

Learning dispositions

Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool Fact Sheet

- ✓ This fact sheet supports educators' understanding of the Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool (the Tool). It highlights assessment as an everyday practice using a case study. It builds on the ideas explored in the [Assessment and the planning cycle practice videos](#).
- ✓ The Tool helps teachers and educators track and understand children's learning and development in a dynamic and consistent way.
- ✓ It supports educators working with the [Early Years Planning Cycle](#) and their assessment of children's learning. The Tool guides observations of play-based learning and generates Learning Reports from educator observation.
- ✓ Analysis of the information educators collect (e.g., via observations) informs their teaching practice (Plan, Act, Reflect). Over time, educators observe, document, and assess each child's progress against the five [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework \(VEYLDF\) Learning Outcomes](#).
- ✓ The 8 Tool modules align with the VEYLDF Learning and Development Outcomes *and* the Assessment for Learning and Development Practice Principle of the VEYLDF.
- ✓ The Tool's suggested teaching strategies have been designed to support children's learning trajectories and can be adapted to your service's resources and context.

Tool module: Learning dispositions and the VEYLDF

The Tool fosters strength-based assessment approaches. Through everyday observations in play-based learning environments, educators reflect on what a child can typically do with consideration to the child's cultural context and experiences. The Tool generates a Learning Report that allows educators to consider what a child is ready to learn next and offers targeted learning experiences to scaffold their learning (Plan/Act).

This module, *Learning dispositions*, aligns with **VEYLDF Outcome 4 - Children are confident and involved learners**.

- ✓ Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.
- ✓ Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
- ✓ Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another.
- ✓ Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials.

For the *Learning dispositions* module, educators observe and reflect on a child's learning progression of skills related to attention, memory, and executive functioning in interactions. For each module, educators respond to a series of questions which draw on their existing knowledge of the child. When completed, the Tool gives teachers and educators a Learning Report which provides them with a picture of the child's strengths and interests related to the particular module.

Case study

Sofia attends four-year-old kindergarten in metropolitan Melbourne. She enjoys playing outdoors, collecting loose parts (wheels, cylinders, pinecones, magnets, bark, blocks) and building different structures with them. Sofia seeks out natural materials such as leaves and grass and participates in group weaving experiences with her peers. In a group weaving experience, her educator notices that she quietly persists in weaving grass alongside the children and educators in dialogue around her. They also observe that, when stuck, she carefully watches other children to see how they manipulate the weaving materials, before trying a new method. Later, Sofia's educators observe her gathering more grass and asking her friend to help her create a blanket for their baby.

Collect information

Based on multiple observations, collected over time and with added perspectives from her parents, other educators, and early years professionals, Sophia's educator completes the *Learning dispositions* module. They note that she can:

- use imaginative play to explore ideas
- manipulate materials for an intended purpose
- experiment with trial and error.

Question / Analyse

For the Learning Report in this module, the 'nutshell' and Learning Outcome Statement provides a summary of Sofia's learning progression and describes how she can:

- attempt activities and make choices with adult support
- use her senses to explore the natural and built environment
- co-construct learning.

The report suggests intentional teaching strategies to support next steps in Sofia's learning based on where she is currently at. Sofia's educator reflects on the information and suggested teaching and learning strategies the report provides, such as:

- provide instructions that require the child to perform two or more actions in an experience that is enjoyable and motivating for the child, and specifically acknowledge the child for performing both/all parts of the experience and remembering each part. Check for child understanding of instructions or the requirements of an experience
- provide the child with mentoring and peer teaching opportunities so that they can explain the processes of learning experiences to other children
- negotiate expectations and requirements for learning experiences with the child. Use brainstorming activities to help the child understand the requirements of a task and your shared and agreed expectations for its completion, and to support the child's independent planning and organisation.



Early Years Planning Cycle (EYPC)

Sofia's educators reflect on the information and suggested teaching and learning strategies the report provides. This report guides their consideration, together with colleagues, of the most suitable resources and possible integrated teaching and learning experiences (see below) to advance Sofia's learning. Sofia's educators plan accordingly.



FIGURE 4: INTEGRATED TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

Plan

Following a review of the Tool's suggested teaching strategies, Sofia's educators add extensions to the educational program.

Sofia's educators plan for her to:

- experiment with different natural materials found in the outdoor learning environment
- explore how she can manipulate the materials to build and create different structures and creations
- develop her ability to problem solve and to explain her problem-solving processes to her peers and educators.

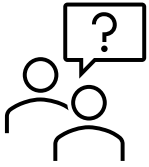
Act / Do

Sofia's educators will intentionally leverage the imaginative play she already enjoys with her friends to encourage exploration of how the different objects she collects can be manipulated to represent objects in play. Educators will deliberately model the use of descriptive language (feels heavy/light, smooth/rough, looks big/small, fast/slow) to scaffold exploration of the materials and promote language development. Her educators will pose questions and encourage her to make predictions. Sofia will be surrounded by tactile resources (water/ice, earth/mud) to further promote exploration of her senses.

Reflect / Review

The plan for Sofia guides reflection and review. Repeated ongoing observation in the day-to-day educational program guides this. Knowing that relationships are deeply connected to thinking and learning, Sofia's educators collaborate and discuss how they can continue to encourage Sofia to co-construct her learning with her peers. As a team, they plan for further small group experiences focused on persistence and encouragement and decide on key phrases to use consistently to support problem-solving and thinking about learning, such as "How did you know to do it that way?" and "Why do you think that worked?".

Learning dispositions: reflective questions



- How is children's learning assessed in your service and how is the information interpreted?
- How are observations made and recorded in the day-to-day (routine, play, transitions, child collaboration)?
- Think of a time that you made learning visible for children. How can involving children in co-design of learning environments help them to see themselves as confident and capable learners?
- What resources, intentional teaching practices (interactions/experiences) and environments might support consideration of the *Learning dispositions* module?

References

Early Years Assessment and Learning Tool

<https://www.vic.gov.au/early-years-assessment-and-learning-tool>

Early Years Learning Practice Guide

[Pages - Early Years Learning Practice Guide \(vcaa.vic.edu.au\)](https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/Early-Years-Learning-Practice-Guide.aspx)

VEYLDF Illustrative Map Learning

<https://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/curriculum/earlyyears/veyldf/veyldf-illustrative-maps/Pages/Learning.aspx>