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## Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

**1A** Designing environments

**1B** Providing materials and resources

## Establishing a learning environment that reflects children's interests

Agency is the ability to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world. Children should be encouraged to develop and use this sense of agency in relation to how the environment is designed and used, as well as how resources and materials are included. Children's agency is the focus of Element 1.2.3 of the National Quality Standard (NQS).

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

<b>National Quality Standard</b>	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
✓	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>	<b>My Time, Our Place</b>
<b>Principles</b>	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
	Partnerships
	High expectations and equity
	Respect for diversity
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice
<b>Practice</b>	
	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children
	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching
✓	Learning environments
	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment for learning
<b>Outcomes</b>	
	Children have a strong sense of identity
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
✓	Children are confident and involved learners
	Children are effective communicators

## Involving children

Involving children in planning and setting up does not mean that you should take less care to ensure the play space and activities are attractive. You may find it useful to work with children to:

- ▶ change activities one at a time
- ▶ set up new areas together; for example, set up all wet area activities
- ▶ modify activities at different stages
- ▶ set up areas, such as the home corner, block area and sandpit, which are always in the same space with the same basic materials, yet are added to or adapted as required.

Your role in resetting will still apply, although children may help you do this. Choose activities based on:

- ▶ developmental needs
- ▶ your interests
- ▶ incorporating community events and ideas
- ▶ service expectations, requests and ideas
- ▶ ideas from other educators, students and volunteers
- ▶ stakeholder consultation.

When involving children in planning and modifying the environment, you might consider the suggestions outlined in the following table.

Age group	Involvement and considerations	Activities for children
Infants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Take your time and make setting up and packing away part of your day rather than something you do in a rush while the children are out of the room.</li> <li>▶ These times can be excellent opportunities for one-on-one interaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Watching you set up or pack away</li> <li>▶ Listening to you chat as you describe what you are doing</li> <li>▶ Feeling and holding materials and watching what you do with them</li> <li>▶ Helping to pack up by putting items in a tub or on a shelf</li> </ul>
Toddlers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Talk about what you are doing and discuss the materials you are using.</li> <li>▶ Take your time and make this part of your day rather than something you do in a rush while the children are out of the room.</li> <li>▶ These times can be excellent opportunities for one-to-one and small-group interaction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Following directions</li> <li>▶ Working together on simple tasks</li> <li>▶ Pushing in chairs</li> <li>▶ Placing items on a shelf or table</li> <li>▶ Filling a box or tub</li> <li>▶ Sweeping the floor</li> </ul>

## Making choices

Making choices is an essential part of developing decision-making skills. The environment needs to be organised so that children can make activity choices. Be flexible to meet individual preferences and prompt extensions of play. Encourage children to participate in a variety of experiences. The following points should also be taken into consideration.



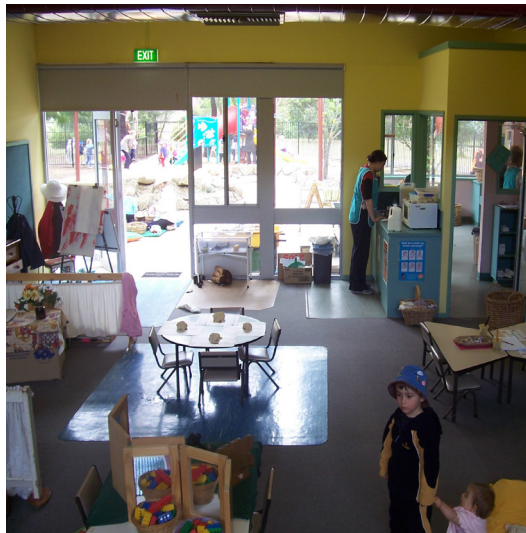
<b>Flexibility with time</b>	Give children the time they need to complete a task. Introduce 'work in progress signs' so children can return to a task later on. Some services have introduced progressive snack and meal times so children have the choice of when to eat.
<b>Flexibility with space, materials and objects</b>	Give children the freedom to move materials into other spaces. This allows for creative and collaborative play. For example, a child may take imitation food from the home corner and use it in the block area where they have built a shop.
<b>Thoughtful arrangement of fixed and moveable items</b>	Consider the flow of movement in the environment. Children need to move around easily, but there should also be 'rooms' where they can work in social situations and on collaborative projects.
<b>Quiet and active learning areas</b>	Open spaces are ideal for larger constructions, games, movement and group interactions. Smaller spaces are often adequate for dramatic play, fine motor skill activities and art/craft activities. Quiet and active areas should be available indoors and outdoors. Thought should be given as to the placement of areas; for example, avoid placing a block area next to a reading area.
<b>Safe play equipment</b>	The play areas should be well-equipped and audits should be done frequently to ensure the safety of the playground and equipment. NQS Quality Area 2 explores the specifics of safety. Resources need to be maintained and cleaned so they are in a fit state for children to use and enjoy.
<b>Facilities designed or adapted to ensure access and participation of every child</b>	For example, a child with partial blindness may need steps marked, ribbons placed on trees and items set against contrasting backgrounds to make them stand out.
<b>Sustainable practices</b>	When the children are practising sustainable practices, such as watering the garden with leftover water or growing vegetables, they are learning to understand and respect the environment. Understanding the environment makes them feel safe, secure and able to explore.

# Practice task 1

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

## Case study

Gelda is five years old. She is interested in construction materials and spends lots of time using different materials to express her plans. Most mornings she arrives brimming with thoughts and ideas. Gelda sometimes asks for materials you have provided in the current environment. Other times she asks for materials and resources that are in the storeroom or are not available at the service.



1. Explain how the environment in the photo is vibrant, flexible and supportive of Gelda's learning.

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2. How would you involve Gelda in planning or modifying the environment shown in the photo?

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3. Which materials/resources do children show a greater interest in? How do you know? Why do you think they show a greater interest in these?

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4. Choose **two** of the materials/resources listed and explain how you would encourage children to use them.

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## Summary

- ▶ The service environment can give children a sense of belonging, especially when it is responsive to their interests and needs.
- ▶ The right balance of experiences ensures children find both the environment and the program inviting and engaging.
- ▶ In order to design indoor and outdoor environments that are conducive to children's learning, it is useful to understand key theories of childhood learning.
- ▶ There are many ways to stimulate children's curiosity and capture their attention.
- ▶ Making choices is an essential part of developing decision-making skills.
- ▶ Children should be able to experience and create environments that are aesthetically pleasing to them.
- ▶ It is a challenge to provide materials and resources that are familiar, yet also stimulate children's interests.
- ▶ Using materials and resources that are natural and familiar to children will help them develop a sense of respect and caring for the environment.

Aspect	What you can do	Example
Physical environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– space for play</li> <li>– a layout that supports the type of play and the area needed to explore and extend</li> <li>– quiet places or safe loud zones</li> <li>– furniture that fits the child and the play</li> <li>– resources that match the play</li> <li>– aesthetically pleasing materials.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>A child initiates pretend play with another child while working with play dough; they need additional space to play out their dramatic ideas, and additional materials, such as dolls, cars and open-ended craft materials.</p>
Social and emotional environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– security</li> <li>– predictability</li> <li>– warm and trusting relationships</li> <li>– support for developing friendships and social behaviour</li> <li>– behaviour regulation support.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>A child wishes to take part in an activity, but does not have the social skills to do so.</p> <p>A child has an idea, but is using inappropriate equipment; she is banging a spoon on her cup at morning teatime. Take the opportunity to initiate a music experience. Encourage the exploration and provide musical instruments rather than focusing on behaviour issues.</p>
Intellectual environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide times:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– where you do not intervene</li> <li>– with intentional discussion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Understand when it is an appropriate time for questioning and exploring, and when the play is of greatest importance.</li> </ul>	<p>A child is engrossed in creative play with natural materials.</p> <p>Question if this is the right time to ask questions and extend the child's thoughts. Is it more important for the child to explore, manipulate and discover for themselves?</p>
Temporal environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide time to initiate.</li> </ul>	<p>A child is watching but does not need help to initiate. Wait to see what is happening prior to intervening.</p> <p>A child is participating in a challenging activity and needs more time. Provide this time or develop a method for extension, such as allowing the play to continue later or using a 'work in progress' sign to enable the work to stay untouched overnight.</p>



# 2B Encouraging perseverance

Certain experiences are necessary for children at particular stages of their development. These are activities that support development in significant areas, and provide building blocks for learning outcomes. Children will achieve skills such as:

- ▶ walking
- ▶ using scissors
- ▶ expressing their needs with words
- ▶ problem-solving.

These skills, once achieved, open the child's world to a progression of new ideas and experiences, such as:

- ▶ walking leads to running
- ▶ scissors can lead to collage
- ▶ self-expression leads to asking for what they want and telling others how they feel
- ▶ problem-solving leads to making suitable choices and understanding consequences.

Watch this video to learn more about encouraging children to solve problems.



## Developmentally significant activities

When significant milestones approach, the activities that you provide to support children are known as 'developmentally significant activities'. These activities are scaffolding actions. Some examples are presented in the following table.

Significant development	Scaffolding examples
Learning to walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Ensure there is sturdy furniture for the child to walk around.</li> <li>▶ Hold the child's arms as they walk.</li> <li>▶ Encourage the child to walk short distances to you.</li> </ul>
Learning to cut with scissors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Provide activities that develop fine motor skills in the fingers, such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– tearing paper</li> <li>– using an eye dropper</li> <li>– using clothes pegs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Provide activities that involve scissors, such as:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– snipping edges of paper</li> <li>– snipping play dough.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# 2C Creating opportunities for learning

There are many ways for children to learn – they manipulate, listen, watch and they explore. They have an innate inclination to find out, to develop one skill and build on it to achieve the next.

This inclination is important to the child's ability to develop, but the environment plays a large part as well, because it is where the learning takes place. Without a stimulating environment, children cannot learn. A stimulating environment provides resources and ideas for extending knowledge; it is a place where educators support development, provide encouragement, and model new ideas and skills.



Opportunities for learning in the service environment come from:

- ▶ play
- ▶ intentional teaching
- ▶ routines.

## Learning through play

Play is an activity that children choose freely. It is enjoyable, engaging and the process is more important than the end product. It has some rules, but these are decided by the child who engages in the play.

The education and care industry is built on the EYLF/MTOP principle of learning through play. This principle is one that educators believe in and express consistently in their personal, professional and service philosophy, and in their pedagogy.

Although play is led by the child, you still have a role to perform. You can:

- ▶ provide materials and resources
- ▶ encourage and support children to explore, solve problems, construct meaning and extend their thinking
- ▶ take advantage of spontaneous teaching moments as opportunities to extend children's thinking.

Play-based learning is about children making sense of their world as they engage with people and objects, and use these experiences to build new ones. It spans all development areas and, regardless of the activity being undertaken, value can be identified in nearly all play. The following table presents some examples of common play activities and their value for learning.

## Learning checkpoint 2

# Providing opportunities that stimulate learning and development

### Part A

Consider the routine of snack time, including preparation, eating and cleaning up.

1. Provide one example of how each of the following are considered during snack time to promote children's learning and development.

a. Time

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b. Space

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c. Materials and equipment

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d. People

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e. Safety

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2. How might peer scaffolding occur during this routine?

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3. List the tasks in this routine that may require a child to persevere.

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## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A** Developing the curriculum

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- 3B** Fostering learning through interests

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- 3C** Evaluating teaching and learning

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- 3D** Following up activities of high interest

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## Designing, implementing and evaluating learning experiences for children

To provide a balanced curriculum, you will need to plan activities and experiences that meet the needs and interests of each child in your service. Children require variety and they each show their own interests and strengths. By providing a holistic curriculum you are ensuring that children can explore areas that they choose for success as well as new areas.

# 3A Developing the curriculum

A curriculum embraces the skills, performances, attitudes and values that children are expected to learn from an educational program. It should include learning outcomes, materials that will be used and the planned sequence that will be implemented to help children attain the learning outcomes. For most of us, a curriculum includes everything that happens during the day, from planned elements to implemented interactions.

To create a responsive curriculum, you must consult with others and reflect on the implementation and planning you do to meet children's needs.



## Children's observations and views

Children's ideas about the curriculum can reveal much about their development and learning, and about their desire to extend and try new ideas. Element 1.1.2 of the NQS states: 'Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program'.

Educators must get to know individual children as well as the group. The information that each child can contribute demonstrates their view of the play space. A sense of 'belonging' comes when they own the plan of activities and experiences. An opportunity for 'being' arises when the spaces reflect their current interests and needs. The ability to 'become' is gained with ideas realised and new challenges met.

Ultimately, you should include curriculum development as an activity/experience that children may choose to participate in each day or week. The depth of this shared planning will depend on the age of the children and their experience in participating. Of course, the more opportunities they are offered, the better they will get.

Your ability to link developmental stages with knowledge of each child's capabilities will enable you to identify the level of participation a child is capable of in the planning process. In addition, you will consider the effect children have on others and see these outcomes as opportunities to extend interests and skills.

## Including children's ideas

Brainstorming with children about how they would like their play space set up, or which experiences they would like provided, enables you to gather a range of ideas. From this list you can involve children further to develop the environment to match their expectations. Ask them questions to discover their thoughts. The following table outlines ways that you can include children's ideas.

## Fostering learning and development

Regardless of the age range of the children you work with, the environment must accommodate all aspects of their development. Family life and children's interests can be explored to increase the link between community, home and care. This also extends the experience of each child as they share their knowledge and skills.

The following table shows how aspects of development can be linked to children's interests and personal culture.



<b>Aspect of development</b>	<b>What you can incorporate into the learning environment</b>
Physical fitness and skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Sporting events attended by the family</li> <li>▶ Physical activities children are familiar with</li> <li>▶ Sports watched on television</li> <li>▶ Games played with peers, siblings and other family members</li> </ul>
Cognitive development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Games played at home</li> <li>▶ Toys they possess or enjoy</li> <li>▶ Responsibilities they manage</li> <li>▶ Home tasks they participate in, such as cooking, cleaning, hanging washing, shopping, gardening, etc.</li> <li>▶ Events and celebrations they participate in</li> <li>▶ Entertainment they enjoy or are exposed to</li> <li>▶ How they are involved in family decision-making</li> <li>▶ Access to a computer or electronic games</li> </ul>
Social development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Places where they are cared for during the week, such as grandparents' or family friends' house, family day care, long day care and occasional care</li> <li>▶ Relationships they have with different people</li> <li>▶ Adult environments they are part of</li> <li>▶ Celebrations and events they participate in</li> <li>▶ Rules and expectations of children by their educators and parents</li> <li>▶ Provision of play</li> <li>▶ Structure of the family</li> <li>▶ Behaviour guidance strategies used</li> <li>▶ Travel experiences</li> </ul>

# 3C Evaluating teaching and learning

A responsive program evolves constantly. In order to identify how effective the curriculum is, you must assess and evaluate it. This should be an ongoing and consistent process as planned and unplanned (spontaneous) events occur daily.

A changing curriculum is usually a sign that your curriculum is responsive to children, a practice highlighted in the EYLF/MTOP.



## Planned teaching and learning

Planned teaching is prepared in advance; planned learning is the outcome of this.

Planned teaching and learning can be based on observation records that you collect and analyse, or it can build on an interest you notice and take time to prepare before offering it to the children. Planned teaching includes the intentional teaching you provide, the group experiences you develop and the deliberate ways in which you set up the environment, interact or demonstrate a task.

Unplanned teaching and learning, on the other hand, results from spontaneous activity. It is a result of an unexpected event that you choose to develop into a learning experience.

## Assessment and evaluation methods

Documentation and planning are an important part of working with young children. In order to effectively meet their needs, educators need to consider practical and meaningful ways to document what they notice. They also need to share this information with children and families. When documentation is a shared experience between children, families and staff, it has many benefits for all three groups.

Assessments and evaluations provide educators with the opportunity to reflect on their pedagogy. This is a chance to reflect on their teaching strategies and the learning environment. Assessment and evaluation can occur in a variety of ways at various times in a curriculum planning process.

## Assessment

The EYLF/MTOP describes assessment as the process educators use to build up a picture of children's learning to support curriculum planning and learning.

Educators look at a child's unique strengths, knowledge and interests – this is assessment – and then that information is used to make decisions about how we respond to each child.

Documentation method	Details	Useful for recording
Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ At enrolment families might complete a 'getting to know you' form</li> <li>▶ Brief, general questions about children's interests and friendships encourage families to share their unique knowledge</li> </ul>	Planned teaching and learning
Sociograms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Webs that demonstrate who children interact with, how often and in what way</li> </ul>	Planned and unplanned teaching and learning

The assessment process is cyclical: you collect assessment information, analyse it, then use your conclusions to provide further teaching and learning experiences. This is supported by Element 1.3.1 of the NQS, which states: 'Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection'.

## Evaluation

Programs should be constantly evaluated to identify problems, develop interventions, identify opportunities and improvements, and design strategies for implementing new and innovative ideas. This is called continuous improvement.

Under the NQF, education and care services are required to establish and review programs to ensure ongoing quality. Standard 7.2 of the NQS defines leadership, stating that: 'effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community'. This standard is concerned with the establishment and maintenance of a culture of ongoing reflection and self-review that offers challenge, provides motivation and increases educator, coordinator and staff member satisfaction.

Once teaching has occurred, evidence should be gathered to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching and to identify the learning that has taken place. Ask yourself: How well did the experience, setting and environment work?

You will use evaluation to identify:

- ▶ spontaneous interests catered for through unplanned teaching and learning – this provides further assessment records and information that may be used to extend teaching and learning in other areas
- ▶ extensions and/or changes – this enables you to clarify needs or see ways children prefer teaching and learning to occur
- ▶ what worked, what didn't work, if the teaching and learning met the objectives set, if the teaching was age-appropriate, if you provided enough props and equipment and what you can do to extend on this teaching
- ▶ another person's thoughts on:
  - the value of the teaching and learning
  - how you provided it
  - how you might improve this teaching
  - whether they thought the teaching was suitable
  - any other areas they feel will help your development.



# Learning checkpoint 3

## Designing, implementing and evaluating learning experiences for children

### Part A

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

#### Case study

Sofie, an educator, is implementing a planned group experience. Her focus is on the children's current interest area of plants and gardening.

The group is sitting outdoors under a tree. Sofie has read a story about planting seeds and the children have planted sunflower and bean seeds in cotton wool held in egg cartons. Now they are watering the seeds and placing them in the sun.

Sofie is preparing to teach the children a song about a seed growing. The song includes movement actions where the children can grow like seeds. Sofie has sung the song once to the children when the gardener walks into the yard. The gardener is planning to build a garden bed. The position has been chosen, and now he needs to measure the space, develop a list of required materials, shop for the materials, build the garden bed and dig it out ready for planting.

As the gardener walks to the proposed area, the children turn to see what is happening and one child calls out, 'Hey mister, what are you doing?'

What would you do next? Explain your response in detail, considering the children's interests and how you would demonstrate flexibility.

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### Part B

1. Design a teaching and learning experience.
  - a. Provide a description of the experience.

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One-on-one interaction with each child offers an appropriate setting to consult with the child on a diverse range of topics. It is an opportunity to learn more about the child. You may be able to ask about their experiences and they may disclose more in these interactions than in the group setting. This one-on-one time allows a child to identify their own needs and communicate them to you.

Watch this video about interacting with children.



## Example

### Consulting with children

Shaheen, an educator, notices that Nyla sits down at the collage table with two other children, but leaves again almost immediately. Shaheen asks, 'Nyla, wouldn't you like to make a collage today?' Nyla says that there is no spare paper to paste onto, the glue brush is all sticky on the handle and she can't access the sparkles (the other children have moved all the glitter to their side of the table, making it inaccessible). Shaheen adjusts the experience and materials and Nyla returns to paste.

## Acknowledging uniqueness

The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics states that educators have an ethical responsibility to 'learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems'. Therefore, you need to recognise and respect the individual qualities and potential of each child.

When you acknowledge that children are unique, you are respecting diversity, which may include differences in:

- ▶ culture and ethnicity
- ▶ linguistics
- ▶ gender
- ▶ socioeconomics
- ▶ family lifestyles
- ▶ abilities, disabilities and health status
- ▶ personalities
- ▶ appearances
- ▶ interests
- ▶ experiences of trauma
- ▶ experiences of dislocation and resettlement.

## Demonstrating respect for uniqueness

Children will feel more comfortable with uniqueness and see their differences as a positive rather than a negative if you encourage open exploration. Be constantly aware of opportunities that arise, and have children explore issues and questions as they occur.

By focusing positively and openly on similarities and differences, uniqueness becomes an exciting experience. Through positive interactions, you can call attention to other points of view. You can encourage communication through small group activities and social situations, which then encourage problem-solving and conflict resolution.



# 4B Supporting children's efforts

Learning is more effective and skill transference is more likely when a child has a sense of satisfaction and pride in their own ability. Part of implementing experiences is about ensuring that children participate and feel supported, assisted and encouraged. Each child will need a different level of support and attention.



## Assisting and supporting children

Giving support and encouragement to children helps them to build confidence, self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Children need to know they are doing well at something, so if they receive reinforcement and constructive, positive feedback, they will be motivated to keep going. If they do not receive support and encouragement they could lose motivation.

Assistance occurs when you help a child to complete a task or to feel good about what they are doing. You need to time your assistance carefully to allow the child to work uninterrupted and complete the task in their way, as far as they can manage. However, you should support them before they get frustrated and give up.

To pick the best time to assist, look for signs that the child is starting to become frustrated or is too challenged. Some examples and suggestions for assistance are outlined in the following table.

What the child might say	What cues they might give	How you can assist and support them
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ 'I can't do this.'</li> <li>▶ 'This is too hard.'</li> <li>▶ 'I don't want to do this.'</li> <li>▶ 'This is stupid.'</li> <li>▶ 'I am stupid.'</li> <li>▶ 'You need to do it for me.'</li> <li>▶ 'I am no good.'</li> <li>▶ 'Why can't I do it?'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Frowning</li> <li>▶ Growling or making aggressive sounds</li> <li>▶ Stopping work</li> <li>▶ Working on the task, but not progressing</li> <li>▶ Asking you to do the task</li> <li>▶ Telling you they can't do it</li> <li>▶ Being aggressive; for example, throwing materials, sweeping the activity off the table or interrupting others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stay with the child and offer help or assistance</li> <li>▶ Simplify the activity if possible</li> <li>▶ Provide strategies or techniques</li> <li>▶ Give hints</li> <li>▶ Change the activity to another one more suitable</li> <li>▶ Ensure that the next activity meets the child's level of ability</li> <li>▶ Provide successful experiences to rebuild confidence</li> </ul>

Note that providing choice and ensuring that children participate in a variety of experiences does not mean that they have to complete a set number of tasks or participate in all activities you provide. The individual child should be your guide.

Just as in creative development, engagement is about the process (doing things) rather than the product (the result). You will notice when you have engaged a child's interest as they will concentrate on their activity, ask questions and stay involved for some time.

As part of engagement, your interactions can help to:

- ▶ initiate play or activity
- ▶ encourage a child
- ▶ make them feel comfortable and safe
- ▶ introduce new language
- ▶ involve them in setting up and modifying activities
- ▶ assist them to participate in different ways
- ▶ co-construct.

**Example**

**Encouraging children to participate**

Hugh, an educator, sets up a new activity. He provides marbles, paper and paint. He also places trays on the table. Hugh plans to pique the children's curiosity and creativity through his interactions. Instead of telling the children, 'This is marble painting and this is how it is done', Hugh says things like:

- ▶ 'Can you work out how to use these things?'
- ▶ 'What do you think you could do with these?'

Hugh thought about how to engage children and encourage them to participate. He realised that engagement is not just an exercise in having them complete an activity; it relates to them exploring, experimenting and being engrossed in what they are doing.

## Respecting a child's choice not to participate

When you focus on the individual child's interests and strengths, and make an effort to involve them, provide relevant choices and encourage enthusiasm and curiosity, you will be providing a high-quality, responsive program. Nonetheless, you will still find that some children will choose not to participate. The following table provides some reasons why.

<b>A momentary decision</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The child wishes to be alone.</li> <li>▶ They want to look at others participating, to see what will happen before they decide to join in.</li> <li>▶ There are too many choices.</li> <li>▶ They are not sure whether they are interested.</li> <li>▶ They could be learning the rules.</li> <li>▶ They are not interested in the activity.</li> </ul>
<b>The result of an event</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The child feels anxious due to past failure.</li> <li>▶ They want to watch because last time it was enjoyable to do so.</li> </ul>
<b>An ongoing choice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ The child feels positively about not participating or is not interested in the activity or experience.</li> <li>▶ They enjoy watching others participate, but do not wish to join in.</li> </ul>