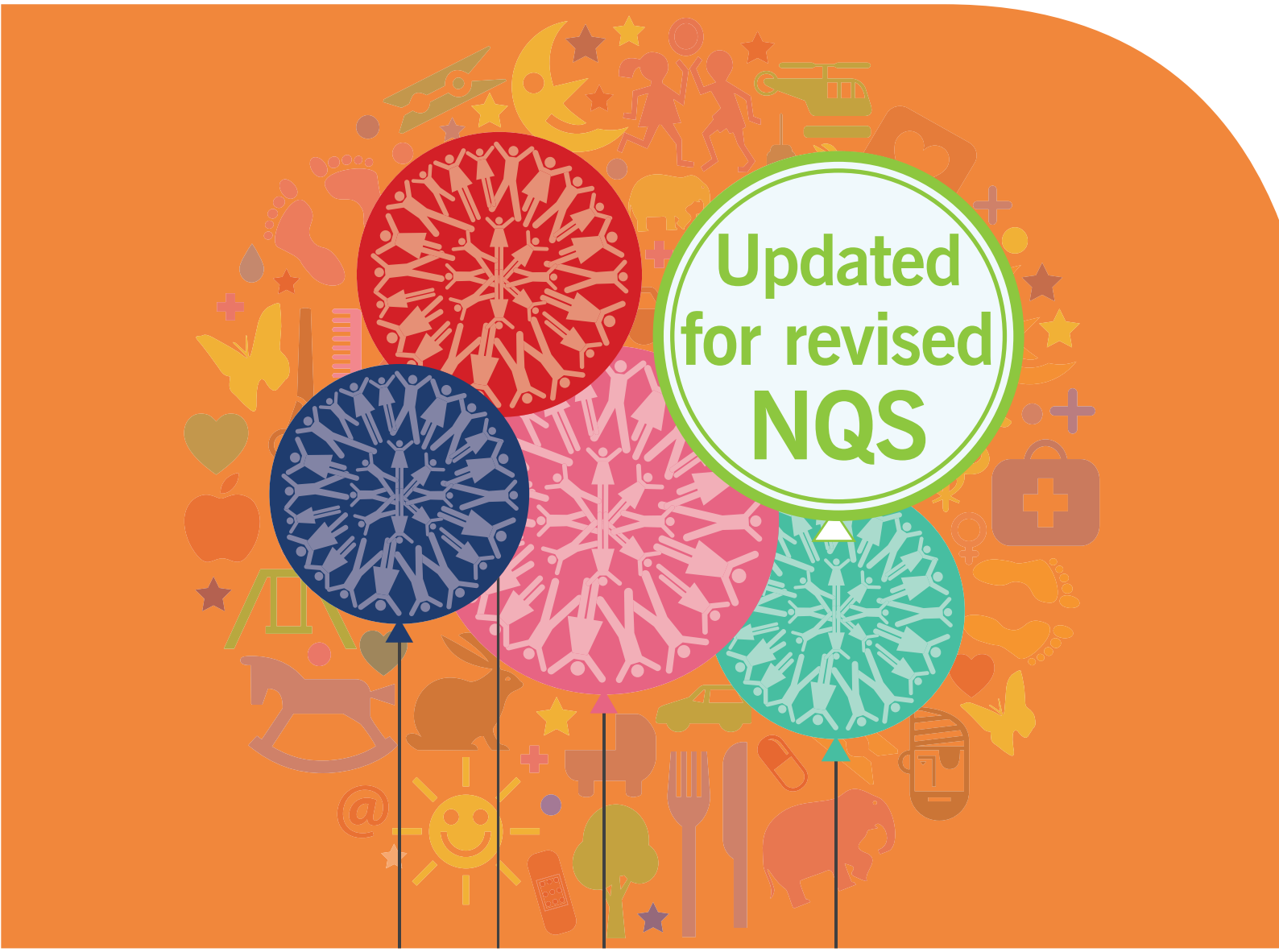
CHCECE013
Use information about children to inform practice



Learner guide

One World for Children Pty Ltd

Aspire learning resources

CHCECE013

Use information about children to inform practice

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1

Aspire learning resources

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CHCECE013 Use information about children to inform practice, Release 2

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407–411 Thompson Road
NORTH GEELONG VIC 3215 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 5272 2714
www.owfc.com.au

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Level 1, 464 St Kilda Road
MELBOURNE VIC 3004 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 9820 1300

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE013 Use information about children to inform practice,* 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	▶ 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	▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	▶ 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	▶ 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	▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	▶ 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 Interacting with children

1B Gathering information from secondary sources

Gathering information about children

In your daily work as an educator, you will make observations about the strengths, interests and development of children. Observing children in their usual play patterns and daily interactions can help you to understand their individual strengths, interests and needs as they develop.

Collecting information from secondary sources, including families, colleagues and specialists, is another way to find out vital information about children.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.

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
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Early Years Learning Framework	
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 Interacting with children

To gain information about children, pay close attention to what they are saying and doing by observing them, listening to them and talking with them.

This interaction should be ongoing so that you get to understand how each child thinks and learns. Involving children in sustained communication helps you develop a learning environment that best meets their needs and preferences.

By collecting and using information about the children based on your observations and interactions, you are showing that you acknowledge, respect and value each child and their family.

When you observe and interact with children, you should:

- encourage children to participate
- encourage children to choose activities that support aspects of their development
- adapt the environment to make it belong to the children
- respect different levels of participation, including the choice not to participate
- consult others about activity choices
- promote a sense of agency.

Watch this video for more information about interacting with children to gain information about them.

Positive interaction

Positive interaction shows children that you value them and recognise the efforts they have made. How and when you interact with children affects how they feel about themselves; your interaction can foster positive self-esteem. It can also help you to communicate with children and find out what they are thinking and feeling about the things they are doing.

The following table provides a number of ways you can interact with children to find out about them. Each of these strategies relies on you paying close attention to the child and taking notice of what they are doing and saying.

How to interact with the child	Examples of what you could say	What you will learn
Teach children to evaluate their own efforts. Never compare children or their work, or make it seem that the child needs to meet your standards.	▶ 'Was that fun?' ▶ 'You seemed to enjoy that.' ▶ 'What do you think about what you have achieved?'	▶ How the child feels about the experience ▶ What they are interested in ▶ What they know about
Never judge children or their work. Focus on the process, time and effort they used rather than the outcome.	▶ 'What a lot of colours you used!' ▶ 'You worked really hard on that!' ▶ 'Tell me what you think of your work.' ▶ 'You must have planned well to achieve that.' ▶ 'Have you been practising?' ▶ 'How many materials did you use?'	▶ What the child enjoyed about the experience ▶ How they feel about the process and outcomes ▶ The level of self-esteem they have ▶ The words and ability to express themselves about what they have experienced ▶ What skills the child has ▶ If they plan and/or how they plan ▶ What other areas of learning are applied ▶ What other areas of learning the child is aware of
Acknowledge pro-social and constructive behaviours. Praise the child in a way that values their individual efforts, not to show others up or demonstrate how things should be done.	▶ 'Thanks for being quiet while I was on the phone.' ▶ 'I appreciate you putting the cups out for morning tea.'	▶ The child's sense of belonging ▶ How the child understands their environment, and the routines and activities that occur in the day

By carefully observing an individual child, you will learn about their:

- view of the world, including their cultural practices, the rules and ideals the child has about interactions and social communication, and how they develop friendships
- family life, which increases the connection between home and care, and extends other children's knowledge as this information is shared
- interests, emerging interests and preferences, which can provide opportunities to extend skills and knowledge
- natural abilities, strengths, skills and knowledge, such as excelling in physical pursuits or intellectual areas.

The following examples illustrate how an educator may learn about individual children by observing them:

- Lisa demonstrates she doesn't understand the rules of the game when she runs away with the ball and starts her own game.
- Jo demonstrates an understanding of friendship when she tells others that Kiera is her friend and they like each other because they both play with dolls.
- Vera demonstrates that she understands the rules of indoor time when she explains to Sally that they need to use a quiet voice and walk inside.
- Frederick demonstrates his ability to communicate socially when he discusses his new little sister at group time.
- Reece demonstrates an interest in bugs and spiders during playtime.

Developmental aspects

You can learn about children by observing their behaviour.

Whatever the age of a child, you should notice:

- aspects of their development, including physical, social, emotional, cognitive and communication development
- the child's interests, ideas and abilities
- the child's knowledge, skills and understanding
- how they react in the play environment.

It is recommended that skills, abilities and knowledge are a focus of your program. In this way, you are providing children with a positive environment that they feel capable of participating in.

The following tables provide an overview of developmental aspects, and the skills and abilities you may expect to observe in children of different ages and stages of development.

Age	Physical aspects
0–3 months	▶ Brings hand to mouth ▶ Takes swipes at dangling objects ▶ Opens and shuts hands ▶ Raises head momentarily while lying on stomach ▶ Reflexively grasps finger or object placed in their hand
3–6 months	▶ Can reach for things voluntarily ▶ Holds head upright in a sitting position ▶ Holds head upright for longer periods while lying on stomach

Age	Physical aspects
6–12 months	▶ Rolls over ▶ Crawls or shuffles ▶ Able to support own weight when held in standing position ▶ Pokes objects with index finger ▶ Lets go of objects voluntarily ▶ Holds own bottle ▶ Pulls themselves to standing position by holding onto furniture ▶ Walks with adult assistance or independently
12–24 months	▶ Holds a large crayon with a palmar grasp (in their fist) and marks paper ▶ Places objects in another person's hand and lets go ▶ Attempts to feed themselves with a spoon ▶ Uses their thumb and forefinger to explore objects ▶ Walks unassisted ▶ May begin to run
2–3 years	▶ Runs with ease ▶ Pedals a tricycle ▶ Builds a tower of up to 10 blocks ▶ Screws and unscrews objects such as lids and knobs ▶ Jumps using both feet ▶ Kicks a large ball ▶ Walks on tiptoes ▶ Begins to hold a crayon or pencil between the thumb and fingers
3–5 years	▶ Walks up stairs one foot per step ▶ Throws a ball overhand ▶ Balances on one foot momentarily ▶ Uses scissors with some control ▶ Draws a person with some recognisable body parts ▶ Begins to hold a crayon or pencil in tripod grasp (between the thumb and two fingers) with varying degrees of control

Age	Social aspects
0–6 months	▶ Begins to smile at people from six weeks ▶ Enjoys social play with caregivers ▶ Fascination and interest in mirror images of themselves ▶ Squeals with delight ▶ Uses various cues for gaining attention to needs ▶ Starts developing attachment relationships
6–12 months	▶ Imitates people during play ▶ May begin to test caregiver and parent responses to behaviour ▶ Has clear attachment relationships

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Age	Social aspects
12–24 months	▶ Increasingly becomes more independent of caregivers ▶ Defiant behaviour is more apparent ▶ Begins to develop a self-concept; that is, that they are male or female, what different body parts do, etc. ▶ Can recognise themselves in a mirror
2–3 years	▶ Prefers routine; does not enjoy changes ▶ Imitates the world around them through social play ▶ Is increasingly independent and exerts control with the use of the word 'no' ▶ Does not have the ability to share toys and equipment ▶ Can pick themselves out in a photograph
3–5 years	▶ Is able to cooperate with other children more regularly ▶ Negotiates simple solutions to problems and conflicts with peers ▶ Pretend play increases as children act out what they see ▶ Is more likely to listen and respond to rules

Age	Emotional aspects
0–6 months	▶ Cries in response to another infant's cry ▶ Capable of demonstrating various emotions; for example, interest, sadness, happiness, joy, anger and disgust ▶ Uses various cues for gaining attention to needs ▶ Smiles in response to others ▶ Expresses anger from approximately one month of age
6–12 months	▶ Begins to demonstrate fear ▶ Separation anxiety increases ▶ Begins to laugh at silly things; for example, putting a toy bear on your head
12–24 months	▶ Demonstrates self-awareness ▶ Toward the latter part of this stage, separation anxiety may begin to fade
2–3 years	▶ Experiences new feelings such as guilt, shame and pride ▶ Wants to do things themselves
3–5 years	▶ Begins to develop and express a sense of individuality and personal preferences ▶ Labels own feelings and those of others based on their facial expression or tone of voice ▶ Understands, at least on a basic level, that feelings are caused ▶ Shows progress in expressing feelings, needs and opinions in difficult situations or conflicts, without harming themselves, others or property

Age	Communication aspects
0–6 months	▶ Coos back and forth with caregiver ▶ Capable of responding to their own name (4–5 months) ▶ Pays attention to human voices more than any other noise ▶ Gives and receives communication ▶ Imitates and responds to someone speaking
6–12 months	▶ Until 8–12 months, communicates by crying, cooing, babbling, imitating, making facial expressions, using body language and gestures ▶ Can respond to simple verbal requests ▶ Begins to imitate spoken words ▶ First words may be spoken
12–24 months	▶ Has a vocabulary of approximately 5–20 words ▶ Vocabulary is made up chiefly of nouns ▶ May repeat a word or phrase over and over ▶ Is able to follow simple commands
2–3 years	▶ Can name a number of objects common to their surroundings ▶ Is able to use at least two prepositions, usually 'in', 'on' or 'under' ▶ Approximately two-thirds of what the child says is intelligible ▶ Has a vocabulary of approximately 150–300 words ▶ Can use two pronouns correctly; for example, 'I', 'me' or 'you', although 'me' and 'I' are often confused ▶ The words 'my' and 'mine' are beginning to emerge ▶ Can respond to commands such as 'show me your nose'
3–5 years	▶ Uses clear speech with only a few grammatical errors ▶ More complex speech patterns and vocabulary emerge ▶ Asks questions ▶ Tells stories and recalls past events ▶ Understands advanced concepts such as 'same' and 'different' ▶ May be capable of reciting their name and address

Age	Cognitive aspects
0–12 months	▶ Gains information through all senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch ▶ Explores objects in a variety of ways; for example, by shaking, banging or dropping them
12–24 months	▶ Recognises own facial features ▶ Acquires the notion of object permanence ▶ Begins to sort shapes and colours
2–3 years	▶ Problem-solving skills increase ▶ Can complete a four-piece puzzle ▶ Participates in make-believe play ▶ Can sort by shape and colour

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Age	Cognitive aspects
3–5 years	▶ Increased use of verbal representation ▶ Beginning of symbolic rather than simple motor play ▶ Uses language to show they can think about something without the object being present ▶ Speech becomes more social and less egocentric

Including children in planning

By including children in planning activities and experiences, you provide opportunities for discussion and can observe their interactions. The depth of this shared planning will depend on the age of the children as well as their experience in participating. The more opportunities they are offered, the more their skills and knowledge will develop.

Knowing about developmental stages and each child's capabilities will enable you to determine the level of participation a child may play in the planning process. You will also be able to consider the effects children have on others and see these outcomes as opportunities to extend interests and skills.

When involving children in planning, consider the suggestions provided in the following table.

Age group	Appropriate activities	Involvement and considerations
Infant	▶ Setting up or packing away while they watch ▶ Getting them to help you pack up by putting items in a tub or on a shelf	▶ Tell them about the materials you are using and what you are doing. ▶ Talk about the materials and give them the opportunity to touch, feel and watch. ▶ These activities can be excellent opportunities for one-to-one interaction.
Toddler	▶ Working together on simple tasks ▶ Giving and following directions ▶ Pushing in chairs ▶ Placing items on a shelf or table ▶ Filling a box or tub ▶ Sweeping the floors ▶ Setting up or packing away materials	▶ Talk about what you are doing and discuss the materials you are using. ▶ These times can be excellent opportunities for one-to-one and small group interaction.

Age group	Appropriate activities	Involvement and considerations
Preschooler	▶ Planning activities ▶ Choosing materials ▶ Choosing settings ▶ Setting up materials or areas ▶ Placing items (aesthetically and practically) ▶ Packing away materials ▶ Making changes or modifications ▶ Giving advice ▶ Providing information and ideas ▶ Problem-solving how things may need to be set up or how activities can be altered	▶ Have clear interests and ask questions that can be extended into activity ideas. ▶ Form a small group and discuss or negotiate the things they would like to do. ▶ Encourage them to listen to the ideas of others. ▶ These times can be excellent opportunities for one-to-one, small and large group interactions. ▶ Team or large group activities are appropriate for this age group.

Remember to always take your time and make these activities part of your day with the children rather than something you do in a rush while the children are out of the room.

Practice task 1

1. Choose a toddler or preschooler to participate in a discussion. Ensure you or the service has parental permission for you to observe the child.

   Talk to the child and observe the activities they become involved in. Record your observation by including the following information.

   a. How old is the child?

   b. What activity were they involved in?

   c. Describe how they interacted with you and others.

   d. What topics did you talk about?

   e. How long did you talk for?

f. What did the child tell you?

g. What did you ask the child?

h. What did you find out from interacting with the child?

2. Read the case study, and then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Peter, an educator, is observing four-year-old Lisa, who is playing in the sandpit.

Karen, another educator, is helping a different child build a sandcastle as Lisa watches.

Karen asks Lisa if she would like to build a sandcastle. Lisa smiles, so Karen hands her a bucket and shovel. Lisa turns away from Karen and sits with Charles, a boy she often interacts with. She uses both hands to grasp the shovel to fill her bucket with sand. Once the bucket is full, she turns it upside down.

Peter has never observed Lisa building a castle before, so he is quite interested.

The sand pours from the bucket as Lisa turns the bucket over; at least half of the sand pours from the bucket before Lisa can fully turn it upside down. Lisa begins to scowl and Charles starts to laugh. Lisa screws up her face and lets out a sob. She then throws her shovel, which hits Charles on his leg. Charles continues to laugh as Lisa stands up and kicks the bucket out of her way.

As she leaves the sandpit, Lisa picks up her doll.

Write down what you notice about Lisa's behaviour with regard to the following areas:

- Aspects of her development
- Her interests and skills
- Her needs
- Social interactions
- Her knowledge, skills and understanding

1B Gathering information from secondary sources

Secondary information is something you have not observed yourself; rather, it is information you receive in another way, such as hearing a report from someone or reading someone else's observations or points of interest.

Secondary sources of information often contain a range of points of interest and opinions about children that you may be unaware of. Different people may witness new or different behaviours from a child due to the environment or context in which they observe the child.

Key sources of secondary information are the child's parents and family members, your co-workers and specialists. The information you gain from secondary sources may vary according to the contact they have with the child; however, all of this information is valuable because, combined, it contributes to a full picture of the child. Secondary sources may be in written form, such as enrolment records, or may be verbal information that is passed on to you.

Some secondary sources of information are listed in the following table. Other information sources will be discussed in more detail in section 3A.

Enrolment records	These are forms completed by the child's parent/s that contain information such as the child's name, address, age, developmental aspects, interests, likes, dislikes, routines, language, family, religion, culture and cultural practices, social interactions and reactions to the play environment.
Specialist reports	Specialist reports are records that contain developmental or behavioural information and strategies for management and support.

Collaborating with parents and family members

Parents and family members create their family culture and have a sound knowledge of their child's temperament, interests, skills and developmental needs.

Their knowledge gives you a starting point to gain an understanding of the individual child. The ongoing sharing of information between the service and parents contributes to strong, respectful relationships and a shared responsibility for monitoring the child's strengths and needs.

Develop open lines of communication with each family from the beginning of your relationship so you can work together in the best interests of the child.

To communicate effectively with families you may:

- ask parents and family members to fill in forms, such as enrolment forms
- provide opportunities for parents and family members to participate in feedback methods, such as suggestion boxes or surveys
- involve parents and family members in discussions at drop-off or pick-up times
- develop methods where parents and family members can write or record information, when necessary
- ask specific questions about their child
- share the information you have gathered about the child and ask them to add any further details or clarify the information.

Watch this video about interacting with children's families.

Sharing information with families

When families provide information, ensure that you show interest and encourage them to continue. To facilitate the effective exchange of information with parents, you must make yourself available to speak with them at appropriate times. This availability may vary according to the structure of your service, and your role and responsibilities.

You can make yourself available to communicate and share information with parents and family members when:

- children and parents arrive at the service at the start of the day
- parents arrive to collect their children
- talking on the phone
- having organised care review meetings
- parents participate in activities
- chatting informally in a tea and coffee area
- parents and/or family members drop in during the day.

By planning to share information at these times, you show that your service values communication. Parents appreciate this knowledge transfer as it demonstrates that you are willing to meet the individual needs of their child.

Ongoing communication

The frequency and level of communication you have with parents or family members may vary – some information may need to be communicated daily or weekly.

Things that may impact the level and frequency of communication include:

- how often the child attends the service
- the child's developmental milestones
- the period of time the family has used the service
- the family's expectations of the service.

Ongoing communication with parents and family members keeps you up to date with their needs as well as the needs of the child; it also enables them to share significant events that occur. Events such as divorce, celebrations, a family member moving overseas or the death of a pet may all impact the child's abilities, behaviour or needs. These events affect different children in different ways, so it's important to know about the events and how the child is responding to them.

Be aware that some families may not want to pass information on to you. You must respect this decision; however, you should still work towards establishing a relationship based on interest and trust, which in time may encourage them to share information with you.

Watch this video about families' different cultural expectations of their children.

Collaborating with co-workers

Co-workers may be able to provide you with background information; for example, if a child is moving rooms or has attended the centre previously.

Co-workers can provide secondary information such as:

- documentation they have collected
- records of discussions they have had with others
- portfolios or files containing the child's work or personal information.

Co-workers may also see or hear information and pass it on to you for documentation. This may occur at times when you are 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 may also be able to 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 you. This may provide you with developmental or behavioural information and strategies for management and support.

If you want to contact a specialist service or discuss any details of a child with a specialist, you must first consult the child's parents and obtain their permission. You must also seek advice from your service coordinator prior to discussing any concerns with parents.

Here is further information about specialist services.

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

Provide social services, such as help with housing and employment, especially to underprivileged people.

Inclusion support agencies

Provide support to services that care for children with additional needs; an inclusion support facilitator links the service to specialists, community agencies and equipment that can help meet the child's individual needs.

Practice task 2

1. Collect blank copies of any records a service uses to collect and provide secondary information about children; for example, an enrolment form. Write down where on the records you would find information relating to children's:
   - needs
   - interests
   - skills
   - cultural practices.

2. How does a service gain permission from parents to collect observation records?

Summary

- To gain information about children, you need to observe them, listen to them, talk with them and pay close attention to what they are saying and doing.
- By collecting and using information about the children based on your observations and interactions, you are showing that you acknowledge, respect and value the child and their family.
- Positive interaction shows children that you value them and recognise the efforts they have made.
- By including children in planning activities and experiences, you provide opportunities for discussion and can observe their interactions.
- Whatever the age of a child, you should notice aspects of their development, interests, ideas, abilities, reactions, skills and knowledge.
- It is essential to interact and communicate to initiate play, encourage a child, help them feel safe and introduce new language.
- Collecting and sharing information from secondary sources such as parents and family members, co-workers and specialist services contributes to ongoing support and planning for each child.
- Secondary sources may be written (for example, enrolment records) or may be verbal information that is passed on to you.

Learning checkpoint 1
Gathering information about children

Observe, listen to and interact with **three** different children during their normal pattern of play and daily interactions.

1. Interact with each child to identify a point of interest. The point of interest might:
   - identify a key topic of interest they have
   - be an idea they express about an item, issue or situation
   - demonstrate their knowledge about an item or issue
   - show a skill that the child demonstrates.

   Describe the interactions you had with the children, including:

   a. What you said
   b. What the children said

2. Gather information from a secondary source, such as co-workers or a child's parents. Focus on one child and include details about all of the child's developmental aspects, including their:
   - interests
   - likes
   - dislikes
   - routines
   - language
   - reactions to the play environment
   - family
   - religion
   - culture
   - cultural practices
   - social interactions.

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Provide all the information you collected, making sure that you identify where each item of information was sourced from, and whether you needed to collaborate with anyone to collect the information.

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Recording information

2B Writing objective and accurate records

Recording observations

There are many different methods for recording your observations about children. When gathering information about children through observations, it is crucial to be objective and to use a variety of established methods to record accurately.

Always follow your service's policies and procedures related to recording, and maintain a professional, positive and objective outlook that is free from biased comments or negative labelling. This means your documentation will be accurate and will provide clear examples, precise details and a true account of what you observed.

Your understanding of children develops through these observations, along with your ability to contribute to program planning.

Watch this video for more on collecting information about children.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.

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	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 Recording information

The information you gather from your observations, questioning children and speaking to children's parents should help you:

- plan appropriate play and leisure experiences that extend children's interests and skills
- support children's development at their level of skill, knowledge and understanding
- develop a sound level of knowledge about children's needs and cultures
- support, encourage and assist children
- record changes to children's strengths, interests and levels of development
- support discussion regarding children's skills, needs, interests and cultural practices.

Written records can be used on their own or combined with other types of records to provide greater detail to observation records. Other records that may complement written records include photographs, video or audio recordings and work samples.

Information collected about children is primarily used to identify ideas for furthering the child's learning. How you document information will be influenced by your pedagogy, or professional practice, and by the philosophy and goals of your service. Some services have strong guidelines about exactly how and what you should observe and record, whereas others may allow you to use your own judgment and ideas to work out what is important.

Guidelines for recording observations

Before you start documenting your observations, you need to be aware of the following guidelines, and ensure that correct procedures are being followed according to regulations, standards and quality assurance requirements. Your service's policies and procedures take this information into account.

Gaining permission

Ensure you have parental permission for each child prior to recording observations. At enrolment, all aspects of the program, including observations, should be explained and permission gained for the child's involvement. The parent may sign a clause on an enrolment form stating that observation records can be used by the educators in the service. It is also respectful to ask school-age children if they mind being observed.

Not affecting behaviour

Play or activity should not be interrupted during your observation. Children should not feel watched, singled out or stressed by the observation process.

Be sure that what you observe is a true representation of the child. Spend time getting to know the children before you begin, to ensure you can identify uncharacteristic behaviours.

Ensuring confidentiality

All documentation about children is confidential. It is for the purpose of supporting curriculum planning. Ensure parents give permission to use these records within the service for programming purposes.

Parental permission must be obtained prior to the records being shown to any person outside the service or being used for any purpose other than for program planning. You must also store your records in a place where unauthorised people can't read or access them; for example, in a lockable filing cabinet.

Methods of recording observations

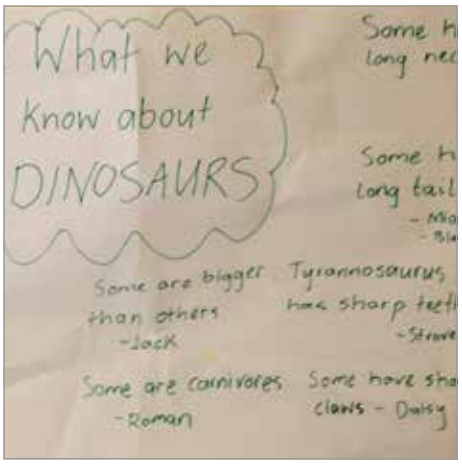
There are various ways you can gather and record your observations of children. Some common methods are outlined in the following information.

Discussion with families

Orientation is a time to collect documentation about children and their families, and to develop open verbal communication. Most services update their documented information regularly, but the daily discussions you have with parents are where most of your important information should come from as you ask questions and listen to the details parents share with you.

Questioning

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



Daily evaluation sheets, surveys, questionnaires and forms are some examples of questioning methods. A daily evaluation sheet asks others to evaluate how the day went by providing specific questions, such as what activities were enjoyed most, what could be extended or what ways the curriculum can be improved.

'Graffiti sheets' can also be used to brainstorm: ask a question and have various people add their ideas to it.

Not all questioning is useful; sometimes children respond inappropriately or provide a response that they think you or their peers would like to hear rather than responding honestly.

Verbal questioning may be recorded in a variety of ways; for example, you may use a jotting or anecdotal record, tick off a checklist, or make notes against an anticipated set of responses.

Jottings

Jottings are brief notes you take throughout the day about things that are important. They may be on a post-it note or scrap of paper. Not all documentation needs to be structured or neatly displayed; some points of interest can be just as valuable noted in a jotting. The important part of documentation is that it is meaningful and useful.

Anecdotal information

You can document anecdotal information by noting simple points of interest related to development, skill or interest. This is usually done by writing a brief description of the point of interest after you see it. 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.

Anecdotal records can also be used to describe what is happening in photographs that form part of your documentation. Anecdotal records are also the best way for you to add entries to diaries, journals, logs and communication books, because they ensure you are recording relevant information clearly, objectively and accurately.

Example

An educator makes an anecdotal record

Regina wants to document Timothy's physical skills, particularly his ability on the ladder. She decides to use an anecdotal record to document her observations. This is what she writes:

Child: Timothy	Age: 3 years 6 months
Date: 06.01.18	Time: 10.15 am
Setting: Outdoors, ladder	
Recorded by: Regina	
Notes: 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, jumping to the ground. He landed on both feet.	

Learning stories

Learning stories use a recording method called a narrative, which makes learning into a story. A narrative should be as engaging as possible. It may include a simple story relating to one incident or it may follow through days or weeks of a project, activity, development or investigation. A learning story may be added to by the child, parents and others who participate in the child's life.

Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia (EYLF) encourages educators to view children, the curriculum and pedagogy in a creative and open manner. Learning stories fit this brief as they focus foremost on the child's interests and skills and, in particular, on the stories or journeys of their learning experiences.

A learning story is flexible in how it is presented and what learning goals, dispositions or organisational or EYLF outcomes it focuses on.

One of the strengths of a learning story is that you can create each record differently using the most effective method of recording.

Each learning story demonstrates that you are able to do the following:

- Notice – you observe children's learning.
- Recognise – you strive to understand what you notice.
- Respond – you put your understanding to use by acting to provide for the child.

These three principles are necessary if you are to produce valuable records.

Here are three examples 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.
- Graeme, an educator, develops a learning story relating to Kim speaking at group time. He uses a written narrative and a recording to demonstrate this discussion.
- Jill, an educator, develops a learning story relating to Lim climbing on outdoor equipment. She takes a video recording of Lim's new skills.

Learning dispositions

A learning disposition is similar to a goal or outcome in that it guides you toward analysing what is happening. A learning disposition shows how a child is developing in a certain area. Some common learning dispositions demonstrated by children are:

- belonging
- wellbeing
- exploration
- communication
- contribution
- thinking
- identity
- community
- futures
- interdependence
- self and social development
- arts and creativity
- communication and language
- design and technology
- diversity
- health and physical development
- understanding the world.

Goals, outcomes and dispositions are often the same, just worded differently. For example, when expressing a disposition, you may say: 'The child is demonstrating how they respect diversity'. In referring to this as a goal, you may say: 'For the children to respect diversity'. When referring to EYLF Outcome 2, you may reference: 'Children respond to diversity with respect'.

Identifying objectives

Learning stories lead you to identify objectives. The things you notice about children when creating learning stories help you plan objectives for them. Objectives are essential as they help you to plan programs for children that are realistic and within their abilities.

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

Digital images

Photographs take a snapshot of a child in action and can be used to show a sequence of events or a particular outcome. They may also be valuable in promoting a child's self-esteem because they can share their photos with others and be reminded of attempts and successes.

Photos also help you to document a child's play and peer relationships. Most educators who use photos add written information to make it clear what is being shown.

Remember that children may change their behaviour when being photographed, so consider this when trying to observe particular behaviour. If you take photos frequently, the children may react less to having their picture taken, and this record will become more accurate.

Video recordings can be used in a similar way to photographs, although they are more difficult to access and show. They make excellent displays of work, especially when a process is being recorded; for example, you could record some children building a sandcastle and play the video in the room for children and parents to look at and talk about. Videos are also useful in that they record sound to complement the visual component.

Photographs and videos are also excellent for recording memories. For example, you could record the child's or the group's achievements over a week, term or year. You could also record special events that occur in the service or for a particular child.

Example

Using photographs to record information

A small group of children are working in the sandpit. They have moved most of the sand into the centre of the pit and are creating a huge sandcastle. Two children have cars and toy people moving over the sand. Two other children are using feathers and shells to decorate the edge of the castle. Other children are negotiating where to place the flag.

The weather begins to change, and you say that it looks like it might rain. The children are disappointed and concerned that the rain will destroy the castle before their parents get to see it.

You suggest taking a photo so their hard work can be recorded and shown to others.

After taking the photo, you attach it to the noticeboard, and children excitedly show their parents what they have achieved.

Samples of children's work

By collecting children's drawings, paintings, stories and other work, you can build a clear record of progression or sequence in development. You may collect originals or photocopy them to keep them on file.

Remember to ask a child before you take samples of their work. If the child refuses, it is important that you respect this, as the work belongs to them. More often than not, however, children will allow you to use their work and may be enthusiastic about providing you with more. These samples can be used to make special portfolios that show a child's progress and later become keepsakes for parents.

Practice task 3

1. Where would a service's observation records be kept?

2. Explain each of the recording types used for collecting information about children. You may want to consult with an educational leader or experienced colleague.

3. Gather samples of any recording formats mentioned above and note what reasons they would be used for.

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4. Ask an educational leader or experienced colleague for some tips on collecting records about children at the same time as participating in normal duties. List at least **two** tips that were provided.

2B Writing objective and accurate records

Observation records are created to provide information about a child. It is important that you record all observations clearly, objectively and accurately.

Objective records

An objective record reports what actually occurred, rather than what you think has happened or how you feel about what you have observed. It requires a non-judgmental approach to ensure that the child is not labelled in a negative or positive way. By doing this, your report will be free from bias. To provide a fair and factual account, an objective record must not include personal opinions.

When a record is neutral or objective, the reader can easily understand what has occurred. There is no need to record why you think the child did something or what you expect they were thinking.

Example

An educator records an objective observation

Isa is writing a record based on her observations of five-year-old Jessica. Isa thinks that Jessica has been a bit naughty today, but she knows that the word 'naughty' is subjective, negative and describes what she thinks, not what she sees. Instead, she writes the following.

Child: Jessica	**Age:** 5 years, 1 month
Date: 18.01.18	**Time:** 2.10 pm
Setting: Outdoors at climbing frame Jessica played with Mallory on the climbing frame. They raced to the top of the frame, and then Jessica pushed Mallory down the steps. Jessica watched Mallory lying on the ground and said, 'What a sook you are!' An educator approached to see if Mallory was okay and Jessica ran to the cubby. Occasionally she looked out the door and poked her tongue out at anyone who passed by.	
Recorded by: Isa	

Isa finds that she can discuss this objective record with other educators to gain ideas about how to support Jessica and guide her behaviour positively. This would not have been possible if her record was limited to describing Jessica as 'naughty'.

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Objective versus subjective language

Subjective language is language that conveys thoughts and feelings about the subject; it is opinionated language. A subjective record is one that includes the writer's feelings and views. In an education and care setting, this type of record may inhibit others from understanding the child, as it can include negative attitudes and labelling, which may bias the reader's perspective.

When using subjective language, the words you use to describe a child or their behaviour might be judgmental. These words refer to thoughts and not what is actually observed. They may be misconstrued by others reading the record because words may mean different things to different people. They may also cause someone reading the record to become biased towards a child before getting to know them. By using words that are negative and subjective, you are also demonstrating that you are not professional in your recording abilities.

Note that learning stories are written as narratives, which tend to use subjective language to describe what is occurring in the event you are capturing. You should, however, still use positive language to describe what happens.

Example

People have different views of the same situation

Three children at the painting easel are talking while they paint. Their discussion is about how paints mix together to make other colours. One child paints on his fingers and then presses his fingers onto the paper and discovers that it leaves his fingerprints. Each child then paints their fingers and presses them onto the paper; they make a series of fingerprints across the pages. The children are laughing and talking loudly about how their fingerprints are different.

Mario's view (subjective)

I think the children at the easel are being too loud and annoying. They are not using the activity as it should be used and this makes me think the children are lacking respect for the room. I think the children are making a terrible mess and they should be made to take responsibility for cleaning it up.

Elisha's view (subjective)

I heard the children at the easel talking about the colours that they made when the paint mixed together; I think they're really smart. Then one child discovered fingerprints and I was excited at how clever he is. This is fantastic! I'd better go and see if they need more paint or any other resources to explore their fingerprints.

Accurate records

Accurate records provide relevant information in an appropriate amount of detail to allow others to know exactly what you observed. Objective recording contributes to accuracy, as it is based on fact. When you record information about an amount, a setting, an activity, a skill or progress, you need to give clear details for it to be accurate.

Some examples of ways you could give specific details to provide accurate records are detailed in the following.

If you are recording that a child completed a puzzle, include the following information:

- How many pieces it has
- Whether she has completed it many times before or this is her first attempt
- What type of puzzle it is (a knob set, a floor puzzle, etc.)
- The theme of the puzzle

If you are recording that a child rode a bike, include the following information:

- How many wheels it has
- Whether he scooted with his feet or pedalled
- Whether he could go forwards and backwards
- What speed he went
- Whether he could manoeuvre around obstacles

In most records, you only need to provide accurate details for the element you are most interested in recording. This element is the focus of your record.

Another way to ensure accurate records is to record your observations and findings at the time of the observation or as soon as possible afterwards, when your memory is clear.

You must also ensure that information such as children's names, dates and times are recorded correctly, and that you check all spelling.

Example

Recording focus

Keiran is recording his observation of Gayle doing origami. At the same table, a number of children are working on individual projects. Sometimes, Gayle and another child speak. At one point, Gayle helps another child find some scissors.

Keiran only makes a record about Gayle doing origami, as he is interested in the folds that Gayle has mastered as well as the figures she attempts. However, what he records about the origami is very detailed and descriptive.

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Practice task 4

Rewrite the following record to remove any biased, inaccurate or negative language. Make up any details you need to.

Child: Johannes	**Age:** 4 years, 3 months
Date: 28.02.18	**Time:** 12.45 pm
Setting: Outdoors at climbing frame Johannes is completing a puzzle, but it is too hard for him. The kid from Afghanistan, Asa, comes to see what Johannes is doing. They start wrecking the puzzle. They are very cheeky and won't let Noma, the infant, come near the table. Johannes pushes Noma away and hurts her. These boys are very naughty.	
Recorded by: Pam	

Summary

- Ensure that you have parental permission for each child prior to recording observations.
- Ensure you follow your organisation's policies, procedures and requirements for recording observations.
- It is valuable to use a range of recording methods to discuss information relating to the interests, skills, developmental needs and cultural background of each child.
- You must be able to write observation records that are factual, non-judgmental, and free from bias and negative labelling.
- Documenting accurately involves giving clear examples and precise details for objective recording.
- Objective, clear and accurate observation records can be used easily by other authorised people.

Learning checkpoint 2
Recording observations

1. Service policies and procedures must be supported by guidelines, legislation and standards. Use these documents to answer the following questions.

   a. Record **four** different guidelines, legislation or standards

   b. Record the policy name linked to each of the guidelines, legislation or standards you chose.

2. Observe, listen to and interact with **three** children during their normal pattern of play and daily interactions, then answer the following questions.

   a. Access a copy of a service's policy regarding collecting documentation and summarise the observation technique you would use for each child. Provide a brief explanation of the type of recording you should use and why you would use it in this situation.

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b. Record a point of interest for each of the children, using one of the types of records used at your service. Remember to include:

- evidence that you received parental permission to observe, record and share this information
- the child's identification (respect confidentiality)
- the child's age
- the time and date of the observation
- the setting
- the point of interest.

c. Add a concluding statement to each record that explains the following:

- what you have discovered about the child
- how this information can help you support the child's development.

3. When recording information about children, remember to avoid any biased comments, negative labelling or inaccurate information.

   Write a sentence that describes each of the following situations, and then explain how your sentence is objective and accurate:

   a. A tired child

   b. An excited child

   c. A sad child

   d. A lonely child

   e. A child enjoying an activity

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Discussing information with relevant people

3B Using observations to plan programs

Using observations to inform practice

You need to use the observations you have collected to provide the best outcomes for children. If you need to discuss information with others, you must follow all guidelines for doing so and discuss the information with appropriate people.

Your observations will also influence the service program. Your program is influenced by the records gathered about each child, as well as by your pedagogy (professional practice). You can use the information gathered to provide appropriate experiences, routines and interactions that reflect the interests and needs of individual children and the group. This recorded information also ensures quality program planning and educator interactions for children.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia*.

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	
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 Discussing information with relevant people

By involving relevant people in discussions about your program, you can make it richer and more dynamic, as discussions may generate fresh ideas for activities and experiences. You will also feel supported as others offer their ideas, participate in preparation and implementation, and contribute to evaluations. You must always maintain confidentiality in your discussions.

Relevant people to involve in these discussions may include:

- parents
- members of the child's extended family, such as grandparents and other relatives
- other educators
- carers
- education providers, such as preschool teachers
- specialists
- neighbours and family friends.

Maintaining confidentiality of information

When a family or other secondary source provides you with information, it is essential that you handle it confidentially. Confidentiality applies to all types of shared information and may include details held on enrolment forms, developmental information or day-to-day information shared at drop-off and pick-up times.

To maintain confidentiality, you must never leave any documentation where others can access it, such as on benchtops, in staff rooms or in your car. It must be stored appropriately; for example, in a lockable filing cabinet, where access is restricted to authorised people.

The information you gather, record and work with must be available to parents at their request, and their permission must be obtained before any records or information is shared with any person outside your service.

Relationships grow through respect and trust. Making and sharing judgments with others not only breaches confidentiality, but is also unprofessional and may compromise your relationship with families and children. For example, if you overstep these boundaries by involving yourself in casual conversation about a family or child, it can be damaging to your reputation and may even cost you your job.

The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics provides you with guidance regarding confidentiality and your responsibilities to families, children, colleagues, communities, students, employers and yourself.

Confidentiality must also be maintained according to the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), which is legislation that protects all personal information handled by businesses (including education and care). This Act underwent recent amendments and now contains Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) that services must abide by.

Other guidelines that relate to confidentiality include:

- the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- the National Quality Standard (NQS)
- the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Sharing information with others

Part of your service policy will include working as part of a team and with the child to plan and prepare the program. Team members need to know about goals and objectives that are set for the child so they can apply their support in the way the plan requires. Including others in recording and planning phases also ensures experiences and activities will be extended into future programs.

The benefits of sharing information with others include:

- gathering new ideas
- being able to offer a range of diverse activities and experiences that suit various children
- having the opportunity to involve children and encourage them to participate in activities that are new or that originate from their cultural background
- the possibility of spontaneous, long-term and ongoing exploration of topics led by children, educators and their families.

To establish and maintain relationships with people based on sharing, you must:

- be non-judgmental
- be open to different perspectives
- be empathetic
- provide clear and relevant information
- demonstrate active listening
- check understanding
- follow organisational standards, philosophies, policies and procedures.

These relationships should be based on the rules of confidentiality and privacy. You must only share information about a child if parents give permission. Part of this permission is given when they agree to educators writing and sharing observation records. However, you must request additional permission before you pass on confidential information such as behaviour issues, developmental needs or medical requirements to people other than parents.

General information such as whether the child ate their lunch or simple information about an activity the child enjoyed is usually safe to share with people officially authorised to pick up the child, but you must check your service policy and procedures first and ensure that this is standard practice. You can find out if someone is authorised to pick up the child by asking other educators or by viewing the relevant section of the child's enrolment form.

Practice task 5

1. How are records stored to ensure confidentiality?

2. Find and write down the specific links to confidentiality in the following guidelines:
   a. The article that links to privacy in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

   b. The NQS element in Quality Area 7 that links to systems that are in place to maintain confidentiality

   c. The regulation that links to confidentiality in the Education and Care Services National Regulations

   d. The ECA Code of Ethics responsibility to parents that demonstrates respect for confidentiality.

3. Read the record, and answer the questions that follow.

Child: Molly	**Age:** 4 years, 2 months
Date: 17.01.18	**Time:** 11.45 am
Setting: Outside, at a table with water play set up Molly was participating in water play. She was playing with plastic boats, and pushing them under the water. She started to investigate other items around her to see if they would float. She used a rock, a stick and a leaf. Harriet saw what Molly was doing and approached the table. She tried to join in, but didn't seem to understand what Molly was investigating. Molly pushed her away and said, 'Leave me alone!' Harriet started to cry.	
Recorded by: Tahlia	

a. If you were Tahlia, who might you want to share this record with and why?

b. If Molly and Harriet's parents had given permission for your service to collect and use observation records for planning purposes, which of the following people would you be able to share this record with without breaching confidentiality? Explain your response.

- ☐ Parents
- ☐ Members of their extended family, such as grandparents and other relatives
- ☐ Other educators in your service
- ☐ Carers or educators in other settings
- ☐ Education providers, such as preschool teachers
- ☐ Specialists
- ☐ Neighbours and family friends

3B Using observations to plan programs

The records you gather about each child provide you, your co-workers, support services, parents and family members with details about the child's current interests, strengths and levels of development. These records therefore help you to plan activities that cater to the specific needs and interests of the children in your care. Detailed information from records can greatly influence how you plan and implement play spaces, routines, experiences and interactions that suit individual children and groups of children.

The planning cycle

The EYLF planning cycle requires you to observe, and then question, plan, act and reflect in response to your observations.

To view a full early years planning cycle, refer to the *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia*.

A planning cycle is continuous. You will continually be updating your plans based on new observations and new skills you acquire as an educator. Each step of the cycle is affected by your philosophy, beliefs and knowledge. Much of your skill development comes from your professional development activities, discussions with your colleagues and other professionals, networking, and from undertaking your day-to-day work. As you gain experience, skills and knowledge, the way you plan may change to incorporate your evolving work practices and ideas.

Planning curriculum and programs

Your curriculum or program planning affects the children in education and care, as they rely on you and your co-workers to create safe and appropriate environments.

Some benefits of a quality curriculum include:

- opportunities for children to explore their interests and extend their knowledge
- choices for play and leisure
- challenges
- stimulation
- spontaneity
- the ability to develop agency or a feeling of independence.

Meeting each of these elements ensures that children receive high-quality care that matches their individual needs.

When you are interpreting documentation and other records about children, you need to identify specific information to help you plan appropriate experiences for the child or group of children.

The following table outlines some of the factors you should take into consideration.

Challenges

The play environment should offer appropriate challenges. If it is too challenging, children may become frustrated as they are not able to master play activities.

For example, if climbing frames are provided for infants who are just mastering the ability to walk, this may cause them frustration as they do not have the necessary fundamental movement skills to use the frames. Climbing frames are also inappropriate for this age group as they are a falling hazard.

Stimulation

The play environment should be appropriately stimulating. If it is not, children may become bored.

Only providing a few toys and books is not enough. Equipment, toys and activities that are appropriate to both age and developmental stage should be provided to stimulate children's development and keep them happily occupied.

Interests and needs

Children should have the opportunity to engage with their interests and needs in the play environment. When you have information about a child's needs and interests, you must apply this to provide the children with a stimulating and rewarding environment that they are happy to spend their time in.

For example, if you observe that a child enjoys water play activities, ensure this is part of the program.

Reactions

Take children's reactions to the play environment into consideration. These may be negative or positive.

If many children race to the home corner in the morning to start their play, this indicates a positive and valuable play environment that should be maintained.

If you identify and use this information, you can then determine appropriate ways to enhance children's play and physical experiences. You can also ensure your interactions with children meet their individual requirements. Children should enjoy and benefit from the experiences you choose.

Watch this video about considering individual children.

Planning the play environment

The following table describes some common behaviour children may display that can help you interpret how they feel about their play environment.

Scenario	Behaviour
The play environment is not stimulating enough.	▶ Lack of interest ▶ Being disrespectful or rough with materials ▶ Not being engaged or involved
The play environment does not meet the child's interests and needs.	▶ Walking around just looking at activities ▶ Saying they are bored or they don't like activities ▶ Not being engaged or involved
The play environment is too challenging.	▶ Not wanting to try or become involved ▶ Saying they can't do it ▶ Being aggressive with materials ▶ Not completing tasks or activities

Planning activities

After you have documented information about a child, you can interpret this data to plan activities and experiences suited to them. Every service will involve educators in different aspects of program planning.

At this level, you must be able to:
▶ observe children
▶ identify points of interest
▶ document information using simple recording methods
▶ identify and provide safe and appropriate activities and experiences
▶ plan and prepare activities and experiences
▶ implement the activity or experience successfully.

To plan activities and experiences that suit children's individual needs, meet their interaction requirements and allow them to develop a sense of agency, you should follow the five stages set out in the following table.

Planning stage	Details	Example
1. Observing points of interest	The principles and practices of your service will influence what information is useful. This starts with you observing the child and finding out what is important. Your focus should be on: ▶ aspects of development ▶ knowledge ▶ ideas ▶ abilities ▶ interests ▶ social interactions ▶ reactions to the play environment ▶ culture ▶ agency.	Felicity is interested in cars.
2. Documenting	Choose the most appropriate method to document your observations and follow your service's policy and procedures for recording information.	Child: Felicity Age: 4 years 3 months Date: 21.02.18 Recorded by: Sam Information received from: Alan (Felicity's dad) Felicity takes her toy cars everywhere. When Felicity and her family are driving, she often asks, 'What car is that one?' Alan says Felicity knows the make and model of a number of cars based on the logo.
3. Linking through setting goals and objectives	A goal is a statement of what you want to achieve. Goals need to be clear, but they do not need to be very detailed; they just need to lead you from the recorded observation to the reason why you want to record this. Many services use the EYLF learning outcomes, subcategories or 'belonging', 'being' and 'becoming' as goals. Objectives are based on the small steps it takes for a child to move from the situation they are in presently to the situation where they are achieving the goal. Objectives are based on the scaffolding experiences that help a child to learn or practise new skills. Objectives must be short and simple and take the child to the next step in achieving the goal.	Learning Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators. Element 5.4: Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work. Goal: For Felicity to be able to share her knowledge of car makes and models with other children. Objectives: ▶ For Felicity to talk about the car her mum drives during snack time ▶ For Felicity to interact with other children playing car games in the sand during morning play ▶ For Felicity to demonstrate that she knows the difference between a four-wheel drive and a sedan during interactions with others

Planning stage	Details	Example
4. Planning an activity or experience	Activities are basic tasks that are completed in a specific way. Experiences occur when resources are provided that encourage agency, including choice, creativity, interaction and learning. The objectives you set help you plan your activities and experiences. When setting objectives, think of experiences, activities and interactions you can use to help achieve the goal. When planning experiences, think about interactions or communication associated with your activity. Ensure they remain positive and encouraging, include scaffolding and demonstrate respect for the child. Communication can initiate play or an activity, encourage a child, help them feel comfortable and safe, and introduce new language, skills or knowledge.	Sam develops a number of activities and experiences to enable Felicity to extend on and share her interest in cars. Objectives: ▶ For Sam to start a conversation about cars at snack time ▶ For Sam to set up a car mat, blocks and dolls in the sandpit ▶ For Sam to make a memory game that matches makes and models of cars, and include sedans and four-wheel drives as a way to introduce the new concept
5. Implementing	Put your ideas into action. Where possible involve the children in altering and setting up the environment.	Sam asks Felicity and other children to help him set up the car mat and a matching game. This gets them involved with the change and also piques their interest in what activities are available.

Reviewing the plan

Once you have completed this process, review your plan by observing again. This involves reviewing the goals and objectives that you have developed to ensure they have direction and purpose.

There are two methods for developing useful objectives, as outlined in the following.

1. Use the SMART acronym:

- Specific – the objective must specify what you want to achieve.
- Measurable – you should be able to measure whether or not you are meeting the objectives.
- Achievable – the objectives you set must be achievable and attainable.
- Realistic – the objective must be realistically achievable with the resources you have.
- Time-framed – specify when you want to achieve the set objective or the period of time you wish to take to achieve this objective.

2. Use a task analysis:

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

If objectives and goals are general and not able to be measured, you may feel that you are not achieving anything and that your program lacks focus. An example of this is the goal: 'For Patrick to increase his fine motor skills'. Creating objectives or open goals like this has little use to your program as they lack direction and purpose.

Achieving a goal may take weeks, months or most of the year. An objective, however, is set with the expectation that it is achievable within the planning period, which for most services is between one and two weeks.

Practice task 6

1. Interview an educational leader or experienced colleague about how a Certificate III educator might be expected to contribute to the planning of activities and experiences in their service.

   Ask about:

   - reflective practices
   - documenting and reporting observations
   - analysing documentation.

   Record the responses you receive.

2. Read the case study, and then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Hayden is making a plan of how he will help Marshal cut with scissors. He first completes a task analysis, breaking 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, as Marshal has never used scissors before, he should just concentrate on completing the first two parts of his task analysis. Hayden sets a goal, then an objective for this week's plan.

Goal: For Marshal to cut with scissors competently.

Objective: For Marshal to hold scissors correctly and open and shut them independently.

a. What are **two** activities or experiences Hayden could provide to support Marshal's learning?

b. What could Hayden say to Marshal while he is participating in these activities or experiences?

Summary

- It is important to maintain the confidentiality of shared written and verbal information by storing it appropriately and not letting unauthorised people access it.
- By discussing information about children with relevant people, you will make your program richer and more dynamic.
- You must identify points of interest that can be used to enhance children's play and leisure.
- When planning activities, you should:
  - observe points of interest
  - document your observations
  - set goals and objectives
  - plan activities and experiences
  - implement plans.
- Write meaningful goals and objectives. Objectives should be measurable, achievable and realistic.
- You should question, plan, act and reflect as part of the planning cycle.

Learning checkpoint 3
Using observations to inform practice

Part A

1. Refer to organisational policies and procedures. For each of the following situations, identify who you could discuss this information with and why.

   In this scenario:

   - The parent has given permission for the service to take observation records for the purpose of planning.
   - The parent drops the child off at the start of the day, and the child's grandparent is authorised to pick the child up at the end of the day.
   - The child is five years old.

   Choose from the following people to discuss the information with:

   - Parent
   - Grandparent
   - Older sister
   - Other educators in your service
   - Carers or educators in other settings
   - Education providers, such as preschool teachers in other settings
   - Specialists
   - Neighbours
   - Child protection authorities
   - Family friends
   - Doctor

   a. The child is unable to use the toilet consistently. They have toileting accidents daily.

   b. The child ate two serves of lunch and one of dessert.

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c. The child has constructed a building project with a group of friends. It is quite complex and the children are excited.

d. You suspect the child may have been abused while staying with a neighbour over the weekend. You notice a burn mark on the child's leg and a bruise in the shape of a hand on their back.

2. Access the following documents and write down where you would find the requested information.
   a. Which element of the NQS highlights that any documentation about a child must be made accessible to families at all times?

   b. Which article from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child highlights the goals of education?

   c. Which ECA Code of Ethics responsibility relates to including families in program decision-making?

Part B

1. Document a point of interest you notice about a child using an observational record of your choice. The recorded information should identify a point of interest relating to the child's development, knowledge, ideas, abilities, interests, social interaction, reactions to the play environment or cultural practice.
   a. Include the child's age, the time and date of observation, and the setting.

b. Explain why you chose the observation recording method you used.

2. Analyse your record and use the point of interest to contribute to the planning of programs.
   a. Access the EYLF and link the point of interest to a learning outcome.

   b. Develop a goal related to the point of interest.

   c. Develop an objective related to this goal.

3. Develop an activity or experience using all the information you have gathered.

4. List **five** interactions you would use during the implementation of the activity or experience you have developed. The interactions should be responsive and respectful. Include how you will interact, what you would say and when you would say it.

5. List **two** things you could reflect on during the experience you have developed to collect more information about the child.