



National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program



Connecting with practice—EYLF and NQS

Vignette: Making salad

Note: Use these notes in conjunction with the [General information](#) sheet for *Connecting with practice*.

Overview:

This vignette shows an educator and children cutting herbs from their garden and then using them to make a salad.

Possible focus points:

- conversations that support learning
- various ways that educators' verbal communication supports children's learning
- experiences as vehicles for a variety of learning opportunities
- balancing asking questions and making statements in conversations with children
- educators' engagement
- children's engagement.



Key Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) concepts:

- Principle: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Practice: Intentional teaching
- Practice: Learning environments
- Learning Outcome: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Key Component of Learning Outcome 2: Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
- Key Component of Learning Outcome 4: Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Key Component of Learning Outcome 5: Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.



Key links to the National Quality Standard (NQS):

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

Element 1.1.1: Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

Element 1.1.3: All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety

Element 2.1.3: Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

Element 2.2.1: At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Quality Area 3: Physical environment

Element 3.2.3: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

First viewing: What did you notice?

Ask participants to watch and listen to the vignette. After viewing it, ask some general questions to start the discussion:

- *What did you notice?*
- *What were the children doing and saying?*
- *What was the educator doing and saying?*
- *What did you notice about the setting and the experience itself? What stood out for you?*

Participants are likely to notice different things. These differences are interesting, as in our work we notice and pay attention to different things. Highlight that there are always different ways of seeing the same practice or event. Each perspective enriches what we can learn. This is why sharing ideas, listening to others' perspectives and having discussions can be so valuable.



Second viewing: Looking more deeply at learning and teaching and links to the EYLF and the NQS

This vignette can prompt discussion about a range of topics. It links to a number of concepts in the EYLF and many Elements in the NQS.

You could begin by asking a general question: What do you think the children in this vignette are learning or demonstrating that they have learned?

Remind participants that figuring out what children may be *learning* goes beyond focusing on what they are *doing*. Pay close attention to the educator's and children's verbal and non-verbal communication.

What Learning Outcomes does this vignette illustrate? Why do you think this? Encourage participants to be specific by going beyond the headings of the Learning Outcomes and looking at the details within them in reflecting on this question.

What do you think the educator's intentions were? In other words, what was she trying to achieve?

Pay particular attention to the educator's use of language. Her conversations with children appear to serve a number of different purposes—encouragement, instruction, links to home and family, links to previous learning (mention of using energy) and explanations, for example. You may want to show the vignette and ask participants to pay particular attention to her verbal communication and then have a discussion about what they noticed. Discuss how the language and conversation enrich the experience by asking participants to imagine what the experience would be like if the educator had only used 'necessary' language.

If you had been the educator in this vignette, what, if anything, might you have done differently?

This vignette offers a good opportunity for educators to reflect on their use of questioning as a teaching strategy. You could talk about the balance of questioning and making statements that this educator demonstrated. This vignette would also offer a good opportunity to note and give examples of the educator's use of closed and open-ended questions. Why are open questions considered to be generally more valuable than closed questions as a way of teaching?

- *What EYLF Principles and Practices does the vignette illustrate?*
- *What additional learning opportunities might this educator plan that would extend the learning further and build on the children's interests? Remember to think more broadly than just 'activities' that she could plan.*
- *What would have made this experience more effective?*
- *If you were observing this experience, what would be worth recording about children's learning? How does the fact that you don't know the children affect your observations and analysis?*

Note that the educator is spending time, both outside and at the table, with only a couple of children. The vignette is a reminder of the value of small groups and the importance of educators planning the program to create opportunities to have sustained interactions with one or several children.

There are many instances where the educator reminds children about safety considerations with scissors and knives. Discuss how she communicates both confidence in the children's abilities and concern about safety.

There are two parts to the vignette—cutting the herbs and making salad. While each part can be looked at separately, the combination of the two parts contributes in a major way to the richness of the experience (even though the two children who are making the salad initially are different to the ones who cut the herbs). That is, the value of the experience lies in part at least in the fact that the children in this group helped to grow some of the ingredients, harvested them, and used them to prepare a salad to share with others. If no one else mentions this you may want to raise this point and ask why it is that this is an example where 'the whole is more than the sum of the parts'.

This vignette illustrates embedding opportunities to learn to respect, care for and value the natural environment rather than thinking of 'teaching about the environment and sustainability' as a special separate endeavour.

Third viewing: What have we learned? What next?

You may want to discuss the priority placed in your group or service on having sustained interactions and conversations with children.

This experience is more effective because it combines cutting the herbs and making the salad. To what extent in our planning process are we mindful of connecting experiences and learning opportunities rather than offering mostly 'one offs'? How can we be more intentional about linking learning and linking experiences?

- *How can we create more opportunities for educators to interact with one or a few children at a time?*
- *What are some examples of ways that we embed opportunities for children to learn to value and care for the natural environment in our everyday practice?*
- *What might families see in this vignette? How could the vignette be used to have discussions with families about children's learning?*
- *What might the children involved see in the vignette? What would be the highlights for them? (Remind participants that it is always valuable to think about what an experience might mean from the child's perspective.)*
- *What else have we learned that we can apply to our practice?*
- *What actions might we take as a result of the discussion about the vignette?*



An Australian Government Initiative

The NQS Professional Learning Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education.



Brought to you by

Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children