothy

Age: 3 years, 6 months

Date: 6/3/18

Time: 10.15 am

Setting: Outdoors, ladder

Timothy climbed the ladder of the fort using both hands to hold the sides of the ladder. He lifted his right leg up onto the first step, then lifted his left leg and pulled himself up to the first step. He then raised his grasp on the ladder one step higher.

He continued alternating legs onto each step and moving his hands. Timothy got to the top of the fort, then turned his body away from the ladder and released his grasp on the sides of the ladder. Timothy said he would jump to the ground. He stood at the top and bent his body, but each time he went to jump off, he stopped. After a few tries, I offered to hold Timothy's hands. He agreed and jumped off, landing on two feet.

Time samples

Time samples are observations taken at time intervals to record progressions or patterns of behaviour or interactions. The record may be taken every five minutes, every half an hour or at a set time each day.

Example

Using a time sample

Child: Louise

Age: 3 years, 11 months

Date: 7/2/18

Recorded by: Regina

Focus: What types of activities does Louise participate in?

9.00 am	Louise is playing at the car mat with two other children.
9.15 am	Louise is playing by herself at the car mat. She is building a road with blocks.
9.30 am	Louise is at the collage table. She is sticking feathers onto a piece of card with sticky tape.
9.45 am	Louise is at the climbing frame. She is sitting on the top and watching other children on the bounce board.

Running records

The purpose of a running record is to record everything you see the child doing and saying during a specified amount of time, usually between one and 10 minutes. Decide the length of time you will observe the child based on what you want to record.

A running record needs to contain information about the play spaces the child plays in and how their activities relate to areas of development. This type of record is very demanding of your time because you need to continually observe and record; it also draws on your knowledge of child development because you need to understand every action of the child.

Example

Creating a running record

Child: Fiona

Age: 4.5 years

Date: 6/1/18

Start time: 10.15 am

End time: 10.17 am

Setting: Collage table

Recorded by: Zoe

Fiona sits at the collage table with her feet flat on the ground, her back against the chair back and her arms on the table with her hands clasped (physical).

She looks up at the educator who is talking to her and is listening as the educator asks her if she would like a ball of play dough (social). Fiona answers 'yes' (language) and holds her right hand out to the educator with her palm up (physical) as the educator holds out the ball of dough to Fiona.

The educator places the dough in Fiona's hand, and Fiona's fingers close around it (physical). Fiona's head moves to the side and down as she places the ball of dough on the table immediately in front of her and puts her left hand on top of the ball of dough with her fingers splayed (physical).

Questioning

Questioning is useful, particularly when working with older children. You can question children directly, or develop a questioning method that allows children to consider and reply in their own time.

Not all questioning is useful; sometimes children respond inappropriately, or give a response that is what they think others would like to hear.

Some tips for questioning children:

- ▶ Verbal questioning may be recorded in a variety of ways: you may use a jotting or anecdotal record, or a checklist to tick off or make notes against an anticipated set of responses.
- ▶ Brainstorming sheets can be used to ask a question and have various people add their ideas to it.
- ▶ Surveys, feedback sheets and questionnaires are more formal methods that can be used with educators and older children.
- ▶ A daily evaluation sheet asks educators and children to evaluate how the day went by asking specific questions, such as what activities were enjoyed most, what could be extended on or how the curriculum can be improved. Use prompts with children to encourage a response.

Event samples and checklists

Event samples record your observations each time a particular event occurs. Specify which event is important to record and, each time this event occurs, add a record of what happens before, during and after the situation.

An event sample is an excellent tool for recording behaviour of one or more children. It can be used to observe development and create objectives for each child. There are different ways you can document an event sample, some of which are shown in the following examples.

Example

Event sample recording specific behaviour

Child: Macy

Age: 5 years

Date: 8/2/18

Recorded by: Regina

Focus: What is happening when Macy's peers are upset with her?

9.05 am	Macy stood at the edge of the car mat and watched for five minutes as Louise, Graeme and Helen played. Macy began lifting the edge of the car mat with her foot and this tipped the children's road, making it break. Graeme said, 'Macy, you need to fix it.' Macy sat on the mat and fixed the road, then Graeme asked her if she wanted to drive the truck. They played for some time.
10.13 am	Macy stood at the collage table. She watched Megan using the materials for approximately four minutes. Macy then picked up the scissors that Megan was using in her work. Megan asked for them back, but Macy did not respond. Megan called an educator who came and asked Macy for the scissors. The educator then asked Macy if she would like to use her own pair of scissors, and Macy agreed and sat to work for approximately 20 minutes.

Example

Event sample recording different activities

Child: Preschool group

Age: 4–5 years

Date: 9/1/18

Recorded by: Regina

Focus: Children's interests and peer relationships

	Collage	Painting	Puzzles
Bernice	9.05 am: 10 mins with two other children	9.15 am: 20 mins	9.35 am: 10 mins
Jenna		9.05 am: 5 mins with Gerard	9.10 am: 35 mins with Gerard
King			9.10 am: 40 mins
Ralph	9.30 am: watching for 5 mins	9.12 am: watching for 18 mins	9.05 am: 7 mins

Example

Event sample checklist

Date: 12/6/17	Puts own jumper on (using buttons)	Puts own pants on (using zip)	Puts own shoes on (using velcro)	Puts own shoes on (tying laces)
Petra	✓	✓	✓	✓
Henry	✓			
Grace	✓		✓	
Nixon	✓	✓		
Steve	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gordon	✓			

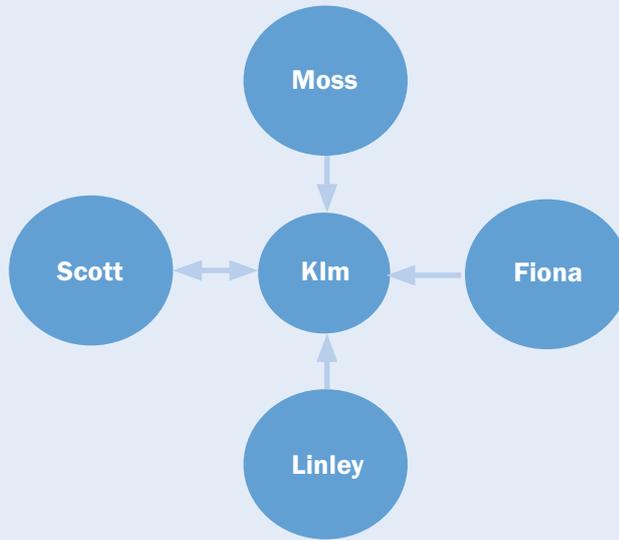
Sociograms

A sociogram is a simple and useful tool to map the interactions of others. It uses a web-like connection to show the interaction that centres around one child or the interactional web that occurs between a group of children. You may use a sociogram to record emerging communication skills, new relationships or changing dynamics in a group.

Example

Mapping social interaction

Kim’s mum is concerned that Kim does not interact with other children while at the service. Richard, an educator, uses a sociogram to collect interaction information and later adds a summary so Kim’s mum can see how Kim participates socially.



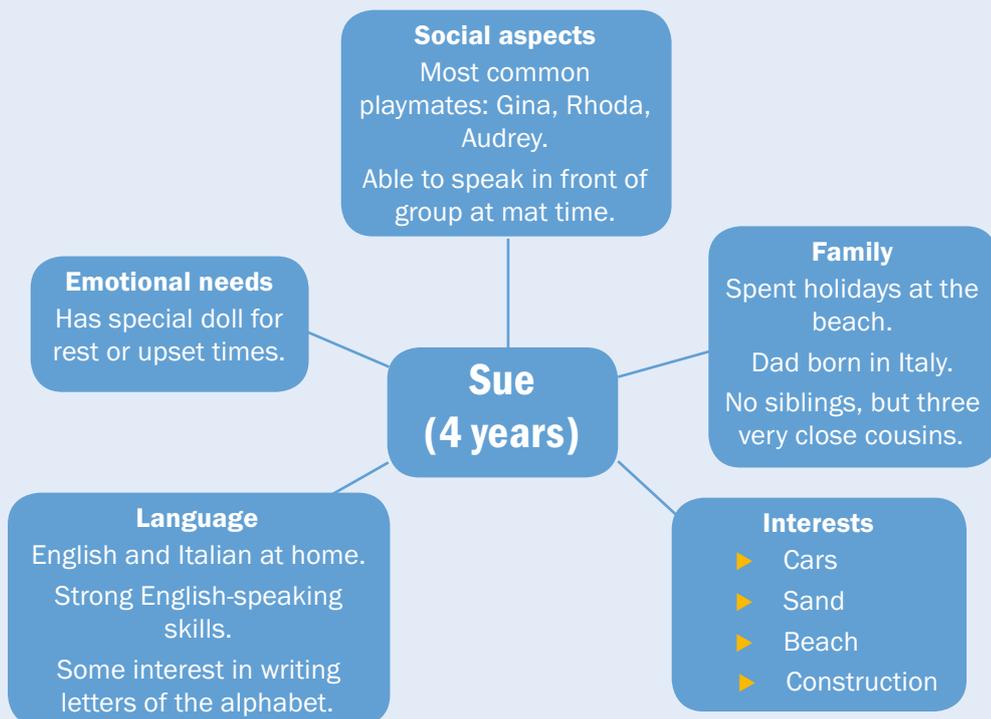
Richard’s sociogram demonstrates that Kim was spoken to by four children (you can see they spoke to her as the arrows point toward Kim), but that Kim only responded to Scott (you can see this as an arrow points from Kim to Scott). Richard decides to make further observations of Kim’s relationship with Scott and other children.

Webs

Webs are an excellent tool for documenting a range of information about a particular child or group. The structure of a web allows you to identify links and clearly map out aspects you are focusing on. They are also useful for brainstorming activities.

Example

Using a web to map information about a child



Learning stories

Learning stories use a narrative to describe learning, development, an incident or a project. A learning story may be added to by the child, parents and others who participate in the child's life.

The learning frameworks encourage you to view children, the curriculum and pedagogy in a creative and open manner. Learning stories fit this brief as they focus on the stories or journeys of the child's learning experiences.

Each learning story should demonstrate that you are able to:

- ▶ notice – observe children's learning
- ▶ recognise – strive to understand what you notice
- ▶ respond – put your understanding to use by acting to support and provide for the child.

A learning story may be presented in different ways depending on the learning goals and outcomes (sometimes referred to as dispositions); for example, whether the activity you are recording relates to:

- ▶ belonging and identity
- ▶ communication
- ▶ thinking, independence and creativity
- ▶ understanding of the world
- ▶ health and physical development.

You can also use a learning story to identify ways to extend a child's development.

You could use the following methods to express your learning stories:

- ▶ Use anecdotal records to describe photos or diagrams.
- ▶ Write the learning story in the form of a letter to the child; for example, 'Stephen, I watched you playing with Kellie and you both worked together carefully to ...'.
- ▶ Use dot points to highlight important aspects of information you are sharing, or photos or samples of work you are including.
- ▶ Use a storybook style that includes children adding drawings of what happened.
- ▶ Use a diary style to communicate information.

You can find some examples of learning stories in the *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia* at: <http://aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf>

You may use different methods to express the learning that you observe. Ultimately all educators are focused on recording the child's progress toward goals, outcomes and dispositions. As an example, if the focus was for the child to 'respect diversity', the following would apply:

- ▶ When expressing a disposition, you could say: 'The child is demonstrating their respect for diversity'.
- ▶ When expressing this as a goal, you could say: 'For the child to show respect for diversity'.
- ▶ When referring to EYLF/MTOP Outcome 2, you could say: 'The child responds to diversity with respect'.

As you become more skilled at writing learning stories, you will start to develop more expressive comments in your recording.

Example

Different ways of recording learning stories

- ▶ Raelene (an educator) develops a learning story relating to Wendy discovering collage. She uses a narrative and some photos to demonstrate Wendy’s exploration. She also adds a recording of Wendy describing what she has done and how she feels about her work. Raelene asks open-ended questions to encourage Wendy to share her ideas and interests.
- ▶ Graeme (an educator) develops a learning story relating to Kim speaking at group time. He uses a narrative and a recording to demonstrate this discussion.
- ▶ Jill (an educator) develops a learning story relating to Lim climbing on outdoor equipment. She videos Lim attempting new skills and adds a description of the video in a narrative form.

Information and communication technology

There are many effective information and communication technology (ICT) tools you can use to capture observations through audio, video and text.

The following table shows how some ICT tools can be used in the learning environment.

ICT tool	Applications in the learning environment
Computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recording observations in a file for each child ▶ Sharing information about children with parents via email or cloud sharing ▶ Playing a slideshow or video of a child or group’s learning journey to others; photographs, videos, sounds, commentary and text can be combined to tell the story ▶ Helping families access information through websites or social media
Smartphone or tablet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recording video: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – encourage children to reflect on their activities – add videos to learning stories – demonstrate progression. ▶ Recording sound: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – record children’s discussions – take verbal notes for you to write down in more detail later – reflect on your own interactions as part of professional development. ▶ Taking pictures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – allow children to take their own pictures – add to learning stories – share with others.
Digital photo frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Playing slide shows of photos of activities, excursions or children’s work ▶ Are portable and relatively inexpensive

Remember not to rely on ICT alone. In some services, equipment may not be readily available or staff may not know how to use equipment confidently and safely. ICT is a useful tool, but you need to direct its use to create useful and actionable learning records. It should be used to supply supplementary evidence.

Consider the following points when collecting audio and visual material:

- ▶ You may need to edit material before sharing it with others.
- ▶ Children may stage their activity for the camera.
- ▶ Make sure you have permission from parents before displaying children in slideshows, recordings or photographs. This may affect the recordings you take of other children.
- ▶ Note who did the recording or photographing, and the date, time, place and event.
- ▶ Use children’s names as you speak to them during a sound recording as you may not recognise a variety of voices on the playback.

Example

Using photographs effectively

A group of children are creating a huge sandcastle in the sandpit. Two children are moving cars and toy people over the sand. Two other children are using feathers and shells to decorate the edge of the castle. Other children are discussing where to place the flag.

The weather begins to change and Cassie, the educator, points out that it might rain. The children are disappointed and concerned that the rain will destroy the castle before their parents get to see it.

Cassie suggests taking a photograph so their hard work can be recorded and shown to others. Raseem’s father has asked that Raseem not be photographed, so Cassie asks Raseem if he would like to be ‘official photographer’. He takes five pictures of the other children with the castle.

Cassie and Raseem choose the best picture. Cassie prints it out and puts it on the noticeboard. At pick-up, the children excitedly show their parents what they achieved.

Practice task 1

1. Research a service’s policies and procedures to find out how and when parents give permission for observations and photographs of their children. Write down what you find out.

.....

.....

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2. Observe children for one hour uninterrupted.
 - a. Make a log of everything you notice in relation to children’s learning and behaviour. Use jottings or dot points to record what you notice.

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b. Which points do you think you could use to develop learning activities or experiences?

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c. For each point you identified, what would be the most appropriate method to record your observation?

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1B Following recording guidelines

When gathering and recording information about children, ensure that you adhere to the NQS and your service's policies and procedures.

To create a holistic view of a child's interests, behaviour and development, you need to:

- ▶ gather information and observations over time and in a variety of spaces
- ▶ include the voices of educators, children, peers, families and other professionals
- ▶ ensure the assessment methods and tools used to gather information consider assessment principles
- ▶ demonstrate inclusive assessment practices.



Watch this video about collecting and writing records appropriately.

Complying with guidelines

Your educational leader and supervisor will help you understand the expectations of your service and follow the National Quality Framework (NQF), including the NQS, MTOP and EYLF. You can access the NQF at: <http://aspirelr.link/explaining-nqf>

You need to gain parents' permission before starting an observation process. This prerequisite will be identified in your service policies and is usually discussed with families as part of their orientation.

You must ensure information is gathered honestly, openly, and with due consideration for privacy and confidentiality. To do this you need to comply with:

- ▶ the Education and Care Services National Regulations
- ▶ the NQS
- ▶ the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics: <http://aspirelr.link/eca-code-of-ethics>
- ▶ the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ▶ the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth).

The Privacy Act protects all the personal information you handle, such as enrolment forms, developmental information and day-to-day information shared at drop-off and pick-up times. Never leave any documentation where others can access it, such as on benchtops, in staffrooms or in your car. Personal information needs to be stored appropriately in a lockable filing cabinet or on a password-protected computer.

The service's philosophy guides the type of learning activities and experiences you provide. The service's policies and procedures tell you what observations to focus on, how many observations you should take, how you could record these and whether you have permission to use your initiative to make these decisions.



Gathering information

Information should be gathered over a period of time. A child's behaviour may be influenced by illness, tiredness, home problems, moods or even the weather, so a one-off observation may not represent a true account of the child's development, skills and knowledge.

By gathering information from primary and secondary sources over a number of days or weeks, educators can observe how the child is progressing, whether new skills have emerged, what new interests have arisen and whether there have been any behavioural difficulties. For example, following a child through a project over a period of days or weeks can provide valuable data about their learning, interaction with others and development.

Make sure each observational record is clear and detailed enough for others to understand. Ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ Will the record or assessment still be understood in three weeks?
- ▶ Will your colleagues be able to plan using the information you provide?

If you want to show the significance of an occurrence, you need to consider how many times it should be noted. You may need to observe the same event on several occasions to support your assessment. You also need to observe the child in a variety of spaces, as children are influenced by their environment.

Example

An educator takes observations over time

Simone, an educator, makes the following observations about Nola throughout the day.

Nola is playing with Imogen in the sandpit. They are involved in building a river that meanders from one corner of the pit to the other. They cooperate, talk and make decisions to work out who will do each task and how the river will flow, until the river is complete.

This observation shows that Nola is able to cooperate with Imogen in the sandpit.

Later that day, Nola is working in the block area. Nola wants to make a fence around a large tower. Two other children are also in the area. Imogen comes into the area and starts to help Nola build, but Nola tells her to go and make her own building. Imogen asks her if she could make the fence around the building, but again Nola tells her to go away. She then pushes Imogen away, saying, 'I don't want to work with you.'

Just before home time, Nola approaches Imogen who is completing a floor puzzle. She asks her if she can help. Imogen agrees. Nola has some difficulty identifying where the pieces fit. Imogen attempts to guide Nola, but Nola becomes increasingly impatient, saying, 'This is stupid, I hate puzzles'. When Imogen gives Nola suggestions, she tells her to be quiet.

These observations show that Nola has skills in cooperating and achieving goals with other children, but at times she prefers to work alone. The final observation in this day shows how Nola is sometimes not able to cooperate with Imogen. Simone may wish to gather further evidence to identify whether Nola cooperates consistently with other children, whether she cooperates only when she feels she is the leader of the activity, or whether cooperation with other children is an emerging skill for Nola and needs to be supported.

Including the voices of others

You need to work with colleagues, the child, family members and specialists to gather information to enhance the child's learning program. By asking relevant people for their perspectives, you can gain a deeper understanding of the children you educate and care for. Make sure you include their voices in your assessments, and use their knowledge and skills to support your direction.

People in a child's life who can assist you include:

- ▶ parents
- ▶ extended family members, such as grandparents and other relatives
- ▶ other educators
- ▶ carers
- ▶ education providers, such as preschool teachers
- ▶ specialists
- ▶ neighbours and family friends.

Family members, carers and friends can help you gather relevant information about the family lifestyle, interests and cultural background. From this information you can plan to offer a wide range of activities and experiences that suit each child. You can provide opportunities to involve children in new activities as well as activities that they are familiar with.

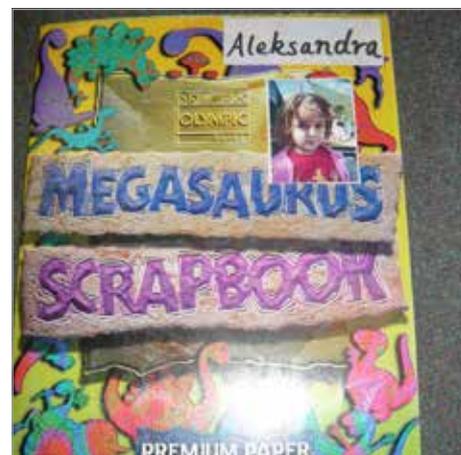
Co-workers may observe the children in different situations to you, so will bring a different perspective. For example, a child may exhibit different behaviours and skills when undertaking an outdoor activity as opposed to an indoor activity.

Specialists offer knowledge and information based on their professional judgment and experience of psychological and physical development. Sometimes you may need to gather information from several specialists to form a comprehensive picture.

It is crucial to establish and maintain sound working relationships with these people. Be non-judgmental, listen attentively and ask questions to clarify your understanding of the information they give you. Record information carefully and remember to respect the privacy and confidentiality of the child and their family.

Assessment methods

You may record observations using a variety of assessment methods. Your chosen method must be appropriate to the purpose and meet your service's philosophy, regulations and legislative requirements.



Portfolio assessment

A portfolio is a collection of information about a child that is developed in partnership with the child, their family and other educators to form a holistic view of their learning. It may be presented in a folder or display book, box, envelope or art folio, or in a computer file or website.

The aim of an assessment portfolio is to gather records that demonstrate the child's strengths, learning, relationships and interests for others to view, comment on and add to. A typical portfolio contains samples of work, learning stories, anecdotal records and journal entries. An effective portfolio is an ongoing project.

A portfolio should:

- ▶ reflect on the holistic child
- ▶ allow the child to self-direct the project and reflect on the past
- ▶ clearly outline the child's development or any related outcomes
- ▶ contain samples to illustrate progress rather than single points in time
- ▶ include a range of recording methods
- ▶ include the voice of children, peers, families and other professionals if applicable.

Formative assessment

Formative assessment is the result of you, the child and others interpreting the information you collect when the child is carrying out an activity.

Formative assessment looks at what the child is doing and identifies how that links with development, learning and behaviour. It takes points of evidence and gives them meaning. Formative assessment is commonly used as part of a learning story. The story tells you what occurred, then the formative assessment tells you what this means – it could be focused on development, EYLF/MTOP outcomes, dispositions or other important information.

Objective assessment

An objective assessment reports what actually occurs. It requires a non-judgmental approach, ensuring that the child is not labelled in a negative or positive way. It is a fair and factual account of what occurred.

Subjective assessment

A subjective assessment includes your personal opinions – what you think or how you feel about what you have observed. While a subjective assessment can be valuable, you need to word it in such a way that ensures others know it is subjective. You also need to assess this alongside the objective record, returning to objectivity when assessing the information.

Summative assessment

Summative assessment occurs when you look back at a range of assessments to gain a comprehensive view of a child. This information can be shared with others, such as colleagues, parents and others who care for the child.

Summative assessment should occur at regular intervals so that you always have an up-to-date understanding of each child, including their behaviours and play preferences.

Example

Writing an objective assessment

Three children are at the painting easel, talking together while they paint. They discuss how colours can be mixed together to make other colours. Anthony paints on his fingers and then presses his fingers onto the paper and discovers that his fingerprints are left on the paper. Each child paints their fingers and presses them onto the paper. They make a series of fingerprints across each other's pages. The children are laughing and talking loudly about how their fingerprints look.

Assessment principles

When gathering information, make sure the assessment methods and tools you use follow the assessment principles of validity, representation, significance and relevance, as described in the following table.

Assessment principle	Description	Example
Valid	<p>Valid assessments measure what they are supposed to measure.</p> <p>Validity is assisted if you choose the correct recording method and provide sufficient detail in an objective manner.</p>	<p>An educator writes the following in Rex's portfolio:</p> <p>Rex worked at a 48-piece puzzle. He began by finding the yellow pieces that belonged to one of the cars in the puzzle, then completing the yellow car. Once these pieces were formed he worked outward from them identifying picture clues and matching pieces to these. Rex completed the puzzle without assistance.</p> <p>This story was accompanied by a photo of Rex doing the puzzle.</p>
Representative	<p>Representative assessments focus on good examples of the child's skills. A record will not be representative if the child is in a situation that artificially hinders or boosts their normal ability.</p>	<p>An educator notices that Matricia (three years) cannot climb to the top of the small A-frame. She is wearing slippery shoes and the A-frame is damp from rain. However, the educator knows that when Matricia is wearing adequate footwear and the equipment is dry, her skills are at a higher level.</p> <p>If the educator made an assessment that Matricia was unable to climb the A-frame and then planned physical activities for her that were at or below this level, she would not be challenged.</p>

<p>Significant</p>	<p>The information you assess must mean something for the child and play an important part in their learning and development.</p> <p>Avoid assessing information that is not important or does not represent something significant or meaningful in the life of a child.</p>	<p>An educator notices that Kevin is unable to use a knife and fork. Miranda is also unable to use a knife and fork.</p> <p>For Kevin (four years) this is a significant developmental need. His mother has told the educator she is worried that he is unable to eat independently when the other children in their family are encouraged to do so.</p> <p>For Miranda this is not significant as the educator knows she uses chopsticks competently at home. The educator has observed her fine motor skills when completing other tasks and they are well developed for her age/stage of development.</p>
<p>Relevant</p>	<p>Assessments that are relevant are ones you consider important to make and are applicable to the situation.</p> <p>Creating records and completing assessments for their own sake is a waste of time. Relevance can be ascertained through consultation.</p>	<p>An educator notices that Lizzie has started to ask about the toilet. Lizzie points to other children when she sees them using the toilet and has twice tried to pull her nappy off in the bathroom.</p> <p>An educator notices that Ben has tried to pull his nappy off; they check his notes and discover that he is yet to show any interest in toilet training. Ben's dad confirms this at pick-up time.</p>

Using inclusive language

Document and assess your observations in an unbiased and methodical manner so they represent a true and accurate picture of the child.

The way you use language conveys a message to others about yourself and your attitudes. If biased language is used, people reading your records can become misinformed. When you use language that is inclusive, you are using language that is unbiased, avoids stereotyping or discrimination, and is objective rather than subjective. Biased language may be racist, sexist, derogatory or stereotyped. It sends a message that you value people differently based on their gender, race, age, marital status, economic class, health status, sexual orientation, religion, political beliefs, or physical or mental abilities.

It is also important to use language that is neutral and accurate. Words such as 'crazy', 'dumb', 'schizo' or 'idiot' are negative, hurtful and incorrect in their description of a medical condition. Similarly, words with negative emotional connotations such as 'whingeing', 'nasty', 'horrible' and 'naughty' are upsetting to others and imply a value judgment that is not appropriate in professional observations.

Review your observations to make sure you have not inadvertently included bias or stereotyping. You can do this by making sure to:

- ▶ delete comments that refer to a person’s background when it is irrelevant
- ▶ only include information that is relevant to the matter at hand
- ▶ use gender-neutral words when speaking generally; for example, ‘person’, ‘parent’, ‘firefighter’, ‘actor’
- ▶ exclude physical descriptions if they are not relevant.

Example

An educator’s negative preconceptions

A new family has enrolled their daughter at the Smithfield Child Care Service. The educators are collecting information from the family about their care practices at home, and observing the child’s emerging skills, learning and strengths.

Later, Naomi (an educator) comments to Henrietta (the director), ‘Those Indian families put too many clothes on their children. And they always want their child to get special treatment. I suppose we will have to put rice and curry on the menu next week.’

Henrietta is surprised at Naomi’s response. She points out that the child was dressed appropriately considering it is cold outside, that every parent wants the best for their child, and that including family recipes on the menu is something they do for every child in the service.

Naomi explains that she had a bad experience with an Indian family at her previous job. They complained about everything and she could never please them, despite her best efforts.

Henrietta reminds Naomi that it is important to respect the child-rearing practices of all families. She stresses the importance of not making biased generalisations about Indian families in future and asks Naomi to make a point of getting to know the new family and welcoming them to the service.

Practice task 2

1. Observe a child and write down one observation you could use to develop a learning activity for this child.

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- a. Whose voices could add depth to this record? Why?

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- b. How will you collect information over time and in a variety of spaces?

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c. How will you ensure your record meets assessment principles?

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d. How will you ensure your record meets inclusive practices?

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2. Access the ECA Code of Ethics and identify the most significant responsibility you believe you have toward children that guides you to meet inclusive practices. Write a paragraph explaining how this responsibility influences your recording of observations.

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Summary

- ▶ Observing children as they go about their activities and gathering detailed information about them from their parents helps you to build a picture of how children are learning and developing.
- ▶ Parents, guardians, carers, co-workers and specialists can provide information that helps you understand what you observe and supports the learning of children.
- ▶ The information you gather helps you to build a comprehensive picture of a child's interests, abilities, needs, culture and developmental level. This allows you to plan appropriate and effective play and leisure experiences that support, encourage and extend their development at their level of interest, knowledge, skill and understanding.
- ▶ Observe children as you supervise experiences, participate in play, help with an activity and interact with them during mealtimes.
- ▶ Record information using a range of methods, such as secondary sources, jottings, anecdotal information, time samples, running records, questioning, event samples, checklists, sociograms, webs, learning stories and ICT.
- ▶ Your assessments need to consider assessment principles: assessments must be valid, representative, significant and relevant.
- ▶ When you collaborate with others to gather information about a child, you are including their voices and using their knowledge and skills to support your direction.
- ▶ Inclusive language should be unbiased; this means using words that are neutral, accurate, relevant and non-judgmental.

Learning checkpoint 1

Gathering and documenting information about children

Observe three children and collect specific information about their background and learning. Select children from different age groups if possible. Prepare a file for each child. You will add to these files in the learning checkpoints for each topic in this learner guide.

Maintain confidentiality at all times.

The parents of the children will need to be willing to give you feedback as you progress through the checkpoints.

1. Provide information about parental permissions. Include:
 - ▶ a copy of the policy that details how permission is granted for collecting records of children's learning and behaviour
 - ▶ a blank copy of the document that parents sign to give permission for educators to collect records of children's learning and behaviour.
2. Develop a simple form that gathers signed permission for you to gather and record information about the three children. The form should include:
 - ▶ your name
 - ▶ why you want the information
 - ▶ how you will use the information
 - ▶ where the information will be stored
 - ▶ how the parents will be involved in the process
 - ▶ whether the parent allows you to include photographs of their child in your records
 - ▶ whether the parent agrees that you can share the information with your trainer/assessor
 - ▶ how you will maintain confidentiality.
3. Create a profile for each child that includes:
 - ▶ family background
 - ▶ interests and play preferences
 - ▶ strengths
 - ▶ relationships
 - ▶ developmental level.

You should collect information from:

- ▶ the family
- ▶ other people close to the child
- ▶ the child
- ▶ other children
- ▶ educators
- ▶ relevant professionals/specialists (if appropriate).

4. Create observation records for each child over a period of time and in a variety of spaces. Identify their progress toward the five EYLF/MTOP outcomes by focusing on:

- ▶ the child's sense of identity
- ▶ the child's connection to their world
- ▶ the child's sense of wellbeing
- ▶ the child as a confident and involved learner
- ▶ the child as an effective communicator.

Use at least **four** of the following methods to gather and record information:

- ▶ Secondary sources such as discussions with others, communication books, incident reports and samples of work
- ▶ Jottings
- ▶ Anecdotal information
- ▶ Time samples and running records
- ▶ Questioning
- ▶ Event samples and checklists
- ▶ Sociograms
- ▶ Webs
- ▶ Learning stories
- ▶ ICT

5. Provide a short summative assessment of each child. Include the voice of others in the assessment.
6. For each child, describe how you have collected information over enough time and in a number of spaces to give you an accurate view of the child.
7. For each child, describe how your assessments are valid, representative, significant and relevant.
8. For each child, describe how you used inclusive assessment practices.



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Using information to monitor development

2B Supporting children's learning

Monitoring children's learning and development

Observing children and documenting their interests, actions and progress is part of the ongoing cycle of learning, development and continuous improvement. A key responsibility of an educator is to effectively use the information gathered from family, co-workers and specialists to inform planning, especially for children and areas where additional support is needed.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
✓	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

2A Using information to monitor development

The responsibilities of an educator in relation to monitoring children's development are clearly defined in the following documents:

- ▶ The Education and Care Services National Regulations – Regulation 74 describes the responsibility of educators to document child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational programs.
- ▶ The EYLF Practice: Assessment for learning describes the responsibility of educators to determine the extent to which all children are progressing toward the learning outcomes and how they can use the developmental information they gather to make decisions about a child's progress, identify any barriers to their progress and identify any areas of additional need.
- ▶ The MTOP Practice: Evaluation for wellbeing and learning explains that educators will gather knowledge about children and engage in monitoring processes so they are aware of how children feel, what they know, can do and understand.



Current best practice for education and care services is a child-centred approach where the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the children as a first priority. A family-centred approach is also used, in which parents are consulted about their child's needs. This holistic approach ensures that you:

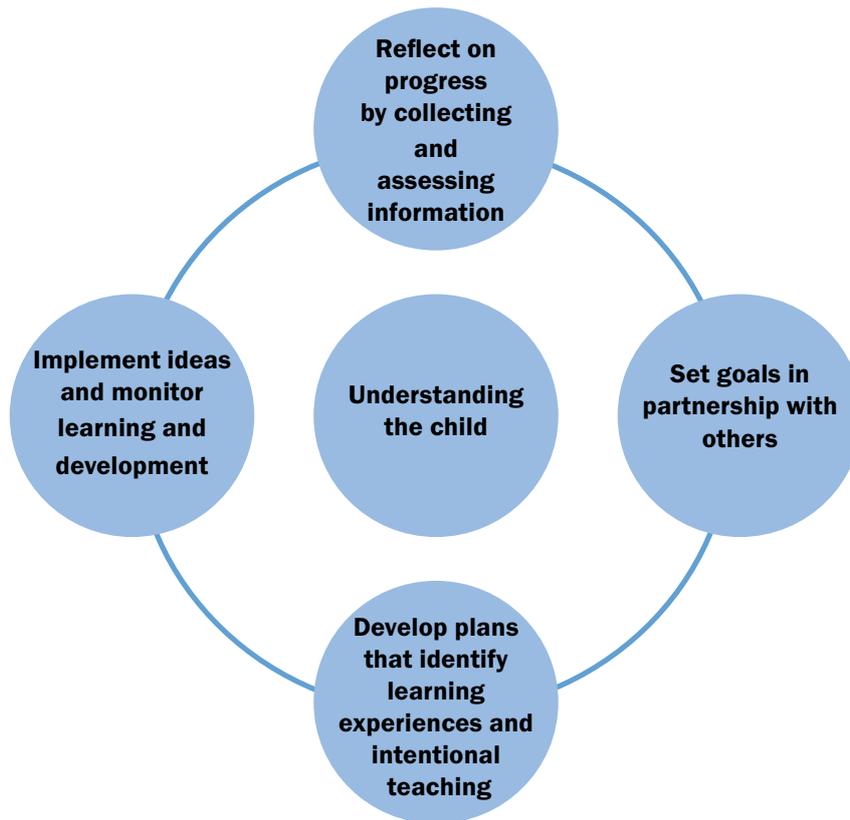
- ▶ consider how the service operates and how it can meet the child's and family's needs
- ▶ put into practice routines and care practices that meet the child's needs and respond to the family's beliefs and values.

Analyse information

Once you've collected information about a child, you need to analyse it so it can be used effectively. Use the records of observation you have collected over a period of time and in different contexts to develop a complete picture of the child's strengths, interests, relationships and learning.

From this information, highlight the child's developmental milestones and how they are progressing in relation to the EYLF/MTOP outcomes. In this way you can form a continuing, comprehensive and holistic view of the child. This information then informs the planning for the child's future learning experiences. Use formative assessment (information you gather as you watch a child) and summative assessment (information gathered over a period of time) to inform your analysis.

The following diagram shows how you can develop an understanding of the child through analysis.



Using summative assessment

As described in section 1B, summative assessment occurs when you look back at a range of assessments to gain a comprehensive view of the child and their progress towards EYLF/MTOP outcomes. It is about summing up what is happening. This information can show the child's play preferences and should be shared with others, such as colleagues, parents and others who care for the child.

Summative assessment should occur at regular intervals so that you always have a complete understanding of each child. It is a useful tool in the process of understanding how to provide the best learning experience for the child.

You can find different methods for presenting summative assessment at: <http://aspirelr.link/ecrh-no40-2012-newsletter>

Example

Creating a summative assessment

Observation	Formative assessment
<p>Learning story Delia, you worked at your sand picture for more than 15 minutes, using samples of all the coloured sand available. You then came to me and said you wanted to add sand from the sandpit, so we went to the sandpit and you collected sand and added this to your picture.</p> <p>Your work took some time to dry as you had used lots of tacky glue. When it was dry I suggested you feel the sand texture. You were not sure what texture was, so I explained it was about how rough or smooth the sand was. You told me that the pink sand was your favourite.</p>	<p>Delia used her creative ideas to add sandpit sand. She is learning about rough and smooth textures.</p>
<p>Jotting notes During group time Delia explained to the group that she likes making healthy ice cream.</p>	<p>Delia is showing an interest in healthy foods and cooking.</p>
<p>Anecdotal Delia is in the home corner. She used chopsticks competently to pick up the small plastic food samples. She looked in the home corner cupboards, asking me where the sushi kit was.</p>	<p>Delia shows interest in cooking and is very capable using chopsticks. She is aware of Japanese foods and cooking methods.</p>
<p>Summative assessment</p>	
<p>Outcome 2 – Delia shows knowledge of a culture other than her own (Japanese).</p> <p>Outcome 3 – Delia is aware of healthy foods. She is interested in cooking using healthy methods.</p> <p>Outcome 4 – Delia is aware of technology in the sushi kit. She also confidently came up with creative ideas for the sand play.</p>	

Each of the formative assessments provided the educator with snippets of information about Delia. However, the summative assessment enabled the educator to gain the overall picture of Delia’s interests, knowledge and progress toward the EYLF/MTOP outcomes.

Linking to learning framework outcomes

It is vital that your summative assessment links the child's development to the learning framework. The following table demonstrates one effective way of doing this.

Areas of focus	Name: Casey P Age: 4.5 years
Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity	
Strengths	Takes considered risks and deals with outcomes
Interests	Uses dramatic play to explore different roles that connect with home experiences (mum, dad, grandma, sister, doctor, hairdresser)
Relationships	Demonstrates attachment to a particular educator
Learning	Persists with challenging activities, but occasionally becomes frustrated and displays anger
Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world	
Strengths	Speaks in front of the large group confidently
Interests	Likes group play, attempts to be included in all group activities
Relationships	Spoke to educator about different skin colours of children at the service
Learning	Uses the words 'that's not fair' when playing games and she does not come first
Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
Strengths	Is aware of bodily needs and communicates these clearly
Interests	Asks to take on responsibilities at mealtimes and talks to other children about nutritious foods
Relationships	Tells educators that her baby sister needs a bottle
Learning	Enjoys movement activities and attempts new movements that are introduced
Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners	
Strengths	Knows a lot about how to use a computer
Interests	Spends time daily at the science activities
Relationships	Asks for educator support when persisting with a task
Learning	Asks many 'why' questions
Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators	
Strengths	Reads first and last name and some words that are meaningful to her, such as 'stop', 'exit' and 'zoo'
Interests	Interested in numbers and letters
Relationships	Listens to peers when they are talking
Learning	Attempts to recognise numbers up to 20

Monitoring development

The information you gain from monitoring children's development helps you to identify specific needs, develop an individual program, and set goals and targets for the child.

A checklist with comment spaces is an effective tool for assessing, measuring and monitoring children's developmental skills.

A developmental checklist should:

- ▶ include milestones that you feel a child should demonstrate if their developmental progress is appropriate at this age/stage of development
- ▶ be clearly written so that you can identify when a child requires support or needs to be more closely monitored
- ▶ consider the child's chronological age (the number of years the child has lived) and maturational age (the stage of development the child is demonstrating) to ensure that individual rates of development, needs and strengths are addressed
- ▶ reflect the individual child in some way; for example, the skills the family say are important to their child.

Example	Development checklist		
	Physical development	Developmental comments	Date achieved
	Walks independently		06/01/18
	Walks up stairs using two feet on each stair	06/01/18: crawls up stairs	24/02/18
	Throws a large ball	14/02/18: pushes ball along ground	
Uses pincer grip to pick up small objects	24/03/18 picks up sultanas at snack time		

Using information to inform planning

If you work with a small group of children you should be able to monitor the children's learning and development consistently and frequently; however, a focus group may be needed if you are responsible for large groups or are working with several educators.

To ensure the curriculum is responsive and inclusive, you must make sure there is a process for checking that information is gathered and recorded for each child, and that this information is systematically assessed and easily accessible to all relevant educators. Your service will have a planning policy and a planning philosophy that may give you some guidance, although many services will leave this process up to you.

You may want to collect details of observation and assessment in more areas than are represented by the EYLF/MTOP outcomes. Your philosophy of learning sets the content of the criteria. You might choose the EYLF/MTOP outcomes including all 19 sub-outcomes, specific dispositions important to your service, families or community, or other learning-focused criteria.

You may wish to use an event sample or a focus group to inform your planning process.

Event sample

To ensure a holistic view of all children, remember to gather information about their progress towards each of the learning framework outcomes from as many sources as possible, including encouraging children to share their thoughts.

If you use a checklist or event sample, you can record the child's progress for each EYLF/MTOP outcome once you have collected adequate information. This works well with a small group of children when you are able to monitor the children's learning and development consistently and frequently. You can then pinpoint which areas to further investigate for the child.

Example

Methods to monitor development

Child: Preschool group

Age: Four to five years

Date commenced: 09.01.18

Recorded by: Regina, Todd and Kylie

	Child 1: Bethanie	Child 2: Rose	Child 3: Harrison
Outcome 1	Interest	Behaviour	Strength
Outcome 2	Strength	Interest	Learning
Outcome 3	Behaviour	Learning	Learning
Outcome 4	Interest	Strength	
Outcome 5	Learning	Learning	Interest

Regina, Todd and Kylie worked to collect adequate information about all the children in the four to five age group. They now know they are able to plan using this information and will have a holistic view of each child.

The educators then decide that they need to collect more detailed information, so they use the checklist below to ensure they are collecting appropriate information.

Criteria	Child 1: Bethanie	Child 2: Rose	Child 3: Harrison
Background sheet	✓	✓	✓
Learning	✓	✓	✓
Strengths	✓		✓
Interests		✓	
Relationships		✓	✓
Play preferences		✓	✓
Behaviour	✓	✓	

Example	Criteria	Child 1: Bethanie	Child 2: Rose	Child 3: Harrison
	One area of developmental monitoring	✓	✓	
	I have gathered enough information over time and in a variety of spaces to ensure each assessment will be valid.	✓	✓	✓
	EYLF outcomes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 3 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Outcome 4 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Outcome 5
	Recording methods used (must be at least five)	1. Learning story 2. Anecdotal 3. Video recording 4. Jotting 5. Sociogram		

Focus group

If you are responsible for large groups or are working with a number of educators, a focus group is an effective way to make sure all observations and assessments are used in the planning process.

A focus group is a smaller group of children organised based on a variety of characteristics. Educators are responsible for observing and making assessments about these children across a set period of time.

Sometimes all educators will observe the children in a single group. The weakness in this type of group is that only a small number of children are being observed at one time, and there may be a large gap between each opportunity for being monitored, during which time skills or interests may have emerged.

One way to make sure this kind of focus group complies with the NQS and learning framework would be to make sure important information about children outside the focus group is still being recorded.

Some focus group models have the same educator attached to a group to provide consistency; however, if the educators rotate to observe different children, the resulting records and assessments have the advantage of coming from different perspectives.

Although focus groups are an effective way to collect information, you need to make sure there are no gaps in your collection, and that they provide the flexibility to observe every child as needed. If you notice something important occurring and the child is not part of your focus group, you must ensure this is responded to. Observe all windows of opportunity or learning milestones regardless of their allocated focus group.

Example

A rotating focus group model

Jess and Amy are responsible for 21 children. To ensure each child is being included in the monitoring program constantly, they break the group up and each focus on three children per day. Their rotating roster allows children to be observed by different educators, ensuring each child gets comprehensive coverage. This roster also allows the children to be observed regularly, at least once per week. The roster is as follows.

Monday 20th	Tuesday 21st	Wednesday 22nd	Thursday 23rd	Friday 24th
Jess: group 1 Amy: group 2	Jess: group 3 Amy: group 4	Jess: group 5 Amy: group 6	Jess: group 7 Amy: group 1	Jess: group 2 Amy: group 3
Monday 27th	Tuesday 28th	Wednesday 29th	Thursday 30th	Friday 31st
Jess: group 4 Amy: group 5	Jess: group 6 Amy: group 7	Jess: group 1 Amy: group 2	Jess: group 3 Amy: group 4	Jess: group 5 Amy: group 6

Creating focus groups

Children should be organised into focus groups systematically and with regard to a number of considerations.

Focus groups are usually based on one or more of the following classifications:

- ▶ Age: children are grouped to ensure a range of ages is represented.
- ▶ Ability: children are grouped to ensure a range of abilities is represented.
- ▶ Cultural capital: children are grouped to ensure a range of cultural backgrounds, lifestyles and interests are represented.
- ▶ Gender: children are grouped to ensure an even gender balance is observed.
- ▶ Attendance: children are grouped on the basis of casual, part-time and full-time attendance.

Example

Creating a balanced focus group

Indigo, an educator, creates her focus groups by identifying some of the main characteristics of the children in her care. She ensures that each group includes:

- ▶ a child with English as a second language or with language difficulty (this was of high importance in her service)
- ▶ children of three different ages
- ▶ some full-time, part-time and casual attendees
- ▶ some boys and some girls.

As co-workers and parents are also contributing to the planning process, she creates a smaller number of larger focus groups. This ensures each child is frequently in focus. The information collected about the focus group relates only to developmental monitoring. All other holistic observations and assessment are collected as they are noticed by the educators.

Practice task 3

Review observation records for one child that have been analysed by an educator. You can access these from a service, a colleague or the *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia* at: <http://aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf>

1. Explain how the educator has collected information about the child's strengths, interests, behaviour, relationships and learning.

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2. Explain how the educator uses information and observations to analyse the child's play preferences and prepare a summative assessment.

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3. Explain how the educator links the information they collect to the EYLF or MTOP outcomes.

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4. Explain how the educator ensures that information about all children consistently informs planning.

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5. How does a service programming policy ensure that the information collected and analysed informs the planning process for all children?

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2B Supporting children's learning

NQS Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice focuses on the curriculum and how you support children's learning. It relates to all aspects of program development, from collecting information about children to responding with critical reflection.

Some other relevant elements are included in the following table.



Element	Education program and practice
Element 3.2.1	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
Element 5.1.1	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 6.2.2	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

Educators have a responsibility to plan a program that takes into account appropriate developmental milestones and expectations. It needs to provide for every child's individual development and learning needs. The program should provide:

- ▶ relevant activity selection
- ▶ modified equipment, activities and precautions, where appropriate
- ▶ additional support when required
- ▶ specialist resources
- ▶ inclusive and unbiased responses.

To develop such a program you need to collaborate with parents, colleagues and specialists so you can identify where additional support is needed, and plan consultations and activities in line with your service's standards, policies and procedures.



Children who need additional support

The information you gain during regular observation, recording and monitoring helps you develop a profile of each child and identify when they have a particular need in relation to their developmental progress. This enables you to develop an individual program and set specific goals and targets for the child.

The profile you develop of the child is not static; it must be reviewed regularly to ensure you have the most up-to-date information.

A child's profile may comprise:

- ▶ personal characteristics, such as age, gender, cultural and linguistic background, and family income, needs and circumstances
- ▶ the child's health and whether they have a disability
- ▶ their abilities and needs, such as their ability to socialise, communicate and use language, giftedness, and any behavioural or psychological needs.

Before establishing that a child needs additional support, observe them in a variety of situations over time and seek information from a range of people as part of your monitoring and screening process. Using only one assessment as evidence of a child's need for additional support is inappropriate and unfair to the child.

The information you gather allows you to:

- ▶ identify and clarify concerns
- ▶ identify whether this development or behaviour is appropriate
- ▶ gain a greater understanding of the situation
- ▶ gather and share information from different perspectives
- ▶ establish whether there are connected situations
- ▶ view the situation from the perspective of other children
- ▶ identify whether additional support is needed for the child to achieve a particular learning outcome.

Additional support may involve an assessment by an inclusion professional, who can identify needs and refer you and the child's family to appropriate services. They can also provide advice, resources and funds to eligible families. You can access information about Inclusion Agencies at: <http://aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme>

Always keep parents and family members up to date with their child's progress. Suggest ways they can provide support at home to help their child with a particular learning outcome. This could be reading to the child at bedtime, encouraging them to play with safe household items to develop their creativity, speaking to their child at their eye level, talking about positive things that happened in the child's day, or providing fun one-on-one times each day or week.

Watch this video to learn more about working with children who require additional support.



Sharing information with families

To enable you to develop an appropriate plan for a child, regularly consult and collaborate with parents and family members. Circumstances may change from what the parent told you at enrolment or induction.

Make yourself available to speak to parents at appropriate times according to the structure of your service, and your role and responsibilities. By developing an ongoing partnership in which information is regularly shared between the service and parents, you contribute to strong, respectful relationships and share responsibility for monitoring the strengths and needs of the child. Reinforce your case by explaining that the more you know about a child, the more you can plan to meet the child's needs. Always show interest and encourage families to continue sharing information.

Parents need to know how their child is developing and what they can do to help. Similarly, educators need to know the family's situation and if there are any issues that may contribute to a child's behaviour or lack of development. For example, if the parents are having relationship problems, the child may be upset, unsettled and clingy; if the child has been unwell, they may not react in their usual way to everyday challenges.

You can support parents by doing the following:

- ▶ Encourage parents to attend meetings.
- ▶ Organise workshops on child development.
- ▶ Develop a library of books and DVDs for parents to borrow from.
- ▶ Assign educators to help parents address concerns or complaints.
- ▶ Coordinate support groups.
- ▶ Develop parenting skills programs.
- ▶ Suggest community resources, such as local service groups and advocacy services.
- ▶ Involve parents in program planning.

The frequency and level of communication you have with parents or family members may vary, depending on how often the child attends the service, the child's developmental milestones and the family's expectations of the service.

Be aware that some families may not want to pass information on to you. You must respect this decision; however, you can still work towards establishing a relationship based on interest and trust, which in time may lead to information-sharing.

Example

Effectively using information from a parent

Joey's mum tells Evie, the educator, that Joey went to the zoo and saw a bear. She shows Evie some photos on her smartphone.

With his mum's permission, Evie helps Joey to show other children in the group the photos of his trip to the zoo on the service laptop. The other children ask Joey questions about the zoo, what the bear ate, and where it lived and slept.

Evie takes note of their questions and extends on this activity the following day by using the laptop to show the children footage of a bear from a nature documentary. They talk about how it moves, and watch it eating and sleeping.

Evie also brings in some brown fake fur for the children to touch. At group time she uses the action rhyme 'Going on a bear hunt' and the children creep around the room using the physical motions of the song.

Collaborating with colleagues

Colleagues may provide you with background information; for example, they might advise you that a child is moving rooms or that they previously used to attend the service. With parental approval they can provide secondary information such as:

- ▶ documentation they have collected
- ▶ records of discussions they have had with others
- ▶ observations from a focus group
- ▶ portfolios or files containing the child's work or personal information.

Colleagues may also see or hear information throughout the day and pass it on to you for documentation. This information might be from a time when you were not in the service; for example, if you work an early or late shift and other educators welcome and communicate with the family.

Other educators can also provide support and advice to you when you collect records, or receive information or feedback from secondary sources.

Collaborating with specialists

If a family uses a specialist service they may share a report from this service with information about developmental or behavioural information and strategies for management and support.

Specialist services include those outlined in the following.

Physiotherapists

Use physical therapy, exercise and massage to restore or maintain movement and physical function.

Occupational therapists

Help people manage activities of daily living, such as dressing, so they can maintain their independence.

Speech therapists

Help people overcome speech, language and communication difficulties.

Social workers

Help provide social services, especially to underprivileged people.

Inclusion Support Programme (ISP)

Provides support to services that educate and care for children with additional support needs.

An Inclusion Agency links the service to specialists, community agencies and equipment that can help meet the child's individual needs.

Prior to contacting a specialist service or discussing any details of a child with the specialist, you must consult the child's parents and gain their permission. You must also seek advice from your service coordinator prior to discussing any concerns with parents.

Practice task 4

1. Identify a child who requires additional support by monitoring their development and learning. Note one learning outcome that this child might be working toward, and explain how you would provide additional support to this child to ensure their success. Remember to maintain confidentiality.

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2. List the ways collaboration has been used to support this child. Include what types of information has been collected. How would you extend on this collaboration, and why?

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3. How do the elements of NQS Quality Area 1 and your service's policies and procedures guide you when identifying additional support needs and consulting with parents and specialists to support children's learning?

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Summary

- ▶ Current best practice for education and care services is a holistic approach that is child- and family-centred. This ensures the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the children and that parents are consulted about their child's needs.
- ▶ The records of observation you collect over a period of time and in different contexts help you develop a complete picture of the child's strengths, interests, relationships and learning.
- ▶ Use formative assessment (information gathered as you are watching a child) and summative assessment (information gathered over a period of time) to inform your analysis.
- ▶ Develop a process to ensure the information gathered for each child is systematically analysed and recorded in formats that are easily accessible by all educators to ensure the planned curriculum is responsive and inclusive.
- ▶ Highlight the child's developmental milestones and how they are progressing in relation to the EYLF or MTOP outcomes to form a progressive and holistic view of the child and identify whether additional support is needed.
- ▶ Regular monitoring helps you identify a child's specific needs and enables you to develop an individual program with goals and targets for the child.
- ▶ Regularly share information with parents and family members, colleagues and specialists to maintain currency of information and support children's learning.

Learning checkpoint 2

Monitoring children’s learning and development

Part A

Complete the following tasks to continue to develop the files for the three children you observed in Learning checkpoint 1.

1. For each child, use a format of your choice to complete a summative assessment that links to the EYLF/MTOP outcomes and represents each child’s:
 - ▶ strengths
 - ▶ interests and play preferences
 - ▶ relationships
 - ▶ learning
 - ▶ need for additional support to meet an EYLF/MTOP outcome.
2. Share your summative assessments with a colleague and/or the children’s parents. Ask for their feedback on your summative assessment and see if there is any further information you can gather from them. Record this feedback.

Part B

Read the case study, then complete the tasks that follow.

Case study

Linda is a Diploma-qualified educator working in a room with 27 children and two other educators. The children are aged between four and five years old and are from a range of backgrounds. They all speak and understand English well. The children usually attend the service between 9.00 am and 3.00 pm.

1. Develop a process that Linda could use to ensure that each child is observed and suitable information is gathered to make the curriculum responsive and inclusive.

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2. What should Linda do if the assessment of information from this process indicates a child needs additional support to achieve a learning outcome?

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Creating best-practice plans

3B Improving your work practices

Using evidence to inform practice

Your curriculum is influenced by the assessments you collect for each child, the philosophy of the service, your knowledge of how children learn, and your teaching practices (pedagogy).

It is your responsibility to use your assessments to develop appropriate learning experiences in line with the service's standards, policies and procedures. Your curriculum should be provided using best-practice teaching methods that reflect the interests and needs of individual children and the group.

Ongoing learning and reflective practice will allow you to develop your skills and knowledge as you gain experience, collaborate and learn from others.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

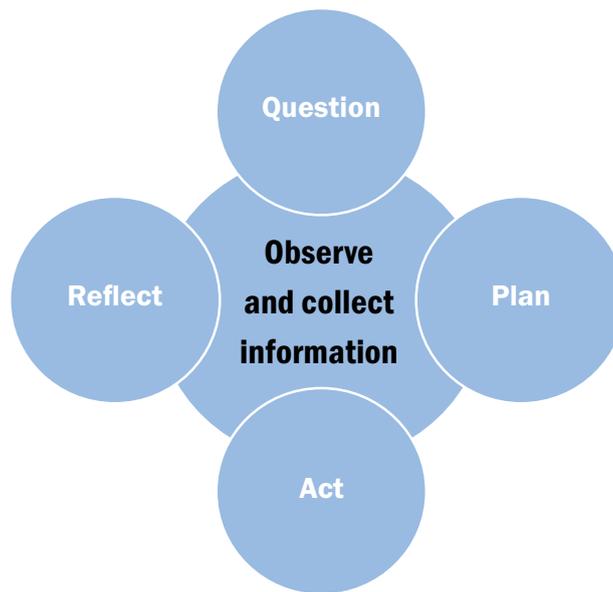
National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
✓	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
✓	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

3A Creating best-practice plans

The assessments you make help you plan learning experiences for each child based on their strengths, interests, relationships and developmental progress.

Be familiar with the planning cycle as outlined in the *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia* or *Educators' guide to the framework for school age care in Australia*.

The cycle is presented in the following diagram.



A planning cycle is continuous. Each step is affected by your philosophy, beliefs and knowledge, and the observations you continue to make. The components of the cycle are outlined in more detail in the following table.

Question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identify and clarify children's strengths, interests and goals in conjunction with the framework outcomes. ▶ Seek information as part of the partnership between educators and families. ▶ Identify how activities can engage the children. ▶ Ensure that each child has opportunities to achieve the goals set for them.
Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Aim to create holistic learning in secure and respectful relationships. ▶ Decide on teaching strategies. ▶ Plan the physical learning environment. ▶ Select methods to monitor and assess children's achievements and progress.
Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Engage with children as they carry out planned and unplanned thinking and learning experiences, listening and responding to what they have to say. ▶ Regularly consult with families. ▶ Continuously monitor and assess children's learning.
Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Assess and evaluate teaching and learning. ▶ Reflect on your knowledge of children's development.

Planning learning

Planning should take a considered approach, using the following steps as part of a planning cycle:

- ▶ Identify what learning should take place following your analysis of observations and information.
- ▶ Plan appropriate activities and experiences.
- ▶ Implement the activities and experiences.
- ▶ Reflect on whether outcomes were achieved through further observation and consultation.

The following table illustrates how the planning cycle could be used effectively.

Planning stage	Example
Observe and record	
<p>Identify what is important for the child from recorded observations and information. Your focus may be on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ development ▶ knowledge ▶ ideas ▶ abilities ▶ interests ▶ social interactions ▶ reactions to the play environment ▶ culture. 	<p>Child: Felicity Age: Four years, three months Date: 21/1/18 Recorded by: Sam Information received from: Alan (Felicity's dad)</p> <p>Felicity takes her toy cars everywhere. When Felicity and her family are driving she often asks, 'What car is that one?' Felicity knows the make and model of quite a few cars because she recognises their logos.</p>
Question: What learning can take place next?	
<p>List the outcomes, goals and objectives the child is working toward so you have a clear direction.</p> <p>Objectives are based on the scaffolding experiences you provide; experiences that help a child to learn or practise new skills. They need to be short and simple, and take the child to the next step in achieving the goal you identified.</p> <p>When setting objectives, think of experiences, activities and interactions you can use to help achieve the goal.</p>	<p>Outcome 5: Children interact verbally or nonverbally with others for a range of purposes.</p> <p>Goal: For Felicity to be able to share her knowledge of car makes and models with other children.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For Felicity to talk about the car her mum drives during snack time. 2. For Felicity to interact with other children playing car games in the sand during morning play. 3. For Felicity to demonstrate that she knows the difference between a four-wheel drive and a sedan during interactions with others.

Plan an activity or experience	
<p>Plan activities and experiences that allow the objectives to be achieved.</p> <p>Plan an activity to give the child practice in completing a task in a specific way.</p> <p>Plan experiences that allow them to experience choice, creativity, interaction and learning.</p> <p>Ensure activities and experiences extend the child's skills in a safe, positive and comfortable environment.</p> <p>Ensure activities and experiences are inclusive and non-gender-biased.</p>	<p>Sam develops two activities and experiences to enable Felicity to extend on and share her interest in cars.</p> <p>Sam plans to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ start a conversation about cars at snack time ▶ set up a car mat, blocks and dolls in the sandpit ▶ make a memory game that matches makes and models of cars. He includes sedans and four-wheel drives as a way to introduce the new concept.
Act	
<p>Implement your plan.</p> <p>Where possible involve the children in making changes, altering and setting up the environment.</p> <p>Be alert to spontaneous play and ideas initiated by the children.</p>	<p>Sam asks Felicity and other children to help him set up the car mat and matching game. This gets them involved and captures their interest in the activities.</p>
Reflect	
<p>Consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Was the outcome achieved? ▶ How effective were the learning strategies? ▶ Were the activities or experiences appropriate to extend skills? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Objective 1 was achieved. Felicity talked about her mum's car. ▶ Objective 2 was achieved. Felicity became involved in the car games in the sandpit. ▶ Objective 3 was achieved. Felicity matched sedans and four-wheel drives and named them during play. ▶ Felicity is able to interact verbally with others for different purposes (Outcome 5).

Once you have completed planning, review the goals and objectives again to ensure they have direction and purpose. If the goals and objectives are general and difficult to measure, you may feel that you are not achieving anything and that your program lacks focus. For example, the goal 'For Patrick to increase his fine motor skills' is not useful because it does not focus on a specific skill, state how the skill is to be developed, or give a time line to achieve the goal.

Goals are more long term than objectives. Achieving a goal may take weeks, months or most of the year, but an objective is set with the expectation that it will be achieved within the planning period, which for most services is one to two weeks.

Two methods for developing useful objectives are outlined in the following information.

Use the SMART acronym

The objective should be:

- ▶ Specific – it must specify what you want to achieve
- ▶ Measurable – it must be easy to tell whether the objectives are being met or not
- ▶ Achievable – the objectives you set must be within reach
- ▶ Realistic – it must be realistically achievable with the resources you have
- ▶ Time – specify when you want to achieve the set objective by

Use a task analysis

Break the task down into small steps showing how a child may complete the task and then identify your realistic objective for the plan.

Example

Using a task analysis to develop an objective

Hayden notices that Marshall is learning to cut with scissors. He plans how he will help Marshall cut with scissors by first completing a task analysis. To do this he breaks down the task of using scissors into small steps:

1. Hold the scissors in the correct manner.
2. Open and close the scissors independently.
3. Cut snips on the edge of paper while the educator holds the paper.
4. Hold own paper and snip the edges.
5. Cut across the page of paper independently.
6. Cut along printed lines (straight and curved).

Hayden decides that because Marshall has not used scissors before he should concentrate on completing the first two parts of the task first. Hayden sets a goal, then an objective for this week's plan.

Goal: For Marshall to cut with scissors competently by the end of Term 1.

Objective: For Marshall to hold scissors correctly, and open and shut them independently by 7 March.

Applying the evidence

It is vital to apply evidence to your planning to ensure you are providing the best possible learning experiences for children. Your knowledge of this evidence can assist you in planning learning and in noticing when children are having or ready for learning experiences. Children learn in various ways, including:

- ▶ play
- ▶ intentional teaching
- ▶ modelling
- ▶ a safe and stimulating environment.

Learning through play

Play is a means for children to practise their communication and social skills. In play, children learn how to think, share, cooperate and negotiate. How they do this depends on their developmental stage. Much of the learning that occurs through play will happen spontaneously, so will not be planned. Spontaneous learning is valuable on its own, but can be coupled with intentional teaching to extend its value. Your goal is to provide learning environments that allow children to learn spontaneously through play.



Valuable play experiences enhance children’s confidence.

Different types of play occur at different ages. Some types of play are outlined in the following.

Imitative play

Children copy others and imitate what is happening around them.

Imaginative play

Children explore experiences and things they see around them, simplify events, act out issues they are trying to understand, experiment and take on roles they would not normally experience. This allows them to pretend they are in situations that they would not usually experience.

Dramatic play

Children take on the roles of other people to explore their relationships with others and investigate what it might be in a different situation; for example, to be popular, famous, or have additional rights.

Play contributes to every area of a child’s development. When you show respect for children’s ideas for play, you are providing an environment that allows healthy learning and development.

The EYLF, MTOP and NQS are based on the belief that play and leisure are how children learn and make sense of themselves and their world. This belief is a reflection of theories and practices of education and care. These guidelines and their foundation theories link to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that play is a child’s right.

Some theories and practices that are important to the EYLF, MTOP and NQS frameworks are outlined in the following table.

Theorist	Key ideas
Malaguzzi (Reggio Emilia approach)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children learn through play. ▶ Play is essential to a child’s wellbeing. ▶ Play allows children and educators to learn.

Theorist	Key ideas
Montessori	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Play is the child's work. ▶ Play is linked with sensory activity, and cognitive, social and emotional experiences. ▶ Play provides optimum brain development.
Steiner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children need play to develop. ▶ Children need to use their imagination. ▶ Educators use natural materials where possible to enhance natural play and develop a sense of beauty and care.
Froebel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Froebel designed the first kindergarten to support his belief that play was an important route to learning.
Piaget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Children are active learners. ▶ Identified three stages of play (sensorimotor, symbolic, and reproductive). ▶ At each developmental stage and age, children will learn and use materials differently. ▶ Children need to repeat activities to practise skills and learn different things. ▶ Learning should be built around children's interests.
Vygotsky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Play stimulates thinking. ▶ Through play, children take on different roles and try out different ways to communicate. ▶ Play allows children to develop language and reasoning skills.
Parten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Play has the following stages: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – solitary play – parallel play – associative play – cooperative play – play with rules – unoccupied play – onlooker play.

Educators should understand the importance play has in children's development and apply this understanding to the activities and experiences they plan.

The environment must reflect individual children's play preferences and interests, provide inspiration and challenges, and have spaces that allow them to play alone and with preferred peers.

Make sure you provide a range of areas, resources and materials for different types of play at different ages to develop the specific outcomes identified; for example, to encourage experimentation, nurture creativity or develop skills such as ball handling, balancing or coordination.

Example

Changing the environment to support developing skills

Maria, an educator, observes Witney (four years) drawing with thick crayons. She has drawn a circle that includes some dots and lines forming a smiling face. From the face emerge some lines identifiable as arms and legs. Witney writes her name roughly but legibly on the top corner of the paper. Witney shows Maria the drawing and says it is a picture of her mum.

Maria sees this as evidence of emerging skills and wants to provide more opportunities to Witney. She offers coloured pencils, thin crayons and paper. Witney can draw more effectively with these materials and use colour if desired.

Learning through intentional teaching

Intentional teaching is deliberate and purposeful. It may occur in a planned situation or be an extension of spontaneous learning.

Intentional teaching involves analysing the evidence you have gathered and choosing a method that provides the best support for the child to reach the identified goal or understand a concept.

Intentional teaching usually includes a plan of how to move from one understanding to another. It may include scaffolding experiences (activities that help a child to develop an emerging skill) or it may relate to a topic of interest to the child.

Intentional teaching is useful for:

- ▶ learning rules and guidelines
- ▶ following directions
- ▶ focusing on specific skill development or learning.

Routine times are excellent for intentional teaching. Children are working at activities that are focused and emerging skills are evident. The teaching might occur spontaneously or be part of a plan. Some examples of intentional teaching during routines are shown in the following table.

Routines	Examples of intentional teaching
Bathroom	<p>How to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ wash hands ▶ turn a tap on or off ▶ brush teeth. <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where does the water go? ▶ Why do we use soap? ▶ What happens if we don't brush our teeth?
Mealtimes	<p>How to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ use a spoon, knife or chopsticks ▶ set the table. <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where do foods come from? ▶ What makes a healthy menu? ▶ Which foods are fresh and which are processed?

Be aware that intentional teaching can disrupt play-based experiences, particularly if it occurs at the wrong moment. Make sure you know when to apply intentional teaching and when to leave children to continue with play.

Example 1

Two children are building a spaceship out of blocks. Sandra (the educator) comes over to them and says, 'That's a big tower. How many blocks have you used?' The children look at her. 'It's not a tower,' they say. 'Oh well, let's try counting the blocks anyway,' she says.

Although Sandra thinks that teaching numbers at this time is useful, the children are busy using other skills. Sandra's question leaves the children thinking that she is not paying attention to their play.

Example 2

Sandra watches and listens as the children are building. She hears that they are building a spaceship. She had planned to introduce numbers as the key topic this week, but decides not to interrupt their work as they are learning other skills from the task.

If the children need her help, she will provide intentional teaching to address the situation they face. In the meantime, she allows them to continue their play uninterrupted and makes a note to read them a picture storybook about spaceships during quiet time.

Learning through modelling

Children's behaviour and learning is affected by the environment and the actions, beliefs and enthusiasm of educators. A method used to help children learn a new skill or behaviour is modelling, where the child watches a skill being performed, retains the information, then imitates the action.

There are various stages to the modelling process. To make the most of these you can identify which stage each child is more influenced by, or which stage they need the most support with.

The following table shows how an educator uses modelling to encourage a child to learn how to brush their teeth to meet the child's identified needs.

Modelling stage	What this means	Example
Attention	The child needs to pay attention to gain learning from modelling. It helps if the environment for modelling is attractive and enjoyable.	The toothbrush and toothpaste are in good condition and are laid out neatly in the bathroom. The area is clean.
Retention	To gain learning from any modelling, the child needs to retain the information gained. This is where the cognitive processes of imagery and memory are important. To ensure the child retains the information, make sure the information you want them to know is clear and unambiguous.	During the modelling, the bathroom door is closed to the noise in the next room. There are no extra materials in the way. These measures ensure the information is clear. The educator models what to do at each step, explaining to the child the reason for each action.

Modelling stage	What this means	Example
Reproduction	To reproduce what has been modelled the child needs to have the skills to do this. Skills can increase through creative and imaginative ways as well as direct practice.	The child attempts to reproduce the actions. The educator supports the process. At group time the group talk about brushing their teeth and remind each other how to do this through a song where they pretend to brush their teeth.
Motivation	The motivation that gets the child to reproduce modelled actions involves encouragement and reinforcement.	During the process and the group time, the educator provides encouragement and positive language; for example: 'Great! You did that well. Your teeth are so sparkly and clean!'

Learning through a safe and stimulating environment

The NQS provides services with guidelines for creating responsive learning environments. Quality Area 3 in particular focuses on the physical environment. It stipulates that the environment must be safe, suitable, and provide a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children’s learning and development.

Learning environments play a large part in helping children achieve the planned outcomes, goals and objectives. A responsive environment adapts to reflect children’s interests and abilities, stimulates their imagination and encourages participation, and allows educators and children to learn together in a comfortable and safe place. You should set up the environment in a way that helps children learn skills or gain knowledge.

The following table describes the combination of experiences, people and spaces that an effective learning environment should provide.

Experiences and opportunities	Description	Example
A range of stimulating experiences	When children experience things for themselves they can explore the activity, experiment and gain knowledge.	Jackson is learning that watching others is interesting and that he can copy what they do. The educator provides a range of experiences that allow parallel play, such as play dough moulding, collage, block building and a dramatic play area.

Experiences and opportunities	Description	Example
Opportunities for spontaneous and organised play	<p>Play is one of the principles of the EYLF and MTOP. Play should be voluntary, pleasurable, symbolic, active, process-oriented and intrinsically motivated. Play is seen as a fundamental right of all children.</p> <p>While it is associated with cognitive development and socialisation, it also provides a way for children to have new experiences and build skills.</p> <p>Children learn best through an integrated approach combining physical, emotional, cognitive and social growth.</p>	Jeremy notices the skills that Leora has used when playing in the art area. She used her creativity to imagine what her painting would look like, and used a paintbrush and her fingers to paint. She used physical skills to hold the paintbrush. She then used her social skills to tell a friend about her painting. Her emotional skills were demonstrated when she felt proud of her painting.
A range of teaching and learning strategies	<p>Educators may be actively involved in interacting with individuals and small groups of children, at times entering into their play, intentionally teaching, observing children at play, preparing the learning environment and collecting resources.</p> <p>Educators also reflect on their observations and their own learning, reviewing programs, and preparing learning activities and resources.</p>	<p>Helen provides an art experience for the children. She observes them interacting with the materials. She notices how some children are capable with the art tools and others show emerging skills. She records what she notices as part of her evaluation using a diary method she has not used before.</p> <p>Helen learns that she has the skills to develop meaningful experiences that meet a range of children's needs. She also finds that she can implement a different style of recording than she had used before.</p>
Diversity of people	<p>Interactions and socialisation are key factors in children's learning and development.</p> <p>Along with educators, children may meet other staff, such as cooks and cleaners. While some interactions could be planned for and organised, many will be spontaneous events. It is beneficial to introduce people from the community, such as police officers, postal workers, grandparents or an Aboriginal Elder.</p>	Melody organises for the local firefighters to come to the service with their truck. The community has been preparing for the bushfire season and this visit allows the children to ask questions and for the firefighters to share information about how the children can be safe if there is a fire in the area.

Experiences and opportunities	Description	Example
Significance to children	<p>Children need to feel important and that what they do is valuable and meaningful to others.</p> <p>Children should be given roles such as setting tables for lunch or setting up experiences.</p>	<p>Grace develops a simple roster that allows each child to take responsibility for a task in the service. She ensures that the tasks link with a child's interest. For example, Aiden has pets at home and loves to talk about them, so Aiden agrees to feed the fish. This responsibility helps build his confidence.</p>
Places to call their own	<p>This relates to the EYLF and MTOP goal of belonging.</p> <p>Children need to be close to people they know, have familiar and comfortable objects, and be in a setting that has a personal history for them. These factors will make the environment responsive.</p>	<p>Georgia ensures that each child has a named locker to place their belongings in each day. This is somewhere that they can place their items from home and know they are safe. She encourages the children to create a name tag to put on their locker.</p>

Watch this video about providing children with opportunities to undertake creative problem-solving.



Recording your plans

There are many ways to record your planning. In some services a format or template is provided; in others you can devise your own method. Whichever format you choose, your plans should:

- ▶ reflect the EYLF/MTOP outcomes
- ▶ display the planned experiences
- ▶ be a living document that you can add to as the children spontaneously interact with the environment and learn through unplanned experiences
- ▶ be understood by parents, educators and others important to the child
- ▶ use inclusive language.

Although the layout and details required in plans varies between services, all plans must include:

- ▶ a brief description of the planned activity
- ▶ a link to an EYLF/MTOP outcome
- ▶ a goal and objective
- ▶ intentional teaching to support the goal and objective
- ▶ modelling to support the goal and objective
- ▶ plans for using play for learning
- ▶ details of the materials required.

It is always good practice to collaborate with others when planning. You can draw on their experience and expertise to make sure you have identified the most appropriate ways for children to learn. Collaborative planning demonstrates your ability to work as a member of a team and learn from others.

There are a number of sources you can access to learn more about recording your plans. Develop a format that is meaningful to you and your service. Search for ‘EYLF templates’ or ‘MTOPT templates’ online to explore a range of ideas. Some specific sources for planning resources are detailed in the following table.

Source	Link
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority samples and templates	http://aspirelr.link/qcaa-samples-and-templates
Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) information sheet	http://aspirelr.link/acecqa-document-child-learning-guide
<i>Educators’ guide to the early years learning framework for Australia</i>	http://aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf
Aussie Childcare Network EYLF templates	http://aspirelr.link/acn-eyfl-templates

Practice task 5

Collect documents from a service that are used to plan for learning. If you are unable to access service documents, use a template source as listed in the previous table.

1. Use dot points to answer the following questions.
 - a. Explain the positives and negatives of the templates and documents you have collected.

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3B Improving your work practices

Reflection is a process in which you assess your own work. It helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses, and where you might improve or extend your knowledge, skills and experience. You also need to reflect on how well you know each child and family.

Your service's standards, policies and procedures should be based on the following NQS and learning framework areas:

- ▶ NQS Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership, refers to the commitment for continuous improvement in which your performance as an educator is regularly evaluated and individual development plans are put in place to support performance improvement.
- ▶ EYLF/MTOP Principle 5 refers to your own ongoing learning and reflective practice. It describes one approach to professional development that involves you systematically reflecting on your work and making relevant changes in your practice as a result.



Using critical reflection

Critical reflection occurs when you analyse and challenge the beliefs that underpin your thoughts and actions. It allows you to assess the appropriateness of your thinking according to real-life experience and use this to inform your future actions and practices.

Critical reflection is an ongoing process of reflection and change. It involves some immediate reaction and some long-term responses. When reflecting on your actions, start by asking yourself these questions:

- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ Why did it happen?
- ▶ How did it happen?
- ▶ How do you feel about it?
- ▶ What have you learnt from this?
- ▶ What is the significance of this?
- ▶ What will you do next?
- ▶ How will this alter your future actions and values?

Example

An educator uses critical reflection**What happened?**

After rest time, Jack wakes and then starts to get dressed. Michelle notices that he is struggling with his socks and his little toe is caught. Jack seems frustrated and continues to pull. Michelle approaches and tells Jack she can help. She unhooks his little toe and pulls the sock onto Jack's foot. Jack cries out, 'No! I want to do it!' He drops to his mattress and wails.

How and why did it happen?

Michelle did not think about Jack's developing autonomy. She wanted to help him get dressed so he could start playing as soon as possible.

How did Michelle feel about it?

Michelle feels annoyed with herself – she knows that Jack is learning to dress himself and that he needs time to do this. Michelle also feels disappointed as she had an opportunity to have one-on-one time with Jack. Now Jack is upset and Michelle feels responsible for creating his emotional state and missing out on a learning opportunity.

What will Michelle do next?

Michelle decides to settle Jack and apologise. She offers to help him take his socks off again so he can show her how he puts them on himself. She initiates a game of 'This little piggy' to restore a happy atmosphere and encourage Jack to respond to her revised approach.

How will this alter Michelle's future actions and values?

Michelle is more aware of what the children are attempting at routine times. She starts to build up a knowledge of which children are demonstrating emerging skills, and creates a database and talks to the other educators about this. She approaches every routine with the intention of finding out what skills children are demonstrating and how they are managing their learning.

What does Michelle learn and why is it significant?

Michelle learns to think about how she interacts with the children and what opportunities she can provide in the environment for children to achieve their personal goals. She also realises that children learn many skills during routine times and that routines sometimes offer richer learning opportunities than planned learning times.

Methods for reflecting on work practices

When you reflect thoughtfully on your practice, you develop ideas for improvement. Each person must find the method that helps them. You might find that different methods work for you in different situations.

Here are some methods for reflection and a description of how they can be implemented.

Journal or reflection log

Journals and logs record your thoughts and feelings soon after an event, allowing you to look back later to evaluate your ideas and actions. They also demonstrate your progress. You can use critical reflection questions or write about your thoughts on the techniques you use, materials you need, the context of your work and the ideas you have.

A journal could include research, personal comments, notes from professional development activities, quotes, photos and sketches. It should be meaningful to you.

Structured discussion

Performance review is a structured discussion that occurs as part of the quality process in your organisation. Structured discussions may also occur in meetings and during professional development activities. They focus on specific areas and provide opportunities for you to access formal professional development and further on-the-job training through coaching or mentoring.

Unstructured discussion

Unstructured discussions occur every day at work, when you are talking to other educators, parents and community members. Each discussion provides the opportunity to reflect on what is being said, how it affects your work, and how you can use the information more effectively.

Supervision

Your supervisor should encourage you to self-reflect. Strategies might include:

- ▶ educational supervision; for example, stretching your skills so you reach your potential
- ▶ administrative supervision; for example, promoting best practice and quality work
- ▶ supportive supervision; for example, encouraging you to develop strong, professional relationships.

Checklist

A checklist is a useful tool for reflection. A checklist for self-reflection may be part of your service practice or something you develop yourself. The checklist might include various points that help you review your skills and abilities, or a list of actions you want to complete.

SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning system. While it can be used for a system-wide review, it can also be used as a personal tool to look at your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It helps you see where you are now, where you want to be, and plan how to get there.

Strengths and weaknesses may refer to capabilities, resources, management, processes, innovation, location or reliability. Opportunities and threats may refer to industry developments/trends, other educators' practice/pedagogy, contacts/partners, demand, new technology, new staff, lifestyle trends, finance or legislation.

Questioning

Before and after questions are useful for self-evaluation.

Consider what you feel and think before you start a project, implement an idea or make a decision for change. Be clear about your plans and intentions.

After the implementation, reflect on:

- ▶ what you feel and think now
- ▶ what you understand now that you didn't before
- ▶ how this will affect your future practice
- ▶ what you need to move forward; for instance, research, skills, support or cooperation
- ▶ what you want to achieve next.

Example	Using a checklist to reflect					
	Skill			Achieved	Needs improvement	
	I treat all families with respect			✓		
	I have a knowledge of each family that I care for and educate				✓	
	I represent a range of cultures in the environment I am responsible for			✓		
		Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
	I have completed my reflection journal		✓		✓	✓
I have achieved a goal		✓ Attended training on allergy management				

Practice task 6

1. Discuss with a range of educators and supervisors how their service identifies an educator’s strengths and areas for development. List the methods they use.

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2. Discuss with an educator how they identified an improvement needed in their performance based on evidence gained from reflective practices. Describe how the improvement was identified and how they put the improvement into action.

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3. Make a list of areas you consider to be your strengths and where you need to improve.

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Summary

- ▶ The assessments you make help you plan learning experiences for each child based on their strengths, interests, relationships and developmental progress.
- ▶ Follow a planning cycle of collecting information, questioning, planning, acting (implementing) and reflecting.
- ▶ Make sure goals and objectives are clearly expressed and linked to NQS and EYLF/ MTOP outcomes.
- ▶ Use the evidence you collect to plan learning through play, intentional teaching, modelling and setting up an appropriate learning environment to ensure routines, experiences and interactions suit individual children and the group.
- ▶ Record your planning using an appropriate template/format.
- ▶ Reflection is a process of self-examination to assess your work, identify your strengths and weaknesses, find out where you might improve or extend your knowledge, skills and experience, and evaluate how well you know each child and family.
- ▶ Improve your work practices by keeping a journal, using a checklist, asking yourself questions, discussing development with colleagues and performing a SWOT analysis.

Learning checkpoint 3

Using evidence to inform practice

Part A

For each of the three children you have been collecting information for, use your formative and summative assessments to develop plans of **two** experiences for each child. For each child, include:

- ▶ an intentional teaching experience
- ▶ a planned ‘learning through play’ experience.

For each experience, your plan should describe:

- ▶ which type of experience it is (intentional or learning through play)
- ▶ what the planned experience is
- ▶ how you will set up the environment to encourage participation and learning
- ▶ how you will ensure the children are comfortable by creating a safe and non-threatening space
- ▶ an EYLF/MTOP outcome
- ▶ a goal
- ▶ an objective
- ▶ modelling that is planned
- ▶ the materials and resources needed.

You can follow a service’s template or use a table similar to the following.

Experience plan	
Child: Name: Age:	
Intentional teaching or planned learning through play experience?	
Description of the experience	
Environment set-up	
EYLF/MTOP Outcome	
Goal	
Objective	
Modelling	
Resources and materials	

Part B

1. Use **three** methods to critically reflect on and improve your practice. Briefly describe:

- ▶ the methods you used
- ▶ what you found out
- ▶ how you plan to improve your performance.

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2. Provide an example of a situation you have reflected on where you believe you could have reacted better. Answer the following questions to reflect on the situation.

- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ Why did it happen?
- ▶ How did it happen?
- ▶ How do you feel about it?
- ▶ What have you learnt from this?
- ▶ What is the significance of this?
- ▶ What will you do next?
- ▶ How will this alter your future actions and values?

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Communicating with families

Sharing information with families appropriately

The way you involve parents determines the level of trust and confidence they have in your ability to care for their child and support their family. Share information about the service and the child's progress with parents and other carers so that they feel actively involved in the child's care and education.

You must maintain confidentiality and privacy and understand the guidelines that surround the collection and discussion of personal information.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children’s health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
✓	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
Early Years Learning Framework	My Time, Our Place
Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
✓	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
✓	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
Practice	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning
Outcomes	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	Children are confident and involved learners
✓	Children are effective communicators

4A Communicating with families

Regular, two-way communication between the service and families benefits children, parents and educators. Parents need to understand the curriculum that has been designed to meet their child’s interests and developmental needs; and educators need to be aware of children’s needs in order to create an effective, responsive program.

A good relationship between educators and parents is vital to sharing information about the child’s learning and development.



Guidelines for sharing information

The NQF provides the following guidelines for developing supportive relationships and sharing information.

Quality area	Element
Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	Element 1.3.3: Families are informed about the program and their child’s progress.
Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	Element 6.1.2: The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child’s learning and wellbeing.
	Element 6.1.3: Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.

A service’s standards, policies and procedures are based on these guidelines, so there is an expectation that you will:

- ▶ exchange information about the program with families
- ▶ show them meaningful documentation
- ▶ develop methods for making information available
- ▶ communicate regularly
- ▶ make arrangements to exchange information at mutually convenient times
- ▶ use documentation methods that are understood by parents and appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child.

A sharing culture in the service will encourage parents to learn and share more.

Parents will usually want to access documentation such as timetables, plans of activities and experiences, and information about their child’s learning and development. This is usually documented in a portfolio of work samples, learning stories, communication books, diary entries, photographs, progress notes from educators and specialist reports (if relevant).

Example**Positive relationship with a parent**

Mercedes, a parent, feels confident that she understands the program planned for her child as well as the philosophy and procedures of the service. She has participated in an orientation process and has a good relationship with her child's educators. Mercedes has also contributed to the observation records and assessments of her child.

She knows she can always contact the educators to provide further information she feels they need to know. She appreciates that the educators show her their plans for her child and discuss progress reports.

The educators are always available to discuss Mercedes' family situation and her child's progress through regular planned meetings, incidental discussions and family information evenings.

When her child begins to show signs of readiness to use the toilet, Mercedes is confident approaching the educators and discussing this. She isn't sure how to manage toilet learning herself, but she knows that together they will develop an appropriate strategy.

Once a strategy has been decided on, a communication book is established for Mercedes and the educators to record the child's toilet learning. This communication book shows progress and successes at home and in the care setting, allowing the parent and educators to provide consistent support for the child.

Sharing documentation

Parents have a right to access their child's records. You should encourage them to view the records, and become interested and aware of the development, interests and strengths you have identified for their child. You need to make time for this in your day or develop a system for parents to do this independently.

There are many ways to share the documentation you have collected about a child. The method you choose must take into account confidentiality and the ability of parents to understand the information. Always ensure that documents (which may include terminology unfamiliar to parents) are clearly explained so there is no confusion. In some cases you may need an interpreter or have important documents translated into the parent's language of choice.

It is a good idea to provide parents with a quiet and comfortable area away from other educators and distractions so they can look at documentation and ask you questions in private.

If a parent shows little interest in sharing information or reading documentation, you should respect their decision while keeping communication lines open. They may have other matters on their mind, or may be content with the professional care their child is receiving.

You could use the following strategies for sharing information with parents:

- ▶ At pick-up time, show parents work samples that reflect a child's recent progress.
- ▶ Arrange a meeting with parents to check that the service records for their child are current and correct.
- ▶ Arrange a private meeting with parents to show them a report that describes their child's behavioural issues and discuss a plan to address them.
- ▶ Arrange parent information sessions as a forum for discussion and to view work samples, timetabling and planning documents.

- ▶ Work with the children to develop storybooks that describe things they find interesting or exciting; these can be taken home so the storytelling can continue.
- ▶ Create individual diaries that move with the child from service to home.
- ▶ Add a parent reflection space on learning stories, observation records or assessments.
- ▶ Provide reflection pages that parents can easily add details to – this could be added to the child’s portfolio or just for your information.
- ▶ Create shared group communication books – add information about the children’s learning or other events throughout the day, then invite parents to comment on the day when they pick up their child.
- ▶ Create wall displays, learning showcases or murals for parents to read that demonstrate the process of learning and the children’s interests.
- ▶ Use a computer or a digital photo frame to display photos from the day.
- ▶ Use ideas from families by consulting them about how things might be done and asking them to share their skills and knowledge with you. Document their feedback and put their ideas into practice so they can see their input is valued.
- ▶ Provide continuing information and support by putting families in touch with support services and advocacy networks. These services can provide brochures, information packs and other helpful resources on developmental difficulties, toilet learning and a wide range of topics that parents might need specialised support with.

Example

Consulting a parent to update service records

Nina, an educator, arranges a time with Despina’s mum, Angela, to look at the records Nina has collected about Despina’s interests and skills.

When Angela looks through the developmental checklist, she identifies three skills that Despina is able to achieve competently at home that are not yet marked on the checklist.

Angela also tells Nina that Despina’s grandmother has recently moved in with their family due to ill health.

Nina updates the information and organises a time for them to catch up again the following month. They plan to talk further about Despina’s interests, skills and development, and lifestyle information about the family.

Confidentiality and privacy

Confidentiality and privacy are important issues you face when considering the legal and ethical aspects of your role. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) protects all personal information handled by businesses, including education and care services.

Information about the children and their family members must be kept private at all times, and only shared with the appropriate people at the appropriate time. If you need to discuss confidential information about a child with another educator, do it in private where other children and parents can’t overhear.

Individual states and territories may also have specific privacy and confidentiality legislation, which only applies to that state or territory; for example, the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) and the *Information Act 2002* (NT).

You will also have organisational policies and procedures that relate to confidentiality; for example, your service may have a security policy that covers all the organisational systems used for:

- ▶ collecting and processing personal information
- ▶ observing children and taking photographs
- ▶ storing personal information
- ▶ sharing personal information.

There will be measures in place to reduce security risks, such as passwords for computer files, locks on filing cabinets and restricted areas for personal files. Make sure you are aware of these security precautions and follow your duty of care to maintain a safe and secure workplace.

Understanding your role

You will play a leading role in maintaining privacy. Your responsibilities are outlined in the service's policies and procedures, your position description, duty of care statement and the ECA Code of Ethics.

Your role with regard to privacy is to understand what is required of you. Make sure you have access to and follow the organisation's policies and procedures relating to confidentiality. Ask about changes that may be made to confidentiality procedures or legislation.

You can learn more about privacy legislation at: <http://aspirelr.link/privacy-act>

Some common applications of confidentiality and privacy you will come across include:

- ▶ obtaining informed consent to observe children, and to collect and share information about children and their families
- ▶ ensuring that images of children are collected and shared with consent and stored according to legislation and organisational policy
- ▶ respecting the right of the family to privacy
- ▶ negotiating agreement with each family to decide whether:
 - portfolios of work or other general records relating to their child may be displayed
 - their child will be identified by first name, initials or another method of their choice
 - their child may be included in photographs and videos
- ▶ storing documents relating to behaviour concerns, developmental monitoring or issues in the family separately to the child's portfolio
- ▶ following procedures for using passwords or security locks to access confidential information
- ▶ ensuring information is only shared with appropriate people.

Practice task 7

1. Access the NQS at: <http://aspirelr.link/national-quality-standard>
 - a. Find Element 1.3.3 and list the relevant concept and descriptor.

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- b. Explain how Element 7.1.2 links to confidentiality of records.

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2. Investigate the privacy and confidentiality policies of a service. List the rules for maintaining confidentiality of documentation that is shared with others.

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Summary

- ▶ A good relationship between educators and parents is vital to sharing information about the child’s learning and development.
- ▶ Documents that may be shared include timetables, plans of activities and experiences, and information about a child’s learning and development recorded in portfolios, photographs, communication books and other records.
- ▶ Educators are expected to communicate regularly with families to exchange information about the program, discuss meaningful documentation, and develop methods for making information available.
- ▶ Use documentation methods that are understood by parents and are appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the child.
- ▶ There are many strategies for sharing documentation, including discussions at pick-up time, showing parents work samples that reflect a child’s recent progress, meetings, parent information sessions, and individual diaries that move with the child from service to home.
- ▶ Follow privacy and confidentiality legislation, policies and procedures to ensure that the information shared in documents about the children and their family members is kept private at all times, and only shared with appropriate people at appropriate times.

Learning checkpoint 4

Sharing information with families appropriately

Part A

Use appropriate strategies to share documentation of your choice with a family.

- a. Explain the type of documentation you shared.

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- b. Explain the strategy you used to communicate the information in the documentation.

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- c. Explain why you shared this particular documentation.

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- d. Explain how you ensured privacy (when appropriate) for the parents when sharing the information in the documentation.

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Part B

- 1. Describe **three** methods for ensuring that information shared with families is kept private.

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2. Explain why it is essential to follow confidentiality practices when sharing information.

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3. Give **two** reasons why documentation about a child’s program and progress must be made available to their family.

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