Welcome to the eighth edition of the EYE. This resource aims to further support implementation of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF).

Edition eight focuses on the Practice Principle of Equity and Diversity. Early childhood professionals create inclusive environments for children and families. They also create experiences and opportunities for children to celebrate the richness and diversity of cultures and heritages.

In this edition we are very pleased to announce the release of a VEYLDF professional learning resource. This resource provides comprehensive information to support early childhood professionals in their work with young children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

This edition also continues the series of interviews with early childhood professionals from the Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes Project (Outcomes Project) 2010–2011. Included in the video clip is Vien Phan from Springvale Service for Children who talks about how her practice is changing since participating in the Outcomes Project.

The VEYLDF acknowledges that ‘the families and communities in which children live are diverse, and children’s learning and development is enhanced when early childhood professionals respect their cultures and ways of knowing and being.’ (VEYLDF p. 7)

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For further information go to the Resources section on page 8.

Sarah O’Donnell is the Director at Springvale Service for Children, an integrated children’s and family service. Sarah along with team members Nichola Marriott, Team Leader Early Learning Program and Vien Phan, Room Leader 3–5 Room talk about their aspirations for all children to have a strong sense of self and to be confident learners.

At Springvale Service for Children early childhood professionals:
- actively promote inclusion and have high expectations for all children
- recognise the importance of their individual and team role in supporting equitable learning and development Outcomes for all children
- establish strong and equal partnerships with families
- continue to build and expand on collaborative relationships with other early childhood professionals.
Snapshots

Using evidence to support children’s learning and development

These two Snapshots of evidence of children’s learning and development from the Outcomes Project 2010–2011 provide examples of early childhood professionals applying the planning cycle to:
• collect information
• 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 – Primary School

Context
An early years team at a primary school use the VEYLDF Outcomes to plan with and note children’s persistence, concentration, ability to cooperate and self manage, and examples of individual’s confidence, interests and abilities. This information is used to build from the transition statements and to discuss with families.

The prep teacher describes the VEYLDF as providing valuable information, structure and support in areas connected to the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), in particular the Personal Learning and Interpersonal Learning domains. The VEYLDF Outcome 4 with a focus on Learning is of particular interest in supporting children’s capabilities in the classroom over time.

Questions to monitor & assess:
Did everyone work well together? (Cooperation)
Did you need to help anyone? (Helpful)

Questions to scaffold thinking for further work:
What could you do if someone wasn’t cooperating?

Questions to monitor & assess:
Where did you get your ideas from? (Imagination)

Questions to scaffold thinking for further work:
How could you get better at using your imagination? Do you feel confident to use your own ideas?

Questions to monitor & assess:
Did you like this activity? Why? (Enthusiasm)

Questions to scaffold thinking for further work:
What new things did you learn? (Curiosity)

Questions to monitor & assess:
What was hard? (Persistence) Did it take a long time? Did you mind? (Concentration)

Questions to scaffold thinking for further work:
What do you do when something is hard? (Persistence)
What could you do next time to concentrate better? (Concentration)
Do you like to get things just right?
**Practice change**

The prep teacher describes the following practice changes since working with the VEYLDF:

- I am much less teacher directed in my relationships with children and I have learnt to listen more and observe more deeply.
- Relationships with children to support their learning are enriched by this change.

**Snapshot 2 – Early Learning Program**

**Context**

An example of evidence from an early childhood professional working in the 3–4 year old room in an integrated children’s service.

A draft Tool has been used to support documentation of an up-to-date, strength-based picture of children’s learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document and Record</th>
<th>Analyse and Interpret</th>
<th>Act</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A group of children were gathering at one corner. Mena was lying down and covered by a piece of material. Above her head, on both sides there were two timers and one orange watercolour bottle. Cassie sat next to Mena, and Kye sat next to the timer watching carefully. When the educator asked what they were playing Cassie answered, ‘We’re playing the doctor … Mena was sick’. Cassie then described, ‘This one (timer) to put blood’ and made a gesture toward Mena’s arms.</td>
<td>- This is the first time that Mena and Kye have been involved in group play. They both started at the service in the last few weeks and their first languages are not English. - Cassie uses play to investigate, imagine and explore ideas. She contributes to play experiences from her own experience and emerging ideas. - The idea about ‘blood transfusion’ may be connected to Cassie’s experience (Cassie’s mother recently spent time in hospital). - Cassie has the ability to make play experiences real for others and is able to include other children in her ideas. - Mena and Kye took on their roles enthusiastically without conversation – it was evident that they wanted to be part of the group play.</td>
<td>- Talk with Mena’s and Kye’s families at pickup time – gather more information. - Observe Mena and Kye to gain more information about their learning. - Support group play more actively. - Provide collections of props for Mena and Kye to use. - Set up the play experience (doctor’s corner) to extend the children’s interest and to gather more evidence about how they use this experience for their learning. - Reinforce language opportunities through play – take an active role to support small groups of children. - Review with the families over time.</td>
</tr>
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‘In playgroup, parents are precious resources in both their children’s development and in gaining information. I have been able to learn from them to build on their children’s positive experience at playgroup.’ (Supported playgroup)
Interviews with early childhood professionals

Three early childhood professionals share their experience in using the VEYLDF and applying the principle of Equity and Diversity.

Here they talk about their changing work with the VEYLDF Outcomes and what’s different about their practice now.

My work with children and families has been strengthened by the recognition in the VEYLDF of Aboriginal cultures and the unique place of these in Victoria’s heritage and future.

In implementing the VEYLDF, I now have more confidence in placing respect for diversity at the centre of the learning program and experiences. I now introduce aspects of Koorie culture as an ongoing part of the learning program. Jenni Connor’s Dreaming Stories is a wonderful resource and the materials from the Yarn Strong Sista (Indigenous Education Consultancy <http://www.yarnstrongsista.com/sharing/index.html>) are always received with great interest and enthusiasm by the children.

Families have provided feedback to me on how incredibly positive this has been for them in acknowledging personal and cultural diversity.

The particular focus on Wellbeing and Identity has strengthened relationships and learning within our service.

The VEYLDF Outcomes provide a body of evidence about children’s learning before school. This has been very helpful for our early years team in working with children and families as part of transition to school.

The detail within the Outcomes support rich discussions with families about what children know and can do now – and helps us to describe small steps and progress in learning. This has made a difference in noticing children’s dispositions for learning and supporting children’s abilities to begin to express ideas, feelings and understandings, particularly in the first few months of transition to school.

The information in the Outcomes is particularly important for children who may not have attended an early childhood program.

The VEYLDF has strengthened my skills in supporting families to see and appreciate what’s positive about their child’s learning.

In my conversations with early childhood professionals at the service I begin with the Identity Outcome. I really believe in the strength of this Outcome, how powerfully Identity is connected with the other Outcomes, and what a difference a child’s sense of identity can make to their participation and success.

What’s different now is that there is much more joint sharing about what learning we see together, for example a child may be more confident and have a strong sense of belonging in one setting.

The VEYLDF Outcomes have provided a shared focus on children’s learning. Early childhood professionals from different backgrounds and disciplines can work together very effectively with the framework as a guide.
Mythbuster

I've been told that I have to do learning stories using the VEYLDF Outcomes. This is what other people do with documentation. This is what parents say they want to see and it makes our service stand out.

A primary purpose of all documentation is to support assessment for learning in the five Outcomes. An important aspect in documentation of children’s learning is the process of analysis and action. Observations without analysis are not useful.

Mixed strategies or varying ways of gathering evidence of learning will best support building a detailed picture of the child and cater for a range of strengths and capabilities – in writing, drawing, speaking, listening and in active ways. This documentation would be in written or visual form and may include observations, records in a tool template, photographs describing children’s learning, and examples of children’s work.

Documentation is part of daily practice. While it is necessary to ensure that documentation includes all children and a range of situations, the most effective documentation comes from noting what is significant.

This is particularly important in the birth to three period where the evidence of infants and toddlers learning and development is more subtle. Decisions about interactions and experiences can occur on the spot as early childhood professionals cue into gestures, body language and responses from children.

• Keep a record of children’s behaviour, thinking, conversations, and interactions.
• Identify what children’s learning looks like in each of the Outcome areas; what does the child demonstrate?
• Collect information about interests, strengths, and capabilities that can inform practice
• Identify areas where a child may require different or additional levels of engagement and support.

Ask the question – Why did I write about this?

Is the purpose of the documentation for communication:
• with a parent
• with another early childhood professional
• with the child?

Now that I have noticed this learning, what does this mean?
Step back and think about the meaning of what you have noticed. Reflective questions may assist you to analyse and interpret:
• Who/what can help me interpret this observation, e.g. the child, the family, other professionals, research evidence?
• What ideas, thoughts, experience or perspectives are behind my analysis and interpretation?
• What does this documentation tell me about this child’s learning and development?
• How is this a pathway for learning?
• How does this observation link to one or more of the learning Outcomes?
Planning time

Aim to use some planning time for further reading to develop and support your interests and passions about children and their learning.

To support deeper thinking:
- look for patterns in children’s learning
- share different viewpoints with colleagues
- think about what other approaches could be used
- place yourself in the play and note children’s reactions and engagement
- provide space and time for children in play.

Considerations:
- Place less focus on the numbers of observations.
- Decrease the amount of observations you record.
- Broaden other reflection activities

Think about and discuss in your service how you regularly gather evidence of children’s learning

Think about what is meaningful about this evidence over time.

Are there ways that I can use this information in my communication with the child and with the family?

How will I adapt my plans and practices in:
- interactions with children
- interactions with families
- the way I set up the learning environment
- the learning experiences I encourage and extend
- the daily routines.

Since working with implementing the VEYLDF, I’m connecting more with other professionals like Maternal and Child Health and Noah’s Ark. I find I communicate more with them than I used to.”

(Long-day day care)
Planning guide

Supporting equity and diversity

If your service has identified equity and diversity as an area that you would like to focus on, this planning guide can be used to support preparation of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as part of the National Quality Standard quality areas.

This also supports critical reflection and practice change in relation to equity and diversity.

The VEYLF Practice Principle of Equity and Diversity provides new possibilities and guidance for early childhood professionals.

Understanding and supporting children’s diverse strengths, abilities, interests and cultural practices is important if we are to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families.

As a team or as part of a local network, consider your understanding of the Learning and Development Outcomes and the Practice Principle of Equity and Diversity.

Navigating your way:

**Read**

- Read and consider your practice in the light of the VEYLF Evidence Paper – Practice Principle 4: Equity and Diversity
- Become familiar with the National Quality Standard and QIP at: www.acecqa.gov.au/

**Discuss**

- Discuss and self-assess your practices against the seven quality areas of the National Quality Standard, for example 1.1.2, 1.1.5, 6.2 and 6.3.3
- Spend time thinking about how your service and local community support and enhance equitable learning and development Outcomes for all children
- Actively challenge and address any issues of inequity, and promote diversity

**Question**

- Question why and how certain practices occur
- Reflect on your practice and consider what you can or might need to change to meet the National Quality Standards
- Write your ideas and reflections down and document in a QIP if this is an area your service decides to concentrate on

**Plan**

- Focus on working through a cycle of continuous quality improvement
- Use a QIP to support your thinking and discussion with others as well as your commitment to change
- Identify strengths and also practices for improvement
- Prioritise areas for improvement and list who and when you will implement the change

**Act**

- Implement change and improvements
- Analyse the change, refine if needed

Use a Reflective Journal as part of your planning and documentation

- Identify one change, plan it and do it.
- Communicate your change to colleagues; review at staff meetings.
- Notice the impact for children, colleagues and in your discussions with families.
- Use your Reflective Journal to review the impact of any changes.

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**Did you know?**

Australia is one of the most multicultural countries in the world.

- ‘Nearly a quarter of Australian residents (23.9%) were born abroad and almost every second resident (45%) had at least one parent who was born overseas.’ Department of Immigration and Citizenship Census 2006
- ‘Currently almost 400 languages [are] spoken in Australia with 16% of the population speaking a language other than English at home.’ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2010
- ‘Number of people identified as being Indigenous and/or Torres Strait Islander origin is 2.3% of the Australian population.’ ABS Census 2006

**LINKS**

The National Quality Framework commences on 1 January 2012 for Long-day day care, family day care, outside school hours care and preschool services.

It aims to raise quality and support continuous improvement in early childhood education and care across Australia.

To find out more go to:

- National Quality Framework Resources for the National Quality Standard and Quality Improvement Plan
- Department of Education and Early Childhood Development National Quality Agenda
Resources

Publications

Following is a list of resources that can be used by early childhood professionals to support their own professional growth and learning and to complement early learning programs and practices.

**Learning English as an Additional Language in the Early Years (birth to six years)**

This resource booklet is part of professional learning materials that have been developed to support implementation of the VEYLDF.

The resource booklet has four sections: ‘Creating welcoming and culturally inclusive environments for all children and families’, ‘Practical ideas to support children under three years old’, ‘Practical ideas to support children three to six years old’ and ‘References and Resources’.

The resource booklet is available for download here.

This set of materials provides comprehensive information to support early childhood professionals in their work with young children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The professional learning materials also include:

- a discussion paper: ‘Supporting Children Learning English as a Second Language in the Early Years (birth to six years)’, by Dr Priscilla Clarke OAM (available for download here)
- three professional learning modules:
  - Module 1 – Learning English as an Additional Language – children under three
  - Module 2 – Learning English as an Additional Language in the preschool years
  - Module 3 – Achieving outcomes in English as an Additional Language in the preschool years.

**Training**

FKA Children’s Services delivers training on the three professional learning modules, and can customise training to a service’s needs. For further information contact FKA Children’s Services Manager on (03) 9428 4471 or go to: www.fka.com.au

**Child-Rearing backgrounds of Immigrant Families in Australia**

*Child-Rearing backgrounds of Immigrant Families in Australia* contains information about child-rearing patterns and cultural backgrounds of different community groups in Australia including aspects of history, geography, food, religion and customs from 37 countries.

This is a valuable resource and supports early childhood professionals in their work with parents and their understanding of child-rearing perspectives. It can be used to support planning and celebrate diversity by gaining knowledge of the diverse cultural practices.

Produced by FKA Children’s Services 2009, this publication is available in Folder and CD format.

**Inclusive Early Childhood Services – a practical guide for professionals**

This is a valuable resource for all early childhood services to assist in creating inclusive environments for children and families. This practical guide presents a series of questions and activities for early childhood professionals to reflect and review practices and environments at their services. The guide provides practical suggestions to support positive change.

This resource is available to early childhood services free of charge in hard copy and can be ordered through the DEECD Kindergarten Communications Material – Order Form found at: www.education.vic.gov.au/ecsm/acmsite/careankinder/brochures.htm
This resource is designed to be used in interactive ways to promote in-depth conversations and thinking about principles, practices and pedagogy over a sustained period of time.

Chapter Six is about **Cultural Competence**.

Underlying cultural competence are the principles of trust, respect for diversity, equity, fairness and social justice. Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences (EYLF, p. 16).

The Educators’ Guide is available at:


**Evidence Paper – Practice Principle 4: Equity and Diversity**

The VEYLDF Evidence Paper – Practice Principle 4: Equity and Diversity is now available online.

The Evidence Paper documents the latest research describing:

- what the Practice Principle of Equity and Diversity is
- why it’s important to teaching and learning
- how professionals engage in best-practice
- the implications for best practice.

As a team or with another colleague, use this Evidence Paper to explore and discuss your understandings of equity and diversity and how your practices align with the Practice Principle of Equity and Diversity.

Questions to get started in evaluating achievements, reviewing daily working practices and considering changes could include:

- What is my understanding of equity and diversity?
- How have we enhanced each child’s sense of belonging and identity?
- What policies and strategies do we have in place to support strong and respectful partnerships with families and communities?
- As a team, what issues of inequity have we addressed?

**Neuroscience – the research**

Our regular feature focuses on compelling evidence in brain development with a particular focus on the birth to three period.

Honorary professorial fellow in education at the University of Melbourne Joe Sparling, is one of the lead researchers of the Abecedarian Project and has developed the 3A (Abecedarian Approach Australia) program.

This approach is based on three practices to stimulate young children and has been found to mitigate the effects of disadvantage.

The 3A Activities are based on:

- learning games conducted individually
- conversational reading
- enriched caregiving with children.

The following link to a short YouTube video provides an excerpt from the National Geographic Documentary: ‘My Brilliant Brain’. This interview outlines the long-term outcomes (over 30 years) for children and their families involved in the Abecedarian Project. This interview is available at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xShX-dJMjmM
Websites

**E4Kids – Effective Early Educational Experiences**

The aim of E4Kids is to inform policy makers, professionals in the field and parents about the contribution that early educators and care programs make to children’s learning and development. This study is conducted by The University of Melbourne and Queensland University of Technology.

E4Kids is a five-year study that will follow a large group of three and four year olds as they participate in childcare, kindergarten and preschool programs. The project will track children and analyse the programs they attend through to the early years of school.

For further information visit: [www.e4kids.org.au](http://www.e4kids.org.au)

**FKA Children’s Service**

FKA Children’s Service is a state-wide service providing advice, consultancy, training and resources to early childhood professionals working with children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

**Quicklinks**

- [What’s New in the Library](#)
- [2011 Professional Development Training](#)
- [2012 Days of Significance](#)

For further information telephone (03) 9428 4471 or visit: [www.fka.com.au](http://www.fka.com.au)

**Koorie Heritage Trust Inc.**

The Koorie Heritage Trust Inc. aims to protect, preserve and promote the living culture of Aboriginal people of south-eastern Australia. Through education and promotion it raises awareness and appreciation of the cultural diversity of Koorie culture in south-eastern Australia and works towards the broader goals of reconciliation for all Australians.

For further information visit: [www.koorieheritagetrust.com](http://www.koorieheritagetrust.com)

**Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)**

SNAICC is the national non-government peak body in Australia representing the interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

SNAICC works to advance the rights and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families.

For further information about SNAICC resources, projects and training visit: [www.snaicc.asn.au](http://www.snaicc.asn.au)

**Events of interest and significance**

**Celebrate International Day of People with Disability on 3 December 2011**

The theme for 2011 is: ‘Together for a better world for all: Including persons with disabilities in development’.

International Day of People with Disability brings together individuals, businesses, community organisations, and governments from every corner of the world to celebrate and acknowledge the contributions, skills and achievements of people with disability.

Celebrate this day by getting involved in your local communities and contribute to increasing awareness of the benefits of integration of people with a disability in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

For more information visit: [www.idpwd.com.au](http://www.idpwd.com.au)

‘Approximately 8% of Australian children have a disability, with approximately 4.3% of those having a severe disability.’

(Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2009)
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 learning and development 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
- practice changes 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 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.

Let us know your feedback about:
- the EYE
- the Resource Booklet – Learning English as an Additional Language in the Early Years (birth to six years)
- articles, resources and information to support you and your team or networks.

Email: veyldf@edumail.vic.gov.au

Tjukurrpjanu Origins of Western Desert Art

A National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) Touring Exhibition is on from 30 September 2011 to 12 February 2012 at the Ian Potter Centre, NGV Australia at Federation Square.

This important exhibition features 200 of the first paintings produced at Papunya 1971 to 1972 by the founding artists of the Western Desert art movement.

These seminal works sparked the genesis of the Papunya Tula movement, now internationally recognised as one of the most important events in Australian art history.