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)

The Early Years Planning Cycle facilitates:
• purposeful observations
• collecting, analysing and making meaning of information about learning and development
• assessing individual children’s learning and development
• making plans about each child and groups of children
• sharing information and collaborating with children, families, colleagues and early childhood professionals
• reflecting on all aspects of events and experiences
• understanding and applying the relevance of context to inform and enrich decisions about practice

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

National Quality Standards
QA1 – Educational program and practice
QA5 – Relationships with children
QA6 – Collaborative partnership with families and communities
QA7 – Leadership and service management
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Observe and Collect Information</th>
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<td><strong>Record what you know and see about children’s strengths, interests, capabilities and culture</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Observe purposefully&lt;br&gt;• Make decisions about what to document, why and how (quality versus quantity)&lt;br&gt;• Document evidence that describes children’s learning and development (learning rather than doing)&lt;br&gt;• Demonstrate the progress and pathways of a child or group of children&lt;br&gt;• Describe learning achievements and identifying areas where a child may need additional support&lt;br&gt;• Invite children to describe their learning&lt;br&gt;• Deepen knowledge and understanding of children, families and communities to inform planning and practice decisions&lt;br&gt;• Record planned and unplanned observations&lt;br&gt;• Use a range of assessment for learning and teaching strategies</td>
<td><strong>Interpret and make meaning of information collected and evidence documented</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Link evidence to learning and development Outcomes&lt;br&gt;• Understand what children know, say and can do&lt;br&gt;• Analyse evidence of children’s learning and development to inform practice and curriculum and planning decisions&lt;br&gt;• Use learning conversations with children, families, colleagues and other professionals to identify, interpret and plan for children’s learning and development&lt;br&gt;<strong>Context for professional learning</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Gain a deeper understanding of the five learning and development Outcomes&lt;br&gt;• Integrate theoretical frameworks and research findings to analyse and understand children’s learning and your practice decisions&lt;br&gt;• Analyse evidence to inform planning decisions</td>
<td><strong>Design learning experiences and learning environments</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Assess children’s learning and development on an ongoing basis and in everyday experiences&lt;br&gt;• Monitor children’s progress in learning and development&lt;br&gt;• Use evidence to inform curriculum decisions&lt;br&gt;• Discuss learning and next steps with children, families, colleagues and other professionals&lt;br&gt;• Support families as children’s most important educators&lt;br&gt;• Work collaboratively to document and assess evidence of children’s learning in other settings and at home&lt;br&gt;<strong>Context for planning and practice decisions</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Use integrated teaching and learning approaches&lt;br&gt;• Use reflective practice to make informed judgements and decisions about children’s learning and development&lt;br&gt;• Use reflective practice to review the quality of practices and learning and teaching strategies&lt;br&gt;• Evaluate the effectiveness of the learning and development program</td>
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<td><strong>Gather evidence of children’s learning and development in a variety of ways</strong>&lt;br&gt;• Listening&lt;br&gt;• Observations of children’s involvement and dispositions for learning, skills in play, thinking and behaviours&lt;br&gt;• Samples of children’s work, for example, a photo of a painting, a taped conversation&lt;br&gt;• Anecdotal records of conversations with children, families, colleagues and other professionals&lt;br&gt;• Enrolment forms&lt;br&gt;• Use an evidence collection tool to document observations, analysis and planning</td>
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**Observe and Collect Information**

**What evidence have I documented and recorded?**
- Who (and what) am I noticing and why?
- What is happening?
- Have I noticed and listened to efforts to communicate, both verbally and non-verbally, including utterances, gestures, posture and facial expression?
- What conversations have I had about children’s culture, interests, strengths, skills in play, talents, capabilities and agency?
- How have I had intentional conversations with children about the progress of their own learning? What have I observed about children’s interactions, temperament, involvement and dispositions for learning?
- What progress have I observed in children’s learning and development across the five Outcomes? Are there any gaps in the documented evidence?
- What is the evidence telling me about what children understand, know and can do?

**Context**
- Children’s learning and development pathways and progress and how you know the learning has occurred
- Significant events that happened before or after the documented learning
- How you involved yourself in children’s learning and development including intentional teaching

**Question and Analyse**

**What does this information and evidence mean? What new insights and knowledge do I have about children’s learning and my practice decisions?**
- What is the child learning?
- What do I know now about what the child is ready to learn and how do I know that?
- What do I know now about this child’s strengths, culture, learning and development?
- How does this observation link to one or more of the learning and development Outcomes?
- Are there gaps in the learning? Are there things I expected to see that are not evident?
- Who have I discussed this with? Who or what else can help me interpret this information, for example, the child, family, other professionals, research and theories?
- What have I learnt about my practice, my teaching and learning strategies and my interactions and relationships with children, families, colleagues and other professionals?
- Who or what helped or hindered the learning?

**Context**
- Additional information that will help to make meaning from what is documented
- The learning environment where this happened, who was involved and the teaching and learning strategies used

**Plan, Act and Do**

**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?**
- How can I use this information in my communication with the child, family, colleagues or other professionals?
  - What learning conversations will I have with children?
  - What intentional conversations have I planned?
  - What further conversations will I have with children, families, colleagues and other professionals about children’s learning and development?
- How will I adapt my plans and practice in:
  - my interactions with children
  - my interactions with families
  - the way I set up the learning environment
  - the learning opportunities I encourage including daily routines?
- Based on analysis, what are my future planning decisions?
  - What intentional actions will I take?
  - How will I continue to plan for learning opportunities in daily life?
  - How will I intentionally plan experiences that allow children to practice, consolidate, extend and enrich understandings and knowledge?
  - What opportunities have I provided for children to revisit learning in different ways and using different experiences?

**Context**
- Different perspectives to analyse observations
- New and shared understandings of children’s potential
- Learning experiences to continue, modify or extend
- Strategies to support sustained and shared interactions with children and between children
- Your practice in light of this analysis, interpretation and reflection
This form can be used and adapted to:
- engage in the planning cycle
- support collecting and interpreting information about children’s learning and development
- inform your planning and practice decisions.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child/Children’s Name/s:</th>
<th>Date: / /</th>
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Context: