

# Documentation of children's learning



The Early Years Planning Cycle outlines the process early childhood professionals use to collect and interpret evidence that contributes to a detailed, up-to-date, strengths-based picture of children's learning and development to inform planning and practice decisions. This Planning Cycle is used to support assessment for learning 'which is designed to discover what children know and understand, based on what they make, write, draw, say and do.' (VEYLDF p. 13)

## Early Years Planning Cycle



The Early Years Planning Cycle is adapted from the *Educators' Guide to the EYLF* (2010)

### The Early Years Planning Cycle supports:

- purposeful **observations over time**
- **collecting, analysing** and **assessing** individual and group learning and development in different contexts
- **making plans** about each child and groups of children
- **sharing information** and **collaborating** with children, families, colleagues and other early childhood professionals
- **reflecting** on all aspects of events and experiences
- applying **context** to inform practice decisions

### Practice Principles

1. Family-centred practice
2. Partnerships with professionals
3. High expectations for every child
4. Equity and diversity
5. Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
6. Integrated teaching and learning
7. Assessment for learning and development
8. Reflective practice

### National Quality Standards for Early Childhood Education and Care

QA1 – Educational program and practice

QA5 – Relationships with children

QA6 – Collaborative partnership with families and communities

QA7 – Leadership and service management

Observe and Collect Information	Question and Analyse	Plan, Act and Do
<p><b>Record what you know and see about children’s strengths, interests, capabilities and culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observe purposefully</li> <li>• Make decisions about what to document, and why and how</li> <li>• Document evidence that describes children’s learning and development in everyday as well as planned experiences</li> <li>• Encourage children to describe their learning</li> <li>• Demonstrate the progress and pathways a child or group of children take</li> <li>• Describe learning achievements and areas where a child may need additional support</li> <li>• Deepen knowledge and understanding about children, families and communities to inform planning and practice decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand what children know, say and can do</li> <li>• Link evidence to Learning and Development Outcomes noting the overlap of outcomes to support a holistic view of children’s learning</li> <li>• Analyse evidence of children’s learning and development to inform curriculum and planning and practice decisions</li> <li>• Plan conversations about children’s learning with children, families, colleagues and other professionals to identify, and plan for children’s learning and development</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design learning experiences and environments that build in continuity, predictability and repetition</li> <li>• Assess children’s learning and development on an <b>ongoing</b> basis and in <b>everyday experiences</b></li> <li>• Monitor children’s progress over time</li> <li>• Use evidence to inform curriculum decisions</li> <li>• Discuss learning and next steps with children, families, colleagues and other professionals</li> <li>• Support families as children’s most important educators</li> <li>• Work collaboratively to document and assess evidence of children’s learning at home and in other settings</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gather evidence of children’s learning and development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to children’s conversations</li> <li>• Observe children’s involvement and dispositions for learning, skills in play, thinking and behaviours</li> <li>• Use samples of children’s work, for example, a photo of a painting, a taped conversation</li> <li>• Take anecdotal records of conversations with children, families, colleagues and other professionals</li> <li>• Refer to enrolment information</li> <li>• Use an Evidence Collection Tool to document observations, analysis and planning</li> </ul>	<p><b>Context for professional learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gain a deeper understanding of the five Learning and Development Outcomes</li> <li>• Draw on evidence of children’s learning, early childhood theories and frameworks and the Practice Principles to analyse and understand children’s learning and your practice decisions</li> </ul>	<p><b>Context for planning and practice decisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use integrated teaching and learning approaches</li> <li>• Use reflective practice to inform and review decisions about children’s learning and your practice</li> <li>• Evaluate the effectiveness of the learning and development program</li> </ul>

Observe and Collect Information	Question and Analyse	Plan, Act and Do
<p><b>What evidence have I documented?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who (and what) am I noticing and why?</li> <li>• What is happening?</li> <li>• Have I noticed and listened to efforts to communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, including utterances, gestures, posture and facial expression?</li> <li>• What have I observed about children’s interactions, temperament, involvement and dispositions for learning?</li> <li>• What conversations have I had about children’s culture, interests, strengths, skills in play, talents, capabilities and agency?</li> <li>• What progress have I observed in children’s learning and development across the five outcomes? Are there any gaps in the documented evidence?</li> <li>• What is the evidence telling me about what children understand, know and can do?</li> <li>• What intentional conversations have I had with children about the progress of their own learning?</li> </ul>	<p><b>What does this information and evidence mean? What new insights and knowledge do I have about children’s learning and my practice decisions?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What is the child learning?</b></li> <li>• What do I know <b>now</b> about what the child is ready to learn and how do I know that?</li> <li>• What do I know now about this child’s strengths, culture, learning and development?</li> <li>• How does this observation link to one or more of the Learning and Development Outcomes?</li> <li>• Are there gaps in the learning? Are there things I expected to see that are not evident?</li> <li>• <b>Who have I discussed this with?</b> Who or what else can help me interpret this information, for example, the child, their family, other professionals, research and theories?</li> <li>• <b>What have I learned about my practice,</b> my teaching and learning strategies, and my interactions and relationships with children, families, colleagues and other professionals?</li> <li>• Who or what helped or hindered the learning?</li> </ul>	<p><b>What will I do next? How will this documentation make a difference in my work with children and families? How will my analysis inform my planning decisions?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How will I use this information in my <b>communication</b> with the child, family, colleagues or other professionals? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What learning conversations will I have with children?</li> <li>– What intentional conversations have I planned?</li> <li>– What further conversations will I have with families, colleagues and other professionals about children’s learning and development?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Based on analysis, what are my future <b>practice decisions</b>? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– How will I plan for ongoing learning opportunities in everyday routines and experiences?</li> <li>– How will I intentionally plan experiences that allow children to practise, consolidate, extend and enrich understandings and knowledge?</li> <li>– What opportunities have I provided for children to revisit learning in different ways and using different experiences?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the learning and development progress for children, including how you know the learning has occurred?</li> <li>• What (if any) significant events happened before or after the documented learning?</li> <li>• How did you involve yourself in children’s learning and development including intentional teaching?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Context</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there any additional information that will help to make meaning from what is documented?</li> <li>• What was the learning environment where this happened, who was involved and the teaching and learning strategies used?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Critical reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the results of my action(s)?</li> <li>• Did my action support the child? How?</li> <li>• How does this observation or example of evidence assist me in thinking differently about this child or group of children?</li> <li>• What changes are evident for children and for me as an early childhood professional?</li> </ul>

This template includes **four** columns to support ongoing learning and reflective practice. It suggests beginning with a proposed program and using all elements of the Early Years Planning Cycle. This template can be adapted and used to support ongoing evidence collection and interpretation of children’s learning and development over time and inform planning and practice decisions.

**Name of Child or Children:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Proposed Program Plan</b>	<b>Observe and Collect Information</b> <i>(include date and time of observation)</i>	<b>Question and Analyse</b>	<b>Act, Do and Plan</b>
<b>Outcomes for children</b>			
<b>Outcomes for early childhood professional(s)</b>	<b>Context:</b>		<b>Critical Reflection:</b>