

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Active citizenship: is about displaying values of respect, inclusion and helping others, as well as appreciating diversity in all its forms. It involves helping out and being connected to your local community. (Adapted from being an active citizen, Australian Government 2022).

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).

Active listening: is concentrating on more than what is being said (such as gestures, facial expression and body language) and involves listening to and acknowledging what is being said in ways that enhance mutual understanding.

Additional needs: the term used for children who require or will benefit or be able to participate more fully from specific considerations, adaptations or differentiation of any aspects of the curriculum, including resources and the environment.

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

Argumentation: the process that allows children to justify their own thinking and to understand that of other people.

Assessment: **Formative assessment** refers to educators' collection of formal or informal assessment information during children's learning experiences in order to inform or modify teaching strategies and learning experiences to support and improve learning outcomes. **Summative assessment** refers to educators' use of specific criteria to evaluate learning outcomes, skill acquisition or academic achievements at the end of a defined period, such as the completion of a project or the end of the preschool year. Diagnostic assessment processes also use specific criteria, but as a 'pre-assessment' allows educators to determine children's individual strengths, knowledge and skills. **Diagnostic assessment** also refers to formal assessment processes used to diagnose learning or wellbeing difficulties undertaken by health professionals. **Developmental screening** refers to the use of formal questionnaires or checklists by health professionals or educators with specialist training to identify any concerns and determine if further developmental evaluation or diagnosis are recommended.

Attachment relationships: refers to the relationship bond a child forms with their primary caregivers, which in early childhood settings include familiar educators. Attachment relationships provide the child with a secure base from which to explore and, when necessary, as a haven of safety and a source of comfort.

Attuned/Attunement: is being fully aware and responsive to children, comprehending their feelings and embodied communication such as through their facial expression, vocalisations, body movements, gestures and eye contact.

Children: refers to all children from birth to age 5 years. In the EYLF, the term ‘very young children’ is used to refer to infants under 2 years and ‘older children’ to refer to children approaching the transition to school. Children are viewed as individuals and as members of a group in the early childhood setting.

Children living with disability: disability is part of human diversity. There are many different kinds of disability and they can result from accidents, illness or genetic disorders. Disability may affect mobility, ability to learn, ability to communicate, or ability to engage with others and with experiences. Some children may have more than one type of disability. A disability may be visible or hidden, may be permanent or temporary and may have minimal or substantial impact on a child’s abilities.

Citizens: participating members of local, national, and global communities.

Citizenship: means being a member of and supporting one’s community including the early childhood setting, as well as the local and global community. Citizenship involves a range of key components such as opportunities for belonging and participation, contributing to decision-making and taking responsibility for actions to others and to the environment.

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

Collaboration: involves working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through information sharing, joint planning and the development of common understandings and objectives.

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

Communities: social, cultural or geographic contexts, 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 and global society.

Connections: learning in one area is related to learning in other areas and to the contexts in which the child is experiencing it. For example, learning in one area of mathematics can be relevant to learning in another area of mathematics.

Critical reflection: is a meaning-making process that assists informing future practice in ways that demonstrate an understanding of each child’s learning, development and wellbeing and implications for equity and social justice. It involves examining and analysing events, experiences and practices from a range of perspectives to inform future planning and decision-making.

Cultural responsiveness: is a contemporary way to think about culture and enables individuals and organisations to be respectful of everyone’s backgrounds, beliefs, values, customs, knowledges, lifestyles and social behaviours. Being culturally responsive includes a genuine commitment to take action against discrimination in any form, embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of the curriculum and working collaboratively with culturally and linguistically diverse children and families.

Cultural safety: recognition, respect and protection of the inherent rights, cultures, and traditions of a particular culture. In a culturally safe environment, there is “no assault, challenge or denial of their people’s identity, of who they are and what they need. It is about shared respect, shared meaning, shared knowledge and experience, of learning, living and working together with dignity and truly listening”. (Williams 2008).

Curriculum: in the early childhood setting curriculum includes all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning, development and wellbeing. (Adapted from Te Whariki, NZ Ministry of Education 2017).

Development: refers to the sequence of physical, language, cognitive, emotional and social changes that occur in a child from birth through to adulthood. Development and learning are dynamic processes that reflect the complex interplay between a child’s heredity, biological characteristics and the environment, which includes family, friends, communities and early childhood settings.

Digital technology: “First developed in the 1960s with the advent of microprocessors or small ‘chips’ that convert information into numbers, digital technology enables large amounts of data to be stored and shared so that it can be accessed, created and used by people anywhere, at any time”. (ECA 2018, p. 23).

Early childhood settings: long day care, occasional care, family day care, Multi-purpose Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Services, preschools and kindergartens, playgroups, creches, early intervention settings and similar services. Early childhood settings include home-based settings, centre-based settings, schools and community settings.

Educators: early childhood teachers, educators and support workers who work directly with children to promote learning, development and wellbeing in early childhood settings.

Engagement: associated with attention, curiosity, interest, optimism and active involvement in learning. Engagement amplifies motivation, a sense of success, relationship building and risk-taking in learning.

Evaluation: educators' critical reflection on and analysis of this information, and consideration of the effectiveness of their planning and implementation of curriculum for children's learning, development and wellbeing.

Executive function: includes working memory, flexible thinking and self-control. Executive functioning refers to the mental processes in the brain that enable children to plan, focus attention, remember instructions and manage multiple tasks successfully.

Fundamental Movement Skills: are basic movements associated with Locomotor skills, such as jumping, running, galloping, leaping, hopping and side-sliding; Manipulative skills, such as catching, underarm rolling, dribbling, striking, kicking and throwing; and Stability skills, such as balancing, stretching and twisting (NSW Ministry of Health 2017).

Funds of knowledge: are the historically accumulated experiences and understandings that an individual has and includes abilities, skills, bodies of knowledge, life experiences and cultural ways of interacting. A child's funds of knowledge are often described as a "virtual backpack" of all the life experiences and knowledge they bring into the early childhood setting.

Growth mindset: is where individuals believe their intelligence and abilities can be improved by effort and actions. This is a necessary part of becoming an effective learner and can create a love of learning and understanding that persistence with increased motivation and effort leads to improvement.

Inclusion: involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, sexual identity, 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.

Intentionality: is being thoughtful and purposeful in actions and making decisions and is something that both children and educators can do. Children are intentional in their thinking, ways of communication and learning and at times lead their own learning and the learning of others. Educators are intentional in the roles they take in children's play and the way they intentionally plan the environment and curriculum experiences.

Intercultural: is something that is shared between cultures. An intercultural space is a place where people of different cultures all feel equally welcome, acknowledged and different ways of knowing, being and doing are respected.

Joint attention: is when a child coordinates their focus of attention with that of another child or educator in order to interact with each other. Joint attention involves 2 or more people paying attention to the same thing such as an object, event or experience. It requires the ability to gain, maintain and shift attention which are important aspects for learning.

Kinships systems: a kinship system is an aspect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander social organisation. It is a complex system that determines the relationships, roles, responsibilities, and obligations to one another and includes ceremonial business around land, lore, births, marriages and deaths. There are different structures and relationships that are not necessarily biological and covers more than people. Kinship includes a connection to Country: animals, places, ancestors, weather systems and plants.

Language and Literacy: in the early years, literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, gesture, dance, song, drama, storytelling, visual arts, digital literacies, and media, as well as listening, talking, signing, viewing, reading and writing.

Learning: is the process of gaining knowledge, skills and dispositions and from birth children naturally use exploration to expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Life-long learning is acknowledged as a self-motivated process that extends intellectual, vocational and personal horizons which begins in early childhood and is continued throughout life.

Learning dispositions: habits of mind that affect how children approach learning. These include persistence and a positive attitude towards tasks; motivation, associated with enthusiasm and engagement; flexibility, associated with consideration of multiple points of view and ways of thinking; problem solving and questioning, associated with posing problems and questions, and making causal connections between people, events and situations.

Learning framework: a guide which provides a vision for learning, pedagogical principles, practices and general goals or outcomes for children's learning and how they might be attained. It provides a scaffold to assist educators to develop their own, more detailed curriculum relevant to their setting and the children and families attending.

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, development and wellbeing. Both the adult and the child have intent to learn with and from each other.

Leisure: in an early learning childhood setting is generally connected with concepts such as free time, fun and being with friends. Leisure and learning are intrinsically linked and contribute to overall wellbeing.

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

Multimodal play: modes are ways or means of communicating meaning in some way so multimodal play is about children and educators using the many different types of resources and materials around them that can potentially be a mode to communicate and make meaning.

Neurodiversity: is the diversity of human minds. It describes the range of differences in individual brain functioning and behaviour, regarded as part of the variance in human populations.

Neuroscience: is a multidisciplinary science that is concerned with the study of the structure and function of the nervous system including the brain and its impact on behaviour and or how children and young people think.

Pedagogy: is the art, craft and science of educating. Pedagogy is the foundation for educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning.

Place-based pedagogy: a pedagogy refers to an understanding that educator knowledge of the setting or context will influence how educators plan and practice. This pedagogical approach is particularly important to Aboriginal and Torres Islander peoples and their connection to land and places should be explored with local Elders and community members in culturally responsive ways.

Play: is fundamental to the healthy development and wellbeing of individuals and communities. It is often defined by a range of characteristics including freely chosen, self-directed, pleasurable, meaningful, symbolic and intrinsically motivating.

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

Reasonable adjustment: a measure or action taken by approved providers and educators to assist children with disability to participate in education and care on the same basis as children without disability. An adjustment is reasonable if it achieves this purpose while balancing the interests of all parties affected, including the child with disability, the approved provider, educators and other children (Australian Government, 2005).

Reconciliation: "At its heart, Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians." (<https://www.reconciliation.org.au/reconciliation/what-is-reconciliation/>)

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.

Routines: regular, everyday events in early childhood settings such as mealtimes, sleep/rest times, group times, getting ready for outdoor play, nappy change/toileting, hygiene, arrivals and departures. Routines are a key component of the curriculum/program. Effective routines provide children with a sense of predictability and consistency that help children to feel safe, secure and supported.

Rituals: educators develop rituals to embed daily events and to enhance predictability and support the familiarity of routines and transitions. Rituals can also ease emotionally challenging events, such as arrival where a ritual for individual children may be developed in partnership with families.

Satiety: being satisfied after eating, that feeling of being full.

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

Self-regulation: the ability to manage energy states, emotions, behaviour and attention; the ability to return to a balanced, calm and constant state of being. Self-regulation is a key factor for mental health, wellbeing and learning.

Shared sustained thinking: results when 2 or more individuals (often adults and children) work together in an intellectual way to solve a problem, clarify a concept or evaluate activities (Siraj-Blatchford et al. 2003, p. 11).

Sociality: is a term used to describe how individuals interact with one another. It is different to the term *social development*, which refers to how sociality changes over time and the process through which a child learns to interact with others around them.

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

Sustainability: seeking to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations (*Brundtland Report 1987*). Contemporary understandings of sustainability span environmental, social and economic dimensions. **Environmental sustainability** focuses on helping children to recognise they are part of ecosystems and have a role to play in preserving, protecting and improving the environment. **Social sustainability** addresses issues of social justice and equity, respect for diversity and inclusion, active citizenship and sense of community. **Economic sustainability** focuses on fair and equitable access to resources, conserving resources and reducing consumption and waste. The 3 dimensions are interconnected and necessary for a sustainable world.

Technologies: includes much more than computers and digital technologies used for information, communication and entertainment. It involves the development of new objects or tools by people that help them in their lives. There are 3 broad types of technology: mechanical (e.g. wheels, blocks, levers and gears) analogue technology (e.g. film-based photography, drawing, painting); and digital technology (e.g. mobile phones and computers) (ECA 2018).

Temporal environment: refers to the timing, sequence and pace of routines and activities that take place throughout the day.

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, such as internet sites and Apps. Many texts are multimodal, integrating images, written words and/or sound.

Theories: a set of ideas to explain concepts or practice.

Transitions: major transitions occur at times of significant change, such as when children first attend early childhood education and care or start school, when the child takes on a new role or becomes part of a new social group. Everyday transitions occur as a regular part of a child's day or week as they move from one setting to another, such as home to preschool or between different early childhood settings. Transitions also occur within settings, and include changes from one activity to another, from one educator to another, from indoor to outdoor play spaces, and transitioning to and from meal and sleep times (Harrison 2016).

Trauma: children may be exposed to 4 different types of trauma: (1) **Single incident trauma** which can result from experiencing a time-limited and often unexpected traumatic event (e.g. a car accident, bushfire, loss of a loved one); (2) **Complex trauma** which can result from exposure to severe, sustained and harmful interpersonal events (e.g. physical, emotional or sexual abuse, profound neglect, domestic and family violence); (3) **Historical trauma** which refers to multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural group (e.g. the intergenerational impacts of the European colonisation and forced removal of children from families and communities on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities); (4) **Intergenerational trauma** which can result when unresolved complex trauma impacts on the next generation's capacity to parent and leads to intergenerational harm. When exposed to traumatic events at a young age, children may not have developed or will have lost their sense of safety, trust and belonging.

Trauma informed practice: responsive practice made possible by awareness of the impact of trauma on children's learning, development and wellbeing. This includes recognising the signs and symptoms of trauma in children, responding by making places and relationships feel safe and supportive to children, and helping children to develop their capacity for emotional regulation.

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