Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Evidence Paper

Practice Principle 3: High expectations for every child

Authored for the Department of Education
and Early Childhood Development
by Madeleine Saffigna, Amelia Church
& Collette Tayler

Practice Principle 3: High Expectations for Every Child

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework guides early childhood professionals' practice in Victoria. The Victorian Framework identifies eight Practice Principles for Learning and Development (Practice Principles). The Practice Principles are based on the P-12 Principles of Learning and Teaching, the pedagogy from the national Early Years Learning Framework, and are informed by the latest research.

The Practice Principles are interrelated and designed to inform each other. They are categorised as Collaborative, Effective and Reflective:

Collaborative

1. Family-centred practice

2. Partnerships with professionals

3. High expectations for every child

Effective

4. Equity and diversity

5. Respectful relationships and responsive engagement

6. Integrated teaching and learning approaches

7. Assessment for learning and development

Reflective

8. Reflective practice

These Evidence Papers document the research that underpins each Practice Principle. The content of the Evidence Papers will be developed into a series of practical guides – Practice Principles in Practice – which will provide practical advice to early childhood professionals on how to align their practice to the Practice Principles.

Executive Summary

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework is for *all* children in Victoria. At the core of this inclusive framework is the practice principle *High expectations for every child*. This evidence paper presents the research to support this practice principle.

It is the right of every child to receive an education that promotes their individual learning path. This practice principle emphasises the uniqueness of each child's experience, learning and development and this paper summarises evidence to support best practice. The expectations of professionals impact directly on children's motivation, self-esteem and self-efficacy (Uszynska-Jarmoc, 2007; Morales, 2010). The evidence clearly shows that children who develop strong self-esteem, sense of agency and academic motivation are more likely to achieve their potential at school as well as being resilient to risk factors throughout their education (Brown & Medway, 2007; Gizir & Aydin, 2009).

High expectations for every child require early childhood professionals to consider multiple ways of knowing and learning, to value children's strengths and differences and to use these in their assessment and planning. In order to support each child's learning trajectory, early childhood professionals must take responsibility for each child's learning and development. This includes finding new ways to learn, providing additional support, reflecting on best practice and persistence in responding to challenges.

The implications for practice informed by the research and detailed in this paper are:

- Early childhood professionals communicate high expectations to every child, every day.

- Early childhood professionals provide differentiated learning environments that promote many ways of knowing and learning.

- Early childhood professionals employ a strengths- and interest-based curriculum that allows each child to experience success.

- Early childhood professionals promote high expectations for every child through communication with families and other professionals.

- Early childhood professionals take responsibility for children's learning and development.

Introduction

Children achieve better outcomes when they are expected to succeed. *Practice Principle 3: High expectations for every child* reflects the commitment of professionals to support each child's individual learning trajectory.

> Every child has the ability to learn and develop. Having high expectations is especially important in achieving better outcomes for the most vulnerable children. Some children require additional supports and different learning experiences and opportunities to help them learn and develop. Early childhood professionals:
>
> - commit to high expectations for all children's learning and development
>
> - ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and development
>
> - recognise that every child can learn, but some children require quite different opportunities and supports to do this
>
> - work with families to support children's learning and development at home and in the community.
>
> VEYLDF, p.10

This evidence paper presents the research supporting Practice Principle 3: High expectations for every child. It is widely accepted that having high expectations for each child is effective teaching practice (DEECD, 2009; DEEWR and COAG, 2009; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Sammons, Hillman & Mortimer, 1995). Research demonstrates that children achieve better outcomes in learning environments where early childhood professionals have high expectations for every child (Halvorsen, Lee & Andrade, 2009). This is especially true for children who are considered 'at risk' (Hinnant, O'Brien & Ghazarian, 2009).

High expectations from both early childhood professionals and parents can enhance children's resilience, achievement, motivation and self-belief (Gizir & Aydin, 2009; Ahmed, Minnaert, Van Der, & Kuyper, 2008). When educators have low expectations of their students it impacts directly on children's self-confidence, belief in their own abilities, sense of agency and their academic outcomes (Rubie-Davies, 2006).

'High expectations for every child' also recognises that each child is different and has a unique learning trajectory, meaning that each child will require unique support to reach his or her full potential (UN Committee on the Rights of the

Child, UN Children's Fund & Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2006; Ireson, 2008; MacNaughton, 2003). High expectations can be achieved by:

- believing that each child is capable of learning

- communicating high expectations to children and parents

- taking responsibility for children's learning and

- reflecting on teaching practice.

Strengths-based, differentiated learning environments give each child the opportunity to experience success, learn and develop.

What do we mean by 'high expectations for every child'?

This Practice Principle is based on the premise that all children have the potential to learn, grow and develop. It is widely accepted in the early childhood field that each child has a unique learning trajectory that can be supported, encouraged and scaffolded to achieve the best outcomes for that individual child (DEECD, 2009; DEEWR & COAG, 2009; MacNaughton, 2003; Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett & Farmer, 2008). This principle promotes each child's right to an education that develops the child's "personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (United Nations, 1989, Article 29). Expectations can be defined as the strong belief that somebody will achieve something. 'High expectations' for children therefore encompass the belief that children will achieve their full potential. This means that early childhood professionals communicate and advocate the highest expectations for every child.

Holding high expectations for every child promotes the idea that each child's development has both universal features and features that are unique to each child and their context (Arthur, et al, 2008). Each child's learning trajectory is different and some children will require additional and/or targeted support to reach their potential. High expectations for *every* child, does not involve having the same expectation of every child. Rather, professionals recognise that each child will experience learning and development differently (Ireson, 2008; UN Committee on the Rights of the Child et al, 2006). High expectations for *every* child affirms that children have diverse culture, ability, learning styles, personalities and identities and that each child can experience success in their learning and wellbeing (MacNaughton, 2003; Jalongo, 2007).

Why are high expectations for every child so important in early childhood learning, development and teaching?

Children learn best when they are expected to succeed

High expectations enable children to achieve the best possible outcomes in both their academic achievement and their wellbeing. In a study by Schiff & Tatar (2003) most children reported that significant teachers – those making a positive difference – expect them to succeed. High expectations from parents, professionals and peers are linked to self-esteem, children's sense of agency and academic motivation. These factors in turn lead to educational success (Ahmed, et al, 2008; Patrick, Mantzicopoulos, Samarapungavan & French, 2008). These factors are discussed in detail below. Evidence shows that early childhood professionals' expectations impact directly on children's expectations of themselves, their academic aspirations and their self-perception (Rubie-Davis, 2006; Berzin, 2010). Motivation, self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy all interact in complex ways to determine a child's academic success and resilience (Uszynska-Jarmoc, 2007).

Motivation is a key factor in children's academic achievement (Archambault, Eccles & Vida, 2010; Uszynska-Jarmoc, 2007). There are many complex factors that can influence children's motivation including their perceived ability, the value that they assign the task, parental expectations, teacher expectations, emotions, interest in the task, and task difficulty (Archambault, et al, 2010; Jalongo, 2007). Evidence states that there is a steady decline in children's motivation from when they begin school; this can have enormous impacts on children's self-esteem, academic achievement and perceived ability in specific tasks e.g. Maths or English (Patrick, et al, 2008; Archambault, et al, 2010). This also means that when children begin school with low motivation and self-perception their academic outcomes are likely to be poor, and to decrease as they move through school (Patrick et al, 2008).

Another important factor in educational achievement is self-esteem. Self-esteem refers to a child's overall feeling of self-worth. It is the child's assessment of their worth based on their experiences, their interactions with others: parents, early childhood professionals, peers and their environment (Maxwell & Chmielewski, 2008). Self-concept is an element of self-esteem that refers to the child's view of her or his own abilities. Children's self-concepts are influenced by their own perceptions, feedback they receive from others, comparisons with peers and results from assessment (Archambault, et al, 2010). A child's self-concept can be heavily influenced by what early childhood professionals deem important and the emphasis that they place on certain skills. For example if a teacher values

written expression over verbal during English language activities, a child whose writing is poor may have a low self-concept in literacy even if their verbal skills are good (Uszynska-Jarmoc, 2007).

Self-efficacy differs from self-esteem in that it refers to a child's belief in their ability to take actions that will achieve their goals (Schweinle & Mims, 2009). It is the child's belief about what they can do rather than their worth as a person, and it is often task or domain specific e.g. singing or science (Schweinle & Mims, 2009). When children believe that they are competent and can achieve results, they are more likely to persist with difficulty, spend more time and energy on the task and modify their approach to achieve better results (Patrick et al, 2008). In this way self-efficacy is cyclical; the more children believe in their ability to affect outcomes the more effort, time and energy they will expend. When children put in more time and effort their outcomes improve thus increasing their belief in their ability to effect change.

Early childhood professionals' expectations influence children's motivation, self-esteem, self-efficacy and self-concept; these are all factors in building academic resilience.

Low expectations affect how children see themselves, and are often linked to socioeconomic, racial, cultural, or gender bias

In the early childhood context, self-fulfilling prophecy refers to the complex interplay between what an early childhood professional expects from a child, and what outcomes that child subsequently achieves. There is considerable evidence that children often begin to view themselves as others see them, for example they may incorporate the early childhood professional's views into their own self-concept (Madon, Smith, Jussim, Russell, Eccles, Palumbo & Walkiewicz, 2001; Montague & Rinaldi, 2001). There is also evidence to suggest that if an early childhood professional expects a child to underachieve they may provide less encouragement, less challenging tasks and take less responsibility for that child's learning, hence creating the environment for that prophecy to come true (Jussim & Eccles, 1992). Self-fulfilling prophecy is complex as it does not affect all children equally, and may have no effect in one context, and dire consequences in another (Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001; de Boer, Bosker, van der Werf, 2010).

In many cases, bias held by early childhood professionals towards certain races, cultures or ability groups is perceived by children and in turn impacts on children's expectations of their own achievement (Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001). Factors that may influence professionals' perceptions of children include: gender, personality and social skills, ethnicity, social class, stereotypes, diagnostic labels, disability or developmental delay, physical attractiveness, language style, the age of the child, dissonance between the early childhood

professional's and child's backgrounds, names, other siblings and family status (Rubie-Davies, Hattie & Hamilton, 2006; Hinnant et al, 2009).

Self-fulfilling prophecy is complex, influenced by many factors, and it is considered more significant to children considered 'at risk' (Jussim & Harber, 2005; Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001). The term 'at risk' is used in the early childhood field to identify children who, for a complex range of reasons, may be at risk of poor educational outcomes (Gizir & Aydin, 2009). These factors may include but are not limited to: family violence, poverty, homelessness, refugee status, behavioural issues, disability or impairment, low socio-economic status, parent education levels, substance abuse, parent incarceration, poor social skills and mental health issues (Gizir & Aydin, 2009; Hinnant, et al, 2009). These and many other factors place children 'at risk' of poor academic outcomes, and early school dropout.

Self-fulfilling prophecies tend to be more influential when they are negative and when they involve children who would be considered 'at risk'. For example when expectations are lowered, children's confidence in their ability to learn diminishes and they are less likely to succeed (Brooks, 2006). When early childhood professionals have low expectations of certain children, their sense of responsibility regarding that child's learning is diminished, leading to poorer outcomes for these children.

High expectations act as protective factors, by promoting resilience in children who are considered 'at risk'

Resilience can be defined as children achieving goals and outcomes despite being at risk of disadvantage (Brooks, 2006). Early childhood professionals' high expectations have the most impact on children considered at risk. For example, in a study on the effects of teacher expectations, boys from minority groups had the largest gains when there were high expectations, and the lowest scores when their abilities were underestimated (Hinnant, et al, 2009). In another study it was found that children from minority groups were more likely to be underestimated and therefore provided with fewer learning opportunities, which in turn led to poor outcomes (de Boer, et al, 2010). The importance of resilience in academic achievement is well documented (Morales, 2010; Gizir & Aydin, 2009). There are a number of protective factors that work together to make children more resilient. These factors include internal factors such as: strong work ethic, persistence, high self-esteem, internal locus of control, and well-defined goals and aspirations. They also include external factors such as: caring personnel, high parental expectations supported by words and actions, high expectations from professionals, and strong peer and community

relationships (Morales, 2010; Gizir & Aydin, 2009). High expectations can work as a protective factor for many years of schooling. In some studies, high teacher expectations in the early years of primary school have had a lasting effect throughout the primary years (Hinnant et al, 2009).

Professionals who have high expectations for every child are also more likely to take responsibility for children's learning and have high levels of professional agency

Professionals who have low expectations of their children's abilities are often reluctant to take responsibility for children's learning. This can contribute to low achievement and poor outcomes for children. Professional responsibility includes 'how willing teachers are to hold themselves accountable for the learning of all their students' (Halvorsen, Lee & Andrade, 2009, p. 182). It also refers to professionals' belief in their own abilities to be effective educators (McLeod, 1995). Early childhood professionals who feel a strong sense of responsibility for children's learning are more likely to find ways to support diverse learners and achieve positive outcomes for children (Halvorsen, et al, 2009; Wilkinson, 2005).

Educator agency or efficacy can be defined as the early childhood professional's belief that they can influence behaviour and make changes that will achieve desired outcomes (Guo, Piasta, Justice, Kaderavek, 2010). Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998, p.202) state that "teachers with a high level of efficacy believed that they could control, or at least strongly influence, student achievement and motivation". When a child is underachieving, educators with a high level of efficacy are more likely to examine their practices and make changes to improve outcomes for that child (Guo et al, 2010). High expectations for each child often lead to more time being spent providing additional and individualised support so that each child can experience success. This leads to better outcomes for children. For example an early childhood professional who sees that a child is underachieving but still believes that child is capable of learning will alter the learning experience to suit that child's learning needs (Halvorsen, et al 2009). Jordan & Stanovich (2001) also found that educators with a high sense of agency spent more time interacting at an academic level with *all* of their students; meaning that children with learning disabilities and gifted students were all challenged and engaged in their learning. Educators who take responsibility for children's learning also recognise that the early childhood environment plays a large role in how children experience learning. The learning space directly influences how 'disabling' a child's additional need may be. Educators will take action to ensure that children with special needs have access to resources, and all social and learning experiences (Forman, 2008). In some cases this will require additional staff members and training to ensure that each

child has the support to achieve their educational and social goals (Mohay & Reid, 2006).

How can we achieve best practice?

Early childhood professionals critically reflect on bias and promote equality in their classrooms through high expectations for every child

Recent research continues to find evidence of different educator expectations about student outcomes based on ability, ethnicity, gender, socio-economic status and race (Rubie-Davies et al, 2006). In order to promote high expectations for each child, early childhood professionals must recognise the aptitudes of diverse learners in their classroom and understand that some children will require different opportunities to reach their learning goals. This Practice Principle links very closely with Practice Principle 8, Reflective Practice. It requires early childhood professionals to consider that what they know may be biased and to think critically about issues of power, discrimination and disadvantage (MacNaughton, 2003). To achieve equality, early childhood professionals must expect each child to succeed and work consciously not to label learners on the basis of race, gender, socio-economic status, ability or other difference. Evidence shows that educator expectations can affect entire class groups of children by influencing children's self-perceptions (Rubie-Davis, 2006). Children are most susceptible to negative self-fulfilling prophecy when others' expectations of their ability differ substantially from their own (Madon & Smith et al, 2001). Early childhood professionals are in an influential position to instil in each child the self-belief necessary for success in later schooling.

Early childhood professionals communicate high expectations to children

Early childhood professionals express their high expectations to all children and engage positively with children to achieve the best learning outcomes. In a study on the practices and beliefs of exemplary teachers, Brown and Medway (2007) found that effective educators had high expectations of every child and communicated these expectations to each child on a daily basis. They found that by communicating the message that every child can succeed they raised children's expectations of themselves. Early childhood professionals' interactions with children also influence how their peers view them and in turn their peer relationships. This can lead to peer rejection and lower self-esteem which are both powerful determinants in later school achievement (Montague & Rinaldi, 2001). By interacting with children in respectful and responsive ways, early childhood professionals can communicate their high expectations regularly and

11

in ways that build children's sense of self-efficacy. This can include focusing on children's strengths, offering encouragement for effort and setting challenging but achievable goals (Halvorsen et al, 2009).

Early childhood professionals advocate for high expectations with parents, colleagues and other professionals

Parent and family expectations influence children's perceptions of their ability as well as their actual outcomes (Benner & Mistry, 2007; Neuenschwander, Vida, Garrett & Eccles, 2007; Archambault et al, 2010). Professionals are in a unique position to talk with families about their expectations for their children and to promote the highest expectations for each individual child. In a study of 50 high-achieving children from low socioeconomic backgrounds 'parental expectations supported by words and actions' was a protective factor that enabled children to succeed (Morales, 2010). Without this it is likely that other protective factors would have had little or no effect. Benner and Mistry (2007) advise that professional and parent expectations are important both independently and as a combined effect. They advise that in some cases a mother's high expectations may act as a buffer to the negative effects of low educator expectations. This is supported by Gizir and Aydin's (2009) study that found that high expectations in the home were the most important protective factor in predicting academic resilience. Gill and Reynolds (1999) also found that children's perceptions of their parents' high expectations had a positive effect on their reading and maths levels in later primary school. It is essential for early childhood professionals to promote high expectations with parents and families and encourage parents to communicate these to their children.

Early childhood professionals can advocate for high expectations for children within the education system and when engaging with other professionals. Early childhood professionals communicate strengths-based, high expectations through transition reports and in correspondence with families. The role of the early childhood professional includes advocating for children in interactions with families, other professionals and the wider community (MacNaughton, 2003).

Professionals use strengths-based approaches that value and extend each child's strengths, abilities and unique qualities

In recognising each child's unique learning trajectory, professionals will plan for children utilising their strengths. They will provide additional or different support for children in areas where they are experiencing difficulty. Effective

early childhood professionals plan in ways that celebrate diversity, recognise strengths, and promote alternative ways of knowing and learning (Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockettt & Farmer, 2008). Evidence from a study by Skinner, Bryant, Coffman, and Campbell (1998) showed that children whose teachers focused on the child's strengths and scaffolded their learning reported a 'love of school' whereas children whose teachers focused on the negative were more likely to view themselves as 'bad' students. This is supported by Patrick et al (2008) who state that "one third of kindergarten students rated their ability and happiness lower after receiving criticism for their task performance" (Patrick et al, 2008, p.125). Extending on children's strengths and celebrating success encourages children to be confident, involved learners (DEECD, 2009). In a study of one preschool's learning framework, the link was demonstrated between strengths-based instruction and resilience: "the curriculum builds on children's strengths and provides experiences that enhance opportunities for success, thus potentially activating the predictors of resilience identified in the framework as important to motivation: self-efficacy, persistence, control and low anxiety" (Arthur & Sawyer, 2009, p.170).

It is also important for early childhood professionals to show respect for different ways of knowing and learning and be open to trying different strategies. This is especially important for Indigenous children and families. Kitson & Bowes (2010) assert that incorporating Indigenous ways of being and knowing into early childhood settings will make them more welcoming, accessible and safe for Indigenous families. Incorporating and respecting diverse ways of being and knowing reduces the risk of stereotyping and making generalisations about families and can open new lines of communication and cooperation (Kitson & Bowes, 2010). Catering for diverse learners means valuing each child's voice and way of knowing. Early childhood professionals must reflect on power relationships so they can construct knowledge with the child not for them (MacNaughton, 2003).

Educators provide differentiated learning environments that offer children varied, responsive opportunities to learn and succeed

A differentiated environment can be defined as a learning space that responds to children's unique abilities, culture, perspectives, strengths and learning styles while also understanding the commonalities in children's development (Schiller & Willis, 2008; Arthur et al, 2008). Differentiated learning is inclusive in that learning is differentiated for every child, not only children who have identified disabilities or learning difficulties (Broderick, Mehta-Parekh & Reid, 2005). It requires early childhood educators to provide a range of learning opportunities so that children with different learning styles and abilities can engage with

equally challenging and meaningful content (Broderick et al, 2005, Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998). A differentiated environment for example, may provide several different ways of learning oral, written, demonstrations, experiments, and multisensory activities that also vary in difficulty ensuring that each child is challenged and can experience success (Broderick et al, 2005; Schiller & Willis, 2008). Differentiated learning requires the educator to have meaningful and challenging interactions with individual children in order to assess their level of understanding and extend this understanding (Jordan & Stanovich, 2001). Individual learning plans are one way in which educators can use assessment of an individual child's learning to set goals and outline the ways in which the child will be supported to achieve short and long term goals (Forman, 2008).

Differentiated learning looks different in every setting, and must be responsive to the needs of the children in that context. An example of another model of differentiated learning is the tiered approach where children who need further development are offered another focused tier of instruction. This may be in the form of a small group looking explicitly at vocabulary, or a professional working one-on-one with a child on numeracy concepts. Tiered instruction has proven especially effective for children who are at risk of learning and reading difficulties (Pullen, Tuckwiller, Konold, Maynard & Coyne, 2010; Cooke, Kretlow & Helf, 2010). In a small study of early childhood professionals that aimed to identify high quality preschool curriculum, a project approach was also identified by early childhood professionals as supporting diverse learners, motivating children by involving them in curriculum planning and achieving academic results through multimodal learning (Beneke, & Ostrosky, 2009). Diverse learners in this study were defined as children with special needs, behavioural issues or factors that put them at risk of academic failure. Forman (2008) also advises that curriculum adaptation – modifying the curriculum to make it more relevant and accessible to children with additional needs, and/or partial participation – and thinking of different ways that children with diverse needs can be involved in all activities, can make education spaces inclusive and supportive.

Professionals provide assessment and feedback to children and parents that is strengths-based and allows each child to experience success

Early childhood professionals will ensure that assessment gives each child the opportunity to succeed. This requires early childhood professionals to understand the strengths of the children they work with and assess them on their individual growth rather than a comparison against others (Tomlinson & Kalbfleisch, 1998). Feedback should praise effort above ability, as children's sense of self-efficacy will grow when they feel their actions are enabling them to

achieve their goals (Schweinle & Mims, 2009). Assessment reports should be strengths-based and also provide accurate information on how the child is being supported to reach their learning goals. Some classroom practices and assessments convince children that they are not capable of achieving (Arthur & Sawyer, 2009). For example, assessment practices that rank children's achievement against one another or focus only on ability are detrimental to children's efficacy. This is because, unlike effort, ability is out of the child's control making them feel powerless over their educational outcomes (Schweinle & Mims, 2009).

Early childhood professionals have high expectations for themselves. They view themselves as agents of change and are confident in their ability to be effective educators.

Evidence shows that high educator efficacy has a positive impact on children's outcomes (Guo et al, 2010; Wilkinson, 2005). There are many factors that impact on educators' feelings of self-efficacy. These include: training, feeling supported by colleagues, experience, knowledge of theory about how children learn, having the philosophy that all children can learn, and an environment that promotes sharing and conversations about theory with colleagues (Wilkinson, 2005; Brown & Medway, 2007).

> Greater efficacy leads to greater effort and persistence, which leads to better performance, which in turn leads to greater efficacy. The reverse is also true. Lower efficacy leads to less effort and giving up easily, which leads to poor teaching outcomes, which then produce decreased efficacy (Tschannen- Moran et al, 1998, p. 234).

Early learning environments and primary schools have an important role in promoting professionals' efficacy. In a study that examined effective literacy and numeracy practice in eight disadvantaged South Australian schools, it was found that educators' efficacy directly influenced student outcomes. The study identified that educators who demonstrated high levels of professional responsibility were those who felt supported by their colleagues, directors and principal, had more paid preparation time, more opportunities to attend conferences and training and felt that they could influence curriculum and policy (Halvorsen et al, 2009). This is supported by Mohay & Reid (2006) who identified additional staff, resources and staff training as imperative for high quality service provision for children with additional needs. This requires a shift to reflective practice, conversations about how and why we teach in certain ways and allocated time for early childhood professionals to engage in discussions about high expectations for all children (Wilkinson, 2005).

What are the implications for achieving best outcomes for children?

1. Early childhood professionals communicate high expectations to every child, every day.

> How teachers demonstrate and talk with children about expectations has a profound influence on how children perceive their own competencies. Early childhood professionals understand that children need to be actively supported and encouraged to attempt, experiment and persist in their learning.

2. Early childhood professionals provide differentiated learning environments that promote many ways of knowing and learning.

> Differentiated learning environments provide responsive learning programs for all children, recognising that the resources, interactions, content, and approaches in the learning environment need to respond to each child's abilities, interests and ways of knowing.

3. Early childhood professionals employ a strengths- and interest-based curriculum that allows every child to experience success.

> All children bring varied experiences, knowledge, abilities and interests to an early learning environment. Effective early childhood professionals respond to these interests and abilities with curriculum that extends learning for each child and creates opportunities to build children's sense of self-efficacy.

4. Early childhood professionals promote high expectations for every child through communication with families and other professionals.

> Parental expectations of children have a significant impact on children's later academic and social outcomes. Early childhood professionals promote high expectations with parents, families and other professionals, and encourage families to communicate these to their children.

5. Early childhood professionals take responsibility for children's learning and development.

> Higher levels of professional efficacy are related to higher outcomes for children. When early childhood professionals are supported by colleagues and supervisors, have opportunities for training and engage in reflective practice, they are better able to articulate and enact high expectations for children. Early childhood professionals who believe in every child's ability to learn create optimal environments for learning and development.

Appendix A Methodology

The following sampling procedures and research methods were used in this Paper. To begin with, an online database search was carried out for current literature using the following search terms;

- high expectations
- self-fulfilling prophecy
- teacher influence
- Children's inner locus of control
- Self-efficacy
- Student outcomes and teacher expectations
- Individualised Learning
- Differentiated Learning
- School success
- Academic motivation
- Self-esteem
- Teacher agency

The terms 'Children' 'Teachers' 'Parents' and 'at risk' were added to create the search parameters relevant to this paper.

Search results were refined by selecting articles that were particular to the Australian context and research that focused on the early years from birth to 8.

The University of Melbourne's online databases were viewed using "Supersearch". This provided a wide selection of electronic journals, scholarly databases, theses and government reports, locally, nationally and internationally, with a particular focus on those abstracts identifying a specific Australian context and a focus on the early years. Only on-line, peer reviewed journal articles and literature published in the last 20 years have been considered.

The databases searched were

ERIC (CSA)

A+ Education (Informit)

Web of Science (ISI)

Education Research Complete (EBSCO)

Expanded Academic ASAP (Gale)

Finally, a number of texts have also been included, because they are especially relevant to the Australian early years context. Specifically, Shaping Early Childhood; Learners, Curriculum and Contexts (MacNaughton, 2003), Inclusion in action (Forman, 2008) and Programming and planning in the early childhood setting (Arthur et al, 2008).

Reference has also been made to early childhood policy papers and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). These were included for their direct influence on Australian early years policy and practice.

References

Ahmed, W., Minnaert,A., Van Der ,G. & Kuyper, H. (2008). Perceived social support and early adolescents' achievement: The mediational roles of motivational beliefs and emotions. *Journal of Youth Adolescence,* 39 (1), 36-46.

Archambault, I., Eccles, J. S., & Vida, M. N. (2010). Ability, self-concepts and subjective value in literacy: Joint trajectories from Grades 1 through 12. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102 (4), 804 -817

Arthur, L., Beecher,B., Death, E., Dockettt, S., & Farmer, S. (2008). *Programming and planning in the early childhood setting* (4th ed.). Southbank: Thompson.

Arthur, L., & Sawyer, W. (2009). Robust hope, democracy and early childhood education*, Early Years*, 29 (2) 163-175.

Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments. (2009). Belonging, being & becoming: the early years learning framework for Australia.   Retrieved 8 December 2010 from http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/EarlyYears LearningFramework.aspx.

Beneke, S., & Ostrosky, M.M. (2009). Teachers' views of the efficacy of incorporating the project approach into classroom practice with diverse learners. *Early Childhood Research & Practice* Vol 11 (1). Retrieved 12 February 2011 from http://ecrp.uiuc.edu/v11n1/ostrosky.html.

Benner, A.D., & Mistry, R.S. (2007). Congruence of mother and teacher educational expectations and low-income youth's academic competence. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(1), 140–153

Berk, L.E. (2009). *Child development* (8th Ed.). Sydney: Pearson Education.

Berzin, S.C. (2010). Educational aspirations among low-income youths: Examining multiple conceptual models. *Children & Schools,* 32(2), 112-124.

Broderick, A., Mehta-Parekh, H., & Reid, K. (2005). Differentiating instruction for disabled students in inclusive classrooms. *Theory into Practice*, 44(3), 194-202.

Brooks, J.E. (2006). Strengthening resilience in children and youths: Maximizing opportunities through the schools, *Children & Schools,* 28(2), 69-76.

Brown, K.E. & Medway, F.J, (2007) School climate and teacher beliefs in a school effectively serving poor South Carolina (USA) African-American students: A case study. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 23(4), 529–540.

Cooke, N.L., Kretlow, A.G., & Helf, S. (2010). Supplemental reading help for kindergarten students: How early should you start? *Preventing School Failure*, 54(3), 137–144.

de Boer, H., Bosker, R.J. & van der Werf, M.P.C. (2010). Sustainability of teacher expectation bias effects on long-term student performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102(1), 168 -179.

Department of Education and Early Childhood. (2009). *Principles of Learning and Teaching (PoLT) P-12*. Accessed on 20 August 2010 via DEECD website http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/teachingprinciples/ onlineresource/p4/.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2009). *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework; For Children Birth to Eight Years.* Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

DEC/NAEYC. (2009). Early childhood inclusion: A joint position statement of the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FP. Child Development Institute.

Forman, P (Ed). (2008*). Inclusion in action* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne: Thompson.

Gill, S., & Reynolds, A.J. (1999). Educational expectations and school achievement of urban African American children. *Journal of School Psychology*, 37(4), 403–424.

Gizir, C. A., & Aydin, G. (2009). Protective factors contributing to the academic resilience of students living in poverty in turkey. *Professional School Counseling,* 13(1), 38-49.

Guo, Y., Piasta, S.B., Justice, L.M., & Kaderavek, J.M. (2010). Relations among preschool teachers' self-efficacy, classroom quality, and children's language and literacy gains. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 26(4), 1094-1103.

Halvorsen, A., Lee, V., Andrade, F. (2009) A mixed-method study of teachers' attitudes about teaching in urban and low-income schools. *Urban Education*, 44(2), 181-224.

Hinnant, O'Brien, & Ghazarian, (2009). The longitudinal relations of teacher expectations to achievement in the early school years. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 101(3), 662–670.

Ireson, J. (2008). *Learners, learning and educational activity*. London: Routledge.

Jalongo, M. R. (2007). Beyond benchmarks and scores: reasserting the role of motivation and interest in children's academic achievement: an ACEI (Association For Cultural Economics International) position paper. *Childhood Education,* 83(6), 395-407.

Jussim, L., & Harber, K.D. (2005). Teacher expectations and self-fulfilling prophecies: Knowns and unknowns, resolved and unresolved controversies. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 9(2), 131–155.

Jordan, A., & Stanovich, P. (2001). Patterns of teacher–student interaction in inclusive elementary classrooms and correlates with student self-concept. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 48(1), 33-52.

Kitson, R., & Bowes, J. (2010). Incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing in early education for Indigenous children. A*ustralasian Journal of Early Childhood*, 35(4), 81 -89.

Kuklinski, M.R., & Weinstein, R.S. (2001). Classroom and developmental differences in a path model of teacher expectancy effects. *Child Development*, 72(5), 1554 -1578.

MacNaughton, G. (2003). *Shaping early childhood.: Learners, curriculum and contexts*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

McLeod, S.H. (1995). Pygmalion or Golem? Teacher affect and efficacy. *College Composition and Communication,* 46(3), 369-386.

Madon, S., Smith, A., Jussim, L., Russell, D.W., Eccles, J., Palumbo, P., & Walkiewicz, M. (2001). Am I as you see me or do you see me as I am? Self-fulfilling prophecies and self-verification. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,* 27, 1214-1224.

Mohay, H., & Reid, E. (2006). The inclusion of children with a disability in childcare: The influence of experience, training and attitudes of childcare staff. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 31(1), 35-42.

Montague, M., & Rinaldi, C. (2001). Classroom dynamics and children at risk. A follow up. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 24(1), 75 -83.

Morales, E., E (2010). Linking strengths: Identifying and exploring protective factor clusters in academically resilient low-socioeconomic urban students of color. *Roeper Review*, 32(1) 164–175.

Neuenschwander, M.P., Vida, M., Garrett, J.L.,& Eccles, J.S. (2007). Parents' expectations and students' achievement in two western nations. International Journal of Behavioral Development Vol 31 pp 594- 603.

Patrick, H., Mantzicopoulos, P., Samarapungavan, A., & French, F. (2008). Patterns of young children's motivation for science and teacher-child relationships. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 76(2), 121-144.

Pullen, P.C., Tuckwiller, E.D., Konold, T.R., Maynard, K.L., & Coyne, M.D. (2010). A tiered intervention model for early vocabulary instruction: The effects of tiered instruction for young students at risk for reading disability. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 25(3), 110–123.

Rubie-Davies, C.M. (2006). Teacher expectations and student self-perceptions. Exploring relationships. *Psychology in the Schools*, 43(5), 537–552.

Rubie-Davies, C., Hattie, J., & Hamilton, R. (2006). Expecting the best for students: Teacher expectations and academic outcomes. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76(3), 429–444.

Sammons, P, Hillman, J. & Mortimer, P. (1995). *Key characteristics of effective schools: A review of school effectiveness research*, Office for Standard in Education and Institute of Education, London.

Schiller, P., & Willis, C.A. (2008). Using brain-based teaching strategies to create supportive early childhood environments that address learning standards. *Young Children*, 63(4), 52-55.

Schweinle, A., & Mims, G.A. (2009). Mathematics self-efficacy: stereotype threat versus resilience. *Social Psychology of Education,* 12(4), 501- 514.

Skinner, D., Bryant, D., Coffman, J., & Campbell, F. (1998). Creating risk and promise: Children's and teachers' co-constructions in the cultural world of kindergarten source, *The Elementary School Journal*, 98(4), 297-310.

Tomlinson, C.A., & Kalbfleisch, M.L. (1998). Teach me, teach my brain.: A call for differentiated classrooms. *Educational Leadership*, 56(3), 52-55

Tschannen-Moran, M., Woolfolk Hoy, A., & Hoy, W.K. (1998). Teacher efficacy: Its meaning and measure. *Review of Educational Research*, 68(2), 202-248.

United Nations, (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Geneva: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Children's Fund & Bernard van Leer Foundation. (2006) *A Guide to General Comment 7: 'Implementing child rights in early childhood*.' The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Uszynska-Jarmoc, (2007). Self-esteem and different forms of thinking in seven and nine-year-olds. *Early Child Development and Care*, 177(4), 337-348.

Wilkinson, L. (2005). Improving literacy outcomes for students in disadvantaged schools: The importance of teacher theory. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 28(2), 127–137.

Melbourne Graduate School of Education

Level 2, Alice Hoy Building
The University of Melbourne
Victoria 3010 Australia

Telephone: +61 3 8344 8285
Facsimile: +61 3 8344 8529
www.education.unimelb.edu.au