

VCAA

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

EARLY YEARS EXCHANGE

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WHAT'S IN THIS EXCHANGE?

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LINKS



[Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework \(VEYLD\): For Children from Birth to Eight Years](#)
(PDF - 1.9MB)

The Early Years Exchange (EYE) is a series of online publications to familiarise you with the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* (the Framework). There will be further monthly updates in March, April and May to support your thinking, discussions and planning with families, colleagues and children. The EYE is intended for everyone who works with children from birth to age eight.

This second issue explores ways to consider **Reflective Practice**.

Evidence shows that reflective practice can help early childhood professionals to think more deeply about their work and motivate them to continually improve by exploring new ideas, promote positive change and confidently build on existing good practice with children and families.



Guest appearance

Carol Blewitt, MEd (Language and Literacy), BEd, is a Prep Teacher at St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School, Belgrave. Carol discusses how she uses the rich information provided in the Transition Learning and Development Statements to reflect on her planning in the classroom and to link with her colleagues in the Junior School team.

The Junior School team at St Thomas More's support each other by:

- thinking about the connections between what they do on a daily basis and the Practice Principles of the Framework
- challenging many 'taken-for-granted' practices through reflective conversations
- considering the family's perspectives of their child
- noticing the child's relationships and interactions at school
- rethinking, reshaping and building on existing practices.

What are some of the benefits of reflective practice?

Reflective practice:

- will help you to slow down and take the time to really notice and delight in children's learning and the magic of their development from birth
- creates a space to use the language of the Victorian Framework in your conversations with colleagues and with families
- focuses your curriculum on relationships with children and families and the value of responsive engagement with children
- reminds us that from birth children are developing their identity and wellbeing
- fosters ongoing evaluation by your team of your goals to advance the learning and development outcomes.

‘To look is one thing. To see what you look at is another. To understand what you see is a third. To learn from what you understand is still something else. But to act on what you learn is all that really matters.’

(Talmud)



Snapshot by Rosemary Hogan, Year 1/2 teacher

I have found it helpful to look at some of the resources used in the early years to support children’s wellbeing and identity. In my research, I discovered the *Cars R Us Cards**, a strengths-based conversation-building tool that was suitable for providing children with the enriched language to express their feelings beyond being ‘mad, sad or happy’.

At the Junior School team meeting, the teachers were discussing how challenging it can be to resist solving young children’s play disagreements. I used my ‘reflective talk’ to suggest:

‘I wonder if it might be better to coach the children to use the language of the *Cars R Us* cards to resolve their own issues rather than as teachers trying to solve everything for them.’

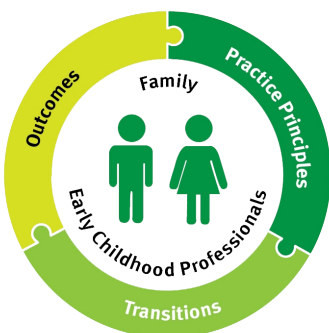
As a result of our conversation and my researching, I decided that I would introduce the *Cars* cards so that the children had language tools to better identify and talk about their own behaviour.

During circle time, we matched the car’s behaviour with our own behaviour and talked about getting back on four wheels and moving forward. The children also were given the opportunity to listen to other children using the Car talk to express their feelings in a calm/safe environment.

I have noticed that not only do the children try to use the new language, but it has also created a space where the children hear other children talking about experiencing similar feelings.

This builds out of the Learning and Development Outcome of Identity (page 19 of the Framework) and links to Interpersonal Development Levels 1 and 2 as described in the VELS.

* *Cars R Us* Cards are part of a suite of resources available through: <http://www.innovativeresources.org/>



Some resources to explore

Curtis, D and Carter, M 2008, *Learning Together with Young Children: A Curriculum Framework for Reflective Teachers*, Redleaf Press, St Paul, MN.

Arthur, L, Beecher, B et al. 2007, *Programming and Planning in Early Childhood Settings*, 4th Edn, Cengage Learning, South Melbourne, Australia.

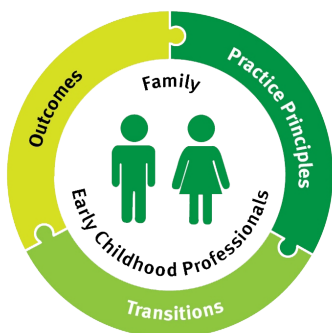
Think about what Reflective Practice means for ...



You
Families
Children
The Service
The Community

‘The voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.’

(Marcel Proust)



Action plan to strengthen Reflective Practice

As a team, map your current reflective practices on a grid to identify areas of strength and areas that need development.

Think about and discuss what practice you would like to rethink, for example:

- How you engage with children/family/other professionals
- How you organise the learning environment
- Why you plan the way you do
- Who makes the decisions about how the day runs
- How you document and assess children’s learning

Ask a mentor/coach how you can find out more about this aspect of your work, who can you talk to and/or where can you find current early childhood articles?

Consider your practice in light of what you have read.

Participate in a facilitated discussion with your team/network on the articles and how you could reshape or replace it and why.

As a group begin to identify realistic goals, priorities and timelines.

Identify one change, plan it and make the change.

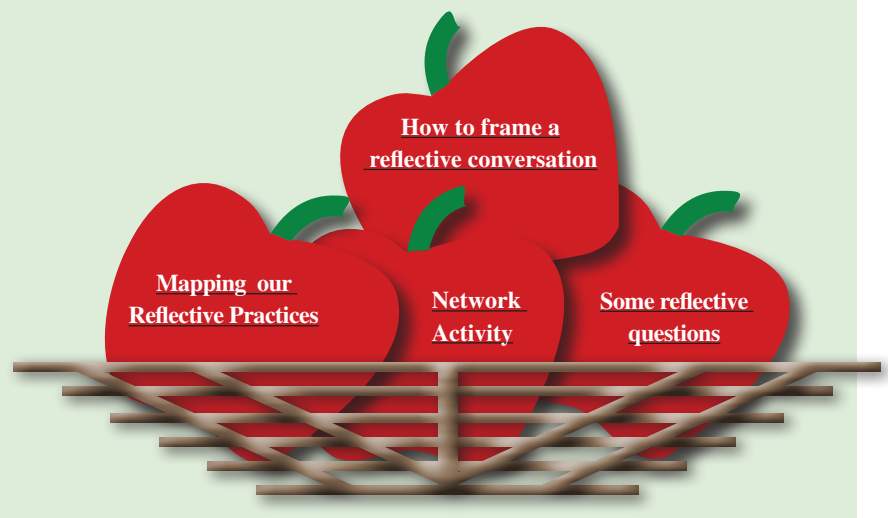
Communicate your change – to your colleagues, children and families.

Notice the impact on children and colleagues and talk to families about it.

Begin to review.



Links to reflective tools



Reminder

Early Years Exchange Issue 1 is available at: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/earlyyears



Mythbuster

The Victorian Framework is too much about outcomes, rather than what to do with my programming.

The Framework recognises that children live in diverse communities and that they achieve the learning outcomes in different ways, at different rates and at different times. However, the five outcomes identify and describe what it is that early childhood professionals and families work to achieve for all children.

Outcomes help us to be clear about what we are trying to achieve as well as guide us to use a clear evidence-based model of how those goals can be achieved.

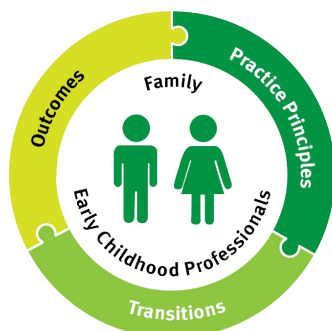
When we are clear about the outcomes, we are likely to:

- provide consistent information across services and to families
- decide on goals with families as shared expectations for children
- choose a way of operating that is evidence-based and known to be effective in achieving learning outcomes
- rethink, reshape and replace approaches and goals that are not advancing learning and development outcomes for children.

When services are not driven by outcomes, they are driven by other factors, such as:

- habit: 'This is how we have always done it'
- unproven assumptions: 'These children need this kind of program'.

Outcomes are achieved through a continuing cycle of planning, observing and documenting, evaluating and reflecting and acting to make appropriate changes.



Exchanges and changes

The Early Years Unit is keen to hear from you regarding:

- questions about implementation
- changes and adaptations you have made
- interesting discussions in your workplace about the Framework
- what's happening in your community.

We would also like to invite comment regarding:

- feedback about the EYE
- suggestions/requests for articles that will support your team.

Simply email: veyldf@edumail.vic.gov.au