Vignette: Discovering—What do you see?

Overview:
This vignette shows an educator, a four-year-old and a baby interacting with a mirror in a family day care setting.

Key Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) concepts:
- children as teachers of other children
- rich learning environments
- relationships between children and between educators and children
- identity
- intentional teaching
- Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5
- learning through play.

Key links to standards in the NQS:
1.1, 1.2, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2.

First viewing: What did you notice?
Ask participants to watch and listen to the vignette. Then use some questions to start the discussion.

- What did you notice?
- What were the children doing?
- What was the educator doing?
- How would you describe the environment?

It is likely that participants will focus on or notice different aspects of practice in this vignette. Try to highlight the importance of seeing practice from different perspectives because it can help us to re-think our beliefs and to challenge our typical way of responding.

How might children respond if we showed them this vignette? What might they notice? Why might we decide to show them the vignette? Why not?

How would the parent of the baby respond to watching this vignette? What might we learn from the parent’s perspective?
**Second viewing: Looking more deeply at the learning and teaching**

Before showing the vignette again, suggest to participants that this time they focus on what and how the children are learning rather than on what they are doing.

- **What are the children learning in this play-based experience and how does the learning link with the Learning Outcomes in the EYLF?** For example, the baby is learning about her identity by recognising herself in the mirror (Learning Outcome 1). The older child is learning to share her ideas with others (Learning Outcome 5).

- **How are the children learning?** How does the baby show her learning and communicate with the educator? For example, she sticks out her tongue, which could be her way of showing that she is recognising different parts of her face and what different parts can do. What else could this action mean?

- **What is the older child learning through her contribution to the baby’s learning?** And what is the baby learning from her interaction with the older child? Why do you think the older child moved the mirror? What might she have had in mind by putting the doll’s face close to the mirror?

- **Are both children deeply engaged in what is going on?** How can you tell if they are or are not?

- **What teaching strategies does the educator use to promote or support the children’s learning?** Through her contribution to the baby’s learning? And what is the baby learning from her interaction with the older child? Why do you think the older child moved the mirror? What might she have had in mind by putting the doll’s face close to the mirror?

Point out that the educator withdrew at a point in the experience. That’s a good example of intentional teaching—deciding when to not be part of the experience and to just observe.

- **What might you record from this vignette about the children’s learning or the experience itself?** How might this experience contribute to your assessment of the children in the vignette and the learning opportunities you offer?

**Third viewing: What have we learned? What next?**

Suggest to participants that this time they focus on links to the EYLF Vision, Principles and Practices and their own practice.

- **How does the older child and the baby’s learning—both from and with each other—link with the EYLF?** For example, the EYLF identifies that children are teachers of other children in different ways (EYLF, pp. 9, 26, 31, 34, 35, 40).

- **What Principles or Practices in the EYLF can you identify in this vignette?** For example, the value of spontaneous learning experiences and play-based learning approaches.

- **What messages are conveyed to the children by this educator’s respectful, responsive interactions and obvious pleasure in being with the children?**

- **What have we learned or what are the key messages from our discussion?** For example, we have learned to look for opportunities in everyday interactions to help children learn about other children’s rights and needs. We also believe that a key message in this vignette is about the ‘unspoken’ but powerful messages that educators convey to children indirectly through their words and actions.

- **What action will we take?** For example, we will look closely at the messages we convey to the children through our interactions and actions to ensure they are conveying positive messages of respect for diversity and difference.

**References**