# Respectful relationships

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| Anne Stonehouse: | My name is Anne Stonehouse. Welcome to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework practice principle video series. The framework is for all professionals and services working with children from birth to eight years. In the videos you see each practice principle in action. It's important to remember that all the principles intersect and overlap, combined they guide professional practice. The videos should be used in conjunction with the Practice Principle guide on respect for relationships and responsive engagement. The guide is on the Department of Education and Training website. |
| [00:01:00] | From birth, warm and respectful relationships with familiar adults build and strengthen secure attachments that are fundamental to children's learning and development. All children, especially very young children need a strong relationship with at least one adult to feel secure. Children must know they can get help if they need it, this is essential for them to thrive and learn. Today, we'll be visiting several services. The professionals, families, and children at these sites will help you consider respectful relationships and responsive engagement, and how this relates to your service. |
| Denise Barr:[00:02:00] | We work with a group called the Australian Childhood Trauma group and they come in and work with our staff, teachers and educational support staff to understand what many of our children have been through. Many of our children have been through trauma overseas but also trauma here in Australia, so we have to have a real understanding of how these children are going to react to certain circumstances, and what the teachers and staff members can do to relate to them to create that connection and feeling of belonging to the school. |
| Helen Walter: | Recently I visited a two year old child at home who has severe cerebral palsy and she is not able to articulate verbally, but she is learning to articulate through a communication book, and it had been a couple of months since I had seen her, and she is familiar with me it was me and she was desperate to show me her new book was what we worked out from her communication. She was clearly telling her mother that she wanted to show me the book which was just incredible. Responding to her, allowing her the opportunity to share in that experience, and that look on her face when she realised, and her mother worked out what it was that she was wanting to express. |
| [00:03:00]Mel Simpson: | We really make children partners in their learning and they get to make decisions and to talk about what they're doing. We really encourage students to explain their thinking, and we often say to them, "What's your theory?" That's based on the idea that everyone has different ideas, or different theories and we think differently, and we think differently because we have different brains, different cultures, and these are concepts that we share with the children all the time. |
| Anne Stonehouse:[00:04:00] | Professionals work to develop warm and responsive relationships with children and their families. They get to know them deeply and accept them. They pay close attention to what children are trying to communicate. Adults’ responsive engagement with children promotes emotional security, children sense of belonging, cultural and conceptual understandings, and their language and communication skills. Modelling and discussing positive respectful relationships also teaches children how to form strong bonds and friendships with others. Professionals and their interactions with families, children, and other professionals acknowledge the importance of respectful relationships and encourage children to play an active role as they learn to relate respectfully to others, to resolve conflicts in a constructive way and respect difference. |
| Joanne Richmond: | We try to have opportunities for students to have voice, give feedback to their teachers around their learning, the classroom, the playground. We've had a lot of discussion as a school around transitions for children from in the classroom, to outside the classroom. One of those changes was actually not having bells anymore, the ACT group talked about how children who've experienced trauma, those bells frighten them, and they really do, and that's one of the reasons that we stopped it. It does make it for a calmer, more soothing, learning environment. |
| [00:05:00]Anne Stonehouse: | Creating respectful relationships and engaging responsively with all children and families can be challenging. Professionals need to examine their own beliefs and feelings honestly. Respectful relationships can be tested when children behave in challenging ways, or when families are experiencing challenges. Developing and maintaining respectful relationships is the foundation for working effectively. |
| Natalie Peters:[00:06:00] | Audrey was upset because perhaps she was playing with this doll, and I could see also that the doll in question was Lola's doll. Lola was trying to assert herself that, "This is my doll. This has my name on it," and she was clearly pointing out it, "It has my name on it," and Audrey really wanted it. Talking to them I was able to identify why Audrey was so upset saying, "I want the doll," and Lola was saying, "This is my doll," and she was pointing to the name. But Lola's very compassionate and she likes to have rules and structure. I don't think she wanted the doll necessarily, she wanted to convey to Audrey that, "this is my doll." So, with Lola I helped her point out to Audrey that this is Lola's doll by pointing to the name, pointing to the letters. Audrey was able to somewhat understand that Lola was trying to say, "This is my doll." Once Audrey began to calm down Lola realised, "I can share!' |
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| Wendy Jarvis:[00:07:00] | Respect is a really important thing for me and it's one of our school values as well, but I do think that you can expect children to show respect if you don't show respect back to them. They can't learn to show respect to others unless they've got an idea of how to do it, and right from the word go in my classroom we have to use our greetings and our ‘please and thank you’s' and apologies where necessary. I try to do that as well and I say to them, you know we all make mistakes and I can say sorry just as easily as you. |
| Anne Stonehouse: | With time and support children learn to regulate their behaviour and how to build respectful positive relationships and establish secure attachments with each other and with adults. They learn from observations and from how they are treated as well as through specific experiences designed to teach them how to engage effectively with others. Responsive engagement and shared, sustained thinking enables professionals to support and extend children's learning. |
| Joanne Richmond: | Going outside, saying 'hello' to them, talking to them about the new baby, the new family pets, just generally chatting and talking to the children, saying, "make sure your parents come to this activity." |
| Mel Simpson:[00:08:00] | This morning we were doing ... ‘cooking from the fridge’ is what this idea is called, and it came about through a parent being concerned about serving sizes. Another parent, who's a doctor, and who was really interested in children having healthy relationships with food now, and the fact that that has long term consequences for children's health and adult health. We were thinking about, "Okay, how do we promote children to have healthy lifestyles now, and to have good nutrition?". So, with this particular parent we were talking about how they learn about food in their family, and it was through culture and through learning from the parents, learning how to cook. |
|  | We thought, "How can we apply that idea to our service in our centre, in our room?" We asked that family to come in and they cooked fried rice from the fridge and this morning Adeline who was the child said, "Yes, that's my fried rice idea," so the cooking from the fridge comes from her. |
| Sharyn Veale:[00:09:00] | Make sure that we're aware of anything special that happens with families, so we know that there’s things going on at home. Might be a birth of a new baby, or it could be they're moving houses something like that, we make sure that those conversations happen within the program as well. |
| Sharyn Veale: | I hear that you had a meeting with Tom's parents today. |
| Wendy Jarvis: | I talked to her mom she's a bit worried about him transitioning to grade one, so we talked about how we will find out who his teacher is, take photos of her and photos of the classroom so that she can make a book for him at home over the holiday, so that he can say, "Well, that's my teacher next year, that's my grade. Things like that. |
| Sharyn Veale: | If you can let me know what grade it is, because if we’ve got him on the holidays then we might even be able to do some walking around his classroom and make sure that he remembers, so that over the Christmas holiday he doesn't forget. |
| Anne:[00:10:00] | Professionals play a role in assisting families to maintain and strengthen positive child-family relationships. Continuity of relationships is important. The younger the child the more important continuity is. Optimum continuity occurs when professionals and families communicate easily and frequently with each other about the child's experience. Shared understanding and decision-making results in experiences that are responsive to each child, building on their culture, strengths, interests and knowledge. |