**[Karen Hope]:** So, Mary, the learning plan that you have selected to show tonight as an exemplar of practice is titled "Hats". Can you tell us a little bit about some of the features of this narrative and how this might help us build a picture of this child's learning and development? And Steph, if you could put up slide four.

**[Mary Holwell]:** Thanks, Stephanie. That looks great. I think it's big enough, certainly big enough for me to read. So I hope everybody else can see that now as well. So you'll see with this learning sample plan, that it does in effect follow the tabs or the little buttons that exist in the Early Years Planning Cycle, which is included in the VEYLDF. So the first heading is collect information and you can see, it's really short. It's quite simple. It's simply a record of what the educator observed about this child. But what makes it meaningful is that the educator has gone on to question and analyse that observation. They've linked in as part of that question and analysis, they've linked the observation to the VEYLDF communication, Learning, and Development Outcome, and chosen some evidence markers that reflect what they think the learning was for this child in this observation. Now, it's important to think about the fact that this educator has collected this information already having a whole raft of information about the child.

So they've made a value judgement that this piece of data is worth recording. Someone else might've seen this and already had lots of examples of this kind of information and decided not to record it for another child. So we need to locate this within the context in which it occurred. And that's the same for all of the learning sample plans that exist in the Early Years Planning Cycle Resource for the VEYLDF. So if we look at this, we see that after that question and analysis phase, the educator starts to think about what they might offer next. So they develop some aims, they link those again, develop evidence markers, and then they write. They purposefully write down what it is they're going to do. And I think that's important in this instance because it helps to focus the educator's thinking and gives them a prompt for some words that they might want to focus and build on with this child to extend their learning.

Now, not everybody needs to have that amount of detail, but we think there is some value for educators in at least taking the time to jot down some of these things. Some more experienced educators can get by with a little bit less around the act and do and the vocabulary because they're used to thinking in those ways. But if you're beginning your work in terms of thinking about a way that will help you document to make sure that your observations are rich and meaningful, and that your documentation opens up pathways for conversations with others, whether that be with family or with children, then this is, sorry, with families or with colleagues, then that is a really valuable and useful way to go about it. Of course, there is value in sharing observational data and documentation with children. But if we think about really little children, it's not going to be text that does that for us.

It will be some kind of visual display, whether that's some photographs or something of that nature, but it's important then to think about, those photographs need to be at the child's level. And you can then gather further information from the way the child or other children engage with those photographs. So there's a cycle there all of the time that's going on. The other thing that I really want to stress in terms of this learning sample plan is that reflect and review process that exists at the end of this page. And it says, look back at the aims of the learning experience to guide your reflection and review. So it's asking you to do that next part of observation that I spoke about briefly in answering the first question, you've collected an observation at the beginning, which is your collect information section, and then you've collected a little bit more observation as you've gone through the process, and you are asked to reflect on that again.

And the reason for that is that you can be reflecting on what do I need to change in the environment to make these learning aims achievable for this child? It might be, what do I need to change in terms of the strategies that I'm using to make this learning available for this child, or it might be, are there other experiences that will allow this child to engage in ways that will support this learning, but just this particular opportunity that I provided wasn't quite right for them on the day.

So there's lots of options there for thinking and reflecting and changing what it is you're offering. That reflect and review process also allows you to gather information that makes what you can discuss with families more real, more visible. You've actually got something which has made the child's learning visible and will provoke some rich and meaningful conversations with families. They might come back to you and say, we noticed that our child is doing these kinds of things at home, or we've never thought about that. How could I support those kinds of things at home? So you've got something that will act as your prompt for conversation.

**[Karen Hope]:** I really, at the start of this conversation, Mary, you talked about this learning plan and said, it's simple in terms of the narrative, but it's not simple, is it, when you unpack it the way that you did. There's a lot going on here. And I think that you used two keywords for me, which was what you observed, what the educator has observed, but then what was meaningful and you need to have those two things sitting alongside, I think, or most, because we observe a lot of things during the day, working with children, but they're not all meaningful in the ways that they might inform into the planning cycle. So it's really making sure that you're thinking about what does this tell me about children's learning and development that I did not know, what piece does it fit into the puzzle?

**[Mary Holwell]:** That's right. That's right. Because if you think about it, we could well, and truly exhaust, not only ourselves, but also the child. If we thought everything that happened across the day was worthy of recording, we would be exhausted. And there are many elements across the day that probably are worthy of recording, but we don't have the time, the availability. We've got enough data about that kind of information already. So we need to make some choices there across every day that we work about which things are going to be the most value to us. And it is that thing. What is it that will enrich our understanding of the child? Whether it be their attitudes and dispositions, because equally they are just as important as the focus that many educators have on the child's skills or interests. Don't neglect, recording information about attitudes and dispositions when you think about your observational data as well.

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