



VEYLDF Review and Update: Report on consultations findings

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Purpose of this Report

This report presents an overview of findings from a consultation process with early childhood professionals to inform a review and update of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). While the consultation process included a range of stakeholders, this report specifically focuses on findings from a face-to-face consultation process and a survey of early childhood professionals.

Eleven face-to-face group discussions with 200 early childhood professionals were held, and an online and administered survey sought views on key improvements to be incorporated in an update of the VEYLDF. Survey responses from 535 early childhood professionals were received¹.

This report will be used to inform decisions about content and format improvements to the VEYLDF in 2016.

Background and context

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) was released in 2009 for implementation in 2010. It has informed the work of early childhood professionals across Victoria by providing a common context to their practices in working with families and children.

In 2015 it was agreed that it was timely to review and update the VEYLDF. While some elements of the VEYLDF will not change, for example, the Learning and Development Outcomes, it is important to maintain the currency of the document. This is particularly relevant in light of changes to policy, new evidence (both nationally and internationally) relating to early childhood development, shifts in issues facing children and families, and emerging information needs of early childhood professionals that have occurred over the last five years.

The VCAA developed a methodology to inform the review and update. This methodology included:

- face-to-face (and video conference) consultations with early childhood professionals and key stakeholders
- an online and administered survey to early childhood professionals
- development of a multidisciplinary early years Practitioner Advisory Group to inform the review and update process
- reference to the outcomes of the Department of Education and Training (DET) 2015 Transition to School initiative consultations to support the revised VEYLDF
- revision of the document branding (including all images) and identification of appropriate new visuals.

¹ The 535 includes completion of the survey by those in consultation sessions

The consultation methodology

This report summarises key findings and themes from consultations that involved early childhood professionals. The evidence presented here was obtained through the face-to-face (and video-conferenced) meetings, and the state-wide survey. These components are presented in the following sections.

Consultation meetings

The consultation process with early childhood professionals was undertaken at 10 venues across Victoria². An additional face-to-face consultation with representatives from cultural organisations was convened at the Melbourne Museum in Carlton.

The main aim of the consultations was to provide an opportunity for early childhood professionals to share their perspectives on ways to improve the appropriateness and relevance of the information contained within the VEYLDF. Attention was also given to changes that could be made to the format and layout of the document to improve readability and use.

Each consultation was 75 minutes in length and refreshments were provided. The average number of early childhood professionals attending each of the consultations was 15, with the size of the working groups ranging from five to 40.

Each consultation meeting followed a similar format: an introduction by Carmel Phillips, Manager, VCAA Early Years Unit, then a facilitated discussion of a series of key questions. Key staff from within VCAA and DET also attended consultation meetings to observe and take notes.

The consultation questions focused on key domains within the VEYLDF:

- emerging evidence and issues that may need to be incorporated in the VEYLDF
- ways to strengthen the Practice Principles
- additional content that will support early childhood professionals to understand the Learning and Development Outcomes
- ideas about improvements to format and structure of the document.

During the consultations, participants formed small working groups. The facilitator introduced each specific question, and six to eight minutes was allocated to the groups to discuss and document their responses. The facilitator then asked a spokesperson from each small group to share key points with the larger group before proceeding to the next question.

Those individuals who had attended the consultations, but not completed the online survey, were asked to fill in the survey at the end of the consultation meeting. The surveys were collected and compiled in sets with the online surveys.

Comprehensive notes were taken at consultation meetings by staff from VCAA or DET. The information was compiled into a summary document under key question headings. While the notes taken in consultations were comprehensive, the focus of this summary is on identifying key domains of improvement of the VEYLDF.

Key messages from consultation meetings were reviewed for each question. A within-group and a cross-group comparison was undertaken to ascertain key patterns in comments.

² North Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Shepparton, Dandenong, Mildura, Geelong, Darebin, Ringwood, Warrnambool, Wallan and the Melbourne Museum (with Education Officers from cultural organisations including the Zoo, Botanic Gardens and the National Gallery).

Online survey

A survey was developed to gain feedback from early years professionals about key elements of the VEYLDF. It was considered an appropriate method to complement the consultations to encourage feedback from those who may not be able to attend face-to-face consultations.

It was also acknowledged that the quantitative data generated from ratings of the content and structure of the VEYLDF would give a clear direction for improvements of these aspects. The survey was limited to feedback about key domains that are within the VEYLDF and aligned with the consultation discussion topics:

- their assessment of the stage of implementation of the VEYLDF that they had reached
- the presentation and layout of the framework document
- the adequacy of information about the Practice Principles
- the information included to support Learning and Development Outcomes from birth to eight years.

A more extensive survey would have made the survey too lengthy and may have reduced the reliability of the survey and limited the completion rate.

Survey responses

A total of 535 early years educators responded to the survey. Of this, 444 of the 535 practitioners completed the entire survey. There was considerable diversity in the service types represented by the respondents, which indicates that the consultation process reached a range of early years professionals. The largest proportion of respondents worked within a Kindergarten context (35%). Responses were received from early years professionals working in services across the four regions, with the largest proportion of respondents representing the South East region (32%)³. Over half of the respondents indicated they had more than 15 years' experience in the early years sector. While this means that the comments will come from professionals with a sound practice base, it also means that they may be more experienced in understanding the issues reflected in the VEYLDF. Given the number of professionals with many years of experience in early childhood, it is not surprising that the majority of respondents also indicated that they were in the consolidation phase in terms of implementing the VEYLDF.

³ The focus of this report is the key findings from the consultation process. Specific demographic data is collated in the Appendix, but is not included here.

Overall findings

The groups participated actively in the discussions sharing views and perspectives about the ways in which the VEYLDF could be improved. There was consistency in the themes emerging in the face-to-face consultations and responses to the surveys. The following sections summarise key patterns in responses to key consultation domains:

1. Usability and accessibility of the VEYLDF
2. Content of the VEYLDF
3. Practice Principles
4. Learning and Development Outcomes⁴

1. Usability and accessibility of the VEYLDF

Of the 535 survey participants, 444 responded to three statements about the layout and format of the VEYLDF. These three statements were:

- The layout of the VEYLDF is engaging and makes me want to read it.
- The VEYLDF follows a logical sequence and flow.
- The language used in the VEYLDF is easy to understand.

Most respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with these statements, indicating that the layout and structure of the current document is considered accessible. However, there was more variability in responses about the accessibility of the language used in the VEYLDF, and qualitative comments in open-ended responses and consultations reinforced this pattern. Open-ended comments revealed a preference for the update to include clearer descriptions and expression, and more examples of how key concepts can be applied in practice.

In both consultations and in open-ended survey responses, early childhood professionals suggested that having tabs between sections in the VEYLDF would help them to navigate between sections more easily, and break-out boxes could be used to define specific terms or examples.

Several respondents noted that the font size on the illustrative links between the Learning and Development Outcomes and the school curriculum is too small. While the tables showing continuum of learning were considered useful, the font did not promote readability or usability.

⁴ The survey also included specific questions on strengthening multidisciplinary practice to support outcomes for children.

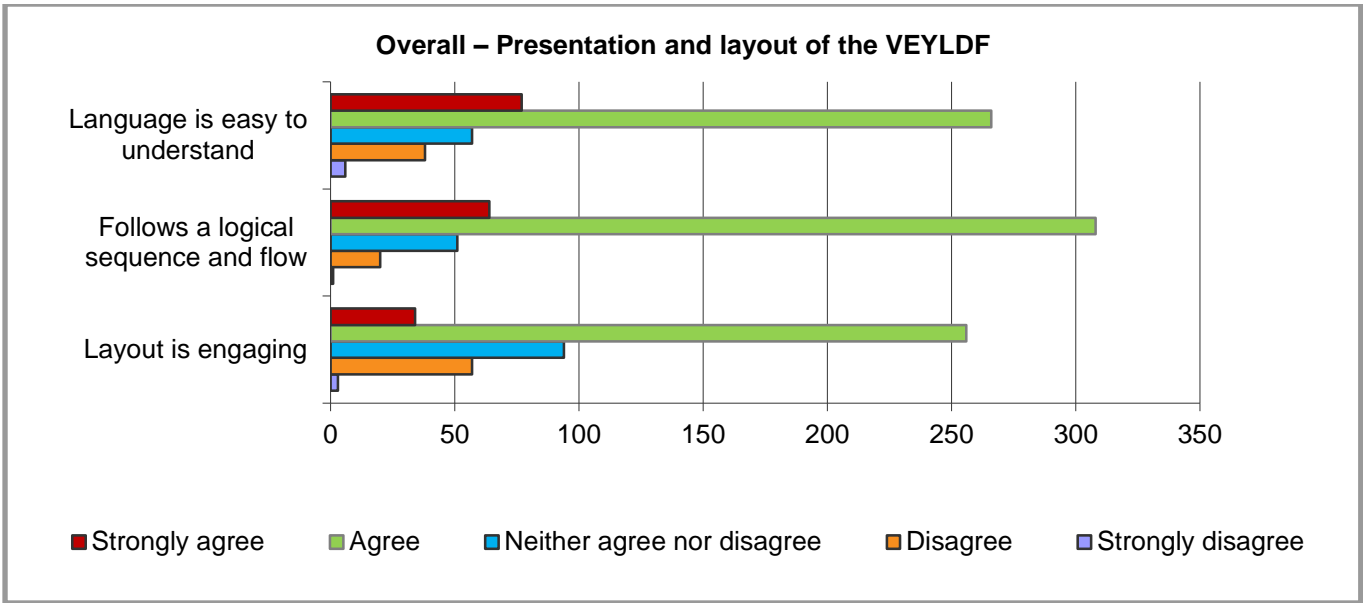


Figure 1: Overall feedback on the three key statements

There were many comments in the consultation and survey findings that related to form and content. Specific themes presented here reflect dominant clusters of quotes or open-ended comments and are framed as implications for the review and update of the VEYLDF.

Keep the printed copy

While many documents are being provided only in online or hyperlinked formats, most participants appreciated and acknowledged the value of printed copies of the VEYLDF. Several participants brought their well-worn copies of the VEYLDF to the consultation meetings. Online resources are useful and are a valuable addition to printed material, but a hard copy of the VEYLDF provides practitioners with a ready reference to write on.

Maintain the VEYLDF scale and size

The consultation generated a range of ideas that have the potential to make the document significantly larger in size. While an update of information is required, many early childhood professionals indicated the size of the current document was appropriate. A much larger document would be more difficult to carry and this could inhibit use. It may be more useful to include links to other support materials within the VEYLDF, rather than separately including these only on the VCAA website. This would facilitate quicker retrieval.

Include tabs between sections

Early childhood professionals in consultation meetings suggested the inclusion of tabs to separate key sections in the document. The tabs could be similarly colour coded as key sections to assist quick information retrieval.

Include photographs and information that are more reflective of diversity

The number of visuals included in the VEYLDF was seen to be adequate. While early childhood professionals valued the inclusion of photos to break up the text, they cautioned against including too many visuals as this can add substantially to printing costs within services and schools when photocopying.

Many practitioners highlighted the importance of including more content and visual material that reflects Aboriginality and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It may be appropriate for the document to include an acknowledgement of the traditional owners and the cultural legacy and history of Aboriginal Australians as a strong, explicit starting point to frame the VEYLDF.

Early childhood professionals also suggested the inclusion of more material that illustrates diversity (background, sexual orientation, gender). Inclusion of additional photos is not sufficient and early childhood professionals noted the importance of active representation of diverse cultural groups in images as well as with content examples.

Keep the title but include the acronym in brackets

There was a strong preference for retaining the title because it is readily recognisable to early years professionals. As the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework is often referred to as the VEYLDF, some participants noted that it may be useful to include the acronym on the title page. This may be particularly useful for those new to the profession.

Simplify language and phrasing

Comments on the open-ended questions in the survey and in group consultations reflected the need for clear, sharp language in the VEYLDF. Some early childhood professionals indicated their preference for drawing from the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) Learning Outcome statements and examples in the EYLF educator guides rather than the VEYLDF as they felt the language and format of the EYLF communicated messages more clearly.

Increase font size of the illustrative links (landscape pages)

The illustrative links (pp. 19–31) between the Learning and Development Outcomes and the curriculum in schools in the VEYLDF were seen to be very useful in providing a continuum of learning and development. A bigger font size would make these sections more readable and useable, but decisions will need to be made about clustering content or re-organising the presentation of material.

Some white space is useful

The white space around the content on each page makes the document more readable and some participants indicated that they wrote notes in the spaces. However, the amount of white space needs to be balanced with a consideration of the size of the document. Some cautioned against too much white space as they saw it as a 'waste of space', and a potential risk for increasing the size of the document.

Incorporate the VEYLDF as part of a resource package

This point does not directly pertain to the VEYLDF, but rather provision of support materials and templates that can be supplementary and support use of the document. This would also reduce the inclusion of more content in an already full document.

Some participants across suggested that the VEYLDF be at the front of a folder or ring binder given to each service. The folder or package could include all the relevant resource materials and additional information referred to in the VEYLDF. A single sheet style copy of the VEYLDF and support documents would then allow specific pages to be removed from the binder for easy copying.

2. Content of the VEYLDF

Overall content improvement

Key questions were used to focus the consultation discussions (see Appendix 2). These focused on gathering practitioners' perspectives on how to strengthen the sections on Practice Principles and the Learning and Development Outcomes. During the consultation sessions early childhood professionals made comments about overall content improvements for consideration. Many of these comments reflected a desire for inclusion of updated material and framing of this material in more accessible language with explicit examples.

An open-ended comment on the survey reinforces this point:

'The VEYLDF is a document that I feel is aimed at educators with higher knowledge base or educational level. In the work that I do I notice the Diploma and Cert III level educators find it a more challenging document to read with language that they do not fully understand. I think the VEYLDF needs to be a more user-friendly document that provides examples or ideas of how to utilise it; educators would then be able to engage and better understand the value of the document.' (Children's Services)

A key theme that emerged was the inclusion of research and theoretical evidence to guide quality practice for the next five years. Early childhood professionals seek information that they can share with particular audiences (for example, teachers in schools, families, colleagues in other disciplines) and that are clear and persuasive. Support resources that can be shared with families and carers need to be made available to clearly articulate the importance of the early years, and the role of the family as 'the child's first and most enduring educators'.

Strengthen the connection between the Practice Principles and Learning and Development Outcomes

Several early childhood professionals suggested the need to strengthen the relationship between the Practice Principles and Learning and Development Outcomes.

Include up-to-date evidence

Themes from consultations and responses to open-ended questions in the survey indicate a need to update the VEYLDF with current information and evidence that has been generated since its release in 2009. Inclusion of stronger evidence of the links between play and development, and the science behind brain development, were commonly suggested across face-to-face consultations. Specific mention was made of the Reggio Emilia and Abecedarian approaches, and information relevant from the Auditor General's report on child abuse/child protection. The latter was seen to be particularly relevant given the increasing number of children presenting to services with experiences of trauma.

Include updated and relevant information for children with special needs and families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage

Some early childhood professionals noted the increase in the number of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage. Participants posed the question of how they could best support children and their families when they are experiencing trauma, domestic violence or mental health issues.

Include content to inform conversations with others

Participants suggested the VEYLDF should include messages about the science behind the importance of learning in the early years that are appropriately pitched to families, school teachers, and other professional groups. It was thought that this information would be invaluable in communicating with these groups and highlighting the importance of play in learning and development.

3. Practice Principles

In the survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement⁵ with six statements relating to the Practice Principles. The respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements indicated the strength of the VEYLDF in this area. There were no significant differences in the views of educators regardless of level of experience (years), or assessment of their stage of implementing the VEYLDF. Table 1 shows the pattern of responses.

Table 1: Perspectives on the Practice Principles

Statement	Agree or Strongly Agree	Neither Agree nor disagree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
The Practice Principles are clearly explained and reflect the continuum birth-8	243	58	43
The Family Centred Practice section has sufficient information to guide my practice	301	90	53
The VEYLDF provides information on inclusive practice (diverse families)	265	95	84
The VEYLDF provides sufficient information on culturally appropriate ways of working with Aboriginal children and their families	156	131	157
The VEYLDF identifies how to collaborate effectively with other early childhood professionals	236	123	85
The VEYLDF helps me understand the purpose and value of assessment and strategies to support assessment	274	89	57

Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statements about the Practice Principles. However, there was a significant difference ($p < .05$) in level of agreement with the statement that the VEYLDF helped them work with Aboriginal children and children from diverse communities.

⁵ A Likert scale was constructed for each statement from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A middle dimension (neither agree nor disagree) was also included. The agree and disagree dimensions have been aggregated to show overall patterns.

Assessment of the spread of responses across the statements suggests that particular attention should be paid to strengthening three of the Practice Principles:

- how early childhood professionals can ‘collaborate effectively with other early childhood professionals’
- information on ‘culturally appropriate ways of working with Aboriginal children and their families’
- information on ‘inclusive practices in working with children and families with diverse needs’.

Comments in response to the survey’s open-ended questions, and comments during the consultations reinforce the need for the VEYLDF to incorporate information that supports early childhood professionals in collaborating more effectively with other professionals.

A thematic analysis of open-ended responses suggests that early childhood professionals understand the value of working collaboratively with colleagues, but that the logistics of inter-professional ways of working are not always straightforward. Early childhood professionals who participated in the consultation process suggested it would be valuable to include descriptions of speciality roles (for example, allied health) and their potential contribution to multidisciplinary ways of working with children in the VEYLDF.

This survey comment illustrates this perspective:

‘The VEYLDF could explain how working collaboratively requires greater understanding of different specialists’ viewpoints and that specialists need to acquire greater understanding of how strategies could be included within the early childhood program, not an add onto the program’. (Preschool Field Officer)

Several respondents indicated that contact lists and strategies to access specialist services would also be helpful. Contact lists require regular updating and it may not be feasible to include them in a framework document; however, links to such resources could be included.

Some early childhood professionals indicated that collaboration can only occur in a genuine two way process. Working collegially or collaboratively requires acknowledgement of the contribution that each professional brings to the context. A number of comments to the open-ended survey questions noted an ‘ideological divide’ between the early years sector and school, which in their view made it challenging to find common ground.

While respondents seek information about how to build networks and partnerships more effectively, they are aware that the VEYLDF cannot influence the quality or sustainability of these relationships.

Early childhood professionals highlighted the importance of inclusion of information that would support them in working with children from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs. For example, in several face-to-face consultations, early childhood professionals raised concerns about the increasing number of families presenting to the service that were from refugee or backgrounds, or experiencing pre-birth trauma. This was seen to be particularly relevant for children from birth to three years.

Consultation discussion revealed that more explicit and concrete examples could be included in the VEYLDF to reinforce Practice Principles. In particular:

- examples of what ‘high expectations’ look like in practice – how we create opportunities for success for every child and how we raise our own expectations of children
- examples of how to work with children and families to support their children’s learning
- examples of assessment for learning – case examples and guides to practice
- practical examples of the Principles, with examples that reference children with diverse and special needs.

A lengthy open-ended comment on the survey points to the need for systems and structures that support the implementation of the VEYLDF. This respondent, an experienced Preschool Field Officer noted the importance of breaking down silos between early childhood services and schools, and offering more supportive guidance to practitioners in their work with children.

'If the VEYLDF is to be a useful and active document a great deal more needs to be done in working with schools. There is a very definite divide between the two sectors understandings of the document.' (Preschool Field Officer).

A specific sub-question in the consultations focused on gaining early childhood professionals' views on the VEYLDF's coverage of Integrated Teaching and Learning. A common theme in responses was that the term 'integrated' is not well defined and explained. Some participants suggested the inclusion of a sharper, clearer description of what the term means in practice. Other participants didn't like the underpinning assumptions built into the phrase 'integrated teaching and learning' as teaching was conceptualised differently in the early years context to school. In their view this may confuse the underlying message about the importance of play in a child's development. The suggestion was to use *approach* or *pedagogy* as preferable to *teaching*.

Views appeared to be divided about the value of the diagram included in the section on Integrated Teaching and Learning (VEYLDF, p. 12). The diagram depicts the intersection between guided play and learning, adult-led learning and child-directed play and learning. Some participants in the consultations found it a simple and powerful visual that reinforced the message of integration, while others thought it was overly simplistic and not useful. The Learning and Development Advisory Group suggested the inclusion of a plait rather than a helix to illustrate how these practices intertwine and shape each other.

It may also be useful to include more information on child-directed play and learning as this is not emphasised in the written section accompanying the diagram. Early childhood professionals suggested inclusion of examples to illustrate what child-directed play and learning looks like in the birth-to-three-year period. The inclusion of examples has the potential to practically demonstrate the linkages between learning and play. Several participants across the consultation groups acknowledged the value of including the bulleted points (VEYLDF, p. 13), which define how early childhood professionals can apply the Practice Principle, 'Integrated Teaching and Learning' in their practices with children.

4. Learning and Development Outcomes

The responses to the survey statements about the Learning and Development Outcomes reveal that while many respondents agree that the information is sufficient, many are less confident or unsure, and indicated a response of neither agree nor disagreement.

The statements were:

- The Learning and Development Outcomes provide useful information to guide practice with **children birth to eight years**
- The Learning and Development Outcomes help me understand the needs of **children birth to three years**
- The Learning and Development outcomes help me to understand the needs of **children three to five years**
- The Learning and Development Outcomes help me to understand the needs of **children six to eight years**
- The links from Foundation to Level 10 Curriculum in schools helps me to understand how to build on prior learning and development **with children five to eight years in a school setting**.

Table 2 summarises the responses to the items about the Learning and Development Outcomes. There was most variability in responses about the sufficiency of information relating to Learning and Development Outcomes for children birth to three years. It appears that early childhood professionals who responded to the survey do not feel the VEYLDF prepares them as well for supporting Outcomes in the birth-to-three-years period as it does for supporting them in practice with other age groups.

Table 2: Learning and Development Outcomes

Outcome Domain	Strongly Agree or Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Strongly Disagree or Disagree
The Learning and Development (L&D) Outcomes provides useful information to guide practice with children from birth to eight years	391	35	20
Learning and Development Outcomes help me understand the needs of children from birth to three years	138	123	83
Learning and Development Outcomes help me to understand the needs of children from three to five years	360	56	28
Learning and Development Outcomes help to me to understand the needs of children from six to eight years	250	148	46
The links from Foundation to Level 10 Curriculum in schools helps me to understand how to build on prior learning and development with children from five to eight years in school setting	171	211	62

Several respondents felt the information was generalised across age groups and does not adequately reflect the specific characteristics of key stages across a continuum of learning. Qualitative comments included in the open-ended responses to the survey reinforce this point.

'(There) needs to be more age specific (information) for children birth to three years in line with their development. (I) need more examples of how each outcome can relate to ALL age

groups. There is such a diverse difference between a six-month-old and a five-year-old.'
(Kindergarten)

'I think there could be more inclusive of the younger years, although this is not something I require in my day to day work – I know that this is a challenge for educators who are working in the birth-three years range to meet the standards that are written for three-five in their program effectively and reflect the learning outcomes for children within this age range.'
(Kindergarten)

'The development that occurs between birth and five years is enormous and yet this is all combined in one section of the outcomes.' (Kindergarten)

Some participants used the EYLF examples to better situate their understanding of the outcomes. The framing and examples used in the EYLF were seen to be more user-friendly and informative, particularly for birth to two years. Other early childhood professionals indicated they share the EYLF with families as they considered the concepts of *Belonging, Being and Becoming* were more parent-friendly. There was a strong message that the VEYLDF needs to include and reference explicit examples and provide supporting templates:

'It would ... be worthwhile providing educators with realistic outlines or templates of how documentation could be completed effectively and efficiently. There are far too many educators working outside of hours just to complete what they believe is required for the frameworks. There is a lot of myth around things such as portfolios are compulsory, you can't use a check list etc. as well as the idea that strength based language means you ignore children's challenges or delays when documenting.' (Preschool Field Officer)

A second pattern in the survey findings relates to the continuum of learning and development from Foundation to Level 10.⁶ Participants in consultations appreciated the explicit links to the curriculum in schools. The links demonstrate that early learning relates to and strengthens later learning. Discussion focussed on the need for schools to be aware of the continuum and use the VEYLDF to inform their work with children in the early years of school.

'There needs to be better communication and understanding of the VEYLDF by teachers in primary schools. This would then improve common goals, help stop push down curriculum, and enhance transition.' (Kindergarten)

The illustrative links from the Learning and Development Outcomes to the school curriculum (VEYLDF, pp. 19-31) were described as being useful in demonstrating pathways in learning and development from birth to eight years. However, some early childhood professionals indicated that the information included in the landscape pages generalises outcomes from birth to five years, and does not delineate types of learning and development birth to three years, and three to five years.

This limitation is partially a structural one. It is difficult to fit the information on one landscape page. The font size is already small and difficult to read. Some participant suggested synthesising the information further and making a sharper link between the building blocks from birth to eight years.

'(The) information and examples need to be more age specific so that it clarifies the transition points and developmental needs of children at different ages and stages.' (Long Day Care)

A written document cannot include all information relevant to outcomes. Educators need to engage with the material and identify the implications for their work with children and families. There needs to be a balance between guidance and instruction. An educator within Long Day Care suggested

⁶ Note: the Victorian Curriculum was announced on 14 September 2015 during the last week of the VEYLDF consultations

that some educators use the examples within the outcomes section in a directly instrumental way, rather than as a prompt for further reflection:

'The examples of how these outcomes may be observed have become "cut and paste" words to show the child's learning and therefore provide very little true meaning for the educator or the family, and limit the way an educator may have otherwise interpreted or reflected on an observation.' (Long Day Care)

Conclusion

The consultation process undertaken to inform the refinement of the VEYLDF has been intensive and thorough.

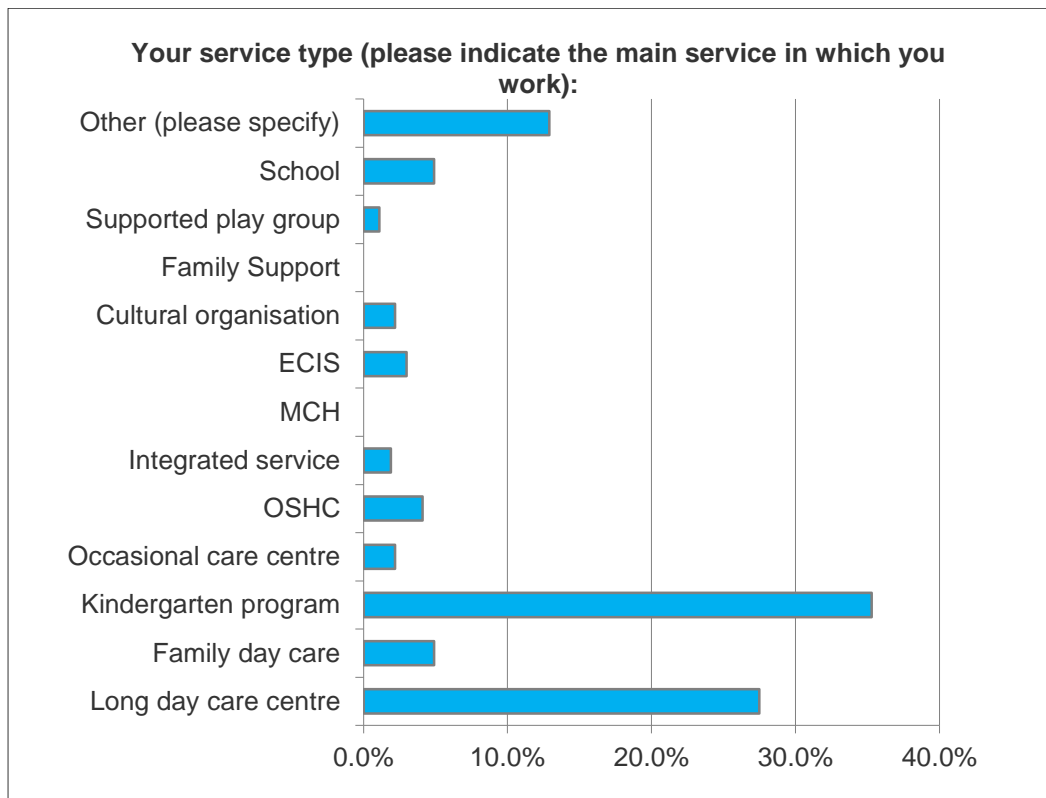
In the consultation period (August to September 2015), early childhood professionals were generous with their feedback and actively engaged in discussions at consultation meetings.

From May to December 2015, VCAA and DET have been in discussion with a range of key researchers, experts and advisory groups including the Learning and Development, Practitioner and Transition Advisory Groups. and Maternal and Child Health and Family Support Workers.

This process has provided the basis for reshaping the VEYLDF to better address the needs of early childhood professionals across Victoria and further support improved outcomes for children.

Appendix 1: Demographic data

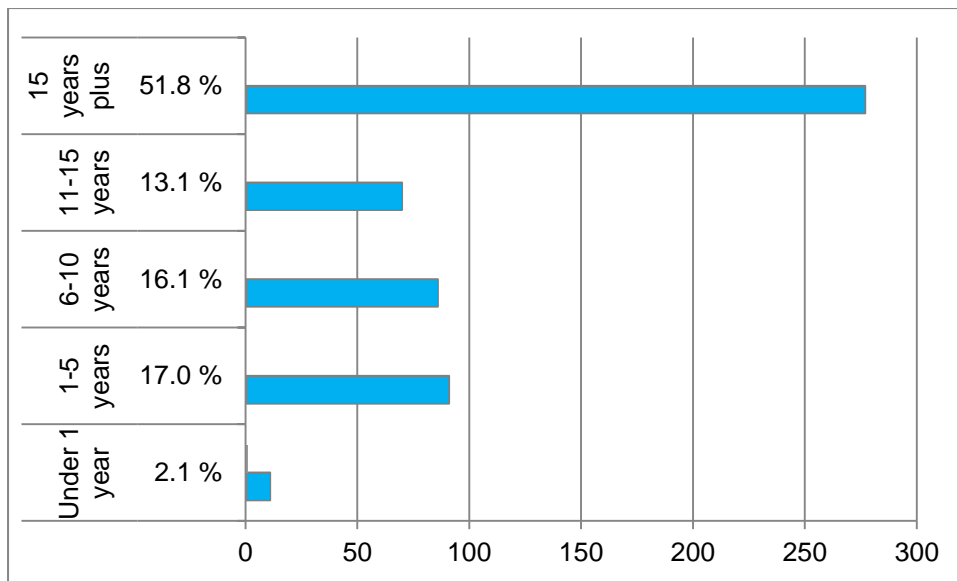
1. Service experience of survey respondents



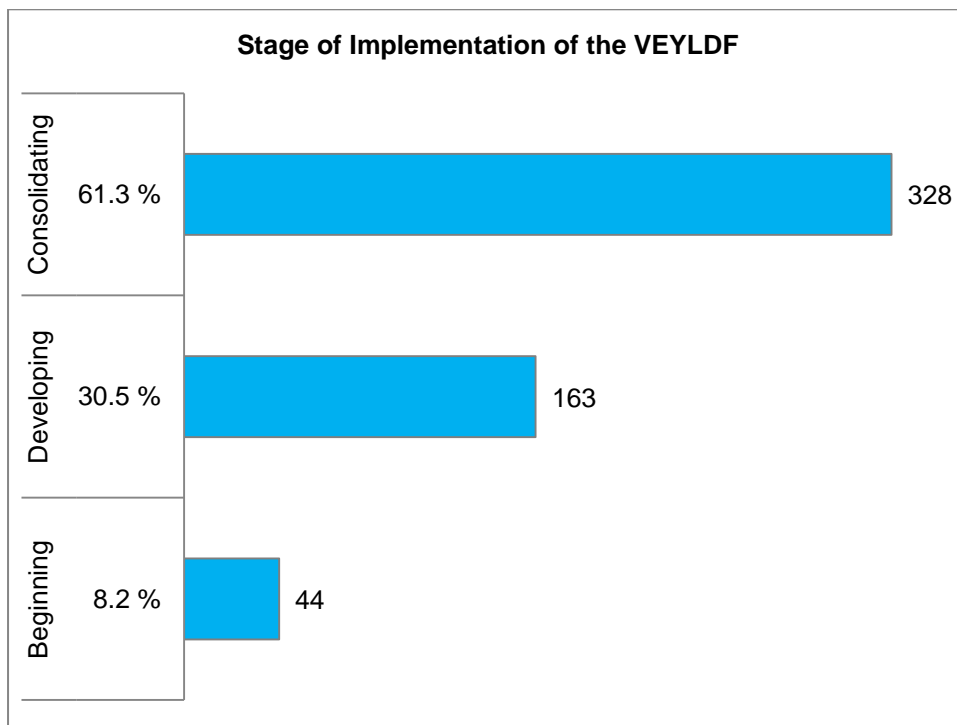
2. Service location by region



3. Experience of participants



4. Assessment of implementation stage



Appendix 2: Consultation discussion questions

1. What are some key practice and/or research findings that have emerged over the past five years that you believe should be included in an updated VEYLDF?
2. How might the Practice Principle *Integrated teaching and learning approaches* be strengthened to influence deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful decisions and active engagement with children in every day environments?
3. How might the Practice Principle *Assessment for learning and development* be strengthened to inform:
 - progress in children’s learning and development (0-8 years)
 - analysis of evidence of learning with children, families and other professionals
 - timely referral and additional support?
4. Identify the third Practice Principle for Review (this is an additional question if time permits)
5. In relation to the Outcomes, does the information included in the five learning and development outcomes provide sufficient guidance for your practice? If not, how could they be strengthened?
 - 5a. What supporting documents would be helpful now to strengthen your understanding of the learning and development outcomes?
6. How could the mapping of the VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcomes to the Foundation to Level 10 curriculum be strengthened to advance continuity of learning across early childhood services and schools?
7. In what ways can information about the critical learning in the birth to three period be strengthened in the VEYLDF document?
8. The format for the revised VEYLDF
When you look at the document overall - How can the layout be improved? (prompt: images, logos and figures, and VEYLDF title)?

In face to face Consultations – the Survey is completed individually by participants prior to the close of the session

Appendix 3: Survey questions

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) Review and Update Survey

The Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) are undertaking a review and update of the VEYLDF to better support ongoing implementation over the next five years.

This includes:

- review and update of the details within the eight Practice Principles for Learning and Development to reflect policy changes and advances in evidence based practice
- revision of existing images and logos and identification of new visuals to reflect new policy directions and contemporary research evidence including, *The Transition: A Positive Start to School initiative* .

The five Learning and Development Outcomes in the VEYLDF are nationally agreed measures for all children birth to five years and will not change. However, the VEYLDF review process provides an important opportunity to strengthen the introductory statements and the illustrative links from early childhood education and care to the early years of school.

Completing the survey

Please complete this brief survey to assist the DET and VCAA in understanding your perspectives on the current VEYLDF. This information will help us identify the areas requiring modification in the VEYLDF update. Please include any other comments on ways you think the VEYLDF could be improved to better guide your practice.

Your responses will be valuable in revision of the content, structure and design of the VEYLDF.

This survey will only take about 8 minutes of your time. Please complete this now and click done (if online), or hand it in to the group leader (if you are completing this in a consultation meeting). Your responses will not be identifiable. If you'd like to provide feedback but it might identify who you are please contact us privately so that we can ensure your personal information is managed by the VCAA. We do not ask for personal information via survey monkey.

Please note: once you begin your response online, you are able to move forwards and backwards within the questionnaire. The questionnaire must be completed in one session however, as your response will not be saved for further editing.

If you have any further questions or comments please contact Carmel Phillips Manager of the VCAA Early Years Unit on: phillips.carmel.j@edumail.vic.gov.au

Thank you for your willingness to be involved in this work to inform ongoing implementation.

About you and your current work

Your service type (please indicate the main service in which you work):

- Long day care centre
- Family day care
- Kindergarten program
- Occasional care centre

- Outside school hours care
- Integrated service
- Maternal and Child Health
- Early childhood intervention
- Cultural organisation
- Family Support
- Supported play group
- School
- Other (please specify)

In which Department of Education and Training region is your service located?

- North West
- South West
- North East
- South East

Your years of experience in early years:

- Under 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 15 years plus

In reflecting on your practice so far, please make an assessment of where you think you are in relation to implementing the VEYLDF?

- **Beginning** – Getting started with the VEYLDF
- **Developing** – Building knowledge and skills in applying the VEYLDF in practice
- **Consolidating** – Embedding the VEYLDF in practice

Please respond by selecting the level of agreement that best reflects your view about the statement. It may be helpful to refer to the VEYLDF document as you consider each question.

Your views on the VEYLDF Overall – Presentation and layout of the VEYLDF

- The layout of the VEYLDF is engaging and makes me want to read it
- The VEYLDF follows a logical sequence and flow
- The language used in the VEYLDF is easy to understand

Practice Principles

- The Practice Principles are clearly explained and reflect the continuum of learning and development from birth to 8 years.
- The section on family centred practice provides me with sufficient information to understand this practice.
- The VEYLDF provides relevant information about inclusive practices for working with children and families from diverse communities.
- The VEYLDF includes sufficient information about culturally appropriate ways to work with Aboriginal children and families.

- The VEYLDF identifies how to collaborate effectively with other early childhood professionals to support health, learning and development of all children.
- The VEYLDF helps me to understand the purpose and value of assessment and identifies strategies to support effective assessment practice.

Please tell us how the section on the Practice Principles could be improved to better support your work with children and families.

Learning and Development Outcomes: Introductory statements

- The five learning and development outcomes provide useful information that guides my practice with children birth to 8 years.
- The five learning and development outcomes assist me in understanding the learning and development needs of very young children and babies **birth to 3 years**.
- The five learning and development outcomes assist me in understanding the learning and development needs of children **3 to 5 years**.
- The five learning and development outcomes assist me in understanding the learning and development abilities of children **6 to 8 years**.
- The links to the Foundation to Level 10 curriculum in schools helps me to understand how to build on prior learning and development with children **five to eight years in school settings**.

Please tell us how the introductory sections on the five learning and development outcomes can be improved?

Open-ended Questions

There is a growing evidence base about the value of a multidisciplinary approach to strengthen outcomes for children. What additional content do you think the VEYLDF should include **to support you in working collaboratively with other early childhood professionals?**

Please comment on any other material that you believe should be included in the VEYLDF to further support your practice with children, families and other early childhood professionals.

Thank you again for sharing your experiences with us. This information will be very helpful to DET and the VCAA in updating the VEYLDF to support implementation for the next five years.

Carmel Phillips Manager of the VCAA Early Years Unit phillips.carmel.j@edumail.vic.gov.au