

# A VISION FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

A vision: All children engage in learning that promotes confident and creative individuals and successful lifelong learners. All children are active and informed members of their communities with knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.



Fundamental to the Framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging*, *being* and *becoming*. From before birth children are connected to family, communities, culture and place. Their earliest learning, development and wellbeing takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they construct their own identities and understandings of the world. Educators engage children in learning that promotes confidence, creativity and enables active citizenship. They celebrate diversity with children and their families, and the opportunities diversity brings to know more about the world. Educators understand children may come from diverse backgrounds and acknowledge this in each child's *Belonging*, *Being* and *Becoming*.

## Belonging

Experiencing *belonging* – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong to diverse families, neighbourhoods, local and global communities. *Belonging* acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, trusting relationships and affirming experiences are crucial to a sense of *belonging*. *Belonging* is central to *being* and *becoming* in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

## Being

Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world. *Being* recognises the significance of the present, as well as the past in children's lives. It is about children knowing themselves, developing their identity, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about children *being* in the here and now.

## Becoming

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, dispositions, capabilities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by different events and circumstances. *Becoming* reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as children learn and grow. It emphasises the collaboration of educators, families and children to support and enhance children's connections and capabilities, and for children to actively participate as citizens.



The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children’s learning, development and wellbeing from birth to 5 years and through the transitions to school. It communicates these expectations through the following 5 Learning Outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.

The Framework provides broad direction for early childhood educators to facilitate all children’s learning, development and wellbeing and ensure children are supported, celebrated, and connected to their community. It guides educators in their professional decision-making and assists in planning, implementing and evaluating high quality educational programs and practices in early childhood settings. It also underpins the implementation of relational and place-based pedagogies and curriculum relevant to each local community and all children in the early childhood setting. Relational pedagogy underpins the ways in which educators build trusting, respectful relationships between children, families, other educators and professionals, as well as members of the community. Place-based pedagogy refers to an understanding that educators’ knowledge of the setting or context will influence how educators plan and practice.

The Framework is designed to inspire conversations, improve communication and provide a common language about children’s learning among children themselves, their families, the broader community, educators, teachers in schools and other professionals including those who work in child and family services, higher education and training organisations.



## Elements of the Framework

The Framework puts children’s learning at the core and comprises interdependent elements: Vision, Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes (see Diagram 1). All elements are fundamental to early childhood pedagogy and effective curriculum decision-making.

Curriculum encompasses all the interactions, experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning, development and wellbeing.

Children are receptive to a wide range of experiences. What is included or excluded from the curriculum affects how children learn, develop and understand the world.

The Framework supports curriculum decision-making as a continuous cycle of planning, assessment and critical reflection. This involves educators knowing the children, families and community contexts and drawing on their professional knowledge to plan for individual children and groups. These plans are implemented, evaluated and reflected upon to inform further planning.



Working in partnership with children and families, and communities, teachers in schools, and other professionals, educators use the Vision, Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes to guide their planning for children’s learning, development and wellbeing. To actively engage children, educators identify children’s strengths, choose appropriate teaching strategies and content, design the learning environment, and collaborate with children to co-construct learning. Educators build an engaging child-centred curriculum when they plan, analyse and assess children’s learning and critically reflect and evaluate planning and practice for and with children.

## Children’s learning

The diversity in family and community life in Australia means that children experience *belonging*, *being* and *becoming* in many ways. They bring their diverse experiences, home languages, perspectives, expectations, and cultural ways of knowing, *being* and doing to their learning.

Children’s learning is dynamic, complex and holistic. This means that cognitive, linguistic, physical, social, emotional, personal, spiritual and creative aspects of learning are all intricately interwoven and interrelated.

Play-based learning capitalises on children’s natural inclination to be curious, explore and learn. Children actively construct their own understandings that contribute to their own learning. In play experiences children integrate their emotions, thinking and motivation that assists to



strengthen brain functioning. They exercise their agency, intentionality, capacity to initiate and lead learning, and their right to participate in decisions that affect them, including about their learning.

Play-based learning:

- allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness
- offers opportunities for multimodal play
- enhances thinking skills and lifelong learning dispositions such as curiosity, persistence and creativity
- enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning and to transfer learning from one experience to another
- assists children to develop and build relationships and friendships
- develops knowledge acquisition and concepts in authentic contexts
- builds a sense of identity
- strengthens self-regulation, and physical and mental wellbeing.

Viewing children as active participants and decision-makers opens possibilities for educators to move beyond preconceived expectations about what children can do and learn. This requires educators to understand, respect and work with each child’s unique qualities and capabilities.

Educators' practices and the relationships they form with children and their families have a significant effect on children's participation in early childhood education, engagement in learning opportunities and success as learners. Children thrive when they, their families and their educators work together in partnership to support their learning, development and wellbeing. Relationships are strengthened when educators recognise and affirm children's home languages and cultural identities and when they create culturally secure and safe places for children and their families.

Children's early learning influences their continuing educational journeys. Wellbeing and a strong sense of connection, optimism, resilience and engagement enable children to develop a growth mindset, and a positive attitude to learning.

The Learning Outcomes section of the Framework provides examples of evidence of children's learning, development and wellbeing, and the educator's intentional role in extending and enriching children's play, thinking, learning and sense of wellbeing.

