[The logo for the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, and the Victorian State Government.]

TITLE: Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. Video 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world.

DR CAROLINE COHRSSEN: VEYLDF tells us that from birth, children learn to see themselves as individuals, accepting their uniqueness and the uniqueness of others. Children seek belonging to people, country, place and communities. They help and show concern for others, learn to respect those who differ from them and practise peaceful and inclusive ways of resolving conflicts. Children become aware of the impact to the local environment, both physical and social, in their lives. They learn ways to care for the environment and contribute to a substantial future. Some children require carefully constructed experiences to affirm their belonging in connection with the group and to facilitate their participation in local community experiences.

In the planning resource documents relating to community, you will see one entitled Plant Diary. It presents an observation of four-year-old Emma explaining to 18-month-old Jesse that we don't pull flowers off plants. Let's read the observation together.

Eighteen-month-old Jesse and four-year-old Emma are outside in the garden. Emma finds a flower on the ground and gives it to Jesse. Jesse crouches down and looks at the flower. Emma says, ‘Jesse, you are meant to smell it!’

Jesse smiles and sniffs at the flower. Emma tells Jesse, ‘We only pick up flowers that have fallen on the ground, Jesse. We don’t pull them off the plants.’

When analysing the observation, we can see that Emma is showing appreciation for the natural environment and respecting living things. Links have been made to evidence markers in the VEYLDF:

* Learners demonstrate an increasing knowledge of and respect for natural and constructed environments, and
* Learners develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things.

When planning a learning experience based on this observation, three aims have been identified. For Emma and other learners:

* To explore the needs of living things,
* To develop an understanding of the care and responsibility required to grow a plant, and
* To observe and notice changes in living things over time.

Each of these aims can be differentiated according to the capabilities of the learners in the group. Here we know that Emma was interested in plants, so the learning experience plan for learners is based on growing seeds. However, you will also see that two of the aims can be applied to any group activity that focuses on living things. In this way, we focus on the intended learning but the vehicle for learning will follow learners' interests. For example, they may be interested in observing changes in chickens as they hatch from eggs and begin to grow.

The text that describes a learning experience provides opportunities for learners to demonstrate the aims or learning intentions that were identified. Suggestions of open-ended questions and new words are also provided. In the final step, educators are encouraged to reflect and review the learning experience. Specific provocations are provided to demonstrate the types of questions educators may ask themselves. One key question is, ‘What will you plan next to consolidate or extend this learning?’

This question is important. By intentionally continuing to focus on these learning aims in many different contexts, learners are supported by educators to generalise the learning - to transfer the concepts or capabilities from one experience to another. By providing multiple opportunities to rehearse these capabilities or concepts in ways that follow learners' interests, the planning cycle keeps on turning.

[The five circles of the planning cycle rotate clockwise around the central circle labelled ‘Context’.]

DR CAROLINE COHRSSEN: Learning is deepened in the context of play.

[Dr Caroline Cohrssen. Honorary (Professional Fellow), Melbourne Graduate School of Education, The University of Melbourne. Authorised and published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.]