

EARLY CHILDHOOD PEDAGOGY



The term *pedagogy* in this Framework refers to the art, science or craft of educating. It describes the professional knowledge, practices and creativity that educators use to intentionally foster and nurture children's learning, development and wellbeing. When educators establish respectful relationships with children and their families, they are able to work together to use relational and place-based pedagogies that assist in developing curriculum relevant to children in their local context. Using these pedagogies and other child-centred approaches supports curriculum decisions that include children's ideas and reflect their curiosity, allowing them to celebrate their own interests, friendships and express themselves in different ways.

Educators' professional judgements are central to their active role in facilitating children's learning. In making professional judgements, they intentionally weave together their:

- professional knowledge and skills
- contextual knowledge of each child, their families and communities
- understanding that relationships with children and families are critical to creating safe and trusting spaces
- awareness of how their beliefs and values impact children's learning and wellbeing
- knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- personal styles and past professional experiences
- use of all components in the planning cycle.

Alongside their professional knowledge educators draw on their creativity, intuition and imagination, including engaging in critical reflection to evaluate and adjust their practice to suit the learners, the time, place and context of learning.



Different theories, world views and knowledges inform early childhood approaches and practices to promote children’s learning, development and wellbeing. Educators draw upon a range of perspectives in their work which may include:

- developmental theories that focus on describing and understanding the influences on, and processes of children’s learning, development and wellbeing over time. For example, attachment theory explains children’s formation of trusting relationships with important adults; social learning theory focuses on how children observe and imitate the behaviour of others; cognitive theory describes thought processes and how this influences the ways children engage with and understand their world
- socio-cultural theories that emphasise the central role that families and cultural groups play in children’s learning and the importance of respectful relationships, and provide insight into social and cultural contexts of learning and development
- practice theories, such as affordance theory that asks educators to think, for example, about the possibilities for activity that the physical environment offers children. The theory of practice architectures invites educators to think about their sayings (understandings of their practice), their doings (the ways in which they practice) and their relatings (how they relate to others in their practice)
- ancestral knowledges are ways of knowing and understanding shared through history and culture, in the written, oral and spiritual traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- place-based sciences that foster community connections in ways that build on local (children, families, communities and educators) funds of knowledge (experiences and understandings) that assist in building thriving learners and communities
- critical theories that invite educators to challenge assumptions about curriculum, and consider how their decisions may affect children differently
- feminist and post-structuralist theories that offer insights into issues of power, equity and social justice in early childhood settings.

Drawing on a range of perspectives and theories can challenge traditional ways of seeing children, teaching and learning, and encourage educators, as individuals and with colleagues, to:

- investigate why they act in the ways that they do
- discuss and debate theories and other perspectives to identify strengths and limitations
- recognise how theories, world views and other knowledges assist in making sense of their work, but can also limit their actions and thoughts
- consider the voices of children, their families and their communities in their decision-making
- consider the consequences of their actions for children’s experiences
- consider who is included and who is excluded or silenced by ways of working
- find new ways of working fairly, justly and inclusively
- consider the ecosystems in which children live and learn.