This Early Years Exchange is the first in a series of publications to familiarise you with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (the Framework). There will be monthly updates during February, March, April and May 2010 to support your thinking, discussions and planning with families, colleagues and with children. It is intended for everyone who works with children between the ages of birth and eight years.

What is the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (the Framework)?

The main purpose of the Framework is to guide early childhood professionals to fulfil important work commitments and responsibilities. It is a core document that provides the vision for high quality early childhood education and care – it is not an instruction manual that prescribes practice.

It is designed to prompt ongoing conversations and learning for early childhood professionals. The discussion, debates and reflections that occur as a result of familiarity with the Framework will promote positive changes and build on existing good practice across the early years.

The Framework supports early childhood professionals to act intentionally in:
- planning for children’s learning and development
- facilitating children’s learning and development
- assessing children’s learning and development.

Each service will use the Framework in a unique way that fits with its community. It is not intended to be read in one sitting, but to be ‘dipped into’ and reread over time. Constructive change takes time – time to read, to think, to listen to children’s voices, to discuss with colleagues, to experiment with new ideas and evaluate changes over time.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Think about what the Framework means for...

You
Families
Children
The Service

Getting started with the Framework

You may be wondering whether using the Framework means changing everything about your practice. While some ideas may be new, you may find that much of the Framework is familiar and matches your current practices.

The Framework asks you to reflect on your thinking and to act intentionally to advance all children’s development and learning from birth at age eight years.

It challenges you to consider ways to be active, purposeful and thoughtful in making choices. It also challenges you to reflect on the traditional ways of operating in early childhood services, rather than continue with practices that ‘have always been done that way’.

Action plan Where do I begin?

Read and find the place that seems most familiar and/or the part that most interests you:

• Vision and Purpose Section (pages 5–8)
• Practice Principles (pages 9–14)
• Learning and Development Outcomes (pages 17–31)
• Transitions (pages 33–35)

Think about your practice in light of what you have read.
What implications will it have for you? Take time to consider. If some of the language is unclear, you could:

• check the Glossary (pages 51–53)
• Google the word
• write the word on a post-it note to check with other colleagues for clarification.

Set some time aside in your regular meetings with colleagues to discuss what the Framework means for your service and your practice. For example:

What is the same?

• How can you build on current practices to:
  – extend children’s learning and development
  – rethink the way you create inviting learning spaces
  – involve children’s interests in the learning environment
  – enhance relationships with other early childhood professionals

What is new?

• How can you find out more about this aspect – who can you talk to and/or where can you find more information?

As a group begin to:

• identify realistic goals, priorities and timelines.
• identify one change – plan it and make the change.

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

Begin to review and adapt programs.

‘I need help getting started – finding how the Framework links to current programming and how I can document my program’
The Framework turns early years learning into a ‘tick box’ exercise

The Framework has the flexibility to accommodate a diverse range of approaches to program planning and allows practitioners to use their professional judgment.

The Framework acknowledges that play is crucial for children’s learning and development and encourages play, fun and the enjoyment of learning. Early childhood professionals recognise that learning is an active process that involves children’s engagement and interactions with adults and peers to support learning and development. Play is essential to stimulate and integrate a wide range of children’s intellectual, physical, social and creative abilities. Every child will take a unique path in their learning and development journey.

The Framework supports early childhood professionals to think about principles, discuss what this means to daily practice and review and adapt programs to support learning.

‘The outcomes are good and contemporary. Like the new language used – outside traditional developmental domains. It makes us think about what we do’

The centre staff commented that some children were engaged for longer periods of play and that provided staff with the opportunity to challenge the children’s thinking and extend their learning through conversations. This process became the model that staff used to implement further action.

Snapshot

Staff members at an integrated children’s centre involved in the trial of the Framework decided to use a step-by-step process to plan their entry point into the Framework.

They used an action plan of Read, Talk, Plan, Notice and Reflect. They began by focusing on the way they:

• observed children
• set up their play spaces.

First, they decided to provide a two-week timeline to read the Practice Principles of the Framework. Next, they held a staff discussion about the way they usually observed children and the way that they usually set up play spaces. From that, they agreed to implement small changes for a trial period and note what impact this had on children’s interactions and learning.

The children were invited to plan play spaces with staff. Staff noticed that this enabled a broader range of children to initiate play and learning and that the children accessed a broader range of materials.

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Links to current resources

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Early Childhood Australia

Email contact

To send any questions, comments or feedback to the VCAA Early Years Unit, simply click on the link below to contact us:

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