

Information sheet

BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

Play-based learning and intentionality

Play-based learning approaches allow for different types of play and recognise the intentional roles that both children and educators may take in children's learning. When children play with other children and interact with adults, they create relationships and friendships, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings.

Educators are intentional in all aspects of the curriculum and act deliberately, thoughtfully and purposefully to support children's learning through play.

This information sheet supports the [Practice, Play-based learning and intentionality](#) from *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) V2.0*.

It provides you with reflective questions as you consider your practice, service philosophy and children's program in relation to this Practice.



Links to the [National Quality Standard \(NQS\)](#)

The NQS recognises the potential of the educational program and practices to enhance each child's learning and development. The EYLF V2.0 Practice, Play-based learning and intentionality is reflected in several quality areas of the NQS, with a particular focus in:

- QA1: Educational program and practice
- QA3: Physical environment
- QA5: Relationships with children
- QA7: Governance and Leadership

Standard 7.2.2: Leadership – Educational leadership

Play-based learning with intentionality can expand children's thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn, promoting positive dispositions towards learning.

- This Practice reflects contemporary understandings of both child and educator intentionality and their roles in play, teaching, and learning.
- Intentionality is described for both adults and children, with an expectation that educators are intentional in all aspects of their professional practice. It draws on research to define the intentional role of the educator in play-based learning, with strategies educators may use to engage, support and expand children's thinking and learning through play.

What this looks like in practice?

- Children are encouraged and supported to act intentionally and with [agency](#) in play as they make decisions. For example, making decisions about the materials they play with and who they engage with and invite into their play.
- Children are fully engaged in their play as they make plans, create characters, solve problems, develop self-awareness and learn how to socialise, negotiate and think with others.
- Educators recognise that learning occurs in social contexts and that joint attention, interactions, conversations and shared thinking are vitally important for learning by using a range of communication strategies that involve explanations, speculation and problem solving.
- Educators plan and create indoor and outdoor learning environments that promote and support different types of play for children's active engagement, agency, problem solving, curiosity, creativity and exploration.
- Educators guide and scaffold children's learning by using intentional teaching strategies such as asking questions, explaining, modelling, speculating, inquiring and demonstrating to extend children's knowledge, skills and enjoyment in thinking and learning.
- Educators intentionally use routines, rituals and transitions to foster learning, development and wellbeing, as a part of the curriculum.
- Educators intentionally plan and implement meaningful play-based learning experiences using children's interests, curiosities and funds of knowledge.

Examples of specific age groups include:

Under 2 years

- Educators are attuned to children's actions and behaviours in order to make intentional decisions about their learning and development.

2 – 3 years

- Educators act as resourceful and respectful co-learners and [collaborators with children](#) as they explore their growing independence.

3 – 6 years

- Educators and children are engaged in sustained, extended, challenging and deeper interactions which are based on children's ideas and skills through [shared thinking](#) and scaffolded learning.

Reflective questions and provocations

- Identify how your service philosophy guides quality practice, demonstrating a commitment to play-based learning and intentionality?
 - » Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog – Finding the balance: Play-based learning and intentional teaching](#)
- How do you demonstrate intention in your practice and how does this impact on outcomes for children?
 - » Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog – Leading play-based pedagogies](#)
- How do you demonstrate that you value children's ideas, thinking and interests? How responsive are all educators to these?
 - » Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog – Intentional teaching leads to purposeful play-based learning](#)
- How do you ensure children's agency and voices are considered in planning for infants?
 - » ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA1 Supporting agency: Involving children in decision-making](#)
- How does your pedagogy as an intentional teacher differ from indoor spaces to outdoor environments?
 - » ACECQA – Information sheet – [QA3 Babies and outdoor play](#)
- As a team, critically reflect on and discuss the different ways in which educators engage children of all ages in making decisions about their own learning. How can you empower families to engage in discussion and decision making about approaches to supporting children's agency?
 - » ACECQA – Critical reflection – [Recording and sharing information \(YouTube\)](#)

- How do you arrange experiences, routines, rituals and the physical environment to support children to make choices about what they would like to do and how they will do it? What opportunities for improvement have been identified and when can these occur?
- » Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) – [Intentional teaching: So many possibilities](#)

ACECQA references and resources

- Australian Government Department of Education – [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0, 2022](#)
- ACECQA – [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- ACECQA – [Critical reflection – Recording and sharing information \(YouTube\)](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 Babies and outdoor play](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA1 Supporting agency: Involving children in decision-making](#)
- ACECQA – [We hear you blog – Learning through play and leisure](#)

Other references and resources

- Early Childhood Australia – [The Spoke blog – Leading play-based pedagogies](#)
The Spoke Blog is © Copyright Early Childhood Australia, All Right Reserved.
- Early Childhood Australia – [Intentional teaching leads to purposeful play-based learning](#)
- Early Childhood Australia – [Finding the balance: Play-based learning and intentional teaching](#)
- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) – [Intentional teaching: So many possibilities](#)
- The Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) – [What is sustained shared thinking? Is it important?](#)