



The Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Program



EYLF PLP Workshop materials

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The national program of 65 *Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Program (EYLF PLP) Workshops* that Early Childhood Australia designed and delivered under the EYLF PLP with funding from the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) were held in rural, regional and metropolitan areas of Australia from 26 March until 6 August 2011. Approximately 5,500 participants attended the Workshops.

This e-Newsletter provides an introduction to the Workshop materials that were created specifically for the EYLF PLP Workshops, including the PowerPoint presentation, videos and worksheets.

We hope that being able to freely access these materials will give all early childhood education and care professionals and settings around Australia an equal opportunity to learn from what was offered at the Workshops and to share and participate in discussions taking place in the EYLF PLP Facebook and online Forum communities.

Workshop PowerPoint presentation

The PowerPoint presentation was designed in **three parts**, to be delivered over a full day.

Please note: If you as the educational leader have not seen the presentation, it may be helpful to watch it first; reflect on the needs of your team and the best way to use the presentation to support your educators.

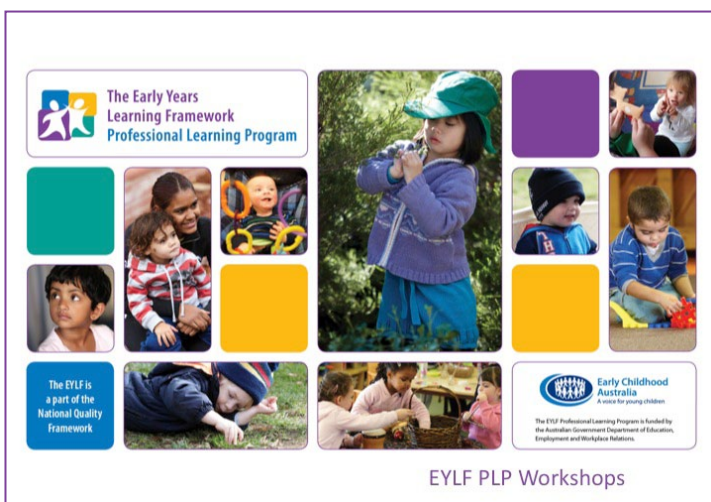
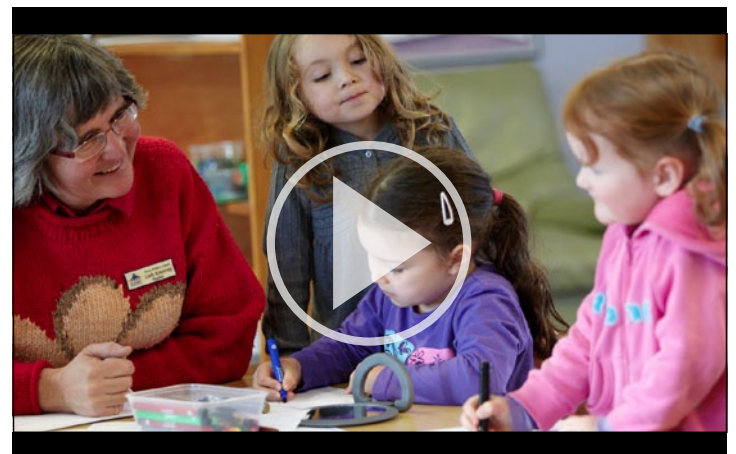
PowerPoint presentation: Part one—*Background to the project and professional responsibilities*

Part one gives information about the project and the Commonwealth Government's reform agenda, including the relationship between the EYLF and the National Quality Standard (NQS). This could be background information for educators to read.

The section on professional responsibilities could be used as a discussion point to raise with educators, about how they see their individual and collective responsibilities in terms of engaging with the national Quality Reforms in general, or more specifically the EYLF and the NQS. Educators may be given this question as an individual task before coming together to discuss as a group. The shared understandings could be used as a starting point to plan a way to make progress in tackling the reforms. For example: *We need time as a group to discuss our progress around the practices of the EYLF—given the fact we all work part time and completely different shifts, how can we achieve this?* Develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) around professional development/conversations.

Another aspect of part one is to engage with educators around the challenges and excitement of implementing the EYLF. This lets directors know how their team of educators is feeling and provides an opportunity to work with their excitement to overcome the challenges. This too, could be included in the QIP and progress could be measured over time.

Video 1: *Educators as early childhood professionals—Setting the tone* (with thanks to Lady Gowrie SA)



PowerPoint presentation: Part two—*Reflective practice*

'Ongoing learning and reflective practice' is one of the five Principles of the framework. Reflective practice is an essential skill for all educators to develop, which over time can support them to develop different ways of thinking; deeper understandings of their own, and others', values and beliefs; and can lead to changed practices. This section includes two short videos that can be used as a way to look at practice through new eyes. You may want to use footage from your own setting, but initially it is often easier for educators to comment on others' practice rather than their own.

Video 2: *Lunch time with toddlers*



This short video shows a lunchtime routine where the service provides the lunch. Sandwiches are offered to children who do not like the lunch on offer. Educators might like to see it more than once.

The facilitator may guide educators' thinking, based on the Learning Circle approach (included with this presentation), asking initially:

- What did you see?
- Will we all see things differently based on our own meal time /food experiences?
- How skillful are we at observing 'seeing'—were there gaps?
- Was the focus on one aspect only, such as manners? Why?
- How might a parent see it?
- What might the children be feeling/thinking?
- What EYLF Principles and Practices are evident in this video?
- What learning can we see? Is there potential for further learning?
- How might we think about our own Practices around meals and snacks in our setting?
- What might we change? Why?

Video 3: *Outdoor play*



This video shows a few sequences in a natural outdoor setting. The facilitator may guide educators' thinking, based on the Learning Circle approach (included with this presentation), asking initially: *What did you see?* This video usually brings a wide range of discussions from concerns around safety to delight in the natural environment. Using the type of questions from the Jenni Connor's *Thinking about practice: Working with the Early Years Learning Framework* planner (available in the next EYLF PLP e-Newsletter) should lead educators to new perspectives on their own—and others'—Practices.

Some suggestions and ideas to explore (you may have others based on your and your educators' own experiences and beliefs):

- What are the safety issues (if any) and how do we foster 'risk-taking' in our spaces?
- Who is in charge of children's shoes?
- Does an educator have to be involved in all children's outdoor experiences, or just be nearby?
- What does 'supervision' mean for me?
- The swings—were they dangerous, or did we see capable and competent four-year-olds who have learned about space and can remain safe?
- Children chanting—how did we see this? Could it be 'bullying', or merely children playing with rhymes and words?
- How well do we know the current regulations? Do we sometimes 'read' things into regulations that may not be real, and in fact, limit children's play?
- What possibilities did we see in terms of children making progress towards all five Learning Outcomes?
- A practice of the EYLF is learning environments—are there any gaps in our learning environment? Do we need to develop a QIP to—over time—include more natural materials?

PowerPoint presentation: Part three—*Planning and assessment*

This section's focus is on planning for children's learning. These slides ask educators to consider whether their current planning model makes connections between the various parts of the EYLF; to clarify understandings around various practices and principles in the EYLF—for example: *What do words such as holistic mean?*—and then to ask educators to reflect on planning for learning, rather than planning activities.

The PowerPoint presentation includes some discussion points and planning questions for use with your educators. In thinking about these, educators may like to refer to e-Newsletter issue 16: *Reviewing practice*. In addition, whenever there is change there are often many myths that become realities about practice; especially planning and documentation, so 'teasing' these out may be useful discussion points.

E-Newsletter issue 19: *Myths and realities* may be used to support this discussion. The next part of the presentation asks educators to think about the planning cycle and how educators gather data, analyse it, plan for learning and assess learning, in their current setting. The third video can be used as a process to trial working in this way—gathering the data, questioning and analysing it, planning for further learning, reflecting and reviewing, and then the cycle begins again.



Video 4: *Table-top activity*



Another short video with a group of preschool children, participating in a sorting game using tweezers. After watching this video the facilitator may guide educators' thinking, based on the Learning Circle approach (included with this presentation), asking initially:


- What did you see? Explore the different perspectives discussed by educators.
- What might be the purpose of this activity—colour matching; fine motor skills; cooperative skills and learning to work independently?
- How broadly or narrowly do we plan for children's learning?
- How could this one simple experience be part of children, as individuals and the group as a whole, making progress towards the five Learning Outcomes?
- What did this short clip tell us about individual children?
- Did we jump to the conclusion that one girl was dominant? Is this a non-issue or an issue? Why?
- Did we see different skill levels among children?
- Do we need to plan further experiences to support the child who was more interested in exploring the 'how' of the tweezers rather than worry about the game's intended purpose?

One of the requirements under the NQF is for services to develop a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The personal action plan suggested in the presentation could be developed further into a service QIP.









For more information about developing QIPs, visit the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website at: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/EARLYCHILDHOOD/Pages/default.aspx>

Workshop handouts

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How we can use the 8 Aboriginal ways of learning in the early years

-  1. Story
-  2. Plan
-  3. Picture
-  4. Do, think
-  5. Land
-  6. New way
-  7. Watch first
-  8. Show your mob

Developed by the Regional Aboriginal Education team and Early Childhood Team Western NSW, NSW Department of Education and Training.

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Learning Circles

Learning Circles provide self-directed learning. The learning occurs through shared inquiry and dialogue. Participants progress at their own pace, drawing on their own experience. Life experience provides adults with a great deal of knowledge—usually more than they realise. The Learning Circles are a way of drawing this out and increasing participants' self-confidence. The discussions start where people are at and involve a spiralling process of reflection and action.

The participants in the Learning Circle decide what issues to explore and how much time to spend on particular topics. Some sessions might be guided by a facilitator, for example, a key person in the leadership team. Sometimes the role of facilitator may be shared around the group. The facilitator helps the group to frame their discussion and to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate equally.

The Learning Circle group discussion may be supported by resource information, for example, some reflective questions or written texts. The group can decide what resources they will use—they may adapt material or find their own resources. The Learning Circles may need to have some rules and routines to be successful.

The Learning Circles are intended to lead action and change. They are democratic in spirit and encourage genuine participation. Experience has shown that Learning Circles have had the following outcomes:

- Highly satisfying aspects of participation for individuals who are sharing experiences, considering other viewpoints and learning more in a stimulating and thought-provoking environment.
- Participants who develop greater self-confidence and a more critical approach to their learning.

Some topics for discussion:

- How to get organised for curriculum implementation
- Establishing professional goals/vision ...
- Innovations in practice
- Establishing philosophical understandings...

Some additional information:

Carley, M. & Carmel, J. (2009). Dialogues for discovery. Brisbane: Early Childhood Australia—Queensland Branch.

Lovett, S. & Gilmore, A. (2003). Teachers' learning journeys: The quality Learning Circle as a model of professional development. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 14(2), 189–211.

Macfarlane, K. & Carmel, J. (2007). Report: Circles of change revisited. Brisbane, QLD: Health and Community Services Workforce Council, Griffith University.

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8 Ways: The EYLF expects all early childhood educators to work in ways that demonstrate their understanding of the histories and realities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in their current work with children and families every day. The inclusion of *8 Ways* is to demonstrate how **one** group in regional NSW have used the EYLF and embedded it with local pictorial understandings. Each service within the context of their community will find their own way to achieve this. The following link may help educators find further information: <http://8ways.wikispaces.com/>

Learning Circle: This handout gives educators an understanding of the potential of Learning Circles (yarning circles) and the suggested ways they can be used. Learning Circles are a useful and safe way to engage all educators to talk about practice in a reflective way, and over time, come to new understandings and changed practices. The 'Learning Circles' process, like all collaborative inquiry, requires an underpinning of collegial trust, goodwill and respect. For example, the Learning Circle model can explore why 'things are always done this way here' and give opportunities for change with new/different understandings as we engage with the EYLF.



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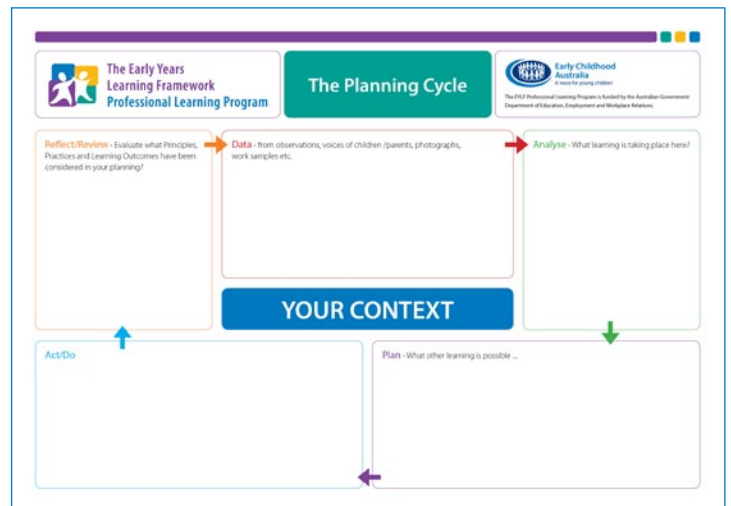
Reflection template

The following questions will help scaffold conversation in group reflection activities. Another useful resource is *The Art of Focused Conversation*, available from: <http://topfacilitation.com/Docs/AFCC.pdf>. Use this resource in staff development to achieve the depth of reflective thinking that can transform practice.

<p>Reflect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What did you see? (equipment, objects...) What happened? What words or phrases stand out? What delights you; what intrigues, frightens worries, annoys and excites you? What does it remind you of? What did you struggle with? What strikes you as something new or fresh in this? Where did you raise your eyebrows? What experiences do you associate with this? When have you seen similar situations? 	
<p>Reframe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is happening here; what is this all about? Why is this significant; how do you know this is significant? Where have you read/heard about this? How will this affect your work? What have you learnt from this? 	
<p>Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will you take away from this conversation in relation to your work with children, colleagues and parents? What ideas have you changed? What will you change about your practice? I am beginning to think... 	
<p>Revisit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is happening? What else is possible? What could happen now? How might this discussion affect my practice? 	

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Planning cycle: This tool assists you to reflect on your current way of planning. Does your current planning demonstrate all aspects of this cycle—observations/gathering data; analysis/questioning; planning and carrying out the plan; further reflection for further data collection, planning etc.? Although these components are presented as a circle in the presentation, sometimes we educators may need to go back to, say, the gathering data part, if we do not have enough evidence to draw conclusions and plan for further learning.

Planning cycle worksheet A4 and A3: Proformas you might like to use and/or adapt for your own process.

Reflections template: This is a useful template for educators to use as they examine and work through ideas about their own, and service/school current practices. It enables staff to appreciate the wide range of views there can be on a topic, to gain from each others' experience, and to challenge what is simply assumed and taken for granted.

This template uses the ideas of 'Reflect, Reframe, Act and Revisit'. It could also be useful in determining and writing a QIP.



Additional Resources

Download *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*—the PDF version, or the RTF version. For more information please visit the DEEWR website.

The six Early Childhood Australia EYLF publications are available through the ECA online resource catalogue.

Jenni Connor's *Thinking about practice: Working with the Early Years Learning Framework* planner which was also given out to participants at the Workshops, will be the subject of EYLF PLP e-Newsletter issue 21.

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