THINKING ABOUT PRACTICE
Working with the Early Years Learning Framework
Ongoing support

After you have attended the EYLF Professional Learning Workshop, you will find ongoing support through:

- the EYLF PLP Forum—a place where you can continue to talk with other people, to share achievements and talk through the issues being faced. Join the discussion at: http://forums.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/

- the EYLF PLP Facebook community, including the weekly Facebook ‘Thinking practice’ series—short reflections designed to provide you with a constant source of thought provoking inspiration as you implement the EYLF; and the ‘Observing practice’ series—short films of practice in action, aimed at getting educators to observe and describe the interactions, play, environment and learning in each situation. Connect with the EYLF PLP Facebook community at: http://on.fb.me/eylfplp

- the EYLF PLP e-Newsletters, which share developments and offer a vehicle for educator voices and experiences to be disseminated. Subscribe at: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfplp/

- the ‘Talking about practice series’ of e-Learning videos—an excellent resource that can be utilised in training and staff meetings. These are available on the EYLF PLP website at: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfplp/

- a series of 12 short EYLF service practice and training videos (Vignettes), which will also be made available on the EYLF PLP website at: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfplp/

About the author

Jenni Connor has been an early childhood teacher, a superintendent and a primary school principal. She managed early childhood programs and wrote curriculum in Tasmania before becoming a freelance consultant. Jenni was a member of the Consortium developing the Early Years Learning Framework and is the writer for the e-Newsletter series and other ECA publications. She undertakes field research into the learning of young children and adolescents and Indigenous education and advises on the Australian Curriculum and Asia Education.

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Section 1: Context

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) (DEEWR, 2009) was approved by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in 2009. Since then, early childhood educators in vastly different contexts have been working to understand what the EYLF means for them and their practice.

The EYLF is Australia’s first national curriculum framework for educators working in early education and care settings with children from birth to age five. It identifies shared values and beliefs and contributes to consistency of practice across different learning settings. The EYLF promotes professional dialogue within and between settings and highlights the crucial role early childhood educators play in establishing strong foundations for children’s current wellbeing, future learning and life success.

In light of the significance of the EYLF in framing the work of early childhood educators, Early Childhood Australia has been funded by the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations to design and deliver an integrated suite of professional learning strategies to support the implementation of the EYLF.

This EYLF Professional Learning Program (EYLF PLP) has five elements:

- EYLF Professional Learning Workshops across urban and regional Australia delivered by experienced and knowledgeable early childhood educators.

- An EYLF PLP online Forum where issues arising in practice can be raised in supported professional conversation.

- Regular EYLF PLP e-Newsletters which share the challenges and opportunities educators experience as they engage with the EYLF, learn from the Workshops and reflect on what they might do and change.

- A set of EYLF PLP ‘Talking about practice’ e-Learning videos to be used by educators as individuals or with staff in their setting.

- A series of film Vignettes which capture effective practice in relation to the EYLF and provide a stimulus for thinking and conversation.
This document—Thinking about practice—has been produced for educators participating in the nationwide Workshops delivered as part of the EYLF PLP and will be available on the EYLF PLP website. The document aims to support educators to look closely at the EYLF with their colleagues, to talk and listen to each other and to review their current practices to provide the best possible environment for young children’s learning.

This process will take time. It is not a one-off experience, but an ongoing professional process of reflection and renewal.

There are many ways of engaging with the EYLF and educators will find different starting points. Some educators begin with the big ideas of Belonging, Being and Becoming, while others reflect on the Principles and Practices and some consider how their current provision supports Learning Outcomes. Ultimately, educators need to engage with all these elements because they interrelate to make the ‘package’ that constitutes quality early childhood practice.

The content of this document follows that sequence. It begins with Belonging, Being and Becoming; moves on to discuss the EYLF Principles; examines key Practices; and finally talks about promoting, assessing and documenting Learning Outcomes.

It is hoped that using this document will help educators to engage in a deep professional conversation that highlights what people believe and value; questions some assumptions underlying everyday routines and interactions with children and families; and results in a commitment to make any changes that seem necessary to respond to the aspirations of the EYLF.

Professional reflection and reform take courage and leadership. ‘Leadership’ will involve prompting colleagues to read the EYLF, helping them to interpret its meanings, encouraging conversations about practice and ensuring that all are involved in decisions about changes that affect them. Leaders will support and guide colleagues through processes of inquiry and reflection, such as those modelled in the next sections of this document.

Figure 1: Elements of the Early Years Learning Framework
Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, p. 10. © Commonwealth of Australia (used with permission).
Section 3: The ‘reflect, reframe, act, revisit’ process

The EYLF (p. 13) identifies ‘ongoing learning and reflective practice’ as one of the five Principles that underpin effective early childhood pedagogy. The EYLF explains that reflective practice involves engaging with questions, gathering information, critically examining what is happening and reflecting on what might be changed.

Reflective practice is explored further in the Educators’ Guide to the EYLF (pp. 7–9). The Educators’ Guide describes the features necessary to create and sustain a culture of inquiry:

- trust and collegiality
- respect for different viewpoints
- opportunities for all to contribute
- organisational commitment to inquiry
- time for reflection and to develop skills
- recognition that there is no one right approach or answer
- courage to question taken-for-granted practices and assumptions.

A range of terms can be used to describe the inquiry process. In this case the inquiry is focused on the EYLF and educators are invited to:

**reflect**: Think critically about what they are currently doing and reconsider the reasons behind what they do, evaluating ‘how things are done’ in relation to the broad directions of the EYLF

**reframe**: Look closely at the Principles and Practices outlined in the EYLF and ‘map’ what they already know and do against the ideal approaches described in the EYLF, identifying strengths and gaps in their approach

**act**: Decide what change, big or small, they might make to ‘how things are done around here’ in response to the EYLF

**revisit**: Observe how the change is impacting on children, families and the educators and talk about whether to continue the new approach, amend some aspects of it or make further improvements.

**Example**: Educators might read and talk about the statement on page 9 of the EYLF in relation to the practices occurring in their setting:

"Children actively construct their own understandings and contribute to others’ learning. They recognise their agency, capacity to initiate and lead learning and their rights to participate in decisions that affect them, including their own learning."

Use the following inquiry process to think about this example. The left-hand column has generic questions; the right-hand side has questions relating to the example and for educators to use with staff in their own settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>At the moment in our setting, who can influence the program of experiences and the schedule of the day?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is happening in our setting?</td>
<td>Which aspects of the day should children have input to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you see?</td>
<td>What decisions might they be involved with?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reframe</th>
<th>How can we find out what children think and feel about their daily experiences?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How might someone else see this?</td>
<td>What might we change after these conversations?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Where can we see children’s influence on what happens during the day?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What may be guiding our thinking?</td>
<td>Are only some children contributing ideas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does it have to be like this?</td>
<td>How might we find out what other children think and feel?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revisit</th>
<th>How might this discussion affect my practice?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is happening?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What else is possible?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What could happen now?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How might this discussion affect my practice?</td>
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</table>
**Section 4: Getting started**

A good place to start is to discuss with colleagues what the EYLF is, and what it is not; it's a framework to be adapted to different circumstances, not a recipe to be followed rigidly.

Educators may also need the opportunity to confirm their own values and beliefs and to identify those they hold in common with colleagues. They might reflect on how these values are evident in the philosophy of the service and in their daily work with children and families.

**About Belonging, Being and Becoming**

The EYLF explains (p. 7) that:

- **Belonging** is about knowing who you are and where you 'belong'. Having a secure sense of belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. *Children feel that they 'belong' because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place (EYLF Information for families).*

- **Being** is about enjoying the present and being accepted for who you are and supported to meet challenges. … *children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun (EYLF Information for families).*

- **Becoming** is about how children change and grow and learn to participate fully and actively in society. *Children start to form their identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become (EYLF Information for families).*

**Working with Belonging, Being and Becoming**

These three powerful concepts apply to all participants in the early learning setting. In Family Day Care, for example it may involve thinking about 'the belonging' of the carer's own children as well as children visiting the setting and their families. In other kinds of settings, a number of adults with different roles have to be considered.

Educators in a preschool said:

> It's important to include all staff—teachers, assistants, support workers, the cook and the grounds person—and to give the genuine message that there are no experts here; we're all finding out about the EYLF because everything each of us does impacts on children.
Section 5: Principles that underpin effective practice

On the basis of international research evidence, the EYLF (pp. 12–13) highlights five principles which underpin effective early childhood practice:

1. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
   When children develop secure relationships with trustworthy adults, they feel more confident and able to learn.

2. Partnerships between early childhood educators and families
   When families and educators work together, they can enhance children’s wellbeing and learning achievement.

3. High expectations and equity
   When educators and families hold high, reasonable expectations for all children, all children are more likely to reach their learning potential.

4. Respect for diversity
   When the early childhood curriculum values and connects with the practices, values and beliefs of children’s cultures and communities, it motivates children to learn.

5. Ongoing learning and reflective practice
   When educators closely examine events and experiences from different perspectives and critically review their practices, curriculum quality, equity and children’s learning improve.

The Workshops, online discussions and e-Newsletters in this Professional Learning Program will explore the application of the Principles in varying contexts.

Questions to stimulate thinking and conversation:

- How do our current education and care arrangements enable babies, toddlers and preschool children to develop secure, consistent relationships with carers? Could we make changes to strengthen the bond between individual children and particular carers?
- What opportunities do we provide for families to communicate with us about their children, so that we can learn from them; and for us to explain why we do what we do and how children are learning?
- How can we create opportunities for families to be involved in decisions about their children’s learning?
- Do educators hold equally high expectations for all children’s learning? What might underlie lower expectations for some children? How might such assumptions be re-evaluated?
- How can we involve families in sharing their culture and beliefs to the extent that suits them?
- What could we do further to reflect and connect with children’s lives in significant ways in the setting and our daily work?
Section 6: Practices that promote children’s learning

The EYLF (pp. 14–17) selects eight practices that early childhood educators should pay particular attention to:

- holistic approaches
- responsiveness to children
- learning through play
- intentional teaching
- learning environments
- cultural competence
- continuity of learning and transitions
- assessment for learning.

This document opens up discussion about what four of those practices might mean for educators working in different early learning settings: ‘Learning through play’; ‘Learning environments’; ‘Intentional teaching’; and ‘Assessment for learning’.

The Workshops, online discussions and e-Newsletters in this Professional Learning Program will explore the application of all eight practices in varying contexts.

6.1 Learning through play

The EYLF (p. 46) defines play-based learning as:

A context through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

The EYLF (p. 15) explains that:

Early childhood educators take on many roles in play with children and use a range of strategies to support learning. They engage in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking.

The EYLF also recognises that children’s play is not always equitable, fair and kind and advises educators to:

… actively support the inclusion of all children in play, help children to recognise when play is unkind and offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair and inclusive learning community.

Questions to stimulate thinking and conversation:

- Are there times when children move randomly around play equipment and don’t really settle to anything? What do we think about this? Are there times when our interaction could help children to sustain play and extend their thinking?

- What do we currently do if we see unfair play or some children dominating and others being left out? If you have an example of when you weren’t sure about how to respond, discuss this with the team or a colleague.

- What else could we do?

- How do we currently respond if children bring ideas such as war games or ‘weapons’ from popular culture into their play?

Each setting will come to these questions in different ways. They may reframe them to suit their own needs or design their own questions. Some will work through them all. What’s clear however is that the questions will often take educators to issues that they already have on their minds.
**Example:**

When considering the question about fairness in play, an educator described the following incident:

One of the toddlers was immersed in play with all the little cars. Another toddler came over and immediately wanted some of the cars.

One educator said: *It’s not fair that one toddler could use all of the cars.*

But another educator said: *From which child’s perspective is it not fair?*

Someone else added: *Why do we even expect toddlers to share?*

When asked how she resolved the issue, the first educator simply said: *I talked about it with the children.*

Use the following inquiry process to think about this example. The left-hand column has generic questions; the right-hand side has questions relating to the example and for educators to use with staff in their own settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>Reframe</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Revisit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• What is happening here?</td>
<td>• How might we view this scenario?</td>
<td>• How could this be resolved in a way that intentionally takes into account the social and emotional needs of both children?</td>
<td>• How might this discussion affect my practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What do we believe about toddlers that might influence our responses?</td>
<td>• What do we believe about toddlers that might influence our responses?</td>
<td>• How might we help toddlers begin to understand the needs of others?</td>
<td>• What else could we think and do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How might someone else see this?</td>
<td>• How might someone else see this?</td>
<td>• How might we feel if someone suggested we just ‘buy more cars’ or ‘make the toddlers share’?</td>
<td>• What is happening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How did the educators get to this point and what may be guiding their thinking?</td>
<td>• How did the educators get to this point and what may be guiding their thinking?</td>
<td>• How might this discussion affect my practice?</td>
<td>• What else is possible?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What else could we think and do?</td>
<td>• What else could we think and do?</td>
<td></td>
<td>• What could happen now?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
6.2 Learning environments

The EYLF (p. 15) describes environments that support learning as:

… vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. They cater for different capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions.

Early childhood education has long recognised the natural and constructed environments inside and outdoors as vehicles for learning and opportunities for teaching. As the EYLF (pp. 15–16) notes, Australian play spaces ‘… invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature.’

We also need to think about whether the environments we provide:

- invite conversations
- promote sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning
- introduce novelty to provoke interest and more complex and increasingly abstract thinking
- include digital technologies that can enable children to access global connections and resources and encourage new ways of thinking.

Questions to stimulate thinking and conversation:

- Are our indoor and outdoor environments equally focused on children’s learning? How do educators approach children’s learning indoors and outdoors?
- Are there elements in our environments that connect with children’s learning in their home, culture and community? What do these look like?
- How could we help all children to understand and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first custodians of this land?
- Are our environments flexible so that they will challenge and support children’s learning, potentially for five years?
- Do our environments reflect high expectations for all children and invite children to participate to the full extent of their abilities?
- What would an environmental audit of our setting show about energy usage or wastage? How might we as educators, with children and families, act for sustainability of resources?
Example:

One setting started with the issue about challenge in the outdoor environment and thought about it from the perspective of a person coming into their setting.

So the questions they used were:

- What can everyone who comes into our setting see in relation to the environment and learning challenges?
- What can only we see about this because we work here?
- What don’t we see anymore because it is part of our everyday view?

This service has river rocks in several areas of the playground.

The educators said: Outsiders will think that these rocks could be dangerous because children might throw them.

On the other hand, some other educators said: All small equipment has the potential to be thrown.

They remembered that the stones had been brought in to manage the potentially dangerous activity of the bigger children pushing the large trucks at high speed around the shared path that wound through the playground.

The educators had talked with the children about the problem. They helped children to see that, although pushing the carts was fun and exciting, it was also frightening for the smaller children who used the path and that it was potentially dangerous.

Adults and children then together decided to create an area where rocks could be loaded into the big trucks. The rocks were delivered when the children were there and, over three days, the children and educators carted them in and put them in place.

Use the following inquiry process to think about this example. The left-hand column has generic questions; the right-hand side has questions relating to the example and for educators to use with staff in their own settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>Reframe</th>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Revisit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ What is happening here?</td>
<td>▪ How might we have approached a similar situation?</td>
<td>▪ Why did the educators in the example involve the children in the decisions and resolution of the problem?</td>
<td>▪ Who benefits from the ways this problem was resolved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What concerns might we have held?</td>
<td>▪ What concerns might we have held?</td>
<td>▪ What might we do in a similar situation?</td>
<td>▪ How might this discussion affect my practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ How might we respond to someone who worries about rocks being thrown?</td>
<td>▪ How might someone else see this?</td>
<td>▪ What else is happening?</td>
<td>▪ What else is happening?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What else is possible?</td>
<td></td>
<td>▪ What could happen now?</td>
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</table>
6.3 Intentional teaching

The EYLF (p. 15) defines ‘intentional teaching’ as:

… deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful. Educators who engage in intentional teaching recognise that learning occurs in social contexts and that interactions and conversations are vitally important for learning. They actively promote children’s learning through worthwhile and challenging experiences and interactions that foster high-level thinking skills.

The EYLF suggests that educators who engage in intentional teaching use strategies such as:

- **modelling and demonstrating**—Let’s find pieces of the puzzle with flat edges and decide whether they might be the sky or grass.
- **open questioning and speculating**—I wonder what made the puddle disappear?
- **explaining**—Fish need to eat like we do, so someone will need to mind our goldfish over the holidays.
- **engaging in shared thinking and problem solving**—How will we make sure everyone gets a piece of your birthday cake?

Intentional teaching can happen both through planned activities and through educators ‘seizing the moment’ to explain something important or to ask a question that provokes children’s inquiry. In family day care settings, for example, educators are very ‘intentional’ when they choose and change the range of equipment set out for children’s play and learning.

Educators have both small and large intentions for children’s learning. They teach simple routines, such as washing hands, by showing and reminding children. And they know that developing more complex understandings and attitudes, such as respect for others, will require intentional modelling, intervention and discussion over a long time.

Educators also know that ‘being intentional’ can mean deliberately leaving a child to play quietly, standing with them silently observing a natural event, or putting an arm around an unhappy child.

Questions to stimulate thinking and conversation:

- What is the difference between ‘being intentional’ and ‘taking over’?
- Who usually solves problems children encounter?
- If you can think of an example where you ‘solved a problem’ for a child, discuss with your team or colleague other possible approaches.
- What do educators currently do if conflict occurs between children?
- How could we use such occasions to intentionally build children’s capacity for empathy and collaboration?
- Are we ‘intentional’ about all aspects of children’s learning, or just about their cognitive learning?

What do we do if children ask questions we don’t know the answers to?

**Example:**

A child asked: Does the grass stay green at night?

The educator responded: How will we find out?

That resulted in an extended conversation about how they would find out and who might help them. They explored many options, including asking other children, typing a question into Google and talking about what happens at night. Finally, a decision was made that the child and the educator together would ask the parent if he could take home a torch and go outside in the dark and see for himself.

What else could the educator do to encourage creative inquiry and investigation?

Do educators in our setting know how to … introduce appropriate tools, technologies and media and provide the skills, knowledge and techniques to enhance children’s learning? (EYLF, p. 37).
6.4 Assessment for learning

The EYLF (p. 17) defines ‘assessment for children’s learning’ as ‘the process of gathering and analysing information as evidence about what children know, can do and understand. It is part of an ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children’s learning’.

The EYLF explains that assessment is ‘… important because it enables educators in partnership with families, children and other professionals to:

- plan effectively for children’s current and future learning
- communicate about children’s progress
- clarify what might be hindering children’s progress
- identify children needing additional support
- evaluate the effectiveness of learning programs and approaches
- reflect on pedagogy that will suit the context and the children’.

The five Learning Outcomes in the EYLF ‘… provide educators with key reference points against which children’s progress can be identified, documented and communicated …’ to families and others in the professional community.

The primary purpose of assessment therefore, is to support children’s learning. Children can only learn what they are enabled to learn, so we need to look closely at the experiences and interactions that educators provide, as well as what children know, understand and can do. As the EYLF (p. 17) points out ‘all children demonstrate their learning in different ways’. So, assessment methods, strategies and tools should enable children of all cultural and language backgrounds and with the range of physical and intellectual capabilities to demonstrate competence.

Questions to stimulate thinking and conversation:

- Do we enable children to show their skills and understandings in cultural ways and forms that include children from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds?
- Do our ways of assessing learning capture the small steps some children take as well as the ‘giant leaps’?
- Are children and families able to contribute to our understanding about children’s competence?
- Do our current recording systems give educators sufficient information to know when to intervene? You might identify a child about whose learning you have concern and discuss with a colleague how to gather deeper information.
- If we are concerned about some children’s progress, do we look critically at our learning programs and make changes or do we assume that the ‘problem’ lies with the learner?
Section 7: Learning Outcomes and assessment

The Educators’ Guide to the EYLF (p. 42) explains that:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming are ‘big picture aims’
- the five Learning Outcomes and their 19 sub elements are broad, longer term goals of integrated competencies, processes, understandings and dispositions
- points of evidence are ‘… often discrete skills or content that enable children to achieve the Learning Outcomes’.

**Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity**

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

**Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world**

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- 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**

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

**Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners**

- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, 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 5: Children are effective communicators**

- 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 information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

Looking closely at the Learning Outcomes and their key components, there is evident interconnection between them. The Learning Outcomes are not designed to be ‘taught’ or assessed one by one. Instead, educators gather rich pictures of children’s learning and analyse those to assess what children are showing they know and can do and how they have progressed.
Example:

An educator noticed two three-year-olds creating a dramatic play in home corner; one child was being ‘the doctor’, the other ‘the patient’. She was impressed with the girls’ rich use of oral language and the way they negotiated and co-constructed the story and the meaning. A carrot became a banana, for example, because ‘when mummy was in hospital, you have to bring fruit’. They used a cushion for a pillow and some fabric for a bed cover. They negotiated roles and added new language as the conversation progressed.

The educator wondered: ‘Should I note this as progress in Outcome 5 which is about communicating?’ She went back to the Outcomes and key elements and decided the demonstration of learning connected to at least two Outcome areas.

Questions to stimulate thinking and conversation:

- Does our current planning provide a balance of experiences across the five Learning Outcomes?
- Can we see children engaging with learning to build competence in relation to all Learning Outcomes?
- Are we supporting children to build capabilities in relation to long-term goals, such as care, respect, responsibility and contribution to their world?
- Are we supporting children’s thoughtful inquiry, engagement with ICT and emerging literacy and numeracy interest, knowledge and skill?
- Are there gaps and silences in our provision for children’s learning?

Use the following inquiry process to think about this example. The left-hand column has generic questions; the right-hand side has questions relating to the example and for educators to use with staff in their own settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflect</th>
<th>How might we interpret this learning?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is happening here?</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reframe</th>
<th>Which Outcomes might it relate to?</th>
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<tr>
<td>How might someone else see this?</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Act</th>
<th>Look closely at Outcome 4 as well as 5. What do we notice that relates to the example?</th>
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<td>What is guiding the educator’s thinking?</td>
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<th>Revisit</th>
<th>How could we record this learning?</th>
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<td>What could happen now?</td>
<td>How could we support next stage learning?</td>
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The Learning Outcomes are described separately for planning and provision to ensure that children are enabled to learn in all five areas. When observing and recording children’s learning, we acknowledge its complex and integrated nature.
Conclusion

The adoption of the EYLF in early childhood settings across Australia offers a golden opportunity to enhance the professionalism and status of the early childhood educational community. The EYLF draws on ‘… conclusive international evidence that early childhood is a vital period in children’s learning and development’ (EYLF p. 5).

This confirms the significant contribution of early childhood educators to children’s current and future learning success. The Framework challenges educators to critically review traditions and practices in light of new understandings about children, learning and optimal early childhood provision for the twenty-first century. It is an aspirational document projecting an image of early childhood educators as knowledgeable, skilled and engaged in critical and self-reflective decision making.

Rising to this vision of the early childhood professional requires a strong commitment to ongoing learning and continuous improvement. The Workshops conducted under the EYLF PLP banner are part of that process, and further deep, lasting learning will need to be pursued back in settings and with colleagues. This document is designed to stimulate and support those ongoing conversations.

References


EYLF PLP Workshop resources

In addition to Thinking about practice: Working with the EYLF, EYLF PLP Workshop participants will also receive the following publications to enrich the Workshop experience and provide ongoing support as they implement the EYLF in their services.

**Belonging, being and becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia**

The Early Years Learning Framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.

**The Early Years Learning Framework: Building confident learners**

Leonie Arthur

Explores how educators can help children to be confident and involved learners, focusing on Outcome 4 of the first national Early Years Learning Framework for Australia.

(2010, 28 pages) ECA Code: RIP1001

**Every Child magazine—Early Years Learning Framework**

Various authors

Themed around the first national Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, this edition features informative articles to help improve learning outcomes for young children, including engaging children in rich conversations, developing an enquiring mind, and much more.

(2009, Vol. 15 No. 4, 36 pages) ECA Code: EC0904

**Every Child magazine—Wellbeing**

Various authors

This issue of Every Child magazine focuses on Wellbeing—recognising and understanding mental health issues, as well as articles about some common contributing factors to children’s mental health issues such as depression, separation, and low levels of carer responsiveness.

(2010, Vol. 16 No. 2, 36 pages) ECA Code: EC1002

**The Early Years Learning Framework: Getting started**

Joy Goodfellow

The Council of Australian Governments recently endorsed the first national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for educators in a range of early childhood settings. This guide is specifically designed to introduce and support educators in coming to know about, understand and work with the EYLF.

(2009, 28 pages) ECA Code: RIP 0904

**Stars are made of glass: Children as capable and creative communicators**

Leonie Arthur, Felicity McArdle and Marina Papic

Stars are made of glass: Children as capable and creative communicators focuses on Learning Outcome 5 of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia and explores how children communicate using spoken language, music, movement, images and symbols.

(2010, 31 pages) ECA Code: RIP1002

**Learning and teaching through play**

Anne Kennedy and Lennie Barblett

The Early Years Learning Framework: Learning and teaching through play focuses on The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia and explains how educators examine their understandings of play and how play-based approaches require intentional planning and teaching in order to support and extend children’s learning.

(2010, 27 pages) ECA Code: RIP1003

**ECA Code of ethics**

Outlines Early Childhood Australia’s Code of Ethics in easy-to-follow point form.

ECA Code: COEBRCE
After you have attended the EYLF Professional Learning Workshops, you will find ongoing support through a selection of EYLF Professional Learning media. These will provide you with an ongoing source of information and resources to help you work with the EYLF, as well as a platform for you to continue developing support networks and EYLF conversations.

**EYLF PLP online Forum**
The EYLF PLP Forum offers a place where issues arising in practice can be raised in supported professional conversation.

The EYLF PLP online Forum is underwritten by the ECA Code of Ethics and is envisaged as a safe professional community where the challenges and potentials of the EYLF can be discussed, advice sought and ideas tested. Join in the discussion at:

**EYLF PLP Facebook community**
The EYLF PLP Facebook community provides another space where people can connect with the early childhood community and take advantage of the new ‘Thinking practice’ and ‘Observing practice’ series.

The weekly ‘Thinking practice’ series consists of short reflections designed to provide readers with a constant source of thought-provoking inspiration as they implement the EYLF.

The ‘Observing practice’ series consists of short films of practice in action, aimed at getting educators to observe and describe the interactions, play, environment and learning in each situation.

Connect with the EYLF PLP Facebook community at:
[http://on.fb.me/eylfplp](http://on.fb.me/eylfplp)

**EYLF PLP e-Newsletters**
The EYLF PLP e-Newsletters provide support by providing case studies and other information about how educators are engaging with the EYLF across a range of settings. Researched and written by an ECEC expert with the support of leaders in early education and care, it responds to content in the online Forums; questions and issues raised at the Workshops; information from case studies of services; and requests from services for information about particular issues they are facing. Please subscribe by filling in the form at:

**Vignettes**
The Vignettes are a series of 12 short EYLF service practice and training videos, which capture effective practice in relation to the EYLF and provide stimulus for staff discussion. The clips will provide educators who work alone or in small settings with a professional learning conversation where a range of perspectives on the EYLF are put forward. The Vignettes may also be used as a professional learning tool in staff meetings or training institutions. These are accessible on the EYLF PLP website at:

For further information and updates on the Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Program:
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Phone: +61 2 6242 1800