Welcome to the seventh edition of the EYE to support implementation of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).

In this edition we focus on babies and toddlers and the primary influence of families on young children’s learning and development. The first three years in children’s lives are the most critical years in shaping the architecture of the brain. Early learning experiences provide the foundations for brain development and functioning throughout life. Healthy development of a young child’s brain is built on the small everyday learning ‘moments’ that parents and early childhood professionals experience with children.

This edition features the first in a series of interviews with early childhood professionals from the pilot Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes Project (Outcomes Project) 2010 – 2011. The Outcomes Project used an inquiry based model of professional learning with fifty early childhood professionals working with families and children birth to eight years. Participants documented and refined their understandings and skills in observing, documenting and analysing evidence of children’s learning in the five outcomes.

Participants were from Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Enhanced MCH, long day care, out of school hours care, family day care, kindergarten, supported playgroup, early years in primary school and Early Childhood Intervention Services.

In the video clip and the ‘Snapshot’ section participants share their observations and analysis of children’s learning in the five outcomes.

By respecting the pivotal role of families in children’s lives, early childhood professionals are demonstrating family-centred practice. This edition explores ways to consider Practice Principle 1: Family-Centred Practice.

**Guest appearance**

In conversation, early childhood professionals describe how they are using the five outcomes in their work with families in supported playgroup and Enhanced MCH settings.

Andrea Alvis and Bernie Harrison participated in the Outcomes Project (birth to three years group) and here they talk with Project Facilitator, Anne Stonehouse about some of their experiences. Dr Estelle Irving was a co-facilitator for this group.

Andrea Alvis works as the Senior Family Services Practitioner with Anglicare Plenty Valley. During the Outcomes Project, Andrea was the Uniting Care Moreland Hall Intensive Playgroup Counsellor.

Bernie Harrison works as an Enhanced MCH nurse with the City of Greater Dandenong.

Anne Stonehouse works extensively across the early childhood sector as a consultant, writer and facilitator of professional learning.
Snapshots

Using evidence to support children’s learning and development

Three Snapshots of evidence of children’s learning and development from the Outcomes Project provide examples of early childhood professionals applying the planning cycle to:

• collect information, including the context for the child and family
• analyse and interpret observations and records
• plan and act to support children’s learning and development
• actively reflect on programming and pedagogy
• discuss children’s learning with families.

Snapshot 1 – Family day care

Context

Setting: Two children with Family day care educator
Experience: Play experiences in family room – Jack (2 years 9 months), Fraser (3 years 5 months).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record</th>
<th>What learning was noticed?</th>
<th>Future planning</th>
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</table>
| Fraser was walking up back and forth in the family room, a mobile phone to his ear saying ‘Oh, it’s okay mate. I had no service. Don’t worry, it’s my work phone.’ Jack followed closely behind, mimicking Fraser’s movements and words including swapping the block he was using as a pretend mobile phone from one ear to the other. This play continued for eight minutes. Fraser moved away and started playing with Lego. Jack continued talking on the mobile phone to his mum. Jack then followed Fraser to the Lego asking him to answer his phone. | Jack was showing interest in other children (VEYLDF p. 19) by mirroring Fraser’s play. This was the first time he was interested in play with Fraser. He used language and engaged in symbolic play to imagine and create roles, scripts and ideas (VEYLDF p. 31) – demonstrating his COMMUNICATION skills. Jack followed up by initiating play with Fraser, using language to extend their play together. | Family day care educator shared information with Jack’s dad at pick up time about his progress:
• Jack was interested in being near Fraser and copying his behaviour.
• He is developing a positive relationship with another child.
• It involved turn taking as Fraser waited for Jack to repeat what he had said.
Family day care educator asked about Jack’s interests at home and talked with the family about how they would like to be involved at Family day care.
Follow-up actions by Family day care educator:
• In discussion with Jack, set-up play space/s and select materials for two children where Fraser and Jack can play together, allowing them to concentrate on their friendship
• Family day care educator to join in to keep the play going. |

‘I am taking more in-depth observations ... and using these observations to encourage parents to see more of their child’s learning too.’

(Child Care Centre, 2011)
Looking closely at the detail in the outcomes has helped me to shine a light on children’s learning.”

(Supported playgroup, 2011)

Snapshot 2 – Supported playgroup

Context

Setting: Culturally diverse supported playgroup, Megan (2 years 6 months) and her mother Sarah have been attending playgroup for six weeks. Megan stays close to her mother and observes what is happening during the small group time.

Experience: A small singing and movement group is planned for children and parents in response to information provided by Sarah about Megan’s interest in singing. Led by playgroup leader Angie singing ‘My lovely cloth, it goes up and down.’ A parachute is used for this small group experience to build trust and a sense of belonging.

### Documentation / Record

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What was happening?</th>
<th>What is the learning and development?</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Angie encouraged children to run under the parachute with her while it was up in the air. Children stayed watching the parachute. Megan joined Angie under the parachute, sitting close, smiling and laughing as the parachute billowed up and down. | Megan joined in group actions for the first time and showed enjoyment in being involved in this experience. Megan is learning to:  
  - mirror others and join in play – LEARNING  
  - listen and respond to sounds in songs – COMMUNICATION  
  - express her feelings with others – IDENTITY  
  - build trust and confidence with supported playgroup leader Angie – WELLBEING. | What’s next?  
Follow-up with the family?  
Angie made time at the end of the session to talk with Sarah. Following on from information provided by Sarah about Megan’s interest in singing, Angie talked about the learning she noticed:  
• Megan is establishing a trusting relationship with a familiar educator (Angie). She shows this by moving close to Angie’s side during the parachute song.  
• By following Angie under the parachute, Megan is showing she can mirror actions of others. This is an important first step in forming strong attachments. In conversation with Sarah, Angie learned that Megan enjoys the swing at home. To build on learning outside the playgroup, Angie suggested using Megan’s interest in singing to introduce another song. On the swing they could sing:  
‘Ready, Set, Go, Up in the air I fly, Zoom, zoom.’ |

* All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of any children, families or staff featured in the Snapshots.
Snapshot 3 – Maternal and Child Health (MCH)

Context

Setting: MCH Nurse Julie, Rachel (4 years), Kia (2 years) brought her doll from home, Karen (mother, 8 months pregnant)

Experience: MCH Nurse Julie conducting two year old Key Ages and Stages visit with Rachel and her mother. The family had attended for all previous Key visits.

Rachel and Kia entered the centre happily and both sat at a small table with a tea set. Julie and Karen were seated at the office desk discussing the completed Parental Evaluation of Developmental Status (PEDS).

The two year old Key Ages and Stages visit covers growth, development, nutrition and feeding, parenting support, safety and kindergarten enrolment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Analysis and Interpretation</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rachel played with the tea set at a small table. Kia sat beside her and tried to take a piece of the tea set. Rachel pulled the tea set out of Kia’s reach and Kia began to cry.</td>
<td>A new baby is a major transition for the family. How can we best support the transition for the family? The children are at different levels of learning and development in their play and readiness to share toys. How can we best support the development of the relationship between the siblings and still allow them the opportunity to problem solve?</td>
<td>Talk with Karen about preparing herself and the children for a new baby.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel took Kia’s doll and used it in her play as the imaginary tap for the water.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karen asked Rachel to share the tea set. Neither of the children responded to Karen’s request. Rachel took pieces of the tea set back from Kia. Both children were upset and crying.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen was also upset and said she didn’t know how she was going to manage the girls’ behaviours when the new baby arrived.</td>
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A new baby is a major transition for the family. How can we best support the transition for the family? The children are at different levels of learning and development in their play and readiness to share toys. How can we best support the development of the relationship between the siblings and still allow them the opportunity to problem solve?

Talk with Karen about preparing herself and the children for a new baby.

• **During pregnancy**
  What will help now? Who can help? What do the children know now about the pregnancy and the new baby? What is important to the children?

• **Planning for child birth**
  Talk about the arrangements for the care of the children during the birth. Discuss the plans with the children so they know what to expect.

• **Bringing the baby home**
  Introduce ideas to help the children adjust to changes when the baby comes home. Include the children in daily activities and care of the baby. Provide the girls with some special and private space, and things of their own that they don’t have to share with the baby. Follow-up further at next visit.

• **Provide information on**
  [Raising Children’s Network](https://www.raisingchildren.net.au)
  Have you just had a new baby? These services may help.

*All names have been changed to protect the anonymity of any children, families or staff featured in the Snapshots.*
Families do want to know that children are happy and settled. Families also want to know about babies’ and toddlers’ learning and development.

Relationships between families and early childhood professionals are fundamental to the early development of babies’ and young children’s wellbeing. Talking with families every day is a central link for the child between home and the early childhood service.

As early childhood professionals, you can use the five outcomes to talk about the everyday routines and events with children and families through a learning lens. Sharing this information with families about children’s learning will strengthen your understanding and responsiveness with children.

The subtlety of evidence of babies’ and toddlers’ learning requires deep and broad knowledge of children’s learning and development in the birth to three period. Going into the language and detail in the five outcomes and reading them on a regular basis is vital. Discussing them with colleagues will support your understanding of what the five outcomes mean for the children. This process will support your confidence in talking with families about their children’s learning.

Your individual records detail what you are noticing about babies’ and toddlers’ learning. Think about how you will use this information to have informal, regular conversations with families to support babies’ and toddlers’ learning at your service.

‘Partnerships with families are central to working with children under three in any setting. One of the reasons for this and one of the ways to strengthen relationships is through sharing the complexity and richness of children’s learning.’

(Supported playgroup, 2011)

Key Messages

1. Implementing these frameworks is an essential step in preparing for the National Quality Framework. It is a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 that a program is delivered to all children being educated and cared for by the service that is based on an approved learning framework and is delivered in a manner that accords with the approved learning framework.

2. The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, the Early Years Learning Framework and the Framework for School Age Care are complementary documents. They are key components of the Australian and Victorian Government’s quality reform agenda for all early childhood education and care settings.
Action plan

Supporting family-centred practice

Using the five outcomes to build close working partnerships with families and children and involving parents in their child’s learning leads to improved outcomes for children.

Team meetings are a useful way to continue to talk about the VEYLDF and to consider changes at an individual, program and service level.

As a team:

• spend some time thinking about the different ways that you engage with families and provide feedback about their children’s learning
• work on building relationships with each family and get to know them
• think about and discuss what practices you would like to rethink and reshape.

Navigating your way: Read, Discuss, Reflect and Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Consider your practice in the light of readings – VEYLDF Evidence Paper: Practice Principle 1: Family-Centred Practice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Participate in a facilitated discussion with your team, a network, mentor or coach about evidence and what it means for your practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect</td>
<td>Write down your ideas and reflections, this supports your thinking and discussion with others as well as your commitment to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act</td>
<td>Identify realistic goals, priorities and timelines for change</td>
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Chart your course: Use a Reflective Journal as part of your documentation

• Identify one change, plan it and do it.
• Communicate your change to colleagues.
• Notice the impact for children, colleagues and in your discussions with families.
• Use your Reflective Journal to review.

Resources

References

The VEYLDF Evidence Paper Practice Principle 1: Family-Centred Practice is a valuable resource to support discussions within your team or network.

Equal partnerships with families mean:

• parents increase their knowledge and understanding of their children’s learning
• early childhood professionals benefit through increasing their knowledge and understanding of children’s learning opportunities at home
• children experience their parents and early childhood professionals working closely together
• families and early childhood professionals build a trusting and secure environment for children to learn and grow – providing a sense of continuity between home and the service.

‘If we are always certain that our work is ‘okay’ or ‘going well’ or ‘doesn’t need to change’ we will never be open to different ways of thinking and doing.’

(Dr Anne Kennedy DEEWR online forum, 2011)
**Book reviews**

Remember you can share your recommendations on valuable references and resources by emailing vevldf@edumail.vic.gov.au

### The more you know, the more you see – Babies' and toddlers' learning and the EYLF
Written by Anne Stonehouse

This research in practice booklet is available through Early Childhood Australia and you can view the contents and a sample chapter here.

This book is informed by the Outcomes Project 2010–2011 and refers to case studies from several Outcomes Project participants. It includes evidence of children’s learning from birth to three.

It has been written primarily for early childhood educators, but may also be of interest to families and others who work closely with young children.

There is a very useful section that describes evidence of learning in each outcome and the practices to support this learning.

This book is highly recommended to support staff discussions and self-directed learning.

### Wellbeing from Birth
Written by Dr Rosemary Roberts

**Wellbeing from Birth** is an essential read for early childhood professionals working with babies and young children, as well as students undertaking study in early childhood. It offers a way of thinking about the wellbeing needs of children.

It draws on relevant research, theory and practical examples to explore answers to questions such as:

- What is wellbeing?
- What determines its development?
- How do we know when we are seeing it?

**Wellbeing from Birth** is rich with examples and each chapter ends with a summary of key messages, points for discussion and suggestions for further reading.

### Videos and websites

#### Professional Learning Program

Early Childhood Australia EYLF Professional Learning Program (PLP) – Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

The EYLF PLP, developed for the Australian Government by Early Childhood Australia, provides ongoing professional support to services as they engage in the EYLF implementation process.

To find out more information go to: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfplp/

‘Read, trust and be sceptical at the same time.’

(Seamus Heaney)
Neuroscience – an introduction

The video clip Stimulating Minds and Protecting Brains provides compelling messages about the science of early brain development and how that affects learning, behaviour and health for a lifetime.

Delivered by Jack Shonkoff, Professor of Child Health and Development, Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University, this nine-minute presentation could be used as a resource for discussion with parent groups and/or to support a facilitated discussion at a staff meeting.

Further reading on neuroscience

Remember the Baby Brain Map
The Baby Brain Map is a wonderful resource to recommend to new parents. Follow this link to the Baby Brain Map which describes how development is enriched by responsive relationships.

Raising Children Network

The Raising Children Network is a comprehensive resource for parents and carers of children from birth to 15 years of age and early childhood professionals. This resource shares practical and evidence-based information for families including:

• being a parent
• play and learning
• health and nutrition
• nursery rhymes and songs for babies
• interactive guides and maps to find local help and support services including practical, personal and professional services.

Click here to find out more about:
Newborn play and learning: in a nutshell
Baby play and learning: in a nutshell
Toddler play and learning: in a nutshell
Share this resource with families by:
• providing the web address www.raisingchildren.net.au
• using information and resources on notice boards or
• making information available to discuss with families.
Previous editions

Six previous editions of the EYE are available for you to revisit as you continue to implement and embed the learning frameworks.

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<th>Edition</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Guest Appearance by</th>
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<td>Getting started with the Framework</td>
<td>Professor Collette Tayler</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>Prep teacher</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Respectful relationships and responsive engagement</td>
<td>Room leader at a childcare centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Partnerships with professionals</td>
<td>Local government children’s services team</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Integrated teaching and learning approaches</td>
<td>Education Coordinator at a cultural organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>High Expectations for every child</td>
<td>Kindergarten teacher</td>
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A Team approach to planning – working with children 2–3 years

The video clip interview from the EYE No. 3 (March 2010) is recommended viewing to support staff discussions and self-directed learning.

It is based around the practice principle of respectful relationships and responsive engagement and describes the factors that make a difference in learning for infants and young children.

In this interview Belinda George, an early childhood professional working in long day care describes how she sets up the learning environment for very young children and how the service encourages a team approach to planning.

Belinda was a member of the Outcomes Project Group and works in the 2–3 year old room at St Kilda Tree House Child Care Centre.

Exchanges and changes

The EYE is a series of online publications to support implementation of the VEYLDF. The EYE is intended for everyone who works with children from birth to age eight.

The VCAA Early Years Unit is keen to hear from you about:

Children’s learning and development

- questions about implementation of the VEYLDF
- how you are using the five outcomes in your practice with families
- what you are noticing about children’s learning
- ideas that you are trialling in the workplace about working in partnership with families

Support and leadership

- changes and adaptations you have made, perhaps as a result of transformation of beliefs, attitudes or knowledge
- interesting discussions in your workplace about practice change, who supports you and who do you support in embedding the VEYLDF
- collaborative learning environments or communities of practice that support you
- early childhood professionals who are demonstrating leadership within your service or community.

Tell us what you think:

- feedback about the EYE
- ideas for articles, resources and information to support you and your team or networks.

Email: veyldf@edumail.vic.gov.au