



Discussion Paper:

# 2021 National Quality Framework Approved Learning Frameworks Update

August 2021

## Table of Contents

List of Figures .....	3
List of Tables .....	3
Executive Summary.....	4
Background .....	4
The ALFs Update Project.....	4
The Discussion Paper .....	4
Overview of Opportunities to Update and Improve the ALFs .....	5
1. Vision.....	5
2. Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice .....	6
3. Principles.....	6
4. Practices .....	8
5. Learning Outcomes .....	10
Have Your Say .....	12
Discussion Paper Questions.....	12
The Vision To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:.....	12
Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice .....	13
To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by: .....	13
Principles.....	13
To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by: .....	13
Practices.....	13
Learning Outcomes .....	14
Background .....	15
2021 NQF ALFs Update .....	15
Consultation Process.....	16
Stage 1.....	16
Stage 2.....	17
Stage 3.....	18
Purpose of Discussion Paper .....	18
Strengths, Opportunities and Points of Discussion .....	19
Section 1: Vision.....	20
1.1 Strengths .....	20
1.2 Opportunities .....	21
Section 2: Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice .....	25

2.1 Strengths .....	25
2.2 Opportunities .....	25
Section 3: Principles .....	27
3.1 Strengths .....	27
3.2 Opportunities .....	28
Section 4: Practices .....	35
4.1 Strengths .....	35
4.2 Opportunities .....	37
Section 5: Learning Outcomes .....	43
5.1 Strengths .....	43
5.2 Opportunities .....	45
How to Provide Feedback .....	56
Glossary of Acronyms .....	57
Appendices.....	58
Appendix 1: Stage 1: Stakeholder Representation by State/Territory, Type of ECEC/OSHC Service, National Quality Standard Quality Rating, Type of Approved Provider, and Size of Approved Provider.....	58
Appendix 2: Stage 1: Children’s Data.....	61
Appendix 3: Points of Discussion for Consultation .....	62
The Vision To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:.....	62
Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice .....	62
To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by: .....	62
Principles.....	62
To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by: .....	62
Practices .....	63
Learning Outcomes .....	63
References .....	65

## List of Figures

<b>Figure 1.</b> Stakeholder Participation in Stage 1.....	17
<b>Figure 2.</b> ALFs Update Project Timeline.....	18

## List of Tables

<b>Table 1.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who gave ratings of extremely or very for the EYLF as a whole.....	19
<b>Table 2.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who gave ratings of extremely or very for MTOP as a whole.....	19
<b>Table 3.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated early childhood pedagogy as extremely or very important.....	25
<b>Table 4.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF Principles as extremely or very important.....	27
<b>Table 5.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP Principles as extremely or very important.....	28
<b>Table 6.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF Practices as extremely or very important.....	35
<b>Table 7.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP Practices as extremely or very important.....	36
<b>Table 8.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF Learning Outcomes as extremely or very important.....	44
<b>Table 9.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP Learning Outcomes as extremely or very important.....	45
<b>Table 10.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF examples as extremely or very useful.....	46
<b>Table 11.</b> Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP examples as extremely or very useful.....	46

# Executive Summary

## Background

Along with the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) and National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard (NQS), the Approved Learning Frameworks (ALFs) are part of the regulatory system that established the National Quality Framework (NQF). Under the National Law, approved providers of education and care services must ensure that the programs they deliver to children are based on an ALF and is delivered in a manner that accords with the ALF.

On 15 December 2020, Education Ministers commissioned an update of the two national approved learning frameworks under the National Quality Framework (NQF) - [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#) (EYLF) and [My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care](#) (MTOC). The ALFs inform educational programs and practices in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and outside school hours care (OSHC) services.

As both ALFs have been in use for a decade or more, the purpose of this update is to ensure they reflect contemporary developments in practice and knowledge to extend children's and young people's learning.

A national consortium led by a partnership between Macquarie University, Queensland University of Technology and Edith Cowan University was engaged by ACECQA on behalf of all governments to lead this project and the paper was prepared by the Chief Investigators of the consortium<sup>1</sup>. More information about the project is available on the ALFs Update website at [www.alfsupdate.mq.edu.au](http://www.alfsupdate.mq.edu.au).

## The ALFs Update Project

The project is being delivered over three stages:

1. Gathering feedback about the current ALFs from a wide range of stakeholders to inform the Discussion Paper (complete),
2. Gathering stakeholder feedback on the Discussion Paper to inform the updates to the ALFs, and
3. Sector piloting/testing of the draft updated ALFs.

Release of the Discussion Paper marks the beginning of Stage 2 of the project. The [Terms of Reference](#) agreed by Education Ministers for the 2021 ALFs Update can be found on the ALFs Update website at [www.mq.edu.au/faculty-of-arts/alfsupdate](http://www.mq.edu.au/faculty-of-arts/alfsupdate).

## The Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper identifies current strengths, as well as opportunities for clarification, expansion and updating the ALFs. It is informed by Stage 1 of the project including broad based

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor Fay Hadley and Professor Linda Harrison (MQ), Professor Susan Irvine (QUT), Associate Professor Lennie Barblett (ECU), Associate Professor Jennifer Cartmel (GU), and Dr Francis Bobongie-Harris (QUT)

consultation, survey responses and a literature review. Points of discussion and opportunities to strengthen the ALFs are outlined under the five elements of the EYLF and MTOP:

1. Vision
2. Pedagogy and educator’s professional practice
3. Principles
4. Practices
5. Learning Outcomes.

## Overview of Opportunities to Update and Improve the ALFs

### 1. Vision

*Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the Frameworks, including the vision, principles, practices and outcomes*

The NQF acknowledges Australia is a nation of great diversity, and an ancient land that has been cared for by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for many thousands of years. Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures, and perspectives throughout both ALFs is a priority and reflects the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Council, 2019). This includes recognition of the more than 60,000 years of continual connection by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a key part of the nation’s history, present and future. Evidence suggests this is a way to move towards Reconciliation<sup>2</sup>. Expanding the EYLF and MTOP visions recognises the role of ECEC and OSHC in advancing children’s engagement in Reconciliation, respect and recognition of the world’s oldest continuous living cultures. It also aligns with the Australian Curriculum supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures.

#### *Opportunity*

- Expanding the EYLF and MTOP visions to recognise the role of ECEC and OSHC in advancing Reconciliation.
- Adding a principle about embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives in both the EYLF and MTOP.
- Making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures and ways of knowing more explicit in all of the learning outcomes to reflect family/community connections, connection to country, kinship systems, telling of stories (oral history), spirituality, and connecting with the extended family.

#### *Clarify ‘success for life’*

The vision for both ALFs, with its emphasis on learning experiences that are enriching and engaging, was strongly endorsed by stakeholders. There were concerns raised about the complexity of the statements and the need for more clarity on the phrase of “success for life”. There is opportunity to align the vision with the Mparntwe Education Declaration (2019) which aspires to all children

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<sup>2</sup> To find out more about [Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the Frameworks, including the vision, principles, practices, and outcomes](#) view pages 21-23 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

becoming confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community<sup>3</sup>.

#### *Opportunity*

- Reconsidering the words “success for life” in the vision and instead emphasise the vision as all children and young people become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.

## *2. Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice*

### *Strengthening the link between the vision and the planning cycle*

The Education and Care Services National Law (National Law) requires service providers to demonstrate how they plan and implement programs for both individual and groups of children and young people. Planning for learning is a continuous cycle that involves planning, implementation, critical reflection, assessment and evaluation. High quality programs have a strategic and reflective approach to planning for learning. There is opportunity to amplify the importance of planning in both Frameworks to better inform practice and the assessment of children’s learning, development and wellbeing in ECEC and OSHC<sup>4</sup>.

#### *Opportunity*

- Adding detail on planning for learning that addresses the importance of, and explains the continuous cycle of planning, observation, documentation and reflection.

## *3. Principles*

### *Strengthening the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice*

The ability to engage in critical reflection is core to the provision of high-quality education and care, and a priority for ongoing learning and continuous quality improvement. While promoted as a key principle in both ALFs, there is opportunity to further strengthen critical reflection as a principle to emphasise that reflection includes action and children engaging with diverse views<sup>5</sup>.

#### *Opportunity*

- Expanding the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice to further strengthen critical reflection as a principle and professional practice.

### *Introducing a new principle promoting collaborative leadership*

The importance of effective leadership in ECEC and OSHC is well documented including the relationship between effective leadership and children and young people’s experiences and

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<sup>3</sup> To find out more about [Clarify success for life](#) view pages 23-24 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>4</sup> To find out more about [Strengthening the link between the vision and the planning cycle](#) view pages 25-26 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>5</sup> To find out more about [Strengthening the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice](#) view page 28-29 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

outcomes. This goes beyond formal leadership positions, to include leadership by children and young people and educators. The surveys and the focus group comments reflected this theme, and there is opportunity to add a principle that recognises values and supports leadership in this broader context<sup>6</sup>.

#### *Opportunity*

- Adding a principle that reflects contemporary research evidence concerning the role of collaborative leadership and teamwork.

#### *Strengthening the principle of high expectations and equity*

There has been considerable growth in research and understanding relating to inclusive environments and practices for children and young people. Inclusion makes visible and celebrates the diversity of children and young people's lives. There is opportunity to draw on new knowledge and evidence-based practice to strengthen inclusion in ECEC and OSHC services, whereby educators are skilled in enacting inclusion for all.<sup>7</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Expanding the principle of high expectations and equity to reflect contemporary understandings of diversity and inclusion.

#### *Introducing a new principle addressing sustainability*

Teaching children and young people about the natural environment and how to take care of it is central to education for sustainability. However, sustainability extends beyond environmental education. International organisations, such as UNESCO, now recognise three dimensions of sustainability; environmental, social and economic sustainability. This broader view of sustainability is a feature of several other early years frameworks. Recognising children and young people's interest in supporting a fair and sustainable world, there is opportunity to add a new principle addressing sustainability and to strengthen concepts of sustainability throughout the two Frameworks.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Adding a principle of sustainability to include environmental, social and economic sustainability.

#### *Updating the principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationship to include relational pedagogy*

The importance of relationships between educators and children is a key theme of the ALFs. This draws on attachment theory and research demonstrating links between security and trust in relationships with important adults and children's positive sense of self, confidence and self-worth.

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<sup>6</sup> To find out more about [Introduce a new principle promoting collaborative leadership](#) view page 29-30 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>7</sup> To find out more about [Strengthening the principle of high expectations and equity](#) view pages 30-31 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>8</sup> To find out more about [Introducing a new principle addressing sustainability](#) view pages 31-32 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.



Relational pedagogy incorporates being responsive to children’s lives and circumstances and applying trauma informed practices to create safe spaces for children and young people.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Revising the principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships to include children and young people’s connections with educators and their peers to underpin learning and teaching practices.

#### *Strengthening partnerships to include other professionals*

There is no consensus on what is meant by partnerships with families and educators often understanding partnerships differently. Partnerships between OSHC professionals and school principals and management are vital in providing high quality care, play and educational environments for children and young people. Reflective of a holistic approach to children and young people’s learning and wellbeing, there is opportunity to expand on partnerships with professionals and schools.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Strengthening the principle of partnerships to include working with diverse families, culturally safe spaces, and strengthening connections with child and family professionals and school communities.

## *4. Practices*

#### *Clarifying the meaning of holistic approaches*

The literature notes the concept and practice of ‘holistic approaches’ appear inconsistent and reflect disparities between pedagogy and curriculum within the sector. In OSHC services, key to high quality pedagogy is the importance of children and young people working with educators to develop the learning program. There is opportunity to strengthen the focus on holistic approaches and provide greater clarity on what this looks like in planning and practice.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Clarifying the meaning of *holistic approaches* to learning and teaching, including the connection between the vision, principles, practices and learning outcomes in both Frameworks.

#### *Strengthen the connection between play-based learning and intentionality*

The current practices of “learning through play” and “intentional teaching” (EYLF) and “intentionality” (MTO) could be more aligned to strengthen the coherence of both ALFs. While learning through play is promoted and strongly endorsed in ECEC and OSHC, research suggests that

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<sup>9</sup> To find out more about [Updating the principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationship to include relational pedagogy](#) view pages 32-33 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>10</sup> To find out more about [Strengthening partnerships to include other professionals](#) view pages 33-34 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>11</sup> To find out more about [Clarifying the meaning of holistic approaches](#) view pages 37-38 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

Australian educators still do not have an agreed understanding of what this is, or a shared language to describe it. There is opportunity to strengthen understanding about play-based learning and intentionality, including the role of children, young people and educators in play and learning.<sup>12</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Combining the practices of learning through play, intentional teaching and intentionality to reflect contemporary understandings of child and educator roles in play, teaching and learning.

#### *Cultural responsiveness to replace cultural competence*

All Australian children and young people have the right to know and value the history and current context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the stories of the land on which they live. Cultural competence is a recurring theme across the principles, practices and outcomes of the EYLF and MTOP. Researching and thinking in this area has moved beyond the idea of cultural competence to cultural responsiveness. There is opportunity to update the ALFs to focus on cultural responsiveness in education and care.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Changing the practice of cultural competence to *cultural responsiveness*, which includes a genuine commitment to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of service provision.

#### *Align assessment and evaluation for learning development and wellbeing*

While assessment of children's learning outcomes in early childhood services is required under National Law, and embedded in the NQS, Stage 1 of this project identified varied understandings of its purpose and practice. There continues to be mixed views on assessment in ECEC and the focus on MTOP is on evaluation for wellbeing and learning. There is opportunity to strengthen the concepts of assessment and evaluation in the EYLF and MTOP and connect these to the planning cycle in authentic, meaningful, and transparent ways. This includes assessment practices that provide children with the opportunity to review and consider their own learning.<sup>14</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Aligning EYLF and MTOP practices to: *Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing* to reflect contemporary understandings of authentic and meaningful assessment approaches including children and young people's role in assessing their own learning.

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<sup>12</sup> To find out more about [Strengthen the connection between play-based learning and intentionality](#) view pages 38-39 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>13</sup> To find out more about [Cultural responsiveness to replace cultural competence](#) view pages 39-40 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>14</sup> To find out more about [Align assessment and evaluation for learning development and wellbeing](#) view pages 40-42 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

## 5. Learning Outcomes

### *Detail and delineation of examples to reflect children and young people's diverse abilities and educators' promotion of learning*

The literature notes that educators and teachers would prefer to have some further description of the five outcomes pertaining to specific age groups such as infants and toddlers and preschool aged children. This approach is evident in other early years curricula. For example, *Te Whariki* (NZ) offers description of learning, development and wellbeing for infants, toddlers, and young children. There is opportunity to strengthen the diversity and usefulness of examples of teaching and learning under the learning outcomes in both Frameworks.<sup>15</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Providing more guidance and examples of what the learning could look like and how educators could promote learning to better reflect difference and diversity to include:
  - specialised age groupings of children and young people (infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, early years of school and middle school)
  - children and young people's different abilities
  - social (learning with others) as well as individual learning
  - diverse cultures and families.

### *Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity*

Children have multiple and changing identities. There is a push for strengthening the identity of children and young people as Australian citizens with connection to the identities of others. Aspects of identity formation that encompass gender identity and gender expression (with a non-binary dichotomy) and family diversity are also critical. There is opportunity to update Learning Outcome 1 to include these aspects of identity and to strengthen understanding of the importance of identity in framing children and young people's personal self-worth, uniqueness and positive sense of themselves as learners.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 1 to reflect contemporary perspectives of personal (e.g., gender) and social (e.g., customs and rituals) identity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders identities.

### *Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world*

Children and young people are participating in many communities beyond their local community, many by digital means. Adopting a broader definition of sustainability, encompassing environmental, social and economic sustainability, recognises children and young people as competent problem-

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<sup>15</sup> To find out more about [Detail and delineation of examples to reflect children and young people's diverse abilities and educators' promotion of learning](#) view pages 46-48 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>16</sup> To find out more about [Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity](#) view pages 48-49 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

solvers, able to engage with complex problems and to enact positive change. It also aligns with understandings of sustainability in the Australian Curriculum supporting continuity of learning.<sup>17</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Strengthening concepts of sustainability in Learning Outcome 2, based on the broader definition of sustainability spanning environmental, social and economic sustainability.

#### *Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing*

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse focused attention on the nature, cause and impacts of child sexual abuse, and the role community prevention can play in promoting child safe organisations. The ALFs Update project is asked to consider the role of the two Frameworks in prevention of child abuse and in supporting the implementation of Child Safe Organisation principles in ECEC and OSHC. Recognising the importance of a comprehensive approach to promote and support wellbeing, there is opportunity to strengthen understanding of the benefits of regular physical activity, teaching of wellbeing concepts and mental health promotion.<sup>18</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 3 to reflect information about wellbeing and drawing on recent research and guidelines relating to children's health and wellbeing, social competence, embodied learning, fundamental movement skills, including mental health promotion, protective behaviours and resilience.

#### *Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners*

Self-regulation and positive growth mindsets are concepts emphasised in the literature and other similar frameworks. Expanding this outcome to strengthen children's thinking allows the further exploration of metacognition and the language of learning.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Strengthening the focus in Learning Outcome 4 on young people's thinking, development of conceptual thinking (e.g., science and mathematics) and reinforcing the use of the language of learning.

#### *Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators*

The literature places significant emphasis on the acquisition of oral language and the ways in which educators support this learning. Times to talk with peers is particularly important and building vocabulary seen as critical in the development of reading skills. So too, children and young people need opportunities for creative expression through different methods and materials that supports all

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<sup>17</sup> To find out more about [Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world](#) view pages 49-50 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>18</sup> To find out more about [Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing](#) view pages 50-51 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>19</sup> To find out more about [Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved](#) view pages 51-53 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

areas of learning. Promoting safe ways of using technology and nurturing critical skills to operate in the digital environment is also of growing importance.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Strengthening the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 5 to include oral, aural and non-oral languages, communication through the arts, mathematical thinking and a focus on children and young people as creative, safe, and critical users of technology for learning, leisure and creative expression.

#### *Language and accessibility*

A key objective of the introduction of the ALFs was to provide a shared professional language for teachers and educators working in ECEC and OSHC. It is important that the ALFs are also clear and accessible for educators with diverse qualifications. There is opportunity to strengthen clarity and understanding of some key concepts in the ALFs to enhance professional practice in ECEC and OSHC.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Opportunity*

- Expressing complex ideas in professional language that is accessible to the wider workforce whilst retaining the value of the ALFs for all audiences.

## Have Your Say

Feedback can be provided through the following options:

- an [online survey](#) for providers of education and care services (ECEC and OSHC), educators and other professionals,
- an [online survey](#) for families whose children attend ECEC or OSHC services,
- submitting a [written submission](#),
- for those working in an ECEC or OSHC by [gathering perspectives from the children and young people](#).

Stage 2 of the ALFs Update project closes on **17 September 2021** so be sure to have your say before then.

## Discussion Paper Questions

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### *The Vision*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

1. a) Expanding the EYLF and MTOP visions to recognise the role of ECEC and OSHC in advancing Reconciliation.

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<sup>20</sup> To find out more about [Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators](#) view pages 53-54 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

<sup>21</sup> To find out more about [Language and accessibility](#) view pages 54-55 in the 2021 NQF ALFs Update Discussion Paper.

- b) Adding a principle about embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives in both the EYLF and MTOP.
- c) Making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures and ways of knowing more explicit in all of the learning outcomes to reflect family / community connections, connection to country, kinship systems, telling of stories (oral history), spirituality, and connecting with the extended family.

- 2. Reconsidering the words “success for life” in the vision and instead emphasise the vision as all children and young people become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.

### *Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 3. Adding detail on planning for learning that addresses the importance of, and explains the continuous cycle of planning, observation, documentation, and reflection.

### *Principles*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 4. Expanding the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice to further strengthen critical reflection as a principle and professional practice.
- 5. Adding a principle that reflects contemporary research evidence concerning the role of collaborative leadership and teamwork.
- 6. Expanding the principle of high expectations and equity to reflect contemporary understandings of diversity and inclusion.
- 7. Adding a principle of sustainability to include environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- 8. Revising the principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships to include children and young people’s connections with educators and their peers to underpin learning and teaching practices.
- 9. Strengthening the principle of partnerships to include working with diverse families, culturally safe spaces, and strengthening connections with child and family professionals and school communities?

### *Practices*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 10. Clarifying the meaning of holistic approaches to learning and teaching, including the connection between the vision, principles, practices and learning outcomes in both Frameworks.

11. Combining the practices of learning through play, intentional teaching and intentionality to reflect contemporary understandings of child and educator roles in play, teaching and learning.
12. Changing the practice of cultural competence to *cultural responsiveness*, which includes a genuine commitment to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of service provision.
13. Aligning EYLF and MTOP practices to: Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and well-being to reflect contemporary understandings of authentic and meaningful assessment approaches including children and young people's role in assessing their own learning.

### *Learning Outcomes*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

14. Providing more guidance and examples of what the learning could look like and how educators could promote learning to better reflect difference and diversity to include:
  - specialised age groupings of children and young people (infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, early years of school and middle school).
  - children and young people's different abilities.
  - social (learning with others) as well as individual learning.
  - diverse cultures and families.
15. Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 1 to reflect contemporary perspectives of personal (e.g., gender) and social (e.g., customs and rituals) identity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders identities.
16. Strengthening concepts of sustainability in Learning Outcome 2, based on the broader definition of sustainability spanning environmental, social and economic sustainability.
17. Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 3 to reflect information about wellbeing and drawing on recent research and guidelines relating to children's health and wellbeing, social competence, embodied learning, fundamental movement skills, including mental health promotion, protective behaviours and resilience.
18. Strengthening the focus in Learning Outcome 4 on young people's thinking, development of conceptual thinking (e.g., science and mathematics) and reinforcing the use of the language of learning.
19. Strengthening the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 5 to include oral, aural and non-oral languages, communication through the arts, mathematical thinking and a focus on children and young people as creative, safe, and critical users of technology for learning, leisure and creative expression.
20. Expressing complex ideas in professional language that is accessible to the wider workforce whilst retaining the value of the ALFs for all audiences.

## Background

Along with the National Law and National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard (NQS), the ALFs are part of the regulatory system that established the National Quality Framework (NQF). For example under section 168 of the National Law, approved providers of education and care services must ensure that a program is delivered to all children they educate and care for that is based on an ALF and is delivered in a manner that accords with the ALF.

To become 'approved' a learning framework requires the approval of the Education Ministers. Currently, there are two national ALFs under the NQF for children's education and care:

- [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia](#) (EYLF)
- [My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia](#) (MTOF)

Both ALFs were developed prior to, and formally introduced with, the commencement of the NQF in 2012. Recognising that children learn from birth, the National Law and NQS require ECEC and OSHC services to work with the ALFs to inform their educational programs and practices. Specifically, services are required to use the ALFs to guide:

- the development of programs that promote children's learning and development
- the pedagogical practices of educators
- a planned and reflective approach to assessment and planning for each child (ACECQA, Sept 2020, p.100).

Both ALFs have been in use in ECEC and OSHC for close to a decade, and it is important they remain contemporary and support effective foundations for high quality education and care and strengthen relationships across the early childhood and school age service systems.

A review of the ALFs was identified as a key issue for stakeholders during consultations on the 2019 NQF Review. In late 2020, the former Education Council commissioned an update of the ALFs and subsequently agreed to Terms of Reference (ToR) for the project. The [ToR](#) for the project are available on the ALFs Update website at [www.mq.edu.au/faculty-of-arts/alfsupdate](http://www.mq.edu.au/faculty-of-arts/alfsupdate).

The ALFs Update focus is a "refresh" of these Frameworks. While mindful of other relevant policy reviews and initiatives, such as the NQF Review and development of the National Workforce Strategy, these are not the focus of this project.

Education Ministers have authority to approve final versions of the updated ALFs, together with a proposed approach to implementation and timing for their commencement.

## 2021 NQF ALFs Update

Governments consider both Frameworks effective. An update of the ALFs will strengthen their contribution to the objectives of the National Law and their value to all stakeholders ensuring the Frameworks are in line with the contemporary research and evidence-based practice, improving national consistency and, where appropriate, strengthening continuity and alignment with the Australian Curriculum.



The [Terms of Reference](#) (ToR) for the 2021 NQF ALFs Update will consider:

- new knowledge and insights since 2010 and how these are reflected in recent curricula and frameworks
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
- a range of perspectives – human rights; culturally and linguistically diverse communities; children and young people with additional needs
- ways of measuring success in order to support children’s learning, development and wellbeing in ECEC
- links/relationships between the ALFs and, where appropriate, the Australian Curriculum
- Australian Productivity Commission Inquiries and Royal Commissions
- other relevant reviews – Disability Standards for Education, mental health, child safe principles.

Importantly, the Update will also be informed by responses, feedback and issues/themes raised during stakeholder engagement.

## Consultation Process

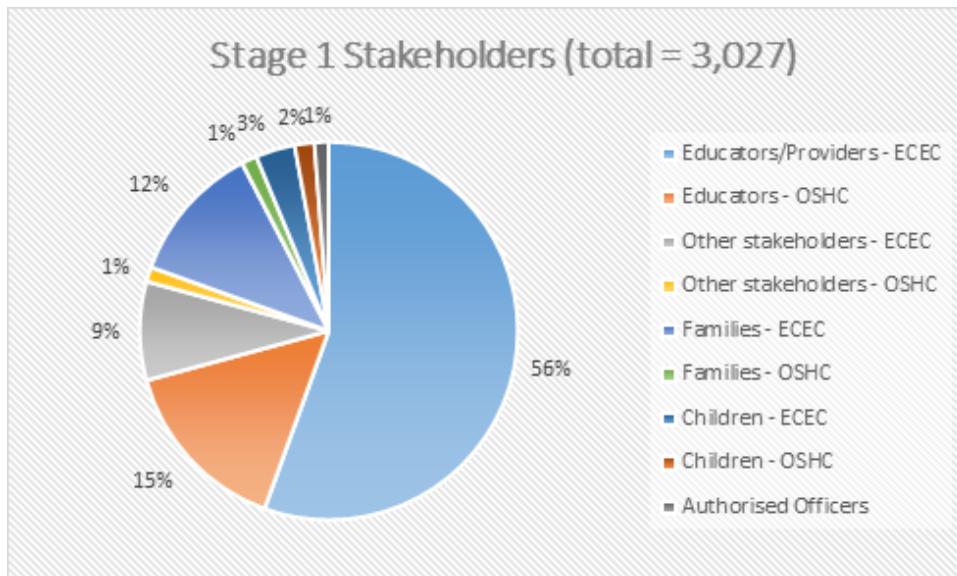
The 2021 NQF ALFs Update is being delivered in three stages.

1. Gathering feedback about the current ALFs from a wide range of stakeholders to inform the development of the Discussion Paper
2. Gathering stakeholder feedback on the Discussion Paper and proposed updates (in the form of 20 questions) to inform the recommended updates to the ALFs
3. Sector piloting/testing of the draft updated ALFs.

### Stage 1

Stage 1 was completed in July 2021. This Stage included a review of literature and current curriculum frameworks (448 papers and 14 frameworks) and the collection and analysis of stakeholder views on updating the ALFs. Feedback was gathered through a set of online surveys, focus group discussions with Regulatory Authorities and the collection of voices (drawn and written) of children and young people between 2.5 to 12 years. Stakeholder participation by role and type of service (ECEC and OSHC) is summarised in **Figure 1**.

**Figure 1.** Stakeholder participation in Stage 1



The views of over 3000 educators, service providers, families, children and young people, and other professionals from all jurisdictions and all types of ECEC and OSHC services have informed the preparation of this Discussion Paper. We thank all stakeholders for their time and contribution to this important policy initiative.

The Discussion Paper summarises ratings and written responses from educators, service providers, other professionals and families to the Stage 1 online survey. The Paper also draws on feedback from a representation of state and territory Regulatory Authorities, and on children and young peoples' words and images about their experiences of education and care in ECEC and OSHC services.

You will find more detailed information about Stage 1 stakeholder representation in **Appendix 1** (and on the website), including by State/Territory, National Quality Standard Quality Rating, type, and size of Approved Provider. More information about the voices of children and young people is provided in **Appendix 2** (and on the website).

## Stage 2

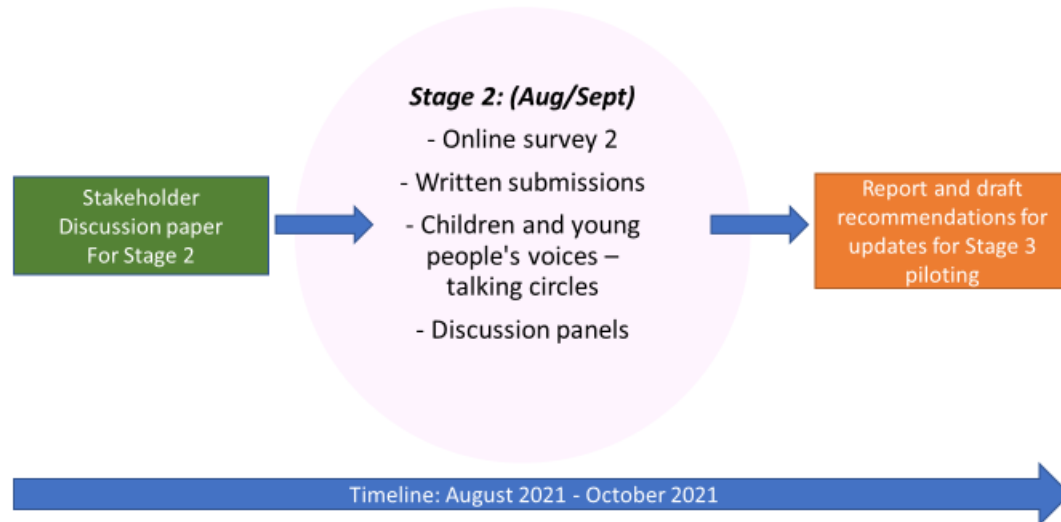
Stage 2 of the ALFs Update project is now commencing with the release of the Discussion Paper and Stage 2 surveys. The focus of Stage 2 is to identify potential areas for updating in the ALFs, informed by research and feedback gathered in Stage 1.

Your responses to the questions raised in this Discussion Paper will inform the recommended updates to the EYLF and MTOP. Feedback can be provided by completing the [online survey](#).

Alternatively, organisations may choose to make a submission, responding to the questions raised in this Discussion Paper. We are also keen to hear from children and young people and encourage ECEC and OSHC services to engage children and young people in providing feedback. More information is available on the ALFs Update website at [www.mq.edu.au/faculty-of-arts/alfsupdate](http://www.mq.edu.au/faculty-of-arts/alfsupdate).

This consultation is open from 24 August to 17 September 2021. During this time, five discussion panels with sector representatives will also be hosted.

Figure 2. ALFs Update Project Timeline



### Stage 3

Stakeholder feedback from Stage 2 will inform the writing of the draft updated ALFs. In Stage 3, the proposed updates to the EYLF and MTOP will be piloted in 15 education and care sites across Australia. Findings will inform final recommendations on the proposed updates to the EYLF and MTOP to be considered by Education Ministers.

### Purpose of Discussion Paper

The purpose of this Discussion Paper is to gather feedback from educators, families, service providers, peak and professional organisations, researchers and other interested stakeholders on the strengths and the areas requiring updating in the two ALFs – [Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Framework for Australia](#) (EYLF) and [My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia](#) (MTOP).

The objectives are to:

- reflect on the current strengths of the two ALFs
- identify potential areas for updating the EYLF and MTOP
- seek feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders on the potential areas for change and improvement
- invite feedback on any other areas for change and improvement.

Your responses will inform the development of an updated EYLF and MTOP for consideration and final approval by Australian Education Ministers.

## Strengths, Opportunities and Points of Discussion

Stakeholder feedback in Stage 1 of the project highlighted the strengths of the current ALFs and opportunities for updating the Frameworks. In the following section, insights from Stage 1 are shared, summarising feedback and insights from contemporary literature, curriculum and policy documents. From this, we put forward and invite feedback on 20 opportunities for updating and strengthening the EYLF and MTOP (see **Appendix 3** for a full list of the questions).

This section follows the current structure of the two ALFs. Addressing each of the elements of the Frameworks (Vision, Pedagogy, Principles, Practices and Learning Outcome) we report on stakeholders' ratings and views about the importance of each of these elements in the EYLF and MTOP. The Discussion Paper also reports on stakeholders' ratings of satisfaction with, and the usefulness of, the Frameworks and examples in helping educators observe, understand and plan for children's achievement of the learning outcomes.

Ratings are presented as the per cent of stakeholders who rated each ALF element as 'very or extremely important'; other ratings options were 'moderately, somewhat, slightly or not at all important'. In reporting on strengths, we use a figure of 85% agreement that the element is extremely-very important as an indicator of stakeholders' strong endorsement of the currency of these elements. We have included comments from the surveys, insights and advice from the Regulatory Authority focus groups and voices of children and young people to complement and illustrate the views of stakeholders.

Stakeholders' overall ratings of satisfaction with, and the usefulness of both Frameworks support the decision of Education Ministers for an update to the ALFs. For the EYLF, about two-thirds of stakeholders gave ratings extremely-very satisfied with the framework as a whole, below our benchmark of 85% as the indicator of strong endorsement.

**Table 1.** Per cent of stakeholders who gave ratings of extremely or very for the EYLF as a whole

<b>Thinking about the EYLF as a whole:</b>	<b>Educators /Approved Providers</b>	<b>Other Professionals</b>
How satisfied are you with the current framework?	68%	63%
How useful is the current EYLF framework for assessing children's achievements?	56%	52%

Similarly, ratings for overall satisfaction with and the usefulness of the MTOP framework were lower, which will become evident in the following sections, contrast markedly with the high ratings given for the elements of the framework.

**Table 2.** Per cent of stakeholders who gave ratings of extremely or very for MTOP as a whole

<b>Thinking about the MTOP as a whole:</b>	<b>Educators /Approved Providers</b>	<b>Other Professionals</b>
How satisfied are you with the current framework?	55%	52%
How useful is the current MTOP framework for providing play and leisure opportunities that are meaningful to children and support their wellbeing, learning and development?	53%	57%

## Section 1: Vision

### 1.1 Strengths

*EYLF: All children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life.*

Recognising that learning begins from birth, the EYLF Vision is for all children to experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life. The Objectives and Guiding Principles of the National Law underpin this vision, in particular “to improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services” and “children are successful, competent and capable learners”. Notably, there is also strong alignment between the EYLF Vision and Goal 2 of the Mparntwe Education Declaration (2019): “all young Australian become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community” (p.4).

The EYLF Vision was rated as extremely or very important by 89% of educators/providers, 85% of other professionals who support early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, and 87% of families who use these services. Educators/providers and other professionals also endorsed the view of children’s lives as “belonging, being and becoming” (89% rated this as extremely-very important). Overwhelming support for the vision was reflected in the survey comments and the voices of the children and young people.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*It sets high expectations (ECEC, Early Childhood Teacher [ECT], Family Day Care [FDC])*

*The vision is deep and meaningful and focusses on each child’s strengths, physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. I love how it is play based (ECEC, ECT, Director, Nominated Supervisor, Preschool, Independent school)*

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*MTOP: All children experience meaningful and joyful learning, enriching their childhood.*

The MTOP Vision for children's learning through play and leisure was rated as extremely to very important by 84% of families, 73% of educators/providers, and 69% of other professionals who support outside school hours care. Educators/providers valued the vision, but felt it too wordy, complex, and highlighted the need to make it easier to understand.

There was stronger endorsement of “play, learning and leisure”: 98% of educators/providers and 96% of other professionals rated this aspect of the vision as extremely-very important for their work within OSHC. For MTOP the importance of leisure and play was emphasised as an essential aspect for the children. Children and young people require time for the elements and characteristics of leisure experiences as they contribute directly to the “development of identity, autonomy, competence, initiative, civic duty, and social connections” (Caldwell & De Witt, 2011, p.13).

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Continue to dictate and emphasise the role of play and leisure-based activities (OSHC, Nominated Supervisor, After School Care [ASC])*

*The children are given play options, they're not forced to all do the same activity. This allows my child to grow in the area he wants to (OSHC, Parent, Before School Care [BSC]/ASC/Vacation Care [Vac]).*

*Lots of time to play and lots of time to eat. Together with my sister and brother and there is lots of free choice (OSHC, Child, 9 years).*

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## 1.2 Opportunities

### 1.2.1 Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the Frameworks, including the vision, principles, practices and outcomes

The NQF acknowledges Australia is a nation of great diversity, “and an ancient land that has been cared for by Indigenous Australians for many thousands of years” (ACECQA, Sept 2020, p.10). ECEC and OSHC services are expected to value and engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to support children, families and educators to strengthen their understanding of First Nations histories and cultures. The ToR for the ALFs Update includes consideration of cultural competence and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the EYLF and MTOP.

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures and perspectives throughout both ALFs is a priority and reflects the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Council, 2019). This includes recognition of the more than 60,000 years of continual connection by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as a key part of the nation’s history, present and future. The Declaration makes the following commitment, “Through education, we are committed to

ensuring that all students learn about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to seeing all young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples thrive in their education and all facets of life” (Education Council, 2019, p.3). Quality environments provide all children with rich learning experiences that nurture and support their cultural identity (Priest, 2005). Additionally, Holzinger and Biddle (2015) suggest that embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives is a way to move towards Reconciliation.

While the words Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are discussed in the two ALFs in the preamble and some outcome elements, the terms are not threaded through the documents. There is an opportunity to recognise the role of ECEC and OSHC in supporting educators and children to understand and advance Reconciliation. This could be reflected in the vision as well as embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives across the Principles, Practices and Outcomes of both Frameworks. This will support services and educators to build respect for, and recognition of, the world’s oldest continuous living cultures, authentically advance Reconciliation and identify that ECEC and OSHC services are working towards understandings of this through their ways of working, conversations with children and openness to diverse perspectives.

The Literature and survey findings emphasise the need to introduce a new principle of embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into both Frameworks. Stampoulos and Barblett (2018) insist that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives should be represented in philosophies, policies, pedagogies and practices. Educators have a responsibility to create culturally safe places that support the telling of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories and perspectives, working in intercultural ways through their practice. Young children in a dominant culture can build a false sense of racial superiority that is damaging, causes isolation and ill prepares children to function in a diverse society (Derman Sparks cited in Miller, 2011, p.39). Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives will enhance all children and young people’s educational experiences and contribute to Reconciliation.

The words Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander are not found in the descriptive elements of the five learning outcomes. Mulhearn (2016 cited in Sumsion et al., 2018) suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, ways of knowing and being (p.173) are silenced in the EYLF (DEEWR, 2009) with general statements about diversity so that respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges had been rendered close to ‘invisible’ (p. 253). Yunkaporta (cited in Burgess and Cavanagh, 2016, p.53) believes that Aboriginal education should be “built in rather than bolted on”. Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives throughout the Frameworks, including the vision, principles, practices and outcomes was supported by stakeholder feedback in Stage 1.

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Greater acknowledgement and expectation for the provision of culturally safe places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families (ECEC, Director, Nominate Supervisor, Educational Leader, Long Day Care [LDC]).*

*As a key guiding Principle of the NQF, "Valuing Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture", it would be good to see this embedded into each framework and their significance intensified (OSHC, Other-Catholic School, BSC/ASC/Vac/LDC).*

*"Valuing Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture", it would be good to see this embedded into each framework and their significance intensified (ECEC & OSHC Participants).*

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**Points of Discussion: Vision - Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and perspectives**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 1.*
  - a. Expanding the EYLF and MTOP visions to recognise the role of ECEC and OSHC in advancing Reconciliation.*
  - b. Adding a principle about embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives in both the EYLF and MTOP.*
  - c. Making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures and ways of knowing more explicit in all of the learning outcomes to reflect family/community connections, connection to country, kinship systems, telling of stories (oral history), spirituality and connecting with the extended family.*

*1.2.2 Clarify 'success for life' in the vision*

The ToR for the ALFs Update include a focus on strengthening pathways between both ALFs and links to the Australian Curriculum. The vision of both ALFs can be strengthened to emphasise the importance of quality relationships and connections, learning through play and children's holistic learning, development and wellbeing (CASEL, 2020; Milton et al., 2020). Informed by the literature, these are key concepts in the NQS, and align with the general capabilities in the Australian Curriculum. Stakeholders strongly endorsed the themes of belonging, being and becoming and the need to continue to recognise the significance of the here and now in children and young people's lives. Many spoke of the need to shift the focus from 'success for life' as it was seen as confusing and something hard to measure.

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**Example comments from stakeholder feedback**

*I like to hang out with the OSHC carers and use the school playground (OSHC, Child, 9 years)*

*I would take away "builds success for life" and add something more along the lines of for every child to build relationships and engage in learning that helps them achieve their full potential (ECEC, Educational Leader, LDC).*

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### Points of Discussion: Vision for children's learning

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 2. Reconsidering the words "success for life" in the vision and instead emphasise the vision as all children and young people become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.*

## Section 2: Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice

### 2.1 Strengths

#### EYLF

The NQS references the central role of the ALFs in guiding curriculum decision-making in ECEC and OSHC. The expectation is that educators will draw on the ALFs, their pedagogy and their in-depth knowledge and understanding of each child to inform their educational programs and practices. The attention to pedagogy and effective educational practices informed by theory, research and educators’ professional judgements are seen to be a point of distinction and a strength of the EYLF. In Stage 1, stakeholders’ strong endorsement (ratings over 90%) was evident for four aspects of early childhood pedagogy and professional practice (see **Table 3**).

**Table 3:** Per cent of stakeholders who rated early childhood pedagogy as extremely or very important

Features of Early Childhood Pedagogy and Professional Practice	Educators/ Approved Providers	Other Professionals
Professional knowledge and skills	97%	98%
Knowledge of children, families and communities	98%	97%
Awareness of how beliefs and values impact on children’s learning	94%	92%
Creativity, intuition and imagination	93%	91%
Theories about early childhood, including developmental, socio-cultural, behaviourist, critical, post-structural theories	77%	84%

In contrast, 77% of educators/providers and 85% of other professionals rated the EYLF listed theories about early childhood as extremely or very important. A narrow theoretical view has been found to diminish the professional role and agency of educators. Drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies supports reflection when “interpreting the day to day experiences when working with young children and their families” (Anderson, 2014, p.81). This, in turn, builds professional knowledge and supports improved practice. Hurst (2017) invites consideration to be given to the theories used to guide programming in OSHC services particularly for older children. In updating the ALFs a short description of theories that inform pedagogy and educators’ perspectives about children and young people’s learning will be given.

### 2.2 Opportunities

#### 2.2.1 Strengthening the link between the vision and the planning cycle

Enabling educators to support children's learning and development and to assess achievement of the learning outcomes is a key aspect of the ToR. The vision in both ALFs is critical and underpins every aspect of educators’ work in implementing the principles, practices and outcomes.

National Quality Standard Area 1: *The Educational Program and Practice* requires services to demonstrate how they plan and implement the program for both individual and groups of children

and young people. Specifically, Standard 1.3 requires *educators and co-ordinators to take a planned and reflective approach implementing the program for each child*.

Planning includes a continuous cycle and high-quality programs have been found to have a strategic and reflective approach (Harrison et al., 2020). Digital documentation has changed the work of early childhood teachers, with digital platforms shifting what is shared about children’s learning and how it is shared with stakeholders and other interested parties, for instance policy and regulatory accountabilities (White et al., 2021). There was agreement across all stakeholders on ensuring the vision was more evident in educators’ planning and programming. However, the value of these in informing practice can be overshadowed by a narrow focus on the learning outcomes. Without adding to existing requirements for assessment and evaluation required under National Law, and the quality outcomes described in the NQS, there is opportunity to describe the importance of planning in both Frameworks to better inform practice and assessment of children’s learning, development, and wellbeing in ECEC and OSHC.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*It would be helpful to have a basic structure for the time in after school care. If this was school three hours without a plan would not be acceptable (OSHC, Parent, ASC).*

*Learning Outcomes are the areas educators are most familiar with, but educators can lack real understanding of their intent or their basis in the principles and practices and how these are linked to the achievement of Learning Outcomes (Focus Group).*

*More clear guidelines for what a cycle of planning is, what’s required and best practice to achieve this (ECEC, Educational Leader, Room Leader, ECT).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Pedagogy and educator’s professional practice

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 3. Adding detail on planning for learning that addresses the importance of, and explains the continuous cycle of planning, observation, documentation and reflection.*

## Section 3: Principles

### 3.1 Strengths

#### EYLF

The identification of value-based principles to inform educator practices and children’s learning outcomes is recognised as another strength in both Frameworks. These align with the guiding principles for the NQF which include: the rights and best interests of children are paramount; children are successful, competent, and capable learners; equity, inclusion and diversity underpin the NQF; Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued; the role of parents and families is respected and supported; and best practice is expected in the provision of education and care services. Focusing on the EYLF, there was overwhelming support (over 90%) for all five of the current EYLF Principles, as shown in **Table 4**.

**Table 4:** Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF Principles as extremely or very important

EYLF Principles	Educators /Approved Providers	Other Professionals	Families
Secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships	97%	98%	98%
Partnerships with families and support professionals	95%	98%	91%
High expectations and equity for all children’s capacity to succeed	95%	97%	92%
Respect for diversity of cultures, values, practices and beliefs	97%	95%	93%
Ongoing learning and reflective practice	90%	91%	Not asked

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*The principles underpin everything I do with the team. It guides my decisions on a daily basis (ECEC Centre Director, Nominated Supervisor, Preschool/LDC).*

*Clarifying for ECEC services how they can apply the principles and practices as part of their planning...how the Practices, Principles and Learning Outcomes interact together in practical ways (Focus Group).*

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#### MTOP

Stakeholders’ ratings for the importance of the Principles for MTOP were also strong, but with more variation, as shown in **Table 5**. The principle of *Partnerships* received higher ratings from families

than from educators/providers and other professionals. Of note is that the principle of *Ongoing learning and reflective practice* received lower ratings for importance from educators, providers and other professionals (73%-74%) working in OSHC than those working in ECEC (90%-91%).

**Table 5:** Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP Principles as extremely or very important

MTOP Principles	Educators /Approved Providers	Other Professionals	Families
Secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships	99%	96%	93%
Partnerships with families and support professionals	85%	82%	93%
High expectations and equity for all children’s capacity to succeed	89%	93%	90%
Respect for diversity of cultures, values, practices and beliefs	95%	96%	93%
Ongoing learning and reflective practice	74%	73%	Not asked

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Expand the descriptors with more specific examples enabling the principles to be more visible in practice to educators. Also, the relationship between principles and philosophies that could be strengthened (OSHC Nominated Supervisor, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*Partnerships with families should be emphasised (OSHC Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader, Educator, ASC/Vac).*

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## 3.2 Opportunities

Recognising the integral link between children and young people’s learning, educator practices and relationships in education and care, there is opportunity to clarify, expand and update principles in both ALFs. Informed by Stage 1 feedback, and current literature, the following principles are identified as priorities for updating.

### 3.2.1 Strengthening the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice

The principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice is reflected in the NQS as well as in the current ALFs. In the NQS, critical reflection is recognised as a key component of the planning and assessment cycle, and educators are expected to critically reflect on children and young people’s learning and development, as individuals and in groups, to plan, implement and evaluate

educational programs and practices. The ability to engage in critical reflection is core to the provision of high-quality education and care, and a priority for quality improvement (Brownlee et al., 2020; Harrison et al., 2020). Cartmel and Brannelly (2016) note the importance of critical reflection in the OSHC educators' core competencies and knowledge. While promoted as a key principle in both ALFs, there is opportunity to further strengthen critical reflection as a principle to emphasise that reflection includes action, as well as including children and young people (i.e., children engage with and evaluate diverse and competing perspectives to inform their decisions and actions). Critical reflection was identified as an area for improved practice by stakeholders and focus groups to emphasise that reflection includes action and children and young people engaging with diverse views.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*The role of critical reflection in everyday practice is important (OSHC, Other, Peak).*

*I feel as though "ongoing and reflective practice" is the principle that gets most overlooked. Could there be a way to strengthen this principle to showcase its significance for example further explanation and examples of ongoing learning and reflective practice? (ECEC, Educational Leader, Preschool/LDC).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 4. Expanding the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice to further strengthen critical reflection as guiding professional practice.*

#### 3.2.2 Introducing a new principle promoting collaborative leadership

Collaborative leadership was a key theme that emerged from Stage 1 stakeholder consultations. The importance of effective leadership in ECEC and OSHC is well documented (Cartmel et al., 2020; Waniganyake et al., 2017) including the relationship between effective leadership and positive outcomes for children and young people. This connection is promoted and supported throughout the NQS, which identifies leadership as a quality area and key determinant of high quality provision. This goes beyond formal leadership positions, to include leadership by children and young people and educators in a broad range of contexts. In this way leadership is viewed as, "an individual and collective responsibility" (Stamopoulos & Barblett, 2018, p.xix). How school leaders saw OSHC impacted the curriculum decisions available to OSHC professionals (Cartmel & Grieshaber, 2014; Cartmel & Hurst, 2021). It was noted that if principals viewed OSHC as a low priority it impacted the curriculum decisions available to OSHC professionals. The surveys and the focus group comments

reflected this theme, and there is opportunity to add a principle that recognises, values and supports leadership in this broader context.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*There's nothing in the framework [EYLF] that talks about leadership, and I wonder if whether or not we need to... saying how does a leader lead pedagogy (Focus Group).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Principle of collaborative leadership (new)

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 5. Adding a principle that reflects contemporary research evidence concerning the role of collaborative leadership and teamwork.*

#### 3.2.3 Strengthening the principle of high expectations and equity

Supporting children's learning and development and enabling educators to assess achievement of the learning outcomes is a key focus of the ToR for the ALFs Updates. The ToR also require consideration of human rights perspectives, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, for inclusive quality education for all children and young people.

Aligned to antidiscrimination and disability legislation, the NQF is founded on the principles of equity, inclusion and diversity enabled by the National Law. There has been considerable growth in research and understanding relating to inclusive environments and practices for children and young people. Inclusion makes visible and celebrates the diversity of children's lives. Inclusive environments ensure that all children have equitable and genuine opportunities to participate.

There is opportunity to draw on new knowledge and evidence-based practice to strengthen inclusion in ECEC, whereby educators are skilled in enacting inclusion for all children. For instance, research with children with additional needs found that while educators agree inclusion is important "the enactment and pedagogy around inclusion appear problematic" (Keary et al., 2020, npg). Additionally, recent research by Cloughessy et al., (2019) found in terms of equity it was critical for ECEC educators to be skilled in providing a welcoming environment for same-sex families and their children to build a sense of belonging.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*The space around inclusive education has changed so much in the past ten years, and our responsibility around this (focus group).*

*Adding in concepts of gender dysphoria; inclusivity and diversity applies to all the stakeholders and not just the children and their families (OSHC, Educational Leader, Coordinator, BSC/ASC).*

*Just as much focus on inclusion of disability/'diff-ability' as there is on inclusion of different cultures within the ECEC sector (ECEC, Family Day Care Educator).*

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#### **Points of Discussion: Principle of high expectations and equity**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 6. Expanding the principle of high expectations and equity to reflect contemporary understandings of diversity and inclusion.*

#### *3.2.4 Introducing a new principle addressing sustainability*

The NQF promotes the role of education and care services in building children's understanding of sustainability, with a strong focus on environmental responsibility. This is evident in the NQS and the current ALFs. Notably, this is also a strong focus in the Australian Curriculum. Introducing a new principle addressing sustainability responds to the ToR for the ALFs Update, in particular, strengthening coherent pathways between both ALFs and the Australian Curriculum and learning from equivalent Australian and international frameworks. Teaching children and young people about the natural environment and how to take care of it is central to education for sustainability. However, sustainability extends beyond environmental education. Contemporary research promotes a broader view of sustainability. For example, international organisations, such as UNESCO, now recognise three dimensions of sustainability; environmental, social and economic sustainability which are seen to be intertwined, not separate. This broader view of sustainability is a feature of several other early years curricula (e.g., Norway, Sweden, Japan, and Korea), positioning children and young people as competent problem-solvers, able to engage with complex problems and to enact positive change.

Recognising children and young people's interest in supporting a fair and sustainable world, there is an opportunity to add a new principle addressing sustainability and to strengthen concepts of sustainability throughout the two Frameworks. The benefits of children and young people playing outdoors and engaging with their natural environment is an historical and enduring principle in education and care, reinforced by all stakeholders in Stage 1. Notably, nature and animals were key themes in children and young people's drawings and writing.

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#### **Example comments from stakeholder feedback**



*I feel that the EYLF is missing content on understanding the world. Connection to nature, understanding of sustainable living, growth (ECEC, Family Day Care Coordinator, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader).*

*I feel that children these days have less opportunities to experience & learn in nature (due to city life) (ECEC, Parent, Preschool).*

*Sustainability and diversity and how as educators we can promote this to children families and the community (OSHC, Educational Leader, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Principle of sustainability (new)

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 7. Adding a principle of sustainability to include environmental, social and economic sustainability.*

#### *3.2.5 Updating the principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationship to include relational pedagogy*

The ToR require the Updates to focus on contemporary research, in particular brain development in the context of early learning and foundations for lifelong health and representation of socially and culturally diverse perspectives. The importance of relationships between educators and children is a cornerstone of the NQF and a central theme in the NQS and the ALFs.

Under the NQS, educators are expected to engage in responsive and meaningful interactions with children that build children's trust, confidence and security. This draws on attachment theory and research demonstrating links between security and trust in relationships with important adults. Furthermore, such relationships build and strengthen children's positive sense of self, confidence, and self-worth. Recent critiques have highlighted the need to move beyond the idea of relationships as 'emotionally supportive' (Cheeseman, 2017), to think about "new possibilities for understanding and enacting relational pedagogies" (Degotardi et al., 2017, p. 358) that promote learning and wellbeing.

Contemporary research also highlights the importance of educators understanding of how trauma and complex family lives and circumstances can impact the ways children behave and learn in ECEC and OSHC (Howard, 2020). Relational pedagogy incorporates being responsive to the children's lives and applying trauma informed practices to create safe spaces for children and young people (Barfield et al., 2012). There was overwhelming support for this principle from all stakeholders. Children and young people reinforced the importance of their relationships with educators.

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*How can we support educators through the framework to see the importance of acknowledging and greeting families by their names, role modelling connection and a sense of security and trust to the children? (ECEC, Other, Peak).*

*The focus for MTOP should be on relationship building and cohesion, as you cannot identify where children, families, educators, and communities lie with respect to the other Principles until you have developed strong, mutual relationships (OSHC, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*Enthusiastic leaders that care about the kids. (Parent, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*I like talking and hanging out with OSHC carers (OSHC, Child 9 years).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 8. Revising the principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships to include children and young people's connections with educators and their peers to underpin learning and teaching practices?*

### 3.2.6 Strengthening partnerships to include other professionals

Acknowledging the diversity of children and families, and holistic and integrated nature of children's learning, development, and wellbeing, the NQF promotes collaborative partnerships to achieve and sustain the best outcomes for children. This is a key theme in the NQS and current ALFs.

The ToR for the ALFs Update encourage consideration of opportunities to strengthen these partnerships, including ways to strengthen coherent pathways between both ALFs and insights from contemporary research regarding continuity of learning; multidisciplinary relationships with professionals; parental partnerships and the home and community learning environment. While relationships are seen as a hallmark of quality education and care there has been some inconsistency noted in 'meanings' attached to relationships as described in the EYLF.

There is no consensus on what is meant by partnerships and Hadley and Rouse (2018) found differences in how partnerships are understood and enacted by families and educators. Partnerships between OSHC professionals and school principals and management are vital in providing high quality care, play and educational environments for children and young people (Cartmel & Hayes,

2016; Westoby et al., 2021). Hadley's et al., (2021) research noted there was often a gap between schools and the OSHC service, especially when dealing with child protection matters. In culturally safe spaces educator's address: issues of power, actively counteract issues of racism or discrimination, adapt programs to be responsive to families' priorities and lived realities, integrate Indigenous perspectives into program design and delivery, and privilege the views of families in determining if a service is culturally safe (Gerlach et al., 2017).

The essence of true partnerships was raised in the focus groups. Reflective of a holistic approach to children and young people's learning, development and wellbeing, there is opportunity to expand on partnerships with professionals and schools. Survey respondents also noted the importance of understanding diversity within the partnership.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I would tier the principles, whereby partnerships, expectations, diversity, and ongoing learning can be built from a base of secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships. (OSHC, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*I believe we need to have consistent partnerships with allied health professionals to support the ever-increasing level of additional needs children in our care (ECEC, ECT, preschool).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Principle of partnerships

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

*9. Strengthening the principle of partnerships to include working with diverse families, creating culturally safe spaces and strengthening connections with child and family professionals and school communities.*

## Section 4: Practices

### 4.1 Strengths

#### EYLF

The principles and practices are recognised as a strength in both Frameworks. Stakeholders' ratings for the importance of the EYLF practices demonstrated very strong endorsement for six of these eight practices, with 89% to 98% of educators/providers other professionals rating them as extremely-very important. Notably 96% of families also rated *Learning through play* as extremely-very important.

**Table 6:** Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF Practices as extremely or very important

EYLF Practices	Educators /Approved Providers	Other Professionals
Holistic approaches (connectedness of mind, body, spirit)	85%	87%
Responsiveness to children (value and build on children's strengths, abilities, and interests)	98%	95%
Learning through play	98%	97%
Intentional teaching (deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful)	94%	90%
Learning environments (that support learning)	98%	96%
Cultural competence (respect, celebrate, understand, honour differences)	95%	92%
Continuity and transitions	92%	89%
Assessment for learning (an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting, and evaluating)	80%	84%

*Holistic approaches* received slightly lower ratings; 85%-87% of stakeholders rated this practice as extremely-very important. There was also weaker endorsement of *Assessment for learning* by stakeholders, including families (only 60% rated this practice as extremely-very important).

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*For our family we place 'learning through play' very highly. So much research shows that play-based learning is the best for the early years. It should continue into prep and years 1-2 at Primary school too. They should be allowed to get messy, experiment, run, jump, and climb as they learn (ECEC, Parent, LDC).*

*I think the practices could be explained in greater detail and how they collectively contribute to high quality pedagogy...a 'bringing it all together' section could be an option (Focus Group).*

*Assessment for learning should be based upon the teacher/parent understanding of the child rather than a tick box exercise/test (ECEC, Parent, LDC).*

*I like playing in the sandpit though you don't have to play all day (ECEC, Child 2years 10mths)*

## MTOP

Educators/providers and other professionals who support OSHC services were in agreement in their strong endorsement (ratings over 90%) of four of the eight MTOP Practices. Families also endorsed *Learning through play and leisure activities*; 83% rated this Practice as extremely-very important.

**Table 7.** Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP Practices as extremely or very important

MTOP Practices	Educators /Approved Providers	Other Professionals
Holistic approaches (connectedness of mind, body, spirit)	71%	84%
Collaboration with children (responsiveness to all children's strengths, abilities, interests)	96%	96%
Learning through play and leisure activities	97%	96%
Intentionality (deliberate, purposeful, and thoughtful actions)	77%	84%
Environments as welcoming spaces	96%	96%
Cultural competence (respect, celebrate, understand, honour differences)	91%	88%
Continuity and transitions (with homes, schools, community spaces)	83%	83%
Evaluation for wellbeing and learning (an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting, and evaluating)	58%	76%

Children and young people noted the importance of *playing with my friends, good OSHC carers* (OSHC child, 10 years), with many drawing about their friendships.

Three of the Practices received weaker and more varied endorsement: *Holistic approaches*, *Intentionality*, and *Continuity and transitions* ratings range from 71% to 84% for extremely-very important. The greatest variation was seen in stakeholder ratings for *Evaluation for wellbeing and learning*, which received ratings of extremely-very important that ranged from 76% of other professionals to 58% of educators/providers to 31% of families.

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Evaluations should be different in OSHC, and children should play a critical role (OSHC, Other, BSC).*

*Evaluation for wellbeing should be more of a focus than for learning (OSHC, Educational Leader, Nominated Supervisor, Educator, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*Although after school care is a place of learning, for me it's more about support for their wellbeing, safety, social relationships, strengths, and play (OSHC, Parent, ASC).*

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## 4.2 Opportunities

Recognising the integral link between children and young people’s learning, educator practices and relationships in education and care, there is opportunity to clarify, expand and update practices in both ALFs. Informed by Stage 1 feedback, and current literature, the following practices are identified as priorities for updating.

### 4.2.1 Clarify the meaning of holistic approaches

The ALFs Update includes learnings from equivalent Australian and international frameworks and reviews. Illustrating the importance of the description of holistic approaches, the New Zealand framework Te Whariki endorses this as principle two (MoE, 2017). Fleer et al., (2013, p. 6) note the concept and practice of ‘holistic’ approaches appeared inconsistent in ECEC reflecting disparities between “pedagogy and curriculum” within the sector. Narvanen and Elvstrand (2015) state that the holistic approaches to develop curriculum in OSHC services should include child participation. ECEC educators and approved providers have stressed the importance of strengthening the focus on holistic approaches and for more clarity in this area.

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Strengthening holistic practices and connection between body and mind especially in terms of social and emotional learning (ECEC, Educational Leader, LDC).*

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### Points of Discussion: Practice of holistic approaches

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 10. Clarifying the meaning of holistic approaches to learning and teaching, including the connection between the vision, principles, practices, and learning outcomes in both frameworks.*

#### *4.2.2 Strengthen the connection between play-based learning and intentionality*

The NQF recognises children as “capable and competent learners who have agency and learn best through a play-based program” (ACECQA, Sept. 2020, p.100).

Under the NQS, educators are expected to facilitate and extend each child’s learning and development by engaging in evidence-informed practices. In the NQS, these are described broadly as intentional teaching, responsive teaching, and scaffolding, and facilitating child directed learning, which inform the practices promoted in the ALFs.

The ALFs Update ToR include strengthening coherent pathways between both ALFs and learning from equivalent Australian and international frameworks and reviews. The current practices “learning through play” and “intentional teaching” (EYLF) and “intentionality” (MTOP) could be more aligned to strengthen the coherency of both ALFs. While all educators strongly endorsed the practice of “Learning through play” research suggests that Australian educators still do not have an agreed understanding of what this is or a shared language to describe it. Educators also interpret the role of the educator in play differently (Taylor & Boyer, 2019). Closely linked to play-based learning, and an emerging theme in the EYLF surveys is better explanation of intentional teaching, and greater emphasis on the role of educators in this context. This mirrors the findings of Leggett and Ford (2013, p. 48) who found that interpretations of intentionality are sometimes blurred for educators.

There is opportunity to strengthen understanding about both play-based learning and intentionality, including the role of children/young people and educators in play and learning. This provides a platform to consider more integrated approaches to teaching and learning, valuing and promoting both child and adult-led learning. This is particularly important to consider when services are responding to the interests of older children. Play as leisure has different constructs. Palsdottir and Kristjansdottir (2017) note that the concept of leisure has the potential to underpin OSHC programs focus on creativity, fun, holistic learning and social awareness and sense of community. Yet in Australia, Hurst (2017) found that educators have a romantic notion of play, and leisure as a concept is not well understood as children and young people are often left waiting to take part in leisure experiences in OSHC. Both the surveys and the young peoples’ voices supported strengthening this practice.

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Holistic learning and learning through play need to be strengthened as it allows children to develop holistically, across and within all domains in integrated and meaningful ways (ECEC, School Principal, Preschool).*

*Varied, authentic, inquiry-based activities that tap into child's interest (ECEC, Parent, LDC)*

*Larger focus on intentionality when planning environments, gathering spaces and resourcing for multiple age groups and interests - rather than planning for experiences or traditional programming (OSHC, Approved Provider, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*More things to do that older kids like (12 year old, OSHC).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Practices of learning through play and intentional teaching/intentionality

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 11. Combining the practices of learning through play, intentional teaching and intentionality to reflect contemporary understandings of child and educator roles in play, teaching and learning.*

#### 4.2.3 Cultural responsiveness to replace cultural competence

The ToR for the ALFs Update require a focus on cultural competence and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and ways of knowing, doing and being as well as learning from findings and recommendations from relevant inquiries and Royal Commissions. All Australian children and young people have the right to know and value the history and current context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the story of the land on which they live (Barblett et al., 2017; Jackson-Barrett & Lee-Hammond, 2018; Miller, 2011). Cultural competence is a recurring theme across the principles, practices, and outcomes of the EYLF and MTOP. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are diverse, so it is important to develop perspectives that are contextually relevant to the setting. Interweaving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stories into education by teaching Indigenous cultures and perspectives has been identified nationally to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (DET, 2011).



The EYLF requires educators to deliver a curriculum that “celebrates the diversity in and between children, families and communities” (Adam et al., 2019, p.549). Researching and thinking in this area has moved beyond the idea of cultural competence to cultural responsiveness. For example, the Department of Education Western Australia *Aboriginal Cultural Standards Framework* (2015) asks teachers to take and teach ‘culturally responsive actions’. Cultural responsiveness is defined as “the ability to interact and communicate effectively and sensitively with people with a different background to your own with proficiency”. This is enabled by respect for culture, self-reflection, learning and a commitment to improvement of practices and relationships” (WADET, 2015, p.16). There was strong support from stakeholders throughout Stage 1 to explore the concept of cultural responsiveness.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*A greater focus on honouring Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and creating culturally safe places for Indigenous children and their families (ECEC, Centre Director, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader, LDC)*

*Extend the focus on cultural competence (Focus Group).*

*Perhaps to highlight its importance, its own dedicated point - something around Aboriginal Perspectives / Indigenous. Not to be included in the above diversity principle, but to emphasise it in that and on its own (OSHC, Others, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*Cultural competence is the WRONG TERMINOLOGY! Competence suggests a checklist to be ticked off, when we can never be totally competent in the cultural perspectives and practices of another culture (ECEC, Centre Director, LDC).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Practice of cultural competence

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 12. Changing the practice of cultural competence to cultural responsiveness, which includes a genuine commitment to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of service provision.*

#### 4.2.4 Align assessment and evaluation for learning development and wellbeing

Supporting the objective of the NQF to improve educational and developmental outcomes for children, service providers are required to implement a planned and reflective approach to

assessment and planning for each child. For example, the National Law requires service providers to ‘assess’ each child’s progress against the outcomes of their educational program [in early childhood] and to ‘evaluate’ each child’s wellbeing, development and learning [in OSHC]. The NQS reinforces these requirements in Quality Area 1, Educational Program and Practice.

There is opportunity to strengthen the concepts of assessment and evaluation in the EYLF and MTOP and connect these to the planning cycle in more authentic, meaningful and transparent ways.

By doing this the Update addresses the ToR of strengthening coherent pathways between both ALFs and linking to the Australian Curriculum, as well as supporting children’s success and assessment of achievement of outcomes. International frameworks also have a focus on this. *The Early Years Foundation Stage (UK) and Te Whariki (NZ) both describe assessment as ongoing and formative and “sits at the heart of effective early years practice” (EYFS, 2012 p.3).*

There is a varied understanding in ECEC services of what constitutes assessment and how the analysis of the evidence gathered through observation and documentation is relevant to the process in the planning cycle. This is demonstrated by Element 1.3.1 Assessment and Planning Cycle being not met by the highest proportion of ECEC services in Australia. Therefore, the ALFs could better support educator’s understandings of effective assessment strategies.

Stage 1 consultation highlighted strong support for the Learning Outcomes (see **Table 8**) but identified challenges in understanding and implementing the requirements for assessment against the learning outcomes and related documentation. Educators and providers are seeking more specific information on assessment within the EYLF, including meaningful approaches to assessment and what should be assessed.

Harrison et al., (2019) found the design and use of formative assessment tools was a key part of educators’ planning for children in the years before school, but there was little evidence that the use of assessment strategies by ECEC services impacted children’s outcomes. They note that while the EYLF and The Educators’ Guide (DEEWR, 2010) “direct educators to use assessment to look at individual pathways for children, liaise with families and plan integrated and meaningful opportunities and experiences for children’s learning, no specific assessment tools are recommended” (Harrison et al., 2019, p. 13).

Parents in Stage 1 feedback focussed on the play, wellbeing, safety, social relationships and strengths, as a priority over assessment and cautioned against a move to formalised assessment. This does not preclude assessment practices, although cautions against more formalised assessment approaches. Keary et al., (2020) caution that top-down ECEC assessment practices are impeding inclusive practices. It is clear there is a need to build understanding about assessment practices that are authentic, reliable, and valid and do not create a deficit approach or label children. The Finnish early years framework as well as others, highlight the inclusion of assessment practices that provide children with the opportunity to review and consider their own learning.

The term assessment is not used in the MTOP. Instead, the focus is on evaluation for wellbeing and learning. In Stage 1, the majority of the OSHC educators and approved providers emphasised the challenges faced by the educators in evaluating and documenting children and young people’s learning, development, and wellbeing in OSHC. Assessment and evaluation allow educators to evaluate their practice, and for children and young people to set their own goals for learning and self-assess their progress towards these goals. Survey participants reinforced the need to explore the concept of Assessment for learning/Evaluation for learning, development and well-being.

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Assessment for learning to be further unpacked so it better reflects how ECEC services plan and document children's learning such as documentation of and decision making about and for children's learning (ECEC, Centre Director, Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader, ECT, LDC).*

*I think that this is very difficult to measure (ECEC, Parent, FDC).*

*I don't expect staff to 'assess' my child's learning - I do expect that they notice children's interests and strengths and listen to children's ideas and thoughts in order to plan their program though. Although after school care is a place of learning, for me it's more about support for their wellbeing, safety, social relationships, strengths, and play (OSHC, Parent, ASC).*

*Assessment of learning is difficult as so much is really based on educator judgement of what they child may or may not be 'learning' (ECEC, ECT, Preschool).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Practices of assessment/evaluation

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 13. Aligning EYLF and MTOP practices to: Assessment and evaluation for learning, development, and wellbeing to reflect contemporary understandings of authentic and meaningful assessment approaches including children and young people's role in assessing their own learning.*

## Section 5: Learning Outcomes

### 5.1 Strengths

While prompting debate during the development of both ALFs, the identification of five high level learning outcomes is now widely viewed as a strength in both Frameworks. Stage 1 feedback endorsed the continuing relevance of these, however, revealed some different perspectives on the usefulness of the guidance and examples in relation to educator practices and indicators of learning. As noted earlier, there is concern about a narrow focus on the learning outcomes, and a desire to strengthen the connection between the vision, principles, practices, and learning outcomes in both Frameworks. This point was captured well by the focus group discussions.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I think that the key components and the examples of when this learning is evident are awesome. They are comprehensive. [But] I don't necessarily think that educators use those in the way that they should (Focus group).*

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While not a focus in Stage 1 consultation, the role of subject area content and how it is taught, imparted, or shared with children and young people is discussed in the literature (Westoby et al., 2020), often in relation to intentional teaching. Some argue that the Frameworks point to the importance of discipline or content knowledge, recognising this applies to all learning outcomes (e.g., health and nutrition, science and sustainability, oral language development). However, others have suggested this is an area that needs to be strengthened and made more explicit. For example, Krieg (2011, p. 51) argued that the silence in the EYLF on this impacts teachers' and children's access to "the concepts and methods of inquiry found in the learning areas to support their investigations and inquiries."

#### EYLF

EYLF Learning Outcomes 1 to 4 were universally and consistently endorsed by all stakeholders, with 93% to 98% rating these Outcomes as extremely-very rated important (see **Table 8**). The component statements of each of these Learning Outcomes were also very strongly endorsed (see **Appendix 1** for details).

In contrast, Learning Outcome 5 received somewhat lower ratings by educators/providers, with variation in the ratings for the components. Higher ratings were given to the importance of: interact verbally and non-verbally with others (97%); engage with and gaining meaning from a range of texts (91%); express ideas and make meaning using a range of media (87%); and understand how symbols and pattern systems work (87%). The lowest ratings were given for how children use information and communication technologies (75%).

**Table 8.** Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF Learning Outcomes as extremely or very important

<i>EYLF Learning Outcomes</i>	<b>Educators /Approved Providers</b>	<b>Other Professionals</b>	<b>Families</b>
LO 1 Children have a strong sense of identity	97%	97%	95%
LO 2 Children are connected with and contribute to their world	93%	96%	93%
LO 3 Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	96%	98%	96%
LO 4 Children are confident and involved learners	93%	94%	97%
LO 5 Children are effective communicators	87%	90%	92%

Parents' comments in relation to the Learning Outcomes were focussed on wanting their children to learn through play and it being fun.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*We are still very fresh and green to the learning outcomes for our little one. Both my partner and I are still just thrilled to see him develop his social skills and personality from going to day care and being with other children and his educators that also provide him much attention and care. This is just amazing for us to experience as first-time parents and to encourage further learning through the activities they host during the day and that we try to carry into the weekend and have some fun with him as well (ECEC Parent, LDC).*

*Play should be more important than rote learning. Children at preschool should be developing their curiosity about the world and an interest in learning. They should be taught how to think for themselves and given the confidence to trust their own ideas (ECEC Parent, Preschool).*

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#### MTOP

Stakeholder feedback on the Learning Outcomes in the MTOP was also very positive, with four of the Outcomes rated as extremely to very important by 85% to 95% of participants, as shown in **Table 9**. As with the EYLF responses, the lower ratings for Learning Outcome 5 were explained by variations in the component ratings: 98% rated 'children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes' as extremely-very important compared to 64% for 'children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts' and 75% for 'children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies.'

**Table 9.** Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP Learning Outcomes as extremely or very important

MTOP Learning Outcomes	Educators /Approved Providers	Other Professionals	Families
LO 1 Children have a strong sense of identity	95%	94%	90%
LO 2 Children are connected with and contribute to their world	91%	85%	86%
LO 3 Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	95%	96%	97%
LO 4 Children are confident and involved learners	85%	92%	86%
LO 5 Children are effective communicators	76%	79%	79%

OSHC parents’ comments in relation to the outcomes were focussed on the importance of leisure for their children and deep connections with their educators. The children and young people talked about the connection to their educators, use of play and learning new things and a space to build relationships with friends.

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Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*The carers; the food; the playground; the people; the girls and boys; IT; sandpit; more than 100 kids (OSHC, Child, 8yrs).*

*You have ‘seconds’ and meet new people (OSHC, Child, 10 years).*

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## 5.2 Opportunities

### EYLF

The NQS sets the expectation that curriculum decision-making is informed by the ALFs and “contributes to each child’s learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing and confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators” (ACECQA, Sept 2021, p. 105). In contrast to the very high level of stakeholder endorsement of the importance of the Learning Outcomes, much lower ratings were given for the usefulness of the supporting examples of children’s and educator’s actions that are provided in the EYLF for each component of the Learning Outcomes. Less than two-thirds of stakeholders rated these as extremely-very useful (see **Table 10**).

**Table 10.** Per cent of stakeholders who rated EYLF examples as extremely or very useful

<b>In your experience:</b>	<b>Educators /Approved Providers</b>	<b>Other Professionals</b>
How useful are the examples of children's actions in helping to observe and understand each child's achievement of the Learning Outcomes?	64%	63%
How useful are the EYLF examples of how educators promote learning in helping to plan for children's achievement of the Learning Outcomes?	62%	60%

ECEC educators, approved providers and others all emphasised the need for shortened and condensed outcome components, with less overlap and, more explanation and examples of how each outcome looks in practice. They also highlighted the need to address infants and toddlers more explicitly and specifically in the outcomes, with examples of what the outcomes being achieved would look like in practice for each age group. Making the ALFs more relevant to school settings was also emphasised, along with further explanation of play-based approaches to achieve these outcomes and closer links with other curriculum documents.

#### *MTOP*

Similar concerns about the usefulness of the examples provided in the MTOP were evident from the ratings and comments of stakeholders. Only half of educators and other professionals rated the examples as extremely or very useful for understanding children's achievement of, and educators' promotion of, the Learning Outcomes (see **Table 11**).

**Table 11.** Per cent of stakeholders who rated MTOP examples as extremely or very useful

<b>In your experience:</b>	<b>Educators /Approved Providers</b>	<b>Other Professionals</b>
How useful are the examples of children's actions in helping to observe and understand each child's achievement of the Learning Outcomes?	54%	55%
How useful are the EYLF examples of how educators promote learning in helping to plan for children's achievement of the Learning Outcomes?	52%	50%

OSHC educators, Approved Providers and others identified that outcomes be simplified, condensed and made more appropriate for school-age children.

#### *5.2.1 Detail and delineation of examples to reflect children and young people's diverse abilities and educators' promotion of learning*

Contributing to the overarching principles of the NQF, in particular, that children are successful, competent and capable learners, the ToR for the ALFs Update focus attention on supporting learning

and development and assessing children’s achievement of the learning outcomes. The ToR also seek to strengthen representation of socially and culturally diverse perspectives.

The literature notes that teachers would prefer to have some further description of the five outcomes pertaining to specific age groups such as infants and toddlers and preschool aged children (White & Flear, 2019). This approach is evident in other early years frameworks. For example, *Te Whariki (NZ)* offers description of learning, development and wellbeing for infants, toddlers and young children. White and Flear (2019) also state strengthening transitions and continuity links to the Australian Curriculum are required. However, Grieshaber (2018, p. 1224) warns to ensure that outcomes are viewed as broad and observable it is important to avoid narrow linear conceptions ‘ticked’ with ‘one-off’ consideration.

Focus group participants as well as survey respondents described the need for more guidance in the examples across different settings with children with diverse capabilities. The presentation of the examples was discussed in focus groups to make examples “clearer” and are not seen as “an exhaustive list”. Survey respondents also emphasised providing these descriptors could make the connections to the Australian Curriculum be more seamless. Furthermore, focus group participants suggested links to the NQS could assist educators with the interrelated nature of the EYLF/MTOP and the NQS.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I would like to see it split into age groups - babies /toddlers/preschoolers. This will support educators to not get so lost in interpreting the children they are focusing on (ECEC, Centre Director, LDC).*

*We need to include somewhat more tangible examples or ideas: we need to consider the varying education levels and understanding of our educators. Giving them examples will support their understanding of how to apply the frameworks more clearly (focus group)*

*MTOP learning outcomes need to be specific to OSHC and not early childcare as we are a different environment, looking after children 5-12 years with larger ratio's (OSHC, Nominated Supervisor, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*I believe if EYLF is being updated it should have a flow on effect for Early Stage 1 learning outcomes (kindergarten curriculum), as this would be working cohesively across 0-12 years of age (ECEC, Others, Preschool/Kindergarten).*

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## Points of Discussion: Learning outcomes (in general)

To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:

14. *Providing more guidance and examples of what the learning could look like and how educators could promote learning to better reflect difference and diversity to include:*
  - a. *specialised age groupings of children and young people (infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, early years of school and middle school)*
  - b. *children and young people's different abilities*
  - c. *social (learning with others) as well as individual learning*
  - d. *diverse cultures and families.*

### 5.2.2 Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

Reflective of the NQF objectives and guiding principles, the ToR for the ALFs Update require consideration of human rights perspectives, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, cultural competence and representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives and representation of socially and culturally diverse perspectives. The ToR also require attention to recommendations from relevant inquiries, including the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Identity has been related to a sense of cultural, social, and spatial belonging, including rituals and the 'ritualised' use of space (Sumsion & Wong, 2011). Additionally, there is a push for strengthening the identity of children and young people as Australian citizens with connection to the identities of others (Marwick, 2017). Aspects of identity formation that encompass gender identity and gender expression (with a non-binary dichotomy) and family and cultural diversity are also critical. Stakeholders in Stage 1 advocated for updating of Learning Outcome 1 in relation to the importance of identity in framing children and young people's personal self-worth, uniqueness, and a positive sense of themselves as learners. This is well supported in the literature (Chapman, 2021; Solomon, 2016).

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I like coming to preschool to play with my friends (ECEC, Child, 5.5 years)*

*A list of 12 friend's names (OSHC, Child, 8 years)*

*Respect for diversity of cultures, values, practices, beliefs, and (identities including gender) (ECEC, Government Department, LDC/FDC).*

*I would like to see the Outcomes and the examples much more strongly articulate the reality of identity development in children - for children to feel recognised and respected for who they are, they may need support in the language around what their identity means for them - if their developing identity does not fit with*

*expected norms, they may have difficulty articulating themselves and therefore not gain that recognition and respect (OSHC, Others, FDC).*

*Adding in concepts of gender dysphoria; inclusivity and diversity applies to all the stakeholders and not just the children and their families; the concept of 'citizenship' is a little problematic and ambiguous (OSHC, Educational Leader, BSC/ASC).*

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### Points of Discussion: Learning outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:

15. Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 1 to reflect contemporary perspectives of personal (e.g., gender) and social (e.g., customs and rituals) identity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders identities.

#### 5.2.3 Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

The NQF views children and young people as capable learners who exercise agency in their learning, by constructing their own understandings and contributing to others' learning. The ToR for the ALFs Update include identifying opportunities to strengthen coherent pathways between both ALFs and links to the Australian Curriculum. Children and young people are participating in many communities beyond their local community, many by digital means (Noble et al., 2020). Ideas to be considered in this area include a strengthening of differences and diversity of people, their cultures, beliefs, and perspectives. Caring for the natural environment is a strong theme in other early learning frameworks and with aspects of sustainability, including environmental education could be strengthened in the EYLF and MTOP. There is a significant influence of sustainability education when implemented with children and young people (Hill & Brown, 2014). Adopting a broader definition, sustainability is a principle underpinning early years curriculum in a growing number of countries, is a key requirement in the Australia Curriculum and is increasingly recognised as a significant area of content in contemporary curriculum provision (Edwards et al., 2016, p.36).

Recognising the importance of children and young people being connected and contributing to their world, stakeholders in Stage 1 suggest strengthening this outcome so that my family, my community and my world are highlighted. These views were also reflected in survey responses from ECEC parents.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*Cultural appreciation particularly learning about the traditional owners of the land (ECEC, Parent, FDC).*

*Could be separated better and have more on depth on socialising and cultural respect and then being within and caring for our natural environment (ECEC, Parent, LDC).*

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**Points of Discussion: Learning outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world**

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 16. Strengthening concepts of sustainability in Learning Outcome 2, based on the broader definition of sustainability spanning environmental, social and economic sustainability.*

#### *5.2.4 Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing*

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017) focused attention on the nature, cause and impacts of child sexual abuse, and the role community prevention can play in promoting child safe organisations. The ALFs Update project has been asked to consider the role of the two ALFs in prevention of child abuse and in supporting the implementation of Child Safe Organisation principles in ECEC and OSHC, as well as Strengthen coherent pathways between both ALFs and links to the Australian Curriculum. The importance of mental health in the wellbeing outcome is highlighted in the literature and other similar frameworks. Queensland Health Department (2018) reports that teaching children and young people about mental health is as important as learning about physical health. Furthermore, contemporary frameworks underscore the importance of teaching children how their brains work, what is needed for healthy brain development and the importance of self-regulation an executive function. Other areas to be explored more fully in this outcome are physical play and learning, risk, fundamental movement skills, sport, and healthy lifestyles with attention to food choices, movement and exercise, sleep, and relationships. This includes increased attention to infant and young child feeding practices and the opportunities these create for relationship building and learning (McGuire et al., 2021). International and Australian health guidelines advocate for the promotion and incorporation of physical activity and healthy eating in ECEC programs (Australian Dept of Health, 2019; NASPE, 2013; NSW Dept of Health, 2010; WHO, 2017). Despite strong evidence that regular physical activity in early childhood has psychosocial and cognitive benefits, including school functioning and achievement (Gasser et al., 2018), recent reviews have highlighted vast variations in services' provisions for and encouragement of physical activity and opportunities for risky play (Little & Stapleton, 2021; O'Brien et al., 2018; Saunders et al., 2019).

The teaching of protective behaviours to children and young people in age-appropriate ways is a recommendation of various departments and supported by the literature (Trew et al., 2021). Protective behaviours could be strengthened with an emphasis on building and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships in ways to assist with resilience, coping and self-soothing and calming strategies. Stakeholders in Stage 1 emphasised the need to address well-being much more comprehensively and to be taught more explicitly.

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### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*The day to day dramas we encounter that affect our children like: Covid / cancer in families how to cope / homelessness/ gender confusion/ bullying for being different (OSHC, Approved Provider, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*The document doesn't focus enough on protective behaviours (ECEC, Educational Leader, Room Leader, Preschool).*

*Ensuring their safety, this cannot be based on a single person's 'feelings or instincts' (OSHC, Educator, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*Greater visibility of mental health. Using the word 'mental health' as well as, or together with, 'wellbeing' is important for breaking stigma around mental health and making visible how school age care services support children's mental health (OSHC, Parent, ASC).*

*Have some more picnics together (ECEC, Child, 3 years).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Learning outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 17. Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 3 to reflect information about wellbeing, drawing on recent research and guidelines relating to children and young people's health and wellbeing, social competence, embodied learning, fundamental movement skills, including mental health promotion, protective behaviours, and resilience.*

#### 5.2.5 Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

The NQF recognises that children learn and develop in the different contexts in which they live and are more likely to be successful learners when they see connections and experience continuity of learning between their different contexts. Supporting this, the ToR for the ALFs Update include identifying opportunities to strengthen coherent pathways between both ALFs and links to the Australian Curriculum and learning from equivalent Australian and international frameworks and reviews. Self-regulation, growth mindset and teaching children how their brains function are

concepts emphasised in the literature and other similar frameworks. For example, WA Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines (SCSA, 2014) and the Northern Territory Preschool Curriculum describe this outcome as thinking and learning (NT DET, 2018). The Swedish curriculum for School-Age Educare refers to giving children the opportunity to develop creativity, curiosity and belief in their own abilities and broaden their understanding of different ways of thinking and being (Skolverket, 2018). Expanding this outcome to strengthen children's thinking allows the further exploration of metacognition and the language of learning. Additionally, Carol Dweck's (2006) work in growth mindset emphasised forming positive dispositions and attitudes for learning. Boylan et al., (2018) assert a growth mindset assists children with motivation for learning, so learning focused on developing growth mindsets should be incorporated into early years curriculum.

In this outcome, the notion of content area has surfaced where educators can assist children to make meaning as they require some familiarity with "concepts and methods found in subject areas" (Krieg, 2011, p. 51). For older children in the year before school there could be some description of concepts that connect to the Australian Curriculum.

Stakeholders in Stage 1 emphasised the need for increased focus on social-emotional regulation and for intentional teaching of social emotional learning, metacognitive strategies, and strategies to exercise executive function.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I think there is an opportunity to consider more recent research such as growth mindset and dispositions and a focus on the process of learning, rather than the product. In Early Childhood we have long held the belief the emphasis should be on the process of learning not the product, sadly I still see product focused practice (ECEC, ECT, Preschool).*

*Goals can be quite tricky in an OSHC setting in comparison to early learning - being they are in groups. I think more of an inquiry approach is better than a direct instruction goal approach (OSHC, Educational Leader, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*Explicit reference to executive functions is missing completely ... Whilst the revised EYLF may use different language from that used by the World Bank (in multiple domains), it is well established in research that executive functions underpin learning and need to be reflected in the EYLF (ECEC, Higher Education Institution, Preschool/LDC).*

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## Points of Discussion: Learning outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:

18. *Strengthening the focus in Learning Outcome 4 on young people’s thinking, development of conceptual thinking (e.g., science and mathematics) and reinforcing the use of the language of learning.*

### 5.2.6 Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Seeking to support all children to be successful, confident, and capable learners, both ALFs place emphasis on children as effective communicators. Updating Outcome 5 addresses two of the ToR for the ALFs Update: Strengthening coherent pathways between both ALFs and state-based frameworks and link to the Australian Curriculum and learning from equivalent Australian and international frameworks and reviews. There is significant emphasis on the acquisition of oral language and the ways in which educators assist children with this. Times for talking to peers is particularly important and the development of vocabulary seen as critical in the development of reading skills by age eleven (Pascal et al., 2019). Pascal et al write “It is particularly important that...children have a confident grasp of oral language and communication before they are moved on to grasp the skills of written forms of language.” Pascal et al., (2019) caution that communication and language, and literacy skills are to be presented in real world contexts which have meaning for the child and Payler et al., (2017) note opportunities should be provided to experience creative expression through different modalities and materials that supports all areas of learning. The notions of inclusion also surface here as educators, children and young people and families use alternative means of communication; for example, Ford and Fasoli’s (2001) observations on reliance on silence and non-verbal communication in Indigenous communities, also noted in Harrison et al., (2017) recordings of infant-educator interactions in a Queensland Multifunctional Aboriginal Children Services program.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I also strongly believe in the benefits of key word sign/Auslan and other visual and communication aids, however these are not easily able to be expanded upon within Learning Outcome 5...This practice can also be applied to verbal children who incorporate Key Word Signs etc. into their own communication with low/non-verbal children in their room (ECEC, Educator, FDC).*

*Outcome 5 - include more around alternative methods of communication e.g., AAC (ECEC, Parent, LDC).*

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The incorporation of digital technologies and children and young people's safe and competent use of these tools is evident in the literature and other similar frameworks. For young children and young people, promoting safe ways of using technology and nurturing critical skills to operate in the digital environment is of growing importance. Survey respondents indicated more clarity regarding the use of technology for learning is required. Furthermore, an understanding that digital technology is much more than screentime, can be used intentionally and spontaneously by children and educators, and is relevant to all of the Learning Outcomes, spanning learning, leisure and creative expression is required. Additionally, STEM, STEAM and technology, and expressive forms of the arts were all areas Stage 1 respondents argued needed to be strengthened in the two ALFs to maintain currency.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I believe creativity is sadly underrepresented. Music art and other forms of self-expression are barely mentioned in the outcomes (ECEC, Nominated Supervisor, ECT, Preschool).*

*My service programs are reflective of IT, STEAM, and loose parts play (OSHC, Approved Provider, BSC/ASC/Vac).*

*It should be more about teaching children how to use technology safely (ECEC, Educator, Preschool).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Learning outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

- 19. Strengthening the guidance relating to Outcome 5 to include oral, aural, and non-oral languages, communication through the arts, mathematical thinking and a focus on children and young people as creative, safe, and critical users of technology for learning, leisure and creative expression.*

#### 5.2.7 Language and accessibility

Addressing language and accessibility of the ALFs responds to the ToR focus on governance arrangements for the ongoing promotion, protection, maintenance, and support of the ALFs and was an emergent theme through stakeholder engagement in Stage 1. The creation of the ALFs saw the introduction of some new terms to educators. Kilderry et al., (2017) found that educators who had trained prior to 2010 felt they were “out of the loop” and uncertain about terms such as pedagogy, agency and what they look like in practice. Additionally, Grieshaber and Graham (2017) describe terms such as intentional teaching, assessment for learning, pedagogy, and scaffolding as terms more commonly used in teaching and understand that not all educators with diverse qualifications

will be able to implement. Stakeholders in Stage 1 highlighted extensively that making the language within the framework more accessible to the diverse workforce would aid in implementing the ALFs in both ECEC and OSHC services. Both clarity of terms and well as support for educators in translating the ALFs into practice were common themes.

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#### Example comments from stakeholder feedback

*I love it so much, but I think it can be too abstract for some people - languages other than English and people new to the field (ECEC, Educator, LDC).*

*I think it's got some really great advice in terms of how you become a great professional...[but] there's lots of comments over the years... that the language in there, and the ideas and concepts, are too complex. ...I don't think we remove the strength that is in there, because they're complex ideas and notions. I think that may be that's addressed through supporting resources (Focus Group).*

*For example: As a general vision, I see its value, but it is a document that is not written or explained very well for new, unqualified, and inexperienced staff (OSHC, Nominated Supervisor, BSC/ASC).*

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#### Points of Discussion: Language of the ALFs

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

*20. Expressing complex ideas in professional language that is accessible to the wider workforce whilst retaining the value of the ALFs for all audiences.*



## How to Provide Feedback

Both the EYLF and MTOP are important Frameworks that inform educators' work. Both Frameworks contribute to quality programs for children and young people and guide the support families are given in raising their child(ren). For this reason, it is vital that we all work together to maintain the relevance and currency of these Frameworks.

You can provide feedback to the discussion paper, responding to the opportunities and questions raised in the following ways:

1. Complete [online survey](#)
2. Share the surveys with your stakeholders, colleagues and/or families using this [printable poster](#) with QR code, available to download in the website quick links. The family surveys have been translated into 5 languages – Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean and Vietnamese
3. Submit a [written submission](#): this can be from an individual, a group of people and/or an organisation or peak. We have provided a template for this submission, and you can choose to address all or some of the questions raised in this discussion paper.
4. If you are working in an ECEC or OSHC you could gather perspectives from the children and young people. Please see the [Data Collection for Children booklet](#) which outlines the instructions for collecting the children and young people's voices, which includes seeking permission from the families for their child/ren and young people to participate.

Your time and consideration of the issues raised in this discussion paper are very much appreciated and we look forward to receiving your feedback and hearing your views. Stakeholders will be updated regarding this stage through the website. You can also register to receive regular updates on the project by registering your interest through the [website](#).

## Glossary of Acronyms

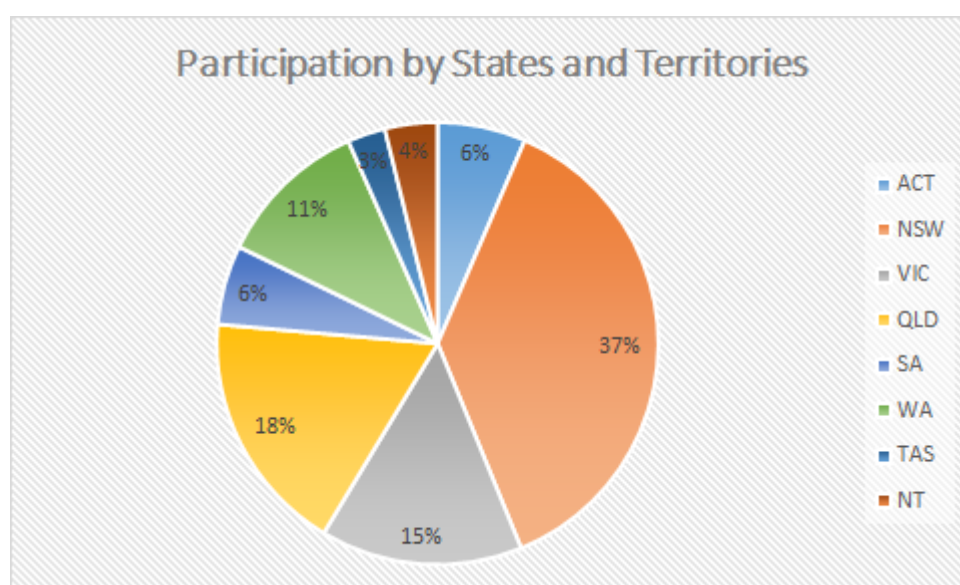
<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
ACECQA	Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority
AESOC	Australian Education Senior Officials Committee
ALFs	Approved Learning Frameworks
ASC	After School Care
AOs	Authorised Officers
BSC	Before School Care
ECEC	Early Childhood Education and Care (birth-8yrs)
ECPG	The Early Childhood Policy Group
EYLF	Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
FDC	Family Day Care
LDC	Long Day Care
MTOP	My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standard
OSHC	Outside School Hours Care (5-12yrs)
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths
Vac	Vacation Care

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Stage 1: Stakeholder Representation by State/Territory, Type of ECEC/OSHC Service, National Quality Standard Quality Rating, Type of Approved Provider, and Size of Approved Provider.

The Discussion Paper has been informed by feedback from over 3000 stakeholders, including service providers, educators, families, children, and other professionals from all jurisdictions and all types of ECEC and OSHC services. The following Figures provide further information provided by the participating stakeholders about the location and type the ECEC and OHSC services providers operated, educators worked in, other professional supported, and attended by the children of participating families.

**Figure 1.** Stakeholder representation by State/Territory



**Figure 2.** Stakeholder representation by type of ECEC and OHSC service

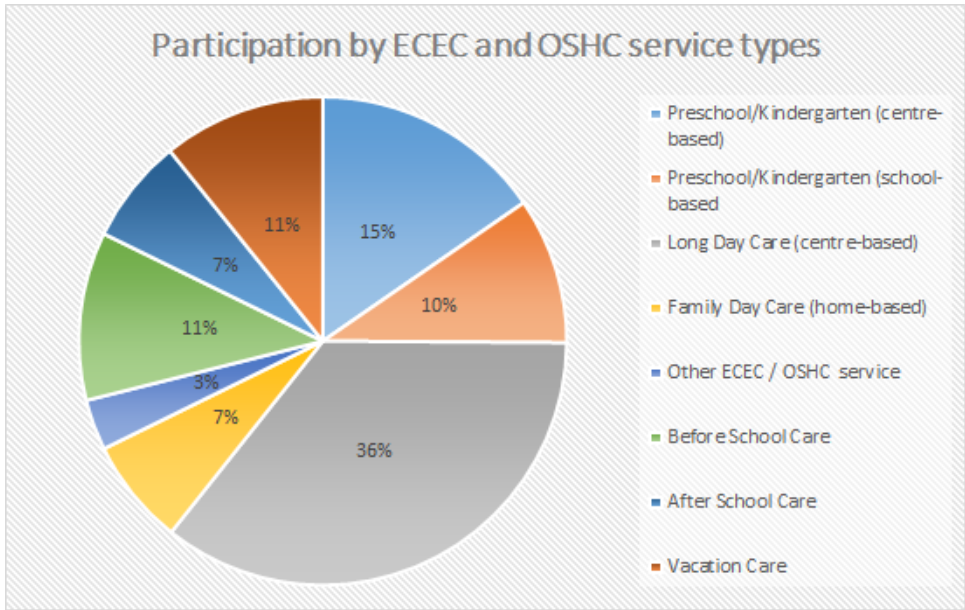
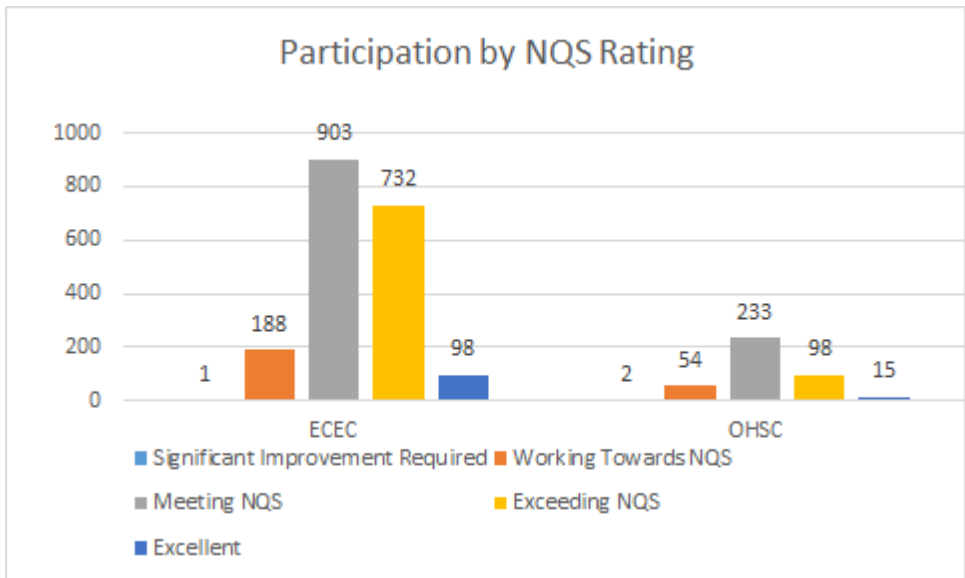
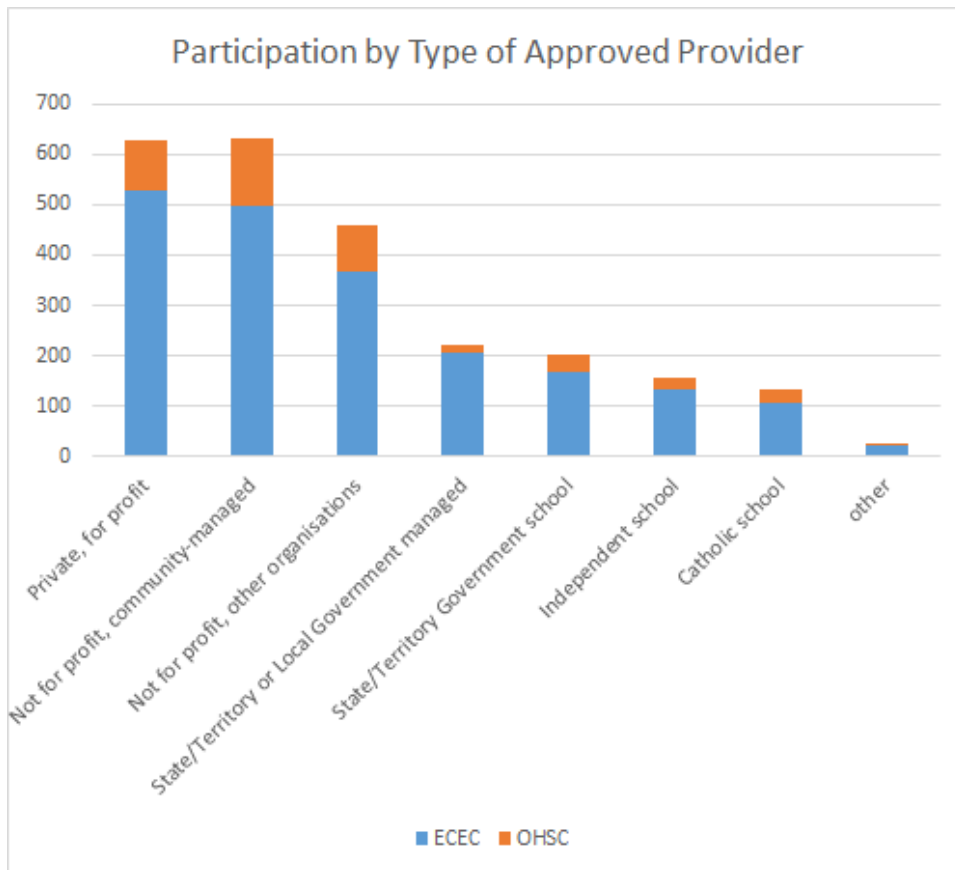


Figure 3. Stakeholder Representation by National Quality Standard Rating

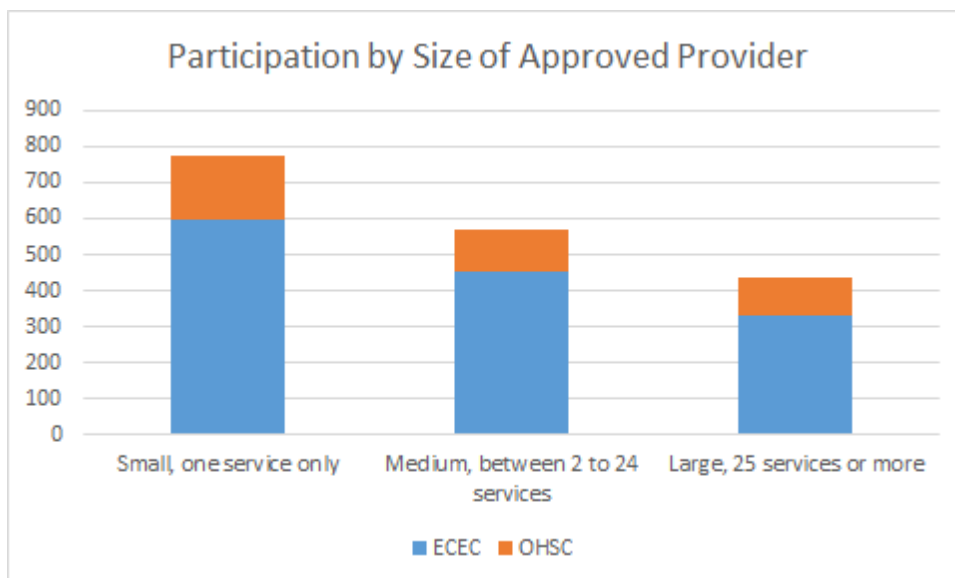


Note: The numbers refer to the number of stakeholders, not the number of services

**Figure 4. Stakeholder Representation by Type of Approved Provider**



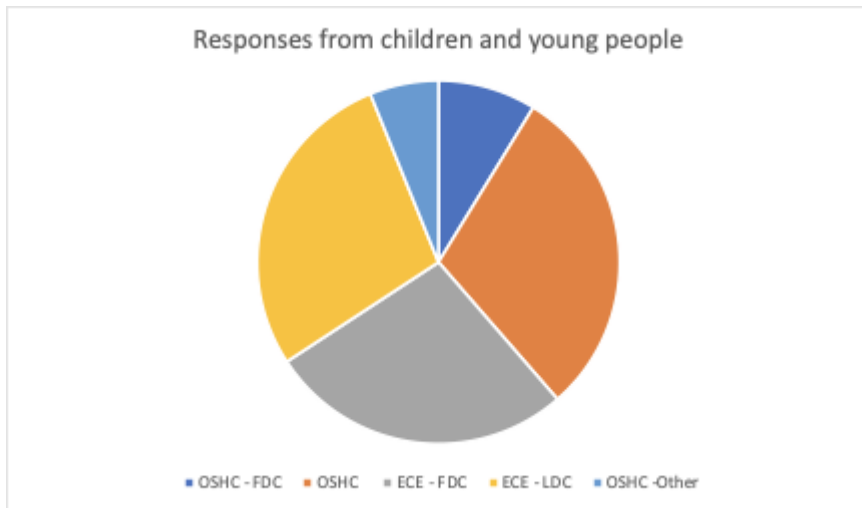
**Figure 5. Stakeholder Representation by Size of Approved Provider**



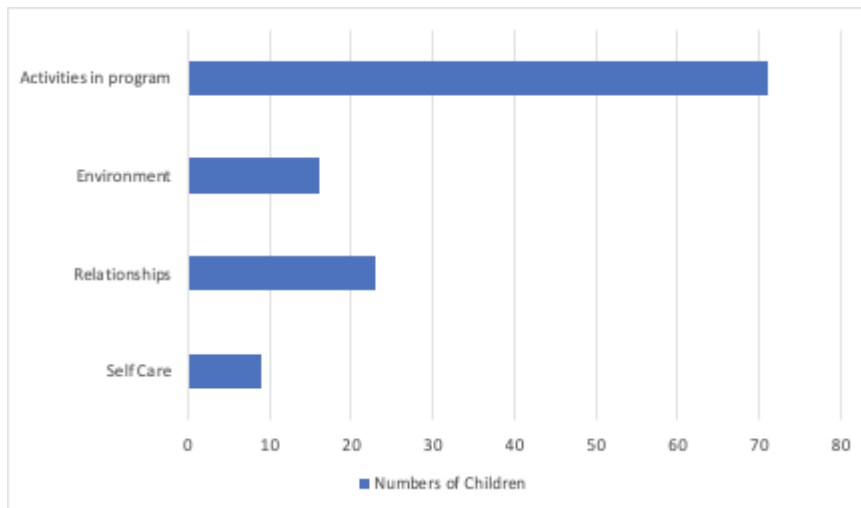
## Appendix 2: Stage 1: Children's Data

The 11 Practitioner leaders involved in the consortium collected the voices (drawn and written) of children and young people. This data includes voices of 102 Children from ECEC settings and 51 Children in OSHC settings have to date contributed their perspectives.

**Figure 1:** Responses from Children and Young People



**Figure 2:** What the children and young people drew/ wrote about their service



## Appendix 3: Points of Discussion for Consultation

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### *The Vision*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

1.
  - a) Expanding the EYLF and MTOP visions to recognise the role of ECEC and OSHC in advancing Reconciliation.
  - b) Adding a principle about embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges and perspectives in both the EYLF and MTOP.
  - c) Making Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders cultures and ways of knowing more explicit in all of the learning outcomes to reflect family / community connections, connection to country, kinship systems, telling of stories (oral history), spirituality, and connecting with the extended family.
2. Reconsidering the words “success for life” in the vision and instead emphasise the vision as all children and young people become confident and creative individuals, successful lifelong learners, and active and informed members of the community.

### *Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

3. Adding detail on planning for learning that addresses the importance of, and explains the continuous cycle of planning, observation, documentation, and reflection.

### *Principles*

*To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:*

4. Expanding the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice to further strengthen critical reflection as a principle and professional practice.
5. Adding a principle that reflects contemporary research evidence concerning the role of collaborative leadership and teamwork.
6. Expanding the principle of high expectations and equity to reflect contemporary understandings of diversity and inclusion.
7. Adding a principle of sustainability to include environmental, social and economic sustainability.
8. Revising the principle of secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships to include children and young people’s connections with educators and their peers to underpin learning and teaching practices.
9. Strengthening the principle of partnerships to include working with diverse families, culturally safe spaces, and strengthening connections with child and family professionals and school communities?

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### Practices

To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:

10. Clarifying the meaning of holistic approaches to learning and teaching, including the connection between the vision, principles, practices and learning outcomes in both Frameworks.
11. Combining the practices of learning through play, intentional teaching and intentionality to reflect contemporary understandings of child and educator roles in play, teaching and learning.
12. Changing the practice of cultural competence to *cultural responsiveness*, which includes a genuine commitment to embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of service provision.
13. Aligning EYLF and MTOP practices to: *Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing* to reflect contemporary understandings of authentic and meaningful assessment approaches including children and young people's role in assessing their own learning.

### Learning Outcomes

To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:

14. Providing more guidance and examples of what the learning could look like and how educators could promote learning to better reflect difference and diversity to include:
  - specialised age groupings of children and young people (infants, toddlers, pre-schoolers, early years of school and middle school).
  - children and young people's different abilities.
  - social (learning with others) as well as individual learning.
  - diverse cultures and families.
15. Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 1 to reflect contemporary perspectives of personal (e.g., gender) and social (e.g., customs and rituals) identity and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders identities.
16. Strengthening concepts of sustainability in Learning Outcome 2, based on the broader definition of sustainability spanning environmental, social and economic sustainability.
17. Expanding the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 3 to reflect information about wellbeing and drawing on recent research and guidelines relating to children's health and wellbeing, social competence, embodied learning, fundamental movement skills, including mental health promotion, protective behaviours and resilience.
18. Strengthening the focus in Learning Outcome 4 on young people's thinking, development of conceptual thinking (e.g., science and mathematics) and reinforcing the use of the language of learning.
19. Strengthening the guidance relating to Learning Outcome 5 to include oral, aural and non-oral languages, communication through the arts, mathematical thinking and a focus on



children and young people as creative, safe, and critical users of technology for learning, leisure and creative expression.

20. Expressing complex ideas in professional language that is accessible to the wider workforce whilst retaining the value of the ALFs for all audiences.

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