

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Active learning environment: an active learning environment is one in which children are encouraged to explore and interact with the environment to make (or construct) meaning and knowledge through their experiences, social interactions and negotiations with others. In an active learning environment, educators play a crucial role of encouraging children to discover deeper meanings and make connections among ideas and between concepts, processes and representations. This requires educators to be engaged with children's emotions and thinking. (*Adapted from South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework, General Introduction, pp10 & 11*).

Agency: being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world.

Attuned: "Attunement includes the alignment of states of mind in moments of engagement, during which affect is communicated with facial expression, vocalisations, body gestures and eye contact". (Siegel, 1999).

Children: refers to babies, toddlers and three to five year olds, unless otherwise stated.

Community participation: taking an active role in contributing to communities.

Co-construct: learning takes place as children interact with educators and other children as they work together in partnership.

Communities: social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights and responsibilities and/or other bonds. 'Communities' is used variously to refer, for example, to the community within early childhood settings, extended kinships, the local geographic community and broader Australian society.

Critical reflection: reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice.

Curriculum: in the early childhood setting curriculum means 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and

unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development'. [adapted from Te Whariki].

Dispositions: enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to situations, for example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence.

Early childhood settings: long day care, occasional care, family day care, Multi-purpose Aboriginal Children's Services, preschools and kindergartens, playgroups, creches, early intervention settings and similar services.

Educators: early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings.

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.

Intentional teaching: involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always' been done that way.

Involvement: is a state of intense, whole hearted mental activity, characterised by sustained concentration and intrinsic motivation. Highly involved children (and adults) operate at the limit of their capacities, leading to changed ways of responding and understanding leading to deep level learning (adapted from Laevers, 1994).

Children's involvement can be recognised by their facial, vocal and emotional expressions, the energy, attention and care they apply and the creativity and complexity they bring to the situation. (Laevers) *A state of flow* Csikszentmihayle cited in *Reflect, Respect, Relate* (DECS 2008).

Learning: a natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development.

Learning framework: a guide which provides general goals or outcomes for children's learning and how they might be attained. It also provides a scaffold to assist early childhood settings to develop their own, more detailed curriculum.

Learning Outcome: a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families.

Learning relationships: relationships that further children's learning and development. Both the adult and the child have intent to learn from each other.

Literacy: in the early years literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, story telling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing.

Numeracy: broadly includes understandings about numbers, patterns, measurement, spatial awareness and data as well as mathematical thinking, reasoning and counting.

Pedagogies: practices that are intended to promote children's learning.

Pedagogy: early childhood educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning.

Play-based learning: A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

Reflexivity: children's growing awareness of the ways that their experiences, interests and beliefs shape their understanding.

Scaffold: the educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.

Spiritual: refers to a range of human experiences including a sense of awe and wonder, and an exploration of *being* and knowing.

Technologies: includes much more than computers and digital technologies used for information, communication and entertainment. Technologies are the diverse range of products that make up the designed world. These products extend beyond artefacts designed and developed by people and include processes, systems, services and environments.

Texts: things that we read, view and listen to and that we create in order to share meaning. Texts can be print-based, such as books, magazines and posters or screen-based, for example internet sites and DVDs. Many texts are multimodal, integrating images, written words and/or sound.

Transitions: the process of moving between home and childhood setting, between a range of different early childhood settings, or from childhood setting to full-time school.

Wellbeing: Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs - the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life (adapted from Laevers 1994). It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience.