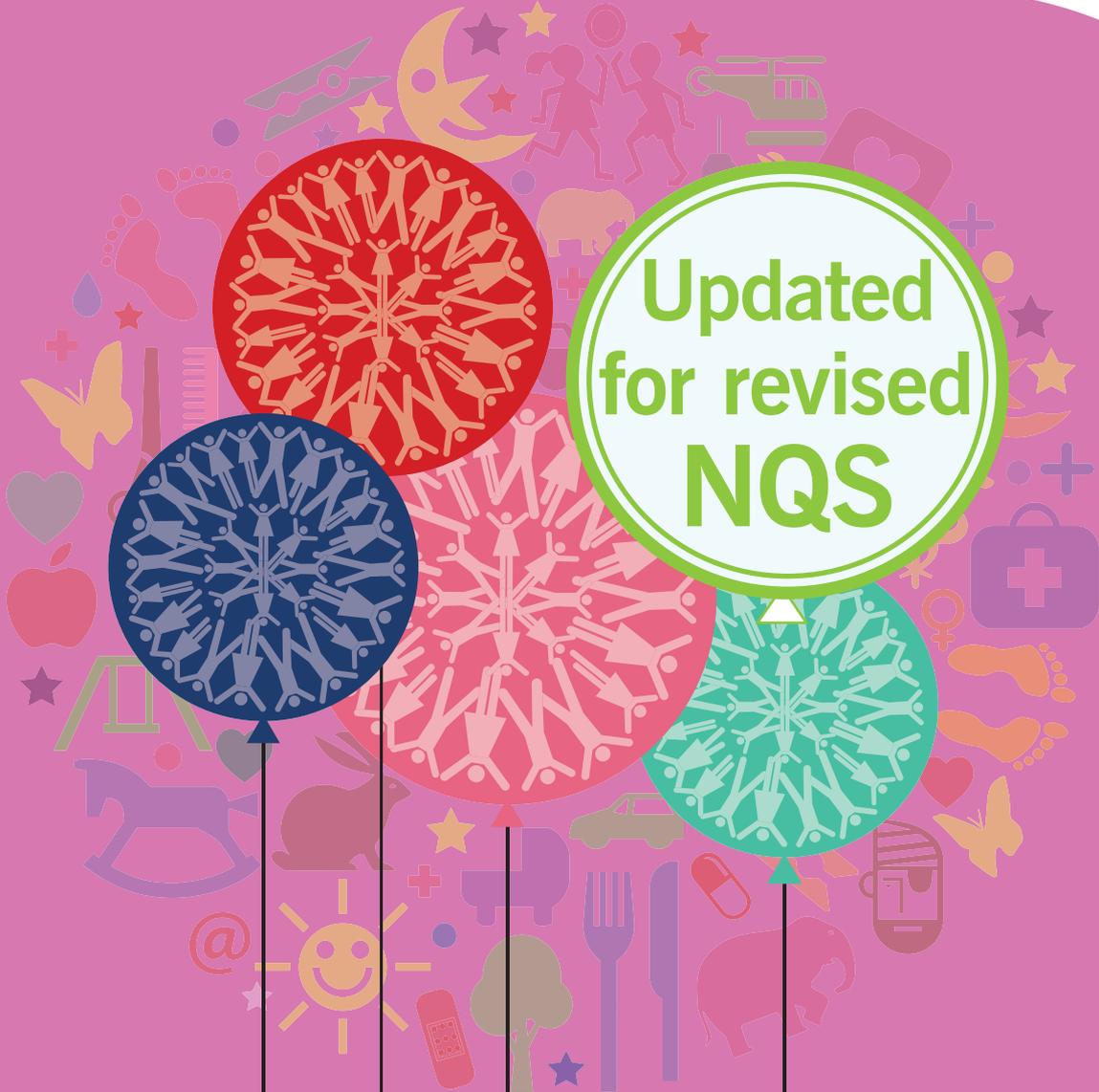


CHCECE007

Develop positive and respectful relationships with children



Updated
for revised
NQS

Learner guide



aspire
learning resources

CHCECE007

Develop positive and respectful relationships with children

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1



Copyright Warning

**This product is copyrighted to One World for Children
(ACN 076 297 400).**

One World for Children owns copyright in this product. Aspire Training & Consulting owns the licence to publish this material. Except as permitted by the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) or unless you have obtained the specific written permission of One World for Children, you must not:

- reproduce or photocopy this product in whole or in part
- publish this product in whole or in part
- cause this product in whole or in part to be transmitted
- store this product in whole or in part in a retrieval system including a computer
- record this product in whole or in part either electronically or mechanically
- resell this product in whole or in part.

One World for Children and Aspire Training & Consulting:

- invest significant time and resources in creating original products
- protect their copyright material
- will enforce their rights in copyright material
- reserve their legal rights to claim loss and damage or an account of profits made resulting from infringements of their copyright.

Aspire is committed to developing quality resources that meet the needs of our customers. However, occasionally Aspire finds, or is notified of, errors. Please refer to our website at www.aspirelr.com.au to see if there are any updates that may be relevant to you.

Every effort has been made to ensure the information in this book is accurate; however, the author and publisher accept no responsibility for any loss, damage or injury arising from such information.

Except where an information source is acknowledged, the names and details of individuals and organisations used in examples are fictitious and have been devised for learning purposes only. Any similarity to actual people or organisations is unintentional.

All websites referred to in this unit were accessed and deemed appropriate at time of publication.

Aspire Training & Consulting apologises unreservedly for any copyright infringement that may have occurred and invites copyright owners to contact Aspire so any violation may be rectified.

CHCECE007 Develop positive and respectful relationships with children, Release 2



© 2018 One World for Children Pty Ltd
407–411 Thompson Road
NORTH GEELONG VIC 3215 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 5272 2714
www.owfc.com.au

Cover and design
© 2018 Aspire Training & Consulting
Level 1, 464 St Kilda Road
MELBOURNE VIC 3004 AUSTRALIA
Phone: (03) 9820 1300

First published February 2018

Cover design Rewind Creative

Printer Doculink Australia Pty Ltd, 1d/28 Rogers Street, Port Melbourne VIC 3207

e-ISBN 978-1-76075-089-3 (PDF version)

ISBN 978-1-76059-939-3

Contents

Before you begin	iv
Topic 1 Communicating positively	1
1A Responding positively	3
1B Sustaining conversations	10
Summary	12
Learning checkpoint 1: Communicating positively	13
Topic 2 Interacting with children	15
2A Participating in play	17
2B Interacting positively	21
Summary	25
Learning checkpoint 2: Interacting with children	26
Topic 3 Supporting and respecting children	29
3A Creating respectful environments	31
3B Supporting children	40
Summary	46
Learning checkpoint 3: Supporting and respecting children	47
Topic 4 Maintaining the dignity and rights of children	49
4A Creating positive environments	51
4B Guiding children's behaviour	57
Summary	61
Learning checkpoint 4: Maintaining the dignity and rights of children	62

Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE007 Develop positive and respectful relationships with children*, 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 Responding positively

1B Sustaining conversations

Communicating positively

The way that you communicate with children influences their behaviour and the way they feel about themselves. Educators can communicate in a way that helps children feel safe and accepted. Good communication skills allow educators to build warm and positive relationships with children. Educators can explain options for play experiences or rest, and involve children in matters that affect them.

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 Responding positively

Strong relationships are built on good communication, and good communication relies on effective interactions. To develop strong communication skills, you need to become a responsive communicator and use strategies to help you develop positive relationships with children.

As an educator, you can strengthen relationships if you:

- ▶ make yourself accessible to each child during the day
- ▶ provide opportunities for interaction in play and routines
- ▶ never force children to communicate
- ▶ provide feedback and encouragement to all children
- ▶ make sure your body language matches your words
- ▶ give children time to think before they respond
- ▶ use open-ended questions.

Effective communication

Effective communication refers to how well you use basic strategies to communicate with others. You must develop a style that demonstrates care for children, respects their rights and encourages their development. These expectations are clarified through the following:

- ▶ Regulation 155 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations – Interactions with children
- ▶ Regulation 156 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations – Relationships in groups
- ▶ Quality Area 5 of the National Quality Standard (NQS) – Relationships with children
- ▶ Approved learning frameworks: communication is required for educators to positively interact with the young child in their learning.

These expectations can be found on the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website: <http://aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework>

Along with the expectations outlined in regulations and standards, your organisational policies and procedures will guide your interactions with children. Two important strategies for effective communication are:

- ▶ having realistic expectations
- ▶ using nonverbal communication.



Realistic expectations

Children's language skills begin developing from birth as a two-way process of communication. By looking at the language processes of each stage of a child's development, you can identify milestones common to each age group. If you are familiar with these milestones, you will be able to respond sensitively and appropriately to children's efforts to communicate.

Watch this video to learn more about communicating with children according to their age and stage of development.



Birth to three months

Newborn infants communicate unintentionally using sounds and actions. They cry when hungry, cold or uncomfortable, look at their carer's face and move their arms and bodies reflexively. When carers respond to this communication, the infant learns how to use their sounds and actions to communicate a response. This is the beginning of a two-way process of communication.

Example

Communicating with a newborn

Infant cries.

Educator: 'Oh dear! What's the matter?' Smiles and picks up the infant.

Infant is comforted by the interaction, stops crying and appears to focus on the educator's face.

Educator: 'You just wanted a cuddle – that's right, now. Are you hungry?'

Infant: Cooing sounds, burps.

Educator: 'Oh, so that's what you were telling me. Better now.'

Three to 12 months

An infant's ability to communicate develops quickly. At three months, they make a wider range of sounds and babble to themselves and other people. Sudden sounds and harsh, angry or loud voices may cause them distress. They show interest in and gain comfort from familiar voices, singing and conversation. They are active communicators, using both sounds and actions.

Your initiation of babbling and cooing or your response to these sounds will encourage the infants to take turns in communicating at this stage.

Watch this video about communicating with infants.



Example**Communicating with an infant**

Infant gazes at a teddy bear.

Educator places a blanket over the teddy bear. 'Where has teddy gone?'

Infant looks at educator and smiles, pulls at the blanket and laughs when teddy appears.

Educator: 'Peek-a-boo, you found teddy!'

Infant: Looks at teddy and shakes the blanket.

Educator: 'Should I do it again?' Hides teddy.

Infant smiles, looks at the blanket and back to the educator.

Educator: 'The blanket! Yes, under the blanket. Where is teddy? Find teddy!'

Infant pulls the blanket off the teddy and giggles.

The educator smiles and the infant smiles back. They are active partners in communication.

12 months to two years

Toddlers communicate using sounds and some words; they understand and use gestures and body language. They begin to associate words with familiar objects and actions, and understand many more words than they can say.

Toddlers are active communicators. They:

- ▶ communicate with intention
- ▶ can initiate interactions
- ▶ communicate for different purposes
- ▶ are more capable communicators than most people recognise.

As part of their speech development, toddlers imitate words and sounds. Their words may not be clear, but educators and others who know them well will understand them. They use verbal and nonverbal communication for many purposes. If you respond positively to this communication, the toddler will be encouraged to develop their skills. Toddlers' nonverbal communication is usually very effective.

Toddlers can:

- ▶ identify needs
- ▶ greet people
- ▶ draw attention to themselves
- ▶ label objects
- ▶ protest
- ▶ show off
- ▶ ask for comfort.

Toddlers express ideas using simple one- or two-word sentences. They use nonverbal communication and intonation to make their meaning clear; for example, 'Mummy gone' can be a question meaning 'Has Mummy gone?' or a statement meaning 'Mummy has gone'.

At this stage children talk about objects and actions that are part of their everyday lives. These words are called key words of meaning; they may be made-up words or words that are easy to say at this stage of language development. For example, 'nook-nook' could mean a dummy and 'baba' could mean a blanket.

Toddlers can participate as equals and introduce their own ideas into conversations.

Example**Communicating with toddlers**

Elise, two years old, points to some children playing in the sandpit and says, 'Truck ... um, truck.' Phoebe, her educator says, 'Yes, they have a truck'.

'Mine truck gone,' says Elise. Molly, 12 months old, points to the sandpit as well.

Phoebe says, 'Ah! Did someone take your truck?'

Elise: 'Mmm, truck brmmm, brmmmm!'

Two to three years

Communication advances at an astounding pace during this period. The child begins with two- or three-word sentences, but quickly extends to complex sentences and grammar. There may be mistakes in their sentence construction and confusion regarding the meaning of words, but the overall meaning is clear in context. For example, toddlers aged two to three years may say things like:

- ▶ 'Me want banana.'
- ▶ 'All gone doggie?'
- ▶ 'Mine balloon broked.'
- ▶ 'He sick, poor him.'

At this age children ask questions – especially 'why' questions. They can understand simple instructions (one instruction at a time is best). They begin to appreciate the rules of conversation and wait their turn to speak while listening to other people's ideas. They use 'me' and 'I' to indicate self-awareness and their growing independence.

For toddlers of this age, their main interests are objects and actions from their daily life. They are mostly interested in real experiences and what is happening here and now, and may demonstrate this by saying:

- ▶ 'I a big girl now. I got boots.'
- ▶ 'I want more juice.'
- ▶ 'Me no want spoon, want fork.'
- ▶ 'The big dog all gone.'

By responding to the child's questions, you are demonstrating that their comments and efforts are understood and valued.

Three to five years

Children aged between three and five years (preschoolers) may use long sentences and complex grammar. They may incorporate tense to talk about the past and future, and correctly use negatives.

Children at this age communicate to think, imagine and understand the world outside their immediate experiences and to express self-awareness. Their everyday spoken vocabulary is about 5,000 words and they understand even more words. They can tell and follow stories, remember poems, appreciate humour and enjoy discussions that take place during routines and experiences. They develop socially and use communication when playing with other children. They can follow one- to two-step instructions.

Here are some common sentences that preschoolers may say:

- ▶ 'I think I'll go outside to play.'
- ▶ 'My dad's truck uses lots of petrol.'
- ▶ 'Let's put the baby horse to sleep.'
- ▶ 'John and me built a big tower.'

Discussions are popular at this age and are an excellent way to encourage children to listen and share information. Children will also learn to value and respect each other's opinions.

You might develop a formal discussion group, such as a mat time or group time routine, or you might find opportunities to start or enrich discussions that occur spontaneously.

The length of any given discussion group will vary depending on the age and stage of the children involved, their interest in the topic and your ability to keep them involved. The success of this type of group relies on how well you prepare, whether the discussion fits with the children's interests and developmental understanding, and how you influence the children to take an interest in the subject.

Discussion should always be relaxed and unhurried; a rushed conversation that is designed to meet your agenda will not be of interest to children and will fail to extend their knowledge and skills.

Nonverbal communication

A large percentage of your communication with children will be nonverbal. Children will be looking for your nonverbal messages, which you will be using for a range of reasons.

Nonverbal communication allows you to express your feelings without using words. Common forms of nonverbal communication include facial expressions, eye contact, touch, posture and gestures. These are often referred to as body language or cues. Sounds without words such as laughter or crying are also forms of nonverbal communication.

In contrast, using words helps you to express facts and ideas.

To use nonverbal communication effectively, you must ensure that you are:

- ▶ working at the child's level so they can see your body language
- ▶ close enough to the child to gain their full attention
- ▶ able to use or avoid eye contact, depending on what is appropriate
- ▶ open to providing physical touch if needed; for example, hugging a child, holding hands in a circle, being a dancing partner or helping with dress-ups.

Example**Nonverbal communication**

Michael, aged five years, looks out of his preschool window to see his educator, Mary, patiently waiting for him. She has Susan, 18 months, in the stroller, and Clive, who is three years old, at her feet. Mary glances at the window and sees Michael looking at her. She smiles and waves at him. Michael's teacher opens the door to let the children go out to meet the parents and educators. Michael runs out to Mary.

Mary gives Michael a big smile and says, 'Hello, we've been waiting for you. Clive wants you to help with his train set and Susan has been saying your name all afternoon.'

Mary takes Michael's bag from him and hooks it onto the handle of the stroller. Michael gives Clive a quick hug and peers into the stroller to make a funny face at Susan, who laughs happily and kicks her legs in response.

Mary holds out her hand for Michael and says, 'Come on, let's get into the car, then we can talk about your day'.

Adapting nonverbal cues

You may need to adapt your nonverbal communication to accommodate individual children according to their cultural and family backgrounds. The following provides examples of sensitivities you may need to take into account.

Personal space	Some children will feel comfortable with an arm's length of space between you, while others will be comfortable with close physical contact.
Eye contact	Depending on cultural expectations, eye contact may be a sign of honesty and respect, or a sign of disrespect.
Tone of voice	Some children are comfortable with loud and direct language, while others think that a loud person is angry. At times, you may need to use a stern tone to convey limits. Some children will ignore stern tones and others may become overly emotional if they think they have upset you.

Practice task 1

Read the following case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Shawn slowly approaches an educator, Rachael, and tugs on her clothes. Rachael bobs down to face Shawn, smiles and says, 'What are you up to, Shawn?'

'Want slide,' Shawn says.

'Would you like to go on the slide?' Rachael asks. Shawn smiles and nods. Rachael takes his hand and leads him to the group of children using the slide.

1. Think about Shawn’s verbal abilities. In what age group do you think Shawn would be – infant, toddler or preschooler? Why do you think this?

.....

.....

2. When does Rachael use nonverbal communication to show Shawn she wants to help him?

.....

3. What could Shawn’s nonverbal communication be expressing?

.....

.....

1B Sustaining conversations

As an educator you need to engage children in meaningful conversations that provide children with a sense of agency. If you plan experiences that are based on children's interests, you are more likely to be able to hold conversations with them about what they are doing, thinking and learning. These conversations will be most effectively sustained by listening actively and asking open-ended questions.



Active listening

A conversation is an exchange of ideas between communication partners. If you want to be effective at conversing, you should use active listening. Active listening is essential if your conversation is to be meaningful and sustained.

Active listening means giving your full attention to the child to show that you understand their point of view.

To show you are concentrating and interested, you will need to:

- ▶ focus your attention on the child and the topic
- ▶ observe body language and nonverbal messages
- ▶ avoid distractions
- ▶ set aside your prejudices and opinions
- ▶ ask questions or seek direction
- ▶ change your body position to show you are listening; for example, face the child and lean towards them
- ▶ answer questions and follow directions
- ▶ respond with reflection (reflective listening); for example, 'So you felt scared?' or 'Is that right?'
- ▶ give encouragement through verbal responses; for example, 'Oh, really?' or 'Go on'.

Try to use active listening with any child or adult you are conversing with. Even in situations where words are not used, such as when interacting with an infant, you can smile, use body language, respond to gurgles and give your full attention to the infant.

Asking open-ended questions

Open-ended questions are a useful and important tool to incorporate into your everyday interactions with children. This requires you to think about how your questions are worded and presented so that children will have an opportunity to explain and extend beyond a 'yes' or 'no' response.

Questions that require a 'yes', 'no' or one-word answer are called closed questions, because the response is limited. These questions do not sustain a conversation.

Compare the following examples.

Closed questions	Open-ended questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is it hot outside? ▶ Did that hurt? ▶ Do you like trains? ▶ Are you angry? ▶ Did you do that? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What is the weather like outside? ▶ What happened? ▶ What do you like about trains? ▶ How did it make you feel? ▶ How did that happen?

Talking at mealtimes

Mealtimes are excellent opportunities to sit together and start discussions. There are obvious environmental supports – the children are all sitting down together and are involved in the same relaxed activity. There are some obvious topics, such as whether the children like their snack or meal. Other topics might involve:

- ▶ food in general
- ▶ health and wellbeing
- ▶ their home life
- ▶ their interests
- ▶ what the child has been doing today or on the weekend
- ▶ plans the family has for later in the day or week.

When educators use mealtimes as discussion opportunities, they are demonstrating how people interact socially during routines. It also makes the mealtime less rushed and more relaxed. Some things you can do to make this time enjoyable are:

- ▶ allow enough time so the children are not rushed
- ▶ sit with the children to encourage a sociable atmosphere
- ▶ accept that there will be some mess
- ▶ model manners and positive ways of eating
- ▶ encourage children to talk with each other
- ▶ encourage children to participate in the mealtime conversations even if they have chosen not to eat.

Practice task 2

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

Case study

Billy runs up to his educator, Julia. He is puffed and trying to speak at the same time, and is rubbing his head. 'Nick ... hit the spade,' he says. Julia gets down to Billy's level and looks directly at him. 'It sounds like you're in a rush to tell me something, Billy. First take a deep breath. Then tell me, what did Nick do?' she says.

Billy takes a deep breath and then says, 'Nick hit me on the head.' Julia shows concern and says, 'Did Nick hit you on the head with the spade?'

'Yes!' says Billy.

1. When does Julia use active listening?

.....

2. When does Julia use an open-ended question?

.....

3. Access an organisational policy and procedure related to interacting with children. Use this information to note what Julia should say next to Billy to show that she cares for him and respects his need for attention.

.....

.....

.....

4. Billy is interested in playing with sand. Write a sentence that Julia could use to start a conversation with Billy about this.

.....

.....

5. When talking with Billy at a mealtime, what is one way that Julia could make sure the discussion was relaxed and unhurried?

.....

.....

Summary

- ▶ Effective communication relies on using basic strategies to communicate with others.
- ▶ Children’s language skills begin developing from birth as a two-way process of communication.
- ▶ A large percentage of your communication with children is nonverbal.
- ▶ Children use nonverbal cues as part of the communication process.
- ▶ A conversation is an exchange of ideas between communication partners.
- ▶ Talk about topics that are of interest to the child so that they are engaged in the conversation.
- ▶ Active listening and asking open-ended questions are key strategies that can be used to help sustain a conversation with a child.
- ▶ Use mealtimes as an opportunity to initiate and engage in discussions with children.

Learning checkpoint 1

Communicating positively

1. Consider these **three** conversations you could have with children and complete the table below.
 - ▶ Conversation 1: a conversation you might have with a small group of five-year-old children after you have finished serving a snack.
 - ▶ Conversation 2: a conversation you might have with a six-month-old baby who has woken from a sleep.
 - ▶ Conversation 3: a conversation you might have with a toddler who approaches you with a book.

	Conversation 1	Conversation 2	Conversation 3
What are two expectations you have of the children based on their age and stage of development?			
What is one open-ended question you could use to initiate a discussion?			
How would you demonstrate active listening?			

2. When talking to a group of five-year-olds during a mealtime, which physical action could you use to create a relaxed and unhurried atmosphere for the conversation to develop?

3. If a child approaches you, but you are unable to talk with the child at that moment, how would you deal with the situation to acknowledge their need for your attention and demonstrate that you care and respect their needs?

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Locate an approved national learning framework (*Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework (EYLF)* or *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia (MTOPI)*). Identify which learning outcome discusses children's communication and ways educators can promote learning communication skills.

.....

.....

.....



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Participating in play

2B Interacting positively

Interacting with children

Your level of involvement in children's play will be guided by their verbal and nonverbal cues, which will help you to enhance or extend play.

All interactions with children need to be positive and respectful of their comments, questions and requests for assistance. Children learn from this role-modelling of positive interactions and develop a sense of agency.

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	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and 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 Participating in play

As play is a social activity, there are times when it is important for you to become involved. You can involve yourself in a child's play by:

- ▶ showing a child how to do something as part of the play
- ▶ asking open-ended questions to extend or expand on the experience
- ▶ adding relevant materials and resources
- ▶ becoming involved in play activities.



When you are invited to play, follow the children's lead. Provide subtle suggestions to enhance and extend the play, but never take over or direct. You may find it appropriate to enter play, complete a goal and then leave.

Element 5.1.1 of the NQS supports your involvement in children's play and interactions. You are expected to participate in children's play and use children's cues to guide your involvement.

Extending play

As you watch children play and listen to their ideas, you will find that opportunities arise for you to provide support and extension to their play. Extending play involves providing new ideas, objects or suggestions. When you provide extensions to play, children remain engaged for longer periods and can find a broader range of options for their play. This means that their sense of agency has been increased. The extensions could take the form of:

- ▶ adding new props to a play space, such as dress-ups, toys or equipment
- ▶ suggesting a larger or smaller space for the play
- ▶ adding a new idea relevant to the topic.

Example

Extending play

Crispin, an educator, notices that Abraham and Jeanette, both three years old, are working beside each other using the train set. The children have built a long, winding track. Crispin hears the children talking about who will drive the train and realises it only has one engine and three carriages. He is aware that the children will both want to drive and have their own train, so he collects more train parts and brings them out. 'Here, Abraham and Jeanette, there are many engines and carriages for you to choose from!'

Educator roles in play

The roles you take in children's play should extend its value and increase agency. If you think carefully about the play that is occurring and the messages or cues the children are sending you, you will be able to think about the roles you can take during play. This process will help you to identify when it is time for you to exit or change your type of participation. You might take on one of the following roles.

Play role	What you would be doing
Observer	<p>An observer watches, listens and tries to figure out what the play is about by understanding the children's perspective and interests.</p> <p>Careful observation means you are less likely to say or do something that disrupts children's play, and you will have a better idea of what to say or do to extend children's play if the opportunity arises.</p> <p>You may be an observer initially and then move into one of the other play roles.</p>
Provider	<p>A provider notes what the children are trying to do and then thinks about what can be provided so that play can proceed smoothly. For example, a provider may arrange:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ space for play ▶ special materials for play ▶ more time for play. <p>Careful provision means you will support the play and allow it to continue. You can also extend the play by giving children more to think about and do in their play.</p>
Mediator	<p>A mediator helps children solve problems that occur in play when the children can't solve these problems themselves.</p> <p>Watch for times when children get stuck. For example, when an argument threatens to stop the play, this is a cue for you to mediate. You can then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ step in and make a suggestion ▶ offer an alternative ▶ model a new way to act to solve the problem ▶ support the children to work out a way to enable the play to continue. <p>You also extend children's skills in problem-solving when you intervene to mediate, as children will often copy your problem-solving solutions in future play.</p>
Player	<p>A player joins in with the play. This seems to be the easiest role, but careful thought is needed before you join in. Adults can be actively involved in play as long as they respect that the play belongs to the children.</p> <p>Being a player lets you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ extend play by modelling new ideas ▶ assist new players to find a role ▶ help children act out scenes or ideas that they don't know much about. <p>A player also assists children to keep their play going for a longer period of time. Perhaps even more importantly, it strengthens the child-educator relationship, as the interaction allows both parties to learn more about each other.</p>

Often when you take on a role in play, something will happen during the play that means you must change your role. The table below gives some examples of how you might change your play role when you notice cues in the play.

Cues that tell you to change your involvement	What you should do	New role
Children are arguing, disagreeing, confused, tense or facing a problem	Help children to solve the problem	Mediator
Children are looking around or searching for things, or asking for materials or resources	Provide resources	Provider
Children ask you to play	Join in playing	Player
Play continues successfully	Allow play to continue	Observer or player
Items are not being cared for or are being used unsafely	Remove items that are not required or suggest alternatives	Provider or mediator
Play extends	Provide additional resources	Provider
Other children wish to join the group, but are not sure how	Support the children to join in or provide additional resources	Mediator or provider
You are playing with children, but your role reduces or changes and you are no longer needed	Remove yourself from the play	Observer

2B Interacting positively

As you watch children play and listen to their ideas, you may find opportunities to provide support and extension to their play. You can identify their feelings through verbal interaction and nonverbal interaction, such as their body language, movements, gestures and facial expressions. Some children are confident about asking for attention or more time to express their ideas. Others rely on you to pick up their cues and needs to express themselves or receive your attention.



By responding to all feelings, you start building relationships with children and show them that you care. By doing this, you will allow the child to feel like they belong in the environment and are part of the group. This links with Outcome 1 from the national learning frameworks (EYLF and MTOP).

Role-modelling

All your actions and interactions are observed by others in your workplace: your colleagues, the children in your care and their families. Modelling is why you develop many of the same habits and mannerisms as the people you live and work with.

Role-modelling is one of the most powerful ways to teach children appropriate behaviours. Children will quickly pick up behaviours and attitudes in the environment – both positive and negative. Always use encouraging and positive language, and role-model good social and communication skills in all your interactions.

Sharing ideas and stories

Children are imaginative and will come to you with many thoughts, questions, ideas and suggestions. They may show agency in being excited by an idea for an activity or concerned that it may not work. Sometimes their ideas are not fully formed, and your ongoing interaction can help them to develop their ideas.

The following table shows some strategies you may find useful when children share their ideas and stories with you.

Strategy	How to implement
Use active listening to understand what the child has to say.	Face the child. Get down to the child's level.
Avoid leading the child with specific questions; respond with simple comments.	'That's interesting.' 'What an interesting idea.' 'How does it feel?'

Strategy	How to implement
Recognise specific feelings where possible to enable the child to do the same.	<p>'You are very excited about this.'</p> <p>'How confident you are!'</p> <p>'You seem very happy.'</p>
Ask the child questions.	<p>Ask what the child wants to do next. Brainstorm if needed and if the child is old enough.</p> <p>'How could we make this happen?'</p> <p>'Then what happens?'</p>
Use physical (body) language.	<p>Sit close to the child.</p> <p>Demonstrate enjoyment or pleasure if appropriate by clapping, smiling, jumping up and down or laughing.</p> <p>Copy the child's reactions if appropriate.</p>
Provide materials or opportunities.	<p>The child may need time, space, materials or people so that their idea or story can be expressed.</p> <p>The child may need to tell others or express themselves to specific people.</p>
Redirect the child to the next activity – either a new activity or an extension of the idea or story.	<p>If the child is extremely excited or enthusiastic, help further their ideas or stories.</p> <p>Monitor the child's participation to ensure they are still feeling positive and enthusiastic. You will be monitoring their levels of frustration, confidence and ability to cope with challenges.</p>

Helping children extend their ideas

When children share their ideas and stories with you, there is an opportunity to develop the situation into a learning experience for the child and perhaps the wider group.

To help children extend their ideas:

- ▶ Encourage children to listen to each other's ideas.
- ▶ Encourage children to think flexibly about their options.
- ▶ Show children how you think about problems by explaining or demonstrating what you might do or how you do things.
- ▶ Accept and acknowledge children's suggestions in a positive way.
- ▶ Explain things that limit children's options, such as safety considerations, practicality or resources.
- ▶ Allow children time to make suggestions; don't rush them or decide for them.
- ▶ Make sure all children participate – not just those who are loud, enthusiastic or quick to speak up.
- ▶ Offer new ideas and encourage children to consider different interests.
- ▶ Provide new and stimulating materials or topics for discussion.

Children's idea and story sharing can be spontaneous or planned; formal or informal; or part of an individual discussion or group activity. This is an ideal time to focus on the children's interests and provide learning experiences.

Example

Extending an idea

Jackson, an educator, is sitting with Marna, who is five years old. Marna is telling Jackson about how she would like to sail in a boat and catch fish in the sea. Marna went to the beach for a holiday and brought back some shells that she had collected. Marna asks if she could show the other children her shells.

Jackson tells Marna he thinks this is a great idea, and suggests they create a discovery table and put some sand on the table as well. He asks Marna if she would like to build a boat using blocks and make fishing lines with sticks and magnets. Marna is excited, and she jumps up and down saying, ‘Yes, yes!’

Requests for assistance

If a child requests help from you, it demonstrates that they know you will respond to their needs and take them seriously, and that they feel safe, secure and supported.

You can communicate your willingness to help children by listening to them when they ask for your attention. You should also ask children whether they need help, and watch their cues to see how they are progressing in their activities.

Frustration is a difficult feeling for children to identify as it is similar to anger. Your careful observation and discussion will help children to recognise when they feel frustrated, why they feel this way and how they can ask for help.

Signs that a child is feeling frustrated or requires assistance include:

- ▶ not progressing in their activity
- ▶ irritability, anger or annoyance
- ▶ biting a lip
- ▶ giving up.

Possible actions you can take are included in the following table.

Action	Examples
Set simpler challenges or provide assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Move a toy closer to an immobile infant. ▶ Provide a selection of puzzles of different difficulties. ▶ Give directions and support – ‘Try turning the piece this way. See how the green part matches here?’
Intervene in relationships when they seem to be developing into frustrating scenarios	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘Jamie and Easton, what are you trying to do here?’ ▶ ‘How could you work together?’ ▶ ‘There are lots of jobs to do, let’s decide who will do what.’ ▶ ‘Let’s work out what to do first.’
Support the child to use methods for expressing or dealing with frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Suggest they move away from the activity or person that is a problem. ▶ Provide stress relief strategies like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ‘Take a big breath.’ – ‘Stop and take a look at things again.’ – ‘Go for a walk around and then come back and see if you can do it.’
Encourage the child to take a break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘You need to do some stretches and come back to that!’ ▶ ‘Maybe it will be easier if you try something else first.’
Acknowledge the frustration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ ‘This is frustrating; it’s a very hard job to do.’ ▶ ‘We all get frustrated sometimes; it’s part of learning.’

Responding to comments and questions

It is common for children to ask questions and make comments. You will hear a lot of 'why' questions. When a child is curious about the world, themselves and others, you can use this as an opportunity to develop their decision-making and problem-solving skills.

You can support decision-making and problem-solving that evolves from comments and questions by:

- ▶ recognising problems and/or decisions
- ▶ clarifying goals
- ▶ planning strategies
- ▶ finding solutions
- ▶ asking open-ended questions
- ▶ supporting children to share their ideas with others
- ▶ providing new and stimulating materials
- ▶ using everyday events to explore the world
- ▶ supporting exploration
- ▶ talking about routines and choices
- ▶ supporting parents to provide learning environments at home
- ▶ helping children break things up into manageable steps
- ▶ helping them to see other people's points of view.

Consultation

One of the most effective ways to encourage positive questioning and develop a sense of agency is to consult with children. By consulting with them, you are supporting them to express their ideas and views. Some common things children can be consulted about include:

- ▶ limits and guidelines
- ▶ activity choices
- ▶ programming ideas
- ▶ behaviour expectations
- ▶ parent involvement
- ▶ staff involvement.

Consultation is a basic principle of good quality relationships, and there are many opportunities to incorporate it into your practice. It can take the form of verbal, written or nonverbal communication. You can consult with children and parents by holding a meeting, sending out a survey, having a group or individual discussion, or chatting informally. You could make requests or provide a suggestion box. Consultation can also be undertaken spontaneously when the opportunity arises; for example, you could provide anecdotes or listen to conversations to spark an idea.

Consultation must be appropriate to the child's level of development. Get to know their communication style and consult them over simple matters that concern them. Consult children to provide them with experiences that are relevant and interesting to them. Some preschoolers will easily be able to plan activities with you; others will need lots of encouragement and support.

Try the following suggestions:

- ▶ Offer possible play choices and listen carefully to children’s questions about the choice.
- ▶ Use open questions to encourage children to reflect and ask their own questions; for example, ‘Why do you think the boxes are there?’
- ▶ Encourage children to consult with each other. If they have a question, see who can help them find an answer.
- ▶ Teach children to research. You don’t always need to have an answer; you can use a computer, books, posters and other people, including visitors.



Watch this video about interacting with different children.

Practice task 4

Give an example of what you could say or do to implement each of the following positive interactions:

1. Role-modelling

2. Listening to a child share an idea

3. Helping a child who needs assistance

4. Responding to a question from a child

5. Supporting children to make their own decisions

Summary

- ▶ As play is social, there are times when it is important for you to become involved.
- ▶ As you watch children play and listen to their ideas, opportunities may arise where you are able to provide support and extension to their play.
- ▶ Children are imaginative and will come to you with many thoughts, questions, ideas and suggestions.
- ▶ Children will request help when they feel safe, secure and supported, and will expect you to respond to their needs and take them seriously.
- ▶ School-aged children, preschoolers and some toddlers often ask questions and make comments.
- ▶ One of the most effective ways to encourage positive questioning is to consult with children.

Learning checkpoint 2

Interacting with children

1. You are watching two toddlers, Zandra and Roddy, playing beside each other. They are engaged in home play. The area provides four chairs and a table. There are four plates and four cups on a shelf.

Zandra begins setting the table and Roddy starts doing the dishes. Zandra sets out two plates, then puts a cup next to the first plate. Roddy is using the other two plates and three of the cups. Roddy scowls and you notice he is heading toward the table that is being set. He wants to have all the cups.

- a. What role could you play to guide the children positively? Choose between observer, provider, mediator or player.

.....

- b. What could you say to role-model working together?

.....

.....

.....

.....

- c. What cues might tell you that the children need you to mediate?

.....

.....

.....

2. A discovery table is set up with leaves, flowers and pictures of caterpillars and butterflies. There is a live caterpillar crawling on a leafy branch and the children have access to a magnifying glass.

Terrance approaches the table and stands looking at it for a few minutes. He does not touch anything. He sits in the chair for a couple of minutes, but still does not touch anything. He then says, 'Gross'.

- a. Terrance might be seeking assistance. What could you say to encourage him to ask for help?

.....

.....

b. How could you respond positively to Terrance’s comment?

.....

.....

.....

c. Identify **two** questions that Terrance might ask you about the experience.

.....

.....

.....

d. What specific resource might you use to help answer any of Terrance’s questions in an educational way? Provide details.

.....

.....

.....

3. You are participating in a group discussion at a mealtime. Burton, four years old, begins to tell you about his weekend and that he went to a hospital because his grandma is sick. Safron, also four years, interrupts to say that she went to a hospital too because her grandpa has a broken leg. Safron then says that she wants to make a hospital in the home corner.

a. What would you say to encourage the children to tell their stories, but also role-model how they can listen to each other’s stories?

.....

.....

.....

b. What are **two** ways you can show you are listening?

.....

.....

c. What are **two** open-ended questions you could ask Safron to find out more about her idea of setting up a hospital and support her decision-making and planning?

.....

.....



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Creating respectful environments

3B Supporting children

Supporting and respecting children

Each child has their own strengths and limitations. Children should be helped to understand that differences are normal and that diversity should be welcomed.

You can show respect for children by creating an environment that reflects their lives with their families and communities. By doing this you are not only acknowledging differences, but also modelling tolerance and respect, and creating an environment that encourages agency. You also help children understand that, despite their differences, they share many similarities with each other.

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	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and 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 respectful environments

One way to accommodate a child's needs and interests is to explore their family life and their links to the community. Doing this increases the connection between home and education, and allows each child to share their knowledge and skills.

Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child reminds us that every child – whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, abilities or family structure, or what they may say or do – must be respected, protected and have their rights upheld.



The experiences a child has with their family links to their interests, abilities and needs. Children enjoy learning about others through interacting with them. This provides you with the opportunity to introduce new ideas and involve children in discussions, play and games related to finding out how they are similar and different to others.

The cultural priorities of families or the local community, and things such as language, rituals and religious beliefs, all affect the way you present your program, how you communicate with others and what priorities you place on aspects of the curriculum.

Families are unique

There is no such thing as a typical family; each family is unique in the way they interact as a unit and how they interact with their local community. It is common for people with similar family values or backgrounds to live in the same neighbourhood as this allows them to receive support from people who understand them through speaking the same language, or sharing a religious or spiritual belief.

Daily interactions are an easy and consistent way to communicate with families and to informally gather information about their unique qualities. This cultural information should be documented and used to help you implement the best practices and routines for that child and their family.

The following table outlines the type of information you could gather about a family and their community, and some ideas on how to include these in the service environment, practices and routines.

Aspect	Details	How to implement
<p>Beliefs, values and customs</p>	<p>Every family has their own beliefs and customs, which are based on their values. These are influenced by religion, ethnicity, family background and culture.</p> <p>Family values can be represented in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How to use leisure time ▶ The importance of sporting achievements ▶ Having busy or relaxed schedules ▶ Food preferences or requirements ▶ Academic success ▶ Cultural interests, such as museums and art galleries ▶ Money, wealth and material possessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Follow social practices and customs whenever possible. ▶ Ask families about their customs and what they mean. Share this information with children and other educators. ▶ Ask permission for you and the children to participate in a custom or practice. Ask a family or community member to lead your experience.
<p>Race and ethnicity</p>	<p>Race and ethnicity may refer to country of origin or a group of people with shared characteristics. Australia is home to people of many races and ethnicities with different beliefs, backgrounds and lifestyles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use posters, books and stories that show people of various cultures and ethnicities. ▶ Represent countries using flags or other national emblems. ▶ Ask permission for you and the children to participate in a cultural celebration. Ask a family or community member to lead your experience.
<p>Language</p>	<p>Many languages are spoken in Australia. Every language should be respected as a valid form of communication. Some people can speak more than one language. People with hearing impairment may use sign language.</p> <p>Language is not just about words. You will meet people with different communication styles and nonverbal social customs.</p> <p>Be aware that people may not be able to express themselves in the same language as you.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Communicate with families in a range of ways: verbally, in writing or by demonstration. ▶ Provide material in the family's first language to share information. ▶ Talk about languages with children and other educators, and explain some of the differences. ▶ Display words in various languages around the organisation.

Aspect	Details	How to implement
Religion or spirituality	<p>Religion or spirituality can dominate family life and can have a strong influence on the norms, beliefs, values and customs that determine family culture. Individuals and communities frame their desires in religious or spiritual terms. Your respect for their beliefs is essential if you wish to provide quality outcomes for children and families.</p> <p>Conversely, some families do not follow religious or spiritual beliefs. They want a secular (non-religious) education for their children, in which children may learn about others' beliefs but are not encouraged to believe themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensure you have permission from parents before introducing any particular religion or spirituality. ▶ Respect Dreamtime stories as part of Indigenous spirituality. Find out about how to present Indigenous stories and beliefs appropriately by asking a community member or consulting a local resource group first.
Clothing	<p>Appearance and dress may vary between different ethnic and cultural groups. Some people or groups wear traditional clothing and others wear symbols in relation to religious beliefs. Some styles of dress or appearance relate to socioeconomic backgrounds and financial circumstances.</p> <p>Children may notice differences in clothing and begin to ask questions. You should use this as an opportunity to positively talk about difference.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Talk about cultural dress. ▶ Use posters and books that show people wearing different clothing as they go about their daily lives. ▶ Discuss the beauty of different fabrics and how they might be made. ▶ Include a range of clothes, fabrics, hats and shoes in dramatic play.
Life experiences, personal history and experiences of trauma	<p>Everyone you meet is shaped by their life experiences, many of which they will not share with you. Traumatic experiences can affect a person's outlook and the way they interact with others, but these are not always easy to identify.</p> <p>In some cases, trauma can be easily noticed, such as when a person has burn scars on their face. There are other forms of trauma that are not obvious, such as an experience of war, death of a loved one, or a serious illness or accident.</p> <p>Trauma can influence the development of a person or family. It might make them appear mistrustful, aggressive, overprotective, demanding or shy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Encourage people to share their stories by providing a confidential and respectful environment. ▶ Respect feelings that families have about certain practices and routines, and adapt your routines and practices to meet these. ▶ Provide support resources on topics useful and relevant to family and community participation and need. ▶ Celebrate with families, support them through hard times, and empathise with them. ▶ Involve specialists if appropriate.

Aspect	Details	How to implement
<p>Ability</p>	<p>People have diverse interests, which can lead to developmental differences. One child might come from a family that enjoys sport, so is very active and has good hand-eye coordination. Another child might come from a family that loves to read books, so has advanced literacy skills and makes up wonderful stories. Some people are born with or develop a disability or impairment that will affect their development in childhood. Don't assume that this will hold them back in other areas; for example, a child who has delayed speech may excel at painting and drawing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Use posters, stories and guest visits of people with different abilities. ▶ Provide dolls with disability. ▶ Provide materials and resources for dramatic play, and discussions that link with disability, such as wheelchairs or crutches. ▶ Talk to children about why people need wheelchairs, hearing aids and other devices. ▶ Alter the environment to make everyone comfortable; for example, provide accessible garden beds or create a quiet area to talk without background noise. ▶ Include children with additional support needs or advanced learning and show others how they can be welcomed and participate.
<p>Family structure, relationships, gender and sexuality</p>	<p>The family structure might consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ heterosexual parents ▶ same-sex parents ▶ single parents ▶ extended families, where a number of generations live together or close by ▶ foster families ▶ blended families, where more than one family group comes together or custody is shared. <p>By acknowledging different family structures, you can be sensitive to needs, respect all families and encourage children to feel valued. By talking openly about different ways families are made up, children can feel included and can learn about the way others live.</p> <p>By treating children as individuals and using non-stereotypical interactions, you can support them in discovering their own identity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Represent various family scenarios in discussions, posters and books. ▶ Create a family tree or a photo wall that shows all the different types of families. ▶ Invite families to participate in activities. ▶ Organise family events and special days. ▶ Use inclusive language – for example, rather than having 'Father's Day', have 'Special Person Day' so all children can invite someone. This will allow those with same-sex parents, step-parents or more than one special person in their life to celebrate these people.

Aspect	Details	How to implement
<p>Age</p>	<p>Some children are cared for by older parents or their grandparents, others by young parents. Older people may have different values to younger generations.</p> <p>Some children will have contact with grandparents or older adults, while others won't. These interactions will build on children's experiences and knowledge of the world. Grandparents or older people may guide and care for children in different ways to parents and carers.</p> <p>Both young and older parents may be extremely capable or may need additional support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Treat all parents with respect. ▶ Involve grandparents and extended family as much as possible. ▶ Encourage older people to volunteer and visit the service so that children can have contact with people of all ages. ▶ Respect young parents based on their ability rather than their age. ▶ Provide all parents with support relative to their needs and abilities.
<p>Food preferences</p>	<p>A family's food culture is influenced by lifestyle, religion, customs and health beliefs.</p> <p>Being conscious of these differences will allow you to provide a menu and setting that is culturally appropriate for the children and people in your service.</p> <p>Some common preferences are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ vegetarian (no meat, poultry or fish) ▶ vegan (no animal products) ▶ kosher (conforming to Jewish dietary laws) ▶ halal (conforming to Islamic law). <p>Remember that each family is different; don't assume that because a family is from a particular racial or religious background, they will follow the same preferences.</p> <p>Diets that don't form part of a religious or cultural practice require the same consideration when planning children's meals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide a variety of foods representative of families and the local community. ▶ Talk about the foods, their flavours, where the recipes come from and why you chose them. ▶ Openly discuss reasons why people choose particular foods, and demonstrate respect for these choices. ▶ Include allergies and personal choices as reasons why people eat particular foods. ▶ Compare families and how their choices are similar and different. ▶ Explain that not all families of the same race or religion follow the same rules or choices.

Celebrations

There are many occasions for celebration that will reflect the cultural mixture of families who use your service and the communities they live in. Celebrations can mark:

- ▶ birthdays
- ▶ name days
- ▶ festivals
- ▶ achievements or milestones
- ▶ community events
- ▶ the beginning and end of a school term or holiday
- ▶ cultural or religious events
- ▶ graduation from the service.

Educators can incorporate various types of celebrations into routines. For example, when a child has a birthday everyone might sing 'Happy birthday'; during Diwali children could make lamps and eat a special meal; and when local festivals occur the children might celebrate their own adaptation of the festival. This provides children with a variety of social experiences and indicates that diversity is valued and respected. Doing this also widens your own view of the world.

Cultural and religious celebrations

Religious and cultural calendars alter each year. In Australia, some dates are fixed, such as Christmas Day on 25 December and New Year's Day on 1 January. (Note that some cultures and traditions celebrate Christmas and New Year's Day on different dates.)

However, there are also celebrations that are based on a lunar (moon) calendar, such as Easter, which occurs on the first Sunday after the Paschal full moon. In addition, there are many other events to celebrate or commemorate, such as Anzac Day and Book Week.

There are calendars available online that outline most national events, national weeks of celebration, and cultural and religious dates. These calendars can be found on the Australian Government website: <http://aspirelr.link/special-events-calendar>

Example

Cultural events calendar – January 2017

The following is an extract of different cultural events in January 2017.

Date	Event
January 1	New Year's Day Feast of St Basil – Orthodox Christian
January 6	Armenian Christmas Day
January 15	World Religion Day – Interfaith
January 20	Schützenfest, Adelaide – German cultural festival
January 25	Burns Night – Scottish
January 26	Republic Day – India
January 28	Chinese New Year Tet (Vietnamese Lunar New Year)
January 31	Parkash Utsav Dasveh Patshah –Sikh

Adapted from the calendar on the Australian Government Department of Social Services website (<https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/settlement-and-multicultural-affairs/programs-policy/a-multicultural-australia/government-building-social-cohesion/calendar-of-cultural-and-religious-dates>)

Community events

Community events vary in size and relevance. Socially, community events provide children with opportunities to see how they can make a difference to others and how the community values their contributions.

Community events may be based on state or national activities, or may be focused on local community interests. They may include occasions for:

- ▶ specific groups, such as a seniors day or toddler library session
- ▶ whole communities, such as the Royal Melbourne Show
- ▶ education, such as a Vietnamese cultural day
- ▶ charity, such as a fundraising event to build a playground in a park.

Your local council or shire website may provide information on upcoming community events.

Family events

Family celebrations are usually linked to parental religious beliefs and to the family's priorities and interests. The best way to find out about each family's celebrations is to ask them directly. You will find that most families celebrate similar events, such as birthdays, but may celebrate them differently.

Example

Birthday celebrations

Emily and Tim are turning one on the weekend. The educators have asked both families whether they are planning a celebration.

Emily's family plans to have a party and:

- ▶ invite all the children from Emily's room
- ▶ invite all their relatives and friends
- ▶ have a BBQ in their backyard
- ▶ hire a jumping castle and a clown
- ▶ have a large store-bought cake with sparklers and sing 'Happy birthday' in Dutch.

Tim's family plans to:

- ▶ invite a friend from playgroup over to play
- ▶ have some finger food for lunch
- ▶ have homemade fairy cakes with candles and sing 'Happy birthday'.

Both families are excited about the birthday celebrations and feel that they are providing an age-appropriate and culturally suitable celebration.

Practice task 5

1. Interview **three** families.

a. Find out the following things and report them in the following table or similar.

Question	Family 1	Family 2	Family 3
Who are the people that make up their family and what are their roles?			
What are two things that are really important to their family?			
What connections do they have with the local community?			

b. What similarities and differences did you find between the **three** families?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

c. Are these differences represented in your environment, practices or routines in some way? If so, how? If not, how could they be?

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Research **two** different local communities. You may access information online or contact them directly.

a. What similarities and differences did you find between the local communities?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

b. How might these differences be reflected in an organisation’s environment, practices and/or routines?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child encourages you to think about children’s and families’ rights and to represent these in the community. Which of the articles from this means the most to you and your work with families and the community, and why?

.....

.....

.....

3B Supporting children

As children start forming relationships with others, they develop attitudes about differences. Set ideas or opinions about particular groups of people can influence children's feelings about who they are, and how they feel about others. Children will accept differences depending on their:

- ▶ age and maturity level
- ▶ capabilities
- ▶ family, school and peer group attitudes and beliefs
- ▶ life experiences
- ▶ prior learning experiences.



When children develop a strong sense of identity (EYLF/MTOP Outcome 1) they are able to understand and accept their similarities and differences. This allows them to feel:

- ▶ safe, secure and supported
- ▶ resilient
- ▶ able to provide others with care, empathy and respect
- ▶ autonomous
- ▶ a sense of agency
- ▶ confident.

Diversity

Children need to see diversity in their daily lives to be able to value and accept it. There are a variety of differences that children may notice, including:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ▶ gender | ▶ interests and preferences |
| ▶ race, ethnicity and culture | ▶ appearance |
| ▶ age | ▶ beliefs and practices |
| ▶ socioeconomic status | ▶ temperament |
| ▶ social context and lifestyle | ▶ communication style |
| ▶ ability. | |

Individual families have different beliefs about what children need, and these link to the desire to give their child the best opportunities to grow and develop. Through communication you can:

- ▶ show children and families that you accept and respect them
- ▶ talk to children and families about their needs and interests
- ▶ encourage children and families to respect and value each other's differences
- ▶ encourage children and families to share the things they feel are important with others.

Attitudes

Some people have stereotyped or biased attitudes about particular groups. Often these are negative attitudes that may come from ignorance, fear or the inability to ask questions and receive appropriate answers. There are many times when children are faced with new and different situations; for example, people may look different, act differently or say things they don't understand. If children develop fears and concerns about these differences, they may in turn develop stereotyped and biased views of others.

To help children develop positive attitudes:

- ▶ Encourage children to ask questions about differences they notice.
- ▶ Help children to feel comfortable asking questions by being comfortable yourself.
- ▶ Try to answer questions honestly.
- ▶ Avoid feeling embarrassed about a certain topic.
- ▶ Make sure your answers match the children's level of understanding.
- ▶ Guide children to ask questions in positive ways.

You can encourage positive attitudes by accepting children's interest and discussions about differences, even if they use biased words. However, you should find a way to let them know that the word is inappropriate and can cause hurt.

You should always avoid deliberately criticising or embarrassing children. If you embarrass children they may become less willing to communicate. If you overreact to the use of certain words, this may encourage children to use these words to get your attention.

Things that are familiar feel comfortable to children. Strange or different things may make them feel uncomfortable or inquisitive. Therefore, the more difference you expose children to in your program, the more likely it is that they will react positively to difference in the future.

The following are examples of how you can respond to children's negative attitudes.

Example 1

Zack: 'Why has that man got such a funny ear?'

Educator: 'Well, I don't know, but I think he may have had an accident and hurt his ear. I think his ear is scarred.'

Example 2

Michaela: 'Why does Azara always wear that silly scarf?'

Educator: 'Azara's scarf is important to her. She would be upset to hear you call it silly. In her family all the girls and women wear a scarf. It is part of their religion.'

Example 3

Mary: 'Mike's disgusting. He's a dirty moron.'

Educator: 'Well, Mike has made a big mess, but I think he just enjoyed putting all those different things together.'

Example 4

Michaela: 'I don't want to hold Fred's hand, it's yucky.'

Educator: 'Fred, will you be my partner? Fred's hand looks different to yours, Michaela, but I don't think it's yucky.'

Example 5

John: 'Kwarme has dirty skin.'

Educator: 'Kwarme has dark brown skin because that is the colour he was born with. It isn't dirty. All his family have dark brown skin.'

Similarities and differences

Just as it is important to talk positively about differences, there are also many ways you can identify similarities between different children. This highlights that all people have both similarities and differences, and that all people should be treated the same.

Some ways to highlight similarities and differences:

- ▶ Play games where children need to match themselves with others; for example, 'All those wearing red, bob down.'
- ▶ Add dolls to the home corner that have a range of abilities, skin and hair colours.
- ▶ Display posters of a diverse range of people involved in everyday activities.

The following are some further ideas to help children learn about similarities and differences.

Activity ideas

- ▶ Make a book or a photo album with photos of all the children and educators in the group. Use this album to initiate discussions about how they look.
- ▶ When putting out crayons, paint and pencils, include a variety of skin-tone colours.
- ▶ Have mirrors in your room where children can view themselves and make comments.
- ▶ Get the children to bring in photos of their families. Use these to initiate discussion about where they get their features from and different family structures.
- ▶ Read books that deal with differences in a non-biased way.
- ▶ Make sure your resources reflect diversity.
- ▶ Have a multicultural menu and use different utensils at mealtimes.

Abilities and confidence

Children develop at their own pace in different areas. It is not unusual for a child to have strong skills in one area of development and weaker skills in another. This is also true for children with disabilities.

Children's development influences their interests; conversely, an interest can help development in a particular area.

Consider the following examples:

- ▶ Graeme has strong fine motor skills; his interests include woodworking and box construction.
- ▶ Justine has strong gross motor skills; her interests include dancing, obstacle courses and bike riding.
- ▶ Wesley is interested in art and craft activities; his developmental strengths are in the areas of fine motor skills and creativity.
- ▶ Nilma is interested in bugs; her developmental strengths are in the areas of cognitive development and language.

By identifying and responding to children's interests, you can tailor your program to suit. A responsive program engages children, and responds positively to varying abilities and confidence levels.

Paying attention to a child's dislikes is just as important as their likes. When a child obviously dislikes an activity or routine, they can become upset, fearful or disruptive. In many cases your response to a dislike can make a big difference to a child and even alter their abilities. It is very simple to find out what a child's likes and dislikes are. You can ask the family or the child, or you can simply observe the child in play.

Example

Children's dislikes

Quentin arrives each day crying and clinging to his dad. When his dad leaves, he clings to an educator, and throughout the morning his crying and clinging continues. Lisa, an educator, talks to Quentin's family and asks about his likes and dislikes. She finds out that Quentin doesn't like crowded areas and mostly plays outdoors at home.

The next day Lisa arranges for the group to be outside when Quentin arrives. He is almost unrecognisable as he comes through the back door, tentatively but freely. He says goodbye to his dad happily.

For the rest of the morning Quentin plays actively and happily outdoors. He even begins to associate with the other children.

Acknowledgment

Acknowledgment and encouragement show children that you value them and their achievements. They give them the motivation to do things for intrinsic reasons (to please themselves or because the task is worth doing).

Acknowledgment and encouragement focus on the child's efforts, even if the results aren't perfect. They are aimed at helping children feel good about themselves, which boosts their self-esteem. For example, after a child has helped pack away the toys, you may encourage them by saying, 'Matilda, you worked really hard to put all the toys away.'

There is a range of ways you can demonstrate acknowledgment and encouragement during or after an event, such as the following:

- ▶ Provide feedback using a comment about the effort that has been put in, the object the child has created or something they have done that particularly interests you.
- ▶ Ask questions that demonstrate your interest and appreciation, such as:
 - ‘How did you do that?’
 - ‘What materials did you use?’
 - ‘What do you think of your work?’
- ▶ Thank children for their contribution by saying please and thank you, and acknowledging the achievement.

Your knowledge of each child should enable you to recognise things that the child sees as important. Having a conversation about what they have done will also help you find out more about how they express themselves.

To ensure that you respond to successes, try to consider things from the child’s perspective. The most effective way to do this is by providing a child-focused program.

Example

Considering a child’s perspective

Christine, an educator, is chatting with Daniel about the picture he has drawn of a horse, when Wesley approaches them to see what they are looking at. Wesley is good at art and likes to copy pictures from books.

Wesley says, ‘Daniel, your horse’s legs look funny. Horses don’t have legs like that!’ Daniel looks upset. Christine says, ‘Well, Wesley, what I like about Daniel’s drawing is the way you can tell the horse is going really fast – his nostrils are flaring and his tail is blowing in the wind. You can tell that Daniel really thought hard about how to draw that.’

Daniel looks pleased. ‘Yes, I saw a horse galloping at my Grandpa’s in the country. He was going really, really fast!’

‘That’s cool!’ says Wesley. The two boys start talking about animals that run fast and Christine moves away.

When Christine made positive comments about Daniel’s drawing, his feelings of success were acknowledged and his self-esteem increased. She also modelled to Wesley that effort is important, not just results.

Comfort

Children may express feelings of hurt or distress by:

- ▶ crying
- ▶ losing their appetite
- ▶ clinging
- ▶ becoming violent
- ▶ feeling sick
- ▶ sucking their thumb
- ▶ displaying negative behaviour
- ▶ regressing in development.

If you notice these signs you can respond using the following strategies.

Comfort

The child’s level of comfort with you, their age and their own personal space requirements dictate how close you get. Comfort the child physically by sitting close, touching their arm, rubbing their back or giving a hug. Also consider the appropriateness of your actions in relation to the issue, to ensure your contact is not misunderstood.

Listen

Listen to what the child has to say. Avoid leading the child with specific questions. Respond with simple comments like ‘Oh, I understand’ or ‘Mmm!’
 Respond to feelings. If you recognise a specific feeling such as anger or frustration, say to the child, ‘You seem very angry’.
 Use your body to show you are listening by facing the child and looking at them.

Problem-solve

Problem-solve in simple ways, preferably by asking the child what they think they should do. This strategy depends on the age of the child, but brainstorming a resolution is a great way to resolve a negative feeling.

Provide comforters

Provide comforters to the child. They may have their own toy, blanket or dummy that they use when distressed, or you may offer them a special item to play with.

Redirect

Redirect the child to new activities. It is unwise to redirect a child when they are extremely upset, but in many cases a new, different or special activity will help the child happily move to a new feeling of comfort and enjoyment. Monitor the child after redirection and participate in the activity if you can to ensure the child is emotionally stable.

Allow expression

You need to ensure the environment and your relationship with the child allows the expression of feelings, as suppressed feelings can lead to greater issues.

Practice task 6

Access the EYLF/MTOP and the NQS at the ACECQA website: <http://aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework>

For each of the points below, identify at least one link in the EYLF/MTOP or NQS. The link might be an element (and its descriptor), a principle or a practice. You may need to reference the same principle, practice or element more than once.

1. Show an interest in all children

.....

.....

2. Show you understand all children and respect them

.....

.....

3. Comfort distressed and crying children

.....

.....

4. Respond to children in a way that encourages their confidence and abilities

.....

.....

5. Respond to the efforts of children who have difficulty participating so they build their confidence

.....

.....

6. Encourage children to respect similarities and differences between each other

.....

.....

Summary

- ▶ One way to accommodate a child's needs and interests is to explore their family life and their links to the community.
- ▶ There are many occasions for celebration within the cultural mix of families who are likely to use your service and the communities they live in.
- ▶ The relevance of different community events to your service may depend on the size of the event and the age group of the children you work with.
- ▶ Family celebrations are usually linked to parental religious beliefs, and to the family's priorities and interests.
- ▶ As children start forming relationships with others, they develop attitudes about differences.
- ▶ Children need to see diversity in their daily lives to begin to value and accept it.
- ▶ Some people have stereotyped or biased attitudes about particular groups; often these are negative attitudes that may have come from ignorance, fear or the inability to ask questions and receive appropriate answers.
- ▶ Just as it is important to talk positively about differences, there are also many ways you can identify similarities between different children.
- ▶ Acknowledgment and encouragement show children that you value them, their efforts and achievements.

Learning checkpoint 3

Supporting and respecting children

Access a community calendar from the local council.

Choose a community event taking place in the next month or two that is suited to family attendance or participation. Use this event as the basis for your assessment.

1. Create a poster, computer/video display, newsletter or something else agreed on by your trainer/assessor to display information about the event.

The display should tell parents:

- ▶ the name of the event
- ▶ what it is about
- ▶ when it occurs – time, date
- ▶ where it will be
- ▶ any other relevant information about booking requirements, contact numbers, preparation, etc.
- ▶ the article of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that applies to the inclusion of all cultures
- ▶ the NQS that links to building relationships and engaging with the community.

2. Develop a simple experience or activity that children could participate in for your chosen event.

- a. Explain what the experience or activity is.

.....

.....

- b. Explain how the experience or activity reflects the event.

.....

.....

- c. Explain what materials and resources would be required.

.....

.....

- d. Explain how an infant, toddler and preschool child could participate.

.....

.....

- e. Explain what purpose the experience would fulfil.

.....

.....

3. Demonstrate that you are prepared to implement the experience you have planned in question 2.

a. How would you show interest in what all the children were doing during the experience?

.....

.....

b. How would you show respect for all children choosing not to participate in the experience?

.....

.....

c. How would you respond positively to a child who was skilled and confident in participating?

.....

.....

d. How would you respond positively to a child who had difficulty and felt unsure while participating?

.....

.....

e. How would you highlight the similarities and differences of children as they participated?

.....

.....

f. How would you comfort a child who became distressed and cried while participating?

.....

.....

g. How would you acknowledge a child's efforts and achievements while participating?

.....

.....



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

- 4A Creating positive environments**

- 4B Guiding children's behaviour**

Maintaining the dignity and rights of children

Children's environments influence their behaviour. The environment gives messages and encourages certain actions according to the type of care provided and the educators' interactions. A consistently positive and adaptive environment meets children's needs, and offers frequent caring and supportive interactions.

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	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and 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 Creating positive environments

The environment plays an important role in how children behave. With careful planning and monitoring of the physical environment, you should be able to foresee negative influences and make modifications so that positive behaviours occur.



The NQS, learning frameworks and your organisational policies and procedures all guide you in how to create a suitable environment for children. The guidelines stipulate the need to support children to regulate their own behaviour. Children learn to do this more effectively if they know what is expected and appropriate in various areas and situations.

Clues as to what is appropriate in a certain area can be indicated by the materials and equipment set out, the pictures on display, or the customary routine or activities that take place there. As positive habits can take time to develop, it may be necessary to keep the same space arrangements until you feel children:

- ▶ are confident in the play space
- ▶ have a sense of belonging
- ▶ understand what is expected of them, and how they can contribute to the group and their own development.

Positive environments

The following table outlines some of the environmental conditions that may cause children to experience stress, frustration and conflict, and tips for making the environment more positive.

Condition	Suggested ideas to help
An environment that is too noisy and over-stimulating can encourage behaviour in young children that leads to conflict.	Adults should use quiet voices. Children may raise their voices to talk over loud adult voices and this can lead to a high noise level. Reduce background noise; for example, use music selectively. Children learn to tune out if there is constant background music, which may have a negative effect on their ability to listen carefully when required.
Activities that are too crowded encourage conflict.	Set up activities so the number of children is automatically limited. For example, if you have enough dough for two children to work at a table, have two lumps of dough and two chairs. If both chairs are occupied, other children can see that there is no space for them at that time. This avoids overcrowding.

Condition	Suggested ideas to help
<p>Insufficient equipment will make a child’s focus shift from the activity itself to making sure equipment isn’t taken by another child. The younger the child, the harder it is to share.</p>	<p>Ensure that each child has individual equipment when possible. For example, provide six buckets and six spades in a sandpit that comfortably accommodates six children.</p> <p>When it isn’t practical to have enough for each child, expect to have to help children resolve conflicts about sharing – it is an important part of their learning and needs gentle, understanding support.</p>
<p>Children who are tired have less ability to deal with other children and conflict may occur.</p> <p>Similarly, over-excited and boisterous behaviour is often an indication of tiredness in young children.</p>	<p>Provide rest periods in the daily routine to cater for these needs. Children’s needs vary, so you will need to observe them to provide adequate rest.</p> <p>Be aware that rest can be sleep, lying quietly with or without a book, or even just playing quietly by oneself. Listening to music or a story tape may also provide rest time.</p>
<p>If activities are above a child’s level of ability, they may become frustrated rather than challenged. This can lead to conflict and aggression between children.</p>	<p>Provide activities that are suited to each child’s level of development. They will then be fully involved and conflict is less likely to occur.</p> <p>If an activity requires the adult to be doing a lot of directing, it is probably beyond the children’s ability and therefore not developmentally appropriate.</p> <p>As well as structured activities such as puzzles, provide plenty of open-ended activities so children can work at their own pace and level. Activities like this might be a playdough table, water play, water and soap suds, clay, a dry sand tray, box work, painting, drawing, or playing in the home corner or block corner.</p>
<p>It is valuable for children to enjoy their own company and learn to work alone at times.</p> <p>Many children who are in full day care need extra time for working and playing uninterrupted by other children.</p>	<p>Make sure you offer a balance of solitary and group play. Children may become involved in conflict more easily if their need for alone time is not met.</p> <p>Provide areas for an experience where one child can choose to work alone; for example, LEGO or books on a cushion. Create these corners by using screens and furniture.</p> <p>Children can learn that they need to ask first before joining someone who is working alone. A negative response should be respected; this is part of learning to respect the rights of others.</p>

You can also use the following strategies to provide an environment that facilitates appropriate behaviour and a sense of agency:

- ▶ Accept that adults and children make mistakes – learning comes from error.
- ▶ Encourage children to be involved in developing the limits and guidelines for their group.
- ▶ Be consistent in your own and your colleagues’ application of the limits, guidelines and consequences.
- ▶ Be aware of the different expectations of behaviour that parents have for their children.
- ▶ Try not to force young children into sharing; sharing takes many years to learn.

Positive interactions

Strong relationships are built upon effective interactions. You may enjoy working with children; however, this in itself won't make you a good educator. You need to become a responsive communicator and use strategies to help you develop positive relationships with children and help them feel a sense of agency.

<p>Talk positively</p>	<p>Reflect on how you currently speak to and interact with children. Do you use positive instructions?</p> <p>Use positive language, as most children try hard to do what you want them to. When you say not to do something, a child will listen and know what not to do, but they may not understand what it is that you would like them to do instead. You should state exactly what you expect from children, rather than what is not allowed; for example, say 'Walk' instead of 'Don't run', or 'Feet on the floor' rather than 'Get your feet off the table'.</p> <p>Positive language lets the child know exactly what it is you want them to do and creates a more pleasant atmosphere.</p>
<p>Send clear messages</p>	<p>Use language that is appropriate for a child's age, stage of development and culture to ensure that you communicate positively and clearly. One way to help you communicate effectively with children is to say what you actually mean clearly and concisely. For example, if you want to implement a group time, rather than saying, 'Stop running, you have to come and sit on the mat now', say, 'Let's all sit down for a puppet show'. This communicates your message clearly and positively to the children.</p> <p>Your use of gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice will help. These aspects can be cultural, so you may need to think about the way you use them; however, simple messages that are conveyed positively usually work well.</p>
<p>State the expected behaviour</p>	<p>If a child displays an acceptable behaviour, encourage them; for example, 'Thank you, Anna, for picking up the blocks off the floor. If we leave them there someone may fall over'.</p> <p>If a child displays an undesirable behaviour, take them aside and explain why it is unacceptable; for example, 'Anna, you left the blocks on the floor, someone may fall over. Please put them away if you have finished playing'.</p>
<p>Listen to and accept children's feelings</p>	<p>To really listen to what children have to say, you should get down to their eye level and use body language to show that you are concentrating. You must also show that you respect what they have to say and think it is important.</p> <p>To do this, you can mirror what the child says in conversation back to them. For example, if a child says they don't want to go outside as they are cold, your response may be to use appropriate body language and say, 'If you feel cold today, maybe you can put on your coat'. This shows you are listening and that you understand what they are saying.</p>
<p>Give children time</p>	<p>Take any opportunity you can to sit and communicate with children. Do this informally and regularly. Positive communication with children takes time and practice. Stay consistent in your approach so that children can learn positive communication from you. This approach will also help you build positive relationships with children.</p>

Communicating appropriately

When speaking to children, remember to control your tone of voice and make sure it is compatible with what you are saying. For example, if you are explaining appropriate behaviour to a child who has just done something dangerous but amusing, you must explain the required behaviour with a straight face, or they will not take your words seriously. Instead of yelling across the room, move to speak to the child, as this will ensure the child won't feel humiliated in front of the group and may result in a more positive interaction.

Be aware that gestures and nonverbal communication can mean different things to different cultures. For example, in Japan, the hand gesture used in Australia to mean 'go away' means 'come here' and it is considered rude for younger people to look older people directly in the eye.

The following table gives some examples of how to match your verbal, nonverbal, facial and vocal messages.

Verbal message	Gesture	Facial expression	Tone of voice
'Let's all sit down for a puppet show.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Wave with your hand to indicate that the children should come over. 	Smile	Welcoming, happy
'It's dangerous to run with scissors.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Hold the child by the hand gently to gain their attention. ▶ Kneel at their level. ▶ Look into their eyes. 	Frown	Serious
'I will put the hammer away. It needs to be used safely.'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Kneel at the child's level. ▶ Look into their eyes. 	Frown	Serious

Redirection

Redirection is a method you can use with all children. It means responding to a child's current behaviour and redirecting them to more appropriate actions or interests.

Effective redirection can help children learn to develop self-control and self-direction. They can learn to recognise the reasons for their behaviour and build a range of alternative actions to use next time. The child may also learn to control their feelings to some extent.

The following table outlines some common forms of redirection.

Form of redirection	Description	Example
Distraction	<p>This type of redirection involves moving a child's feelings or thoughts from something distressing or frustrating to something positive. You can identify a child's interests and engage them in a different activity. This strategy should never replace the need for acknowledging feelings; rather, it is useful when children need to break away from the situation they are in and move on.</p>	<p>Fiona's mum has just left and she is crying and upset. An educator is giving her a hug and talking softly to her, saying, 'Fiona, I can see you are upset that Mum has left; she'll be back after lunch'.</p> <p>After a short while, the educator comments that the pet mice are spinning on their wheel, and asks if Fiona would like come over and watch them. They move over to the mice and Fiona begins laughing and then moves off to play with the other children.</p>
Preventing harm	<p>Redirection is often useful to prevent harm when drawn-out explanations are not appropriate. When redirecting, the following steps are often successful:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Briefly verbally acknowledge the child's feelings or purpose; for example, 'You seem angry.' 2. Redirect the child to an activity with a similar outlet for their feelings or purpose; for example, 'Let's hit with the hammer.' 3. Help the child move to the new location. <p>Once you become familiar with individual children, you will be able to identify when they are heading for a situation that may lead to concerning behaviour. This is called 'recognising the antecedent situation'. Redirection is useful when you can predict this situation, as intervening prior to an incident and redirecting the child to another activity removes potential harm.</p>	<p>James (two years) is climbing on the chairs. Ruth, his educator, says, 'Don't climb on the chairs, James'. James looks at Ruth and smiles. He stands up on top of the chair and starts to stamp his feet. Ruth gets very annoyed and says angrily, 'I told you not to climb on the chairs. It's too dangerous.' James continues to stand on the chair and smiles at Ruth.</p> <p>Ruth takes a deep breath and decides to use positive statements and redirection. She switches to a pleasant but firm tone of voice and says, 'Come down on the floor, James.' As he starts to climb down, she takes his hand gently and says in a happy voice, 'Let's go climb on the climbing frame!'</p> <p>The steps Ruth took are applicable for older children as well. Even though they can understand an instruction not to do something, they may stop listening to adults who always give them orders.</p>

Practice task 7

Jarred and David, both aged three, are arguing over who should have the first turn on a tricycle. Jarred says that he is bigger than David, so he should go first. David says that he should go first because he can ride it better than Jarred.

Geoff, their educator, has only put out one tricycle as he would like the children to learn to solve problems and communicate with each other.

Answer the following questions about this scenario.

1. Do you think that Geoff made a good plan for the children? Is it appropriate for their age and stage of development? Explain why or why not.

.....

.....

.....

2. If you approached the children, what might you do to resolve the conflict? Write down how you would alter the resources, what you would say to redirect the children, and how you would use gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice.

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. If Jarred bites David as an expression of his anger and frustration, what strategies would you use to remain gentle, calm and reassuring?

.....

.....

.....

4. What suggestion would you give to Jarred that he could use to express his anger and frustration in another way that is more appropriate? Your suggestion should help him regulate his behaviour and help him build his self-esteem.

.....

.....

.....

4B Guiding children's behaviour

Children may display concerning behaviour for many reasons. To guide this behaviour you must take the time to identify the cause, then work to resolve it.

When a child displays concerning behaviour, you need to consider whether the child may be:

- ▶ attention-seeking
- ▶ confused
- ▶ unclear about the limits
- ▶ lacking self-esteem
- ▶ reacting to a family crisis, stress or problems
- ▶ acting normally; the behaviour may be part of the child's temperament
- ▶ tired
- ▶ hungry
- ▶ bored
- ▶ frustrated
- ▶ upset
- ▶ sick or in pain.



You can guide this behaviour by responding to the needs of the child or the cause of their behaviour; for example, you could provide rest, food or attention. You can also apply particular strategies that assist in guiding children toward more positive actions. In this guiding role, you can help the child understand their behaviour and make more appropriate choices for the future.

Behaviour that causes extreme or continued concern must be reported as required by your organisational policies and procedures. As with all documentation you complete, you must ensure that you record accurate information and advise the correct people, such as your supervisor or manager.

Choices

Making simple choices is an important first step in learning about the decision-making process. Children should be given plenty of opportunities to practise this skill as part of their development of agency. When a child is involved in making a choice, they gain a feeling of ownership and are more likely to follow through with their actions.

Children of all ages are able to make simple choices such as what they want to play with, eat and wear. Be aware that young children (especially toddlers) are unable to make big decisions.

You need to know which choices are appropriate to give a child, be able to respect the decision the child makes and follow through with their choice. You should always offer choices that are realistic and can be provided. Listen to the words you use, and use questions when there are choices and statements when there are no choices.

Just as children make choices based on what you suggest to them, they also make choices on how to react in difficult situations or when things are not going the way they would prefer. In these situations the child may be emotionally driven and not able to clearly see what the best choices are. Your communication can support the child to see what their options are and give them strategies to work with. Some things you can teach children that will help in these situations are limits and consequences.

Example**Presenting choices**

When Uma is working with a child she says, 'You can choose your drink today. What drink would you like?' The child chooses lemonade, but Uma is unable to provide this. Uma should have offered a choice of water or milk.

When Matt is serving drinks to the toddlers he asks, 'Do you want water or milk, Jenny?' Jenny chooses milk.

Limits

Limits and guidelines for behaviour let everyone know exactly what is expected of them. These limits and guidelines describe acceptable behaviour. They must be clearly communicated to:

- ▶ children, especially new children
- ▶ parents
- ▶ potential users of the service
- ▶ regular staff
- ▶ relief staff.

Limits and guidelines vary from one organisation to another, so it is important that you find out what limits and guidelines apply as soon as you begin working in a new role. You will be expected to follow these guidelines consistently. If you do not understand the limits and guidelines, talk to your workplace supervisor for clarification.

Limits must be written positively to be effective; for example:

- ▶ Stay inside the fenced area.
- ▶ Sit at the table to eat and drink.
- ▶ Be gentle with each other.
- ▶ Walk when you are inside.

Notice how each limit tells the child what must be done, rather than what cannot be done. This makes your expectations clear to children and others.

The best way to ensure that children understand and respect limits and guidelines is to have them work with you to develop them. When the children have identified issues and behaviours of concern, thought about the outcomes and created a positive expectation, they will be able to support each other to uphold the limits and guidelines that they have created.

It is common for children to test limits and guidelines, particularly with new people. For example, children may pretend that they don't know what the rules are. This is usually just a way of getting to know you, how you will care for them, and how you interact and solve problems. Children like to feel that the adults caring for them know what they are doing, so be confident and assert yourself as a responsible adult who enforces the guidelines consistently and appropriately. When you do maintain limits, children will feel safe, which allows them to develop a sense of agency.

There may be times when children won't respond to your communication efforts. If this is the case and you've already given them choices, you now need to give instructions for what you want them to do.

Natural consequences

Consequences show children the possible and logical results of their behaviour. Natural consequences link with the situation and will occur if you do nothing to intervene. Children learn naturally from their actions if you allow this, but they often need you to explain what has happened to help them understand events.

Natural consequences are not punishments, but they are often unsafe or inappropriate. Some natural consequences have outcomes that are risky and may result in physical or emotional harm.

Some natural consequences children may experience include:

- ▶ If they hurt another child, the child will no longer want to play with them.
- ▶ If they throw a ball on the roof, they will have no ball to play with.
- ▶ If they are wasteful with resources, they will run out.
- ▶ If they are rough with equipment, it will break.
- ▶ If the child is left to throw sand, they may hurt other children
- ▶ If the child continues to be rough with other children, there will be injuries and complaints.
- ▶ If the child doesn't wear a hat outside, they will get sunburnt.

You can see from these natural consequences that you may need to speak with the child involved and explain; for example, 'Ben, now the ball is on the roof there are no balls to play with. Josie does not come to get the balls off the roof until Friday, so you will have to wait until then.' This cements the idea for the child and helps them see the full picture.

Logical consequences

Logical consequences are an alternative to inappropriate natural consequences. A logical consequence links with the situation clearly; for example:

- ▶ if you throw sand, you need to leave the sandpit
- ▶ if you hurt other children, you need to work on your own
- ▶ if you take your hat off, you need to go inside.

Logical consequences show children the possible and logical result of their concerning behaviour, but they need to be explained and developed clearly with the children when you set limits.

Guidelines for explaining consequences:

- ▶ Clarify the behaviour and the consequence. For example, 'John, you are throwing sand. It will go in someone's eyes. If you keep throwing sand you will have to move to another activity.'
- ▶ Allow the child to choose their behaviour. This increases their sense of agency.
- ▶ If the child plays safely, acknowledge this. For example, 'John, you are building a great sandcastle. Well done keeping the sand low.'
- ▶ If the child chooses to play unsafely, follow through with your consequence. For example, 'John, you are throwing sand again. It is time to come out of the sandpit.'

► Provide a choice of activities for the child to move to. For example, 'John, would you like to play with the basketball or come over to the beanbag game?'

► If needed, support the child's move. For example, 'Come on, John, let's go to the beanbag game. I think we can have fun there.'

Guidelines should be explained to children so they are aware of what you are trying to achieve. They should also be included in determining appropriate consequences for concerning behaviour where possible. Sometimes being involved in planning consequences and being made aware of your interest in their behaviour is enough to bring about a marked improvement in a child's behaviour.

Practice task 8

Kyall, the educator, is taking the preschool children outside on a hot summer day. He says, 'Would you like to put your hats on now?' Wyatt says, 'No thanks!'

Answer the following questions based on this scenario.

1. Why do you think Wyatt said 'no' to Kyall?

.....
.....

2. What could Kyall say to Wyatt to make sure he puts his hat on when he is outside?

.....
.....

3. What might Kyall say to the other children to acknowledge their positive choice to put their hats on?

.....
.....

4. What **two** choices could Kyall offer Wyatt so that he can make his own decision about his play?

.....
.....

5. What natural consequence might occur if Kyall allows the children outdoors without hats?

.....
.....

6. What do organisational policies and procedures say about limits and consequences? Do they mention involving children in their development?

.....

.....

.....

7. Would you class Wyatt's behaviour as concerning? Why or why not?

.....

.....

8. What would you do next to guide Wyatt's behaviour?

.....

.....

Summary

- ▶ The environment plays an important part in how children behave.
- ▶ Encourage children to be involved in developing the limits and guidelines for their group.
- ▶ Strong relationships are built upon effective interactions.
- ▶ State exactly what you expect from children.
- ▶ Use language that is appropriate for a child's age, stage of development and culture to ensure that you communicate positively and clearly.
- ▶ If a child displays an acceptable behaviour, encourage them.
- ▶ Children may display concerning behaviour for many reasons.
- ▶ Making simple choices is an important first step in learning about the decision-making process, and children should be given plenty of opportunities to practise this skill.
- ▶ Limits and guidelines for behaviour let everyone know exactly what is expected of them.
- ▶ Consequences show children the possible results of their behaviour.

Learning checkpoint 4

Maintaining the dignity and rights of children

1. Describe at least **two** features of a play space that could minimise stress or frustration for children. Explain your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Conflict often occurs between children during play. Write down **four** environmental conditions that may contribute to conflict between children. For each of the conditions you identified, provide one example of what you could do to reduce the risk of conflict occurring.

Environmental condition	Strategy to reduce conflict

- a. What would you say and do to acknowledge Reese’s positive behaviour choice? Describe the language, gestures, facial expressions or tones of voice you would use.

.....

.....

.....

.....

- b. What would you say and do if Destiny threw the paint brush across the room, fell down screaming and tried to kick the easel over? Describe the language, gestures, facial expressions and tone of voice you would use.

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 6. Access a copy of an organisational policy regarding the limits and consequences of behaviour. Speak to an educator and record how the children were involved in developing appropriate consequences for concerning behaviour and how they will be involved in updating or reviewing them. Do you believe this is adequate? Explain your answer.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....