



OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Belonging, being and becoming are integral parts of identity.

Children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities. This includes their relationships with people, places and things and the actions and responses of others. Identity is not fixed. It is shaped by experiences. When children have positive experiences they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of *belonging*. Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity – ‘who I am’, ‘how I belong’ and ‘what is my influence?’

In early childhood settings children develop a sense of *belonging* when they feel accepted, develop attachments and trust those that care for them. As children are developing their sense of identity, they explore different aspects of it (physical, social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive), through their play and their relationships.

When children feel safe, secure and supported they grow in confidence to explore and learn.

The concept of *being* reminds educators to focus on children in the here and now, and of the importance of children’s right to be a child and experience the joy of childhood. *Being* involves children developing an awareness of their social and cultural heritage, of gender and their significance in their world.

Becoming includes children building and shaping their identity through their evolving experiences and relationships which include change and transitions. Children are always learning about the impact of their personal beliefs and values. Children’s agency, as well as guidance, care and teaching by families and educators shape children’s experiences of *becoming*.

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

Children feel safe, secure, and supported

This is evident, for example, when children:

- build secure attachments with one and then more familiar educators
- use effective routines to help make predicted transitions smoothly
- sense and respond to a feeling of belonging
- communicate their needs for comfort and assistance
- establish and maintain respectful, trusting relationships with other children and educators
- openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others
- respond to ideas and suggestions from others
- initiate interactions and conversations with trusted educators
- confidently explore and engage with social and physical environments through relationships and play
- initiate and join in play
- explore aspects of identity through role play

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:

- acknowledge and respond sensitively to children's cues and signals
- respond sensitively to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations
- support children's secure attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships
- support children in times of change and bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar
- build upon culturally valued child rearing practices and approaches to learning
- are emotionally available and support children's expression of their thoughts and feelings
- recognise that feelings of distress, fear or discomfort may take some time to resolve
- acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways
- spend time interacting and conversing with each child

Add your own examples from your context:

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency

This is evident, for example, when children:

- demonstrate increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others
- be open to new challenges and discoveries
- increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others
- take considered risk in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected
- recognise their individual achievements and the achievements of others
- demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation
- approach new safe situations with confidence
- begin to initiate negotiating and sharing behaviours
- persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:

- provide children with strategies to make informed choices about their behaviours
- promote children's sense of belonging, connectedness and wellbeing
- maintain high expectations of each child's capabilities
- mediate and assist children to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others
- provide opportunities for children to engage independently with tasks and play
- display delight, encouragement and enthusiasm for children's attempts
- support children's efforts, assisting and encouraging as appropriate
- motivate and encourage children to succeed when they are faced with challenges
- provide time and space for children to engage in both individual and collaborative pursuits
- build on the culturally valued learning of individual children's communities
- encourage children to make choices and decisions

Add your own examples from your context:

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities

This is evident, for example, when children:

- feel recognised and respected for who they are
- explore different identities and points of view in dramatic play
- share aspects of their culture with the other children and educators
- use their home language to construct meaning
- develop strong foundations in both the culture and language/s of their family and of the broader community without compromising their cultural identities
- develop their social and cultural heritage through engagement with Elders and community members
- reach out and communicate for comfort, assistance and companionship
- celebrate and share their contributions and achievements with others

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:

- promote in all children a strong sense of who they are and their connectedness to others – a shared identity as Australians
- ensure all children experience pride and confidence in their achievements
- share children’s successes with families
- show respect for diversity, acknowledging the varying approaches of children, families, communities and cultures
- acknowledge and understand that children construct meaning in many different ways
- demonstrate deep understanding of each child, their family and community contexts in planning for children’s learning
- provide children with examples of the many ways identities and culture are recognised and expressed
- build upon culturally valued approaches to learning
- build on the knowledge, languages and understandings that children bring
- talk with children in respectful ways about similarities and differences in people
- provide rich and diverse resources that reflect children’s social worlds
- listen to and learn about children’s understandings of themselves
- actively support the maintenance of home language and culture
- develop authentic children’s understanding of themselves

Add your own examples from your context:

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

This is evident, for example, when children:

- show interest in other children and being part of a group
- engage in and contribute to shared play experiences
- express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively
- empathise with and express concern for others
- display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives
- reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they:

- initiate one-to-one interactions with children, particularly babies and toddlers, during daily routines
- organise learning environments in ways that promote small group interactions and play experiences
- model care, empathy and respect for children, staff and families
- model explicit communication strategies to support children to initiate interactions and join in play and social experiences in ways that sustain productive relationships with other children
- acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration of alternative perspectives and social inclusion

Add your own examples from your context:

Inclusion:

involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.