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

TITLE: Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. Video 1: Children have a strong sense of identity.

DR CAROLINE COHRSSEN: The VEYLDF tells us that identity is unique to each individual and defines who people are, what shapes their interests and how they come to view the people and events around them. From birth, relationships are the foundation of children's construction of their identity. Secure attachments are critical for all children from birth and linked to positive mental health outcomes. Also, the acquisition and maintenance of first or home languages has a significant and continuing role in the construction of identity.

Children who have a strong sense of identity feel comfortable within local, social and cultural practices important in their lives. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, connections to country, including through learning on country in the natural world, support identity. When children seek and accept new challenges, they show autonomy and agency. As children learn and develop, they build further on their abilities to cooperate and work collaboratively, demonstrate initiative by asking questions and attempting new challenges.

In the planning resource documents relating to identity, you will see one entitled Taking Turns. It presents an observation of 22-month-old Lizzie playing with a train on a train track. Let's read the observation together.

Twenty-two-month-old Lizzie was playing with the trains, pushing the ‘Thomas’ train around the circular track. Ying, 24 months, sat down beside Lizzie. Ying picked up a red train and began to push it around the track. Lizzie said, ‘No,’ and pushed Ying’s hand away from the track. Ying took the ‘Thomas’ train out of Lizzie’s hand and continued to push both trains around the track.

Lizzie started to cry, stood up and approached a nearby educator, arms reaching out and upwards. She said to the educator, ‘Want Thomas, want Thomas.’ The educator knelt down and gave Lizzie a hug. They returned to the train area together, where the educator assisted Lizzie and Ying to solve the problem.

When analysing the observation, we can see that Lizzie is using emerging language skills to communicate with the educator and with Ying. Links have been made to evidence markers in the VEYLDF. Learners initiate interactions and conversations with trusted educators and learners communicate their needs for comfort and assistance.

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

* To use language to communicate their emotions and needs, as well as interests, with peers.
* To work collaboratively with peers when sharing resources, and
* To use vocabulary relating to taking turns and sharing.

Each of these aims can be differentiated according to the capabilities of the learners in the group. Here we know that the learner is interested in playing with trains and so the learning experience plan for learners is based on trains. However, you will also see that the aims can be applied to any group activity, from taking turns with buckets in the sandpit to taking turns to help themselves to fruit at snack time. In this way, we focus on the intended learning, but the vehicle for learning will follow learners' interests. The text that describes the learning experiences 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’.]

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