



# A place for everyone: Responding effectively to every child

*Early childhood professionals and families who engage respectfully and responsively with children from birth in everyday routines and experiences promote children's confidence and empowerment. This includes encouraging children to initiate and lead their own learning, teaching them how to engage effectively with others. VEYLDF p11*

## Why it matters

Fundamental to effective early childhood education and care is the expectation that every child will have the opportunity to grow and learn. This means that educators work collaboratively with families to create meaningful and differentiated programs that respond to children's needs and interests enabling children to reach their full potential.

With the implementation of two years of funded kindergarten, educators may be working with children with very diverse learning needs. This will include children whose development varies across the age range and those who may require specific support.

When educators work in partnership with families and other professionals to better understand how all children can be supported to fully participate in the program, they maximise the opportunity to achieve the best outcomes for individual children as well as the group as a whole.

Differentiated responses take into consideration the various ways children learn. Offering diverse and innovative learning experiences can be further enhanced by using expert advice to enrich and enable every child's learning and development.

This approach relies on a commitment to high expectations for every child and a belief in their right to access high quality early childhood education.



Effective implementation of two years of funded kindergarten is enhanced when educators engage with the Practice Principles of the **Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework**

- Reflective practice
- Partnerships with families
- High expectations for every child
- Respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- Equity and diversity
- Assessment for learning and development
- Integrated teaching and learning approaches
- Partnerships with professionals.

It is recommended that educators refer to the **VEYLDF** and the Practice Guides for further suggestions and ideas about continuous improvement.



### **Practical tips to support the development of secure relationships:**

- **Responding to the unique attributes, strengths and interests of all children starts with the enrolment and orientation process.** It is important to get to know every family and also recognise that some families and their children may require additional support. It may be helpful to start enrolment processes earlier and make time to discuss individual requirements, expectations and appropriate responses with families. This may be best supported by including other relevant professionals.
- **Consider using the time at the beginning of the year (or before you start working together) to meet as a team to discuss how the program can best suit individual children.** At this meeting it would be helpful to talk about logistics (organising the space and resources for example), and also discuss your views on how to ensure all concerned maintain high expectations when working with diverse groups of children and families. This could be an opportunity to understand the perspectives of others and talk through any different viewpoints and come to an agreement about how to proceed and what strategies will be implemented.
- **Identify clear ways to assess children's learning and development and share this information with the team as you make decisions about how to enhance and enrich each child's learning.**
- **Use your regular team meetings to talk about how all children and their families are engaging in the program.** It is helpful to spend time as a team reflecting on how individual children are participating in the program. Consider how they are advantaged or disadvantaged by the program you are providing and how this could be modified to create stronger outcomes with particular reference to equity and diversity and the inclusion of all children.
- **Use a communication diary or journal.** Use a team diary or journal to make notes about observations, or questions that you have about how individual children are participating in the program. You may invite other early years professionals to offer their feedback as well. Use this to develop individual learning plans to maximise learning and development outcomes.

## Questions for reflective discussion:

The VEYLDF Practice Principle **Reflective Practice** invites educators to think about and challenge the practices they take for granted.

Use the following questions to support discussion with your colleagues.

- Share your understanding of inclusion in early childhood education. Use the ECA joint statement on inclusion of children with a disability in early childhood education and care listed below to guide your discussion.
- Consider this quote – ‘Educators think critically about opportunities and dilemmas that can arise from diversity and take action to redress unfairness.’ (EYLF p 13) – What do you think this means in practice?
- What are the benefits of inclusion for all children?
- What might be the challenges?
- What could you do to address these challenges? What strategies might you develop?
- How can you maximise the benefits?
- What might you need to reconsider or change in your practice to realise high expectations for each child?
- How could you include other professionals to create authentic and collaborative partnerships to support children and their families?

## References and further reading

Convention on the rights of the child (1989)  
Treaty no. 27531. United Nations.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Department of Education and Training and the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2016). Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. DET and VCAA, Melbourne.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/veylfdframework.pdf>

Department of Education and Training (2019). Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Australian Government, Canberra.

<https://docs.education.gov.au/node/2632>

Resources on the Practice Principles

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veylfdfproflearn.aspx>

Reflective Practice Education Resource

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/profdev/Pages/reflectivepractice.aspx>

ECA Statement: The inclusion of children with a disability in early childhood education and care  
<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-work/submissions-statements/#position-statements>

DET webpage for Children with additional needs and rights

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/default.aspx>

DET webpage for Childcare and kindergarten for Aboriginal children

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/needs/Pages/kooriechildcarekinder.aspx>

DET webpage supporting educators to plan for and run Three-Year-Old Kindergarten Programs

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/Pages/running-three-year-old-kinder.aspx>



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