# Practice Principles for Children’s Learning and Development

## Practice Principle: High expectations for every child

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) provides a comprehensive way of thinking and working with young children that supports their continuity of learning as they move through the various settings from home and early learning services to school. The VEYLDF identifies eight Practice Principles that illustrate the most effective ways for teachers to support children’s learning and development.

The eight interrelated Practice Principles are:

* Reflective practice
* Partnerships with families
* **High expectations for every child**
* Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
* Equity and diversity
* Assessment for learning and development
* Integrated teaching and learning approaches
* Partnerships with professionals (VEYLDF 2016, p.7).

When Prep teachers align their professional practice with the VEYLDF Practice Principles, they can be confident they:

* are working in ways that respond to what research tells us about how young children best learn
* are best placed to build trusting and collaborative relationships with families and other professionals.

#### Why is it important to have high expectations for every child?

* The ways that children see themselves as learners affect how they learn and develop. When you convey your belief in children’s ability to meet an expectation that is a stretch for them, and they see themselves as competent and capable with agentive power, they are more likely to persist with challenging tasks and improve their learning outcomes.
* When you, as a teacher, acknowledge children’s rights and hold them accountable, you are demonstrating your belief in children’s potential to achieve. All children have the right to have their ideas and opinions respected and to see the inclusion of their ideas in broader decision-making in the classroom or in relation to their individual learning plans.

#### What does it mean to have high expectations for every child?

Working with high expectations means that you can build on each child’s strengths by matching tasks with their potential – you neither underestimate nor overestimate their abilities, thereby ensuring engagement and success over time. This expectation of success is a powerful lever for engaging with families and other professionals. Through a collaborative engagement with families and other professionals, you can support all children’s learning and development. When you work together in a cohesive way with high expectations, you are supporting all children’s learning and development.

#### In the classroom – Nellie Gibson, Junior School Leader and Learning Specialist, Princes Hill Primary School

*‘Listening with deep intent to children in my learning spaces is perhaps one of the most important things I do daily as an educator. Feeling listened to and then seeing this listening transform into a moment of further learning is a powerful experience for learners and educators. When children see how much I value their learning by carefully curating displays of their theories, thinking and expressions, they feel that they are part of the whole process – an important part.*

*As a staff team, we are always communicating to children that we expect great things from them. I think as a team, we are learners, with an openness to trying new things and to listening to children's curiosities.*

*I believe we honour each child's individuality and sense of group through our practice of active listening. We, as a team, use a mixture of one-on-one conferencing, whole-group meeting time and small-group targeted inquiry time. We feel this allows for differing energies and comfort when communicating thinking and learning.’*

#### How do I do it? – Top tips

* Commit to having high expectations for every child’s learning and development. Value children’s strengths and differences, and communicate to them your belief in their ability to succeed.
* Show sensitivity and be responsive to the messages the learners convey about themselves as well as their own and their family’s unique abilities.
* Be aware of the impact of low expectations, prejudice and a lack of attention on any child’s learning and development.
* Ensure that every child experiences success and is motivated to accept new challenges through which they can learn and grow. This will require some differentiation in the learning experiences you provide for learners.
* Recognise that some children require different opportunities, spaces and specific supports to learn effectively and thrive.

**Find other useful resources and further information about the VEYLDF on the**   
[**Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority website.**](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/earlyyears/ey-curriculum-resources/Pages/Index.aspx)