Module 7

Learning and Development

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Course Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHC30113</td>
<td>Certificate III in Early Childhood Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHCECE005</td>
<td>Provide care for babies and toddlers</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHCECE003</td>
<td>Provide care for children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHCECE010</td>
<td>Support the holistic development of children in early childhood</td>
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[goodstart.edu.au](http://goodstart.edu.au)

Version 1.0
Acknowledgements

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Authors

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This is the seventh module in a series of modules required for learners to achieve the qualifications of CHC30113. The qualification that you are studying towards has a prescribed number of Units of Competency that must be completed at a successful level for you to be awarded the qualification. Each Unit of Competency includes essential outcomes, knowledge and skills that you must obtain. The Unit of Competency also describes the context and assessment conditions required for the learner to participate in. These requirements are nationally consistent.

To enhance your learning experience, Units of Competency have been clustered together to enable you to participate in a holistic professional learning program with streamlined assessment tasks and with suitable content clustered together.

In each module, the Goodstart Institute of Early Learning offers learners a number of resources to assist them with their learning, enabling students to gain the necessary knowledge and skills required for each Unit of Competency.

The Learning Guide contains the content needed to gain the knowledge and skills required to be a successful early childhood educator. Additionally, all of the information required to complete assessment tasks are located within this Learning Guide.

The Learning Guide is broken into several chapters, each relating to a different Unit of Competency.

The self-paced learning experiences contained within this Guide assists the learner to unpack the theory and literature and apply the information to their local context. These experiences will assist the learner to prepare for success with the required assessment tasks.

**Structure of the learning program**

The components of this module include:

- Myportal presentations
- The Learning Guide (textbook)
- The Assessment Guide.

**Learning activities**

Learning activities are provided throughout this Learning Guide and in the presentations in myportal. These activities are designed to support you (the student) to put into practice the content and skills discussed in the relevant sections and to consider how the content is relevant to your local work/study context. These activities also support you in developing foundation skills (language, literacy, and numeracy) that are essential to role performance.

While completing the experiences contained within this Learning Guide is not compulsory, learners who do participate in the learning experiences generally achieve better outcomes in the Assessment Guide.
Assessment

It is time to complete the Assessment Guide when you:

• understand thoroughly the information provided within the Learning Guide
• have participated in the required online workshops or on-campus activities, and
• feel confident that you are able to transfer knowledge gained from participating with course material into practice within your local community.

All assessment items are required to be completed at a successful level before learners are able to be awarded competence, and progress on to further modules.

Community of learners

Completing professional learning through blended delivery modes (online, course books, etc.) can be isolating at times. It is important that you participate as an active member of our community of learners and add your thoughts, ideas, reflections, and questions to our blog on myportal. Because learning is a socially constructed process, participating on the learning site will help you with your learning and will also support your peers.

Goodstart Early Learning policies, procedures and requirements

Goodstart Early Learning has provided current service policies, procedures and requirements for learners to engage with as part of their learning experience. Learners will need to use the content within these documents to gain the necessary knowledge and skills required for them to become a successful early childhood educator. Learners working or completing work placement in non-Goodstart Early Learning services are required to familiarise themselves with their local service documents. However, for the purpose of being assessed for this qualification, learners will need to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understandings of Goodstart Early Learning policies, procedures and requirements.

Academic support

Each learner is assigned to a Professional Learning Consultant (PLC). The PLC is an expert in the fields of early childhood education and adult education, and their main role includes teaching, coaching, providing advice and support to our early childhood education and care students, as well as assisting learners to prepare for assessment. Additionally, PLCs will assess learners’ performances against stated performance criteria.

Learners who need academic assistance, have questions about the course content or assessment, or wish to participate in any of the additional learning opportunities (e.g., workshops) may seek the services provided by our Academic Learning Team. There are many ways to access academic support.
1. Contact your PLC directly by telephone or email.
2. Telephone Academic Support on 1800 617 455 (Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm Queensland time).
3. Contact the out-of-hours telephone support on 0427 942 562 (Monday–Thursday, 5pm–8pm Queensland time).

Study days and workshops are regularly held both during working hours and out of hours at your local Institute Professional Learning Hub. A schedule of these events is available on our website.

**Citations and referencing**

Goodstart Institute of Early Learning uses reference style APA version 6 to cite the work of those individuals or organisations whose ideas, theories, or research have directly influenced the development of this Learning Guide. Students must also reference cited material. A referencing help tool and style guide is located on myportal.

**Resources**

Resources such as interactive learning activities, workshops, readings and templates can be downloaded from the myportal.
### Chapter 1

**CHCECE005 Provide care for babies and toddlers**

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<td>Element 6</td>
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Within this chapter, the term babies refers to children aged from birth to 12 months of age and the term toddlers children aged from 12 months to two years of age. This chapter focuses on the very important first two years of life. Some say these are the most important of all the years.

Educators working with babies and toddlers have a crucial role to play in supporting the learning, development and long-term wellbeing of these children. In these first few years of life, rich experiences and strong responsive relationships help to lay the foundations of learning and development that have lasting consequences. Educators working with babies and toddlers must partner with families and connect to community services where necessary to maximise children’s opportunities.

**Importance of a responsive and engaged educator**

This chapter begins by considering the important role that educators play in working with babies and toddlers. Quality practice must occur within a babies and toddler room. Often educators believe ‘real learning’ happens in the older age groups (and once they go to school); however, research from the neuroscience field has emphasised the significance of the learning that occurs within the first few years. It is therefore crucial that educators working with this age group are aware of their huge responsibilities and of the value and support that colleagues and the service in general should provide. Educators who take the time to ‘listen’ to the learning; to see the baby or toddler as an intelligent and competent person; and who are engaged and responsive to the child’s interests and needs, will support children having strong foundations that lead to improved life outcomes (Institute of the Developing Child, Harvard University).

### Activity 1.1

**Watch and consider:**

Watch and consider the following YouTube clip: The Science of Early Childhood Development presented by Jack Shonkoff MD. The video length is 3:57 mins.

To access the vignette, click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser - http://safeshare.tv/w/GiDxSGTr

- Why are early experiences for young children so important for brain development?

Current research is highlighting that it is not just brain development and intelligence that is enhanced through rich positive experiences in the early years, Victorian Children’s Commissioner Berni Geary stated at an ECA Council Meeting (personal communication, 3rd September, 2014) that children’s whole body systems are affected.

As stated in the last section, children who interact and engage with adults who are responsive to their interests and needs, and who are provided rich stimulating experiences are more likely to thrive. Positive two-way interactions with adults and rich learning experiences allows a young child’s brain to develop.
# Element 1

## Promote children’s health

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<td>1.1</td>
<td>Reach agreement with families on how sleep and rest will occur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Check the cots, bedding and equipment meet approved standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Implement safe sleep practices and explore and implement quality sleeping environments</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Ensure bedding is clean, using appropriate hygiene standards</td>
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### Promoting children’s health

Within module two of this training package, the concept of critical rituals was introduced. Within this module, this concept will be explored further, such as children’s role in critical rituals and encouraging children’s thinking and learning from the everyday experiences. Furthermore, the important partnership between family and educator will once again be explored, also at a much deeper level.

Critical rituals are those that occur during the day and include such things as sleeping, rest and relaxation, meal times and toileting. These rituals are the major everyday events that occur in our lives that are important for our health and wellbeing. The experiences within these rituals must be positive, safe and meet the unique requirements of each child. Critical rituals are not routine activities that ‘just happen’. They are potent, authentic opportunities for real-life learning. For example, let’s consider rest time.

The critical ritual of rest time is not only an opportunity for children to rest their bodies and calm their minds, it also incorporates many learning opportunities. The following outlines some of the learning opportunities arising from engagement in rest time, in relation to Belonging, being & becoming. The early years learning framework for Australia [EYLF] outcome areas (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009). For a start, children feel safe, secure and supported (EYLF: Outcome 1). Children take more responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing (EYLF: Outcome 3) when educators talk to children about how they like to rest and discuss strategies to help them to calm their body and mind. A predictable pattern during the day helps children to know that rest time occurs after lunch, and that children may rest in the ‘quiet cave’ whenever they need to (EYLF: Outcome 1 and 3). Of course, children also develop a range of skills by helping to prepare for rest. For example, matching and sorting skills (finding sheets); physical skills (making a bed); sequencing skills (the steps before sleep); and self-esteem (from succeeding in completing the task). There are other skills and knowledge children learn as they participate through this daily ritual that forms an important part in the life of the service.
Educators are encouraged to reflect upon the service’s current rituals and to value the opportunities and potential learning experiences within these events.

Critical rituals are events that often occur at home and at the service. Wherever possible, forming partnerships between home and service where similar rituals are shared means a seamless transition for the child and leads to positive wellbeing, harmony and a strong sense of belonging.

**Partnerships with families to support children’s sleep and rest needs**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Office of the High Commission for Human Rights [OHCHR], 1990) recognises the importance of the family as the fundamental unit that exists to support the care and well-being of the child. If you recall from module two, we defined a family in many different forms: one parent, same-sex, extended family, nuclear family, grand-parents as main caregivers and many other family types. Regardless of how you define what constitutes a family, it is important to recognise that a child’s family is central to who they are, of great importance to their sense of belonging and wellbeing, and that the family unit is to be recognised and respected (Loreman, 2009). The Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) highlights to us that “Learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators work in partnership with families” (p.12). In genuine partnerships, families and early childhood educators value each other’s knowledge of the child and engage in shared decision-making.

Educators, at times, believe that because they have completed an early childhood qualification, that they hold a balance of power and have knowledge and skills above or more important than that of the families (Elliott, 2006). This belief by educators creates barriers towards building positive partnerships with families. Educators who think in this way are encouraged to re-evaluate their role and recognise that forming a partnership with families leads to better outcomes for children without devaluing the critical role educators have in supporting the education and care of the young child. Considering the Ecological Systems Theory highlighted in chapter one, children who are supported by the two systems of home and school will have better outcomes.

Once you have completed your studies, you may eventually be responsible for leading programs and supporting other staff to consider children’s rituals while within the service. Educators need to consider the rituals they create in the early childhood education and care service:

- What are the service’s established rituals?
- What are the children’s individual rituals?
- Should some of the service’s rituals be reviewed in collaboration with the child and family?

In the next section, a focus on working with families to support children’s individual sleep and rest needs will be explored.
Individual preferences for sleep and rest

It is important educators talk with families and children about how children prepare for bed and how they like to sleep and/or rest at home. This may include: the bedding children like; a pillow for older children or no pillow; various soothing techniques such as reading to sleep or a gentle rub on the back; security toy (teddy, blanket) versus no special toy or blanket; shoes on or shoes off. Wherever possible, families and educators should collaborate to determine whether similar rituals can be followed, making transition between home and service easier and more enjoyable for all.

Normally, educators are supportive of working with families to ensure baby’s own unique sleeping and rest needs are met, however, for whatever reason, once a baby becomes a toddler, educators begin to shift the child into ‘service based routines’, where the service dictates when the child will sleep rather than the child following their natural body rhythm. This practice is not respectful to the child and educators are encouraged to look for ways that allow all children to learn and recognise the signs of their own body’s need for sleep and rest and to be able to enact these. Strategies may include children knowing that they can access a sleep area at any time, giving them access to a quiet space, or services having a bed permanently set up in a room.

Children’s soothing techniques

Children use different strategies to help calm and self-soothe, preparing themselves for rest. For example some children unconsciously twirl their hair, sniff a comfort toy, suck their thumb or a pacifier, cuddle a certain toy or like their backs rubbed in a certain way. Some children are used to going to sleep being nursed by a parent or carer. It is important to find out how children are supported to relax so that, where possible, similar techniques can be used.

In discussions with Mum, Marcy established that Mum wore a certain jumper when putting her baby to sleep. Baby would snuggle into the jumper as part of her routine to sleep. After discussions with Mum, it was decided to send the jumper to the service, which Marcy laid across her chest for the baby to snuggle into as she fell asleep. Mum was a little embarrassed about this strategy at first, however, with baby calmer and falling asleep quickly, all were happy to follow this strategy until the baby felt secure and safe in the service.
Activity 1.2

As an Educator, you often work with a range of people with various skills and experience, particularly when staff have leave and casual employees are utilised to back-fill the position.

For this scenario consider that you the permanent staff member working in a toddler’s room. You find yourself working with a Lead Educator who is a casual staff member replacing the normal Lead Educator while she is on holidays. The Educator is a lovely person and very caring towards the children, however, she has a traditional view that all children must sleep or rest for at least two hours at the same time so that educators are able to get other ‘important’ jobs done.

How would you explain to this Educator the important practices and routines of your service and the reason for these?

How would you respectfully challenge her traditional, disrespectful, not current, practices?

It is not okay in any situation to force children to sleep or the reverse, to stay awake. Educators may at times feel they have been put in a difficult place when family members request these actions. It is difficult and it is a topic that requires sensitivity. For example, a family who is up at 11:30pm (or later) each night because their child has fallen asleep at the service may find it a challenge to have a calm, rationale conversation with an educator.

Within the life of a service, there will be tensions at certain times as families and educators work together for what they both believe is the best for children. In these situations, good communication is essential and it is important to meet with the families as soon as possible to talk through the issue. In these difficult scenarios, it is important to listen fully and sensitively to the family. Is there an easy solution? Can a compromise be made? Would a short sleep for the child make a difference? Are the rituals similar or are events different and is this the cause for the child not sleeping? The role of the educator in these situations is to remember that, while in care, educators have a responsibility to children’s rights and the need to allow children to have a say in this event. For a non-verbal child, this might mean the child falling asleep at the table. If a child is that tired that an educator cannot keep them awake and they are falling asleep at a table, then educators must listen to the child’s needs as the child is saying: I am tired and I need sleep. Being professional and respectful to families as you partner with them through these challenging times helps to build better relationships. If educators feel they do not have the confidence or resources to have these conversations with family members, then educators are encouraged to ask for support from the Director and/or support staff.
Table 1.1 Children’s sleep pattern guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Possible sleep pattern</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 months of age</td>
<td>Sleep occurs around the clock when required or as per the child’s sleep routine. May sleep 10-18 hours every 24hrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-12 months</td>
<td>Moves towards longer periods of sleep during the night and 1–4 daytime naps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-24 months</td>
<td>Can sleep 12-14 hours per 24 hours. Daytime naps gradually decrease to one.</td>
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(Adapted from Walker & Miller, 2013, p.191)

Ongoing conversations about children’s sleep and rest needs should occur. Families and educators should share information such as whether there have been any changes at home or at the service that may affect children’s sleeping or need for sleep; e.g., whether the child has had a bad night’s sleep the night before or other information that would affect the normal and agreed routine.

Safe and clean cots and beds

At Goodstart Early Learning...

Goodstart Early Learning staff must obtain a copy of the following Requirement from the Goodstart Policy Framework:

Sleep, Rest and Relaxation: Requirement NQS2

Students working and / or studying at services other than Goodstart must familiarise themselves with their service sleep and rest policy and / or procedures.

Educators must know and be able to apply the knowledge and skills outlined in their sleep, rest and relaxation requirement.

In Australia, 115 babies under the age of twelve months died through Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy [SUDI] in 2012 (2014 SIDS and kids fast facts, n.d.). Fifty of these deaths included Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), while babies slept. Educators must be meticulous at sleep time to ensure strategies recommended by the SIDS and Kids Organisation are implemented. This includes ensuring cots and beds are safe and clean, therefore, statistically reducing the risk of SIDS.

The safety of all children while in care is paramount. However, due to the increased health risk factors while babies sleep, additional policy requirements have been developed and
added to rest and sleep times policies and requirements to guide educators working with babies.

Regulation 81 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations (Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs [MCEECDYA], 2014) relating to ‘sleep and rest’ identifies that “The approved provider (and nominated supervisor) of an education and care service must take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children” (p.56).

The Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2013b) states:

When considering the supervision requirements of sleeping children, an assessment of each child’s circumstances and needs should be undertaken to determine any risk factors. For example, because a higher risk may be associated with small babies or children with colds or chronic lung disorders, they might require a higher level of supervision while sleeping.

Sleeping children should always be within sight and hearing distance so that educators can assess the child’s breathing and colour of their skin to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Rooms that are very dark and have music playing may not provide adequate supervision of sleeping children. Supervision windows should be kept clear and not painted over or covered with curtains or posters. (p.64)

The following information is an excerpt from the Goodstart Early Learning Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Requirement for educators working with babies and toddlers:

On arrival at the service, educators must:

• assist families to store any linen provided. Linen must be appropriate for the season and be provided for children on a weekly basis in an individually named sleep bag for storage.
• have access to current safe sleeping information at the centre which can be accessed by staff or families as required.

Preparation of rest areas:

• cots and other bedding equipment and accessories must meet Australian Standards
• position beds and cots with unobstructed access to assist in managing emergency situations and to reduce the risk of cross infection or injury
• provide children with a safe sleeping environment removing from reach all potential dangers including cords or strings, heaters and electrical appliances
• only one child is permitted per bed or cot for rest time
• if a child does not have linen for rest time, the service must provide clean linen for use on the day
• ensure that the room temperature and linen is appropriate for the climate
• older children are to be encouraged to make their own beds
• ensure sleep room viewing windows are free from obstruction
• Cots must be prepared as below:
  - the bottom sheet must be firmly tucked in.
  - the covering sheet and light blanket must be firmly tucked in at the bottom to prevent
    the baby or child from covering their head during rest
  - do not use doonas, pillow, lamb’s wool, thick quilts, bumpers, soft toys or pacifiers
    attached to a chain in cots.

### Activity 1.3

Explore the available resources on Safe Sleeping Practices available to families and educators
for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.
http://www.sidsandkids.org/safe-sleeping/indigenous-safe-sleeping/

### Sleep practices

Safe sleep practices are necessary to ensure children’s safety while sleeping. SIDS and the
Kids Sleeping Safe Program outline an extensive education campaign for families and
community members working with babies. Educators must follow the sleeping practices
recommended by SIDs.

### Activity 1.4

Read and be able to embed in practice:

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to see the
latest advice for safe sleeping practices and a picture of how a baby should look, sleeping in a
cot. Consider whether there are any cultural considerations between each of the procedures
recommended in this pamphlet and the information from Activity 1.3.
http://www.sidsandkids.org/safe-sleeping/

Babies have different sleeping needs and sleeping patterns. Younger babies require more
sleep than older babies. It is important to be aware of our language, particularly when
working with families to ensure Educators are not encouraging language that is negative
and regarded as a ‘self-esteem stopper’. For example, if a baby is not sleeping at night, the
baby is not a ‘naughty baby’ or a ‘bad sleeper’, the baby is sleeping as per the baby’s
unique sleep pattern. Understandably, most parents will want to try and encourage their
baby to shift their sleeping patterns to align with the parents’ sleeping pattern, usually with a larger block of sleep at night and shorter sleeping times during the day.

Once a child begins at the service, the child will usually have their own typical sleep pattern. To ensure children gain the best quality sleep, it is best to attempt to accommodate the child’s home sleeping pattern at the service. Family members may be concerned at the difference between home and service such as noise levels and the level of light in sleep rooms. However, children will become familiar with these differences and once the child has established a feeling of security and safety within the service, should not find these differences an issue.

Families may have certain practices they implement at home to improve baby’s sleeping, such as chains on dummies, amber beads for perceived teething solutions and bumpers in beds. These practices may be suitable for families at home, however, at the service, educator practice must align to service policy and / or requirements. Refer to sleep, rest and relaxation requirements in National Quality Standard 2.1.2 (Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority [ACECQA], 2013a, pp.53-55). For example, at Goodstart Early Learning, it is considered unsafe for babies to go to sleep with amber beads due to the high risk of choking. It is important to communicate with families that educators are willing to partner with families however must at all times follow Goodstart policy requirements.

Young babies are often swaddled (now referred to as wrapping). Wrapping in a practice that may be used within the service, however, educators must ensure children are wrapped safely.

Activity 1.5

Read and consider:
Wrapping is a practice that many family members use, however there are some risks with wrapping particularly if the child is wrapped too tightly. Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the information on safe wrapping - http://www.sidsandkids.org/safe-sleeping/safe-wrapping/

Supporting children from sleep

We often reflect about how to support children to sleep, however, minimal reflection occurs considering how we support children to wake. Some of us take a little while to wake. Just think about how you wake from a Saturday afternoon sleep. In fact, some children may become unsettled or distressed when waking from sleep, particularly while at the service. Children may require reassurance with a cuddle, a slow soft pat, or snuggling and reading a favourite book with an adult. These actions help to support the child to feel safe, secure and to wake from their sleep. Other children may wake and feel grumpy and need time alone to
wake by themselves. Educators need to be aware of children’s unique patterns and support them to be able to enact their behaviour pattern.

### Element 2

**Provide positive nappy-changing and toileting experiences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>Change nappies using appropriate hygiene practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Adapt experiences to meet the individual child’s routines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Support children sensitively and positively when they are learning to use the toilet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Work with families to support children’s toilet learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Early Years Learning Framework Principle 2: Partnerships emphasises the important relationship of Educators with each child’s family (DEEWR, 2009). A key responsibility of educators working in early childhood education and care is to develop respectful supportive relationships with families. In fact, this requirement is stipulated through National Quality Standard 6.1 and Standard 6.2 (ACECQA, 2013a), which requires educators to support families in their parenting role and to respect families’ beliefs and values about child rearing.

The next section will focus on family and educators working in partnership to support children’s toileting requirements.

Learning to toilet is a big step in a child’s life. Speak to any family member with a toddler and the topic is a main focus of conversation. Toileting is a time of great vulnerability for the child, and a time of learning, making mistakes and being supported. Learning to use a toilet requires mutual trust, support and consistent practice. Families may have different toilet training practices. Some practices may have been passed down from generation to generation and others gained from one of the many different expert books available that offer advice to families on ways to parent. Young children are all different and come from different homes and lived different experiences. Some children will have siblings to watch and learn from and others may not. These are all factors that need to be considered when planning to support a child to learn how to toilet. The next sections will consider nappy changing and then progress to discuss how to help support children to toilet train.

### Critical ritual of toileting

#### Nappy change

Having a nappy changed or going to the toilet is normally a private affair, a ritual that should be supported with the upmost respect and dignity for the child and honour the child’s sense of privacy. You may recall that Module two discussed that nappy change areas should be private areas for the child and should not be used as thoroughfares or for congregating.
within. Additionally, in children’s bathrooms half doors or lace curtains or indoor plants can support a sense of privacy for children but allow the direct-sight contact required for supervision.

Nappy change and toileting must meet the child’s individual care needs and routines and also follow policy and procedure of the service. As discussed within the last section, ongoing conversations with families to support children about rituals and routines at home and how the service can support this is essential.

**Checking a child’s nappy**

**Respect and dignity**

Is it respectful to check a child’s nappy outside in the playground by peering inside the nappy while the child is attempting to play? How could you check a child’s nappy to see whether the child required a change but at the same time ensure dignity to the child?

Do you actually need to check? Rather than checking, could you value the time as an opportunity to take the child for some one-on-one time and freshen the child up regardless?

Is the child able to inform you that they have soiled their nappy?

If you feel that it is important to check a child’s nappy, then share this with the child so that they know what your intention is and you are supporting their cognitive development by verbalising and encouraging them to think about body functions. Additionally, moving the child into a more private space supports the child’s dignity.

“Simone, I am just going to get you to walk over here a little where it is a bit more private and check your nappy to see whether we should go inside to freshen you up. Do you need your nappy changed, Simone?”

Changing young children’s nappies provides an opportunity for sharing a rich, positive and one-to-one experience with the child. To ensure the experience is positive, there are a few strategies that should be considered. Firstly, speaking to children about your intentions and inviting them to have their nappy changed helps to set the scene and provides opportunity for children to prepare themselves to exit whatever they are currently engaged within. If we are inviting children to participate in a task, then it is important that we listen and respect the answer (children’s rights to a say). Children may refuse because they are engaged in some experience at that time and educators may need to negotiate a more suitable time for the child. For example, “I can see you are finishing your sand castle. In five minutes, I will need to come and get you to change your nappy so that you are more comfortable”. This practice allows the child to have some control and say over the process and to prepare for the ritual.

During the ritual of changing the nappy, educators can share rich conversations about the experiences the baby has engaged in. For example, sing songs, play finger games and display interesting objects for the child to look at and wonder and for the educator and child to discuss.
The Guide to the Education and Care services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations (ACECQA, 2013b) states:

“Nappy changing and toileting rituals are also valuable opportunities to promote children’s learning, meet individual needs and to develop strong relationships with children. Having their needs met in a caring and responsive ways build children’s sense of trust and security – which relates strongly to the Early Years Learning Framework”. (p.64)

Nappy changing involves dealing with bodily fluids and, therefore, it is a requirement that educators know the service nappy change procedure and feel confident at being able to embed this in practice to minimise the risk of cross infection while also ensuring the experience is positive, respectful and maintains dignity for the child.

Activity 1.6

Nappy change procedure

Access a copy of your service nappy change procedure. If you are not currently working in a service then access the procedure outlined in Staying Health Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (5th ed.). Hyperlink below or type the URL into your search engine -


Does the nappy change procedure state what nappies are recommended in early childhood education and care?

What are the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) [Module 2] that must be worn during nappy change to minimise the risk of cross-contamination?

Some services ask families to change a child’s nappy as they arrive at the service. This ensures the child is ready to engage in the program and supports the child to feel a sense of routine and sense of safety through the intimacy of the nappy change experience with their family member.

How do you teach family members about the service’s nappy change process so that they follow the correct nappy change procedure and ensure cross infection is minimised?

The Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and care services National Regulations (ACECQA, 2013b) stipulates:

“Preparing for a nappy change is fundamental to maintaining an adequate level of supervision of children. Educators should ensure that all of the required equipment is available and in reach prior to beginning the nappy change ritual. During a nappy change, a child should never be left alone on the change table and physical contact should always be maintained with the child”. (p.64)
Activity 1.7

Reflection: Lead Educators are required to assist all Educators to implement best-evidenced practice. In the following scenario consider the strategies you may adopt to ensure babies in your care remained safe and provided quality education and care experiences.

The Director is away and your new team member is starting. It is the Educator’s first day and she has never worked in a baby’s room before. You are the lead Educator. What strategies would you adopt to ensure you could be confident that she would know how to change a nappy following the service’s nappy change policy?

The National Construction Code 2012 (Australian Building Code Board, 2011) outlines the standards required for nappy change benches and the locations within services. Most facilities have steps onto a nappy change bench as a means of reducing the likelihood of injury to an educator’s back. Steps also encourage children’s independence. Children who are mobile should be assisted to walk up the steps onto the nappy change bench. Non-walking children should be lifted onto the change mat safely using correct manual handling techniques (refer to Module 3). There will be times when educators will care for older children who are in nappies and in some cases may not be mobile. In these circumstances, educators will need to collaborate with families, centre support staff such as Workplace Health and Safety Advisors and Senior Advisor, Inclusion Support (Goodstart Services) to develop an individual plan for the assisting the child with toileting, while at the same time maintaining the dignity and respect for the child and the wellbeing of the educator (back care).

Beginning to learn to use the toilet

Children’s readiness for learning to toilet will vary greatly but will not occur until a child has developed the necessary physical, cognitive and behavioural capabilities. To begin learning how to use a toilet, a child requires the ability to:

- learn some control of their bladder and bowel movements before they are able to learn to toilet,
- recognise that they need to toilet (cognitive function), and
- want to learn to use the toilet.

As indicated in the last section, it is important to collaborate with families to discuss routines and rituals. Educators may need to provide professional advice to families about whether it is the right time to begin to teach a child to toilet. In some cases, families may be eager to have children learn to toilet for reasons such as the high cost of nappies, cultural reasons or because the parent has read that children should have learnt to use a toilet at a certain
Reassuring families or encouraging them to wait a little longer may help the family to rethink their plans so that the child is better placed for success with learning to toilet.

**Activity 1.8**

Read:

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access Staying healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services


- Read page 47 on toilet training
- What does the document recommend to teach females through the toileting process?

**Activity 1.9**

Click on the following hyperlink to the “Raising Children” website or type the URL into your web browser

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/toilet_training.html

This is a credible (recommended) website supported by Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Social Services. It is a website worth sharing with families.

- What does this website recommend about assisting children to learn to use the toilet?
Element 3

Promote quality mealtime environments

3.1 Promote positive mealtime environments that are adapted to meet the individual child’s routines and needs

3.2 Ensure babies are fed individually

3.3 Follow approved standards for safe storage and heating of formula and breast milk and for cleaning equipment and utensils

3.4 Assist in providing a supportive environment for mothers to breastfeed

3.5 Prepare formula and other food according to recommended food safety standards

Baby and toddlers’ nutritional and meal ritual needs

Just like toileting rituals, meal times are important daily life events. A quality environment provides a high standard of nutritionally appropriate and adequate servings of food and fresh, clean water. Meal times should follow respectful practices that honour the child as an individual and promote meal times as social opportunities, incorporating rich learning experiences.

Feeding babies and toddlers

Meal times are social opportunities, whether in one-to-one situations between an educator and child or in a small group. Educators must collaborate with families to discuss children’s preferences for eating, such as times and amounts. As individuals we all like different things. Some of us enjoy a big breakfast at a certain time, while others (ignoring the evidence about the importance of eating breakfast) prefer a quick coffee on the run. Children are no different and understanding children’s preferences supports them to feel listened to, valued and supported.

Educators must collaborate with families to understand the child’s routine for meals at home, so that their individual routine can be supported within the service. Educators may feel pressured by the service cook or other educators to force children into set service routines. This practice is not ideal for young children and educators are encouraged to work with other staff to identify the concerns and offer solutions that allow children to follow their own routines.

Conversations during meal times are opportunities to support children’s language development. To encourage quality conversations, consider strategies such as children and adults sitting at the same level and facing each other.
At Goodstart Early Learning…

Goodstart staff must obtain a copy of the following Procedure from the Goodstart Policy Framework:

Milk Feeding: Procedure NQS2

Students working and / or studying at services other than Goodstart must familiarise themselves with their service procedure relating to milk feeding.

Educators must know and be able to apply the knowledge and skills outlined in their service milk feeding procedure.

Safe storage and heating of milk

The main food source for a baby under six months of age will be their bottle, containing formula or breast milk. Heating and maintaining the quality and standard of milk is therefore important. Safe storage, heating and preparing bottles are important tasks that must be given the importance and attention they deserve.

Expressed breast milk and boiled water ready for the preparation into formula are to be brought to the service in clearly labelled clean and sterilised bottles (if required) with teats covered. Breast milk must also be marked with the date the bottle is to be used. Bottles should be stored on the lower shelf in the main body of the refrigerator (not the door), on a spill proof tray. This ensures that if by chance the bottle is knocked over, the milk would not drip onto other food.

It is crucial that milk is stored at the appropriate temperature. Table 1.2 outlines the requirements for maintaining milk quality. This table has been accessed from the Goodstart Early Learning NQS2 Milk feeding procedure. Educators need to familiarise themselves with this document and its content.
Table 1.2 Temperature requirement for maintaining the quality of milk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breast milk</th>
<th>Room temperature</th>
<th>Refrigerator</th>
<th>Freezer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshly expressed into a closed container</td>
<td>6-8 hours (26°C or lower)</td>
<td>3-5 days (4°C or lower)</td>
<td>Two weeks in the freezer compartment of the refrigerator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If refrigerator is available, it should be used.</td>
<td>Store in the coldest part of the refrigerator</td>
<td>Three months in a stand-alone freezer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6-12 months in a deep freezer (-18°C or lower)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously frozen – thawed in refrigerator but not warmed</td>
<td>Four hours or less (that is, the next feed)</td>
<td>24 hours stored in coolest part of the refrigerator</td>
<td>Do not re-freeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previously frozen – thawed in warm water</td>
<td>Do not store beyond feed</td>
<td>Four hours or less (that is, the next feed)</td>
<td>Do not re-freeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infant has begun feeding</td>
<td>Do not store beyond feed</td>
<td>Discard</td>
<td>Discard</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Goodstart Early Learning NQS2 Milk feeding procedure**

Some mothers are unable, or choose not to breast feed. Educators must not make a judgement on individual’s decisions and support mothers in their role. Baby feeding formula is a safe alternative to breast milk, providing adequate nutrition as long as the bottle is prepared fresh and the directions are followed correctly. Depending on the service procedure, families will be required to bring sterilised bottles with cooled boiled water, which at time of preparation, educators add pre-measured formula powder. Prepared formula breaks down quickly and increases risk of bacteria.

If staff are required to make a bottle, water must be boiled from a kettle for at least 30 seconds. The boiled water will then need to be cooled before the formula can be added and the bottle given to the child. Forward planning is necessary as a hungry, upset baby will demonstrate little patience while waiting for a bottle to cool.

To heat formula, once again use a commercial bottle warmer or a jug of warm water that the bottle is placed into until the milk reaches the required temperature. Once again, it must be stressed that bottles must never be heated in a microwave even if family members state that this is done at home.

Prepared bottles, formula or breast, may be stored up to 24 hours before the recommendation is for the milk to be discarded. Milk should not be reheated nor re-frozen due to increased risks of bacteria.

Cow’s milk or goat’s milk, if provided by family, can be given to infants as a main drink after 12 months of age and used with solids from 9 months, as long as there are no health concerns. Reduced fat milk is not recommended for young children. Clean fresh boiled
water is important for children after the age 6 months, before this age, it is not necessary for exclusively breast fed babies (NHMRC, 2013).

The dangers of giving the wrong bottle

Recently a Queensland hospital accidentally gave a three week old baby another’s mother breast milk. The infant’s anxious family will now wait six months for the results to determine whether their child has been infected with AIDS and/or Hepatitis.

Regardless of whether the bottle contains breast milk or formula, it is essential that babies are given the correct bottles. Giving the wrong bottle can make the child sick through a sudden change of formula and cause dehydration. Breast milk is a body fluid and must be treated with respect and care to ensure that there are no risks of crossinfection, and spread of possibly life-threatening diseases.

All bottles must be clearly labelled with the baby’s name. Additionally, breast milk must also include the child’s name and date milk is to be used so that contents are discarded at the appropriate time. All breast milk, prepared bottles and sterilised bottles with boiled water should be kept in the refrigerator. Check your service’s policy. At Goodstart Early Learning, two Goodstart staff are required to check the name on the bottle before administering a bottle.

Milk should only be warmed in a specific baby bottle warmer or by standing the bottle in warm water (never in a microwave). Milk temperature should always be checked before providing to an infant. The temperature should feel like an absence of heat and cold. Left over milk should be discarded, particularly breast milk.

Bottles and food must be prepared in the bottle preparation area or kitchenette.

Promoting breast feeding

We care for infants and toddlers with families from different backgrounds, cultures, beliefs and experiences. For some families breast feeding is a natural occurrence with families feeling quite comfortable to breast feed publicly. For others, it is private ritual and if not supported, the mother may feel as though she needs to give up breast feeding when the child is placed in care. Services need to consider how they encourage mothers to continue breast feeding and to provide quiet and private spaces for them to feed or to feel comfortable breast feeding around educators. Some services have established a breast feeding room, others a comfortable chair in the sleep room, or a chair in a corner with some indoor plants positioned so that the area is a little more private. The purpose is to give mothers some choice of feeding where they feel comfortable, not making mother’s feel as they need to be hidden away. Speak to mothers about their breast feeding needs and preferences. Mothers may also look to educators for advice on breast feeding. Associations such as Australian Breast Feeding Association provide a wealth of information on breast feeding including a 24 hour support line.
**Activity 1.10**

Access a copy of your service’s procedure for proving children with bottles. If you are not currently working in a service then access the procedure outlined in Staying Health Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (5th ed.). Hyperlink below or type the URL into your search engine -


Read the section on storage and preparation of bottles on p.58.

- What temperature do bottles need to be stored at in the refrigerator?
- How long can breast milk be kept for?
- How long can breast milk be kept frozen for?

**Assisting to feed a child with a bottle**

Feeding a baby a bottle provides a special moment for the educator and baby. It is a time where baby is held close and provided with focused attention. Research from the neuroscience field highlights the importance of holding and touching baby while feeding and providing direct eye contact. Feeding provides opportunity for educators to strengthen their attachment with young children and to form positive relationships.

Goodstart Early Learning Feeding Procedure (Milk Feeding: NQS2 Procedure) recommends educators nurse young babies in the cradle position close and not to prop the bottle. Maintain eye contact with the child, speak softly and smile. Wind (or support the child to burb) by gently patting or rubbing the child’s back, during and after feeding. As babies develop skills and have a stronger desire to be more independent, they will want to feed themselves. Encourage self-help skills by supporting the child to hold his or her own bottle, under direct supervision. Hold the infant or place the infant in a high chair with their bottle. Older children should be encouraged to sit at the table with sipper cups and will continue to require supervision.

**Food servings**

Breast milk should be the main source of food for babies with solids being introduced gradually at around six months of age. This will vary depending on the child’s growth, development and family choice. At six months, the introduction of solids is necessary to support the infant’s nutritional requirements particularly with the need of iron and zinc to infant’s diets. First foods, which are in fact semi-solid, liquid-like foods such as mashed up pumpkin and children’s iron-enriched cereals should be introduced one at a time with a gap between each new introduction. This allows educators to monitor for adverse reactions and food allergies. Food serving amounts and bottle consumption must be recorded on the
Routine Record Sheet, which provides important information between the service and family to inform families of the child’s daily nutrition while at the service.

**Activity 1.11**

**Read**

Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL into your web browser to access the National Health Medical Research Council Infant Feeding Guideline for Health Care Workers. This resource freely available, provides a wealth of information about breast milk, breast feeding, breast feeding challenges, formula, first foods and foods not suitable for children.


- Access the document and download the document for your future reference.
- Make a list of foods not suitable for infants.
- How would you promote suitable foods for infants to families and at the same time provide information about the foods that are unsuitable?

**Element 4**

**Create a healthy and safe supporting environment**

4.1 Communicate with families daily about the child’s intake and experiences with food and drink

4.2 Ensure safe areas and encouragement is provided for babies to practise rolling over, sitting, crawling and walking

4.3 Supervise closely when babies and toddlers are in situations that present a high risk of injury

4.4 Ensure babies and toddlers can safely explore their environment with their hands, mouth and bodies

4.5 Keep up-to-date with children’s immunisation status and recommended immunisation schedule
Communication with families about children’s dietary needs

Throughout the modules, the emphasis on collaboration with families has been highlighted again and again. Partnerships with families means a more seamless transition between home and the service for the young child. There are many systems and tools that educators put in place to build good communication with families. Good communication helps to build relationships; poor communication erodes!

Wherever possible, ensure the core person working with the babies or toddlers room, welcomes the family each day. Physically going to families so that you are close to them (not calling out across the room or playground) and greeting them and their child in person helps to make them feel important, valued and immediately connected. It also provides a subconscious message to the family of welcoming them and providing time to chat.

Because meal times are such an important ritual for young children, speaking to families about the child’s daily needs are essential. Additionally, at the end of the day, when the family comes to pick the child up, use the opportunity to exchange information about the child’s intake of food and drink. Educators are required to record this information on the Routine Record sheet, but as a family member, it is often nice to hear and talk about these topics with educators rather than reading off a piece of paper. Exchanges of information also provide opportunity for questions and sharing of knowledge and builds relationship.

National Quality Standard 2.2.1 daily communication with families will be necessary to provide "information about the child’s intake and experiences with food and drink" (ACECQA, 2013b, p.64).
Element 5

Develop relationships with babies and toddlers

5.1 Provide predictable personal care routines that are rich and enjoyable

5.2 Respond to babies and toddlers when they practice and play language by repeating words, sounds and gestures that children use

5.3 Describe objects or events and talk about routine activities with babies and toddlers

5.4 Initiate one-to-one interactions with babies and toddlers during routines and add to interactions initiated by babies and toddlers

5.5 Use a favourite toy or comfort item brought from home to assist babies and toddlers

5.6 Provide babies and toddlers with many opportunities to experience relaxed and physical contact

5.7 Respond positively to babies’ and toddlers exploratory behaviour

5.8 Closely monitor babies and toddlers for signs of hunger, distress, pain and tiredness and provide physical comfort as appropriate

Develop relationships with babies

On the basis of international research evidence, the Early Years Learning Framework (ACECQA, 2013a, pp.12-13) highlights five principles that underpin effective early childhood practice. Of great importance is the principle to create secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with young children, which includes babies and toddlers. “When children develop secure relationships with trustworthy adults, they feel more confident and able to learn” (ACECQA, 2013a, p.13).

Figure 1.6

Young children develop strong relationship with educators when educators are respectful to children, positively and warmly care for them and are responsive to the educational needs.

Educators have such an important role to play in people’s lives!
Part of the predictable care rituals for young children include ensuring staffing arrangements allow for children to have minimal numbers of different educators who work with children, and at least one core Educator with young children at all times. For educators working in a baby’s room in a long day care service, the lead educator may start early in the morning and the other educator start later in the day so that the staff member is able to finish later, ensuring there is always a familiar person with children at all times.

**Safe learning and care environments for babies and toddlers**

Social and emotional wellbeing comes from children feeling safe, secure and valued. If we want children to learn and develop, they need to feel that the environment they are in is supportive and provides opportunity for them to explore. This includes people, resources and systems.

A healthy safe environment implements high standards of hygiene, follows workplace health and safety policies and procedures, and considers the environment (e.g., layout and resources and the child’s individual wellbeing needs). Furthermore, the adults are predictable, reliable, responsive, fair and understand children.

Young children in particular benefit from routines and rituals that are predictable. Following a child’s individual routine allows them to stay in their normal pattern of behaviour. There are a number of ways to help create a sense of belonging such as a child sleeping in the same cot, having their belongings placed in the same location, family photos displayed at the child’s height, perhaps bringing a favourite toy to the service each care day and children helping in the daily routines of the service thus creating a sense of responsibility and ownership.

Young children require educators they know and trust. Young children form attachments with their educators who become their secure base. As children begin to explore the world, children constantly ‘check in’ with their educators to gain feedback and assurance with what they are doing. The strong connections and relationships established between

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**Activity 1.12**

**Critical reflection**

How do your current education and care practices enable babies and toddlers to develop secure, consistent relationships with educators?

- What practices do you currently use?
- Are there service policies and / or procedures that support educators to enable relationship building?
- What new strategies could you embed?
educator and child allows the child to try new things and to investigate the environment, knowing that their educator will be there to assist if the child needs help or if things become too challenging (Circle of Security International, n.d.). Children who leave the secure base to find that the educator becomes unavailable, non-responsive or is not present when a child needs support, learn not to trust the educator and attachment is affected.

**Activity 1.13**

Read and consider the importance of attachment

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the following reading:

http://himh.clients.squiz.net/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2767/2 Attachment.pdf

http://himh.clients.squiz.net/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/2767/2 Attachment.pdf

**Activity 1.14**

Attachment

Students are encouraged to participate in the Goodstart Institute of Early Learning workshop titled: Attachment in the early years: Supporting social and emotional wellbeing.

This workshop is free to students and delivered on-campus, video-conferencing and MP4 recording.

International research has highlighted the importance of consistent educators as an indicator of quality in early childhood education and care (Sylva, 2003). This module has already expressed the importance of educators from babies and toddler rooms being at either end of care shift to ensure that at least one familiar educator is on in the morning and one at the other end of the day. Consistent staff goes further than this though. Services need to consider casual and floating staff and occurrences such as holidays. Having consistent and familiar educator helps to minimise stress and anxiety to young children. High levels of stress and anxiety are detrimental to young children’s development, learning and long-term health; therefore, it is important to minimise stress and anxiety in these important first few years.
Activity 1.15

Watch

Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL to your web browser and watch the following vignette on the effects of stress on young children:

http://www.abc.net.au/tv/life/video/LIFEAT1.htm?program=lfe&pres=s2359909&story=1

Scroll down the page to the vignette on stress.

- How can heightened ongoing stress affect young children?
- What could cause stress to babies in a service?
- How could you reduce the risk of ongoing high levels of stress for infant, babies and toddlers?

The physical environment of the baby and toddler’s room (layout and resources) should support wellbeing. Young children need spaces to roll and crawl and to test their newly developing skills of balancing, standing, pushing, pulling and walking. Tripping and falling are often a daily occurrence as young children develop these skills and become more confident with their ability. With this in mind, it is important to ensure spaces allow children to move freely. Stimulation and opportunity to engage in rich interesting experiences is essential at this young age when children’s developing brain thrives on opportunity to explore and investigate the world. Indoor and outdoor environments for babies and toddlers are as important, if not more important, than any other age group. Young children need quiet places as do older children, so that they too can find a sense of solitude when desired. Are there mirrors for young children to gaze into so they can reflect upon their image and develop a sense of autonomy?

Environment for infants and toddlers

When considering a suitable rich environment for infants ask yourself these questions:

- How does the environment respect and demonstrate dignity to the child and their family?
- Does the environment create a sense of belonging for the child and their family?
- Are there photos of the child and their family at the child’s level that the child can view independently?
- Are all children’s cultures and family structures represented in resources and through educator’s practice and interaction?
- Are meal areas presented beautifully (aesthetically)? Perhaps a table cloth with flowers and interactions that encourage conversation.
• Do educators recognise each child’s capabilities and allow children to use china, crockery and authentic materials and resources rather than plastic?

• Are nappy areas calm, clean, uncluttered and have ever-changing areas of focus for a child to gaze at? For example, an interesting light, colours or a hanging mobile are present.

• Are there soft furnishings that allow the child to cuddle with an adult on a chair, lounge or rug?

• Are there sturdy pieces of equipment for infants to practice pulling themselves up on, standing and starting to walk?

• Are there windows that allow children to look through and to feel connected to the outside world?

• Are there resources and toys of interest that encourage children to crawl towards?

• Are there push-along and pull-along toys and resources that support children to learn to walk?

• Are there multiple copies of resources so that several children can use items as they learn the concept of sharing?

• Is there a quiet and private space for mothers to breast feed?

• Are resources available on low shelves or in baskets so that babies can access them independently or through body or verbal language make requests for certain resources?

• Does the environment allow children to make safe choices and have a say in the choices?

• Are babies and toddlers recognised for the exquisite ability to communicate and their thinking visible for others to see, consider and celebrate?

Sleep rooms

In Module 2, students briefly considered appropriate areas for children to sleep. It is important to once again visit this topic.

Reflect upon your service:

Does the sleep room in your service represent how you might have a sleep room (nursery) at home, if you had your first precious baby?

The likelihood is that you have answered this question with a ‘no’. Young children spend many hours sleeping at an early childhood education and care service. Furthermore, new parents often have a strong image of what they think a baby’s sleep room should look like and feel like. Of course babies deserve beautiful things such as environments of great aesthetic beauty. However, many early childhood education and care service sleep rooms are clinical and unsightly.

How can we create more beautiful sleep environments for young children that may reflect sleep environments at home and may appear less clinical but still ensure children’s health and safety? Firstly, each sleep environment is different and space and safety needs to be
considered. Dark sleep rooms can be frightening to infants and also dangerous for educators coming in and out. Consider whether there is an opportunity to add some soft lighting to sleep rooms such as bedroom lamps that meet Australian standards. Remember that cords must be high and not reachable by children, and lamps must be out of reach of cots. Cots and beds should be made up so they look inviting; an invitation to children for rest and also a message to families that their child is cared for. If the cot room space allows, consider a hutch that displays photos and favourite children’s books. There are many ways to make a cot room a cosy space; remembering cords, hanging items, electrical cords and all other items must not be able to be reached by children.

Activity 1.16

Read

Click on the following hyperlink or type the URL into your web browser for Keeping Baby Safe (2013) published freely by Product Safety Australia –

http://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/972363

- List 10 items not meant for infants and babies.
- Summarise how this publication recommends you identify and remove potential hazards to infants.

Educators are encouraged to refresh their knowledge and skill for identifying risks and hazards through the SAFER procedure in Module 3.

Risk reduction strategies support children to remain safe. Examples or risk reduction strategies include putting covers on electric plugs, having half doors or gates separating nappy change areas to play rooms, placing child-proof locks on gates, having suitable fences, attaining a lockable poisons cupboards (with all poisons kept in this area), and removing small or dangerous objects (unless they are in use by babies with engaged educators).

Product recalls

Service staff need to be alert to product recalls, which may occur at times. For example 16 June 2014, Woolworths recalled baby food after a metal blade was discovered in a pouch of food.

Educator engagement

Infants and toddlers learn more in the first few years than in any other period of life. Educators should position themselves closely to children so that they can listen and observe, respond quickly to a child’s emotional needs, or respond to activities with an increased risk (such as climbing a slide for the first time). To enable educators to be responsive to children, they also must work closely and communicate effectively with each other about their intentions and next steps. For instance, if the babies are outdoors and an infant requires a nappy change, the educator responsible must inform the other educators so that they can supervise the remaining children while the first educator is inside changing the infant’s nappy.

Children need to be able to take ‘considered risks’ to enable learning and development to occur. For instance, a considered risk may be attempting to climb a ladder for the first time. In this situation, the risk is ‘considered’ because the educator reflects upon the child’s abilities and steps in closer in case the child needs extra support. The educator will also talk the child through the actions needed for success.

Exploring the environment

Figure: 1.3
Are these natural materials safe for children to use? Of course they are! How would an educator support a child exploring this natural landscape?

Figure 1.4:
Wind chimes can provide interesting sounds for young children. Additionally, glass chimes may provide an additional sensory experience of light refracting in the sun.

Coloured water hung in trees or bird feeding houses also provides a focus of interest for children in playgrounds on different occasions, particularly when hung at heights that children can see easily.
Providing a safe environment for babies and toddlers is important so that they can explore the environment with their full senses. Safe sensory experiences for babies and toddlers are important for children’s learning and development. Children are born ready to learn. In fact, they were learning and developing while still in the mother’s womb. Babies have an innate interest to discover the world and use their full senses (seeing, touching, hearing, smelling and tasting) to understand its properties and how it works. In the two first years of a child’s life, their senses, particularly in the mouth (taste) and through touch (tactile), are more developed than the baby’s other senses. Babies learn in what is known as the sensorimotor stage (approximately the first two years of life).

“Theories are the big ideas that come from research and wise thinking over time” (Kennedy, 2012, p.1). The theories about children’s development and learning should guide each educator’s own understanding about development and learning, and consequently influence their practice. There have been a number of theorists in the last few decades who have had had a significant influence on the way we understand children’s development and learning.

Jean Piaget (pronounced pee/r/jay) was one of the leading developmental psychologists who guided our understanding of child development over the last few decades. Piaget’s theories extended from watching and observing his own three children. According to Piaget’s cognitive developmental theory (as cited in Berk, 2012), stage one (the sensorimotor stage) recognises that infants and toddlers ‘think’ with their eyes (visual), ears (auditory), hands and body (tactile). The belief is that the senses are used because at the first stage, infants and toddlers have not yet learnt to carry out activities inside their heads (as cited in Berk, 2012). That is why play-based, hands-on experiences are essential for young children’s learning. Over time, theories are challenged or new theories are developed based on new learning and better research.

Multisensory learning supports the idea that children learn through the manipulation of objects and encourages children in the first three years to play and engage in learning experiences where children touch, feel, taste, and hear. Multi-sensory learning is supported through the neuroscience field. Within this chapter, we have stated that taste and tactile experiences are important to children in the first few years. Table 1.3 (on the next page) lists activities that promote sensory experiences.
Table 1.3 Authentic activities that provide children with opportunities to engage in sensory experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smell</th>
<th>Tactile</th>
<th>Visual</th>
<th>Auditory</th>
<th>Taste</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking the children’s lunch</td>
<td>Different types of materials to touch</td>
<td>Beautiful displays that allow children to focus</td>
<td>No noise</td>
<td>Infants receive enough stimuli through Feeding breast milk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping to pick some herbs from the sensory garden</td>
<td>Mats, rugs, quilts with different textures, materials and ribbons</td>
<td>on something e.g. glass bottles with coloured water sitting on a shelf with sun streaming through</td>
<td>Quiet spaces</td>
<td>After six months of age, introducing different foods at intervals as recommended by guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altering the environment so the delicious</td>
<td>Variety of papers</td>
<td>Bubbles</td>
<td>Talking and listening quietly to a child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smells from kitchen permeate through the</td>
<td>Different types of outdoor surfaces:</td>
<td>Light tables with a range of items</td>
<td>Babble with other children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>service and discussing these</td>
<td>Grass cut at different lengths, pavers,</td>
<td>Mirrors</td>
<td>The sound of trickling water</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with the infants</td>
<td>concrete, pebble paths, timber paths, and</td>
<td>Putting pool fences in or glass portholes allowing children to see and be connected with the community</td>
<td>Hearing the birds in the trees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee plunger</td>
<td>stone paths</td>
<td>A few piece of artwork (children’s) displayed</td>
<td>A range of different types of music: contemporary,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smell from staff room and providing</td>
<td>Different types of natural items from the</td>
<td>respectfully and at children’s eye level</td>
<td>classical, folk, instrumental, cultural specific</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children an opportunity to smell</td>
<td>garden such as green leaves and autumn leaves</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clock ticking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing fresh flowers, herbs and potted</td>
<td>Sensory garden</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rattles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plants</td>
<td>Patting the service chooks or other</td>
<td></td>
<td>Musical instruments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watering the garden</td>
<td>animals (wash hands thoroughly after</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interaction)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clay: wet, dry, different grades</td>
<td></td>
<td>Creating opportunities for conversation e.g.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sand: wet, dry, different grades</td>
<td></td>
<td>small groups for meals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educators do not need to develop gimmicky activities such as slime or finger painting for children to develop and learn through their senses. It is more important to understand why children learn and develop in this way and then look for opportunities in everyday wonders such as the environment and through daily engagement in everyday activities. These experiences are far more authentic, real and purposeful and support the ongoing life of the service.
Figure 1.5

Together the children explored the outdoors on an excursion outside the service along the path collecting natural items to use indoors. Children were provided canvases to construct their installation – in this case a 3D painting. These children who were working on this painting reconstructed canvases using the leaves and seed pods they found and a member of the group who added sand. The manipulation of these materials, the collection of resources are all authentic sensory experiences and of course provide avenues for children to communicate their ideas and thinking through the representation.

Figure 1.6: Gardening for all children

Gardening, picking herbs with the cook to prepare lunch, watering plants and caring for the gardens are all authentic sensory learning experiences. These should be everyday rituals that children participate and learn from and support the everyday life of the service. Furthermore children ‘connect’ to nature and the outdoors and learn about caring for the environment (sustainable education).

Activity 1.17

Read the following article

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser. The article of infants developing senses is from the well-respected website, “Zero to Three”

Activity 1.18

Critical reflection

Think about your service or the service where you complete placement.

• Does the service provide meals for children?
• If it does, currently does the food cooking smells permeate through the service and into the nursery?
• Is there any way of safely encouraging these smells further?
• How could you alert children to these smells?
• Warning: these smells could create a few extra tummy rumblings with children and/or educators feeling hungry!

Immunisations

In recent years there has been negative publicity given to the children’s immunisation scheme. Regardless of your personal beliefs, a responsibility of early childhood educators is to ensure that children within our care are immunised and that the service has up-to-date children’s immunisation schedules. In group care, ensuring children have up-to-date immunisations is an important aspect for creating health and safe environments for children and adults. This fits within the National Quality Standard: Quality Area 2 (ACECQA, 2013a).

Activity 1.19

Download the National Immunisation Program Schedule (2013) available at:

Further information about immunisations can be accessed through Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious Diseases in Early Childhood Education and Care Services (2012). This document can be accessed from https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch55
Element 6

Developing relationships with families

6.1 Gather information from the family to assist in the transition from home to care
6.2 Assist in the transition from home to care
6.3 Communicate daily with families about their care.

Developing relationships and partnerships with families was discussed in great detail in Module 5 from this qualification. Additionally, the topics within element six (above) have been explored throughout this chapter.

It is essential that educators establish strong and respectful ongoing communication between family and the educators of the service and this begins from the moment the family considers enrolling the child into the service.

National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and outside school hours care services in Australia. It provides families and educators with a more detailed understanding of children’s education and care requirements, objectives, outcomes, and expectations.

The National Quality Standard comprises seven quality areas. Although all quality areas are interwoven and what affects one quality area in-turn influences another, three quality areas relate mostly to chapter one of this module.

| QA2 | Children’s health and safety |
| QA5 | Relationships with children |
| QA6 | Collaborative partnerships with families and communities |

(ACECQA, 2013)
### Summary table of quality areas, standards and elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QA2</th>
<th>Children’s health and safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Each child’s health is promoted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Each child’s health needs are supported.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>Each child’s comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Each child is protected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.1</td>
<td>Children are adequately supervised at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.2</td>
<td>Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QA5</th>
<th>Relationships with children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1</td>
<td>Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2</td>
<td>Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition for life and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3</td>
<td>Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviours of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QA6</th>
<th>Collaborative partnerships with families and communities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1</td>
<td>There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.1.2</strong></td>
<td>Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.2</strong></td>
<td>Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.2.1</strong></td>
<td>The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.2.2</strong></td>
<td>Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.3</strong></td>
<td>The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.3.1</strong></td>
<td>Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6.3.2</strong></td>
<td>Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ACECQA, 2013, p.10 – 11)

Click on the hyperlink to go to the ACECQA website to view the full 58 elements:

**Useful websites**

Australian Government: Department of Health

Australian Breast Feeding Association
[https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/](https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/)

National Health and Medical Research Council [NHMRC] (2012)

Product Safety Australia
[https://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/970225](https://www.productsafety.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/970225)

Raising Children Network
[http://raisingchildren.net.au/](http://raisingchildren.net.au/)
Chapter 2

CHCECE003 Provide care for children

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<th>Element 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Element 2</td>
<td>Promote physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element 3</td>
<td>Adapt facilities to ensure access and participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element 4</td>
<td>Help children with change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element 5</td>
<td>Settle new arrivals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you recall, Chapter one of this module began by challenging the learner to first consider the importance of a responsive and engaged educator. The learner was introduced to the research from the neuroscience field on brain development and the significance of the development and learning that occurs through the engagement of rich experiences and a responsive engaged adult in the first few years of life. These important early years ultimately affect a person’s whole life trajectory (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

Within this chapter, we continue to consider the importance of rituals but now go a step further and think about what we mean by treating children with dignity and how this influences our practices during rituals.

Educators have been put on notice by the early childhood education and care profession that they have a professional responsibility to demonstrate dignity to children. The Early Childhood Australia’s [ECA] Code of Ethics (ECA, 2011):

“[Educators] will...create and maintain safe, healthy environments, spaces and places, which enhance children’s learning development, engagement, initiative, self-worth, dignity and show respect for their contributions” (In relation to children, point 6).

Furthermore, it is now law and a regulatory requirement that Educators demonstrate dignity to children.

The National Quality Standards Element 5.2.3 reads:

‘The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times” (ACECQA, 2013, p.136). Additionally, the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) is underpinned by children’s rights and the notion of children’s dignity:

• Being and becoming
• Principle 1: Secure, respectful relationships
• Principle 3: High expectations and equity
• Principle 4: Respect for diversity
• Practice: Responsiveness to children
• Learning outcomes: 1, 2 and 3.

Honouring children and treating children with respect and dignity is a fundamental part of the work of early childhood educators. So what do we mean by children’s dignity? What does this look like in practice and how does this relate to rituals and caring for children?

According to the Oxford dictionary dignity means: “the state of being worthy of respect...a sense of pride in yourself” (Waite, 2012, p.198). All people, including babies deserve and should be treated with respect and dignity. But what does this actually mean in regards to work educators do?

To understand the concept of dignity, let us consider practice when dignity is not enacted:

• dressing or toileting children in front of strangers;
• stripping babies down to their nappies at meal times because they make a mess;
• marching a child naked through the centre to go and get spare clothes after they have soiled their pants;
• ignoring a child when speaking to an adult;
• dressing up children in funny outfits;
• hosing children off after lunch, or
• telling children when they will eat and how much.

Often children are not respected and, therefore, are not treated with dignity. Often adults perceive children differently, not valued, not as citizens and not as capable and intelligent beings with their own abilities and talents.

Let's consider for a moment. You wouldn't dream of stripping your mother down to her undies at the table because she often spills red wine on her white blouse. However, some educators think it is okay to strip children down to their nappies at lunch time as they might get messy. Why do we think this is appropriate for children and not adults? This is not a respectful practice.

Educators are encouraged to consider their practice throughout the day as they engage in experiences with and alongside children and through the critical rituals that are enacted each day. By working sensitively with children and their families, educators can identify appropriate and respectful ways to effectively engage with children respectfully and demonstrate dignity.

Activity 2.1

Reflection

Think about the practices that have been highlighted above that are not enacting dignity to children. Why do you believe these are examples of not enacting dignity?

Reflect upon what makes you, as a person, feel a sense of dignity and what distracts from your sense of dignity?
Actions that encourage respect and dignity

- asking children for their opinions, thoughts and suggestions on things that affect them;
- asking children if you may share their story or their experience;
- asking children if you can touch them, or whether they would like a hug;
- respecting children’s personal space and belongings (their locker, their bags, their lunch);
- respecting their privacy of information, of work, of their body and body functions;
- displaying their approved work with great respect. Present it beautifully, in a frame, on a matting board, in a special place, or with a plague identifying the artist;
- sharing children’s culture with other children;
- guiding children’s behaviour discretely (e.g., everyone at the centre does not need to know that Sammy needs to walk inside);
- recognising capabilities and abilities; and
- valuing the child and recognising that the child deserves beautiful, authentic and real things.

Thinking about and reflecting upon what dignity is to children, families and each other (educators) helps us to also consider children’s rights (OHCHR, 1990) and human rights. Critical reflection challenges us to review our everyday practice, to look for opportunities to improve our practice with children and our lives as a whole.

Element 1

Provide physical care

1.1 Manage toileting accidents in a manner that protects the child’s self-esteem and privacy

1.2 Supervise and engage with children eating and drinking

1.3 Meet individual clothing needs and preferences of children and families within scope of service requirements for children’s health and safety
Providing physical care

When we provide care for the physical needs of children, it is important to ensure we complete these tasks honouring the child in our care and respecting their rights to dignity.

Toileting

Toileting is an everyday normal bodily function. It is part of life. Toileting in most western circumstances is a private and personal ritual. It is a time when people may feel vulnerable and need a relaxed and quiet space to feel safe and comfortable so that their bodies can relax and body functions can occur.

Children can spend long periods of time at early childhood education and care services and in most cases bathroom facilities may not allow the quiet, private spaces most of us desire when going to the bathroom. Educators are encouraged to consider service procedures and the physical spaces of bathrooms. Can a bathroom be modified to allow children to be safe yet also provide a sense of privacy and allow dignity? Lace or see-through curtains that create an illusion of privacy may be useful. Indoor plants or a half-door may be another solution. You can understand and support a child’s strong desire for privacy for toileting by looking for alternatives, such as pointing out to the child when the bathroom is quiet, or perhaps using an adult bathroom.

Do service procedures and strategies used by educators limit visitors from the bathroom or prevent the area being used as a thoroughfare? Often adults walk straight through bathrooms without the slightest consideration for children who may actually be sitting on toilets.

Bathroom environments should be clean, tidy, smell pleasant and be well stocked of supplies such as paper towels and soft toilet paper. Educators are encouraged to talk with children as to how to keep the bathroom pleasant, safe and a place for everybody to have some quiet time.

Learning to use a toilet

Learning to control our bodily functions and to use a toilet is an important milestone in life. It is something to take seriously and in partnership with families and all educators who may care for the child. Children must be physically and cognitively ready for learning to control their bodily functions and use a toilet. Starting children who are not ready is firstly disrespectful and secondly can potentially cause young children stress and anxiety.

Family partnerships are essential when supporting children to learn to use toilets. Bathrooms may be different at home, and cultural (family) practices and traditions will be different. To ensure that there are some common acceptable practices, educators should meet with families to discuss working together on similar processes.

Encouragement and positivity is essential as children learn to control their bodily functions and learn how to use toilets. Understanding and patience are essential, as it is inevitable that during learning these processes accidents will happen. Additionally, it is important to remember that some children will take longer than others to learn to control their bodily functions and learn how to use a toilet. Some children who have mastered control may
temporarily lose this skill for a period of time when major life events occur. For example when a new sibling is born or the child becomes unwell. In these situations, it is important to be kind, sensitive and patient and eventually things should get back on track.

### Activity 2.2

**Reading**

Click on the hyperlink below or type the address into your web browser to access the Raising Children Network website:

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/toilet_training.html

Read the information on supporting children’s toilet training.

### Activity 2.3

**Read**

Revisit the nappy change procedure and toileting training information recommended by Staying Healthy (5th ed). Click on the following hyperlink or type the address into your web browser and refer to p.45:


Consider the necessary strategies for infection control. Educators must be aware of these requirements and be able to embed them into practice. However, nappy changing should focus primarily on positive one-to-one opportunities for relationships building and the sensitivities and respect children should be shown during these very vulnerable rituals. Although cross-infection practices are important, these should not be the focus of our intention, making the child feel uncomfortable.

### Pleasurable meal times

Educators often spend a great deal of time developing intentional teaching experiences in class activity times, but forget the educational opportunities available during critical rituals, such as meal times. Children engaged with an educator can learn to set tables and, in doing so, learn mathematical skills and concepts such as matching, sorting, classifying and one-to-one correspondence. Children also use fine motor and gross motor skills as they walk around, put tablecloths on and use their fingers to place the cutlery on the table. We then need to consider the opportunities available within the mealtime itself.
EYLF: Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity (DEEWR, 2009)

Children feel safe and supported as educators stay close with children and encourage their independence and support where needed but allow for spills to occur as part of the learning process. Children feel safe and secure knowing that this is okay and that educators will respond in a kind and sensitive manner.

EYLF: Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators (DEEWR, 2009)

Children are effective communicators as they are encouraged to relax at meal times with and alongside educators who sit with children and share stories about their day and use verbal and nonverbal skills to talk with children about topics of interest.

Progressive meal times

Most people know that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, however, for some people all they want for breakfast is a cup of coffee. People eat at different times and often eat different amounts at these different times. Children are no different. Therefore, it is puzzling why, in an early childhood education and care service, babies are able to have their own individual meal times respected and followed but as soon as the child enters the toddler’s age group, they are often forced into meal times determined by adults.

Who dictates to children when they can eat within your service? Do children have input into the decisions or are children told when they will eat by the cook or by the educators? If your answer is not the children… then there is a problem!

Services who are thinking about listening to children about their dietary needs and are respectful of children’s rights to when they eat and how much, work together to attempt to find opportunities for children to have some input in the critical ritual.

Some services may elect to offer a fruit stand that is available for children to access at any point of time during the day. On this stand or within a bowl, fresh fruit is available for children to access independently at all times. Educators regularly talk with children about the fruit bowl; discuss what to do with the scraps and consider the importance of only taking what you need (sustainable practices). Other strategies services may negotiate with children include having a large block of time in which children need to decide when to go and have their meals. Lastly, some services may have sandwiches that are available to get at any time, so that if children miss lunch or are tired and want to rest earlier, they can help themselves to food when they are ready.

When establishing a progressive mealtime, a number of factors need to be considered. A risk assessment needs to be completed to ensure food is kept safe. Consult with children about the barriers and together come up with solutions.
Figure: 2.1: Meals to be enjoyed!

An aesthetically pleasing space for children to eat and feel valued needs to be established. Tables with small numbers support opportunities for conversations between children and with adults. Setting the table helps children learn mathematical concepts (counting, grouping, one-to-one correspondence, patterns) and visual discrimination (spatial sense). Real crockery and linen states to children that we value them, we respect them, they deserve nice things and we trust and know that they are able to use real materials. If accidents happen…. they happen, this is part of learning.

Figure 2.2 Authentic literacy experiences

Children can help to design the menus and create the signs to inform children and families of the menu for the day. Children learn authentic literacy skills (reading, writing and understanding that our symbols have meaning) using this approach. Furthermore, this offers a purposeful, educational and authentic daily learning experience for children.
Small group or large group meal times

We have mentioned progressive meal times; however, some services purposefully and with intent do not want progressive meal times. This is quite an acceptable practice, but it is about thinking about the ‘why’. It may be that you believe whole group meal times are important for the whole family to come together. If whole group meal times are something that you, children and families value then you need to consider how you implement these meal times and how individual children’s needs are met during this time. This needs to be thoughtfully considered so that the meal time is pleasurable and a happy and relaxed event for all.

Designing a new meal experience

If this section has inspired you to change your mealtime experiences, then some critical reflection is needed. Firstly, take the time to think about why you believe change is needed. Consider how you would consult with children to gain their thoughts and ideas about the concept. Then think about the how. Consider how you will consult with children and families about making a more pleasant mealtime experience. You may wish to take children on an excursion to a restaurant or watch some media footage of real restaurants. Take some time to design how your mealtime environment may need to change. Encourage the children to draw or sculpture what this environment might be like. Then together, once a decision is made, put it in place.

Suitable clothing

Children need to dress in suitable clothes to attend the service that allows them to engage in learning experiences. Additionally, children need to dress appropriately for the climatic conditions. Encouraging children to come to the service in appropriate clothes, usually means having good effective partnership with families and supporting them to understand the learning experiences children will engage in.

Figure 2.3 Dressing warmly for winter to play outdoors in cooler parts of Australia.

Children are most likely going to get messy, at times, wet and, even perhaps, a little sweaty. Speaking with families about these experiences and providing a rationale for children being fully engaged in these learning experiences are important. If you remember in module two, learners were encouraged to speak with families and to try and discover the reason why family members may be reluctant to send children to the service in ‘play clothes’. It may be a cultural reason, such as the family not wanting the child to look ‘messy’ as they journey to and from the service. Solutions to barriers may be found.
Children need to dress for indoor experiences and outdoor experiences. In some parts of Australia, preparing for outdoor play may include a wide brimmed hat, long sleeves for sun protection and/or long pants to protect them from mosquitoes. In other parts of Australia, it might be that a child dresses for the cold and for inclement conditions such as rain. There are few reasons for children not to play outside in the rain, if they are dressed appropriately.

Educators will work with children and with adults who may have cultural or religious beliefs that influence their dress preference (e.g., a Muslim co-worker that wears a hijab). Once again it is about forming partnerships with families to discuss the family’s cultural or religious needs and how the service can best support this. Asking families what you should do to assist their cultural or religious needs being met will often demonstrate to families your interest in their family and your willingness to support them.

Some clothing is just not appropriate for early childhood education and care environments. Footwear with roller skates embedded, high heels for three year olds or dresses covered in long ribbons, bells and other ornaments, although very beautiful, may in fact be dangerous within the context of the early learning service. Again, talk with families and remind them that the service policies and practices are designed and enforced to keep all children safe.

**Figure 2.4:** Wide brimmed hats, long shirts and sunblock help to protect our bodies from harmful Ultra Violet (UV) rays. Clothes that are loose fitting and allow movement provide children the best opportunity to fully engage in learning experiences.
Element 2

Promote physical activity

2.1 Consistently implement movement and physical activity as part of the program for all children

2.2 Participate with children in their physical activity

2.3 Promote physical activity through planned and spontaneous experiences appropriate for each child

2.4 Encourage each child’s level of participation in physical activities according to the child’s abilities and their level of comfort with activities

2.5 Engage children in outdoor play

2.6 Foster children’s participation in physical activities

2.7 Discuss with children how their bodies work and the importance of physical activity to people’s health and wellbeing

Promoting physical activity

Young children have an instinctive need to move. Howard Garner (1983) referred to movement as an ‘entry point’ to acquire knowledge. In fact, we could consider movement as one of children’s first languages (Kazimierczak, 2012). Often when adults think of young children, comments may include ‘children can’t sit still’. It is highly recommended in fact that children don’t sit still. Maude (2001) states that a three year old child is more active than any other age group through the human life-span. It is during the early years that children’s fundamental movement skills are developed.

In today’s society, children often spend large amounts of time in early learning services or schools with limited space and an increasing number of children living in apartments or in small lot homes where little or no outdoor space is available. Therefore, it is important that educators promote physical activities. Being active is healthy for children. Skills are developed, muscles are strengthened and developed and strong, healthy bones formed. Children grow and develop physical skills at different rates; however, the sequences of development are usually predictable. For instance, a child crawls before walking, and a child learns to control their arms before learning to throw a ball. The three main sets of skills are locomotor (moving from one place to another), stability (skills to help the body stay stationary, and manipulative (using skills to engage with objects for example balls).

The Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) reminds us that “physical wellbeing contributes to children’s ability to concentrate, cooperate and learn” (p.30).
**Locomotor skills**
Skills to move from one place to another include:

- crawling
- walking
- marching
- jumping
- climbing
- running
- galloping
- sliding
- leaping
- hopping, and
- skipping.

**Stability skills**
Movement that includes the body being stationary, but with different body parts that move involve:

- stretching
- bending
- pulling
- pushing
- swaying
- twisting
- log rolling, and
- balancing.
Manipulative skills
Skills that involve using gross or fine motor movements to engage with objects:

• drawing
• pinching
• poking
• throwing
• catching
• kicking
• striking with a racket, and
• striking with a bat.

Activity 2.4
Click of the following hyperlink or type the address into your web browser to access the Commonwealth Governments Physical Activity Guidelines. The Guidelines have recommendations for children aged from birth to 5 years old and then 5 year olds to 12 year olds for physical activity.

Physical Activity Guidelines

Educator’s role within children’s physical activity
Educators have an important role to play in supporting children’s participation in physical activity. Educators need to consider the environment, safety, their own engagement in the task, whether an opportunity for intentional teaching exists and how to document the experience.

Figure: 2.5 Children connect to the natural world and participate in physical activity by caring for the service’s chickens. Feeding the hens, collecting eggs and helping to maintain the chicken’s environment are authentic daily physical tasks that support the life of the service.
Environment

Consider the environment that the children will be exploring. Think about whether the environment encourages a range of physical activities. If it does not, what can be done short and long term to change this? How can educators work with families to add healthy levels of considered risk taking and differences in the environment to encourage exploration and activity?

Resources, such as balls, hoops, climbing equipment (climbing frames, trestles, planks ladders) and gardening equipment, encourage children’s active participation. Educators also should consider how the service can access community resources for children to extend their learning, e.g., within a local school oval, community park / garden or a local bush setting.

Activity 2.5

Students who are Goodstart Early Learning staff are encourage to visit the Outdoor Tool Kit available at the Goodstart Early Learning Intranet – Early Learning & Research Toolkit.

The toolkit provides an opportunity for staff / students to consider children’s connection to and interaction with the physical environment. Many pictures and ideas have been posted by services to represent the work that services have completed in collaboration with children, families and community to promote interesting physical environments with opportunities for deep and rich learning.

Safety

Educators have a role to play in ensuring children are safe. Educators have a responsibility to support children to learn how to use equipment safely and to care for resources so that future generations also have opportunity. Flexible equipment such as ladders and planks can be moved by children to form new structures. Educators need to teach children how to move apparatus safely to ensure back care and help children to ensure items have been ‘connected’ safely.

Taking risks is a normal part of learning. For example, an infant takes a risk when they attempt to take their first steps. Children need to take risks to extend their learning and to learn new skills however; it is the role of the educator to support young children to stay safe while undertaking risk. This may mean holding the hand of a child who is attempting to walk across a balance beam or trying to climb a ladder for the first time to go across ‘croc infested waters’.
Educator’s role

Children need to have a sense of belonging, safety and feel encouraged by educators. When providing support to children, focus on children’s strengths and their successes. Provide authentic (truthful) and sincere feedback to children for example, “you are able to jump with two feet and high”. Non-verbal communication such as a smile or nod, thumbs up or a clap helps to acknowledge the skills of children.

One of the most challenging tasks for all educators is deciding when to step in to help children and when to hold back. Stepping in to assist and coach children without taking over is difficult. Sometimes just providing one piece of advice at a time or modelling (such as how to hold a cricket bat) helps children to learn the skill.

Figure: 2.6 Educator’s plan physical experiences for children.

Activity 2.6

Read the following article on the Raising Children website on encouraging movement in babies. Click on the following link or type into your web browser -

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/movement_babies.html

Planning for physical activity

Physical wellbeing contributes to children’s ability to concentrate, cooperate and learn (DEEWR, 2009). It is, therefore, essential educators plan for physical experiences each day. Children require regular periods of physical activity each day exploring both indoor and outdoor environments to develop physical skills (muscle development, balance, coordination and strength) and, of course, to be healthy.

The National Quality Standard Element 2.2.2 requires that “physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child” (ACECQA, 2013, p.65). Additionally, educators encourage each child’s level of participation in physical activities according to the child’s abilities and their level of comfort with the activities.

Physical activity, regardless of whether it is experienced inside or outside, requires planning and documentation. Educators need to listen to children’s engagement in physical activity
and their exploration of the environment to gain an understanding of children's interests, their thinking, theories and ideas and how the educator can best support them.

**Figure 2.7:** All children need space to run and to practice developing skills.

**Figure 2.8:** Children with advanced running patterns enjoy running at maximum pace and challenge themselves around obstacles and with each other. This further develops skills and supports cardiovascular fitness.

When considering Outcome 3 of the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009): Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing, an educator planned the following experience:

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**Daily program**

Date: 15/07/2014

Experience: To collaborate with children on an opportunity for the group to be safely active inside.

Group time: (introduction) It has been raining for over a week and we have been inside and not able to go outside. To keep our bodies well, it is important for us to be physically active and to give our bodies an opportunity to move around. I wanted to collect your ideas / thoughts on what we could do to make ourselves move, but we need to add some rules so we stay safe.

The focus of this activity was to:

- collect children's ideas, and
- establish boundaries for children to enact ideas safely.

In the planned experience highlighted above, the educator demonstrates their understanding of Outcome three. She has decided to co-construct the planning with the children and will document the outcomes on a separate document. Planning does not have to be on a special document or book, it can be written as a diary entry as shown above and below.
Daily Program

Date: 15/07/2014

Experience: Statues

Introduction

Today at mat time, I asked a group of children I was working with a question I had been thinking about. It has been raining for over a week and we have been inside and not able to go outside. To keep our bodies well, it is important for us to be physically active and to give our bodies an opportunity to move around. I wanted to collect your ideas / thoughts on what we could do to make ourselves move and to allow our bodies to be active but safe while inside?

Ideas

Sarah stated: my mummy has to move when she has been at the computer because she gets a sore neck.

Joshua stated I like to run, I don’t like inside! There was lots of agreement with this.

Ben and Jye added that, they like to run fast!

The children came up with ideas below for movement:

Brianna, Celia, Lilly and Simone – dance

Peter, William and Angus – jumping like frogs

Ava, Enya – ice skating

Samantha explained a game she plays at home with her big sister called statues. Samantha explained the rules and we all discussed what a game with rules was.

Together we agreed that for the next few days after morning tea, we would create some space to be ‘active’ indoors for a period of time and children and teachers could decide to join in.

I asked the children what we would need to do to ensure that we would be safe inside doing these ‘active’ tasks.

These are the responses: listen to the teacher, stay away from the furniture, don’t hurt each other, don’t jump too high, eat lunch first, I don’t want to dance, don’t throw things, be kind.

The children and I decided that a sensible place to have our game of statues was on the large mat and we needed to move some furniture so we didn’t bump into the furniture. Additionally, Callum reminded us that we needed to be near the stereo so that we could hear the music.

Samantha taught us how to play statues remembering to explain that when the music stopped, we all needed to freeze. She was able to recall all of the steps. Some of the children found it a challenge to hear the music and then stop.

The children enjoyed the game so much and asked to play it again tomorrow.
Reflection

I introduced the notion of being active to keep our bodies well. Children had many ideas for keeping active and considered how these activities could be completed safely indoors. Children considered how we had to care for ourselves and the environment.

Children were respectful of each other’s turns for sharing information and turn-taking. 

Samantha was able to recall in detail the game with rules, which she taught to us with confidence.

The children stated they enjoyed the game and requested a follow-up session.

Extension

Discuss with children the opportunity to play the game again and to revisit the reasons why it is important to be active.

Ask children to discuss with their families other games with rules that children might like to learn and share with their friends. Invite children to make their own game and to consider what rules that might be needed to help people to be safe.

Brianna, Celia, Lilly and Simone are interested in dance. Their actions highlighted an interest in ballet. Put books from library on ballet into book corner on the display stand and ask them about their understanding of this type of dance.

Outdoors in all weather

Australia has a diverse landscape and climate, which will be explored further within the next section on sun protection. Due to the intensity of ultra violet rays (UVR) in some locations, it is recommended that children do not go outdoors at certain times of the day. Apart from these hours, educators need to consider how they can support children to have choice between playing indoors and outdoors.

Why do we rush children indoors when it begins to rain? Why can’t we dress children in appropriate clothes and allow them to explore the beauty and richness that a wet environment can offer? Consider the opportunities for learning that are available from the splish as children jump in puddles, the experimentation in making mud soap or chocolate milkshakes, the wonder in observing rain drops on spider webs, the feel of slippery mud and the strong smells of vegetation after the rain. Why do we take children’s choices to play outside away when it begins to rain?

Could we partner with the community to purchase or access wet weather gear to keep at the service for children to use? Could we encourage families to send wet weather clothing when rain is forecast? Additionally when it is cold, there is no reason not to venture outdoors if children and adults are dressed correctly. Children learn about weather and seasons by experiencing and observing the differences of these times.
Lessons from England…

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of taking a year off from my teaching job in Australia and working in a nursery school in London. I was fortunate enough to work in a school (children aged two – school age entry), where the educators were firmly committed to being outside. The school was in the middle of London and yet the outdoor environment that had been developed by the community was extraordinary. The service had a belief that children have a strong desire to be connected to nature.

I recall vividly my first day when it began to rain and running outside to round children up to get them out of the rain. As I managed to bring children in one side, children flowed back out the other entry wearing their raincoats, hats and galoshes (gum boots).

What I learnt that day was to trust these competent children. They taught me the magic of playing in the rain and the wondrous experiences and opportunities it provides for learning. On this day, the children taught me how to listen to the rain.

Lisa Palethorpe

Figure 2.9: The new experiences, joys and opportunities for new theory making are endless when children are able to explore fully the environment, taking opportunity of authentic learning experiences provide by nature.

• How does the environment smell when it is wet?
• Are there any new noises?
• How do things feel?
• Are there different creatures in the garden when it rains?
• What are the colours of the world like when it rains?
• What sounds does the wind make when it rains?
When might we not play outdoors?

Educators need to make an informed decision about the safety of the environment. At times, it may not be suitable to go outside to play. Think about your environment and when it may not be suitable for children to play outdoors for example:

- in a thunder or electrical storm
- when strong winds are present and the playground has large trees
- during times when UVR is higher than the recommended
- when water has pooled and there is an increased risk of drowning, and
- when there is a hazard that cannot be controlled or minimised.

Figure 2.10: Playing in mud is often an enjoyable sensory experience. Slip, slop, plop, the rhythm of words that emerge as children explore how the squelchy mud feels between the toes. How does it feel compared to dry earth? How much water is needed to make it wet? What causes the mud to become mud? Does the mud stay mud forever? Who makes their home in mud? Why? Why not? What would the worms think of the mud?

Encouraging children’s engagement in physical experiences

Physical activity does not need to be running around. It can also include traditional indoor experiences conducted in the outdoors. Most children are energetic, active, curious and inquisitive. Children are born with a strong desire to understand their world and movement is a way children use to explore the world. Consider your interaction with children and the environment around them to encourage their learning. Are children engaged in learning or have they become passive? Could it be the environment?

Figure: 2.11 Construction activities can be done in the outdoors.
Figure 2.12: We often learn about our bodies by thinking about other bodies. Why aren’t we the same? Furthermore we learn to care and respect ourselves by learning to care and respect other people, animals and the environment.
Activity 2.7

Goodstart staff are to visit the Physical Environments Toolkit and consider the rich abundance of resources available to support educators in their role of connecting children to the outdoors.

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**EARLY LEARNING & RESEARCH TOOLKITS**

**Physical Environments Toolkit**

*Your guide to developing children’s environments*

The Physical Environments Toolkit is intended to cultivate thinking and practice reflecting a collaborative approach to design, development and interaction with the physical environment that acknowledges the connections between child, family, educator and community. The Toolkit is a dynamic suite of resources that has been influenced by consultation with children, families, educators and teachers, local centre support professionals and local community members associated with Goodstart Early Learning environments in Queensland, New South Wales, and Northern Territory.

This Toolkit is connected to Goodstart policies and the requirements and expectations of the National Quality Framework which includes the Education and Care Services National Law 2010, the Education and Care Services National Regulations, the National Quality Standards, Belonging, Being and Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, and *My Time, Our Place, The Framework for School Age Care in Australia*.

The information in this Toolkit will be continually reviewed to ensure resources remain current and relevant. Please check back regularly to see what’s new.

Consultation and feedback will continue to influence the Physical Environments Toolkit. To provide feedback or to recommend additional information or resources please click here.

Learning environments are welcoming spaces when they reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the setting and respond to their interests and needs. Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests, needs, abilities and experiences of each child. They cater for different learning capacities and learning styles and invite children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions - ensuring early learning environments are welcoming.

Goodstart has a new *Food Gardening Guide* developed specifically for Goodstart centres. In conjunction with *City Food Growers of Brisbane*, to provide you with the essential knowledge and strategies for successful gardening at your centre. You can also download a PDF of the complete guide here.

More information

For more information about the Physical Environments Toolkit, please contact Jayne Khles – Senior Advisor, Families and Communities.

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**INTERNATIONAL MUDDY DAY**

*International Muddy Day* is a fun, unique way to bring the community together and raise awareness of the benefits of being outdoors. It’s a great day to get muddy and get our hands dirty with the children at our centres.

**JUNE 29**

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**IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

26/11/2014

**APPROVED**

Institute Manager

**Page**

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Learning about our bodies

It is important for children to learn about their bodies, how to care for their bodies and how to keep their body safe.

Additionally, children will learn how their body functions. Educators can teach children about their body through a number of teaching strategies:

• discussions with children to determine what they already know and what they might like to know
• reading books about the body
• looking at x-rays on a light box
• borrowing skeletons from the museum
• obtaining animal parts such as a heart and examining these organs (educators are encouraged to consult families and children before such experiences to determine any concerns of families beliefs, values and cultures to these experiences), and
• using dances and games that support children to learn about their body, and to gain spatial and body awareness.

Figure 2.13: Helping in the strawberry patch. Good food for the body!

Family Planning Queensland has developed a number of resources to support educators and families introduce the concept of self-protection. Helping children learn about their bodies, private areas and how to protect themselves is an important starting point for children’s learning about keeping themselves safe.

Family Planning Queensland has developed Everyone’s got a bottom, a story about Ben and his brother and sister learning and talking together about bodies. It is a tool for parents and carers to gently start a conversation with children about self protection. This book can be purchased via

### Element 3

**Adapt facilities to ensure access and participation**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Assist in providing challenging elements of outdoor and indoor environments that allow for experiences which scaffold children’s learning and development and offer chances for appropriate risk-taking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Promote the sun protection of children to meet the recommendations of relevant recognised authorities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Provide a balance of natural and artificial lighting, good ventilation and fresh air.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>Organise indoor and outdoor spaces that ensure children are not always independent on adults to do things for them and are supported to create their own games and experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>Engage with children in constructing their own play settings / environments and create indoor and outdoor environments that stimulate and reflect children’s interests.</td>
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### Challenging and supporting children’s learning

This section builds upon our knowledge and skills of children to include consideration of the role of the environment to support children to be independent and to learn to self regulate behaviour and to support children’s emotional needs.
Environments that encourage children to become independent

Activity 2.8

Critical reflection

Independence verse adult control

Look at the following photographs: consider what strategies the educators have used to allow children to have independence and be able to enact tasks without having to go to an adult.

The educator believes children are competent and capable. She has taught the children how to access the paint containers independently. The paint bottles have pump pack tops, and children know to come, when required, and get one squeeze of the colours they desire and to put these onto their paint palate. Resources are available and able to be accessed independently by children and children understand that they need to be responsible for these resources and to put them back in their allotted spaces.

Figure 2.15: Equipment trolleys are wheeled outside each day from the sheds. The children know how to access equipment during the day when they wish to use in their play. Children access these independently and understand and value that when they have finished, equipment needs to be put back so that it is cared for.
Sun safe practices

Dorothea Mackellar’s famous poem, “My Country” began verse two with “I love a sunburnt country…” (as cited in Mackellar, 2011). This line reminds us of the harshness of our great land and the delights of our diverse landscapes and weather. With the benefits of our weather also comes the need to protect ourselves from the elements.

Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancers in the world (Cancer Council Australia, 2014). A large number of Australians die each year from skin cancer and in 2011, more than 2000. Skin cancer is mostly preventable and, with some easy precautions, we can reduce our risk of developing skin cancer.

Damage to the skin often occurs while children are young and spend large blocks of time outdoors having fun. Teaching children about sun safety and applying sun safety strategies will help to reduce long-term damage.

Educators must promote the importance of sun safety to children. If you recall, this was discussed in Module One. Educators teach children’s sun safety by first modelling good practice themselves. Educators must wear wide-brimmed hats, sun cream, sleeved shirts, and sunglasses while outdoors.

At Goodstart Early Learning...

Policy and requirement documents guide educator’s practice.

Learners must obtain a copy of, read and be able to embed practices from:
- Children’s Health and Safety Policy (NQS2)
- Sun Safety and Heat Stress Requirement NQS2

Students who work in services other than Goodstart must familiarise themselves and be able to apply their service sun safety policy requirements.

Educators must teach children and families why we have a sun safety policy and practices that are to be followed. Teaching children that too much sun makes skin ‘sick’ is important. Teaching children about suitable hats and how to apply sunblock is important.

Educators are encouraged to talk through their actions when they are applying sunblock to young children. “I am rubbing this sunblock all over your face, neck, arms and legs to protect your skin from the sun. Too much sun can make our skin sick”. As children get more independent, educators can encourage children to apply their own sunblock and to look in the mirror and apply it on their face. Educators, however, must check that the sunblock has been applied correctly, as children learn to become competent at this task.

Other teaching strategies may include applying sunblock (or pretend sunblock) to puppets, reading story-script books to children to remind them of this task. Additionally, children may wish to explore and understand what skin cancer is and how it harms skin and how the sun
damages other objects. Educators may wish to ask children what they know and what they might like to know and explore this as a project.

Educators must work together with children to help them to learn strategies for keeping themselves safe from the sun. All educators need to ensure children (and adults) wear a suitable hat outside. Many services implement a guideline ‘No hat, no play in the sun’ and use this phrase to remind children to wear their hat. Clean, spare hats are needed for children to borrow when children do not have a hat or have forgotten to bring their hat. The guideline is not about punishing children or limiting children, it is about reminding children to wear a suitable hat.

The Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care National Regulations states: “Sun exposure can pose significant health risks for children, including sunburn, dehydration, eye damage and skin cancer” (ACECQA, 2011, p.77).

Outlined above are the procedures and strategies recommended for educators to adopt with children. Additionally, services have a duty of care to provide safe environments for children and adults. Services are required to provide adequate shade through the use of trees, shade sails, fixed roofs and gazebos.

Healthy balance of sun exposure

A healthy balance of exposure to the sun’s ultra violet rays (UVR) is important for health. Recently, there has been an increase within the media of articles on the number of people with Vitamin D deficiencies due to lack of sunlight. People need certain amounts of sunlight for development of healthy bones, muscles and teeth. When UV levels are below three, most people do not require sun protection unless they are near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or water, have very fair skin or are outside for extended periods.

State-specified sun protection measures

From Sun Safety and Heat Stress Requirement NQS2

Sun protection measures must be adhered to in accordance with the recommendations for your state as specified below and on all days with a moderate UVR level of 3 and above.

- ACT: Sun protection is necessary for part or most of each day between August to May when UVR levels reach 3 and above. Minimise outdoor activities and events as much as reasonably practical between 11am and 3pm during the daylight saving period.
- NSW: Sun protection measures at all times from October to March, and between 10am and 2pm April to September. Minimise outdoor activities between 11am and 3pm during daylight saving.
- NT: Sun protection is required all year round as UVR is always high (6-7), very high (8-10) or extreme (11+) during peak UV periods between 10am and 3pm. As the UVR level is often above 3 outside of peak UV periods the UVR level must be checked daily to ascertain when sun protection is required outside peak UV periods.
• QLD: Sun protection measures require all year round. Plan outdoor activities wherever practicable before 10am and after 3pm, all year round. Outdoor and physical activity must be carefully planned to take place at times during the day when UV levels are lower. Outdoor activities should be avoided around the midday hours when UV levels are highest. Multiple sun protection methods are required whenever the UV level index is forecast to reach three or above. In Queensland, the UV index level is usually at three or above all year round.

• SA: Sun protection measures from September to April with particular care between 10am and 3pm.

• TAS: Sun protection measures are required from mid-September to mid-April. Active outdoor play is encouraged throughout the year.

• Vic: Sun protection measures September to April. Active outdoor play is encouraged throughout the year, provided appropriate sun protection measures are used when necessary.

• WA: Sun protection measures are required all year round when the UVR level is 3 or above.

Environmental health needs

Considering shade needs for people’s health is not the only environmental health consideration educators need to think about within an early childhood education and care environment. To maintain good health, children and adults need to work in environments that provide a balance of natural and artificial light, have good ventilation and fresh air and ensure the physical environment (including equipment and resources) is safe and in good working order.

Activity 2.9

Access and read

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 [ACECQA, 2011], p. 77, Section: Ventilation and natural light. To access the guide, click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL into your web browser:

Figure 2.16: Here are the stories we created outside about the troll that lives under the bridge, which was constructed out of blocks by the children.

### Element 4

**Help children with change**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Prepare children for changes in a supportive and timely manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Assist in developing meaningful routines, including those to minimise distress at separation of the family and child</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Identify and respond to children’s feelings openly, appropriately and with respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Encourage children to communicate, listen and treat others with respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Encourage opportunities to express feelings and emotions appropriately</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Children and change

Some adults cope with change much better than others. This may be due to past experience, personality or because of a particular situation.

Activity 2.10

Reflection

Are you good with change or do you prefer for things to stay the same?

Do you like to update your mobile phone with each new model and get hold of all the new features or do you like your old phone?

What about planning? Many educators who have been in the profession for a while will remember that many documented their program in boxes displayed on the wall. When this changed, did you embrace the opportunity to change to something different or did you have difficulties moving onto a new system?

Children too have varied responses to change. What may seem minimal change to adults may be enormous to a child. Furthermore, each child may experience change in different ways. Like adults, children’s reactions may be due to their stage of development, whether children have secure attachments in their life, experiences, personalities and, of course, the significance of the change.

It is important that educators get to know children and their families in order to support children through change, as it can bring about stress and anxiety for them.

Quality pedagogy begins with secure and loving relationships between you and the children. These relationships occur over time and do not happen immediately. Children with high stress levels are less able to learn, and chronically high stress levels impact on a child’s physiology creating long-term problems with their physical and mental health, emotional regulation and overall development and wellbeing (Sims, 201, p.11).

Events that may cause significant stress to some children include, but are not limited to:

- moving house
- preparing for a new early childhood education and care service or progressing to school
- a new educator at the service
- a change of staff shift at the early childhood education and care service
- competing for space, time and attention
- a new baby or sibling coming into the family
- financial hardship
- family stress levels
• having an unwell family member, a family member involved in an accident, or a family member that died.

Some children may be more sensitive to change due to past traumatic experiences.

**Lilly’s story**

Lilly was 2.5 years of age, happy, bright with lots of friends she would play with at the early childhood education and care service. Lilly rarely got upset and she was always the first to ‘have a go at things’. While Lilly was at the service one day, her mother was involved in a car accident. On this day, her Aunty came to pick her up. Lilly stayed with her Aunty for a period of time after the event while her mother recovered.

After this time, any change to Lilly’s normal routine would trigger her to go into a state of heightened anxiety. Lilly would cry and become extremely distressed to a point she was almost physically sick. Triggers could be as simple as having lunch at a different time, a picnic outside, not sitting at tables or an educator being away for the day.

**Activity 2.11**

**Watch**

‘Life at One’ video which is located at the following hyperlink, or copy and paste the URL into your web browser. Please note students will need to scroll down the page to the Stress Test clip and watch this.

http://www.abc.net.au/tv/life/video/LIFEAT1.htm?program=life&pres=s2359909&story=1

Children who are stressed or anxious may react in a variety of ways, including:

• loss of appetite
• become aggressive towards other children
• show signs of relapsing into behaviours that you would expect from a much younger child
• withdrawing
• becoming clingy
• become physically sick
• not able to sleep, rest or sit still or the opposite, sleep often.
Supporting children through change

There are a few things in life that are unavoidable, such as death and taxes (as the saying goes). Another unavoidable thing in life is change. We live in a world of constant change, both positive and negative. How we cope with change depends on our personality, the experiences we have had, and the skills we have learnt to deal with change.

Change is a part of a young child’s life too. Some examples include new food experiences, a new sibling, starting early learning and trying new things. It is important for young children to learn about change and how to cope with change positively in the early years so that “the foundations of confidence and willingness to try things are built right from the start” (Linke, 2010, p.3).

To support children it is important to understand as best we can what is occurring in the child’s world. Respectful partnerships with families are essential in this process. When families first come to the service, educators work with families and build partnership to get to know the child.

It is important to keep in mind that children are all different with different personalities and mannerisms. The important personal qualities that support children deal with change include:

- self-esteem
- confidence
- problem solving, and
- optimism.

Some of the things educators can do to support children with change include:

- establish partnerships with families and communities so that rituals are respected and honoured
- support by a trusted and engaged adult
- allow time and space for children to ‘have-a-go’ in the time they require
- facilitate learning from previous change events
- have conversations between educator and child about the success children experienced in the past from previous change
- allow children to have a say in what happens in situations that affect them
- retain things from the past that are special and are used as tools of discussion for helping the child move forward (e.g. remember when you were little and you couldn’t make that plane and then you could), and
- giving meaning to and labelling feelings.

Separation from family members

The Early Years Learning Framework requires us to establish secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children, families and communities (DEEWR, 2009). These relationships take time to establish.
Before children begin at the service, wherever possible, it is critical that families are invited to spend time at the service to begin to develop a partnership with educators and to feel confident with educator practices.

Educators in many early childhood education and care services have adopted practices that support the child and their family to ease into their day at the service. The educators have worked in partnership with the family to understand the rituals a child has for saying goodbye to family members and the strategies that make this separation a little easier. Transition is most successful when educators work with families and have taken the time to listen to the child. The following strategies may assist:

- **Adopt a primary educator system.** This allows the family member to work with the same educator each day to help transition the child into the program. The family member knows to take the child to this educator and the educator will help the child through the rituals to say farewell.

- **Listen to the child.** Find out the child’s rituals. Does the child like to stand at the gate with the educator and wave farewell to the parent? Does the child like to stay with their sibling in another room? Does the child have a favourite game or book that he / she likes to do first up with the educator to help ease separation?

- **Value the child.** A positive separation is important to help set up a happy day for the child, family and educators. Ensure service systems provide the opportunity for educators to have the time to welcome families and to support children through transition.

- **Value the child and family.** Learn and use children and families’ names. Generic names such as ‘possum’ ‘darling’ ‘Princess or Prince’ may sound enduring however, using children’s first names is respectful and builds relationship because it highlights to the family that the child is important enough for you to remember his or her name.

- **Create a sense of belonging for child and family member.** By greeting the child and family member e.g. “Good morning Zarli, you have brought your blanket and your mum”, gives a message to the child that both mum and child belong at the service.

**Figure 2.17.** Children will only thrive in early learning services if educators build positive and responsive relationships with the children in their care. Knowing the child helps the educator, in partnership with the family, to implement the best strategies for the child.
Activity 2.12

Read the documents accessed by clicking on the following hyperlinks:


Figure 2.18: A sense of place for the child to leave their special belongings each day.

Transitions to a new room

Transitions include “…home to early childhood settings, between settings, and from early childhood settings to school…” (DEEWR, 2009, p.16). Within this section, the concepts of transitions will be considered from the transition from one room to another within the same early childhood education and care service.

Before thinking about moving a child into another room, consider why educators and the Director may wish to do this. Changes in legislation and the opportunity to embrace under the roof ratios provides more flexibility to services to meet the needs of children rather than feeling that children have to be moved to allow space for younger children.
Families are central to the success of the transition process given their importance in supporting children’s wellbeing and sense of security. Additionally, if we are truly committed to Article 12 of United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (OHCHR, 1990) which states that children should have a voice in things that affect them, then children must be asked for their opinion about moving into another room.

When considering moving a child from one room to another, it is important to respectfully involve the family and discuss the reasons. Be mindful of power dimensions as this needs to be a true partnership rather than the educator informing the family that it was going to take place. This approach does not build relationships but instead creates tensions. If the family is in agreement that it is best for the child to move into another room, then the family and educators should work together to support the child making the transition into the new room.

Encourage an environment where children are able to flow from one room to another and develop a sense of belonging to the service rather than a specific room.

Consider whether a number of children can move rooms together with their current educator as well.

If the decision has been made to move the child up to another room, ensure the child and the child’s family has visited the new room several times and completed a thorough orientation. This can help the child to feel comfortable with the educators and other children and is happy to stay and play within the room.

**Transition to school**

Many states and territories within Australia have ‘transition reports’ that are required to be completed by the early childhood education and care service and forwarded to schools upon enrolment of a child into a primary school.

Regardless of whether a requirement exists between services to complete a transition report, early childhood education and care services are encouraged to build partnerships with local schools and to become part of the community. Building partnerships with the school, school community and teachers helps to inform the school of the importance of early childhood education and reduces the perceived gap between school and early childhood, particularly when services can provide regular visits between service types. If the service is located too far from the service for the children to visit, educators and teachers may be able to arrange opportunities for the teacher to come to the service to talk with children about school life and events. Other ways of building partnerships with local schools include:

- advertising school events and activities on service noticeboards
- inviting teachers and the Principal to service events
- providing school uniforms in dress up area
- facilitating family information nights and school excursions
- keeping connected with past students (e.g., inviting past students to come and talk with future students about going to school or to write welcome letters to future students), and
- reading books about school and show photographs of the local school.
Activity 2.13

Explore and watch

Kidsmatter Australia Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative has developed a number of resources for Educators and families working in partnership to support children to successfully transition to school. Click on the link below or copy and paste the URL into your web browser –


Watch the six short videos and consider how your service can better support children’s transition to school.

Learning to understand our feelings

Emotional awareness is understanding that one has feelings distinct from thoughts; being able to identify and name those feelings; and recognising that others have feelings that may be the same as or different from one’s own (Epstein, 2009, p.57).

Children learn feelings and emotions as they engage with the world. As children mature, often so does their repertoire of emotions and their feeling state. As they learn about what emotions and feelings are, they also learn how to express them appropriately for the correct context. Emotion regulation is the ability to identify and control one’s emotions. For example, a child of two years of age may be feeling angry and exhibit this through lying on the ground and kicking and crying. This may be an acceptable form of expression of anger for a two year old; however, it may not necessarily be seen as appropriate for a 40 year old woman to do the same thing.

Although young children are born with emotions, their understanding of emotions and feelings and how to regulate them develops as they grow older. In order to learn about feelings, young children need the support of an adult with whom they feel safe.

Recognising and labelling emotions is important. It is important not to judge children’s emotions as good or bad as children are learning which emotion and feeling is appropriate for which context. Children like adults can learn to control how they behave in response to their feelings, but they should not be led to think they have to control the emotions themselves. Furthermore, adults need to support children through situations when they don’t have the capacity to cope for example, the emotional storm.
Activity 2.14

Read

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the reading from KidsMatter about the importance of feelings.


Consider this reading and identify the additional strategies KidsMatter recommend to support children to learn about feelings.

Babies frown, cry and tense their body when they are unhappy or uncomfortable. This is the language baby’s use. Even though young babies are not able to use words, adults should talk to them about their feelings from an early age. This builds a building block for future development.

Theories of development inform us that often young children cannot separate their own feelings from those of others. If they feel angry, they believe that you too are angry. Toddlers are learning to share and take turns and see other’s points of view. At times, young children need support with these acquiring skills.

Learning to use the appropriate feeling in different contexts

There are a number of ways educators can teach children to identify and express their feelings:

• **Name or label children’s emotions as your own**
  For example, at pack up time, the educator Margaret stated, “I’m really happy today”.

• **Call attention to the feelings of others**
  For example, at arrival time, educator Margaret said to Joe, “Joe, you look rather sad today, I can see that you are not smiling and you look sad.”

• **Comment conversationally on the emotions children express throughout the day**
  Darcy: I made a happy face because I am happy because Mummy comes soon. Educator: Mummy always comes to pick you up Darcy.
  Darcy: I don’t like my Mummy going but I like kindy. Educator: So you like kindy but wish your Mummy could stay because you don’t like her being away.

• **Explain how you are feeling in certain situations to help children understand their own feelings.**
  For example, at story time the Educator stated, “my tummy is making funny noises and I am feeling hungry. I am really looking forward to my lunch.” The educator has her hand on her stomach.
Once again, children can learn emotions through the use of language, looking at photos, pictures and people’s faces that represent different emotions and these being labelled by a more competent other. Introducing mirrors for children to look at themselves and discussing how their face looks when they express certain emotions also helps children to learn to express their emotions. Role play, dramatic play and the use of puppets and dolls helps children to work through scenarios and situations.

**Effective communication by children**

When babies cry, it is their way of telling adults who care for them that something is not right or they are not happy. Adults should not leave babies to cry, this only makes a baby more distressed and anxious. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (OHCHR, 1990) Article 12 states that children have a right to have voice on things that affect them. Babies communicate their dissatisfaction with a situation through crying. Educators are required to be responsive to baby’s needs.

Understanding our social customs and rituals occurs through being role modelled by a more competent other and by being taught. Educators need to demonstrate through their daily interaction, the behaviour they wish children to learn to use while within the early childhood education and care service. Additionally, adults need to teach certain behaviours. Educators must be mindful that cultural considerations are necessary when thinking about what respectful communication strategies are required to be taught and demonstrated within the service. Respectful behaviour includes respecting children’s privacy and feelings.

### Element 5

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<td><strong>5.1</strong> Observe families and children for signs of stress / distress on arrival</td>
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<td><strong>5.2</strong> Begin interaction with the child while family is still present to minimise abruptness of separation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>5.3</strong> Encourage the family to take as much time as needed to have a relaxed, unhurried separation from their child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5.4</strong> Respond to child’s distress at separation from the family in a calm reassuring manner</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Children’s anxieties on arrival**

Stress and anxiety are feelings. They are important feelings that all people need to learn to identify and regulate. When people (including children) get stressed, the body automatically releases a hormone into the body that provides the energy for the person to have a ‘fight or
flight’ response. This is a survival mechanism. The extra adrenalin pumping through our bodies allows us to make a decision about running away from the danger or staying to fight.

A little stress in our life is not necessarily a bad thing. For example, students may feel that they need a little stress in their life to finally face the assessment task they have been putting off. However, ongoing stress is detrimental to our health, particularly for young children with brain development.

Children with high stress levels are less able to learn, and chronically high stress levels impact on children’s physiology creating long-term problems with physical and mental health, emotional regulation and overall development and wellbeing (Sims, 201, p.11).

### Activity 2.15

**Watch and consider**

If you have not watched the vignette in Chapter Two from the Life at One Series please watch this first.

If you have watched this vignette, then please watch the following:

Toxic Stress Derails Healthy Development produced by the Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University. To access this vignette, click on the hyperlink below or copy and paste into your URL.


Consider how you would explain to your team colleagues why minimising stress in children’s lives is so important. Explain what stress can do. What do you believe stress and anxiety for children in your current environment? What possible strategies could you introduce to reduce the amount of stress children feel within the service?

The next few sections will discuss common stressful times for young children and considerations for educators to minimise the triggers.

### Starting at a new early childhood education and care service

When children start at a new service, we often refer to the time children take to settle into the new surroundings as the “settling in” period. This is a critical point in time, when young children develop trust and begin to build relationships with the child.

Consider how terrifying it may be to a child to be left with total strangers in a strange environment, with different smells, furniture and resources that are different from home. Also, people may look different – different clothing, perhaps a hijab, different hair and skin colour, different ways of doing things and those people may not immediately understand how the child communicates or likes things done. And then, of course, all the other young children!

Wherever possible, services should encourage families to spend as much time as possible and as long as they need to settle a child into a new service. When children observe their
family members interacting positively with educators, children gain a sense of safety and feel more relaxed knowing family are present while they get to know the new (and very foreign) early learning environment. Of course, this settling in period is also important for the family. When families spend time at the service with educators, they build relationship, gain trust and feel more comfortable when it finally comes time to leave their child.

Family partnerships are critical. Partnerships help to teach the educator all about their child. This information is important in helping the educator build positive relationships with the child.

Having one educator develop a strong relationship with a child when they begin to attend the service provides the opportunity for the child to feel safe, secure and to begin building relationships with other key educators.

**Separation each day**

### Activity 2.16

Click on the following hyperlink to read and consider the fact-sheet for parents produced by Early Childhood Australia on separation and anxiety.


### Routines to support positive separation

This module has covered in detail the importance of predictable critical rituals. Most young children prefer predictable routines to gauge their day.

**A typical day may go as follows:**

First, children engage in outdoor experiences and, during the morning, children will be asked whether they have had morning tea. Usually, children have morning tea on the tables outside when they are hungry. Due to the service’s requirements for sun safety, children are required to go indoors once the UV rating reaches a certain point. The educator explains to children the need to go inside and why, and then children, in small groups, leave their work to venture inside, knowing that they can come back to the task in the afternoon.

Children will play indoors and some children will help prepare lunch in the kitchen and dining room. After a large play indoors, children will help to pack up and when they have finished their task, progress to the dining room. The child’s day has rhythm and routine with large blocks of time for children to engage in activity. There are no time slots that state that at 10:30 this is what children must do. Children have much opportunity for choice, decision making and control over their day.
Educators support children by talking through changes that may take place, for example, “because the sun’s rays are becoming strong, we will need to go inside soon so that our skin does not get sun burnt”. Children are given notice of the pending change and an explanation for the change.

**Supporting children who are stressed and / or anxious**

Young children are often considered quite resilient to the events in life that at times can affect us. However, even the best environments at times will have things happen that cause stress and distress to young children. Additionally, some children have temperaments that are more prone than others to feeling anxious and stressed.

Causes of anxiety may include:

- having stressful adults in their lives
- sickness
- death, separation or moving
- changes in their daily routines
- lack of clear boundaries, or
- a change in circumstances such as a new baby, or family member, educator.

(Roe, 2006)

**Additional Reading**

Students may be interested in exploring some of the resources available to educators to assist them in supporting children in times of trauma. These periods in a child’s life are normally associated with high levels of ongoing stress.

To access these resources, click on the links below:

- [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/trauma_days_and_weeks.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/trauma_days_and_weeks.html)

Stressful events support children to learn how to manage their feelings through the support of a trusted adult. Learning to manage feelings, to be able to learn techniques to ‘self-soothe’ and learn ways to cope, takes time. The educator has a significant role to play in supporting children learn these skills.

There are a number of strategies that educators can adopt to assist young children.

- Don’t leave babies or young children crying. Strong attachment is developed through trusted and responsive relationships. If children are crying, they need support. Picking up the baby will ‘not spoil’ the baby.
• Get to know each child and their individual mannerisms. Babies have different cries to communicate different desires and it is important to get to know these languages and to respond accordingly.

• Children have different strategies for calming (self-soothing) and receiving support from adults. Some children enjoy snuggling into an adult; other children will like the adult just to sit close by to them.

**Everyday strategies to support reduce stress and anxiety**

Strong social and emotional wellbeing is supported through positive, trusted relationships between child, family and educators. Relationships take time to grow and must be nurtured.

There are strategies that educators can utilise in their everyday practice to support children. These include:

• understanding each child and their unique ways so that educators can identify when a child’s behaviour is building towards an emotional storm, allowing opportunity to provide additional support

• understanding each child’s capabilities so as to offer support where required

• helping children to form relationships with other children

• being aware of children’s play as not all play is friendly, kind and inclusive and challenging children’s ideas, theories and practice where it is inappropriate

• keeping promises

• establishing and maintaining predictable routines

• having consistent educators on regular rosters, for example, an educator from the baby’s room beginning each day

• ensuring children have somewhere special of their own to keep their belongings

• creating connection to home; for example, photographs of children’s family and of their home at the service in locations children can access independently

• developing rituals with children that are unique to their own needs to support them into the program and to leave on each occasion the child attends

• being genuinely warm and welcoming to children so they feel valued and have a sense of belonging, and

• exchanging information with families each day so you have an understanding of the child’s world outside the service and how those events and experiences may influence the child’s day.
Service example:

Considering when support is needed

Angela is very aware of the children she works with each day. Charlie is a very enthusiastic child, who has big ideas and constructs well-thought-out theories of why things occur, but has some challenges with translating his cognitive thoughts into reality. Charlie is learning emotional self-regulation and he becomes very stressed and frustrated with himself when he is unable to translate his ideas.

Charlie has decided to build a billy cart after watching the V8 touring cars on television over the weekend. Angela watches Charlie pace around the room looking at the equipment, but not making a decision. His pace quickens and his hand movements become busy as he begins to talk to himself and uses his hands as a form of expression. Angela realises he is becoming stressed and frustrated as he begins to pull out boxes and toss these looking for the ‘right box’. Angela walks over to Charlie and bends down to his level so that they have eye contact, which provides an opportunity for good communication. She takes his hands and clutches them together and says “I have been watching you Charlie and I think you may be feeling a little stressed this morning. You look like you have thought of something that you want to do and you don’t know how?” Charlie pulled his hands from Angela and explained what was wrong, one foot stamping the ground. Angela acknowledges his feelings and explains to him what she thinks is happening “I thought you were frustrated, your foot is stamping, you hand is punching the air and I bet your tummy is all tight”. Angela offers him some assistance, encourages the both of them to take a few deep breathes and put their thinking caps on and suggests they start with a plan.

The example above values Charlie. The educator understands the children in her care and is responsive to their needs. She helps him connect to his feelings, label them and tries to help the child understand what frustration feels like. The educator supports the child to implement self-soothing strategies to calm (breathing) and re-focus. Furthermore, this educator has engaged in intentional teaching to support the child with their needs.

Figure 2.19: Chloe watches her Dad closely. She is keen to help and begins passing him the screws after watching him get them out of the box.
Activity 2.17

The stress and anxiety of beginning school

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to review and consider the resources available to support educators and families to successfully support children’s transition to school


National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and outside school hours care services in Australia. It provides families and educators with a more detailed understanding of children’s education and care requirements, objectives, outcomes, and expectations.

The NQS comprises quality areas, standards and elements.

There are seven quality areas. Although all quality areas are interwoven, three quality areas relate mostly to chapter two of this module.

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<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>Each child’s health needs are supported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>Each child’s comfort is provided for and there are appropriate opportunities to meet each child’s need for sleep, rest and relaxation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>Effective hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.</td>
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</table>

(ACECQA, 2013)
2.1.4 Steps are taken to control the spread of infectious diseases and to manage injuries and illness, in accordance with recognised guidelines.

2.2 Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.

2.2.1 Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.

2.2.2 Physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child.

2.3 Each child is protected.

2.3.1 Children are adequately supervised at all times.

2.3.2 Every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

2.3.3 Plans to effectively managed incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practices and implemented.

2.3.4 Educators, co-ordinators and staff members are aware of their roles and responsibilities to respond to every child at risk of abuse or neglect.

QA5 Relationships with children

5.1 Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.

5.1.1 Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.

5.1.2 Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition for life and learning.

5.1.3 Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.

5.2 Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.

5.2.1 Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.

5.2.2 Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviours of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.

5.2.3 The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.

QA6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

6.1 Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.

6.1.1 There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.

6.1.2 Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.

6.1.3 Current information about the service is available to families.
<table>
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<th>Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.</th>
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<td>6.2.1</td>
<td>The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2.2</td>
<td>Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3.1</td>
<td>Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3.2</td>
<td>Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3.3</td>
<td>Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.3.4</td>
<td>The service builds relationships and engages with their local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.5</td>
<td>Service practices are based effectively documented policies and procedures that are available at the service and reviewed regularly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ACECQA, 2013, p.10 – 11)


**Useful websites**

Australian Government: Department of Health

Australian Breast Feeding Association:
[https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/](https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/)

National Health and Medical Research Council (2012)

Product Safety Australia

Raising Children Network
[http://raisingchildren.net.au/](http://raisingchildren.net.au/)
### Chapter 3

**CHCECE010 Support the holistic development of children in early childhood**

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</tbody>
</table>
Before you begin engaging with this chapter, chapter 3 of module seven, let us stop and consider some of the significant theories that guide us (educators) about how children learn and develop. You may recall from previous modules that theories are “…the big ideas that come from research and wise thinking over time” (Kennedy, p.1). There are many theories, about many different things. The theories or big ideas educators are interested in are the big ideas that inform us about how children learn, develop and how to best support their wellbeing. We want to understand these theories so that we know “what to do” to support children’s learning.

There are many theorists with many theories about how children learn and develop in the early childhood education and care profession, there are some well regarded and respected theories that are influencing our practice. In this chapter, Educators will begin to investigate these ideas. Additionally, we Educators will consider how each of the current significant theorist, such as Lev Vygotsky, Abraham Maslow, Albert Bandura view the adult’s role in supporting children’s learning and development. It is important to understand the different perspectives and the contemporary thinking that best informs our practice. In this chapter students will explore:

Lev Vygosky’s cognitive development view, which considers the adult having a prominent role in the child’s learning. The adult, or more competent other, supports children’s learning through a process called scaffolding to support children move through their Zone of Proximal Learning.

Abraham Maslow, Hierarchy of Needs, considers the importance of the adults supporting children with emotional and personality development.

Albert Bandura theoretical perspective comes from the lens of social cognitive theory. Bandura believes that adults have an important function of modelling, modelling of appropriate behaviour. Bandura through his experiments believed children imitated and copied adult behaviour.

**Activity 3.1**

**Read**

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser and download the ECA PLP Newsletter: What do theories got to do with it?


The following section will introduce learners to the different domains of development: physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language, recognising that learning and development are interconnected. Children don’t learn and develop in isolation, when they are developing in one domain (e.g. physical skills) they may also be developing in other areas (for example: language development, cognitive development and social and emotional development.)
In this chapter, we are likely to come across a range of new words such as cognition. Don’t panic, it is only a new word and there will be lots of meaning and examples to help these new words and their meanings become clear.

### Element 1

**Support physical development**

1. **Element 1.1** Use daily routines as opportunities to support children to acquire and practise skills

2. **Element 1.2** Assist in selecting and arranging equipment that will develop fine and gross motor skills, and to challenge and encourage choice and spontaneity in physically active play

3. **Element 1.3** Help to create opportunities to support the emerging physical skills of individual children

4. **Element 1.4** Support children to take increasing responsibility for their own health and wellbeing

### Growth

Learners often confuse growth with physical development. Growth is the process by which cells divide in the body to increase size. Physical development, which learners will consider shortly, is about young children gaining control and mastery of their body, e.g., being able to control a whole leg movement so the child can kick a ball.

Before we consider physical development, let us just pause to reflect about the growth that occurs for very young children. For a long period of time, we didn’t think of children’s development until the birth of the baby. Through advancements in technologies and sophisticated imaging technology, researchers now understand the development that occurs during the prenatal stage, after conception. The pre-natal foetus grows significantly and is able to see, hear, and feel from early on in the pregnancy.

### Activity 3.2

**View**

Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL address into your web browser to access a website that highlights the development of a foetus through gestation

http://www.babycenter.com/fetal-development-week-by-week
Body growth is significant in the first few years. Physical growth and development is a significant indicator for general wellbeing. Changes are usually seen in size and portions of the body, fat proportions, muscle development and skeletal composition. For example, by the end of the baby’s first year, the child is usually greater than 50% of their height from birth. By five months of age, the typical baby has doubled the birth rate (Berk, 2012). Growth occurs in two directions - head to feet (cephalocaudal trend) and centre of body outwards (proximodistal trend) (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2010).

Sensitive periods in brain development are thought to occur, where certain skills must be developed or otherwise lost forever. Sight and hearing are two such skills (Carr, 2012).

**Biological and environmental influences on development**

Factors that affect development and growth include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience and nutrition</th>
<th>Biological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre and post natal care</td>
<td>• Inherited (genetics) factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child &amp; mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities to engage in stimulating physical and social interactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment free from drugs and toxins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and cultural practices</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are many reasons why young children do not thrive and develop. Some examples may include:

- malnutrition (Mother not eating enough and poor milk or not enough milk production. Incorrect preparation of formula);
- poor diet (baby’s given cordial or soft drink), in many developing countries coke is cheaper than fresh water;
- neglect;
- severe reflux;
- inadequate absorption of food due to disease or illness;
- lack of physical activity;
- lack of experiences and stimulation, and
- lack of play.
Activity 3.3

Activity description

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is caused by the affects of alcohol during pregnancy. Many women
drink alcohol, and many young women binge drink on weekends, and may not be aware that
they are pregnant.

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to read and
consider information Fetal Alcohol Syndrome


Brain development

There are some very sophisticated learning tools and resources to support our understanding
of brain development. This section will maximise technology and encourage the learner to
tap into this knowledge.

Activity 3.4

Click on the following link or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to view this 50 sec
video on brain development from Discovery Channel

http://www.discovery.com/tv-shows/discovery-presents/videos/understanding-the-brain-
development.htm

Children’s brains begin to develop even before they are born. The experiences children
have when still within the womb can have lasting effects. This is why it is essential mothers
have good nutrition, regular exercise, low stress, no alcohol / cigarettes / drugs while the
foetus is developing. After birth, the baby’s brain develops rapidly, quadrupling in volume by
adulthood (Berk, 2012).

Neuroscience have found that the first 3 years are the period of most rapid growth during
which there are specific sensitive periods for optimal learning in particular areas. It is during
this period that through activity / rich experiences the brain is stimulated and neuronal
connections are laid down, sculpted and reinforced by regular use. If the connections are
not used regularly, the connections are either not activated, decay or pruned (use it or loose
it!).
Activity 3.5

The rich, quality experiences young children engage with support the development of the brain wiring – building the brain (intelligence). Early childhood educators working with young children have a critical role to play in supporting the wiring of the brain, which affects the child’s whole life trajectory. Huge responsibilities!

Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL into your web browser to access the YouTube clip (1.57 mins) on Experiences Building Brain Architecture by the Centre for Developing Child at Harvard University – http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNNsN9JkrwS

Activity 3.6

Baby brain map

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the well regarded web site Zero to Three Matters – http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/brain-development/baby-brain-map.html

Click on the interactive brain to inform youself about the development that occurs at the approximate ages and what influences development.

Pound (2011a) highlights to educators that:

- physical exercise has an important role to play in providing the right conditions for the brain to thrive
- play is essential to learning and development, and
- there are strong connections between learning and senses. This signifies the importance of children being provided with opportunities to learn by using their full range of senses.

Teaching children to care for their own health and wellbeing

When we consider learning, we usually think of concepts such as literacy and numeracy. Of equal importance is teaching children to recognise and understand their body, mind, feelings and emotions. Listening to our body and understanding why our body responds in a certain way keeps us safe, healthy and happy.
Learning this knowledge comes from engaged adults who talk with children about such topics. Conversations to support children’s understanding can include talking about good nutrition, clean healthy water, and the importance of resting our bodies. Examples include:

- “If we ate cake often, what might happen to our body?”
- “Why do we need to drink lots of water”?

Educators who are responsive to children will help children to become aware of their emotions and speak to children about how they might be feeling and support them to describe and recognise the reactions the child may be feeling, e.g., “Is your tummy feeling tight and rumble?”

### Physical development

In the last chapter, educators explored the reason why physical activity was important, described fundamental movement skills and highlighted how to promote it. Within this section, educators are going to consider their role in supporting physical development.

The National Quality Standard Element 2.2.2 states “physical activity is promoted through planned and spontaneous experiences and is appropriate for each child” (ACECQA, 2013, p. 65).

Within an early childhood education and care service, there will be occasions for children to engage in spontaneous experiences through play that promote physical activity and there will be times that form part of planned experiences and critical rituals (routines) that also encourage children’s physical skills.

Educators often overlook the everyday rich learning opportunities children engage in as they go-about their everyday lives, e.g., meal times provide opportunity to set the tables, serving food, self-feeding, clearing away, all requiring physical skills. For an educator to do these activities on behalf of children is to take from the child’s opportunity not only to engage in these physical experiences, but to also feel the joy of being independent and having a valued role in the lived experiences of the service.

### Fine motor skills

The term ‘fine motor’ means ‘small muscles’. Fine motor skills involve the ability to use and control the small muscles in the fingers, the hand and arm to manipulate, and to control and use tools and resources. Finger motor control is not just connected to the hands and arms, fine motor skills also required hand-eye coordination.

**Figure: 3.1** Fine motor skills are enhanced through many experiences such as this creative arts experience where the children were engaged with weaving.
Figure: 3.2 Babies often enjoy pushing and pulling beads.

Gross motor skills

Gross motor means ‘large muscles’, including arms, legs, feet, head, neck and torso. Children will participate in activities that will help with the development of gross motor skills such as crawling, walking, sitting, rolling, reaching, balancing, jumping, catching, throwing and striking.

Everyday learning through critical rituals

Children learn and construct knowledge through their social engagement with others. Children will learn and develop through their everyday engagement with their peers and supported by a sensitive and responsive educator. Educators are to consider the everyday lived experiences children engage with that provide rich and authentic learning experiences.

Activity 3.7

Reflection

Consider all of the everyday critical rituals that occur through the typical day a service: preparing meals, setting tables for meals and cleaning up, making beds, rest time, feeding pets. These experiences provide rich opportunities for learning and skill development.

Rather than considering these events as duties or tasks for educators to complete, how can you provide these opportunities to children as their everyday experience through which learning occurs? Who prepares the tables for lunch at your service? Children, educators or somebody else?
Table 3.1: Some examples of the skills learnt through everyday rituals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting the table</th>
<th>Helping the Cook</th>
<th>Caring for the Chooks</th>
<th>Preparing beds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maths</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matching placemats</td>
<td>Measuring stock</td>
<td>Measuring food</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorting cutlery</td>
<td>Counting eggs</td>
<td>Counting eggs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting the children in attendance.</td>
<td>Weighing flour</td>
<td>Size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading the clock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positional language: knife goes beside plate</td>
<td>Reading recipes</td>
<td>Reading instructions, writing the care form.</td>
<td>Reading labels, recognising patterns and describing them, building vocabulary, giving instructions to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New words: herbs, vegetables, different foods.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing menu sign for the day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine motor: picking up utensils</td>
<td>Pulling Thyme leaves off branch to put herbs into food</td>
<td>Climbing into the chook house to get containers.</td>
<td>Placing beds in the correct position (fine &amp; gross motor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole arm movement – putting table cloth on.</td>
<td>Collecting eggs</td>
<td>Cleaning the straw</td>
<td>Laying sheets – fine motor, coordination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collecting herbs / vegies from garden.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social &amp; emotional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of pride</td>
<td>Sense of pride</td>
<td>Developing empathy for others</td>
<td>Sense of pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>Sense of accomplishment</td>
<td>Learning how to care for animals.</td>
<td>Sense of accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Describing feelings</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of belonging ‘our service’</td>
<td>Feeling of responsibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of belonging ‘our service’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of belonging ‘our service’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning to care for self.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving: Table cloth to stay and even.</td>
<td>Problem solving, Measuring, volume.</td>
<td>Considering and following sequences and steps.</td>
<td>Thinking about where to place beds. Sequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pattern making (laying table to match placemat / picture)</td>
<td>Reactions – why certain things happen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The word ‘agency’ describes when a person is able to act or do something. For children, it is based on their sense of themselves” (Whitington, 2014, p.4). Inviting children to participate as contributors to support the maintenance and workings of the service is important for children to allow a true sense of belonging. As educators, it is important to consider how we think about children. Children tend to think of themselves the way the adults who care for them think and talk about them. So if you (educator) think that children are capable and that they have ownership in the service, then you are likely to expect children to be assisting to care for the environment.

Do you see rituals as ‘routine tasks’ to get done as fast as you can? or

Do you view rituals as authentic learning experiences for children which children must be involved in enacting?

**Developmental trends in early childhood**

The following table provides a snapshot of the typical norms of development expected for most children. In past years, child development was presented to educators with age timeframes of when people should expect children to be achieving certain development. This led to a focus on children from a deficit model, as when children couldn’t achieve development by a certain age, educators believed it was their role to ‘fix children’. Understanding children through a contemporary lens, we know that children will develop and learn at different rates because of their lived experiences, genetics, interests, etc. Just because a child doesn’t walk for a few months does not mean that there is a problem. The development profile below supports the educator to recognise when certain development should emerge.

**Table: 3.2 - Developmental physical trends**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Typical norms of development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baby</td>
<td>Grasping objects, raise body and head, turn head side to side, pick things up with the finger and thumb (pincer grip), transfer objects, sits aided then unaided, pull body to standing position, stands alone, lowers self to floor, may crawl, may walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
<td>Crawl very skillfully. If not walking will begin walking and then learns to run, falls not uncommon. Crawls up and down stairs. Pushes and pulls toys, Picks up objects and enjoys relocating objects. Learns to climb. Seeks autonomy – self-eating and dressing self. Begin reading – turning pages and using art materials such as crayons and chalk. Preference to who arm movement rather than through the wrist. Toilet training may begin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Preschool | Walks up and down stairs using alternative feet  
Jumps and able to balance on alternative feet  
Kicks a large ball  
Jumps in place  
Walks in a straight line  
Hops |
### Typical norms of development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Typical norms of development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Climbs ladders, trees, obstacle courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walks backwards heel to toe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More refined drawing ability, able to use wrist to control instruments and will begin showing hand dominance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to go to bathroom independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Able to dress and feed self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-age</td>
<td>Throws and catches accurately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writes, learns to do up shoe laces, open wrap off sandwiches, complete detailed art work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good motor coordination and manual dexterity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Charlesworth, 2011).

## Educators responding to children

Relationships with children and their families is the key to the success of our work. Positive relationships with children develop when we are respectful and responsive to children’s desires, interests and needs. The art of an early childhood educator’s professional practice is knowing when to step in and when to hold back, but always listening, thinking and reflecting. As Educator’s we have responsibilities to support the learning and development of young children. This requires us to consider what children do and then thinking about, what is occurring and the ‘what’s next’. The following section will explore this further. Let’s first watch this vignette and begin to think about what is occurring and then the possible, what’s next.

### Activity 3.8

**Watch the vignette**

Click on the following link to watch the video of the child jumping

https://vimeo.com/104472334

This young child is fascinated with the sound she is able to create by jumping onto the crate. The child is walking and balancing unaided and able to step up onto a platform and jump. She is excited by the noise she is able to create and repeats this task over and over again (password: GoodStartVideo).
So what next for this child’s development?

Provide other materials for this child to extend her interest in the creation of sound for example bubble wrap, cellophane. At the same time, this interest will also provide opportunity to promote fine motor skills by encouraging the child to feel the different surfaces and gross motor skills by moving the materials in place (strength, coordination) and fundamental movement and dynamic balance (keeping balanced while moving).

**Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing**

“Physical activity and attention to fine and gross motor skills provide children with the foundations for the growing independence and satisfaction in being able to do things for themselves” (DEEWR, 2009, p.30).

---

**Activity 3.9**

Click on the following hyperlink to watch the following vignette -

https://vimeo.com/104472918

Children begin playing and learning games with rules.
Games such as ‘Stuck in the mud’, ‘Duck Duck Goose’, ‘Farmer in the Dell’ are traditional games that children enjoy learning and playing together.
Password: GoodStartVideo

---

**Figure: 3.3**

Children enjoy testing their skills and challenging themselves. Children often enjoy running, climbing and being autonomous.
Activity 3.10

Read and consider

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL address into your web browser to access the article on Playing Fair at the Raising Children Website

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/playing_fair.html

Although this article states it is for older children, the strategies discussed are appropriate for children who begin to show an interest in Playing Games with Rules.

After reading this article, consider your role as educator in dealing with the following unfair situation.

A group of girls is playing ‘stuck in the mud’. A child is frozen and the rule of the game requires a child to crawl through the frozen child’s legs to unfreeze the child. The teacher requests the children allow Samantha to join in the play. Up to this point, the Samantha has been standing to the side trying to join in. The girls state that they don’t want her to play. The teacher states “We are all friends at kindy!” (Which is clearly not the case.) The girls accept Samantha into the game for a few minutes. Samantha is frozen because she is tagged. The girls wander off and leave Samantha standing frozen. After a few minutes, Samantha realises she has been left out.

Experiences to promote physical development include:

climbing trees, balancing on beams, digging for treasure in the dirt patch, gardening, building towers from blocks, kicking balls, swinging on swings, shaking rattles, walking, playing with boxes, crawling through tunnels, riding bikes and trikes, pushing trucks, pushing push-toys, running, walking on stilts, spinning in tops, playing with clay, sewing, making things in the collage area, wood work, eating lunch, dance, running.
Activity 3.11

Fundamental Movement Skills

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the Kids At Play: ACT Health Department website. This resource provides a wealth of information about fundamental movement skills including: locomotor skills, balance skills and ball skills.


- What are locomotor skills?
- What teaching experiences can educators offer all children to support the development of locomotor skills?

Figure: 3.4 Climbing trees is a gross motor experience which involves climbing, coordination, hand-eye coordination, physical strength. Other skills involved include courage and social skills – turn taking, patience, being considerate to friends and language skills.

Figure: 3.5 Fine motor activity
A child created this picture out of materials from the collage area. She used glue, coordinated the cutting of the sticky tape, and drew the faces.

Figure: 3.6 A child’s Grandmother visited the service and taught the children how to sew.
Empowering children to be independent

Children have a strong desire to be autonomous (to do things for themselves), and, usually, to ‘have a go’. Early learning services should be spaces where children are able to complete tasks safely, with support and encouragement and provided with the time they require to complete tasks to the level of detail they wish to achieve. Children also need the opportunity to practice and repeat activities. Educators also must realise that part of learning is making mistakes. Paint spills, spilling water, or glue not sticking is part of the learning process. Reassuring children that it is okay and to reflect upon what happened is a very important learning strategy.

We support children’s development by our attitude - encouraging them, trusting them and believing in them - and being in close proximity to support children when needed and by being intentional in our teaching. We need to teach children how to use equipment, to consider the resources they need, to consider if s child will need close support for the task and, once again, giving children the time they need to complete the task.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

“As children become more independent, they can take greater responsibility for their health, hygiene and personal care and become mindful of their own and other's safety (DEEWR, 2009, p.30).

Mentioned above was the importance of agency. Like adults, children’s learning is greater when they are engaged in activities that are of interest to them. Children feel empowered when they are able to make choices and decisions about the things they are involved with and able to enact.

Remember in chapter two of this module, we briefly introduced the idea of a secure base from the Circle of Security Framework.

Activity 3.12

The Circle of Security is a theory based on Attachment theory that explains the relationship between adult and child.

Click on the following type hyperlinks or copy the URL into your web browser to download the resources available at each site -

http://circleofsecurity.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/COS_travelingaroundCOS.pdf
Children rely on trusted and secure relationships they have with adults to help them to feel safe. When children feel safe and secure, they begin to investigate and explore their world. You often will notice this with babies. As they begin to explore their surroundings, they often stop and check in (through a look at Mum) to ensure she is calm and okay with what the child is doing.

**Element 2**

**Support social development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>Support children to understand and accept responsibility for their own actions appropriate to their level of understanding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Create opportunities for one-on-one interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Model care, empathy and respect for children, educators and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Join in play and respect social experiences with other children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Assist and support children when they are having difficulty understanding or communicating with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Model language that children can use to express ideas, negotiate roles and collaborate to achieve goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Assist children to develop trusting relationships with educators and other adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Encourage children to respect and regard each other’s individual differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Offer children play choices and respect children’s choice to watch and observe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social development**

Children are born into the world with an innate desire to communicate and socialise with others (Kidsmatter Early Childhood, 2011). Young children are both sociable and becoming socialised during their development. Learning to get on with others and to live in this social world requires skills and the ability to form complex relationships. Children learn about relationships and how to function socially through their interactions and experiences with others (Berk, 2012). The modern Australian child spends more and more time in group education and care than previous generation, so young children must quickly learn how to form successful relationships with other children.

There are a number of theories that support educators’ understanding of social development. Firstly, you have already completed study on the Ecological System Theory from Chapter 5. The Ecological System Theory challenged us to view the child as being influenced by a number of systems. Children learn about their social world through the
relationships they have and the connections within their systems. Children’s values and beliefs are formed, they learn how to respect and treat others and they learn how to engage in our social world. When we are considering a child’s social development, this must be considered within the context of the relationships within which the child is living, i.e., family and educators, and peers within the service.

Another important theory to consider is that for Albert Bandura (1925-present), Social Learning Theory. Bandura through his studies with bobo dolls claims that children are influenced by what they observe. In his series of experiments, Bandura has an adult act aggressively to a blown up bobo doll. After the child observes the adult acting aggressively towards the doll, the child’s play becomes aggressive to the doll, they have been given. The Social Learning Theory states that children learn by observing and listening to others. Young children mimic our behaviour, so it is important that educators provide positive role models.

Educators must recognise the importance of their role in supporting young children’s social development by being a good role model and ensuring behaviour and actions are ethical, dignified and respectful, as well as demonstrating care and empathy.

Activity 3.13

NAPCAN Video

You may recall in an earlier module watching the film clip by NAPCAN ‘Children See Children Do’. This YouTube clip highlights the importance of adults being good role models to children and the influence our behaviour has on children.

To watch the film clip click on the hyperlink below or copy and paste the URL into your web browser. http://napcan.org.au/children-see-children-do/

Activity 3.14

Educator Behaviour

Access a copy of the ECA Code of Ethics by clicking on the following hyperlink or copying and pasting the URL into your web browser


Reflect upon the Code of Ethics in relation to your professional behaviour to children.

• Consider the characteristics listed. Are these characteristics / behaviours reflective of the way you teach and behave? Are you being the best role model you can to children?
• What areas of development do you believe you may need to focus on?
Encouraging social development

In the previous section, the learner considered Bandera’s Social Learning Theory that highlights the importance of the educator as a role model, modelling ethical, dignified and respectful behaviour, as well as practices that demonstrated care and empathy.

Additionally, educators can encourage children’s social development through kindness, guidance and expectations. Children can learn that different environments have different expectations. The best situation for a child is to have similar environments, systems and expectations between home and service. However, sometimes this is not possible. To explain this, I will use a common example. Some families believe that swearing is a normal part of everyday conversation. The role of the educator is not to make a value judgement on the family’s decision to swear, however, at the same time, it isn’t suitable for the child to swear at the service. Through one-to-one interactions, support and teaching the child replacement words to use at the service, the child can learn which words are okay to say at home and at the service.

Educators must teach children, through intentional teaching strategies, the prosocial skills children require to succeed in social groups. Teaching children through discussions, reading stories and coaching children assists them to understand concepts. Educators entering play and role modelling appropriate behaviour and skills also assists children to develop their social skills. Children will, of course, need times and opportunities to practice these skills and may need assistance when certain elements of the social skill are forgotten or the child lapses into using the former practice.

Figure 3.7 Exploring the notion of water, water flow, evaporation together with friends, sharing and constructing our ideas.

Activity 3.15

Teaching conversation turn taking.

In my classroom, I had a little person who came from a single child family. Tom, as we will call him, was the apple of his parent’s eye and when Tom talked, everybody listened. The problem, however, was when Tom began venturing outside the family home with his Mother, he did not understand that to form positive rich relationships, conversations with people is a two way process and sometimes we must wait our turn. When Tom began going to kindergarten, the other children began to get annoyed with Tom because he didn’t listen and dominated most conversations.

• How would you teach this child turn taking in conversation, to listen to others and to wait for his turn to speak?
• What one-to-one interactions would you have with Tom?
To teach Tom success with effective communication, intentional teaching is required. Goals, plans and specific learning objectives for Tom should be planned. To ensure success, only one skill can be taught at a time. The first step in this process is to think about theory.

Tom is likely to still be in the pre-operational stage, which Piaget believed that children considered their own viewpoint was the only viewpoint (truth) (as cited in Charlesworth, 2011). Respecting this level of development, what we want Tom to achieve is to honour his viewpoint but to also wait for his turn to speak and, therefore, not dominate conversation. We want him to value his peers and to learn to listen. At group time, rather than Tom calling out and taking over the conversation, we want him to learn to take turns and to listen to others.

To support Tom, a yarning circle might be introduced with a talking stick. This means that the only person who is able to speak is the person holding the stick. Because the stick is concrete (a physical object) and can be seen and felt, it may become easier to comprehend (cognitively) that talking occurs when you hold the stick. This may support the learner to wait for their turn to speak. The educator will need to introduce the concept to the group, and model and demonstrate what success looks like a couple of times.

The educator also will have to explain the process and practice with Tom and Teddy a few times to assist Tom’s understanding of the concept. The educator also may develop a social skills booklet with photos and simple script explaining the process in a book form, which Tom can read before group time.

Activity 3.16

Recognising and accepting diversity

Social development is learning how to engage in and be an active member of our social world. Our world is diverse and is not the same as the environment in our home or our service. Social development includes recognising difference and understanding and appreciating diversity.

A significant role educators play in supporting children’s social development is being a good role model first and foremost, but the role also includes respectfully challenging and redirecting children’s play when it is not fair, unjust or erodes other children’s or people’s rights.

Consider how you would react to this scenario that occurred within a service.

In the sandpit, Jonkie is watching the other boys. The boys are playing with the trucks digging a dam. The boys support each other with different elements of the construction. The play is intense and the boys are really engaged. Jonkie stands close by and on a number of times attempts to enter the play by handing different pieces of resources to the boys. Each time Jonkie attempts to engage the boys on the ground, they ignore him. Eventually Jonkie states: “I will drive the bull dozer”. Matthew turns to Jonkie and states “You are not allowed to play here, you are dirty”. (Jonkie is of Korean heritage)

In the scenario above, children have excluded Jonke due to race, most likely, because of his skin colour. Play is not always kind, respectful or dignified and, in these situations, educators
must respectfully challenge children’s theories and ideas. We need to teach children that difference is acceptable and normal. In the situation above, a significant strategy is required.

Firstly, I would ask the boys what they meant to ensure that I interpreted the situation correctly. I would then talk to children about their comment and how hurtful and unkind it was to Jonkie. As a small group experience with the boys, I would instigate a project to understand the science about skin tones and what makes skin colours different. Additionally, I would consider the environment and look at the resources provided to children to ensure they were reflective of our diverse society.

Children do not need to be friends with everybody, as adults are certainly not friends with everybody they work with. However, what we must teach is that we need to be friendly with and kind to others.

**Empathy: What is it and how do we teach it?**

Empathy is a complex cognitive skill. It is a skill learnt over time. Empathy is the ability to try to understand the feelings of others. Burgess states that empathy is “the person’s ability to understand, have compassion for, and interact meaningfully with another person” (as cited in Carpenter, 2006, p. 13). With this definition, you can understand why empathy is considered an essential component of interpersonal and interperso

Some key strategies include:

- having opportunities to socialise with other children
- talking to children and teaching social cues (e.g., when somebody comes up to us to play, we say “hello”)
- playing games with others, so children learn cooperation
- reading stories that highlight characters being empathetic to others
- Coaching children through challenging moments;
- modelling appropriate behaviour to children
- praising children when they are being caring, empathetic and explaining why you like what they are doing so that they understand what it is that you like and why, and
- helping children use words to say what they need and feel.

(Kidsmatter Early Childhood, n.d.)

**Educator's role in supporting social development**

Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity – ‘who I am’, ‘how I belong’ and ‘what is my influence?’ (DEEWR, 2009). Educators have an important role to play in supporting children to learn about and to be able to enact acceptable social behaviours. Educators must model and teach the behaviours they wish children to use. Children will act and respond as they see others acting. Remember our NAPCAN video: children see, children do.
Understanding a child’s stage of development will help educators decide when they need to step in to discuss what has happened and to explore the situation with the child. New skills need time and may need to be re-taught several times before they become the child’s everyday behaviour. Educators should consider how they can support children to experience success, by reminding children of the behaviour required. For example, when we are in a large group, ask children “What do we need to do to ensure everybody has a chance to talk?”. 

Theorists, Jean Piaget and Vygotsky, both coming from different viewpoints, highlighted the importance of social development through play. Piaget believed that as children played, their viewpoints are challenged so that eventually children learn to consider other people’s viewpoints (as cited in Charlesworth, 2011). Vygotsky believed that play supported children with representational abilities and therefore social interactions essential for learning (as cited in Pound, 2011b). These theories are quite complex, but the important elements is the function of play to social development.

Play is the medium through which children learn and develop. Educators have a strong role to play in assisting children’s play, redirecting children’s play and at times standing back and not engaging. 

Barblett (as cited in Connor, 2014) describes educator’s roles in children’s play as:

- Parallel player – doing similar tasks alongside children
- Script writer – helping to tell the story
- Stage manager – providing space, props, prompts
- Co-constructor – asking questions, making suggestions
- Participator – with children’s agreement, taking a direct role
- Modelling – showing how to enter and exit play; how to negotiate, and
- Challenger – Asking is this fair? Will they understand what we mean?

Communication and social development

According to Kostelnik et al. (2009) “the roots of children’s social behaviours lie within their overall developing concept of how the social world works, their social understanding” (p.101). Understanding the world begins with understanding yourself. Of course, the manner in which we see ourselves, competent and capable citizen, then influences how we engage with people and our environment. The relationships we have with others influences our social behaviour. We listen, model, and gain an understanding about who we are from others and their interactions with us.

The language adults use provides a window into the manner in which they consider children. If adult’s language is respectful, attentive and positive, children’s esteem will be enhanced. If adults have a different view about children, they often will be less involved, not interested and the language can be quite destructive.
Self-esteem stoppers

(negative verbal communication)

Self-esteem stoppers, over time, erode children’s self-esteem and create poor relationships between adult and child.

These self-esteem stoppers can be stated by a family member or an educator: screaming or yelling at children; cursing them; ridiculing them; not engaging (silence); shushing a child; labelling a child (e.g. lazy child, pain-in-the neck); using sarcasm or negative tones; speaks discourteously to the child; not listening to the child; paying insincere attention; not acknowledging the child; responding to a child inappropriately; cutting a child off mid-sentence; making a child the butt of jokes; criticising a child; making statements such as “thank Goodness Peter is away!”

Only this morning I heard a parent state to a child while walking her two children into a service: “Oh, I don’t know why I had you two kids!”

Although she was obviously angry with one of her children, the comment (a self-esteem stopper) would have had a negative effect on both children.

Self-esteem builder

(positive verbal language)

Self-esteem builders include: actively engaging with children; offering praise; greeting children; saying positive things such as “I love it when you come to class!”; using language to demonstrate you are interested in the child; actively listening to children; speaking courteously to children; displaying genuine warmth, acceptance and kindness in tone; speaking to children when you see them or using body language to indicate you are aware of their presence and pleased; using the child’s first name; using child’s interest and ideas to guide conversation; listening to the child and asking others to wait until the child has finished with their turn of talking.

Adults have an important role to play when working with children and engaging with them to support their social development. Opportunities for small group and one-to-one experiences provide opportunity for adults to build trusting and respectful relationships between the adult and child. These opportunities enable the adult to find out more about the child and support them through the use of intentional teaching techniques. If adults have developed a trusting relationship with a child, s/he is often more willing to engage and listen to the adult when situations become challenging or when the child seeks adult support to deal with conflict. Educators need to teach children social skills, re-teach these and then support children (coaching & mentoring) over and over again, while children develop these
new skills. Patience and understanding are essential, as often, new skills are difficult to master and mistakes are a natural part of the learning process!

Relationships are enhanced when children know that they can rely on you (the educator) for support, understanding and empathy, when things don’t go to plan.

“Lilly, I really enjoy your company at early learning, you are such a good thinker!”

Teaching social skills

Vanderbilt University have a number of resources and practical strategies that educators can review and consider using to support children’s social development.

To access Vanderbilt University, click on the following link or copy the URL address into your web browser -

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#scriptedstories
Element 3

Support emotional development

3.1 Provide children with a range of strategies to make informed choices about their behaviours appropriate to their level of understanding

3.2 Ensure children experience pride and confidence in their achievements

3.3 Provide acknowledgement and support if a child experiences frustrations, and encourage children to see mistakes as an opportunity to learn

3.4 Encourage children to express and manage feelings appropriately

3.5 Support children’s efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate.

3.6 Motivate and encourage children to persevere with challenges

3.7 Share children’s successes with families

Emotional development

Emotions are affective responses to events that affect us. Emotional development is the ability to understand and manage emotions. For example, if we are happy, we smile or laugh and if we are sad, we cry. Children learn about their emotions and increase their range of emotions through experience. Children also learn to regulate their emotions with experience. Children learn about their basic emotions, develop a greater range of feelings and learn self-regulation. This is learnt behaviour and occurs through experience.

Educators have a significant role to play in supporting children’s emotional development.

- Many mental health problems have their onset in childhood or adolescence.
- Teachers need to understand social & emotional development, to reduce the incidence or impact of risk factors and to help build people’s protective factors and help people access support where needed.
Activity 3.17

What does this picture tell us?

Look at the picture below this section.
What emotion is the child displaying? How do you know?
As adults, most of us will see this picture and realise the child is either angry or extremely upset. However, not everybody has the skills to recognise the emotion the child is displaying. Part of our role as an educator is to teach children to recognise the emotions others are exhibiting.

Figure 3.8: Most of us recognise this child is extremely upset or may be angry.

Table C: first appearance of basic emotions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic emotions</th>
<th>Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Happiness      | • Smile – from birth  
                 | • Social smile – 6 to 10 weeks  
                 | • Laugh – 3–4 months |
| Anger          | • General distress – from birth  
                 | • Anger – 3–4 months  
                 | • Frustration – end of first year  
                 | • Defiance – end of second year |
| Sadness        | • Distress to “still face” – 2–7 months.  
                 | • Separation anxiety 8–10 months |
| Fear           | • First fears – 6–12 months  
                 | • Stranger Anxiety – 8–12 months |

(Adapted from Berk, 2012)
Complex emotions such as shame, embarrassment, guilt, envy, pride emerge around the age of two and need adults support to understand when to feel the emotion. Eric Erikson’s (as cited in Charlesworth, 2011) stages of psychosocial development from birth to 5 years guides our understanding about emotions.

#### Table C: Erikson’s Psychosocial (Emotional) Stages of Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate age</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birth to 1 yr.</td>
<td>Trust vs. mistrust</td>
<td>To establish a trusting relationship with a primary caregiver – to develop trust in self, others and the world as a place to get our needs met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3 yrs</td>
<td>Autonomy vs. shame and doubt</td>
<td>To strive for independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 yrs.</td>
<td>Initiative vs. guilt</td>
<td>To plan and carry out activities, and to learn society’s boundaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 yrs</td>
<td>Industry vs. inferiority</td>
<td>To be productive and successful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(Adapted from Charlesworth, 2011)*

**Self-efficacy and self-regulation**

- Self-regulation develops from:
  - Becoming aware of your behaviour
  - Assessing it against internalised standards, and
  - Providing self-reward or punishment.

- Self-efficacy is the beliefs we have about our own abilities and areas of incompetence.

A child learning about their emotions also needs to learn that their emotions and the way they enact these emotions can impact on other people. Children need to learn to recognise their feelings, understand what the feeling is and to be able to express these appropriately for the context. Feelings and the expression of the appropriate feelings for the context may need to be taught to children. If children are angry and are aggressive to other children, they need to learn that this behaviour is not accepted by other children. Teachers need to role model, and reinforce the correct emotions for the correct context and support children when things get challenging.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

Outcome 1 of the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) is to support children to gain a strong sense of identity. Self-identity is about how a person views themselves as a unique individual.
Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) developed a model to represent what he believed to be a hierarchy of needs that people required to gain self-actualisation (fulfilment).

- Physiological includes: food, water, shelter, warmth – the most basic and important need.
- Safety: security, freedom from fear
- Love & belonging: family, friends, partner
- Self-esteem: respect, recognition and achievement
- Self-actualisation: fulfilment.

Children learn love, belonging, pride and confidence as they achieve in their daily tasks.

**Attachment theory**

Social and emotional well-being is strongly influenced by the positive, rich and trusting relationships we form. The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2009) states that “healthy development depends on the quality and reliability of a young child’s relationships with the important people in his or her life, both within and outside the family” (p.1). Attachment is the strong affectionate tie we have with special people in our lives that leads us to experience pleasure when we interact with them and to be comforted by their nearness during times of stress (Berk, 2009). Attachment theory, which was developed by John Bowlby (1951) and Mary Ainsworth (1978), included the concept of fear of strangers (approximately at the age 8 – 10 months) and separation anxiety (10 – 12 months).
OUTCOME 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

“In early childhood settings, children develop a sense of belonging when they feel accepted, develop attachments and trust those that care for them” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 20). “When children feel safe, secure and supported, they grow in confidence to explore and learn” (DEEWR, 2009, p.20).

Teaching emotions and feelings

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia reminds us that children develop a “strong sense of identity” (DEEWR, 2009, p. 20).

Educators can use a range of resources to teach children about their full feeling world. The most important tool to use is everyday conversations with children supporting them to recognise how they might be feeling – what this looks like and thinking about how it feels. Educators can begin by asking children what feeling they are showing (while you are smiling) and asking children how they know. You can then describe to the children what happiness feels like inside. Mirrors should be available within classrooms to allow children to look at the different ranges of emotions and to see what their facial expressions and body language looks like when they feel a certain way. Additionally stating to children, you look unhappy or sad because… helps children to connect their feelings and their body’s physiological response. Asking children to represent these emotions through a range of mediums (drawing, paint, wire, and clay) helps them to think about their feelings and to represent their thinking.

Significant research has been published on feelings and emotions and provides much support to educators. Puppets and dolls are useful for role playing emotions and demonstrating to children how children may respond in these situations.

Strategies for teaching

Teaching children about their feeling world so that they know and understand their feelings and can learn to self-regulate is an important part of our social being. Teaching feelings is as important, if not more, than language, literacy, numeracy and other content. If we can’t have good wellbeing, life can be a challenge and lead to significant medical and social problems. The following activities will support the learner to engage with a number of teaching resources about teaching strategies to support children.
Activity 3.18

Activity description
Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL address and type it into your web browser to access the following resource to support teaching strategies on feelings:


Activity 3.19

Centre for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning at Vanderbilt University, USA.

Click on the following hyperlinks or copy and paste each URL into your web browser to access resources to teach emotions and feelings:

http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html
http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html#teachingskills

The resources include examples of feeling charts and scripted stories. It is highly recommended that if you want to incorporate resources such as these into your program, that you develop your own resources and use photographs of the children at your service. The resources will then be authentic and have more impact.

Please note the good behaviour charts and stencils are not appropriate for Australian early childhood contexts.

Celebrating success and learning from mistakes

We learn much about our world through the mistakes we make. Some of us make mistakes, get up, brush ourselves off and keep going. For others, making a mistake is almost like the end of the world. Supporting children through daily reflection about things that worked and worked well and also reflecting about things that didn’t work well, why and what we could possibly do next time supports children to be reflective and to move through situation with an element of emotional stability. Reflective practices help to de-personalise mistakes. Rather the mistake being ‘my’ mistake, it becomes a mistake to consider and problem solve.

When celebrating our learning journey, it is important to ensure the conversation includes families. Families have a genuine right to be active partners with us towards the education of their children. Educators are encouraged to look for ways to share children’s learning with
families. This may include documenting the event with the child and posting it somewhere visible in the room.

This may include sending an email or calling the family with the child about the event. Taking photographs to use as artefacts to share with families later or ensuring that when family come to the service that somebody shares the story with the family. The exchange of information ideally should occur in conjunction with the child. This exchange of information creates a sense of pride and future talk point. It builds opportunity to make stronger connection between home and service and provides a window of opportunity for the family to have further discussion and further learning at home. Most importantly the opportunity highlights the competent child, the knowledge and skills exhibited by the child in the service context.

**Activity 3.20**

**Read**

The Hunter Institute offers a range of teaching resources and information on supporting children’s social and emotional wellbeing.

Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL address into your web browser to access the Response Ability resources


**Activity 3.21**

**Explore the Kidsmatter Early Childhood website**

Click on the hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser -


Read the Feelings Matter Factsheet (4 pages) and consider the listed strategies recommended for educators to embed to assist children understanding and expressing their emotions appropriately.

Select three strategies that you believe you could implement into your service.
Activity 3.22

Explore the Kidsmatter Early Childhood website

Click on the hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser


Read the Helping Children Manage their Emotions fact sheet and consider the listed strategies recommended for Educators.

Select two strategies that you believe you could implement into your service.

Element 4

Support cognitive development

4.1 Intentionally scaffold children’s learning

4.2 Provide children with a range of materials, resources, technologies and experiences to explore and problem-solve to stimulate cognitive development

4.3 Provide experiences that allow children to explore a range of concepts

Cognitive development

Cognition often is a frightening word to new educators; however, this strange word just refers to the mental processes, reasoning, planning, problem solving, representing and remembering that occur in our minds. Current theories about cognitive development state that young children are not able to see pictures and think in their minds like adults. Thinking visually and problem solving by working out problems internally develops at a later stage in life.

Young children think with their hands and use their full senses to gain meaning and work out theories. Therefore, early childhood education must be hands on. Additionally, children often forget - they learn, forget, learn and forget, and, eventually, the skill becomes permanent. Repetition for young children is essential so children have the opportunity to revisit experiences and concepts (Kagan, 2014; Hughes, 2014). You may have, at some point in time, heard a young child talking through a difficult task by talking aloud, this is called private speech.
Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (1896-1934)

Vygotsky (as cited in Pound, 2011b) emphasised the importance of language with the development of abstract thought, thinking and theory making. He believed that children’s language and cognitive development resulted from social interaction, engagement with other children and adults. Vygotsky emphasised the importance of family, other children and community.

Children use language in context, facial expressions and body language to understand, make meaning. Young children also use language to physically talk themselves through tasks. For example, a toddler climbing up a ladder might voice ‘up’ to verbalise the difficult task they are doing. As children become more skilled at tasks, the voice becomes internalised.

The zone of proximal development is the gap between what a child can do alone and what the child can do when supported by a more skilled or experienced other person such as another child or adult. This is a particularly important concept to early childhood professionals because it means if we understand the zone of proximal development, as educators, we can intentionally teach children within this zone to support children’s learning (scaffolding).

Jerome Bruner was influenced by the work of Lev Vygotsky and attributed the concept of scaffolding (as cited in Pound, 2011b). Scaffolding is the process by which an adult or more competent other gives support to a child during a learning process until such time as the support decreases as the child’s skill level and mastery increases. Educators modify the type and amount of assistance they provide for each child. When educators listen to children (using our eyes, ears, senses and whole body), they gain a good understanding of the child’s abilities. They can plan experiences for children that challenge their current capabilities and support new learning.

Activity 3.23

Workshop participation

Learners may wish to participate in the Scaffolding Children’s Learning Workshop or Intentional Teaching Workshop available on the Institute’s Professional Learning Workshop Calendar.

Scaffolding children’s learning

Vygotsky’s theory about the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the term scaffolding (which was actually theorised by Bruner) relate to higher mental functions that occur through the interactions of two or more people (as cited in Pound, 2011b). Vygotsky’s theory emphasises the guidance and support of adults, or more competent child, are significant influences in cognitive development. Zone of proximal development is the zone between
where children are almost able to do something – and the area where they can achieve something with the support of the more capable other. With some extra help, the child is able to do the task that they could not do alone. The importance of the ZPD is that this zone is the area cognitive development occurs.

Scaffolding can be as simple as an adult providing some verbal cues to support the child’s thinking, or using fingers to point out objects as children count (one-to-one correspondence). Scaffolding is reduced as children begin to adopt internalised (private) speech and are able to do the task independently or less support.

### Activity 3.24

Consider participating in the Scaffolding Young Children’s Learning workshop, which is a Goodstart Institute of Early Learning workshop series.

### Intentional Teaching

“Intention teaching is thoughtful, informed and deliberate” (Connor, 2014, p.1.)

### Activity 3.25

Watch and consider

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the vignette from the 2012 ECA conference of Intentional Teaching

Activity 3.26

Read and consider

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the newsletter written a follow up piece from the vignette –


- So what do you think ‘Intentional Teaching’ is?
- How would you describe it to a colleague?

Intentional teaching is the teaching we enact when working with children. At times, this may be planned, such as teaching children how to use a new resource such as felt pens for the first time, or it may be enacted as something emerges from the program.

Introducing felt pens to young children

Today, I am putting into our college area these new pens. These pens are special pens and produce this beautiful bright colour. (Demonstrated on butcher’s paper). Now these special pens are called felt pens and have some special care rules that need to be followed so that they stay healthy and last for a long time for all children to use.

Can you see when I take the lid off? I place it onto the back of the pen so that I do not lose the lid. The lids are very important hats that keep the pen magic. If we lose the hat, the pen gets very sick and we cannot use it. When I use the pens, because they are special, I need to hold them carefully. Can you see how I am holding this pen?

Activity 3.27

Consider participating in the Intentional Teaching workshop, which is part of the Goodstart Institute of Early Learning workshop series.
Educator’s role in supporting cognitive development

The significance of time!

Recently, Professor Carla Rinaldi (Reggio Children) (personal communication, 14th August, 2014) spoke with a group of Goodstart Directors from Victoria exploring the notion of documentation. Significant key points were reflected upon, however one point worth sharing that relates to this topic emerged from Professor Rinaldi’s presentation. The importance of listening! Often educators engage in experiences before letting children explore their theories and ideas first. Let me explain.....

Why does it rain?

A story from Reggio from Professor Rinaldi

A child said to a child, “why does it rain?”

Another child called across the table to the child, “Because God is crying!”

As an educator, what would your ‘what’s next be?’

If like, the people at my table on 14th August, the educators stated with great gusto..... I would use that as a learning cue and start teaching children about water conservation and the cycle. Another stated she would put books out and posters and possibly do some research with children.

What would your actions have been if you had been the educator in this experience?

Rather than give children the answers, what is of equal importance is to allow children to construct a theory “Because God is crying and to test their theory out”. Creativity is encouraged when children are encouraged to consider abstract ideas, to express an idea and the theory they believe is correct and to examine these ideas through different mediums. If we believe rain is because God is crying, how does this occur? Let us use our imagination and think some ideas. Could you draw your ideas so that we can see what you are thinking?

It is important to listen to the child and to listen to the child’s ideas and the manner in which the child thinks and constructs his or her ideas. Problem constructing is of great importance. There will be endless opportunities for children to eventually gain the correct reason why it rains.
Activity 3.28

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL to access the ABC Life at 9 series –
http://www.abc.net.au/tv/programs/life-at-9/
Creativity Episode 2 which was viewed 5th August, 2014.
This show is part of the national longitudinal research study that has been following a group of
children from birth. This episode on creativity is essential viewing. Consider the content in
relation to cognitive development, problem solving and creativity in the arts.

Resources, equipment: the right experience

When designing environments with children and locating resources and equipment to
provide rich learning environments for children, consider the use of a variety of resources
including natural products and open-ended resources. Open ended resources that can be
used for a number of purposes provide the best opportunity for children to play and engage
their creativity. Small pieces of wood or rocks become money. Tubing becomes a periscope
or a stock whip. Wood becomes special stepping stones.

As you consider how your environment supports children’s learning and development
consider the following question from Curtis and Carter (2003, p.57)

• What messages does our environment give children about how they should use
  their bodies?
• Are the indoors and outdoors flexible enough to be transformed for a variety of
  uses?
• Where are the opportunities for individual children to get away from it all and
  relax?
• How can we create a space where a small group of children can work without
  interruption?
• Are we satisfied with our balance of open-ended materials and single-purpose
  ones?
• Where can we add unusual loose parts for children to use, both indoors and
  outdoors?

When considering resources to use within a service obviously safety is paramount. In addition
to keeping children safe, educators need to challenge children’s minds, bodies and social
skills with materials and resources that support complex play, collaboration, problem solving
and creativity (Curtis & Carter, 2003).
Open-ended resources and recycled materials that could be used as props include:

- tiles
- carpet squares
- industrial spools
- small wooden blocks
- wine corks
- plastic pieces
- polished stones
- plastic tubing
- fabric
- polished stones
- plastic tubing
- fabric

When seeking suitable materials, look for interesting shapes, designs, patterns, and textures. Many capital cities have recycles shops where you can buy bags of recycled goods that make good treasures for playing with. Of course, sparkly and bright things are often a favourite for young children.

**Multiple intelligences**

Howard Gardner (1943 - ) is a Professor of Cognition based at Harvard University, USA. He argues that intelligence is not something that could be seen or measured such as an IQ scores. Gardner proposes that what is important is understanding how people learn, rather than how much intelligence they have (Gardner, 1983). The following outlines the elements that make up each of the intelligences proposed by Gardener (as cited in Pound, 2011a).

**Linguistic intelligence**

*Linguistic intelligence is practiced when we use language to:*

- Talk to explain ourselves, feelings, emotions, ideas through words, oral or written language
- Remember
- Persuasive conversation
- Metalinguistic language (reflecting on language)

**Logical-mathematical intelligence**

*The logical- mathematical intelligence is:*

- Ability to understand and use numbers and reason well.
- People who have good logical-mathematical intelligence are likely to be good with numbers, computers, think logically and solve problems.
Musical Intelligence

Musical intelligence is:

- The intelligence that Gardner believes comes first
- People who have musical intelligence are likely to hum or sing while they work, tap their fingers or feet.

Naturalist Intelligence

Naturalist intelligence is demonstrated through:

- Our connection to nature
- Our strong desires to organise and classify both animals and plants.
- People who have high naturalistic intelligence are likely to enjoy being outdoors and outdoor education.

Spatial Intelligence

Spatial Intelligence

- People are able to perceive the visual-spatial world
- People in this category are likely to be good painters, draw, models (bodily kinaesthetic intelligence), and solve problems.
- Concerned with the recognition and manipulation of wide space as well as more confined areas (puzzles)

Figure 3.9 Exploring music and puzzles quietly outside.
Element 5

Support communication development

5.1 Value the child’s linguistic heritage and encourage the use of acquisition of home languages

5.2 Select, read and tell developmentally appropriate stories

5.3 Use puppets and other props to stimulate children’s enjoyment of language and literature

5.4 Model and encourage two-way communication through questions and careful listening

5.5 Encourage children to explore symbols, patterns and their relationships

5.6 Draw children’s attention to symbols and patterns in their environment and talk about patterns and relationships, including the relationship between letters and sounds

5.7 Create opportunities for group discussions and exchange of views between children

5.8 Ask and answer questions during the reading and discussion of books and other text

5.9 Model language and encourage children to express themselves through language in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes

Language development

One of the most fascinating aspects about working with young children is watching how they exquisitely communicate from such an early age. Newborn babies cry and coo to the absolute delight of the surrounding adults. The young child who begins experimenting with language and their first attempts at using words. Then, of course, to the older child who begins to master sentences.
There are many different theories about language development. Some theories base their ideas from the focus of language as a cognitive system and others, as used within this module, as a social communicative system. In this module, the theory put forward by Halliday (1993, 1994) will be considered.

Language is a system for making meaning and includes 3 functions: semantic, syntactic, and phonological (Charlesworth, 2011).

Semantic level: linguistic system that conveys meaning
Syntactic level refers to the ways in which meanings are organised into groups of words, phrases and clauses.

Phonological level refers to the sound system of language that is how the words and structures are actually expressed in speech sounds called phonemes.

According to Halliday (1994), language serves three functions in the lives of speakers:

- Ideation function: enabling us to represent what we experience in the world around us (to describe our experiences);
- Interpersonal function: enabling us to interact with people in our lives by asking questions, making statements, giving commands and making offers (interactions);
- Textual function, as we use language to produce texts which are coherent and make sense.

The visual representation on the next page shows Halliday’s (1994) recognition of the interactions between these three functions.

Now that learners understand the three functions of language, let us consider children’s use of language.

**Strategies to support language development**

Language is enhanced when children engage in positive and respectful relationships with others.

Strategies to support children’s language development include:
• Using a rich and diverse range of language. The more children are exposed to language, the greater the repertoire of language children will gain.
• Encouraging two-way communication. Speaking – listening – processing – answering. Listening is part of the communication process.
• Modelling language to children
• Encourage children to participate in a range of language experiences.

Valuing children’s home language

Early in a toddler’s life, children’s utterances begin to resemble words. The words will resemble children’s home language (i.e., their native language, the language spoken by the child’s family). Halliday (1994) highlighted through what he referred to as context of culture that children also learn through language about the beliefs, values and attitudes of their families and communities. Having a socio-cultural perspective, Halliday notes that children produce language according to ‘who they are’ and that this is shaped by past experience, personality, age, gender, religious background and socioeconomic status.

A child’s culture may mean that the child speaks different languages at home. Making connection between the service and the child’s home, including the child’s home languages, will result in the child experiencing a stronger sense of belonging and wellbeing.

Educators key role is to provide children with rich opportunities to explore with the spoken language and written text, in both English and home languages.

Reading with young children

Reading to children aloud is an important experience for children to develop oral language. It can also assist to develop “phonological knowledge, vocabulary, concepts about the world, a sense of book language and story structure, and understanding about sentences call all be enhanced” (Fellows & Oakley, 2010, p.65).

Reading to children can be individual (one-on-one), in small groups and some educators read a story to the whole group. Reading stores supports children to learn new words and to listen to different sentence structures. Oral language is developed when children listen to the story, ask questions and read and re-read the same story (Fellows & Oakley, 2010).

Sustained conversations can occur when children ask questions about pictures and events in the story and the educator takes the time to look at the story more closely. The best language development occurs when the group of children the educator is working with is less than eight (Fellows & Oakley, 2010).

Reading with young children is a joy and educators have the power to bring a book to life and create a sense of delight and wonder for children, creating a passion for reading. At the other end of the spectrum, educators can take the fun out of reading. Much consideration is needed as to what book is read, why and how it is read to a child.
Many children’s books are full of nonsense and rhyme / rhythm. Do you bring a book to life or take the fun out?

Reading stories aloud to children exposes them to correct grammar usage and to a range of sentence structures.

In order to get the most out of reading stories, it is absolutely essential that books are selected and planned ahead. If you are not familiar with the story, then the book should be read several times and practiced aloud. Consideration should be given as to the children’s culture, interest and the level of language and the suitability of this for children.

**Tips for becoming an excellent story teller**

**Practice…Practice….Practice**

Becoming a good story teller comes with practice and honesty. Be honest to the children you are teaching. Are you really an inspiring story teller or are you boring children with your tone? Here are some strategies to support you improve:

- Practice holding a book up to your side and practice reading pretending you are reading to a group of six – eight children.
- Sit in front of the mirror – look at your facial expression. Have you got a dead-pan expressionless face, or do your facial expressions also tell the story. If you do not have expression, over accentuate your expressions (you can always decrease them later)
- What are your body gestures? Do you also talk with your hands and body to keep the listener engaged?
- Record your story telling on your phone or a voice recorder and listen to it. Is there rhythm and melody in your voice? Do you change pitch and pace or do you speak in the one tone?
- Do you use different character voices for the different characters in the story or perhaps a puppet or small world character you are using?
- Do you need any props that could help to bring the story alive?
- When would be best to pause and to add further emphasis?
- Do you know all the words, can you say them correctly?
- How will you begin and end the story?
- What fingers rhymes, songs or sounds might you use to support audience participation?
- Are there any questions that you think children might ask or you might want to encourage?
- Practice the story several times so that you know the story well BEFORE you read the story to children.
Activity 3.29

Click on the following hyperlink of copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the website of the famous Australian: Mem Fox -
http://memfox.com/for-parents/
• Read the tips on reading, she has developed for parents.

Literacy development

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (DEEWR, 2009), defines literacy as:

Literacy is the capacity, confidence and disposition to use language in all its forms. Literacy incorporates a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, listening, viewing, reading and writing. Contemporary texts include electronic and print-based media. In an increasingly technological world, the ability to critically analyse text is a key component of literacy. (p.38)

Barratt-Pugh (1998, p.5) described six elements of socio-cultural lens of literacy:

1. children’s learning about literacy is influenced by the literacy experiences they observe or are involved in at home or within the community
2. literacy practices are often culturally specific
3. children’s understanding about literacy is varied
4. there are different practices for different purposes
5. children learn literacy in different ways or have different ‘patterns’ of literacy learning’, and
6. literacy practices are valued differently.

So in reality what does this theory mean? The theory informs us that when children observe adults engaged in literacy practices. And when literacy is included in everyday rituals and events, children see literacy as having meaning and purpose.

To become familiar with literacy, children need to be immersed in a literacy rich environment. Text can include signs, cook books, maps, posters, books, and magazines. However, the most important strategy for supporting language and literacy learning is spending time talking with children, of all ages (Arthur, 2009). Furthermore, reading, re-reading over and over again and talking with children about letters through everyday discussions will help children in your care engage in rich language practices.
Using symbols

Our world is full of symbols and children are very component at recognising symbols from a very early age. Symbols include signs such as fast-food signs: Red Rooster, McDonalds. Symbols also include letters, numbers, money and musical notations. Value children’s recognition of symbols and extend these discussions to make connections to letters and words. All are a form of communication and supports and recognises children’s symbol recognition. Children will also use a range of symbols and marks as communication tools as they begin to understand and make sense that our culture uses written symbols to communicate.

Activity 3.30

Read, explore, reflect

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access the Let’s Read, anywhere, anytime web site


Consider the development that occurs to support literacy development and strategies educators could implement.

Activity 3.31

Read and reflect

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access and read the Early childhood Australia NQS PLP e-newsletter on Becoming Literate –


Educators supporting language and literacy development

Language learning is essential for school and life success. Language is the way we communicate, verbally and in writing with others. Language provides a strong medium in which children express themselves and development explodes through the early childhood years. Young children must be provided with rich opportunities to not only hear and see good role models language and rich sources of language, for development, children also need the opportunity to practice these skills. Educators have a significant role in supporting
language and literacy development. Strategies to in support language development include:

- modelling language and encouraging children to express themselves;
- using models of two-way communication (you speak I listen and vice versa);
- responding sensitively and appropriately to children’s efforts;
- using a range of resources to model literacy;
- use some words and phrases of children’s first language.

### Activity 3.32

**Consider and reflect**

Reading and phonics programs such as Jolly Phonics have no place (in the Author’s opinion) in an early learning service. Please read the following comments by Mem Fox regarding Jolly Phonics and then consider the research article that is available for students to access that highlights that there is no evidence that a phonics program within an early childhood program is of any benefit –


Another reading worth reflecting upon is:


This is a research article is heavily embedded with research information and data, however students are to note that the findings indicate “there is currently no research evidence to suggest that the use of these programs with children under five is effective in supporting emergent literacy in the short or long term” (p.47).

### Activity 3.33

**Read and consider**

The short newsletter from ECA PLP newsletter: Play-based approaches to literacy and numeracy –

Element 6

Create an environment for holistic learning and development

6.1 Support and initiate inquiry processes, try new ideas and take on challenges
6.2 Provide resources and materials that offer challenge, intrigue and surprise
6.3 Assist to promote children’s sense of belonging and connectedness
6.4 Engage children in sustained shared conversations to extend their thinking
6.5 Provide the opportunity for scaffolding learning and development
6.6 Assist children to see their mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow
6.7 Facilitate families’ diverse contributions to the learning community
6.8 Share information with colleagues about child development and wellbeing

Inquiry based learning

Young children from the moment they are born have “…an enormous curiosity that makes the child searches for reasons for everything…” (Rinaldi, 2013, p. 8). Children watch, listen, ask questions (often why), copy, repeat experiences all in an attempt to understand and make sense of how their world works. When children are able to explore and investigate issues or questions of their interest, children feel an interest in their own learning (autonomy).

Inquiry based approaches to learning comes from the standpoint that children are intelligent constructors of knowledge and learning, rather than passive recipients of someone else’s knowledge (i.e., “viewing children as ‘empty vessels’ to be filled”). Inquiry based learning experiences support children to follow their own interests and shape their own learning.

This does not mean that there is not an important role for the educator. On the contrary, the educator supporting inquiry based learning must work with and alongside children to support rich opportunities for learning. Educators encourage children’s thinking by asking open ended questions. Educators document children’s thinking, their ideas and their reasons for these ideas. The recording of the information allows children and educators to come back to the task over and over again and to revisit the concept at different times.

Inquiry based learning creates a culture of investigation and active learning. Some early childhood education and care services have a planning time where children talk about their area of work and children are invited to share their ideas and interests with others. These
opportunities also provide opportunities for children to engage in sustained, shared conversations and opportunities to construct new knowledge as a community of learners.

Please note that in inquiry based learning, educators do not need to have the answers. The process is a research investigation of working with and alongside children to find answers together and this may be a process that is revisited many times before the answers are founded or are reconsidered.

**Research Resources**

Resources to support children’s inquiry based learning are essential. Research kits should be available to children indoors and outdoors and contain paper and chart paper for recording, pencils, measuring tapes, mirrors to look at things from different perspectives, magnifying glasses, cameras, sound recorders and specimen jars. These items provide opportunities and invitations for children to engage in research to find solutions to their questions.

Resources such as light boxes, overhead projectors and torches provide opportunities for children to engage with light and shadow.

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

“Active involvement in learning builds children’s understandings of concepts and the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning. They can challenge and extend their own thinking, and that of others, and create new knowledge in collaboration interactions and negotiations. Children’ active involvement changes what they know, can do, value and transforms their learning (DEEWR, 2009, p. 32).”

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**Importance of play**

Play is the vehicle through which children achieve the outcomes as described in the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009).

Play is considered the medium through which children learn. As children play and engage with others, the environment and resources, their active processes help them to construct new knowledge and skills. Play allows children to test ideas and role play experiences they may have observed in life. Play involves developing new skills and new knowledge and being creative. All children should be given opportunities to play, including school aged children.
Children learn through play!

The Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) states play-based learning is: “A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations” (p. 6).

Table D: Parten (1932) proposed a series of developmental stages in children’s social play:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of play</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unoccupied play</td>
<td>Children do not seek to enter play, but are in the vicinity of play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onlooker play</td>
<td>Children observe play and may be close to a play situation, but there is little direct involvement in the play.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solitary play</td>
<td>A child plays alone. There is no interaction with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel play</td>
<td>A child may play with objects and be near others playing with the same or similar objects, but there are little or no interactions among the players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associative play</td>
<td>Children are involved in group play with others using similar equipment or doing similar things. There is no common goal and no determined roles or plan of action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative play</td>
<td>Cooperative play in a group, cooperating with each other to work towards a shared goal or to implement a shared plan of action.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(as cited in Arthur, Beecher, Death, Docket & Farmer, 2012, p. 100)
Activity 3.34

**Watch:**

It is not compulsory to watch this television show because it is quite long. However, I encourage you to consider watching some or all. The Life at 9 series captures part of a longitudinal study that is currently underway in Australia following 10,000 children. The study has been following these children since birth and they are now 9. The ABC production has been broadcasting a small sample of these children and showing some of the tests and experiences the children have been progressing through.

This episode is on creativity and speaks highly on the importance of play for all children. Although these children are 9, the information is relevant to all children. This show is entertaining and captures current theories and understanding of how children learn and develop, well worth the investment of time!

Click on the hyperlink below or copy and paste the URL into your web browser –

http://iview.abc.net.au/programs/life-at-9/DO1303H002500#playing

Adults have a vital role to play in children’s learning through play. In further modules, learners will engage in a Unit of Competency that considers further the importance of play, how play supports learning and the educator’s role.

Activity 3.35

**Reflecting on my understanding of play:**

Respond to the following questions:

• How would you explain to a family how important play is to children’s learning?
• What are the benefits of play?
• What is your role (as educator) in supporting play?
Read
Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL and type it into your web browser to access two short readings on play.


Resilience

Albert Einstein is reported as saying “If you haven’t made a mistake, you haven’t done anything new!” (http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/mistakes).

Making mistakes is part of life. However, some people bounce back from mistakes with gusto and look for new challenge, while others struggle at the idea of having made a mistake and are resistant to go again or have another attempt.

Educators need to encourage children to develop a curious disposition and willingness to ‘have-a-go’. This can be encouraged by praising children efforts regardless as to the outcome and encouraging children to reflect on their participation efforts. It also means supporting to recognise that learning about something often entails failure. Children need to learn that failure or not being able to do something is part of life and not the end of the world!

Activity 3.37

Watch the DVD ‘Life at 5’ Vignette on Resilience.

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser -

http://www.abc.net.au/tv/life/video/LIFEAT5.htm

What things do you say to a child to support them to feel supported as they complete challenging or new experiences?
Open ended resources

Balancing the materials available to children is an important role of the early childhood educator. A range of resources should be provided and accessible to children. Open-ended resources that are not prescriptive allow for more opportunity for diverse play (Dockett & Fleer, 2003). Rather than putting plastic fruit in an area for play, open ended resources could include different types of rocks, wooden pieces, sticks, and paper that children can use to create into the object they need it to be. Where resources are not open-ended, educators are encouraged to purchase equipment that is safe, of quality standard and workmanship and reflects the local community.

Sustained shared conversations

Conversations with children are one of the most important things educators can do with children. Conversations that are not simply closed questions (requiring a yes or no answer) allow an opportunity for rich dialogue and enhancement of relationship.

In fact, the EPPE study (the Effective Provision of Preschool Education Project in Britain) found that sustained, shared thinking involves children and educators working together in conversations which provide opportunities to discuss and think about the problems or challenges in an informed extended manner (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford & Taggart, 2004). Sustained shared conversations was found to be a key strategy for supporting quality adult-child interactions. It also was identified as a critical component in effective early childhood programs that led to better educational outcomes for children.

**Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) states:**

Educators … engage in sustained conversations with children to extend their thinking (p.15)

So what is a sustained conversation? Sustained conversations involve open ended questions. Asking ‘why they think something works the way it does’.
Activity 3.38

Read and reflect

Click on the following hyperlink or copy the URL into your web browser and read the Early Childhood Australia PLP NQS PLP e-Newsletter No. 43 2012 Sustained, shared thinking –


- List the 6 strategies that ECA suggest are involved for conversations that support sustained, shared thinking (page 2).

Activity 3.39

Watch and reflect upon the sustained shared conversation in this video clip -


Creating a sense of belonging

Children need to feel safe, secure and belonging to a space before learning can occur. A sense of belonging is created when children and their families are genuinely welcomed into a service, made to feel a part of the service and when they and their families are treaty with dignity and respect.

According to the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) “Belonging is: knowing where and with whom you belong” (p.7).

What pedagogical strategies do you use to support children feeling a strong sense of belonging at the service?
Activity 3.40

Read and consider

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser to access Early childhood Australia NQS PLP e-learning newsletter No. 23 Spaces for children -


• List two strategies you have gained for creating a sense of belonging for all children in your service.

Consider the messages you give families:

• How do you welcome children and families into the service each morning? Are children made to feel that you are so happy to see them? Do you assist families so that the start of the day is as easy as possible?

• Do you have connections between the service and home: furniture, photos that are displayed with the utmost respect?

• Do you ask children genuinely for their opinion and try to build a culture of ‘our service’ rather than ‘my service’.

• Are all children and families welcome?

Our values and beliefs affect our practices. It is therefore important to think about what we believe and why we therefore respond in certain ways.

Families as authentic partners with children’s learning

Over and over again through the learning materials, learners have been encouraged to realise the importance of working with families and community in partnership to educate and care for young children. Families are key players in the understanding and teaching of children for their holistic development. Families are constantly watching their children and observing their learning and behaviour. Listening to families, respecting and valuing their input allows educators to gain an understanding of the child in a range of settings as well as allowing educators to relate to the family’s religious, ethical and moral practices and customs. This understanding allows opportunity for consistent approaches between service and home and helps to provide the child and family with a sense of belonging. Furthermore, gaining an understanding of the child’s cultures helps to provide a richer, more in-depth picture of who the child is and provides insight into the thinking and theory making of the child. Inviting families to authentically share information about the child and to be truly involved in the documentation process allows vehicles to share information and to construct curriculum that is “relevant to the child in their local context” (DEEWR, 2009, p.11).
Diversity of ideas and beliefs


Over the last few years there has been hysteria in local communities as early childhood services and primary schools consider their everyday practice to ensure that these practices may not be offensive to certain religious beliefs. Debate has raged on different topics such as ‘Banning Santa’ because it was deemed as a Christian Practice.

Article 14 of the UNCRC states that children have freedom of thought, conscience and religion. ‘Children have a right to think and believe what they want and to practice their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights’.

Activity 3.41

Read and reflect

Click on the following hyperlink or copy and paste the URL into your web browser and consider Article 14 -


Banning guns / Santa / super hero play does not solve issues. The Banning of Santa was completely taking out of content by a family who reported the situation to the media.

Consider what Article 14 says.

How could you support families in your service with different religious views and practices?

How could you be respectful, support and value all families and their appropriate religious beliefs?

Community of learners

Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (DEEWR, 2009) requires educators to embed reflection and inquiry into their daily practice. This premise stems from an understanding that reflective practice helps educators to think more deeply about their work. Furthermore, reflective practice is more likely to lead to change when undertaken collectively (DEEWR, 2009).

Ongoing learning and reflective practice is one of the five Principles of the Early Years Learning Framework. The idea of a community of learners is based on the ideas and beliefs that people learn as people participate is share activities and experiences (Rogoff, 1994).
Each educator comes to the early childhood education and care service as an individual; a person with their own history, experiences and values. Their experiences will include schooling, study and ongoing professional inquiry (professional development, reading journal articles, etc.) These activities help to create the person you are and influence your belief system.

Being recognises this individualism but it also recognises educators as part of a team (DEEWR, 2009). When individual educators come together as a team, they develop a collective belief and value system. Knowledge is generated as educators interact, share knowledge and reflect together.

### Professional Inquiry

**The Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) says**

A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when early childhood educators and those with whom they work are all involved in an ongoing cycle of review through which current practices are examined, outcomes reviewed and new ideas generated. In such a climate, issues relating to curriculum quality, equity and children’s wellbeing can be raised and debated. (p.13)

Educators can be part of a number of communities of learners. Educators can form a community of learners within their own team environment but may also establish other learning communities with families, and connections and relationships with professionals from other disciplines. This relates to the educator’s sense of Belonging (DEEWR, 2009).

Educators can create a community of learners by sharing appropriate information with colleagues and families. This may include content information, journals, fact sheets and online materials. Educators need to reflect upon this information in relation to the service’s policies, procedures and practices. Additionally, educators may share information (with permission) about children’s learning and development with colleagues to discuss and reflect upon teaching, learning, assessment. This provides opportunities to share knowledge, to construct knowledge and encourages a holistic understanding of the child and opportunities for continuity of teaching, learning and care.

### Summary

This chapter has provided a brief insight into the theories and knowledge of development essential for educators to understand and consider in their everyday practice. The Early Years Learning Framework requires educators to embedded practices of critical reflection into their everyday practice, and recognise it as essential for continuous importance and good outcomes for children. Critical reflection requires educators to consider the ‘why’. Why are we doing what we are doing? It also requires educators to be able to verbalise this either in written or verbal form. Providing the ‘why’ relies on a good foundational knowledge of the theories of how children learn and develop.
Children’s education, development and learning cannot be compartmentalised. A holistic approach to education and care where educators understand development and learning is interwoven is critical.

**National Quality Standard**

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the NQF and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and outside school hours care services in Australia. It provides families and educators with a more detailed understanding of children’s education and care requirements, objectives, outcomes, and expectations.

The NQS comprises seven quality areas. Although all quality areas are interwoven through this module chapter, and what affects one quality area-in-turn influences another, there are three quality areas that relate mostly to chapter three of this module.

There are seven quality areas:

- **QA1** Educational program and practice
- **QA5** Relationships with children
- **QA6** Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

(ACECQA, 2013)

**Summary table of quality areas, standards and elements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QA1</th>
<th>Educational program and practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>An approved learning framework informs the development of a curriculum that enhances each child’s learning and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2</td>
<td>Each child’s current knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3</td>
<td>The program, including routines, is organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child’s learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.4</td>
<td>The documentation about each child’s program and progress is available to families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.5</td>
<td>Each child is supported to participate in the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.6</td>
<td>Each child’s agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions and influence events and their world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.1</td>
<td>Each child’s learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.2</td>
<td>Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2.3</td>
<td>Critical reflection on children’s learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, is regularly used to implement the program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QA5 Relationships with children**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1</th>
<th>Respectful and equitable relationships are developed and maintained with each child.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1</td>
<td>Interactions with each child are warm, responsive and build trusting relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2</td>
<td>Every child is able to engage with educators in meaningful, open interactions that support the acquisition for life and learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3</td>
<td>Each child is supported to feel secure, confident and included.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.2</th>
<th>Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships with other children and adults.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1</td>
<td>Each child is supported to work with, learn from and help others through collaborative learning opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2</td>
<td>Each child is supported to manage their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviours of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3</td>
<td>The dignity and rights of every child are maintained at all times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**QA6 Collaborative partnerships with families and communities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.1</th>
<th>Respectful supportive relationships with families are developed and maintained.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1</td>
<td>There is an effective enrolment and orientation process for families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.2</td>
<td>Families have opportunities to be involved in the service and contribute to service decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.3</td>
<td>Current information about the service is available to families.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.2</th>
<th>Families are supported in their parenting role and their values and beliefs about child rearing are respected.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1</td>
<td>The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2</td>
<td>Current information is available to families about community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>The service collaborates with other organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1</td>
<td>Links with relevant community and support agencies are established and maintained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2</td>
<td>Continuity of learning and transitions for each child are supported by sharing relevant information and clarifying responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.3</td>
<td>Access to inclusion and support assistance is facilitated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.4</td>
<td>The service builds relationships and engages with their local community.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ACECQA, 2011, p.10 – 11)


**Useful Websites**

Developing Child: Harvard University  
[www.developingchild.harvard.edu/](http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/)

Social and emotional development  
[www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au)

Howard Gardner  
[www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm](http://www.infed.org/thinkers/gardner.htm)

Raising children Network  
[www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)
References


Glossary

Additional needs: Person requiring extra support or resources to succeed at tasks. These needs may be due to cultural backgrounds, education background, family issues, giftedness, intellectual or physical disabilities. Some people prefer the term ‘special rights’ rather than ‘additional needs’.

Agency: Being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one’s world (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Children: Refers to babies, toddlers, and three to five years olds, unless otherwise stated (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Collaboration: Involves working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through information sharing, joint planning, and the development of common understandings and objectives.

Community participation: Taking an active role in participating to communities (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Co-construct: Work in partnership with children (and sometimes other adults) to construct children’s learning.

Communities: Social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights and responsibilities and/or other bonds. ‘Communities’ is used variously to refer, for example, the community within early childhood settings, extended kinship, the local geographic community, and broader Australian society (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Critical reflection: Reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice (DEEWR, 2009, p.45). It involves examining and analysing events, experiences and practices from a range of perspectives to inform future planning and decision making.

Curriculum: In the early childhood setting, curriculum means ‘all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development’ (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Disability: May include a person with physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, and/or neurological learning disabilities; physical disfigurement; the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms; and severe back pain.

Dispositions: Enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to situations. For example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Diversity: An array of skills, knowledge and perspectives, which may include: age; cultural background; ability; education level; ethnicity; expertise; gender; family responsibilities; family structure; language; learning styles; life experiences; marital status; religious belief; socioeconomic background; thinking styles; working styles; sexual orientation; political orientation; geographic location; and professional skills and functions.
Early childhood education and care services: Long day care, occasional care, family day care, multi-purpose Aboriginal Children’s Services, preschools and kindergartens, playgroups, crèches, early intervention settings, and similar services.

Educators: Early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings.

EYLF: Early Years Learning Framework

Harm: Harm is defined within the Child Protection Act 1999 Qld s.9 as ‘any detrimental effect of any significant nature on a child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing’.

Inclusion: Involves taking into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances, and geographical location) in program decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure all children’s experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.

Intentional teaching: Involves Educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. The opposite of ‘teaching by rote’ or continuing with traditions simply because things have always been completed in a certain manner.

Involvement: Is a state of intense, wholehearted mental activity, characterised by sustained concentration and intrinsic motivation. Highly involved children (and adults) operate at the limits of their capacities, leading to changed ways of responding and understanding leading to deep-level learning (adapted from Laevers, 1994) (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Learning: A natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Learning framework: A guide that provides general goals or outcomes for children’s learning and how they might be attained. It also provides a scaffold to assist early childhood settings to develop their own, more detailed curriculum (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Learning outcome: A skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

Life-long learning: A self-motivated process that extends intellectual, vocational and personal horizons that begins from an early stage of life and continue throughout life.

Literacy: Includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading, and writing.

NQF: National Quality Framework

NQS: National Quality Standard

Numeracy: Broadly includes understanding about numbers, patterns, measurements, spatial awareness, and data, as well as mathematical thinking, reasoning, and counting.
**Pedagogy:** Early childhood educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching, and learning (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

**Play-based learning:** A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage with people, objects, and representations (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

**Protective factors:** A factor that may influence or reduce the likelihood of future harm by interacting to support, enhance or develop a family’s capacity, motivation and competence to meet the child’s protective needs.

**Reflexivity:** Children’s growing awareness of the ways that their experiences, interests, and beliefs shape their understanding (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

**Relationships:** Interactions between two or more people or groups of people that may progress or inhibit potential or agreed outcomes. For example, a positive relationship may further a child’s wellbeing, learning and development, whereas a negative relationship may inhibit positive outcomes for the child.

**Risk factor:** Anything that prevents a person from achieving their objectives. For example, the risk factors in an abusive family situation heighten the probability the child within the family may be harmed.

**Scaffold:** The educators’ decisions and actions that build on children’s existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning. For example, relating new knowledge to student’s current knowledge or breaking new information into smaller, more manageable parts (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

**Spiritual:** Refers to a range of human experiences including a sense of awe and wonder, and an exploration of being and knowing (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

**Technologies:** includes much more than computers and digital technologies used for information, communication, and entertainment. Technologies are the diverse range of products that make up the designed world. These products extend beyond artefacts designed and developed by people and include processes, systems, services, and environments (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

**Texts:** Things that we read, view, listen to, and that we create in order to share meaning. Text can be print-based, such as books, magazines and posters, or screen-based, for example internet sites and DVDs. Many texts are multimodal, integrating images, written words and/or sounds (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).

**Transitions:** The process of moving between home and childcare services, between a range of different early childhood services (for example, kindergarten to childcare), or from an early childhood service to full-time school (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).


**Wellbeing:** Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs: The need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical
needs; and for meaning in life. It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning, and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience (DEEWR, 2009, p.45).