



## Connecting with practice—EYLF and NQS

# Vignette: Opportunities for learning in natural spaces

**Note:** Use these notes in conjunction with the *General guidelines*.



### Key links to standards in the NQS:

1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 5.1, 5.2.

### First viewing: What did you notice?

**Note:** This vignette is interesting, as it's really two separate vignettes in one space. You might like to ask the question of what stands out for each part.

Ask participants to watch and listen to the vignette. Then use some questions to start the discussion.

- *What did you notice?*
- *Who was involved?*
- *What were the participants doing?*
- *Where did this happen?*
- *What resources were used or available for the children?*

Often when people talk about their first response to a vignette, different things are noticed. It is helpful for participants to recognise that there can be different perspectives or ideas about the practice or events in the one vignette. Use some questions such as those that follow to help focus on different perspectives.

- *Why do we see different things when we look at the same vignette?*
- *What do those differences tell us as educators?*
- *How might the parent of the toddler respond to viewing this vignette? Why might the parent respond this way?*
- *How might the parents of the boys playing in the sandpit respond to this vignette? Why might a parent respond this way?*
- *How can a parent's perspective help us to think about our practice differently?*

### Overview:

This vignette shows a two-year-old and some three- and four-year-olds in an outdoor space in a group setting. Two experiences captured in the vignette are an educator alongside a very young child holding a chicken and several children playing in a sand area with water, pipes and sand.

### Key Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) concepts:

- children as teachers of other children
- rich learning environments
- children's agency
- intentional teaching through the physical environment
- relationships and interactions between educators and children
- Learning Outcomes 2, 3, 4, 5
- learning through play.

## Second viewing: Looking more deeply at the learning and teaching

Before showing the vignette again, suggest to participants that this time they focus on what the children are *learning* rather than on what they are *doing*.

- **What are the children learning?** For example, the toddler is learning how to handle a chicken appropriately (Learning Outcome 2); the boys are learning to solve problems and to experiment with water and sand (Learning Outcome 4).
- **What other links to the EYLF Learning Outcomes are evident?**
- **How are the children learning?** For example, by talking, listening, watching, experimenting, imitating.
- **How does this outdoor environment encourage learning through play?**
- **What kind of atmosphere is created in this setting—for the toddler and for the boys in the sandpit? Why is this important?** For example, there is a peaceful atmosphere where the educator and child are sitting together with the chicken and this helps promote the child's sense of being respected.
- **What are the features of the educator's role as she sits with the toddler?**

Discuss the fact that the educator asked the child to let the chicken go twice, without the desired result. She then took the chicken from the child. This is a very common occurrence in educators' work with children. Discuss the value in interacting in this way, and the disadvantages.

- **What is the girl learning from cuddling the chicken as well as from the conversation she is having with the educator?** How does this learning link to the Outcomes in the EYLF?



## Third viewing: What have we learned? What next?

Suggest to participants that this time they focus on links to the EYLF Vision, Principles and Practices and their own practice.

*The EYLF highlights the concept of children as teachers of other children. Talk about what the boys might be learning from each other.*

- **Why is the outdoor learning space in this vignette a good example of intentional teaching, even though no educator is directly involved?** For example, the sandpit has equipment that has provoked rich, purposeful play.
- **In the part of the vignette that shows an educator talking with the child holding the chicken, what connections can we see to children's sense of belonging and respect for their being?**
- **What have we learned from the discussion of the vignette that we can apply to our workplace?** For example, we have learned that when educators take the time for relaxed, quiet conversations with a child they create an atmosphere that respects children's being and supports their sense of belonging.
- **What action will we take as a result of our discussion of this vignette?** For example, we will find similar resources for our sandpit in order to promote purposeful play-based learning linked to a range of learning outcomes.

## References

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments (DEEWR) (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra, ACT: DEEWR



**Early Childhood Australia**  
A voice for young children

The NQS Professional Learning Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.