

VCAA

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

EARLY YEARS EXCHANGE

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LINKS



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

This publication is only available online at
www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

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 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 third issue has a particular focus on relationships with young children in the birth to age three period. It explores ways to consider the **Practice Principle of respectful relationships and responsive engagement**.

Guest appearance

Belinda George, Diploma of Children's Services (Early Childhood Education and Care), is the room leader in the Orchard Room for two to three year olds at St Kilda Tree House Child Care, a private 140-place long-day day care centre that incorporates a funded kindergarten program. Tree House Child Care offers an emergent curriculum in an indoor/outdoor program with a commitment to the environment and the local community.

The service encourages a team approach to planning. An example of planning for a learning area is accessible [here](#).



Factors that make a difference in learning for infants and young children:

1. Relationships between educators and children, including their families
2. The understanding educators have and the practices they use to help children learn and develop
3. Children's wellbeing while they are attending ECEC services
4. Children's involvement in interactions, activities and experiences with responsive adults and other children at the service.

(Winter, 2008)



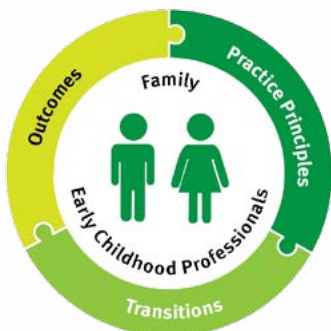
Thomas at 12 weeks

Baby Brain Map

‘Scientists have now proven, beyond reasonable doubt, what many parents and early childhood educators have believed for years – that loving and nurturing relationships with parents and caregivers, along with positive play experiences, significantly affect the brain development of babies and young children.’ (*Whiria te ao tamariki: Infants and Toddlers*, 2002)

The Baby Brain Map reveals the secrets of how early care enriches development. The baby brain map is accessible at:

http://www.zerotothree.org/site/PageServer?pagename=ter_util_babybrainflash



Snapshots

Snapshot 1 – from a child's portfolio

I had set up the drums. Lily (1 year and 9 months) was beating them with her hand and a drumstick. I got out a favourite book, *Ten in the Bed* (Dale, 1990). I sat by Nicholas and started reading. Every time I said ‘roll over’, I beat the cymbal on my knee. Lily copied the sound and rhythm on the drum. What next? Lily came over to me and took the book over to the drums. She beat the drum with the book, singing, ‘Roll over, roll over’.



Snapshot 2 – an educator's observation

One morning, as Rosie (2 years and 9 months) walked in the door, she commented about the flower in my hair. She asked where it came from and when I replied that the flower came from a bush outside, Rosie walked to the home corner, collected a basket and purposefully walked outside. I observed that she soon returned to the home corner with a basket full of flowers. I commented that there were lots of flowers in her basket. Rosie responded by saying, ‘Let’s see how many’. Clearly with her own agenda, she began lining up the flowers end-to-end on the table and commented that she was making a long line. I followed her lead and posed the question, ‘I wonder if your line of flowers will be longer than the table?’ Rosie kept adding flowers until they dropped off the end of the table and then announced, ‘Yes, it is longer’. I was delighted that Rosie had demonstrated an understanding of the measurement concept, of comparative length and usage of mathematical language. I photographed her flower line and noted in forward planning to look for opportunities in everyday routines to consolidate the maths concepts and comparative language with Rosie.

‘The brain experiences explosive growth during the early years ... We need to communicate that relationships ... are the best stimulation for an expanding mind.’

(Thompson, 2008)

‘Infants and toddlers flourish in settings that meet their fundamental needs for close caring relationships ... with responsive caregivers’ (Stonehouse, 2004)



Action plan to strengthen respectful relationships and responsive engagement with children

Team meetings are an excellent way to begin to introduce practical changes to your program. As a team, think about the many different ways that you engage with children during the day and the ways you nurture your relationships with them. Identify areas of strength and areas that could be developed. In discussion you may identify things you want to drop away: routines that are not helpful or are a communication barrier.

Within your team think about and discuss what practices you would like to rethink, for example how:

- your program planning incorporates children’s interests
- you set up learning environments to create opportunities for each child to feel invited, safe but challenged
- you create learning opportunities out of the daily routines in the room
- you adjust your discussions with children to match their development
- you document and assess children’s involvement in experiences
- you and your team make learning visible for the children and your families.

Ask a mentor/coach how you can find out more about one aspect of your work, who you can talk to and/or where you can 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 practices 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.

Link to Network Activity



Resources

Lally, R 2009, ZerotoThree, viewed 18 March 2010, <www.zerotothree.org>

Stonehouse, A and Gonzalez-Mena, J 2004, *Making Links: a collaborative approach to planning and practice in Early Childhood Service*, Pademelon Press, Castle Hill, NSW, Australia.

New Zealand Ministry of Education 2002, *Whiria te ao tamariki: Infants and Toddlers* Issue 1, viewed 18 March 2010, <www.educate.ecc.govt.nz/>

Thompson, R 2008, ZerotoThree, viewed 18 March 2010, <www.zerotothree.org>

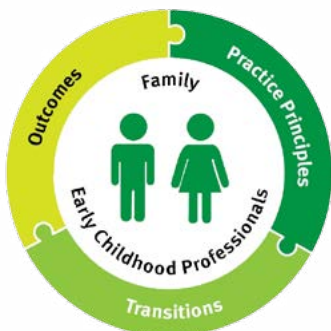
Winter, P 2008, Foundational and expansive learning for infants and older children, personal communication 11 June 2008

Think about responsive engagement with ...



Families
Children
Your Colleagues
The Community

‘Every moment in which an adult provides care to a young infant is a moment rich with learning’ (Lally, 2009)



Mythbuster

Learning and teaching can't be the focus of our days. We work with 15 children in the toddlers' room and we're very busy. It takes all our time to get through the routines, settle in new children and keep all the children safe and happy. Families want to know about routines, and whether everything was okay for their child at the end of the day. We don't have time to focus on teaching young children.

The daily routines of caring for young children – greeting upon arrival at the service, eating, sleeping, changing nappies, saying goodbye, setting up learning spaces, cleaning up and record keeping – include times when educators can strengthen bonds with young children.

Responsive care means slowing down – following the child's lead, being available but not offering assistance too early. A little help is best – maybe asking open-ended questions.

Give infants and young children time to explore and interact with them in ways that support their emotional and cognitive growth – being involved in shared sustained conversations encourages discovery and learning.

Learning and teaching opportunities arise every day when educators follow and extend children's natural interests while providing close and responsive relationships.



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