

CHCECE048

**Plan and implement children's
education and care curriculum**

Learner Guide



**Updated to include
National Quality
Framework changes**

Aspire
Learning Resources

CHCECE048

Plan and implement children's education and care curriculum

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1



CHCECE048 Plan and implement children's education and care curriculum, Release 1

© 2021 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
© 2021 Aspire Training & Consulting
© Aspire Training and Consulting Limited
Level 4, 247-251 Flinders Lane
Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia
Phone: (03) 9820 1300

First published July 2021
Second edition published October 2023

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

e-ISBN 978-1-76075-456-3 (PDF version)
ISBN 978-1-76075-455-6

Aspire Training & Consulting apologises for any copyright infringement that may have occurred in this Learner Guide and invites copyright owners to contact us so violations may be rectified. Every effort has been made to ensure that information within the text is accurate. Note that the writer 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 in examples are fictitious and have been devised for learning purposes only. Any similarity to actual people or organisations is unintentional. All websites within the text were accessed and deemed appropriate at time of publication. For updates to previously published errors, refer to our website.

Copyright Warning

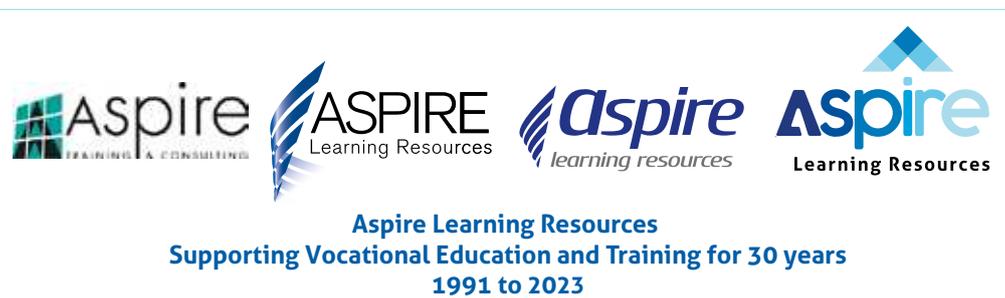
The copyright in this product is owned by One World for Children (ACN 076 297 400).

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.



Contents

Before you begin	vii
Topic 1 Curriculum guidelines	1
1A National Quality Standard (NQS)	2
Educational program and practice	4
Children's health and safety	5
Physical environment	5
Relationships with children	6
Collaborative relationships with families	6
Including communities	8
Confidentiality and privacy	9
Seeking permission	10
Practice Task 1	11
1B Philosophy	13
Purpose of a philosophy	13
Development of a service philosophy	15
Curriculum theory	15
Emergent curriculum	16
Reggio Emilia approach	17
Montessori curriculum	18
Te Whāriki curriculum	19
Steiner curriculum	20
Abecedarian approach	21
Practice Task 2	22
1C Approved learning frameworks	23
Belonging, being and becoming	23
Principles	23
Practices	25
Linking experience to outcomes	26
Learning dispositions	26
Learning outcomes	26
Practice Task 3	29
Summary	29
Learning Checkpoint 1: Curriculum guidelines	30

Topic 2 Observing and assessing information for curriculum design	33
2A Collecting information about children	34
Collecting records	34
Observational guidelines	35
Observation methods	35
Practice Task 4	37
2B Consulting, collaborating and communicating with others	38
Child- and family-centred approach	38
Perspective of others	39
Collaborating with children	40
Collaborating with families	40
Consistency of communication	41
Collaborating with colleagues	42
Practice Task 5	43
2C Assessing to inform curriculum design	45
Identifying relevant information	45
Using knowledge to inform practice	46
Aspects of the child	47
Linking observations to evidence	48
Practice Task 6	49
Summary	50
Learning Checkpoint 2: Observing and assessing information for curriculum design	51
Topic 3 Designing curriculum	55
3A Documenting curriculum	56
Curriculum priorities and opportunities	56
Templates or wall plans	56
Contemporary methods of curriculum documentation	57
Planning resources	58
Practice Task 7	59
3B Designing spaces	60
Safe, stimulating environments	60
Indoor environments	63
Outdoor environments	64
Natural environment	65
Documenting spaces	66
Practice Task 8	66

3C Designing routines, timetables and transitions	68
Child-centred routines	68
Transitions	69
Documenting routines, timetables and transitions	70
Practice Task 9	71
3D Designing play experiences	72
Planned and unplanned curriculum	72
Child-initiated learning	73
Educator-led learning	74
Educator roles in play	74
Changing roles during play	75
Intentional teaching	77
Sustained shared thinking	77
Collaborative learning	77
Providing choice	78
Suitable topics and projects	78
Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture	79
Developing an Acknowledgement of Country	80
Learning spaces	80
Books and stories	81
Art and craft	82
Community visitors	82
Incorporating song and dance	82
Documenting experiences	83
Practice Task 10	86
3E Modifying curriculum	87
Reasons for modifying experiences	87
Responsive modification	88
Guiding outcomes	90
Documenting modifications	92
Practice Task 11	93
Summary	94
Learning Checkpoint 3: Designing curriculum	95
Topic 4 Acting to implement the curriculum	99
4A Setting up the physical environment	100
Ensuring an appropriate environment	100
Aesthetics	101
Materials and equipment	102

Safety	102
Time	102
People	103
Shared responsibility	103
Families and community	104
Practice Task 12	105
4B Modelling and promoting learning	106
Modelling learning dispositions	107
Co-constructing meaning	108
Sustained interactions	108
Critical periods and scaffolding	109
Spontaneous modifications	111
Practice Task 13	112
Summary	113
Learning Checkpoint 4: Acting to implement the curriculum	114
Topic 5 Reflecting on the curriculum	117
5A Evaluating through reflection	118
Continuous refinement	118
In-depth reflection	118
Reflecting on spaces	119
Reflecting on routines, timetables and transitions	119
Reflecting on experiences	120
Reflecting on collaborative learning and sustained shared thinking	120
Reflecting on child-initiated learning	121
Reflecting on responsiveness	121
Reflecting on feedback	122
Reflecting on cultural responsiveness	122
Practice Task 14	123
5B Critical reflection on the current curriculum	124
Purpose of reflection	124
Methods of reflection	125
Documenting critical reflection	126
Reflecting with others	127
Documenting outcomes	127
SWOT analysis	128
Quality improvement plan	129
Practice Task 15	131
Summary	132
Learning Checkpoint 5: Reflecting on curriculum	133

Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE048 Plan and implement children's education and care curriculum*, Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

How to work through this Learner Guide

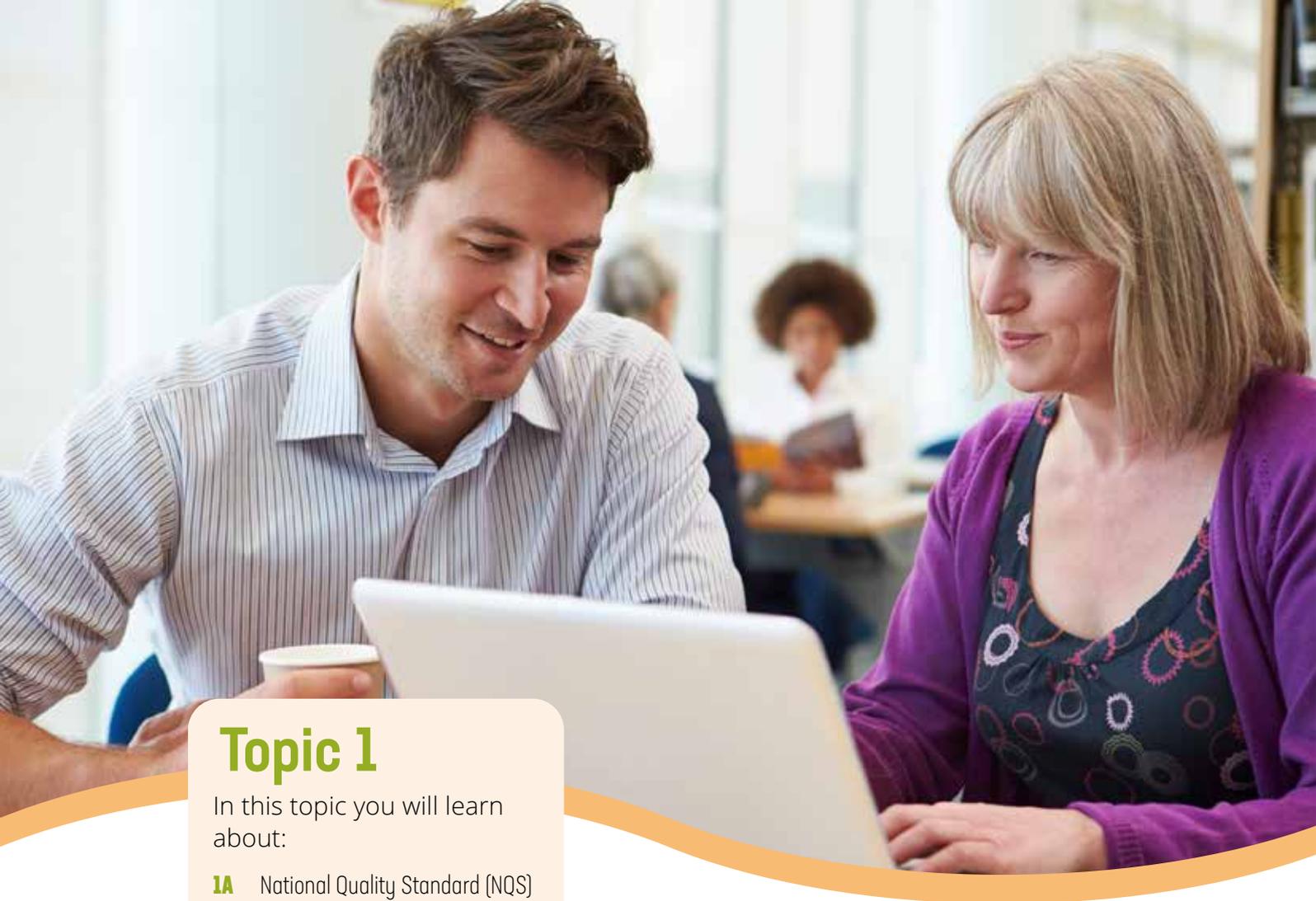
This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

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 action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
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 activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
T1-T5	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
T3, T4	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
T3, T4	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
T3, T4	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
T2-T5	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
T2, T5	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
T1	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
T1-T5	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T1-T5	Partnerships
T1-T5	Respect for diversity
T1-T5	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
T1-T5	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
T1-T5	Sustainability
T1-T5	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
T1-T5	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
T1-T5	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
T1-T5	Responsiveness to children
T1-T5	Play-based learning and intentionality
T1-T5	Learning environments
T1-T5	Cultural responsiveness
T1-T5	Continuity of learning and transitions
T1-T5	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	Learning Outcomes
T1-T5	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
T1-T5	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
T1-T5	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
T1-T5	4. Children are confident and involved learners
T1-T5	5. Children are effective communicators



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A** National Quality Standard (NQS)
- 1B** Philosophy
- 1C** Approved learning frameworks

Curriculum guidelines

A range of guidelines contribute to a service's education program and practice, as outlined in their policies and procedures.

A curriculum and environment should be designed to foster children's learning and development in accordance with:

- National Quality Standard (NQS), available at: aspirelr.link/acecqa-national-quality-standard
- Approved learning framework: *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) available at: aspirelr.link/approved-learning-frameworks
- service standards, policies, procedures and philosophies.

1A National Quality Standard (NQS)

The aim of all elements of the NQS is to create child-focused curriculum that meets children's learning and development needs.

The NQS and related regulations and laws guide educators and provide a basis for practice and policy.

The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations identify the following as priorities.

Regulation	Concept	Summary
Regulation 73 (based on Section 168 of the Law)	Educational program	An educational program is to contribute to the outcomes for each child, as identified in the approved learning frameworks.
Regulation 74	Documenting of child assessments or evaluations for delivery of educational program	<p>For a preschool child, documentation of an educational program must consist of assessment of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences, participation and progress against the outcomes of the approved learning framework.</p> <p>For a child over preschool age documentation of an educational program must consist of evaluations of the child's wellbeing, development and learning.</p> <p>Documentation must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ be prepared in a way that educators and parents understand ➤ consider the period of time and how documentation might be used by educators.
Regulation 75	Information about educational program to be kept available	Information about the educational program must be displayed at the service or in a place accessible to parents.

Regulation	Concept	Summary
Regulation 76	Information about educational program given to parents	<p>Parents must be provided with the following if requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ information about the educational program; in particular, details that relate to their child ➤ information about the child's participation in the program ➤ copy of any documents about the child.
Regulation 155	Interactions with children	<p>Educators must ensure that the service provides education and care to children in a way that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions ➤ allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem ➤ maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child ➤ gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour ➤ has regard for the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service.
Regulation 156	Relationships in groups	<p>Educators must take reasonable steps to ensure that the service provides children with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members and volunteers at the service.</p> <p>This should take into account the size and the composition of the groups in which children are being educated and cared for by the service.</p>

Educational program and practice

Quality area 1 of the NQS is focused on educational program and practice.

It is divided into standards and elements that guide educator practice as follows.

Standard	Element	Descriptor
Standard 1.1: Program – The educational program enhances each child's learning and development	Element 1.1.1 – Approved learning framework	Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.
	Element 1.1.2 – Child-centred	Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.
	Element 1.1.3 – Program learning opportunities	All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.
Standard 1.2: Practice – Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development	Element 1.2.1 – Intentional teaching	Educators are deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.
	Element 1.2.2 – Responsive teaching and scaffolding	Educators respond to children's ideas and play, and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.
	Element 1.2.3 – Child-directed learning	Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.
Standard 1.3: Assessment and planning – Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child	Element 1.3.1 – Assessment and planning cycle	Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observing, assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating.
	Element 1.3.2 – Critical reflection	Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.
	Element 1.3.3 – Information for families	Families are informed about the program and their child's progress.

Children's health and safety

Quality area 2 of the NQS, Children's health and safety, supports educators to plan curriculum that takes safety and physical activity into consideration.

In particular, this area guides routines and timetables. The following are relevant elements.

Standard	Element	Descriptor
Standard 2.1: Health – Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted	Element 2.1.1 – Wellbeing and comfort	Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.
Standard 2.2: Safety – Each child is protected	Element 2.2.1 – Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Physical environment

Quality area 3 sets out expectations for the physical environment.

This includes both the design of spaces and how these are used. The following are relevant elements.

Standard	Element	Descriptor
Standard 3.1: Design – The design of the facilities is appropriate for the operation of a service	Element 3.1.1 – Fit for purpose	Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.
	Element 3.1.2 – Upkeep	Premises, furniture and equipment are safe, clean and well maintained.
Standard 3.2: Use – The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning	Element 3.2.1 – Inclusive environment	Outdoor and indoor spaces are organised and adapted to support every child's participation, and to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments.
	Element 3.2.2 – Resources to support play-based learning	Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.

Relationships with children

Quality area 5 of the NQS guides educators in their relationships with children.

It also sets expectations that children will be involved in planning and encouraged to share their views and interests in ways that are appreciated by educators. The following are the NQS elements connected to relationships with children.

Standard	Element	Descriptor
Standard 5.1: Relationships between educators and children – Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child	Element 5.1.1 – Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
	Element 5.1.2 – Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
Standard 5.2: Relationships between children – Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships	Element 5.2.1 – Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
	Element 5.2.2 – Self-regulation	Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

Collaborative relationships with families

A sharing culture will encourage families to contribute.

Families will usually want to access records such as timetables, plans of activities or experiences, and information about their child's learning and development. This is documented in a variety of ways.

The NQS sets out expectations that you will:

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

To strengthen these expectations, the NQS adds guidelines relating to Quality area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities, as follows.

Standard	Element	Descriptor
Standard 6.1: Supportive relationships with families – Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained, and families are supported in their parenting role	Element 6.1.1 – Engagement with the service	Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions
	Element 6.1.2 – Parents' views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
	Element 6.1.3 – Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
Standard 6.2: Collaborative partnerships – Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing	Element 6.2.1 – Transitions	Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities.
	Element 6.2.2 – Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

You can learn more about the NQS in the *Guide to the National Quality Framework*, found at: aspirelr.link/nqf-guide.

Example

Positive relationship with a parent

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



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

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

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

Including communities

Each NQS Element refers to meaningful engagement with the community.

This community may include:

- the community of the service
- the local geographical community of the child and/or service
- specific communities that the child or family are connected to.

Community engagement might occur through:

- research
- specific contact
- sharing of language
- accessing of support services and resources.

Particular links to community within the NQS are shown in the following.

Standard	Element	Descriptor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Standard 1.1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Element 1.1.1 – Approved learning framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Curriculum decisions contribute to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence and effectiveness.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Standard 6.1: Supportive relationships with families – Respectful relationships with families and communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Element 6.1.3 – Families are supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Current information is available to families about the service and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Standard 6.2: Collaborative partnerships – Collaborative partnerships enhance children's inclusion, learning and wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Element 6.2.3 – Community engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

Families do not live in isolation; they are part of a wider community. They are positively and negatively impacted by these communities and are influenced by the services, or lack of services, available.

Families who are part of local community activities and receive support through their community have a greater ability to manage challenges.

When educators connect with the communities familiar to children and families, they access information that helps them understand a child's knowledge, strengths ideas, culture, abilities, interests, learning and development. This supports the educators to create child centred education and care.

Example**Evidence of community involvement**

Ricardo, an educator, maintains contact with communities important to children and families. He also encourages families to become part of the service community.

Some examples of his practice include:

- arranging family support meetings and parenting topics that are common interests, often presented by community groups or services, such as paediatricians, parenting support services, fire services and dental technicians
- including social contact opportunities within the service such as working bees, family story sharing and celebration events
- gathering information from local services that may be useful to families such as housing co-ops, medical centres, disability supports and community houses
- supporting families to share their own community contacts such as ethnic support groups, sporting clubs and playgroups
- developing curriculum around community celebrations such as tree planting day, local festivals and child focussed events such as theatre productions and visits from artists.

Confidentiality and privacy

The Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) protects all personal information handled by businesses, including education and care services.

Individual states and territories may have specific privacy and confidentiality legislation; for example, the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (NSW) and the *Information Act 2002* (NT). Confidentiality and privacy will be represented in your position description and any duty of care statement.

Service policies are based on the National Quality Framework (NQF) as a whole. They use each component as well as any particular service beliefs and guidelines to set out expected practices. One of the policies that influence sharing of curriculum information is the confidentiality policy.

Your service may also have a security policy that covers systems used for:

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

These policies are based on Regulations 181–184 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, relating to records kept, and storage of records and other documents.

There should also be measures in place to reduce security risks, such as passwords for computer files, locks on filing cabinets and restricted access to certain areas. Be aware of these security precautions and follow your duty of care to maintain a safe and secure workplace. Never leave documentation where others can access it, such as on benchtops, in staffrooms or in your car. This protects the personal information you handle, such as enrolment forms, developmental information and day-to-day information shared at arrival and departure times.

Confidentiality and privacy requirements

- Obtain informed consent to observe children, and to collect and share information about children and their families. Informed consent means families know what you are collecting and why.

- Ensure that images of children are collected and shared with consent, and stored according to legislation and organisational policy.

- Respect the right of the family to privacy.

- Negotiate agreement with each family to decide whether:
 - portfolios of work or other general records relating to their child may be displayed
 - their child will be identified by first name, initials or another method of their choice
 - their child may be included in photographs and videos.

- Store documents relating to behaviour concerns, developmental monitoring or issues in the family separately to shared records.

- Follow procedures for using passwords or security locks to access confidential information.

- Ensure information is only shared with appropriate people.

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

Seeking permission

Prior to involving children in any service processes, including those related to gathering information about the child, you must gain permission from families or guardians.

This prerequisite will be identified in service policies, and is usually discussed with families as part of their enrolment and orientation. These permissions allow you to observe and/or photograph a child to record learning and development.

You may need to develop your own permission form for particular projects. Projects might include community activities, investigative projects where dangers may be involved, incursions, excursions and various other events.

A typical permission request covers:

- your position or title
 - what you want permission to do
 - how you will use the permission
 - where the permission information will be stored
 - how families will be involved in the project
 - whether the family allows you to include photographs of their child
 - whether the family agrees that you can share the information with others, including who these people may be
 - how you will maintain confidentiality (for example, by following service policies and procedures).
-



Practice Task 1

1. Draw a line to match each regulation from the Education and Care Services National Regulations to its description.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| * Regulation 73 | * Information about the educational program must be displayed at the service or in a place accessible to parents. |
| * Regulations 74 | * Confidential records and storage of records and other documents must be private and secure. |
| * Regulation 75 | * An educational program is to contribute to the outcomes for each child, as identified in the approved learning frameworks. |
| * Regulations 181–184 | * Documentation must be prepared in a way that educators and parents understand. |

2. Draw a line to match each element from the NQS to its descriptor.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| * Element 6.2.1 | * Resources, materials and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number, and enable every child to engage in play-based learning. |
| * Element 2.2.1 | * At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard. |
| * Element 3.2.2 | * All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning. |
| * Element 1.1.3 | * Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing information and clarifying responsibilities. |
| * Element 6.2.3 | * Each child's learning and development is evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle. |
| * Element 1.3.1 | * The service builds relationships and engages with its community |
| * Element 6.2.1 | * Each child's learning and development is evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle. |

3. Which of the following statements about the NQF and service policies are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- a. You must gain permission from parents or guardians to gather information about the child. * Yes * No
- b. You are able to take photos of any child within the service and display them because they have signed an enrolment form. * Yes * No
- c. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) makes all personal information about families confidential. * Yes * No
- d. All private information should be stored so it is easily accessible to anyone who may need to access it quickly in an emergency. * Yes * No
- e. Quality area 1 of the NQS focuses on educational program and practice, and guides educators to provide a child-centred program that meets each child's individual needs. * Yes * No
- f. Quality area 5 of the NQS focuses on relationships with children, and promotes the belief that educators must make choices for children based on their professional practice and the input from families. * Yes * No

1B Philosophy

The philosophy of your service is sets out priorities for designing and implementing a curriculum.

The way you put the philosophy into practice is called your pedagogy.

Element 7.1.1 if the NQS identifies that a statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

The NQS states that a service philosophy should embrace the following principles:

- The rights of the child are paramount.
- Children are successful, competent and capable learners.
- Equity, inclusion and diversity are upheld.
- Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued.
- The role of parents and families is respected and supported.
- There are high expectations for children, educators and service providers.



The NQS states that the rights of the child are paramount.

Purpose of a philosophy

A philosophy is a statement that reflects a belief system.

If you have viewed the philosophies of other services, you will know that they are all different, yet share common components. Some of the differences in philosophy will emerge through:

- culturally specific service beliefs
- values and beliefs about children, their development and learning
- values and beliefs about society and communities.

The goals of a service will also influence its philosophy, as services adjust their programs to embody their priorities. These may include:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ➤ creativity | ➤ psychomotor development |
| ➤ recreation | ➤ cultural identity and knowledge |
| ➤ holistic care and development | ➤ environmental understanding |
| ➤ personal attention and flexibility | ➤ confidence with technology |
| ➤ learning and education | ➤ multicultural understanding |
| ➤ social interaction and development | ➤ emotional wellbeing |
| ➤ language development | ➤ spiritual and moral development. |

Example Curriculum philosophy

The following shows an example philosophy, with an outline of how different standards and elements of the NQS are represented.

Philosophy

At Benito's Children's Centre the philosophy is designed to reflect the needs of children in accordance with the EYLF. Curriculum covers all learning outcomes: identity, community, wellbeing, learning and communication.

The EYLF describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming. We incorporate these three goals into our curriculum:

- Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- Being is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun.
- Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

Play is the learning process that enables children to learn through hands-on experiences, such as doing, experimenting, predicting, trial and error, and achieving. As the children play to learn, they bring their unique talents to the education process. An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child's learning and development.

All children have the right to participate in the program, including children of differing genders, abilities and cultures. Each child will have equal access to experiences and equipment.

A variety of multicultural, non-gender-biased, additional support needs and environmentally sensitive equipment is used. Books, music and posters allow children to see a well-balanced perspective of the world that subtly sends out messages of sustainability, peace and respect.

Children's health needs are supported and all transition times, including meal times, sleep times, toileting and nappy-changing times are used as learning experiences as well as relaxed social times for both the staff and children.

Family participation and involvement is an important aspect of the overall curriculum planning process. We attempt to maintain continuity between the home, the community and the service, giving children a sense of belonging. We also endeavour to involve families so a collaborative approach to the overall development of each child's experience can be achieved.

Element 7.1.1: A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

Element 4.2.2: Professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships.

Element 1.1.1: Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

Standard 3.2: The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence, and supports exploration and play-based learning.

Standard 2.1: Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.

Element 1.1.3: All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

Element 5.1.2: The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.

Element 6.1.2: The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

Development of a service philosophy

Many aspects of the philosophy can be identified by asking stakeholders what they would like the service environment to look, feel and act like.

Some specific things to think about when developing a philosophy include identifying any beliefs in regard to:

- children's learning and development
- how you view children
- areas you feel are a priority
- the role of children, families, educators and others in the service and the community
- how the community interacts with the service and how you interact with the community
- theories and approaches
- aesthetics
- social aspects, such as self-image, self-esteem, social interactions and relationships
- diversity, inclusion, anti-bias curriculum and cultural capital
- what you wish to avoid in the setting
- who influences the program
- how the work group will function.

Curriculum theory

The philosophy of your service will be informed by current learning theory.

Some contemporary concepts, including those influencing the national approved learning frameworks, encourage you to look beyond development and into the experiences of the child and their family through the following theories.

Socio-cultural theory	Children learn culturally relevant concepts and practices as they participate in everyday life. Children learn in individual ways due to their cultural and family experiences. The best way for children to learn is to be provided with learning opportunities that link with these experiences.
Experiential learning	Learning occurs best when concrete experiences are used and these experiences are reflected on and then extended.
Play-based curriculum	<p>Play comes to children naturally and is an enjoyable activity. Play is an excellent experience for learning. A play-based curriculum includes structured learning where children must complete specific activities for success, but this is a small part of the day.</p> <p>The process of an activity is most important with play-based curriculum. This process focuses on a child's ideas, intrinsic motivation and learning from experience.</p>

The following are a range of current theories that influence philosophy and therefore the curriculum. In some services one theory dominates, in others a range of these theories guide beliefs. When educators draw on a number of theories they are being eclectic in their approach. This means the service is gathering ideas from a diverse range of sources to determine the theories that will drive the curriculum.

Emergent curriculum

Emergent curriculum is about being responsive to children and providing relevant and engaging curriculum.

This creates a curriculum that evolves and develops with children, their community and environments.

<p>Core beliefs and responsibilities</p>	<p>Curriculum is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ play-based ➤ focused on children's interests, strengths, aspirations, families, social and physical environment, and values ➤ meaningful, relevant and engaging ➤ focused on progressing each child's learning and development toward learning framework outcomes ➤ child-initiated and educator-framed.
<p>Distinct curriculum features</p>	<p>You will notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ inquiry, investigation and projects ➤ scaffolding and intentional teaching ➤ new ideas being encouraged, built on and extended spontaneously and in planned ways ➤ children and adults being part of the planning and evaluation process ➤ spontaneous responses to learning and development ➤ educators recognising and reacting to spontaneous emerging interests and teachable moments ➤ plans naturally evolving rather than being organised in advance.

Reggio Emilia approach

A Reggio Emilia curriculum is child-centred and uses children's relationships to lead learning.

It is based on the principles of respect, responsibility and community.

<p>Core beliefs and responsibilities</p>	<p>Curriculum is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ play-based ➤ constructivist (learning is guided by the environment and community) ➤ not set – planned experiences are extended based on children's interest and feedback ➤ linked to emergent curriculum. <p>Educators believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ children express their ideas though 'a hundred languages', meaning they express themselves in many ways each day (for example, through painting, music, drama, etc.) ➤ they should aim to instil a love of learning ➤ they should treat children as capable and competent ➤ families and the community have responsibility for children ➤ families are partners and the child's first teachers (the environment is the third teacher).
<p>Distinct curriculum features</p>	<p>Children are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ guide or direct their own learning ➤ express themselves in many different ways ➤ find out things through listening, moving, touching and watching ➤ explore, question and interpret the world ➤ find out answers through research, inquiry and projects ➤ stay with the same educators throughout their attendance in a service so a consistent relationship is built. <p>The environment will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ attractive and stimulating materials ➤ nature-inspired spaces ➤ open-plan spaces free from clutter ➤ demonstration that individual artwork is appreciated ➤ evolving spaces that change as children explore their interests and projects ➤ authentic tools and materials – real hammers, cutlery, etc.

You can find out more about Reggio Emilia curriculum at: aspirelr.link/reggio-aust.

Montessori curriculum

A Montessori curriculum views a child as a unique individual who learns in different ways and at their own pace.

The following outlines the core beliefs and responsibilities, as well as distinct curriculum features.

<p>Core beliefs and responsibilities</p>	<p>Curriculum is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ child-initiated ➤ thoughtfully prepared ➤ planned based on each individual child ➤ focused on sensory exploration and scaffolding ➤ linked to emergent curriculum. <p>Educators believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ children are eager to learn and gain knowledge ➤ the development of the whole child should be encouraged, including their physical, social, emotional and cognitive areas ➤ children should first develop order, then coordination, concentration and independence ➤ they should model respect, kindness and peaceful conflict resolution ➤ the environment design, materials and routines help children to self-regulate their learning.
<p>Distinct curriculum features</p>	<p>Children are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ self-regulate by thinking about their learning ➤ be part of a family group with a variety of ages together ➤ mentor and help each other ➤ enjoy freedom within limits ➤ make decisions about their own learning ➤ look critically at their own work, and recognise, correct and learn from their mistakes. <p>The environment will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ self-correcting materials and equipment (for example, the child can see there is an issue due to a piece not fitting or a shape being left out) ➤ natural breakable materials, such as wood, ceramic, metal and glass ➤ many experiences that develop fine motor skills.

You can find out more about Montessori curriculum at: aspirelr.link/montessori-aust.

Te Whāriki curriculum

Te Whāriki curriculum was designed in New Zealand and includes a list of learning goals or skills that educators aim to teach children.

The Te Whāriki curriculum is informal. It is based on the following principles, strands and goals.

Principles:

- Whakamana – Empowerment
- Kotahitanga – Holistic development
- Whānau Tangata – Family and community
- Ngā Hononga – Relationships

Strand	Goal
Strand 1: Mana Atua – Wellbeing	Children experience an environment where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ their health is promoted ➤ their emotional wellbeing is nurtured ➤ they are kept safe from harm.
Strand 2: Mana Whenua – Belonging	Children and their families experience an environment where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ connecting links with the family and the wider world are affirmed and extended ➤ they know that they have a place ➤ they feel comfortable with the routines, customs and regular events ➤ they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
Strand 3: Mana Tangata – Contribution	Children experience an environment where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ there are equitable opportunities for learning, irrespective of gender, ability, age, ethnicity or background ➤ they are affirmed as individuals ➤ they are encouraged to learn with and alongside others.
Strand 4: Mana Reo – Communication	Children experience an environment where they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ develop non-verbal communication skills for a range of purposes ➤ develop verbal communication skills for a range of purposes ➤ experience the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures ➤ discover and develop different ways to be creative and expressive.
Strand 5: Mana Aotūroa – Exploration	Children experience an environment where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ their play is valued as meaningful learning ➤ the importance of spontaneous play is recognised ➤ they gain confidence in and control of their bodies ➤ they learn strategies for active exploration, thinking, and reasoning ➤ they develop working theories for making sense of the natural, social, physical and material worlds.

Te Whāriki and the Australian education and care services approved learning frameworks are very similar. They are based on the same theories and pedagogies. The learning frameworks have adapted the definition of curriculum from Te Whāriki that 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment are designed to foster children's learning and development.'

You can find more about Te Whāriki at: aspirelr.link/te-whariki.

You can find more information about the approved learning frameworks at: aspirelr.link/approved-learning-frameworks.

Steiner curriculum

Steiner curriculum follows a theory of child development that uses three learning strategies that cater for three stages of spiritual development.

Core beliefs and responsibilities, as well as distinct curriculum features are outlined in the following table.

<p>Core beliefs and responsibilities</p>	<p>Curriculum is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ regular and includes routines such as free play, artistic work, circle or group time and practical tasks ➤ inclusive of a variety of traditions and festivals brought from the community. <p>Educators believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ love, warmth and guidance are required for healthy development ➤ they should promote a sense of wonder and imagination ➤ they should use stories, songs, creative play, nature and activities to involve children in their world ➤ they should model and scaffold to support child-led learning ➤ children's physical, behavioural, emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual aspects can be stimulated to foster creative and inquisitive thought ➤ children should lead their learning ➤ children should feel that the world is a good place ➤ electronic media (such as television and computers) should be used minimally because it limits physical activity, may display inappropriate content and reduces imagination.
<p>Distinct curriculum features</p>	<p>Children are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ imitate practical activities ➤ learn by example ➤ be involved in imaginative and creative play ➤ cook, paint, garden, sew and use tools ➤ problem-solve. <p>The environment will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a homelike space with tools, toys and simple, natural materials ➤ natural materials that can be used imaginatively ➤ animals and gardens.

You can find out more about Steiner curriculum at: aspirelr.link/steiner-education-aust.

Abecedarian approach

The Abecedarian approach aims to support children's cognitive, social, emotional and communication skills, with the goal of creating school readiness.

This approach was developed following a research study at Monash University, which showed that educators can increase their ability to provide stable and stimulating interactions with children by adding rich adult-to-child activities.

The Abecedarian approach is outlined in the following table.

Core beliefs and responsibilities	<p>Curriculum is based on four key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ language priority ➤ learning games ➤ conversational reading ➤ enriched care-giving. <p>Educators believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ language is the number one priority ➤ at-risk children develop well if they are provided with safe, responsive, stimulating environments ➤ they should use words and language in fun ways throughout the day at each activity ➤ they should use learning games and experiences (100 games have been specifically developed for this approach) ➤ they should add educational content to repeated daily routines.
Distinct curriculum features	<p>Children are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ read books at an early age ➤ be engaged in individual and pair reading using back and forth communication ➤ talk, listen and learn language.

You can find out more about Abecedarian curriculum at: aspirelr.link/abecedarian-approach.



Practice Task 2

1. Draw a line to match each theory and curriculum approach with the description of the philosophy or beliefs.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| * Reggio Emilia | * Children are encouraged to self-regulate. They are part of a family group. |
| * Abecedarian | * Educators promote a sense of wonder and imagination. They use stories, songs, creative play, nature and activity to involve children in their world. |
| * Emergent curriculum | * Children express their ideas through 'a hundred languages', meaning that they express themselves in many ways each day. |
| * Montessori | * Based on the same theories and pedagogies as the Australian education and care services national learning frameworks. |
| * Te Whāriki | * Based on four key elements: language priority, learning games, conversational reading and enriched care-giving. |
| * Steiner | * Plans naturally evolve rather than being organised in advance. |

2. Which of the following concepts related to philosophy impact on curriculum design and adaptation? Select all that apply.

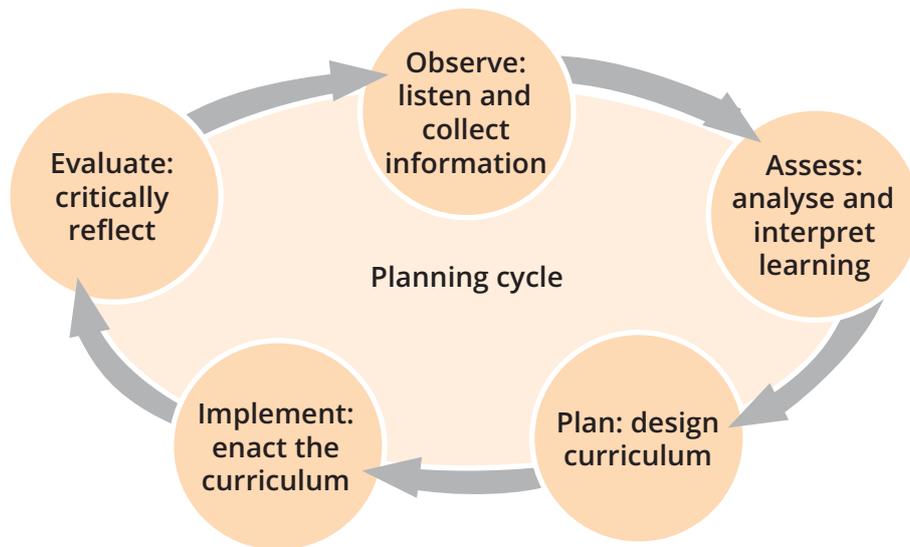
- Current and emerging beliefs, such as experiential learning
- Current and emerging theory, such as socio-cultural theory and play-based curriculum
- Educator rosters and schedules
- Amount of planning time made available for staff
- Specific theories and beliefs
- Eclectic range of theories

1C Approved learning frameworks

The EYLF provides motivation and guidance for collecting, recording and analysing information.

Become familiar with the planning cycle as outlined in: *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia*: aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf

The planning cycle is presented in a diagram similar to this.



A planning cycle is continuous. Each step is affected by your philosophy, beliefs and knowledge, and the observations you continue to make. It includes children, families and others as part of a collaborative effort.

Belonging, being and becoming

The EYLF is set around three goals: belonging, being and becoming.

These goals are a vision for children's learning, and should create the central base for decision-making about curriculum content and direction.

Belonging

Children knowing where they belong and who they belong with

Being

Children living in the moment and being valued for what they are currently doing and learning

Becoming

Children changing from who they are now to a new self that participates fully.

Principles

The principles of the approved learning frameworks are based on contemporary theories and research evidence.

They guide your pedagogy and are the foundations of best practice. The principles are set out in the following table.

Framework principle	How it is demonstrated in the learning environment	How to demonstrate it in your actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Welcoming atmosphere ➤ Familiar educators and experiences ➤ No major changes in the environment without the children being prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide safe and predictable learning experiences that show you welcome the child and family. ➤ Include children in your plans by linking their interests, needs, strengths, ideas and knowledge.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Families' input is valued and acted on ➤ Results of parent–educator and child–educator partnerships are displayed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Plan using information you collect and share with communities, families, children and other educators. This is your knowledge of the child. ➤ Include ideas and skills of families and children, and take their needs into account.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Respect for diversity ➤ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives ➤ Equity, inclusion and high expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cultural and lifestyle diversity is evident ➤ Children work at different levels ➤ Developmental stages, strengths and interests are understood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide children with opportunities that are challenging and interesting, while still giving them a variety of options. ➤ Treat them fairly and allow them to explore and try for themselves, but support them and encourage their attempts. ➤ Consider their stage of development. ➤ Include experiences that represent the perspectives of families, children, educators, the community and the world. ➤ Support children to understand that we are all different yet have similarities. ➤ Show children how to accept others and to learn about them in respectful ways. ➤ Show respect for the environment and allow children to explore and learn about Country.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Materials and resources are natural, recycled or reused. ➤ Environments are enjoyable places to be. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children and adults are supported to understand concepts of sustainability and implement these independently.

Framework principle	How it is demonstrated in the learning environment	How to demonstrate it in your actions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions about how the environment feels or looks are part of the sharing process. When an environment becomes challenging, you take action to restore balance and allow all to feel safe and welcome.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning Collaborative leadership and teamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment evolving rather than suddenly changing Educators take a thoughtful approach Educators work together to create curriculum and support each other to become all they can be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly think about how you are doing and what skills you could develop. Make changes when needed and set goals for yourself to increase your knowledge as well as developing further understanding of each child and their family. Educators sharing information and supporting each other.

Practices

Learning environments must demonstrate your pedagogy through the practices of the EYLF.

These practices also help to identify important features of the learning environment, as outlined below.

EYLF practice	Contribution to the learning environment
Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Needs, strengths and interests of children are catered for All facets of development and dispositions are included
Responsiveness to children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment responds to the children’s needs and directions
Play-based learning and intentionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play as a priority for learning Spontaneous and planned teaching
Learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spaces welcome and encourage learning
Cultural responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reflects diversity Supports individual identity
Continuity of learning and transitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment evolving rather than suddenly changing Familiar educators and experiences No major changes in the environment without the children being consulted or informed
Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent observation and assessment by educators to maintain a responsive environment that meets the needs of individual children and the group

Linking experience to outcomes

Ensure the experiences you plan are linked to the outcomes of the EYLF, as this will help you determine how you implement your pedagogy.

Your role as an educator is an active one; you facilitate learning and make judgments about the learning environment. The learning environment must be responsive to children, families and the community. This requires you to understand and apply theories of child development as well as frameworks, such as the EYLF and NQS.

Your role also requires you to observe, assess and plan for children's behaviour and development, integrating aspects of each child's physical, social, emotional and cognitive development into the curriculum.

Reflect on learning frameworks by evaluating:

- children's basic needs (goals of the frameworks)
- pedagogy (through principles and practices)
- learning and development (through learning outcomes)
- how to develop a balanced approach and feel competent in applying all components of the frameworks
- how each learning framework aspect can be improved.

Learning dispositions

Learning dispositions are represented in the approved learning frameworks.

In particular, learning dispositions are outlined in Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners, and sub-outcome: Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions, such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.

This learning outcome discusses how active involvement in learning builds children's understandings of concepts, and the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning. This helps you to see how important it is to model and demonstrate these dispositions yourself in order to encourage them in children.

Consider how you and other educators encourage positive learning dispositions. If this is done effectively, dispositions are promoted and modelled as part of your practice.

Consider each learning disposition and note when you are using each one. Think about how you can add these to your pedagogy to improve your delivery of curriculum.

Learning outcomes

The EYLF has been created to cover the many developmental aspects of the child as a whole.

They help you to connect what you notice about children’s learning to outcomes that clearly link to teaching. The outcomes of the learning frameworks provide meaningful goals that children progress toward. By identifying this progression through children’s achievements, you are assessing and evaluating the learning the child is demonstrating, as well as the skills they may need to further develop.

Each child will learn differently and demonstrate capabilities within the EYLF outcomes in different ways. By using your professional judgment, based on the principles and practices of the learning framework, you will ensure that all children are able to be involved in a range of valuable experiences that engage them in learning, allow them to belong and build their capacity to be the best they can be.

Each outcome of the EYLF has associated sub-outcomes, as outlined in the following table.

Outcome	Sub-outcomes
Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children feel safe, secure, and supported ➤ Children develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and agency ➤ Children develop knowledgeable, confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth ➤ Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect
Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens ➤ Children respond to diversity with respect ➤ Children become aware of fairness ➤ Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing ➤ Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing ➤ Children are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health and personal safety
Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions, such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity ➤ Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes, such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating ➤ Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another ➤ Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies, and natural and processed materials

Outcome	Sub-outcomes
Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes ➤ Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts ➤ Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media ➤ Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work ➤ Children use digital technologies and media to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

Example

Using the learning outcomes to evaluate teaching and learning

Morgan, three years, is playing in a water trough with three other children. They each have their hands and bare arms in the trough and are swishing them around happily. Tessie, an educator, is chatting to the children, and they are singing a song about fish swimming in the water. At the end of the song, Morgan says, 'Tessie, you have white skin a bit like me'.



In the water trough the four skin tones are obvious, and Morgan has noticed that the other children at the trough have darker skin than her. Tessie replies, 'Yes, I do. We all have skin that is a little bit different, don't we?' Morgan and the other children examine their skin colour with interest. The children place their arms in order from lightest to darkest skin tone. Morgan asks, 'Can we take a photo of our arms to put on the wall?'

Later that day, Tessie uses the EYLF to assess the teaching and learning that had occurred at the water trough (planned experience) and in the discussion (unplanned learning). Tessie decides that the following items relate to the unplanned teaching and learning that occurred about skin colour:

- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Sub-outcome: Children respond to diversity with respect

Tessie can see that the children are working toward understanding how others are similar and different. In the evidence guidance of Outcome 2, she finds the following points that show her she was on the right track. The children 'become aware of connections, similarities and differences between people' and 'notice and react in positive ways to similarities and differences among people'.

Tessie views the educator guidance and pinpoints some actions she can take to support further teaching and learning.

This information is all recorded in the template developed by the service. It includes a learning story that will be displayed for parents to read at pick-up time, and added to the wall display of planned activities.



Practice Task 3

1. Which of the following statements are correct about the approved learning frameworks? Select yes or no for each one.
- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. The planning cycle is continuous. It includes observation, assessment, planning, implementing and evaluating. The cycle meets the requirements of Quality area 1 of the NQS: Educational program and practice. | * Yes | * No |
| b. Learning framework outcomes influence the way you view children's learning and development. | * Yes | * No |
| c. The principles of the approved learning frameworks are based on contemporary theories and research evidence. Learning environments must demonstrate your pedagogy through the principles and practices of the EYLF. | * Yes | * No |
| d. All curriculum needs to be followed strictly and be carefully planned so it can be implemented effectively. | * Yes | * No |

Summary

- The aim of all National Quality Standard (NQS) elements and related laws and regulations is to create child-focused curriculum that meets the learning and development needs of children.
- Educators must gain family permission prior to involving children in any service processes, including those related to gathering information about the child.
- The philosophy of your service is pivotal in designing and implementing a curriculum. The way you put the philosophy into practice is called your pedagogy.
- Some contemporary concepts, including those influencing the national approved learning frameworks, encourage you to look beyond development and into the experiences of the child and their family through theories.
- Each step of the planning cycle is affected by your philosophy, beliefs and knowledge, and the observations you continue to make.

Learning Checkpoint 1

Curriculum guidelines

1. Draw a line to match each NQS quality area to the image that shows how it is demonstrated in the curriculum.

- * Element 2.2.1 – Supervision



- * Element 5.1.1 – Positive educator to child interactions



- * Element 3.1.2 – Upkeep



- * Element 5.2.1 – Collaborative learning



- * Element 1.3.2 – Critical reflection



- * Element 2.1.1 – Wellbeing and comfort



2. Draw a line to match each learning framework principle on the left to the actions of an educator on the right.

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Respect for diversity | * Open-ended experiences allow all children to participate to their level of development and encourage them to challenge themselves to an appropriate level. |
| * Equity, inclusion and high expectations | * All educators must continually seek ways to increase their professional knowledge and reflect on their thinking. |
| * Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships | * Sharing information with families creates a welcoming environment where collaboration can occur to achieve respect and the best possible outcome for the child's learning and development. |
| * Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning | * Gathering information about children's family and cultural heritage allows the educator to include aspects of this background in the curriculum. |
| * Partnerships | * Providing continuity of care allows children to feel safe and provides consistent emotional support. |

3. An educator asks a parent about the types of foods a baby is eating.

Which learning framework practice would this relate to?

- Holistic approaches
- Play-based learning and intentionality
- Continuity of learning and transitions
- Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
- Learning environments

4. An educator wants to extend on the concept of recycling. They set up an area that has bins with different coloured lids. They stick posters above them to show what sort of items should go in each one. They then put out some used boxes, bottles and wrappers, and helps the children to decide which bin to put each item into.

Which learning framework practice does this relate to?

- Cultural responsiveness
- Learning environments
- Responsiveness to children
- Play-based learning and intentionality
- Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing

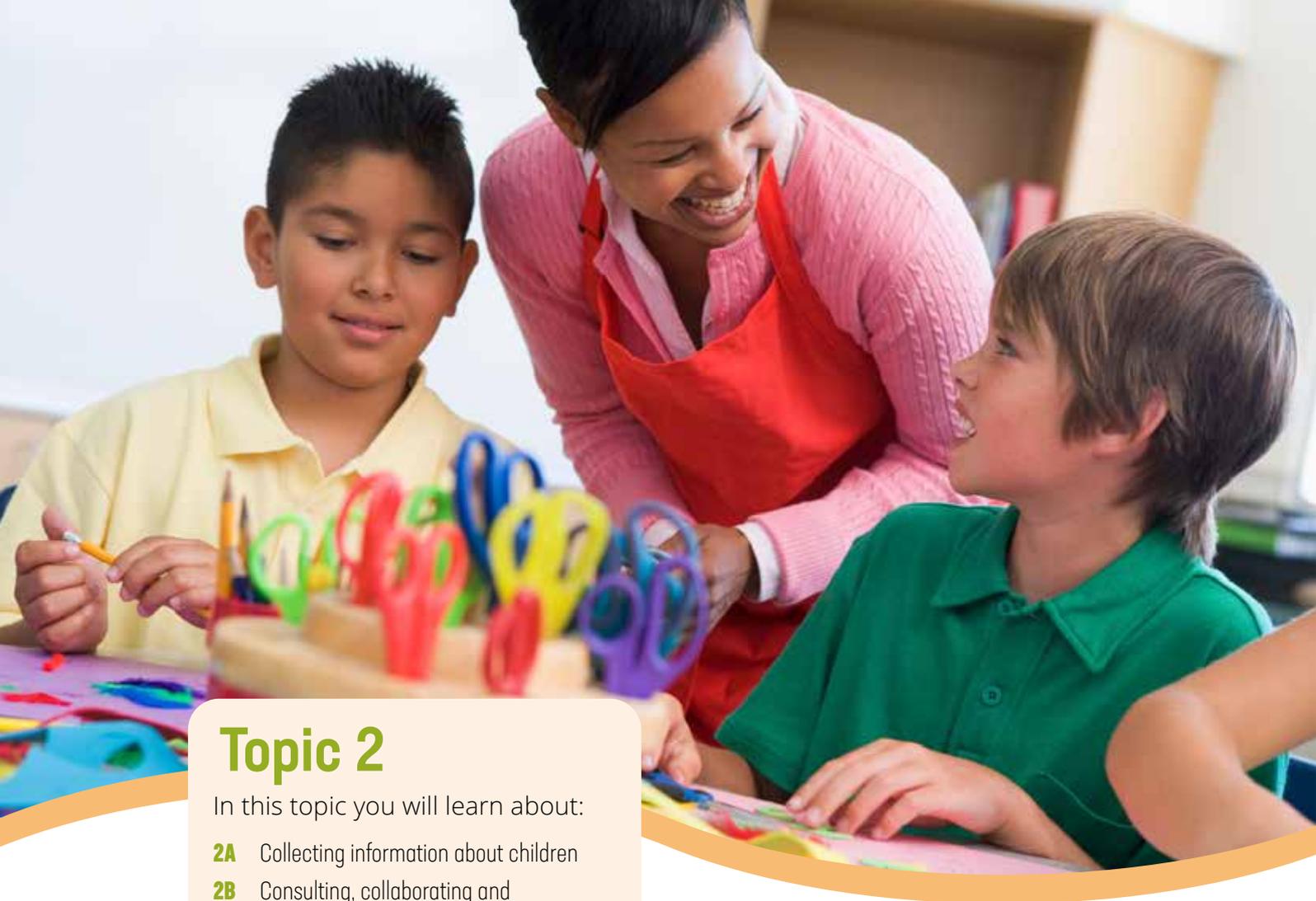
5. While playing outdoors three children begin running around pretending to be firefighters and putting out fires all over the yard. The educator goes to the shed and gets out some hard hats and pieces of rope. The children continue their game using the provided equipment.

Which learning framework practice does this most closely relate to?

- Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
- Learning environments
- Responsiveness to children
- Cultural responsiveness
- Continuity of learning and transitions

6. Which of the following statements about philosophy are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Every service should have a philosophy. This is a statement that is based on a belief system. | * Yes | * No |
| b. A philosophy should be based around one theory and follow the beliefs of that particular theory. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Stakeholders should be included in the process of developing a philosophy. This involves gathering feedback from families, children, colleagues and management. | * Yes | * No |
| d. The service policies are based on the NQF and will reflect the philosophy of the service. | * Yes | * No |
| e. A philosophy should communicate the service attitudes toward families and communities. | * Yes | * No |



Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A** Collecting information about children
- 2B** Consulting, collaborating and communicating with others
- 2C** Assessing to inform curriculum design

Observing and assessing information for curriculum design

Consultation with children, families and others can be used to reflect on the current curriculum and learning environment to identify current strengths and review curriculum goals.

Feedback can be combined with your own reflections and perspectives to provide more options for relevant activities and experiences. As a result, the learning environment will be extended and the confidence of others will build as they introduce new ideas and help to modify and develop the curriculum.

2A Collecting information about children

Curriculum refers to all the things that a child experiences throughout their time in your service.

Observation records help you to plan a curriculum based on what you know about each child and their:

- learning
- development
- knowledge
- ideas
- strengths
- interests
- social interactions
- reactions to the environment.

To create a holistic view of a child's learning and development, you need to gather information that:

- is unbiased
- is meaningful
- is consistent and frequent
- reflects each individual child.

Collecting records

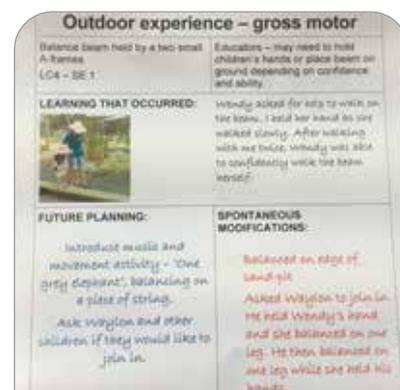
When implementing planned and unplanned experiences, aim to collect records of children's learning in preparation for evaluation.

This data forms evidence of children's participation and development. Assessments of and for learning show you what direction to take next in planning to meet children's needs. Although these records focus on an individual child, they provide information on the success or otherwise of the curriculum.

There is a range of approaches you can use to record information. The data collection methods may be set by your service or developed by you.

Document information about children that shows:

- their ideas
- spontaneous interests that arise
- learning
- new ideas and activities of interest
- any extensions, changes or modifications made
- the way the learning framework outcomes, principles or practices are linked to learning
- the opinions of other people, such as parents, other educators and others caring for the child.



Collecting records about children helps you to evaluate the learning that has taken place.

Observational guidelines

For a holistic view of a child, information must be gathered about the child's progress towards each of the learning framework outcomes.

These details need to come from as many different perspectives as possible, including encouraging children to share their thoughts.

Observation records are created to provide the reader with information about the child that can be reflected on as evidence of their learning and development.

Remember, the way you use language conveys a message to others about yourself and your attitudes. If biased language is used, people reading your records can become misinformed. Aim to use inclusive language that is unbiased, avoids stereotyping or discrimination, and is objective rather than subjective. This will ensure that the language is neutral and accurate.

Observation methods

There are various methods for making and recording observations.

The following outlines some approaches to recording information about children's learning and development.

Secondary sources	<p>Orientation provides an opportunity to collect information about children and their families. Most services update their documented information regularly, but the discussion you have on a daily basis is where most of your important information comes from.</p> <p>Key sources of secondary information are the child's family members, your colleagues and specialists.</p>
Diaries, journals, logs and communication books	<p>These methods form a communication link between the home and the service. Records may relate to one child or to an entire group of children. They can have a specific focus, such as all the child's interactions or their progress in toilet learning, but they are often used to record general information and daily events.</p> <p>Sometimes this method can be used to create a 'story of the day'.</p>
Learning stories	<p>Learning stories use narrative as a recording method. A narrative is story, so it should be as engaging as possible. It may be a short story describing one event or it may follow through days or weeks of a project, development or investigation. A learning story may be added to by the child, family members and others who participate in the child's life.</p>
Information and communication technology (ICT)	<p>ICT offers effective tools for capturing observations that can be shared through audio, video, photos and text. ICT devices that may be most useful in education and care include mobile phones, tablets and computers. You might also use digital photo frames or digital cameras.</p>

<p>Questioning</p>	<p>Questioning is useful, particularly when working with older children. You can either question children directly or develop a questioning method that allows children to consider and reply in their own time.</p> <p>Daily or weekly evaluation recording is an example of a questioning method, as are surveys, questionnaires and forms. This method allows others to evaluate how the day went by asking specific questions, such as what activities were enjoyed most, what could be extended on and how the curriculum could be improved.</p> <p>Not all children can contribute to these methods themselves; however, they will be competent in helping you decide what to record if you prompt them or ask open questions. You can also record children's responses to verbal questioning.</p>
<p>Jottings</p>	<p>Jottings are brief notes taken throughout the day that help you remember something important or interesting you saw or heard. They might be written on a sticky note, in a pocket notebook or in an app. Not all documentation needs to be structured or well-displayed; some points of interest can be just as valuable when noted in a jotting.</p>
<p>Anecdotal information</p>	<p>Anecdotal information is a simple point of interest about a child's development, skill or interest. It is a brief description, often written from memory.</p> <p>Anecdotal records don't record every detail of the environment or observed behaviour – the focus is on the point of interest that you observe.</p> <p>Anecdotal records can also be used to describe what is happening in the photos that form part of your documentation. They can make up part of a diary, journal, log or communication book.</p>
<p>Samples of children's work</p>	<p>Keeping samples of children's work helps you to build a clear record of progression or sequence in their development, skills or interests. You can collect originals (with the child's permission), photocopy them or take photos to keep them on file. Always ask the child before you take their piece of work and respect their wishes if they refuse.</p> <p>Samples can be used to make special portfolios that show a child's progress and become keepsakes for families.</p> <p>Samples of work are the product, rather than an example of the child working.</p>
<p>Webs</p>	<p>Webs are an excellent tool for recording brainstorming or for mapping out what you know about a child, group or learning topic. The structure of a web allows you to identify links and clearly map out aspects you are focusing on. By using a web with the topic of interest at its centre, you can tease out the contents and identify what you or the child know already and what you would like to explore. This is a great way to start a project.</p> <p>Webs may be used to document your entire curriculum or plan, or they may document a range of information about a particular child or group.</p>

Time samples	Time samples record observations taken at specified intervals of time, such as every five minutes, every half hour or at a set time each day. You can use a time sample to record patterns in a specific behaviour, interaction or interest.
Event samples and checklists	<p>Event samples record your observations each time a particular event occurs. Specify which event is important to record and each time this event occurs, add a record of what happened before, during and after the situation, and consider the context and duration of the event.</p> <p>Event samples are an excellent tool for recording the behaviour of one or more children.</p> <p>Checklists are simple event samples where a list is developed and each item is ticked off or dated as relevant.</p>
Sociograms	When it comes to recording children’s interactions, sociograms are a useful and simple tool. A sociogram consists of a web-like connection map of who a child interacts with and who interacts with the child. The sociogram may record the interactions that centre around one child, or may record the interactional web that occurs in a group of children. You may use a sociogram to record emerging communication skills, new relationships or changing dynamics in a group.
Running records	<p>Running records require some preparation. Make sure you are available for the decided amount of time, usually somewhere between one minute and 10 minutes, depending on what you want to record.</p> <p>The purpose of a running record is to record everything the child says and does during the recording period. It needs to contain information about the spaces the child plays in and details of each area of development.</p>

Practice Task 4

Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about gathering information to the correct ending.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| * Assessments of and for learning | * Includes information about children’s progress towards each of the learning framework outcomes based on their interests, skills and background. |
| * Analysis of recorded information | * Are a record of what has occurred and what this means when deciding a direction to take next when planning to meet children’s needs. |
| * Recorded information | * Occurs following the collection of information and allows educators to link learning framework outcomes, principles or practices. |
| * A holistic view of children | * Should be unbiased, meaningful, consistent and frequent. |

2B Consulting, collaborating and communicating with others

Consultation is a process of information exchange where others participate with you to reflect on and evaluate the curriculum.

Consultation helps to ensure that:

- you gather information from a range of people, each with their own perspectives and experiences
- children's home life is acknowledged
- you show that family views are respected
- full participation is encouraged
- there is greater interest in the learning environment
- families feel more comfortable about offering materials or resources to help implement an activity of their choice
- you will be stimulated to explore new ideas and develop closer relationships
- routines are more likely to meet children's needs.



Consulting with others helps you to reflect on and evaluate the curriculum.

Child- and family-centred approach

Contemporary practice in education and care services is a child-centred approach, where the curriculum is designed to meet the learning and development needs of the children as a priority.

A family-centred approach is also used, in which families are consulted and collaborated with about their child's needs. This holistic approach ensures that you:

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

Standards 6.1 and 6.2 of the NQS outline the need for services to work alongside families. Element 1.3.3 focuses on making documentation about each child's program and progress available to families. The guidance related to this element includes expectations that you will:

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

Ongoing sharing of information contributes to strong, respectful relationships, as well as shared responsibility for monitoring the strengths and needs of the child. Element 6.1.1 requires that: ‘Families are supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions’.

The EYLF Principle: Partnerships refers to consultation with families and how educators take their suggestions on board, responding to them and working with them to create more suitable learning environments. By developing open lines of communication from the beginning of your relationship with each family, you can work together in the best interests of the child.

Perspective of others

Colleagues, the child, family members and specialists are resources for gathering information.

By asking relevant people for their perspectives, you can gain a deeper understanding of children and identify if your curriculum is on track.

People who can assist you include:

- children and their peers
- family members, including parents and guardians
- extended family members, such as grandparents and other relatives
- other educators
- carers
- education providers, such as preschool teachers
- specialists
- neighbours and family friends.

The perspectives of others can support you in the following ways.

Children and their peers	Help you gain a child’s perspective and see how they view things, including how they feel, what they see as important, how they might achieve a sense of belonging, as well as how your plans match with their ideas.
Family members, carers and friends	Help you gather relevant information about the family’s lifestyle, interests and cultural background. From this information you can plan to offer a wide range of activities and experiences that suit the individual child. You can provide opportunities to involve children in new activities as well as activities that they are familiar with.
Colleagues	May observe children in different situations, bringing a different perspective. For example, a child may exhibit different behaviours and skills when undertaking an outdoor activity as opposed to an indoor activity.
Specialists	Offer knowledge and information based on their professional judgment and experience of development. You may need to gather information from several specialists to form a comprehensive picture.

It is crucial to establish and maintain sound working relationships with all the people you consult with. Be non-judgmental, listen attentively and ask questions to clarify your understanding. Record information carefully and remember to respect privacy and confidentiality.

Collaborating with children

If you communicate with children frequently in meaningful and authentic discussions, you will gain a genuine understanding of them.

Children will feel that their contributions, ideas and interests are valued and appreciated, and they will feel a sense of 'belonging', enjoy 'being' and extend themselves to 'become' all they want to be. These concepts fit with the approved learning framework goals, as well as the Principle: Equity, inclusion and high expectations.

There are many ways to consult with children and gather their ideas, including:

- group or individual discussion or questioning
- spontaneous discussion or suggestions
- formal and informal requests
- anecdotal discussion (sharing experiences and stories)
- graffiti sheets and questionnaires.

Experiences might be evaluated and adapted due to children's feedback, either before, during or after implementation.

The consultation you participate in with children provides you with communication records and should link with learning outcomes from the EYLF.



Collaborate with children to help them plan experiences.

Collaborating with families

Develop an ongoing partnership with families where information is regularly shared.

This helps you to build strong, respectful relationships, and share responsibility for monitoring the learning and development of the child.

By explaining that the more you know about a child, the more you can plan for the child, you are showing interest and encouraging families to continue sharing information.

Families need to know how their child is developing and what they can do to help. Similarly, educators need to know the family's beliefs, values and perspectives.

You can support families to share information in the following ways:

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

Consistency of communication

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

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

Strategies for sharing information

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

Example

Using information from a parent effectively

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

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

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

At group time she uses the action rhyme 'Going on a bear hunt' and the children act out the physical motions of the song.



Collaborating with colleagues

Colleagues may provide you with background information; for example, they might advise you about a cultural norm or that they previously attended another service.

With family approval, colleagues can provide information such as:

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

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

Other educators can provide support and advice when you collect records or receive information or feedback from others.



Practice Task 5

1. Which of the following statements are correct about consulting and collaborating with families? Select all that apply.

- Consultation allows you to understand and value home practices and get a better understanding of a child's and family's needs, likes and perspectives.
- Consultation with families allows for open conversations, questions that gather information, and to check if planning is appropriate and effective.
- Collaborating with families allows for planning and experiences to be relevant, and encourages families to become involved in the process.
- Collaborating and consulting with families allows for stronger relationships and feedback that can enhance learning and planning.
- Consultation with families needs to be formally documented to ensure everything is recorded and nothing is missed.

2. Which of the following could be used as a communication method with families? Select all that apply.

- Communication books
- Digital sharing platform for learning stories
- Diaries
- Magazines
- Wall displays

3. Draw a line to match each term about consultation to its descriptor.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| * A family-centred approach | * A process of information exchange where others participate with you to reflect on and evaluate the curriculum. |
| * NQS Element 1.3.3 | * Families are consulted and collaborated with about their child's needs. |
| * Consultation | * Outlines how families should be supported from enrolment to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions. |
| * NQS Element 6.1.1 | * Focuses on making documentation about each child's program and progress available to families. |

4. Colleagues, the child, family members and specialists are resources for gathering information. By asking relevant people for their perspectives, you can gain a deeper understanding of children and identify if your curriculum is on track.

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a. Colleagues may provide you with background information about children. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| b. All families will want to pass information on to you about their child. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| c. Children can help you to gather information that helps with curriculum planning. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| d. Other educators have perspectives that may be different from your own. This must be taken into account and used as secondary information. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

2C Assessing to inform curriculum design

Analyse the information you have collected from observation and consultation.

When analysing information, consider:

- the learning you noticed
- any development that was highlighted
- what was important when you noticed it
- what was important from the perspective of other people.



Assess the information you have collected to help you determine curriculum design.

By doing this you are documenting your perspective, which can be used to link information to the learning framework to inform curriculum planning.

Educators across Australia commonly use the EYLF learning outcomes and sub-outcomes to connect what they notice about a child's learning and development in consistent and holistic ways. By linking against the outcomes you are showing an understanding of what you have documented, how you have evaluated this information and how this fits holistically with the child. This makes the curriculum meaningful and purposeful, reflects contemporary practice and applies common language used across the education and care industry.

Identifying relevant information

When assessing an observation record, you will notice information that stands out.

This information is the point that you will focus on.

Steps to linking learning outcomes include:

1. Observe, listen and collect information.
2. Assess the information by asking yourself, 'What does this tell me about the child's learning, development and wellbeing?'
3. Choose a learning outcome and sub-outcome. Do this by either:
 - reading the five learning outcomes of the approved learning framework and choosing the one that most closely connects to what you have observed, documented and assessed
 - reading the sub-outcomes of the learning outcome you have chosen and selecting the one that most closely connects with what you have observed, documented and assessed.

To gather more information on each learning outcome and sub-outcome, you can read the EYLF. Under each sub-outcome there is a list headed: 'This is evident when children, for example:'

Linking to the EYLF clarifies learning and development, and allows you to see how the child is progressing.

You can find information about the approved learning frameworks at: aspirelr.link/approved-learning-frameworks.

Example

Linking to outcomes

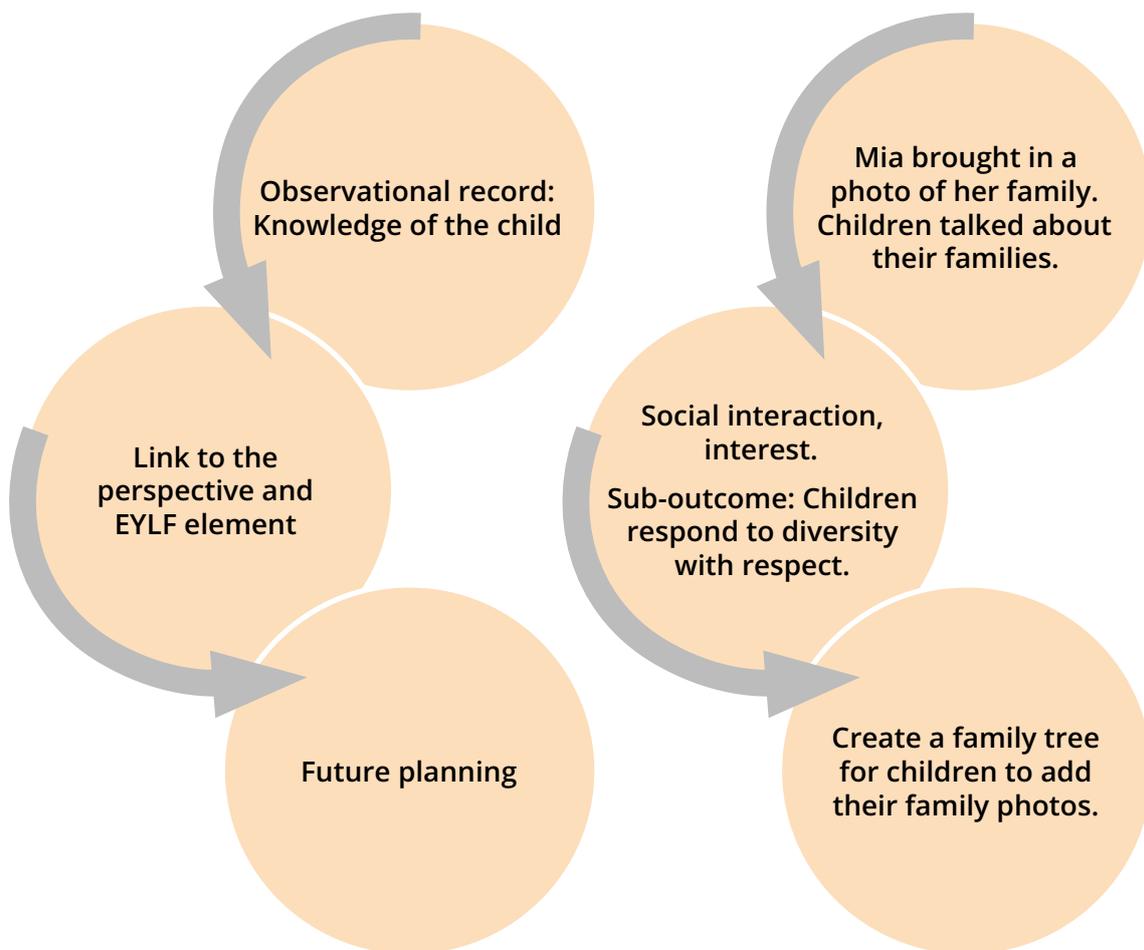
Here is an example of how an educator, Marsha, links her observation of Nim to an outcome and a sub-outcome of the EYLF.

<p>1. Observing and documenting: Notice learning and record what you see</p>	<p>In the play area, Nim is communicating to other children using hand movements and facial expressions. Nim is mouthing that he is not able to speak using his voice.</p> <p>The other children are trying to guess what Nim is saying and they are all laughing as Nim tried to communicate.</p>
<p>2. Assessing: Analyse and interpret the information</p>	<p>Nim has shown interest in communicating without speech.</p>
<p>3. Choosing a learning outcome and sub-outcome</p>	<p>Marsha thinks the learning outcome that links to this learning is Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators</p> <p>Marsha thinks the best sub-outcome is: 'Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes'.</p>

Using knowledge to inform practice

Once you have gathered knowledge about a child or group, you can use it to inform your future practice.

The following diagram shows the process of planning future experiences using your knowledge. On the left is the process, on the right is an example of the process in practice.



Aspects of the child

Assessment should be used to confirm your understanding of the child.

By using this information, you are able to build on where the child is and develop them in a positive direction that includes topics and experiences they enjoy.

This can be useful in many ways, as outlined in the following table.

Aspect of the child	What this means	Ways you may use this
Knowledge/ strengths/interests	The child may want to share or develop in these areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Extend the child. ➤ Support the child to use skills. ➤ Apply the topics to teach new or difficult skills.
Ideas	The child may want to see these happen.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide opportunities. ➤ Support discovery. ➤ Develop possibilities and show the child they are capable. ➤ Extend children's skills, knowledge and relationships. ➤ Help children to plan, negotiate, problem-solve and make decisions.

Aspect of the child	What this means	Ways you may use this
Social interactions	The child may want to develop a relationship, has demonstrated a relationship or is challenged by a relationship.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide opportunities for social interaction and building relationships. ➤ Develop skills using a current knowledge, strength or interest. ➤ Extend the social experience.
Reactions to play environments	The child may feel comfortable or uncomfortable in a space, prefer one space over another or demonstrate different behaviours based on the environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide an environment that is of benefit to the child. ➤ Provide choices in the environment.

Linking observations to evidence

The following are examples showing how evidence might be linked to different aspects of learning and development.

Example	Link	Examples
Example 1	Observation record	A preschooler helps a toddler to turn on a tap.
	Aspect	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Strengths <input type="checkbox"/> Interests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social interactions <input type="checkbox"/> Reactions to play environments
	Outcome 1	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Sub-outcome	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect
Example 2	Observation record	An infant is cuddling up to an educator. The educator is talking quietly to the infant and the infant is smiling up at the educator.
	Aspect	<input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge <input type="checkbox"/> Ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Strengths <input type="checkbox"/> Interests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social interactions <input type="checkbox"/> Reactions to play environments
	Outcome 1	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Sub-outcome	Children feel safe, secure and supported
	Overall goal	Belonging and being

Example	Link	Examples
Example 3	Observation record	A preschooler is speaking to a group about her birthday party. She explains the climbing park she went to, including equipment such as anchors and carabiners. She suggested that she could bring some equipment in so everyone could see.
	Aspect	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knowledge <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Strengths <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interests <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social interactions <input type="checkbox"/> Reactions to play environments
	Outcome 5	Children are effective communicators
	Sub-outcome	Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

Practice Task 6

1. A holistic curriculum includes all learning framework outcomes and reflects learning and development information gained from observation and analysis.

Match each aspect of the child on the left to the way it will inform a holistic curriculum design on the right.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| * Social interactions | * What the child knows, such as details or facts |
| * Ideas | * Things that a child suggests, invents or wants to do |
| * Reactions to the play environment | * Something a child is good at |
| * Strengths | * Things that a child enjoys and wants to know more about |
| * Knowledge | * Communication and interactions with others |
| * Interests | * How they interact in the space, and their behaviours within different areas |

2. A child is sitting next to an educator. The educator asks if they should read a book. Which of the following learning framework outcomes, principles and practices are relevant? Select all that apply.

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Equity, inclusion and high expectations
- Responsiveness to children
- Cultural responsiveness
- Children feel safe, secure and supported
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

3. Select true or false for the following statement.

If a child is observed helping another child pour water, this might link to Learning Outcome 1. * True * False

Summary

- Observation records help you plan a curriculum based on what you know about each child and their learning, development, knowledge, ideas, strengths, interests, social interactions and reactions to the environment.
- For a holistic view of children, information must be gathered about children's progress towards each of the learning framework outcomes and these details need to come from as many perspectives as possible, including encouraging children to share their thoughts.
- Observation records are created to provide the reader with information about the child that can be reflected on at a later date as evidence of their learning and development.
- Ongoing sharing of information contributes to strong, respectful relationships, as well as shared responsibility for monitoring the strengths and needs of the child.
- By linking observations to the learning framework outcomes, you are showing an understanding of:
 - what you have documented
 - how you have evaluated this information
 - how this fits holistically with the child.
- When assessing an observation record, notice information that stands out and demonstrates a particular area of interest.
- During your assessment, aim to confirm perspectives about aspects of the child's learning and development.

Learning Checkpoint 2

Observing and assessing information for curriculum design

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Nash is an educator who is watching Keiko at the painting easel making long blue strokes on the paper. Keiko selects a new brush and dots across the page using yellow. She puts a yellow dot onto one of the blue stripes and says, 'Look, I made green!' Nash says, 'Yes, you mixed blue and yellow together and it made the colour green. I wonder if you can make other colours by mixing them together?'

Keiko paints with red, mixing it over the blue, 'Now I have purple!' Nash jots a few notes about the conversations had with Keiko and asks if they can take a photo of the finished painting to show what Keiko had learnt. Nash asks Keiko if the artwork might become part of a portfolio.

The next day, Nash puts out some jars of clean water and some food colouring with eye droppers. Nash explains the new activity to Keiko and encourages her to continue exploring how colours can be mixed. Keiko experiments for half an hour, mixing and talking about the different colours she is making. While Keiko mixes, Nash starts singing 'I can make a rainbow'.

Nash decides this would make a great learning story, so takes another photo. Nash plans to set up a collage table with different coloured materials. Nash talks with the other educators about what happened and they discuss how they might extend on the colour mixing experimentation.

1. Provide an example of how each of the following curriculum planning stages was used in the case study.

a. Observe

.....

.....

b. Assess

.....

.....

c. Plan

.....

.....

d. Implement

.....

.....

e. Evaluate

.....

.....

2. Which observation recording methods did Nash use? Select all that apply.

- Questioning
- Jotting
- Anecdotal record
- Digital image
- Running record
- Sample of work
- Time sample
- Learning story

3. Which of the following learning framework principles did Nash demonstrate? Select all that apply.

- Partnerships
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- Respect for diversity
- Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning and reflective practice

4. Which of the following learning framework practices did Nash demonstrate? Select all that apply.

- Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
- Play-based learning and intentionality
- Responsiveness to children
- Learning environments
- Cultural responsiveness

5. Which of the following learning framework outcomes links most with Keiko's learning?

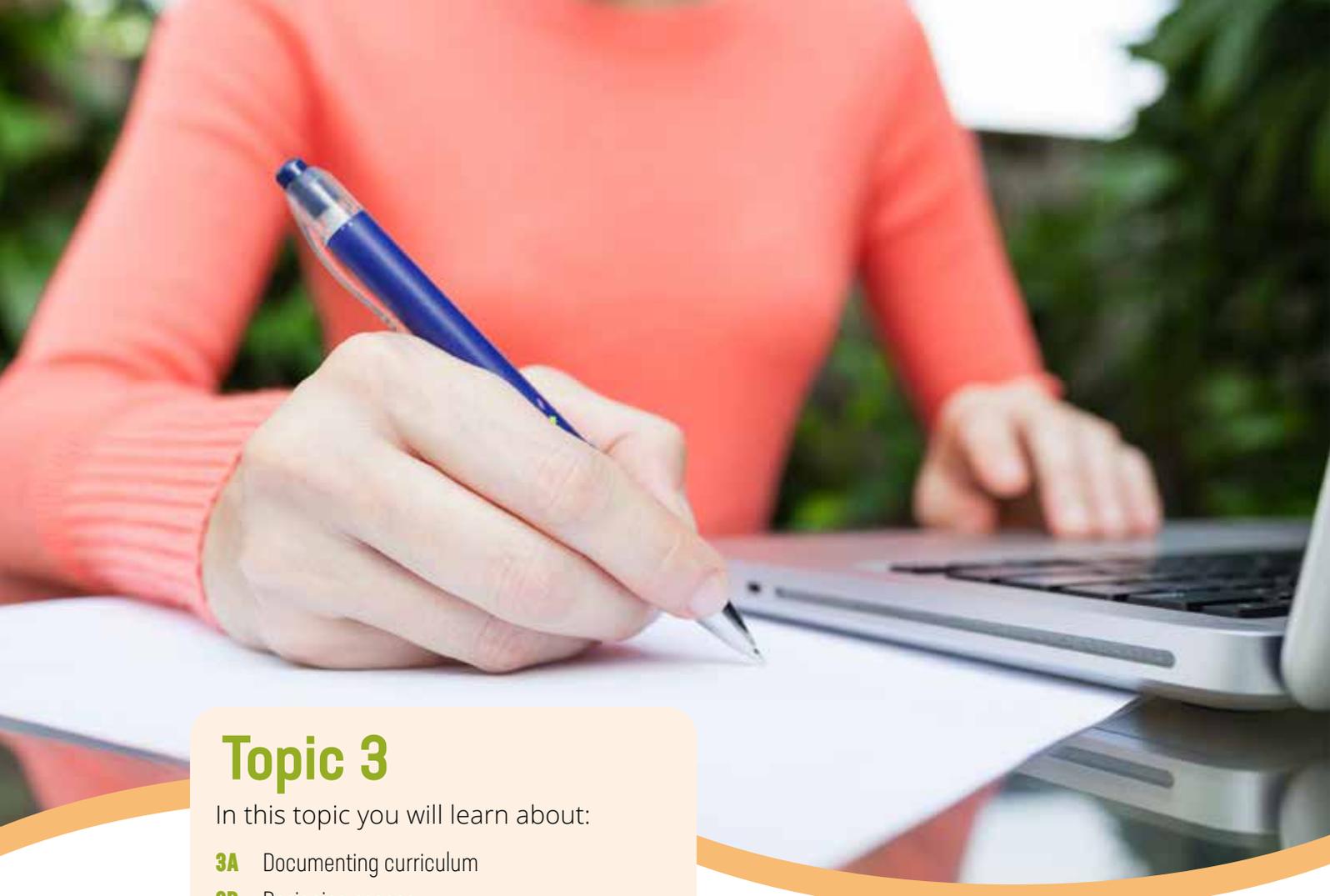
- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

6. If Nash wants to collect more information about Keiko, who would be the best person to consult, collaborate and communicate with to find out each of the following details? Draw a line to match each type of information on the left with the most appropriate stakeholder on the right.

- | | |
|---|-------------------|
| * The learning outcomes Keiko has demonstrated so far | * Keiko's family |
| * Keiko's family structure, traditions and customs | * Keiko's family |
| * Keiko's daily needs, such as sleep times and toileting needs | * Other educators |
| * Keiko's development and the types of tools and processes to record this information | * Other educators |

7. Select true or false for the following statement.

Nash plans his curriculum around Keiko's learning. * True * False
All experiences provided throughout the learning space relate to colour mixing; this would be a holistic curriculum based on teaching colour.



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A** Documenting curriculum
- 3B** Designing spaces
- 3C** Designing routines, timetables and transitions
- 3D** Designing play experiences
- 3E** Modifying curriculum

Designing curriculum

A curriculum is made up of a wide range components that are adapted to maintain relevance and meet the needs of children, families and the service staff.

The approved learning frameworks have been created to support the development of a holistic approach. You should aim to have each of the principles, practices and all five EYLF learning outcomes represented in your plan of experiences, with as many sub-outcomes as possible, in order to design a holistic curriculum.

One of the key objectives of all learning experiences is to nurture the child as a confident and involved learner. Children need to be provided with adequate opportunities to learn, and they need to participate in a variety of play experiences and situations.

3A Documenting curriculum

Show others how you provide for children's learning and play by developing visual displays.

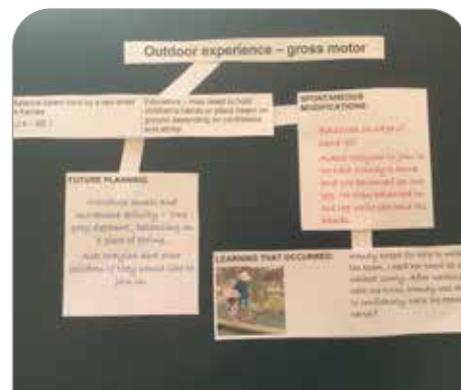
Regulation 75 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations states that all registered services must display curriculum information that reflects the educational program. Whether you decide to create individual documents that are accessible to all stakeholders or a wall display, ensure you provide details of how, what and why you have designed the curriculum in the way you have chosen.

Curriculum priorities and opportunities

Philosophy and service expectations will determine curriculum display and documentation.

Curriculum priorities and opportunities must be catered for. Each documented curriculum must communicate about:

- service philosophies, policies and procedures
- learning framework outcomes, Sub-outcomes, principles and practices
- routines, transitions and timetables
- planned experiences and activities
- spaces for unplanned experiences and activities.



Visual displays are a useful way to show others how you have provided for children's learning.

The documented curriculum should demonstrate that planning has been considered, including:

- collaborative learning and shared thinking
- balance of child-initiated learning and educator-led learning
- responsiveness
- perspectives
- cultural competence.

Templates or wall plans

Traditional or formatted plans are common, involving a plan of the week or period set out with expected experiences and activities.

Spaces are provided for noting modifications and unplanned or spontaneous activities or experiences.

These plans are usually in a table or grid format. Educators identify the areas of the curriculum they feel important to include. They encourage families and children to add to the evaluation, provide new ideas and make suggestions for future plans.

These traditional templates usually demonstrate a less adaptable curriculum as they focus on forward planning rather than demonstrating a commitment to responsiveness. To maintain their relevance, check they include:

- curriculum priorities, including approved learning framework components, dispositions and/or curriculum areas
- modifications as they occur
- an overview of planning rather than a specific day-by-day plan showing an educator-managed process.

Contemporary methods of curriculum documentation

Contemporary methods of curriculum documentation include the use of webs, journals, folders or displays that focus on what is happening now or what is about to happen.

Educators can work together to map modifications and show how these lead to new ideas.

Contemporary curriculum documents might include one or more of the following strategies:

- commencement activities and experiences
- links to evolving experiences and new ideas
- documentation of progress or change through photographs
- new links commencing at regular intervals
- new links commencing as experiences are removed.

Photos may be taken of the document before removing information; or they may be taken periodically to maintain records. This keeps the information together and represents how an experience evolves from planning through to implementation and assessment.

A visual display allows others to add to the plan. It is a growing plan that includes perspectives and directions. The plan is presented similar to a web, where it grows as the curriculum changes. This encourages a continuum where learning and development is linked.



Use displays to show the learning that is happening now and the learning that is planned.

Example

Different planning methods

The following examples show two different planning methods that educators have used to document their curriculum.

Example 1

Kelly, an educator, collects observation records throughout the week. She sets out a schedule that includes:

- experience changes that will occur immediately to meet children's needs
- extensions that will occur over the next week
- new experiences that will be implemented when the experiences already on offer require changes.

Kelly also refreshes her planning documentation so that it is easy to see all these aspects are taking place.

Kelly is responsible for the curriculum. She makes the decisions and puts them into place based on the direction she wishes to take.

Sometimes, by the time she implements experiences, the children have moved on to a different interest, or the continuity of learning is disrupted.

Example 2

Gerda, an educator, likes responsive planning. She usually reacts immediately to opportunities for extension, and she involves the children in the change. At times she needs to delay these changes until the next day or when she has planning time, as she needs to organise new materials.

Gerda includes the children in this planning as it heightens their involvement – sometimes they bring in additional and complementary resources. Because Gerda plans with the children, this frees up her dedicated planning time for other aspects of preparation.

Gerda shares responsibility for the curriculum with the children.

Together they work to extend on the things that interest them and that are important at the time. This allows children to maintain their engagement and to see how their interests link to other aspects.

Continuity of learning is key to success and this is demonstrated through a web format that is added to as the direction changes and grows over time.

Planning resources

You will need to follow your organisation's standards, policies and procedures for completing curriculum plans.

The resources in the following table provide a range of options for formatting your program plans. Remember that these types of documents need to be updated regularly.

Source	Link
Early Childhood Resource Hub	aspirelr.link/ecrh
Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority	aspirelr.link/qcaa-samples-and-templates
Twinkl – Planning and assessment materials	aspirelr.link/twinkl
Pinterest – Collections of online framework programming tools, templates and ideas put together by other educators	aspirelr.link/eylf-pinterest

Practice Task 7

1. Which of the following statements are correct about documenting curriculum? Select yes or no for each one.
- Regulation 75 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations states that all registered services must display information about the educational program. * Yes * No
 - Philosophy and service expectations will often determine curriculum display and documentation. Curriculum priorities and opportunities must be catered for. * Yes * No
 - Despite the method chosen to document a curriculum, all displays should be the same so educators throughout Australia understand. * Yes * No
 - Contemporary methods of curriculum documentation include the use of webs, journals, folders or displays that focus on what is happening now or what is about to happen. * Yes * No
 - An experience plan demonstrates the reasons for the experience, which should focus on helping the child to progress in a certain area of development. * Yes * No

3B Designing spaces

The physical environment sends messages, which may be positive or negative.

Some of the positive messages you should be aiming for are explained in the following table.

This is a good place to be	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children's senses are calmed by the use of natural colours. ➤ Noise is busy rather than rowdy. ➤ Clutter is kept to a minimum. ➤ The environment is clean, bright and well prepared. ➤ All children and families are made to feel welcome.
This place is safe and interesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The environment has limits and boundaries that are easy to understand. ➤ There are inviting and attractive, uncluttered displays and experiences. ➤ Materials are changed in line with children's interests. ➤ Safety is important but children are still able to develop competence. ➤ There are familiar staff.
I belong here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each child has their own space for belongings. ➤ There is child-appropriate furniture. ➤ Children can access materials. ➤ Children's work is displayed in a respectful, uncluttered way. ➤ Children are encouraged to bring their own items into the environment.

Safe, stimulating environments

The NQS provides services with guidelines for creating responsive learning environments.

Quality area 3 in particular focuses on the physical environment. It stipulates that the environment must be safe, suitable, and provide a rich and diverse range of experiences that promote children's learning and development.

Learning environments play a large part in helping children achieve planned outcomes. A responsive environment adapts to reflect children's interests and abilities, stimulates their imagination and encourages participation. Responsive environments allow educators and children to learn together in a comfortable and safe place.

The following table describes the combination of experiences, people and spaces that an effective learning environment should provide. Keep these in mind as you plan for children's learning and development.

Experiences and opportunities	Description	Examples
A range of stimulating experiences	When children experience things for themselves they can explore the activity, experiment and gain knowledge.	Jackson is learning that watching others is interesting and that he can copy what they do. The educator provides a range of experiences that allow parallel play, such as dough moulding, collage, block building and dramatic play areas.
Opportunities for spontaneous and organised play	<p>Play should be voluntary, pleasurable, symbolic, active, process-oriented and intrinsically motivated.</p> <p>Play is seen as a fundamental right of all children.</p> <p>Play is associated with social development, but also provides a way for children to have new experiences and build skills.</p> <p>Children learn best through an integrated approach combining physical, emotional, cognitive and social growth.</p>	<p>Leora has used her creativity to imagine what her painting would look like, and used a paintbrush and her fingers to paint.</p> <p>She used physical skills to hold the paintbrush. She then used her social skills to tell a friend about her painting. Her emotional skills were demonstrated when she said she was proud of her painting.</p>
A range of teaching and learning strategies	<p>Educators may be actively involved in interacting with individuals and small groups of children, at times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ entering into their play ➤ intentionally teaching ➤ observing their play ➤ preparing the learning environment ➤ collecting and providing resources. <p>Educators reflect on their observations and their own learning, reviewing programs, and preparing learning activities and resources.</p>	<p>Helen provides an art experience. She observes the children interacting with the materials. She notices how some children use the art tools skilfully and others show emerging skills. She records what she notices as part of her evaluation.</p> <p>Helen learns that she has the skills to develop meaningful experiences that meet a range of children’s needs.</p>

Experiences and opportunities	Description	Examples
Diversity of people	<p>Interactions and socialisation are key factors in children's learning and development. Along with educators, children may meet other staff, such as cooks and cleaners. While some interactions can be planned for and organised, many will be spontaneous. It is beneficial to introduce people from the community, such as police officers, postal workers, grandparents or an Aboriginal Elder.</p>	<p>The community has been preparing for the bushfire season. Melody organises for the local firefighters to come to the service with their truck.</p> <p>This visit allows the children to ask questions and for the firefighters to share information about how the children can be safe if there is a fire in the area.</p> <p>Children talk about fire-burning practices their Elders use, explaining that it makes the land less dangerous and makes new plants grow,</p>
Allowing children to feel valued	<p>Children need to feel important and that what they do is valuable and meaningful to others.</p> <p>Children should be given roles such as setting tables for lunch or setting up experiences.</p>	<p>Grace develops a simple roster with the children. It allows each child to take responsibility for a task they are interested in. For example, Aiden has pets at home and loves to talk about them; he asks to feed the fish.</p> <p>This responsibility helps to build confidence.</p>
Providing places to call their own	<p>This relates to the learning framework goal of belonging.</p> <p>Children need to be close to people they know, have familiar and comfortable objects, and be in a setting that has a personal history for them.</p> <p>These factors will make the environment responsive.</p>	<p>Georgia organises for each child to decorate a cardboard box for their belongings. This is somewhere they can put personal items from home and know they are safe.</p>
Opportunities to be alone	<p>Children can become tired and overstimulated if they are in a group all day, every day.</p> <p>Children may have a desire to learn independently and may wish to do so uninterrupted or without other adults or children watching.</p>	<p>Kane is working on a construction. He has planned carefully and is concentrating on completing a difficult component.</p> <p>Other children usually use the space for a variety of activities.</p> <p>This week the space has been divided into smaller sections so children can work uninterrupted on projects.</p>

Indoor environments

Indoor learning spaces should provide areas for all types of play, learning and development.

The following table outlines how children of various ages use indoor spaces.

Age group	Type of play	What to provide
Infants and toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Exploration and discovery ➤ Climbing ➤ Manipulative play ➤ Pretend play ➤ Block play ➤ Messy play ➤ Creative activities ➤ Quiet time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wheeled toys ➤ Mirrors ➤ Blocks ➤ Clay and play dough ➤ Sand ➤ Books
Preschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dramatic play ➤ Block play ➤ Reading, language and listening ➤ Manipulative play ➤ Construction ➤ Creative play ➤ Sand and water play ➤ Woodwork ➤ Cooking ➤ Quiet time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Home corner ➤ Dress-ups ➤ Blocks ➤ Books, including audiobooks and books in other languages ➤ Music ➤ Puzzles ➤ Threading materials ➤ Construction and woodworking materials ➤ Maths area for sorting, classifying, matching and ordering games and activities ➤ Science and nature spaces ➤ Clay and play dough ➤ Art materials, including painting, drawing and collage materials ➤ Cooking materials ➤ Sand ➤ Water trough
School-age children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Creative activities ➤ Construction ➤ Pretend and performance play ➤ Relaxation ➤ Language – reading, writing ➤ Discovery – science, nature, maths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Art materials, including painting, drawing and collage materials ➤ Sewing and threading materials ➤ Model building materials ➤ Carpentry and block areas ➤ Doll house ➤ Drama area ➤ Music corner ➤ Books, including audiobooks and books in other languages

Outdoor environments

The outdoor space needs to be given the same level of consideration as indoors and should also offer a mixture of active and restful experiences.

Outdoor play spaces can be clearly defined so children can immediately see how the space can be used and can move easily between spaces without interrupting others at play. Natural features such as stepping stones can provide children with pathways and creative options for their physical play.



Plan outdoor environments to include both active and restful experiences.

Many services provide children with the opportunity to move indoors and outdoors as they please; this is called an indoor/outdoor program. Your staff ratios and service design will determine whether this is an option for you. Access to the outdoors is vital in supporting children's need for:

- large movements
- louder expression
- connection to Country
- understanding of biodiversity and eco literacy.

Almost all experiences planned for indoors can also be offered outdoors. However, outdoor areas offer the extra space needed for physically active play and gross motor activities. Children need opportunities to run, jump, dig, push, skip and climb.

The following table describes various outdoor areas and how they promote children's learning, experimentation and exploration.

Type of activity	Action	Learning concepts
Water play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Manipulating water ➤ Pouring ➤ Tipping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Capacity ➤ Volume ➤ Floating and sinking ➤ Wet and dry ➤ Force and pressure ➤ Evaporation and condensation
Sand and earth play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Digging ➤ Pouring ➤ Moulding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wet and dry ➤ Weight ➤ Texture ➤ Volume
Block play and woodwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hammering ➤ Sawing ➤ Stacking ➤ Balancing ➤ Fitting together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Measurement ➤ Parts and whole ➤ Comparing

The outdoor environment is very important to many children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Respect for the land and caring for the environment are central to many cultures. Nurturing children's relationship to the land helps them learn about the environment and develop a strong sense of identity. Acknowledge this by allowing children to:

- work and play outside as much as possible
- use the immediate environment as a source of learning
- play in family groupings.

Many children also find relief in the outdoor environment if they are overwhelmed by larger groups of children, or the noise and sensory stimulation of the indoor environment.

An outdoor environment may, at times, be cold or damp. This should not reduce the children's ability to use the space. Keep in mind that the learning and development that occurs is child centred, rather than adult centred. Children will learn to wear coats and hats depending on the weather. They will also learn which equipment or materials are suited to use in different weather.

Natural environment

Most children have a fascination with the environment and the things they find in it.

Interacting with nature and natural materials encourages them to appreciate the value and beauty of the environment.

The future of our world resides in the knowledge children hold and the actions they take to care for the environment, and the plants and animals in it. The best way to promote an appreciation for the environment is to encourage children to interact with nature. The best learning will occur when you discuss the environment while children are interacting with it.

Encouraging children to enjoy and learn about the environment

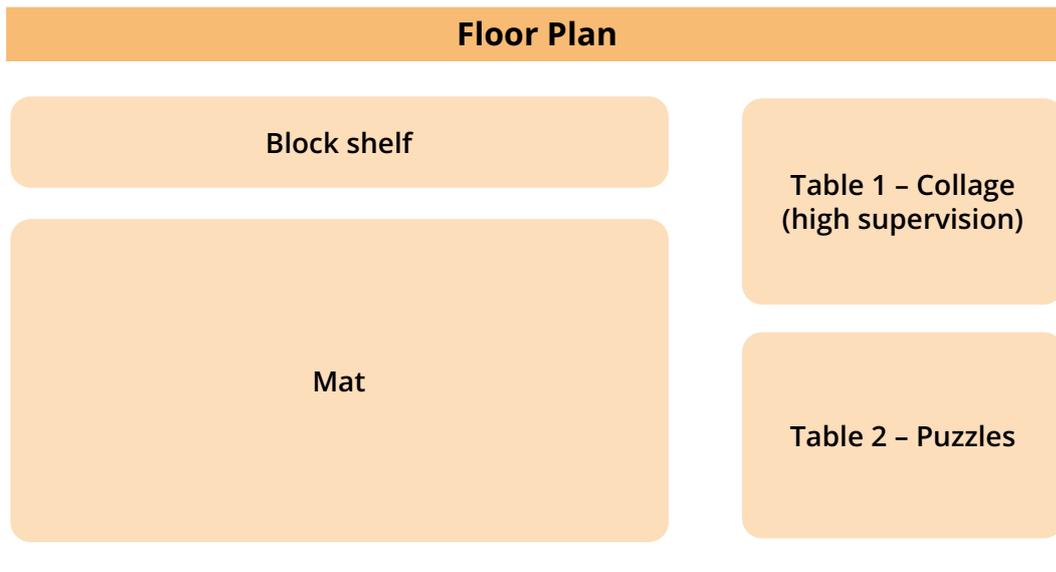
- Use outdoor spaces often.
- Include as many natural elements as possible.
- Encourage children to touch, listen, look and smell.
- Have picnics.
- Grow plants together.
- Visit the zoo, museum and aquarium.
- Arrange visits from mobile farms, animal experts and science educators.
- Use reference books, online searches, pictures and posters.
- Use the knowledge of parents, educators and others in the community (such as park rangers, gardeners and Aboriginal elders).
- Use stories, songs, movement and poetry.
- Introduce curriculum themes on animals and plants.
- Discuss the way Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders used the land and how they value the land.

Documenting spaces

To coordinate the placement of experiences and design your set up, you may find it useful to develop a floor plan or description.

A floor plan or description allows you to communicate information about the location of activities and experiences so others can support the setup of the space. A floor plan or description might show indoor or outdoor spaces. It may also highlight the level of supervision required.

The following is an example of a floor plan for an indoor area.



Practice Task 8

1. Which of the following learning framework principles, practices and outcomes specifically support you to plan natural environments? Select all that apply.

- Learning Outcome 2
- Principle: Respect for diversity
- Practice: Cultural responsiveness
- Practice: Sustainability
- Practice: Continuity of learning and transitions

2. Identify two experiences suited to the indoor environment.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Identify two experiences best suited to the outdoor environment.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

3C Designing routines, timetables and transitions

Children learn about their needs and develop trust if you provide routines that meet their individual needs and flow easily from one focus to the next.

Routines benefit adults and children as they allow you to:

- structure the day so everyone knows what is happening
- provide predictability
- plan and prepare for what happens next
- provide enough time for children to complete tasks and to be fully involved in the learning process
- encourage children to finish one task and commence another; for example, packing up activities and then setting up for snack time
- assist children with hygiene according to their particular needs
- make the most of one-on-one interaction.

Daily routines may differ according to:

- the age of the children
- the number of staff available
- individual needs of staff, families and children
- service management requirements
- philosophy of staff
- experience of staff.

Child-centred routines

An action that is designed to meet the needs of a child as a first priority is called a child-centred practice or a child-centred routine.

If you have a child-centred routine, it means that you have:

- consulted families about their child's needs
- considered how the service operates and how it can meet the child's needs
- observed the child and identified how you can meet their needs
- put routines and care practices into place that meet the child's needs.

Being child-centred means that you understand the needs of the children and provide for these needs as a priority. Consider whether the following types of child-centred routines may work for your service.

Progressive mealtime

The snack or mealtime foods are prepared and placed out ready to be eaten, and children come in small groups to eat when they are ready. This replaces a group mealtime and creates the feeling that the snack or mealtime is another experience taking part in the environment.

Staggered transition

The individual needs of children are catered for differently within a group. A staggered routine allows some children in the group to start a routine earlier or later than others. For example, younger children may commence eating and preparing for sleep prior to the rest of the group, or preschool children may arrive at different times if they are involved in a kinder program.

Indoor-outdoor program

Educators and activities are available indoors and outdoors at the same time, and children can choose where they want to be and what activities they would like to do.

Transitions

A child's day is filled with transitions, and these are often times that are difficult for them to manage.

Some transition times that children experience include:

- home to service
- play to snack or meal time
- meal or snack time to play
- play to sleep or rest time
- play to group time
- play to bathroom routine
- one experience to another.

Transitions will also include life changes, such as the child moving from full-time home care to service care, or from the service to kindergarten or preschool.

A daily timetable should comprise a variety of routine practices linked together to meet everyone's needs. Smooth transitions help children feel secure and respected. Well-planned transitions are flexible, cater for individual needs and keep the program relaxed and enjoyable. The following table outlines some strategies to support you in developing and implementing transition times.



Give children a warning before changing to the next activity or routine.

Alert children to approaching transitions	Provide a warning to children that a transition is approaching. Children often become engrossed in play and it shows respect when you give them a warning that they will need to stop in a few minutes.
Issue simple instructions	Use clear and simple instructions so children know what you expect. Remember that young children can only remember one or two instructions at a time.
Allow for activities to continue later	If possible, allow children to finish an activity or provide a means for them to continue it later. It shows that you value the children's work when you allow them to save what they are doing and return to it later. You may need to consider storage or how you use spaces to enable this.

Stagger routine transitions	Consider whether the group size is appropriate to the activity you are moving to. You may find that you only need to move some children to a new routine, activity or space, and others can come later or do not need to participate at all. You may also be able to eliminate a structured transition by using progressive techniques that allow children to choose to move to a routine or activity by themselves.
Minimise waiting time	<p>Exclude or reduce waiting times and be prepared with ways to fill unexpected waiting times. Not only is waiting time wasted time, it is also time that demonstrates you or your colleagues are not well prepared.</p> <p>The younger the group of children you work with, the less appropriate it is for your routines or transitions to include waiting.</p> <p>Staggered or progressive transitions help reduce waiting. Waiting is also reduced if children are fully involved in transitions, such as helping set up, serving food themselves, taking responsibility for their own needs and belongings.</p>
Be prepared	<p>Preparation is the best way to minimise waiting times and keep your stress level low. By having your materials, space, staff and activities ready to go, you ensure the plan goes smoothly. Preparation allows for flexibility as well – the better prepared you are, the easier it is to cope with on-the-spot changes or mishaps.</p> <p>Communicate with the person who prepares the daily plan and ask if any special preparation is required for upcoming activities. Have a look at the plan when you arrive for the day to see what preparation you can assist with. If you have developed the plan, support others to be prepared and share responsibilities. Where possible work as a team to plan and prepare.</p> <p>When you are implementing a spontaneous activity, you will not have this preparation in place. If possible, allow the children to participate in the preparation of required materials and resources – this will get the activity started right away and eliminate waiting time.</p>
Allocate responsibility to children	Allow children to participate and be independent when possible. Educators often forget that the service exists for the children and that the environment is meant to give them a sense of belonging. Remember that children are capable of taking on responsibilities such as setting up or packing away, particularly if educator have high expectations of their abilities and they are supported, encouraged and thanked for their efforts.

Documenting routines, timetables and transitions

Routines, timetables and transitions should be flexible yet clear in their structure.

Each educator and family should be able to identify the flow of the day. A timetable displaying routines helps this to occur.

The timetable should reflect the type of curriculum being offered, change as the needs of children and families alter and be developed by all educators working with the children, as well as families and children where possible.

The following is an example of a timetable outlining routines and transition times.

Timetable	
8.00am	Children and families arrive Indoor–outdoor play options are available
9.00am	Group time
9.15am	Morning tea
9.45am	Indoor–outdoor play options
11.00am	Music and dance program
11.30am	Prepare for lunch
11.45am	Lunch
12.30pm	Indoor–outdoor play options
1.30pm	Home time

Practice Task 9

- Which of the following statements are correct about routines, timetables and transitions? Select yes or no for each one.
 - Routines benefit adults and children as they provide predictability so that everyone is ready for the next part of the day. * Yes * No
 - An action that is designed to meet the needs of a child as a first priority is called a child-centred practice or a child-centred routine. * Yes * No
 - Being child-centred means that you understand the needs of the children and provide for these needs as a priority. * Yes * No
 - A child's day is filled with transitions and these are often times that are difficult for them to manage. * Yes * No
 - A documented daily timetable helps children feel secure and respected. It is based around the routine practices that meet educators' rosters. * Yes * No

3D Designing play experiences

Learning opportunities occur through play, planned experiences and intentional teaching.

They will also be spontaneous and natural. Children are continually learning from their environment and the people around them. The curriculum should be holistic, flexible and allow children to adjust the environment to their learning needs at the time. Curriculum design should provide play experiences that allow for continuity of learning.

Planned and unplanned curriculum

Planned curriculum includes all the activities and experiences you thought about and prepared for.

Planned curriculum is usually based on observation records collected and analysed, or an interest you notice and follow up. It may include any intentional teaching you provide, the group experiences or projects you develop and the way you deliberately set up the environment, interact or demonstrate.

Unplanned curriculum is the result of spontaneous activity. It stems from an unexpected event that you choose to develop into greater value. To make the most of spontaneous learning, continually evaluate what is happening. Try to determine whether the children are engaged in experiences and are learning through their own actions, or whether your involvement would be supportive.

Planned and unplanned curriculum should be based on children's interest and enthusiasm. Consider how you can include the children's choices and ideas in experiences that relate to EYLF outcomes. Apply principles, such as 'Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning', and 'Collaborative leadership and teamwork', as a catalyse for thinking about your practice during this time, and to confirm you are:

- using a holistic approach
- being responsive to children
- allowing children to learn through play in environments that provide learning opportunities
- providing meaningful intentional teaching
- reflecting cultures, those that are evident as well as the wider cultural backgrounds of your local area and Australia
- respecting and sharing knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and values
- continuing to practice incorporating routines that are aligned with family and respect families and their needs
- are based on your assessments and evaluations for learning.

Example

Planned and unplanned curriculum

The following examples show both planned and unplanned curriculum.

Example 1: Planned curriculum

Maria, an educator, observes Witney using thick black crayons. Witney writes numbers roughly but legibly on the paper. Witney shows Maria the paper. She points to the number '4' and says it is how old she is.

Maria analyses this event to gain a perspective that Witney has:

- knowledge of numbers
- strengths in writing and recognising numbers
- interest in writing.

Maria links this to Outcome 5, Sub-outcome: Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.

Maria plans and provides an experience that allows Witney to extend her knowledge, strengths and interests while allowing for her open-ended use of materials.

Example 2: Unplanned curriculum

Tonya, an educator, is listening to two children at one of the rope swings while she supervises the outdoor play area. She hears them arguing about who gets to go first and who has to push. Tonya uses this unplanned event to teach the children how to use their legs to swing themselves.

She asks, 'Jenny and Ben, do you know how to push yourselves so you can both swing together?'

Tonya records this experience, linking it to Outcome 3, sub-outcome: Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing.

She plans to add a variety of other equipment where the children learn to propel their bodies.

Child-initiated learning

Children learn in different ways – through listening, seeing and doing.

Child-initiated learning means that the child has chosen their activity and are learning through this. This may be an informal learning experience that involves play and results in learning, or the child may initiate a learning experience in which adults participate and guide the learning. Each curriculum should have a balance of child-initiated and educator-led learning.



Allow children to direct their own learning based on their interests.

Much of the learning that occurs through play will happen spontaneously, so will not be planned. Spontaneous learning is valuable on its own, but can be coupled with intentional teaching to extend its value. Your goal is to provide environments that allow children to learn spontaneously through play. Valuable play experiences enhance children's confidence.

Educator-led learning

Educator-led learning should not be disruptive to the learning that occurs naturally or through child investigation.

Educator-led learning may occur through a planned experience such as a group time or an intentional teaching opportunity, or may be part of the interactions you provide throughout the day in experiences and activities that occur.

The curriculum will be informed by the learning and development you notice. When you participate with children, ideas may be generated that can be turned into structured learning experiences. These experiences should be meaningful or lead to opportunities that support children to initiate learning themselves.

To create a balance of child-initiated and educator-led learning, think about the roles you play.

Educator roles in play

The roles you take in children's play should extend its value and increase children's agency.

Think carefully about the play that is occurring and the messages or cues the children are sending to determine which roles you can take during play. You might take on one or more of the following roles.

Observer	<p>An observer watches, listens and tries to figure out what the play is about by understanding the children's perspective and interests. An observer ensures the children are challenged yet not frustrated.</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 ➤ structured activity. <p>Careful provision means you will support the play and allow it to continue. You can also provide for 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. This might involve supporting a child who is frustrated.</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 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. It can strengthen the child-educator relationship, as the interaction allows both parties to learn more about each other.</p>

Changing roles during play

Often when you take on a role in play, something will happen 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 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

Cues that tell you to change your involvement	What you should do	New role
Items are not being cared for or are being used unsafely	Offer to remove items that are not required or suggest alternatives	Provider or mediator
Play extends	Provide additional resources or planned teaching	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

Your daily interactions promote play and learning. By responding to children's needs you start to build relationships with them and show them that you care. Plan to involve yourself sensitively in children's play and to listen carefully, giving your full attention. Provide interactions that show that you have planned routines that allow time for learning and practising.

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.

'Here, Abraham and Jeanette, there are many engines and carriages for you to choose from!'



Intentional teaching

Becoming involved in experiences, routines and transitions helps you to guide or model actions. This is called intentional teaching.

The following are some examples of intentional teaching.

Modelling and demonstrating	Showing a toddler how to hit pegs with a mallet by doing it yourself.
Using open questions	Asking what the children might do to make the sand stick together to build a castle.
Speculating	Helping a child to feed the fish and commenting that you are interested in how many different types of fish there are.
Explaining	Discussing insects and explaining that spiders have eight legs.
Problem-solving and shared thinking	Working with the children to create limits for a new experience.

Intentional teaching could be spontaneous, or could be something you build into your plan in order to:

- have a consistent outcome
- allow all educators to participate
- be certain the experience is valuable and meaningful.

Sustained shared thinking

Sustained shared thinking – either spontaneous or planned – can occur between adults and children.

Sustained shared thinking can focus on a particular topic but incorporate a range of ideas and thoughts, some initiated by the educator or family and some by the children. Children may participate in the conversation depending on their interests and needs.

A sustained shared conversation might become part of an inquiry process and this could build into ongoing evaluation and reflection.

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning includes time where children work with their peer group, cooperating and learning about each other to achieve goals.

It is also a method for children to learn self-help skills.

Review of the curriculum could occur as part of a collaborative learning process, or collaborative learning could be reflected on to identify if it is being incorporated effectively and regularly.

Providing choice

To provide choice, offer a variety of experiences or spaces that allow each child to comfortably participate and switch between them.

This provides variety, reduces waiting times and supports children to be involved in activities that interest them.

Apart from variety and capacity, activities should cater for children's individual interests and strengths. By considering the interests and strengths of the children in the group, as well as the culture and lifestyle of their families, you will discover a wide range of possibilities.

Older children are able to provide their own ideas for activities and experiences. They may answer questions, participate in brainstorming with a group or take responsibility for collecting ideas from other children.

Example

Providing appropriate and adequate choices

The children help to set up the following activities after lunch:

- pasting
- drawing with crayons
- block play
- book corner
- water play.

Helena is interested in active play; there are no choices for her.

Ewan is interested in creative activities; he has four choices.

Scott is interested in dramatic play; he has one choice.

Suitable topics and projects

As children's ability to understand the world expands, so will their questions about the environment.

These discussions are usually complex, and may extend into larger projects that span hours, days or weeks. The following table provides some examples of activities.

Activity	Discussion ideas	Project ideas
Extend on day-to-day routines and interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Where foods come from ➤ What happens when you flush the toilet ➤ How you get water from a tap ➤ What it's like where you live ➤ What pets need ➤ Why people are different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Go on an excursion to a farm ➤ Learn about food chains ➤ Find out about different climates around the world ➤ Adopt a pet and care for it ➤ Explore the lifecycle of a butterfly ➤ Create family trees

Activity	Discussion ideas	Project ideas
Explore the surrounding natural environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Shape, colour and texture of the materials ➤ Where the materials come from ➤ What they are used for in nature ➤ What they can be used for now ➤ Why we should leave natural materials in the environment ➤ How different parts of the ecosystem rely on one another ➤ How do First Nations people care for Country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Keep a log of the things you find, including names and drawings or photos ➤ Encourage children to explore the environment using a magnifying glass ➤ Establish an ant farm ➤ Creating or joining a Bush Kinder program
Take care of plants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ What plants need to grow ➤ How they provide oxygen ➤ Which plants are native to the area and which plants are introduced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Grow a garden, including vegetables and herbs ➤ Create a lifecycle of plants in your garden ➤ Develop an album of plants, including photos and scientific names
Find out about sustainability topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recycling ➤ Reusing ➤ Reducing water and electricity use ➤ Reducing waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Develop a recycling system, worm farm or compost heap ➤ Find ways to reuse items in the service creatively ➤ Implement reduction plans ➤ Have a rainwater tank installed and monitor rainfall and water level

Incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

Children benefit from positive and respectful learning experiences.

By reflecting on and engaging children with many different aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, children can become familiar with Country (all living things) and First Nation peoples. This helps them value the outdoor, natural environment and feel belonging and understanding of the oldest culture.

To be sure this is not tokenistic or theme based:

- include aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture at all times
- create a balance between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences and displays and experiences and displays that represent other cultures
- utilise cultural experiences and displays as methods for introducing other cultural aspects, always remembering to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural aspects.

The goal is not to oversaturate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, but to have it represented consistently so children recognise and respect this.

Developing an Acknowledgement of Country

An Acknowledgment of Country is a short and clear written or oral statement.

'Acknowledgment' means showing awareness and understanding of something. In this case, it shows awareness that we are living on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander land and that we respect the country and people.

The acknowledgement helps children learn the name of the traditional custodians of the area where the service is based. This is different to a Welcome to Country, which should only be performed by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person.

A common acknowledgement states, 'We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet today. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.'

Of course, an acknowledgement is meaningless if the words are not explained. Children will need to know:

- why the acknowledgement is being said – to show respect and care for the first people who lived on the land we are on.
- what a traditional owner is – someone who owned the land first before anyone else.
- where the name of the traditional owner comes from – the name of the mob or group of people (like a surname or town).
- what respect is – the feeling that we care about others.
- who Elders are – people that are older and wiser and have lots of support and are able to share important information with us.
- why we say past, present and emerging – to show respect for the way that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders pass their stories and culture on, not only today, but yesterday. We also hope they will pass their stories and culture on in the future.

The children may be part of developing their own acknowledgement.

Learning spaces

Learning spaces should show respect and interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. This may spark questions and initiate interests.

While your goal might be to incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences, many activities resonate with children for different reasons.

- Group discussions and times where groups are together, might be called 'yarning circles'. The term represents a time where stories are shared. It is an equaliser, showing how all participants – adult and child – are important to the experience. To make the 'yarning circle' most effective, sit on the floor with children rather than raising yourself to a position that is dominant.



Say an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of a session, day or group time.

- Natural objects such as rocks, stones, shells, bark, leaves and reeds can add stimulation and texture in experiences and displays. Children can use these objects in many different ways, while they do so, discussion can occur about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their use of the materials. Their access to the outdoors and natural environments is key to this goal.
- Displays of words, images, artworks and maps can help you celebrate, acknowledge and learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. To avoid this becoming tokenistic, you can add words, images, artworks and maps of a variety of ethnic backgrounds.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork can be used to represent symbols and ideas. Information about the artists, such as their name, picture and a simple map showing where they are from. These art works work alongside other art ideas, showing diversity of art and how different messages are communicated. Remember that art work created by an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person is called 'Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art'. When children who are not of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background create art that uses similar symbols or techniques, the art should be recognised as having used the techniques or symbols. It is not 'Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander art'.

Books and stories

There is a range of contemporary and traditional stories available, including fiction and non-fiction stories.

Dreaming stories (creation stories) can be shared in a picture book, told orally in person by a visiting Indigenous Elder or educator, or a video or online resource narrated by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander storyteller.

Dreaming stories reveal First Nations knowledge of Australia's long-term history. For example, there are many stories that contain giant animals. These are references to the extinct megafauna that existed in Australia a long time ago and are animals that would complement discussion about dinosaurs.

Dreaming stories can connect children to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and be used to initiate sharing about:

- spiritual belief systems
- myths and legends
- features of the local land and how to care for it
- how to behave morally and kindly towards others
- language
- symbols
- customs that should be followed.

Art and craft

Crafts are handmade objects that are mostly used for practical or functional purposes.

They tend to be designed or decorated in specific ways according to local traditions. Many handcrafted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artefacts are mass-produced and sold in souvenir shops, including didgeridoos, boomerangs, music sticks and dilly bags.

Art can be explored to help children understand symbols and meanings, and to comprehend the rich stories that emerge from a single artwork. Children can be shown traditional methods of mixing paint pastes and try painting on different surfaces.

Research the protocols surrounding artifacts or souvenirs. You may learn about rules such as didgeridoo playing being a male only activity, that boomerangs are not used throughout the whole of Australia and may be used as music sticks, and that smoking ceremonies are practiced by all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Community visitors

Hearing stories directly from a respected member of the community, such as a traditional custodian or other Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander educator or community member, will provide an opportunity to model interactions that show respect.

Visitors may share personal experiences, family history and traditional stories. They may even bring artefacts that help children gain deeper understanding of the local culture. Before the visit takes place, staff at the centre should be made aware of the need for sensitivity when asking questions about matters relating to traditional culture and negative historical events.

Invitations to community visitors might extend to other ethnic groups, including families being involved themselves.

Community visitors should also be offered financial compensation for their time and travel costs.

Incorporating song and dance

Singing and dancing together is an opportunity to build a sense of community among the children.

Children can either learn traditional songs (where protocols are taken into consideration) or contemporary songs that help them learn about the ideas and experiences of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Songs also increase familiarity with the sound of the local language.

Dance is used to mark important or special occasions in many cultures; it is often used for storytelling, celebrations and spiritual reasons. Encourage children to participate and learn what various dances mean to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Documenting experiences

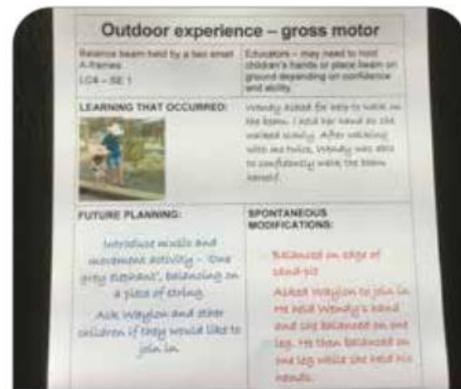
An experience plan demonstrates the reasons for the experience and what you are expecting to occur.

A planned experience should allow the child to progress in a certain area of development.

An experience plan may be used to:

- clarify experience details
- set a process in motion
- clarify roles
- demonstrate a thought process which can be shared with others
- identify and clarify any intentional teaching that will occur.

The following are examples of individual and group experience documentation. The content is based on the learning frameworks.



Use experience plans to show a child's progress in a certain area.

Example

Documenting individual experiences

Individual experience	
Child	Toby
Observation	Toby remained in the book corner after group time and looked through a book showing pictures of farm animals. He was heard telling Sasha that one farm animal was a horse and it ran fast on sand at his Pa's house. Toby told Sasha that his Pa's horse was an Appaloosa because it had spots on its back.
Date observed	13 March
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Toby demonstrated an interest in horses and he knew facts about them. ➤ He was able to share these facts with Sasha. ➤ He also showed he has a relationship with his Pa that included sharing information important to the family.
EYLF links chosen	<p>Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners</p> <p>Sub-outcome: Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions, such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity</p>

Plan	Horses in sand tray
Materials required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sand and sand tray for indoors ➤ Model horses of various types ➤ Pebbles, bark, grass and wooden blocks that could be used as fences ➤ Poster naming horse breeds
Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Place near wall so only two children can have access. ➤ Ensure the tray is not overcrowded – the horses should be able to 'run' around the tray.
Role of educators (intentional teaching)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Talk to the children about the horses. Use the poster to pick out the horse breeds by matching. ➤ Ask open questions; for example: 'What do you think the horses do on the farm?'; 'What do you think the horses eat?' ➤ Ask Toby why the horses run on the sand.

Example

Documenting group experiences

Group experience	
Group name	Red group
Observation	This is a new grouping of children. The children are from different cultural backgrounds with different characteristics. I have overheard some children saying that other children cannot play with them because they are a girl, too small, don't know the rules, etc.
Date observed and analysed	13–15 March
EYLF links	Principle – Respect for diversity Practice – Cultural responsiveness Outcome 2 – Children are connected with and contribute to their world Sub-outcome – Children respond to diversity with respect
Plan	Similarities and differences – Human bingo
Materials required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear space ➤ CD player ➤ CD with short excerpts of music – different genres and tempos

Strategies (intentional teaching)

Gain attention:

- Shake tambourine until everyone is seated.
- Once the children are on the mat we will say our "Acknowledgement of Country, then sign the words 'Hello' and 'Welcome' to each other in Auslan.

Explain game:

I will ask for children to make groups based on the things I call out, such as features that are the same or different about you and others.

Main experience:

- Children dance to music. Stop the music and call out a characteristic and have the children group themselves according to the characteristic.
- Each time the music is played I will ask children to move to the music using their ideas of how the music makes them feel.
- When the music stops I will call out a personal characteristic – I will start and end with, 'Everyone from red group stand together'. This will help group cohesiveness.
- I will ask the children to group together based on characteristics such as eye colour, hair colour, clothing, height, gender and favourite colour.
- Sometimes I will ask the children to group in ways they are similar and sometimes ways they are different. For example, find someone with the same hair colour, find someone with a different hair colour.
- If children have difficulty choosing movements to the music being played, I will encourage them to follow another child or give some suggestions.

Conclusion:

- I will ask about the similarities and differences with questions like: 'What did you learn about each other?', 'What was interesting about the game?'
- This will encourage discussion about things learnt about each other and how the children feel about each other.



Practice Task 10

1. Draw a line to match each aspect about designing play experiences to its definition.

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| * Educator-led learning | * Includes all the activities and experiences you thought about, prepared for and documented. |
| * Child-initiated learning | * The child has chosen their activity and are learning through this. |
| * Daily interactions | * Should not be disruptive to the learning that occurs naturally or through child investigation. |
| * Planned curriculum | * Could be spontaneous or something you build into your curriculum. |
| * Intentional teaching | * Promote learning and play by responding to children's needs and building relationships. |
| * Unplanned curriculum | * May occur spontaneously, however, should still be consistent with the approved learning framework principles and practices |

2. Select true or false for the following statement.

Child-initiated learning should make up half the curriculum, while educator-led learning should make up the other half. This requires a good balance.

* True * False

3. Which of the following are true about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences.

- Children should be exposed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts daily, as part of planned and unplanned experiences, and this should be part of their holistic understanding of culture.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities need to be provided separately to other activities so that their value is made more important than that of other ethnic groups.
- Experiences might originate from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander concepts, or those concepts might enter into other experiences.
- Children will understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture better if it is separate and is seen in all activities provided.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander experiences always reflect history.

3E Modifying curriculum

According to the NQS, a curriculum must be constantly modified to enable it to be responsive.

The following table outlines some guidance from the NQS.

Element	Guidance
Element 1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demonstrating flexibility in delivery to incorporate children's ideas, cultures and interests so that experiences are relevant and engaging ➤ Allowing children to initiate and contribute to play experiences that emerge from their own ideas and interests ➤ Encouraging children to repeat, revisit and add to projects or experiences that they have initiated
Element 1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Seeking opportunities for spontaneous learning in routines ➤ Minimising times when children are expected to do the same thing at the same time ➤ Employing strategies to involve children in designing the program and organising routines
Element 1.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Making use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' to extend children's learning
Element 1.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supporting play experiences initiated by children ➤ Allowing children to direct their own play and leisure experiences with their peers

Reasons for modifying experiences

Effective evaluation can identify a need for modification.

Try evaluating the learning environment and the experiences children are involved in by looking at why modification may be required.

Goal	Reasons for modification
To support all aspects of children's learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New ideas emerge ➤ The learning experience is too challenging ➤ The learning experience is not challenging enough ➤ The children have explored this concept and are ready to learn something new ➤ More natural or open-ended resources are required

Goal	Reasons for modification
To promote opportunities for sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ More or less children want to be involved ➤ More or less space is required ➤ There are distractions, so you need to move to another area ➤ The discussion evolves into a larger learning concept ➤ You need to use more open questions
To ensure that families and the community are respected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involvement is not suitable at present ➤ Families express a certain wish about the service ➤ Changes in the family influence the plans ➤ You learn something new about a family
To enhance opportunities for children's learning from other educators, children and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Timetables need to be more flexible ➤ Inadequate communication or involvement is noted
To foster children's development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monitoring is not provided ➤ Monitoring takes too wide a focus ➤ The EYLF/MTOP is not fully represented
To scaffold learning and development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Skills, interests, ideas and knowledge are emerging

Responsive modification

Curriculum planning needs to be a continuous and responsive process.

Contemporary practice alerts you to the need for a curriculum to be continuously evolving. To do this, you must adapt to the needs of children and adults (both educators and families) throughout each day, and build on interests and ideas as they arise.

Planning is not only based on the daily or weekly schedule of your service rostering system (planning time), but on the things you observe and hear daily.

You will be encouraging children to:

- direct their own play and leisure experiences with peers
- initiate experiences
- share observations and ideas with you.

Contemporary planning leads to a responsive curriculum and reacts to what is happening at the time in ways that meet the immediate learning and development identified. This creates a scaffolding approach as you respond to emerging skills, interests, ideas and knowledge.

Traditional planning involved noticing information, recording information, waiting until planning times for a change to be arranged, then implementing a modification that may or may not still be relevant.

Children’s interests are evolving all the time as they enjoy trying new things and having ideas that move in different directions. What they are involved in and passionate about one day is different to the next. This happens as they are constantly finding out about new things and wanting to expand their knowledge and express their thoughts.

Example

Contemporary design

The following are examples of traditional and contemporary design. In one example a traditional style is used based on evaluation that prepares for the future plan. The other example is based on contemporary expectations that the curriculum should evolve with learning and development as it occurs.

Child’s interests/ skills	Traditional planning	Contemporary design
<p>The child demonstrates an interest in beetles.</p>	<p>The educator documents this. At planning time the educator evaluates and plans to include beetle-focused experiences in the next full cycle of preparation.</p>	<p>The educator acts immediately (where possible) to include experiences that extend on this interest, including providing intentional teaching. This occurs in consultation with and with involvement of the child.</p> <p>If the interest cannot be catered for immediately, the adult and child work together to plan when this can occur.</p>
<p>The child is developing dramatic play skills (emerging skill).</p>	<p>The educator documents this. At planning time the educator evaluates and plans to include dramatic play opportunities in the next full cycle of preparation.</p>	<p>The educator acts immediately to include dramatic play experiences, collecting materials and creating settings. This occurs in consultation with and involvement of the child.</p>
<p>The child is challenged by a fine motor task.</p>	<p>The educator documents this. At planning time the educator evaluates and plans to include dramatic play opportunities in the next full cycle of preparation.</p>	<p>The educator acts immediately to include fine motor experiences that support this emerging skill. This occurs in consultation with and involvement of the child.</p>

Guiding outcomes

The learning framework sub-outcome you decide to link to your observation records help to guide modification.

Use this sub-outcome and your knowledge and perspectives of the child to identify future opportunities for learning, then put these into place.

To gather more information on how you might plan what to do next, you can read the EYLF. Under each sub-outcome there is a list headed: 'Educators promote this learning when they, for example:'

You can research information about the approved learning frameworks at: aspirelr.link/approved-learning-frameworks.

Example

Modifying curriculum

Andy is an educator who modifies the play space each day when an activity or experience needs extension or is not of interest.

Monday – Andy responds to an interest

Andy modifies the play dough table when he notices it has not been used at all.

Andy decides to change this activity, linking it to a child's interest. A child has visited an Aboriginal reserve on the weekend and is talking about what he saw.

Andy decides to include Aboriginal art. He asks the child for ideas about materials and how these might be set up. Andy adds some posters, artefacts and books to the room so the children are inspired, yet not limited in their creative imagination.

Andy links the modification to Learning Outcome 2, Sub-outcome: Children respond to diversity with respect.

Tuesday – Andy responds to an idea

Andy notices children are playing shops in the home area. He asks if they would like to add some materials to extend this shop. The children like the idea and help Andy to set up the space and add what they need.

Some additional craft activities emerge as the children decide to make a cash register and money.

Andy links the modifications to:

- Learning Outcome 2, Sub-outcome: Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens
- Learning Outcome 5, Sub-outcome: Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.

Wednesday – Andy responds to interests

Andy notices that the children have explored the Aboriginal art experience and are starting to use the paint with their fingers. One child has moved from painting on paper to painting on the table.

Andy responds by removing the paper and other materials. He clears the table and adds finger paint to the paint already provided so children can explore the difference in texture and how one moves more easily on the table surface. He asks children who use the experience if they would like to add additional materials to the table. Over the next few days the children add sand, bark, leaves and foam rollers.

Andy links the modifications to Learning Outcome 4, Sub-outcome: Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions, such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.

Thursday – Andy responds to learning

Andy is reading a story to some children. They are interested in the obstacle course in the story. They talk about obstacles and decide they would like to create a challenge course.

Andy responds by asking if they would like to design this on some recycled paper and then develop it using real materials. He works with the children to identify the types of challenges they want to include and how they can create these. They explore safety and design. They set out the course on paper then work together to develop the course as designed. This requires problem-solving as they identify issues. Other children become involved as this develops.

Andy links the modification to:

- Learning Outcome 3, Sub-outcome: Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing
- Learning Outcome 4, Sub-outcome: Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes, such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating

Friday – Andy responds to belonging

Andy notices a child is becoming upset when routines change. The transitions from play to another activity are most marked.

Andy allocates Pamela, another educator, to work with the child. Pamela is responsible for giving the child a five-minute warning of a change. She will stay in the area with the child, and when the transition time occurs, she will support the child and encourage them. She will create fun and interest while strengthening their relationship.

Andy links this modification to Learning Outcome 1, Sub-outcome: Children feel safe, secure and supported.

Planning time

When Andy is timetabled for curriculum planning, he uses this time for:

- meetings
- collecting materials
- spontaneous discussions and extensions
- going to the library
- developing a new project extension
- critically reflecting with others
- communicating about the curriculum with other educators.

Rather than simply planning a range of activities and sticking to this, Andy is prepared to follow up on interests as they arise. He involves children in the planning and implementation.

Documenting modifications

To document an ever-evolving curriculum, flexible methods are required.

Strategies are numerous, however each must allow for constant change. Despite the method chosen to document curriculum, each must show purpose and reflect children and their families. Some structure and understanding must be included so that the curriculum is based only on free play rather than play for learning.

Curriculums might be built around:

- learning dispositions
- learning outcomes
- curriculum areas such as art, dramatic play, routines and transitions.



Practice Task 11

1. Draw a line to match each element of the NQS to how it encourages a consistent modified curriculum.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| * Element 1.2.2 | * Allowing children to initiate and contribute to play experiences that emerge from their own ideas and interests to their satisfaction. |
| * Element 1.2.3 | * Making use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' to extend children's learning. |
| * Element 1.1.2 | * Minimising the times during which children are expected to do the same thing at the same time and employing strategies to involve children in designing the program and organising routines. |
| * Element 1.1.3 | * Supporting play experiences initiated by children and allowing them to direct their own play and leisure experiences. |

2. Which of the following are reasons for modifying the curriculum? Select all that apply.

- To promote opportunities for sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning
- To foster and scaffold children's learning and development
- To ensure that families and the community are respected
- To enhance opportunities for children's learning from other educators, children and their families
- To promote healthy eating and nutritious foods

3. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- a. Contemporary practice alerts educators to the need for a curriculum to be continuously evolving, to adapt to the needs of children and to build on interests and ideas as they arise. * Yes * No

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| b. Curriculum plans must follow the learning framework principles, practices and outcomes. These are guidelines that must be demonstrated and there must be multiple records that these are included. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Each learning framework sub-outcome includes information on how educators promote learning in the element. | * Yes | * No |
| d. The learning framework sub-outcome analysed as linking to an observation record helps guide modifications. | * Yes | * No |
| e. When educators modify the curriculum it must be part of a planned and documented strategy. This is best completed as part of the planning time they are provided each week, fortnight or month. | * Yes | * No |
| f. Scaffolding should occur so that educators build on children's learning and development through planned and unplanned experiences and activities. | * Yes | * No |

Summary

- Curriculum planning needs to be a continuous process.
- Philosophy and service expectations will determine curriculum display and documentation.
- Contemporary methods of curriculum documentation include the use of webs, journals, folders or displays.
- Learning environments play a large part in helping children achieve planned outcomes.
- An action that is designed to meet the needs of a child as a first priority is called a child-centred practice or a child-centred routine.
- Planned curriculum includes all the activities and experiences you thought about and prepared for.
- Educator-led learning should not be disruptive to the learning that occurs naturally or through child investigation.
- By responding to children's needs, you start to build relationships with them and show them that you care.
- To provide choice, offer a variety of experiences or spaces that allow each child to comfortably participate and switch between activities.
- Try evaluating the learning environment and the experiences children are involved in by looking at why modification may be required.

Learning Checkpoint 3

Designing curriculum

Use the image below to answer the questions that follow.



Wendy is walking on the balance beam for the first time. She has asked Susie, an educator, for help.

1. Which of the following would you analyse as information that will inform curriculum design? Select all that apply.

- Wendy is wearing sandals.
- Wendy is walking on the balance beam for the first time.
- Wendy asked to hold Susie's hand.
- Susie is wearing a hat.
- Wendy is using her left hand to hold Susie's hand.
- The rocks in the background are natural materials.

2. Which learning framework outcomes and sub-outcomes link to the information you would analyse in this image? Select all that apply.

- Learning Outcome 1, Sub-outcome: Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Learning Outcome 2, Sub-outcome: Children respond to diversity with respect
- Learning Outcome 3, Sub-outcome: Children become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing
- Learning Outcome 4, Sub-outcome: Children develop a growth mindset and learning disposition, such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Learning Outcome 5, Sub-outcome: Children use digital technologies and media to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

3. Draw a line to match each example of what might happen on the left, to the unplanned curriculum modification that might occur on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| * Wendy walks the beam holding hands two more times, then successfully walks the beam herself. | * Susie scaffolds Wendy's learning by placing the beam on the ground. |
| * Wendy falls off the balance beam while the educator is holding her hand. | * Susie scaffolds Wendy's learning by asking if she wants to try walking with holding hands this time. |
| * Wendy climbs off the beam after a successful balance. She looks around for something to do. | * Susie scaffolds Wendy's learning by asking if she would like her to leave the beam out so she can show her mum how she can balance. |
| * Wendy gets to the end of the balance beam and is very pleased with herself. She wants to walk the beam again. | * Susie asks Wendy if she can see other places she might balance. |

4. Draw a line to match each of the following examples to either child-initiated or educator-led learning.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| * The educator asks Wendy if she can see other places she might balance. | * Child-initiated learning |
| * Wendy gets to the end of the balance beam and is very pleased with herself. She wants to walk the beam again. | * Child-initiated learning |
| * The educator scaffolds Wendy's learning by asking if she needs to hold hands this time. | * Child-initiated learning |
| * Wendy climbs off the beam after a successful balance. She looks around for something to do and runs to the sandpit. | * Educator-led learning |
| * Wendy asks the educator if she can build a cubby over the balance beam. She asks for a sheet to put over the beam. | * Educator-led learning |

5. Which of the following images shows responsive curriculum documentation that represents Wendy's learning? Select all that apply.

DAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Experience	Balance beam				
Learning that occurred	Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam.	Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam.	Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam.	Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam.	Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam.
Spontaneous modifications	None				
Future planning	NA	NA	NA	NA	One day ahead

WEEK	MAY 20 th TO MAY 24 th
Experience	Balance beam held by two A-frames
Learning that occurred	Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam. One day ahead.
Spontaneous modifications	Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam. One day ahead.
Future planning	One day ahead

Outdoor experience -- gross motor

held by a two small A-frames. Educators -- they need to hold children's hands or place beams on ground depending on confidence and ability.

SPONTANEOUS MODIFICATIONS:
Balanced on edge of sand-pit. Asked Wrayton to join in. He held Wendy's hand and she balanced on one leg. He then balanced on one leg while she held his hands.

FUTURE PLANNING:
Introduce music and movement activity - 'One grey elephant', balancing on a piece of string. Ask Wrayton and other children if they would like to join in.

LEARNING THAT OCCURRED:
Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam. I held her hand as she walked slowly. After walking with me twice, Wendy was able to confidently walk the beam herself.

Outdoor experience -- gross motor

Balance beam held by two small A-frames. LC4 - SE 1. Educators -- may need to hold children's hands or place beam on ground depending on confidence and ability.

LEARNING THAT OCCURRED:
Wendy asked for help to walk on the beam. I held her hand as she walked slowly. After walking with me twice, Wendy was able to confidently walk the beam herself.

FUTURE PLANNING:
Introduce music and movement activity - 'One grey elephant', balancing on a piece of string. Ask Wrayton and other children if they would like to join in.

SPONTANEOUS MODIFICATIONS:
Balanced on edge of sand-pit. Asked Wrayton to join in. He held Wendy's hand and she balanced on one leg. He then balanced on one leg while she held his hands.

6. Which of the following might be appropriate ways for Susie to increase group enjoyment of transitions? Select all that apply.

- Ask the children to demonstrate how they balance in different ways before they move to the next routine.
- Include an activity where the children balance in their chosen way. As each child topples over they move to the next routine.
- Have the children balance on one leg to fill waiting time. If they topple over they miss out on the routine and must balance again until the next routine is ready.
- Get every child to show how they balance so that the curriculum can be based on balance for next week.

7. Draw a line to match each learning framework principle, practice or outcome on the left to the example of intentional teaching on the right.

- * Outcome 2, Sub-outcome:
Children are connected with
and contribute to their world
- * Principle: Equity, inclusion
and high expectations
- * Outcome 5, Sub-outcome:
Children engage with a range
of texts and gain meaning
from these texts
- * Practice: Cultural
responsiveness
- * Practice: Learning through
play
- * Susie sets up a bouncing
beam next to the balance
beam, then explains how
the beam works and why it
is bouncy.
- * Susie sets up a stacking
game and demonstrates
how the items can be
stacked.
- * Susie talks about the
timber the beam is made
of, describing how large the
tree must have been and
asking if Wendy would like
to see a photo of a tree like
the one the beam came
from.
- * When Wendy succeeds at
walking the beam, Susie
teaches her a new word,
'balance'.
- * Suzie incorporates
Aboriginal dance into a
group time. The children
balance on each leg as they
dance.



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

- 4A** Setting up the physical environment
- 4B** Modelling and promoting learning

Acting to implement the curriculum

A number of factors should be considered to facilitate an appropriate and inviting learning environment.

Plan and set up the physical environment in a way in a way that suits the needs of the children and considers the purpose and aims you wish to achieve. The environment needs to promote holistic and child-focused play opportunities that allow for adult interactions. These factors can also be used as a basis for evaluating the learning environment.

4A Setting up the physical environment

Curriculum planning needs to be a continuous process.

To implement a learning experience, you may require:

- transport
- equipment
- a venue
- curriculum/learning materials
- staff
- food and drink
- families
- community members.

These resources are not always readily available. You may need to:

- purchase materials or place them on a purchasing list
- reserve or book materials or spaces
- borrow from internal or external sources
- employ staff
- engage specialist staff with particular skills or availability
- involve families or the community
- access funds
- involve volunteers.

Many educators find it useful to pull together their needed resources well in advance as they plan for the next period of time. You might:

- put together a planning pack
- place your resources in a specific area
- make a list.

Be mindful of what you aim to achieve by having materials and resources out for the children. Too many resources at any given experience can cause confusion and frustration due to clutter. Overcrowding the play area will limit your ability to set up an inviting, child-focused and aesthetically pleasing experience.

Ensuring an appropriate environment

The physical environment should suit the needs of the children.

The materials should be attractive to the children and carefully placed to allow ease of use. This helps children to feel engaged with their learning environment.

When children are involved in activities that are open-ended and stimulate a response, they are led into an experience that may bring out new skills and knowledge, and create reasons to interact with others as part of their learning.

To set up a physical learning environment that can capture attention, stimulate a response and engage children, you must:

- be prepared for the children to adapt materials or change the experience
- support experimentation
- be prepared to add more materials
- provide for all possibilities; for example, cleaning up mess and slippery floors.



The environment should be set up in a way that inspires and stimulates children.

Aesthetics

Some people like an environment with lots of clear space, while other people prefer a lived-in, homely feeling.

Your challenge is to balance these needs and create environments that suit the needs of all the children using the space.

When planning the aesthetics of your environment, consider the following aspects of the spaces you are using.

Lighting	<p>Lighting can give a space warmth and character, and can highlight specific features.</p> <p>Experiences should be set up as close to natural light as possible or under good lighting (energy-saving globes labelled 'cool white' work well).</p>
Colour	<p>Colour creates mood and highlights features. Use bright colours to attract the children's attention and encourage an active and stimulating atmosphere. Use soft colours and neutral tones to create a quiet, relaxing space.</p>
Displays	<p>Displays of pictures, posters, props and children's artwork can provide a sense of belonging and give visually stimulating information. Make displays uncluttered, colourful and interesting. They should encourage curiosity – children may use what they see in their pretend play or in creating a piece of artwork, so displays should relate to children's interests or an area of learning.</p> <p>Displays should reflect diversity without stereotyping.</p>
Sounds	<p>Sounds can encourage or inhibit learning. A noisy environment can affect children's concentration. Unnecessary background noise (such as music played for no particular purpose) should be avoided as it raises the overall noise level.</p> <p>Encourage children to use voices and make sounds suitable for the environment. Use music and recorded sounds such as bird songs in a purposeful way, and use silence as well. It is interesting for children to hear their inner thoughts uninterrupted or sounds they have never heard before.</p>
Space	<p>Children learn through play, so many of the experiences you provide should focus on inviting children to play.</p> <p>You want to send a message to the children that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ this space is cared for ➤ play and learning are valued and respected ➤ it is easy to play here ➤ you can change this space and play out your own ideas.

Materials and equipment

Children need easy access to materials, toys and equipment.

These resources need to be regularly refreshed so that:

- they continue to address the children's needs
- children are stimulated in different ways
- a variety of activities is provided.

The resources that are made available to children have an important bearing on the quality and types of learning children can engage in. It is therefore important that materials and equipment:

- match individual children's interests, needs and abilities
- are safe, age-appropriate and in good working order
- are adequate in number to enable children to make choices
- are regularly rotated to ensure children are constantly provided with a variety of activities.



Provide a variety of age-appropriate materials.

Safety

When evaluating the safety of the learning environment, consider the developmental abilities of the children.

This includes their level of:

- understanding of safety and danger
- spontaneous behaviour
- ability to follow limits and guidelines
- curiosity
- interest in adult-modelled behaviour
- independence
- understanding of consequences
- mobility and stability
- barriers to learning.

A safe environment is non-threatening, and should be a space where it is easy to share thoughts and ideas, ask questions and make mistakes as part of learning. The environment should also be set up in a way that meets the accessibility needs of all children.

Time

When children are rushed through learning, they miss opportunities to participate fully.

This may cause frustration and lessen their learning potential. Learning should be unhurried and uninterrupted.

Children need time to:

- make choices and decisions
- become involved
- change direction
- become involved again
- practise and master skills
- form relationships
- express themselves.

When you allow children enough time for their learning, they will become involved and engaged, and will feel challenged and stimulated.

Children may become frustrated or disruptive if they are not allowed to see their learning through to a logical conclusion, so when possible allow activities and games to be completed before changing activities. If this isn't possible, explain the reason to the child and then organise a time when they can continue the activity or learning. For example, 'Jackie, you've been working so hard on building that tower, but it's lunchtime now. Please go and wash your hands for lunch, and I'll make sure your tower is safe so you can work on it again after lunch.'

It can be difficult to judge how long children will continue with the same activity, as each experience will engage children in different ways and be interesting to different children. You should allow children's interest, rather than your planning cycle, to dictate how long an activity is enjoyed for.

People

Staff-child ratios and the qualifications and experience of the educators working with children affect the learning experiences that can be presented to children.

You need space and time to be able to interact with children, enhance social play, model appropriate behaviour and extend learning where possible.

The educators that comprise a team all contribute to the effectiveness of the learning environment. They influence:

- how the area is set up
- what resources and materials are used
- how safe and well supervised the areas are
- whether children are encouraged to take on challenges and use risk-taking skills
- the level of belonging the child feels
- how time and learning are prioritised
- how much time is spent indoors and outdoors.



Ensure staff-child ratios are always maintained.

Shared responsibility

With support, children are able to progress to a point where they can set up and pack away most of the activities and experiences they participate in.

The more responsibility and control children have over their environment, the greater their sense of security, belonging and interest. Therefore, allocating responsibility is an ideal way to help children embrace transition times.

Some ways you can enable children to set up experiences include:

- talking through your needs
- working with them to complete the setup
- providing photos or diagrams that give ideas of how an experience might look
- allowing the child to choose how the setup will look
- giving guidelines and allowing the child to set up according to these.

Include tidying up and resetting as a valuable learning time rather than a chore that must be completed quickly.

Learning opportunities provided by setting up

- Classifying or sorting: Organising things into containers and shelves.
- Placement: Putting things in the correct place.
- Care and respect for the environment and equipment: By helping to care for the equipment the children feel ownership and responsibility for it. Modelling care and respect assists children to gain this skill.
- Cooperation: Working with others to achieve a task.
- Responsibility: Children can be responsible for the task, for leading others, for equipment and for managing their own time and space.
- Independence: Developing skills so that they gain greater competence as they grow.

Families and community

Families and community can be involved in implementing the curriculum.

This might be part of a planned arrangement, such as when the following are arranged:

- Incursion
- Excursion
- Sharing of knowledge, skill or interests
- Extending on culture
- Orientation where new needs and cultures are being aligned
- Initiation of fairs, festivals and community celebrations

They might also be involved in unplanned ways, such as:

- families staying at arrival or coming early and staying until departure
- families becoming involved incidentally when they show interest in what is happening on the day
- donation of materials and resources.

The curriculum will be increased in value when families and the community are involved. By reflecting on and exploring each person's culture, heritage, background and traditions, you are encouraging all people involved in your service to explore these factors and learn about each other from their community.

Ways to include family and community in curriculum implementation

- Neighbourhood walks and using maps and photographs of familiar places for discussion and activities
- Asking families and staff about their community interests and including this information
- Inviting community members to visit and share something about themselves and their role, such as a police officer, grocery store manager or artist

- Providing props that link with community interests and activities, such as grocery items and puppets

- Visiting libraries, museums, markets and parks, and looking at statues, gardens, buildings and signs

- Participating in festivals and recreation activities, such as swimming lessons and music tuition

- Being involved in community initiatives, such as sponsoring a child, raising money and donating goods

- Including child-focused events, such as children's week picnics, library story time and children's art shows

- Organising weekly, fortnightly or monthly visits to a community service, such as an aged care or disability service

- Writing letters or sending pictures

- Participating in environmental care projects

Practice Task 12

1. Which of the following statements are correct about setting up the physical environment? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a. Children find music relaxing, so it should always be playing in the background. | * Yes | * No |
| b. Due to confidentiality reasons, you should not display children's artwork on the walls. | * Yes | * No |
| c. The resources and materials that you use in planning should reflect children's, family, community, interests and developmental needs; including any accessibility needs. | * Yes | * No |
| d. The space that you provide for children should be inviting and flexible. | * Yes | * No |
| e. There needs to be set times for play, and areas must be packed up and cleaned at the same time each day to maintain consistency. | * Yes | * No |
| f. Educators are a valuable resource in ensuring that the learning environment provides children with opportunities to extend their play and development. | * Yes | * No |
| g. Children are too young to play a role in setting up or packing away activities and experiences. They prefer to have everything done for them by the educators. | * Yes | * No |

4B Modelling and promoting learning

The EYLF practices influence how you implement a curriculum.

They support you to act in ways that meet best practice and still allow you to express your personal pedagogy. Your pedagogy in relation to the learning frameworks must be considered when implementing curriculum.

The following is a guide to the practices.

Practices	How you can demonstrate this in your actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Holistic, integrated and reciprocal approaches 	Consider all areas or aspects of the child or children. Think about the perspectives and outcomes of the EYLF that you are aiming to implement.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Responsiveness to children 	Listen to children and take their ideas and thoughts into consideration. Ask them questions and get them involved. Encourage them to set up, make decisions and problem-solve.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Play-based learning and intentionality 	<p>Include play and leisure as a focus. Implement valuable yet realistic group activities and limit long periods of time where children's play lacks choices or opportunities to learn, or where children are confined.</p> <p>Include time where you model and demonstrate. Use open questioning, speculation, explanation, engagement in shared thinking and problem-solving to extend children's thinking and learning.</p> <p>While intentional teaching is important, this does not mean it must be provided as part of an organised group activity. Intentional teaching might occur during particular activities as planned, or spontaneously during play or routines.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Learning environments 	<p>Enrich the environment to make it a place where children grow and learn in an exciting, yet nurturing place.</p> <p>Create interest and wonder at the child's level of understanding.</p> <p>Use different methods to expand on learning, using materials and equipment that children are familiar with, as well as introducing new ideas.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Cultural responsiveness 	<p>Include ideas that support children and adults to respect others, and to learn about them and their needs and ideas.</p> <p>Expand learning to include the world as well as the current environment.</p>

Practices	How you can demonstrate this in your actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Continuity of learning and transitions 	<p>Make routines, change and learning opportunities as consistent as possible.</p> <p>Take into account the emotional needs of children and work from this to enable them to become confident and capable.</p> <p>Allow children to ‘be’. Avoid always preparing them for the next stages. Scaffold their learning due to them showing they need this challenge, rather than deciding they must know something or demonstrate a skill.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing 	<p>Base teaching on the things you see and know are consistent. Gather information over time and take this into consideration to provide environments that meet each child’s needs.</p>

Modelling learning dispositions

Learning dispositions are the characteristics that help you to learn.

Your interactions and plans provide for and promote learning dispositions in children.

A learning disposition can be described as an attitude or tendency that influences the way a child participates and uses learning strategies. They are linked to feelings and views, and can influence someone’s self-image and self-esteem.



Promote positive learning dispositions to children.

If a child exhibits positive learning dispositions they will be more receptive to the learning experiences that are implemented.

Outcome 4 identifies positive dispositions for learning as:

- curiosity
- cooperation
- confidence
- creativity
- commitment
- enthusiasm
- persistence
- imagination
- reflexivity.

To promote these learning dispositions, provide holistic and child-focused play opportunities that include adult interactions by:

- showing children how to express themselves both verbally and non-verbally
- interacting and modelling enthusiasm in your interactions
- being persistent
- encouraging and modelling cooperation at all levels between children and educators
- helping children to grow in their independence
- encouraging confidence in the learning environment.

Co-constructing meaning

When children work together with you to form meaning, it is called co-constructing meaning.

You and the child learn together, knowing that you are both acknowledged and valued in the partnership. As part of this process, you must be willing to share your thoughts, while also recognising the child's expertise. Co-constructing meaning occurs most effectively when you and the child have sustained interactions.

The success of co-construction is embedded in the belief that children are capable. Reflection on the Principle: Equity, inclusion and high expectations, supports this belief and encourages co-construction. An approach that recognises children's ability to co-construct respects that:

- learning is practical and happens best in real situations
- negotiation and mediation may be required in order to support learning
- children build on prior knowledge
- educators provide different perspectives and realities so that children can think outside of their understanding.

Most techniques used for supporting children's learning rely on the educator supporting the child until they have mastered a skill. Co-construction, however, is about developing the child's ability to master learning strategies for themselves, and learning to build knowledge independently.

Strategies to support co-construction

- Include experiences based on the child's interests and focus on building their knowledge.
- Build your knowledge of children's interests so that you can extend on their knowledge.
- Plan and assess your curriculum collaboratively with children.

Sustained interactions

Sustained interactions are those where children interact with you to share ideas and elaborate on interests.

Interactions can be sustained when you:

- gather information
- invite participation
- support participation
- extend learning and/or play
- give feedback and support.

To facilitate these sustained interactions, listen to and seek clarification of the child’s ideas and thoughts. Positive and open questioning and feedback can be used to achieve this; for example:

- ‘I don’t know – what do you think?’
- ‘That’s an interesting idea!’
- ‘I like what you’ve done there.’
- ‘Have you seen what Alex has done?’
- ‘I wondered why you had that.’
- ‘I’ve never thought about that before.’
- ‘What would happen if we did this?’

To maintain dialogue with the child, respond to their replies by expressing your ideas through statements such as:

- ‘I think ...’
- ‘I agree, but I also think ...’
- ‘I imagine ...’
- ‘I disagree because ...’
- ‘I like ...’
- ‘I don’t like ...’
- ‘I wonder if ...’

Children are more likely to become engaged in discussions that are based on their interests and strengths. They are also more likely to maintain a sense of agency when they have participated in developing the plan of activities and are inspired to be curious. Sustained shared interactions support the co-construction of meaning.

Critical periods and scaffolding

While children develop skills through independent exploration and practice, many skills can be supported through scaffolding during critical periods when learning is optimal.

This teaching is called scaffolding and the period when this is most valuable is called a teachable moment, a window of opportunity or a critical period. A critical period can be noticed as the time when a child starts to show interest in something or an emerging skill.

Some examples of how critical periods are supported by scaffolding are shown in the following table.

Critical period	Scaffolding strategies
<p>Child starts to pull themselves up using furniture</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A clear pathway is made so the child doesn’t trip. ➤ Furniture and equipment is provided so the child is able to gain balance without falling. ➤ Adults provide encouragement and are excited at progress. ➤ The child sees other children moving about and accessing areas that they are unable to access unless they can walk.

Critical period	Scaffolding strategies
Child shows interest in looking at a book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Books are provided. ➤ The child sees other children looking at books and using them in various ways. ➤ Pictures are pointed to and noises or words are added. ➤ Books with hard covers are initially added so they are easy to grasp and turn, touch and manipulate. ➤ As skill develops, more difficult books are provided and words included. ➤ Word recognition and later reading are encouraged.
Child shows preference for a particular adult through smiling or feeling comforted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The adult responds with interaction and warmth. ➤ The adult tries to be the person that nurtures the child and provides for their needs. ➤ The child sees other children being comforted and cared for. They observe the adult responding genuinely and lovingly to other children.
A child begins to wash their own hands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The adult helps them with skills they are challenged to achieve. ➤ The child sees the actions of others and learns the process of washing hands. ➤ The child sees how the equipment is used. ➤ Slowly the adult reduces their support until the child can wash their own hands.

By collaborating educators and families can extend scaffolding from the home environment into the service or from the service into the home environment. This creates a continuous transition and supports children in their various environments and in ways that are differently focused.

Example

Using scaffolding to help a child learn

Greg (18 months old) is pulling at his shoe, trying to remove it. Helen, an educator, notices his actions and puts the following scaffolding strategies in place:

- She makes sure his shoe is loose so that he can pull it off more easily.
- She talks to him about the actions of pulling off his shoe, gives encouragement and acknowledges his efforts.
- She suggests that Greg watches his peers to see how they are taking their shoes off.



Spontaneous modifications

Modifications that you apply to the learning environment can occur through a planning process or through immediate action.

As you watch children play and listen to their ideas, opportunities may arise to provide support and extension. When you provide extensions to play, you are usually modifying the learning environment in some way. You will do this so that children remain engaged for longer periods and can find a broader range of options for their play. These modifications may be as simple as adding some new props, suggesting a larger or smaller space, or reacting to or introducing a new idea.

Example Extending play

The following examples show how two educators have extended play and learning.

Example 1

A group of children are playing shop. Maria is an educator and notices there aren't many props available for this play, so she suggests to the children that they come to the factory (the storeroom) to see if they can gather some more supplies to fit out their shop. The children are pleased with the idea and find some interesting stock for their shop. The other children in the room enjoy dropping in to the expanded shop at various times for the rest of the day.

- Over time the shop carries:
- paints
- new collage materials
- LEGO
- art related equipment such, ss staplers and tape dispensers.

Children 'purchase' these items to use in their work.

Example 2

Jane is an educator who observes William 'shearing' teddy bears and plush toys. William recently watched sheep being shorn on his family farm and it has captured his interest.

Jane asks William if he would like to set up a shearing shed. When he agrees, she helps set this up in the block area using A-frames and cushions. William's dad brings in some fleece and some manual and electric shears to ignite discussion. Another parent brings in some toy sheep for the farm set. Jane introduces songs about shearing and finds posters and books about shearing time to display and read.



Practice Task 13

1. Draw a line to match each aspect about modelling and promoting learning to its definition.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| * Critical periods | * Can be modelled by providing holistic and child-focused play opportunities and being involved in interactions with the children during experiences. |
| * Sustained interactions | * Occurs when educators work together with children and share their thoughts, listening to the ideas and expertise of the children. |
| * Scaffolding | * Occur when educators listen to children's thoughts and clarify their meaning through positive questioning and feedback. |
| * Positive learning dispositions | * Can be supported through scaffolding. The period when this is most valuable is called a teachable moment. |
| * Emerging interests | * Occurs when families and educators collaborate and support children to learn new skills. |
| * Co-constructing meaning | * These should be incorporated into the curriculum, and modifications to interactions and the environment should be made to extend on these learning opportunities. |

2. Select true or false for the following statement.

The practices of the learning framework will support you to act in ways that allow you to express your personal pedagogy. The learning frameworks must be considered when implementing curriculum.

- * True * False

Summary

- When choosing materials and resources for play, select those that are practical, have a definite purpose, and are adequate in quantity and quality.
- When children are involved in activities that are open-ended and stimulate a response, they are led into an experience that may bring out new skills and knowledge, and create reasons to interact with others as part of their learning.
- When planning the aesthetics of your environment, consider the lighting, colour, displays and sounds.
- A safe environment is non-threatening, and should be a space where it is easy to share thoughts and ideas, ask questions and make mistakes as part of learning.
- When children are rushed through learning, they miss opportunities to participate fully. When you allow children enough time for their learning, they will become involved and engaged, and will feel challenged and stimulated.
- The more responsibility and control children have over their environment, the greater their sense of security, belonging and interest.
- To promote and model learning dispositions, provide holistic and child-focused play opportunities that include adult interactions.
- When educators and children work together to form meaning, it is called co-constructing meaning.
- While children may develop skills through independent exploration and practice, many skills can be supported through scaffolding during periods when the learning is optimal.
- As you watch children play and listen to their ideas, you may find that opportunities arise for you to provide support and extension.

Learning Checkpoint 4

Acting to implement the curriculum

1. List four materials that have been added to the sand in the image below to set up the experience.



.....

.....

.....

.....

2. Which of the following comments could help to implement an experience or model positive learning dispositions if you were working with the children in the image below?



- 'Do you think if we put the mud in the freezer it would make mud blocks in that tray? Should we try it and see what happens?'
- 'Why don't you use the sink so your mud mess is easier to clean?'
- 'How about you use those plates on the bench to add more mud?'
- 'What might you make if you were cooking for a mud party?'
- 'Do you need any more containers or tubs? We might be able to find some in the shed if you have an idea.'

3. Draw a line to match each learning framework component on the left with the implementation actions on the right that could be added to an experience.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Practice: Responsiveness to children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A child has demonstrated that they are interested in animals. The educator adds fences and animals to the materials. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Outcome 1, Sub-outcome: Children develop knowledge, confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The educator supports three children who are wanting to use an experience where there aren't enough materials for everyone. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Principle: Equity, inclusion and high expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The experience is planned for a child new to the service. The child's parents own a road construction business. The educator shows interest in what the child knows about the use of the construction materials and builds on this information. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Outcome 4, Sub-outcome: Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * A younger child wishes to play with the materials while older children are working. The educator supports the group to work together and provide opportunities for each to participate to make the experiences accessible to all. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Outcome 2, Sub-outcome: Children become aware of fairness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The children have been on an excursion into the community to see how roads are built. The experience is planned to extend on this and the educators will talk to children about the materials provided and how they are similar or different to those in real life. |

4. A child has asked about the colours in a rainbow. They tell you they are not sure why each colour is next to the other. Which of the following experiences could scaffold the child's learning at this teachable moment? Select all that apply.

- Talking about the colours and experimenting with them
- Sorting and matching different natural items
- Threading and weaving using natural materials
- Exploring how colours mix



Topic 5

In this topic you will learn about:

- 5A** Evaluating through reflection
- 5B** Critical reflection on the current curriculum

Reflecting on the curriculum

Evaluation can occur in various ways and at various times in a curriculum process.

Plans should be constantly evaluated to:

- identify problems
- develop interventions
- identify opportunities and improvements
- design strategies for implementing new and innovative ideas.

5A Evaluating through reflection

A brief reflection can give you a quick idea of your curriculum effectiveness.

Answering 'yes' to the following questions indicates the curriculum, plans and experiences are heading in the right direction:

- Are children engaged and active?
- Are there clear goals that everyone is working toward?
- Are there learning and development priorities?
- Are children's ages, stages of development, abilities, language and culture all catered for?
- Is there a holistic approach?
- Are families and the community respected and involved?
- Are prior learning experiences being built on?
- Are the EYLF principles, practices and learning outcomes each being represented?



Consider whether families and children are being respected and involved.

Continuous refinement

The experiences you implement daily will be monitored and reflected on to check continuity of learning.

Aim to nurture each child to feel a sense of value and belonging. By continuously reflecting on and refining the curriculum and your own pedagogical practice, you will be able to:

- address children's new and evolving skills, strengths, abilities, needs and ideas
- add and take away resources, materials and props as suited
- interact in ways that support children and families
- provide routines and timetables that are predictable, flexible and evolving in response to the needs of developing children.

Principle: Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning, provides guidance for refinement of your skills and abilities. The principle encourages you to continually seek ways to extend your knowledge and skills, be co-learners with children, families and the community, and to engage in questioning philosophy, ethics and pedagogy.

In-depth reflection

Additional in-depth reflection is required regularly.

These particular reflections help you to identify strengths and areas in need of improvement, important personal, professional and assessment and rating skills.

These in-depth reflections give you the opportunity to assess if the curriculum is:

- heading in the direction you hope
- meeting children's, families' and community needs
- including all aspects that make up a holistic curriculum
- developed based on information that comes from reflection
- adapting constantly to meet changes.

Reflecting on spaces

The way spaces are provided gives messages to children and their families.

The aesthetics and functionality of the space is influenced by safety, people, time, materials and equipment. Children's level of involvement in constructing and adapting the space can influence their feelings.

Reflect on spaces by evaluating:

- children's involvement in creating and modifying spaces and how this could be extended
- spaces where curriculum is delivered, both indoors and outdoors (these must meet the goals of the service, NQF and curriculum)
- the philosophy and how it influences the setup or presentation of spaces; the philosophy may need to be reviewed or the space adapted to reflect beliefs
- whether the space ever becomes crowded, unfocused or lacks purpose
- where natural materials and resources are included and how are they used to help children understand their responsibility towards the earth and nature.

Reflecting on routines, timetables and transitions

Routines, timetables and transitions should be flexible but consistent.

They should reflect children's needs and respect their abilities and developing skills. Ensure that routines are flexible and able to cater for individual needs. This means taking notice of a child's needs and meeting these in ways that are appropriate for them. Every child is different and so are their routines, timetables and transition needs.

Reflect on routines, timetables and transitions by:

- watching children and listening to their needs, as well as using information from others
- determining if children's needs are met by noticing their behaviours and reactions
- considering whether children are distressed or unhappy, as this indicates that something does not meet their needs

Reflecting on experiences

Play provides a way for children to integrate all their new experiences into their rapidly developing minds, bodies, emotions and social skills.

The curriculum should recognise and provide for play that is:

- voluntary
- pleasurable
- symbolic
- active
- process-oriented
- intrinsically motivated.

Reflect on experiences by evaluating:

- the balance of unplanned to planned curriculum and whether any imbalance needs to be addressed
- multiple unplanned experiences and whether educators may be failing to reflect on and respond to children's needs
- minimal unplanned experiences as they may mean that educators are structuring the curriculum and denying children the opportunity to explore, experiment and find out for themselves.

Reflecting on collaborative learning and sustained shared thinking

Collaborative learning and sustained shared thinking are two strategies for supporting children to work with you and their peers to solve problems, clarify concepts and evaluate what is happening.

These two strategies allow you to support children to work with others to achieve goals.

Reflect on how well the curriculum:

- provides time for deep involvement in activities
- encourages the extension of learning through conversation and exploration
- engages children in what they are doing as part of routine activities or learning experiences
- plans the day so that educators are available to interact with and support children fully
- uses open-ended questions
- provides rich, responsive environments that engage children's curiosity.

Meaningful conversations and in-depth investigation that is verbalised and extended will lead to collaborative learning.

Reflecting on child-initiated learning

In play, children learn how to think, share, cooperate and negotiate.

When you show respect for children's ideas for play, you are providing an environment that allows healthy learning and development.

Reflect on child-initiated learning by evaluating:

- responsiveness to children – whether you include children's interests and abilities, and participate as partners in child-initiated learning
- learning through play – whether you respect the value of play in learning, and add sustained shared conversations and encouragement to think and explore, including providing scaffolding
- learning environments – whether you cater for different learning styles and offer possibilities and experiences, knowing that the children will explore using the resources and ideas provided
- assessment for learning – whether you watch, notice, observe and record so that you find out:
 - what is next
 - what the children need
 - how the curriculum and your pedagogy will adapt based on the knowledge you gain.

Check that educators understand the importance of play and apply this understanding to the activities and experiences they plan. They will show this by providing environments that:

- reflect individual children's play preferences and interests
- provide inspiration and challenges
- have spaces that allow children to play alone and with preferred peers
- view perspectives as building blocks for learning.

Reflecting on responsiveness

Your plans should be adapted as the day progresses.

Each day should begin with an environment that is prepared and meets the expected needs and interests of children. As the day unfolds, the children's interests, ideas and learning should inform the modification of the service play space.

Reflect on responsiveness by evaluating:

- the timing and frequency of modification
- whether modifications are influenced by the children
- how children's involvement, ideas and direction shape the play space
- evidence that curriculum is changing based on children's learning and development rather than educator timetables or needs.

Reflecting on feedback

Ask colleagues, family and community members to give their feedback and participate in curriculum review.

Find out their thoughts on the value of the curriculum and on your pedagogy. Their opinions may help you decide on a change that can make a difference to them.

Ask children questions to gain their perspectives. Use open-ended questions and active listening techniques, and encourage problem-solving.

Reflect on feedback by evaluating:

- stakeholder input and whether all stakeholders are represented – if not, find out why, make a change and improve relationships and/or communication
- how you obtain feedback (such as informal discussions, surveys or formal meetings); an approach that suits one person may not suit another.

Reflecting on cultural responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness is the ability to effectively communicate and interact with people of different cultures.

This involves understanding your own culture as well as the cultures of others. It means acknowledging the similarities and differences between cultures, and breaking down stereotypes and biases.

Being aware of your own world view helps you adopt a positive attitude towards others, gain knowledge of different cultural practices and develop cross-cultural communication skills to use in your workplace and beyond.

Reflect on cultural responsiveness by evaluating:

- how the community is included within the curriculum, not just the cultural aspects of families and educators in the service
- how children gain knowledge of as many cultural differences as possible so they understand that each person has their own background and beliefs
- whether inclusive and accepting behaviour is modelled and encouraged
- how each child is reflected or included in the environment
- whether resources and content reflect everyday similarities and differences between people in Australia and around the world
- if Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are represented within or through experiences and the environment.



Practice Task 14

1. When reflecting on the curriculum it is important to ask questions that evaluate its effectiveness. Which of the following questions lead to meaningful reflection? Select all that apply.

- Are children enjoying the experiences that are set up and engaging in play?
- Are both the indoor and outdoor environments being planned for to extend on children's learning?
- Are natural materials and resources being used in a way that encourages children to take responsibility for the environment?
- Is the service philosophy being followed?
- Are the children's needs being met?
- Are the routines taking place at exact times each day?
- Does the curriculum cater for both planned and unplanned experiences?

2. Select true or false for the following statement.

Reflection allows you to monitor children's learning, improve your curriculum and identify if you are sharing and gathering information from others effectively.

* True * False

5B Critical reflection on the current curriculum

Critical reflection involves considering your attitudes and motivations, and identifying your future directions.

You can use it to determine how you can work towards a higher level of understanding or application of skills and knowledge. While reflection is about checking how you are going and asking yourself questions, critical reflection is a more in-depth process where you have improvement and development in mind.



Regular and effective critical reflection leads to continuous improvement.

The EYLF Principle: Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning, supports all educators to regularly think about what they are doing and how this could be improved. Educators are encouraged to make changes when needed and set goals for improving their curriculum.

When critical reflection is used regularly and effectively, this is called continuous improvement.

Meaningful reflection occurs when you reflect thoughtfully on your curriculum, develop ideas for improvement and put strategies in place to make changes. While reflection helps you to improve your curriculum, it also assists you to react to, understand and plan for children more effectively.

Purpose of reflection

Evidence can be gathered to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum.

You might evaluate the following.

Purpose	Benefit
Identifying spontaneous interests that have been catered for	This provides further information that may be used to extend the curriculum and make it more relevant to the children.
Identifying extensions and changes	This enables you to clarify needs and identify the ways children prefer the curriculum to occur.
Identifying what worked and what didn't work	This enables you to determine whether the curriculum is meeting the objectives, whether the teaching was age-appropriate, whether you provided enough props and equipment, and what you can do to extend on this.
Obtaining input from another person	This gives you another perspective on the value of the curriculum. You can gain feedback on whether the curriculum was suitable and how you can improve it.

Methods of reflection

Critical reflection may be a process you participate in alone, or may involve others.

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

Questioning

Before and after questions are useful for reflection.

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

After the implementation, reflect on:

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

Formal discussion

Structured discussions may occur in meetings and during professional development activities. They focus on specific areas and provide opportunities for you to access formal professional development and further on-the-job training through coaching or mentoring. Professional development might involve an external organised event, or might be a situation where educators work together to brainstorm and share ideas. For example, an educational leader might regularly communicate with educators about the curriculum.

Informal discussion

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

Supervision

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

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

Documenting critical reflection

Critical reflection is most effective when recorded for later consideration.

While reflection often occurs through discussion, it might include documenting your thoughts and feelings or asking others to reflect and share their ideas.

Journals, diaries or reflection logs

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

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

Checklists or event samples

A checklist or event sample may be part of your service practice or something you develop yourself. The checklist could include various points that help you review your curriculum, or a list of actions you want to complete.

When evaluating the overall effectiveness of the curriculum, ask yourself the following questions.

<p>What worked? What didn't work?</p>	<p>Identify which activities and experiences are successful with different children and groups. Note whether there are any factors that may have influenced the effectiveness of the experience, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ children's needs ➤ the sequence of activities ➤ the available resources or materials (including staff) ➤ the time allocated ➤ the available space ➤ aesthetics: the presentation of the materials and space. <p>Remember to evaluate your pedagogy. How do you apply approved learning outcomes, principles and practices?</p>
<p>Were experiences and activities age-appropriate? What can you extend on?</p>	<p>Evaluate whether your expectations for the curriculum were achieved, whether the children enjoyed the curriculum and whether the level of participation was as you predicted.</p> <p>Think about ways to extend the curriculum.</p> <p>Investigate how you can add a greater focus on inclusion, culture, community, involvement with others and Indigenous representation.</p>
<p>What feedback have I received?</p>	<p>Consultation with others may occur through informal daily discussion, meetings or in-depth discussions.</p> <p>All those involved with a child need to be consulted in order to obtain feedback on curriculum implementation and future design.</p>

How does this affect my future planning?	Through evaluation, you are able to gather ideas for experiences that you could use to meet a new set of objectives. It will also help you identify things that are appropriate or inappropriate for the group or individuals. Always continue with the learning experiences children are engaged in, rather than limiting activities to planned experiences only.
What learning framework aspects have been addressed?	The principles, practices and learning outcomes should inform evaluation of the curriculum and learning experiences. An effective, inclusive and balanced curriculum will take all aspects into consideration.

Reflecting with others

Other people can provide useful reflective feedback about your curriculum and how it influenced them.

By giving others opportunities to express their ideas, opinions, requests or thoughts, you are meeting both their needs and your own.

You might gather reflective feedback through general conversations and discussions, or through surveys, meetings, questionnaires or forms. Quality feedback can be best gathered through methods that allow for sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning. These opportunities can be provided using the following methods.

Ways to gain reflections from others include:

- talking to people during visits, interviews, spontaneous discussion and meetings
- gathering feedback through suggestions requests, communication books and apps
- meetings – uninterrupted time when information can be exchanged and discussed
- observing and listening
- contacting by phone
- emailing
- using social media such as Facebook or in-house programs or apps
- conducting surveys verbally
- asking people to complete templates or forms.

Documenting outcomes

Reflection outcomes can be used to discuss issues with stakeholders and to be clear about the actions that need to be taken to implement the change.

These outcomes should be clear, concise and tailored to the audience.

A documented reflection helps those involved know:

- what the results of your reflection, evaluation and analysis were
- why you want to make an improvement
- how you wish to go about enacting any change.

SWOT analysis

A SWOT analysis lists the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of a situation, and helps you to use evaluation to identify what action to take next.

A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning system that can be used for a system-wide review, or as a tool to look at specific areas. A SWOT analysis helps you see where you are now, where you want to be, and plan how to get there.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal to the organisation and may refer to:

- capabilities
- resources
- management
- processes
- innovation
- location
- reliability.

Opportunities and threats are external to the organisation and may refer to:

- industry developments/trends
- other educators' practice/pedagogy
- contacts/partners
- demand
- new technology
- new staff
- lifestyle trends
- finance
- legislation.

A SWOT analysis can be used in the following ways to evaluate curriculum.

Strengths	Weaknesses
Aspects of the curriculum that are already in place and successful. Specific areas of clarity or ability.	Areas where improvement has not been considered or barriers prevent improvement.
Opportunities	Threats
Areas of potential change.	Actions or things that threaten curriculum success or may cause disruption.

Example
SWOT analysis

Ramirez is an educator who completes the following SWOT analysis based on qualitative and quantitative data he has collected about educational resources.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Indoor experiences use natural and recycled materials. ➤ Educators have a strong and consistent emergent curriculum focus and this is obvious. ➤ Educators involve children in developing the curriculum and they participate willingly and with enthusiasm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Funding is low. ➤ Families are not involved in the curriculum development. ➤ Outdoor space lacks natural materials.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ New educational leader has a passion for developing family programs and is interested in creating more meaningful family and community involvement strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Management committee does not agree that emergent curriculum is of priority.

Quality improvement plan

A quality improvement plan (QIP) can be used as a guide to help you express your critical reflection outcomes.

By using the QIP format, you will make sure everyone understands your information. This can be incorporated into the full service QIP and become part of the service QIP review schedule; or you could develop your own mini QIP.

The outcome of the QIP and the information you collect and present through reflection can inform this QIP and together create a comprehensive plan.

The components of a QIP include the following details.

Component of the QIP	What this includes	Example
Goal	A clear and measurable goal allows you to identify progress and achievement. You may need one or more goals depending on the change.	To develop stronger relationships with family members and support them to access and review children's portfolios.
Priority	Marking the priority of the change as low, medium or high.	Medium

Component of the QIP	What this includes	Example
Steps to achieve the goal	<p>Steps are most effective if they are detailed and broken down into simple stages.</p> <p>Detailed, staged steps assist in showing progress.</p> <p>Steps might be sequential, meaning that you must do one thing before the next, or they may be a list, where there are a number of different actions that must be taken to achieve the outcome.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare by identifying communication methods I am comfortable with. 2. Promote ideas to children, other educators and families. 3. Gather materials required and set up with stakeholder support and ideas. 4. Send a reminder message on social media. 5. Create a video showing the process and how the feedback can be provided and used. 6. Review relationships with families after one month, to identify improvements and effectiveness.
Success measures	<p>Success measures are put in place so that you know when your goals have been achieved.</p> <p>Your success measures might also include the degree to which the goal is achieved.</p>	<p>Goals will be achieved when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ families are regularly providing feedback ➤ a video is playing in the foyer and available for families to view ➤ the first review has been completed.
Time lines	<p>Time lines may be influenced by the priority of the goal or improvement. Alternatively, they may be influenced by the complexity of the improvement.</p> <p>By setting time lines, your goal will not be forgotten.</p>	<p>To be completed within two months.</p>
Progress notes	<p>As you achieve each step toward an improvement goal, record dated progress notes.</p> <p>These notes should reflect the actions taken so far to achieve the goal, but also include any change of direction, alteration or barriers that have been faced.</p>	<p>5 October: Identified two communication methods and began promoting idea to children, educators and families.</p>



Practice Task 15

1. Educators who are aware of what critical reflection is, including why and how educators critically reflect, choose to reflect on areas that are meaningful. Which of the following are areas that would benefit from professional critical reflection? Select all that apply.

- Professional practice
- Educational program
- Planning your weekend
- Relationships with children and families
- Class times for study
- Information gathering and analysis

2. Draw a line to match each term relating to critical reflection to its example.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| * Unstructured discussion | * Using before and after questions for evaluation to reflect on what you hope to achieve and whether you reached your goal. |
| * Checklist | * Writing and recording your feelings and thoughts soon after an event to evaluate your ideas and actions. |
| * SWOT analysis | * A performance review as part of a quality process. |
| * Journal or reflection log | * Informal chats that occur every day at work between other educators, families and children. |
| * Supervision | * Being encouraged by your supervisor to participate in reflection to evaluate your professional practice in regard to education, administration and supportiveness in professional relationships |
| * Questioning | * A tool used for critical reflection that may include a list of actions that you wish to complete. |
| * Structured discussion | * A strategic planning system that can be used for a system-wide review or as a personal tool to look at your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. |

3. Which of the following are reasons for evaluating and reflecting on plans? Select all that apply.

- To ensure plans maintain direction
- To help plans to remain purposeful
- To further inform planning
- To show other educators you are good at your job
- So families don't complain
- To gather more information and provide direction for your own critical reflection

Summary

- A brief reflection can give you a quick idea of your curriculum effectiveness.
- The experiences you implement daily need to be monitored and reflected on to check continuity of learning.
- In-depth reflection contributes to the identification of strengths and areas for improvement, important personal, professional and assessment and rating skills.
- The way spaces, routines, timetables and transitions are provided gives messages to children and their families.
- Critical reflection involves considering your attitudes and motivations, and identifying your directions.
- Critical reflection is a more in-depth process where you have improvement and development in mind.
- Reflection outcomes can be used to discuss issues with stakeholders and to be clear about the actions that need to be taken to implement the change.
- While reflection often occurs through discussion, some recording methods can be used to support or document reflection.

Learning Checkpoint 5

Reflecting on curriculum

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Julius is an educator who is planning for future learning opportunities and wants to influence the design of the curriculum.

Julius writes the following note to families:

'Educators use critical reflection to help them identify curriculum direction. Part of this process is to gather feedback so they can reflect and then plan to work toward a higher level of understanding of all families and children, improving curriculum effectiveness.'

1. Julius's note is an accurate form of reflective practice. * True * False

2. Which of the following could Julius do to effectively evaluate the outcomes of his current curriculum? Select all that apply.

- Use reflection to check if the children look busy.
- Reflect on all areas of the curriculum using in-depth questioning.
- Check the routines and timetables are displayed in a way that allows children to see them.
- Involve a range of people in the critical reflection process and ask questions that provide information about curriculum strengths and weaknesses.

3. Julius wants to seek feedback from multiple perspectives about the current curriculum and its capacity to support children's learning. Identify one example of how he might do this for each of the following stakeholders.

a. Children

.....

.....

b. Colleagues

.....

.....

c. Families

4. Select true or false for the following statement.

Sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning can be achieved if Julius spends more time gathering information from children and evaluates their opinions rather than using any other perspectives.

* True * False

5. Julius monitors and critically reflects on the children's learning. Draw a line to match the principles and practices on the left to the learning Julius reflects on.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Practice: Responsiveness to children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Five of the children attending have difficulty separating from their family each day. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Principle: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Julius extends on children's ideas through spontaneous modification of the curriculum. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Practice: Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Julius tries to explain difficult concepts, but sometimes gets confused. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Practice: Play-based learning and intentionality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * One child communicates using Compic, a pictorial communication method. Julius is not sure how Compic works, so he avoids the child. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Practice: Cultural responsiveness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Julius has written a range of learning stories that families and colleagues have commented on as being enjoyable and clear. |

6. Julius uses the information gained from his critical reflection to develop a SWOT analysis based on the current curriculum. Draw a line to match each area of the SWOT analysis on the left to the critical reflection outcome on the right.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| * Strength | * Julius tries to explain difficult concepts, but sometimes gets confused. |
| * Weakness | * A new service is opening in the local community. They will be attractive to families that prefer children to remain in individual age groupings. |
| * Opportunity | * Julius loves to extend on children's ideas through spontaneous modification of the curriculum. |
| * Threat | * One child communicates using Compic, a pictorial communication method. A community organisation is available to provide onsite support to teach Compic to educators and children. |

7. Julius uses the information he has gained from critical reflection to improve his pedagogy. He begins by determining some steps to work toward supporting all children to separate from their families.

Number each step from 1 to 6 in the order Julius should follow.

- Find out more about the children during his interactions with them, their families and his colleagues to evaluate progress.
- Cater for the children's interests and provide for their ideas.
- Speak to the family of each child and explain his goal.
- Regularly check in and gain feedback from the children, families and colleagues.
- Identify the children who have difficulty separating from their families.
- Develop a relationship with each child by welcoming them each day and spending time with them.

