

4. Planning and reflecting on a holistic kindergarten program



How will I extend and enrich children's learning?

This section explores how educators use the decision-making process described in **Section 3** to extend and enrich children's learning. It has been organised according to the five learning areas:

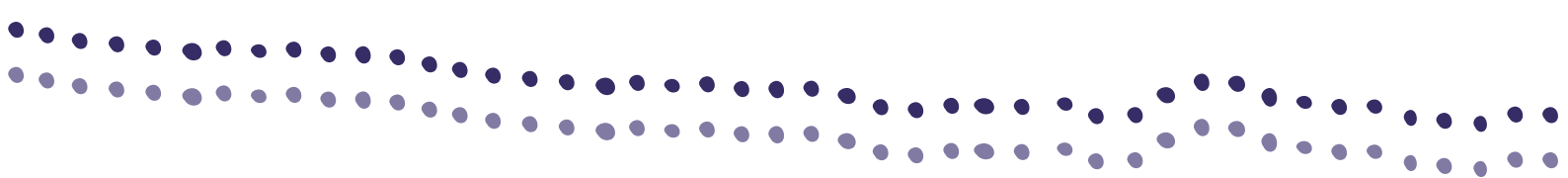
- **Being proud and strong**
- **Being an active participant**
- **Being healthy and safe**
- **Being a learner**
- **Being a communicator.**

Links to the outcomes of the EYLF are clearly stated.

Each learning area describes the:

- expected knowledge, skills and dispositions for children across their Kindergarten Year (**planned learning**)
- intentional teaching practices that promote this learning (**pedagogy**)
- ways children can demonstrate their learning across their Kindergarten Year (**documenting and reflecting**).

Educators use this information to plan for learning that is responsive to individual children, the group and the community context. Educators will select, modify and create other opportunities for learning and teaching as they remain open to the spontaneous experiences that emerge as the children, their families and the community, contribute to the program.



In what ways will I plan for children's learning?

Planning for learning

Planning, including documentation and reflection, is ever present in a kindergarten program. It should be viewed as a collaborative process in which educators, children and families are active participants.

In beginning to plan for children's learning educators, observe and listen to what is evolving in the kindergarten program at any one moment in time to learn about and from the children. This will inform relationships and the preparation of environments, experiences and interactions that engage children in meaningful ways.

A planning format is required that allows all members of the teaching team to make progressive contributions. Written plans underpin practice with children and families, and enhance the accountability and professionalism of a kindergarten program. Your planning will be a work-in-progress. It should be visible and accessible to all members of the teaching team, as well as children and families, at all times.

Educators will ensure that they maintain a balance of experiences across all learning areas, using all learning environments, including the inside and outside physical environment, the relationships of the social environment, and the full range of pedagogical contexts identified in **Section 3**. The value placed on play, relationships and collaborative decision-making will be reflected in the learning opportunities provided.

In considering planned and spontaneous learning directions for both individual children and groups of children, educators will refer to the **planned learning** (knowledge, skills and dispositions) outlined for each area.

In considering the intentional teaching practices that best support children's learning and the participation of families and community, educators will refer to the **pedagogy** outlined for each area of learning.

In making assessments about children's learning and considering the support required for individual children, educators will refer to the section **documenting and reflecting**.



What is the effectiveness of my practice in extending and enriching children's learning?

Reflective practice and ongoing learning

The EYLF defines reflective practice as a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. Its intention is to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children's learning. As professionals, educators examine what happens in their kindergarten programs and reflect on what they might change. They regularly assess themselves, their attitudes, their interactions and the learning environment for cultural competence as defined by Elders and community members.

Since every community and every kindergarten program will be different, educators need to determine the appropriate 'fit' between their context and the practices outlined in this guideline.

Educators should refer to the following overarching questions from the EYLF to guide their reflection:

- What are my understandings of each child?
- What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?
- Who is advantaged when I work in this way? Who is disadvantaged?
- What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?
- What aspects of my work are not helped by theories and guidance that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?
- Are there theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced? What are they? How might those theories and that knowledge affect my practice?

In addition, a series of questions — *As you reflect on your practices ask yourself* — is provided for each learning area to ensure educators continually engage in the process of reflecting on the 'cultural fit' of their decision-making in responding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and the community.

Summary of planned learning

Learning area	Specific focus	Learning statement	EYLF outcome
BEING PROUD AND STRONG	Identity and belonging	A kindergarten child builds a knowledgeable and confident identity. They: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop pride and strength in personal and cultural identity share a sense of belonging and connectedness. 	Children have a strong sense of identity.
	Confidence and resilience	A kindergarten child builds a sense of belief and confidence in themselves. They: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> delight in making decisions and choices develop courage and resilience to persevere and manage change and challenge. 	
BEING AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT	Listening and negotiation	A kindergarten child broadens their sense of belonging to groups and communities. They: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> become aware of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation explore their own and others' cultures and the similarities and differences among people become aware of bias and stereotyping and respond to diversity with respect become aware of fairness. 	Children connect with and contribute to their world.
	Positive relationships	A kindergarten child becomes increasingly independent and interdependent. They: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interact in relation to others with care empathy and respect explore ways to understand and regulate their emotions become socially responsible and show respect for environments explore interactions between people and environments. 	
BEING HEALTHY AND SAFE	Safety and security	A kindergarten child becomes strong in their emotional wellbeing. They: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> feel safe, secure and supported take increasing responsibility for their own health and safety. 	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
	Physical activity	A kindergarten child becomes strong in their physical wellbeing. They: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> gain control and strength for manipulating objects, tools and equipment with increasing complexity develop confidence, coordination and strength in large movement skills and challenges. 	



Learning area	Specific focus	Learning statement	EYLF outcome
BEING A LEARNER	Involvement in learning	<p>A kindergarten child becomes a confident and involved knower and learner. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity • apply a range of skills and processes such as problem-solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating. 	Children are confident and involved learners.
	Investigating environments	<p>A kindergarten child explores, investigates and connects with people, land, place, time and technology. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another and from one time to another • resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies, and natural and processed materials • use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking. 	
BEING A COMMUNICATOR	Oral language/s	<p>A kindergarten child explores and expands ways to use language. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes. 	Children are effective communicators.
	Literacy	<p>A kindergarten child engages with multiple forms of literacy that build bridges between family and community contexts and new learning. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts • express ideas and make meaning using a range of media • explore symbols and patterns in language • build confidence and interest in exploring reading and writing behaviours. 	
	Numeracy	<p>A kindergarten child engages with numeracy concepts that build bridges between family and community contexts and new learning. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work • build confidence and interest in counting • explore mathematical thinking, concepts and language. 	

Being proud and strong

Identity and belonging

A kindergarten child builds a knowledgeable and confident identity. They:

- develop pride and strength in personal and cultural identity
- share a sense of belonging and connectedness.



Planned learning

Educators focus on the following aspects of children's learning:

- pride and confidence in knowing 'who they are' and 'where they come from'
- understanding of themselves as significant and respected
- a sense of belonging to their family, community and the kindergarten program community
- a feeling of acceptance for 'who they are' and 'where they come from'
- pride and connection to the language/s, culture and traditions of their family and community
- awareness of the traditional and contemporary aspects of their personal and cultural identity
- knowledge of their place within family, community and kinship systems as shared by Elders and community members.

As you reflect on your practices, ask yourself:

What does being proud and strong mean in this context?

How do children become competent in their own culture if they are immersed in someone else's?

How are families viewed in a kindergarten program?

Do I engage in family and community partnerships to facilitate the exchange of ideas?

Do my interactions with children and their families reflect culturally specific knowledge?

Have I consulted with Elders in supporting children to develop strong cultural identities?

Does the environment reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identities, beliefs and values?

Are children and families happy to come to this environment?

Am I critically reflecting on my own cultural competence, and am I consulting with the community when assessing the cultural appropriateness of the program?



Pedagogy

Educators intentionally promote this learning, for example, when they:

- promote in all children a strong sense of who they are and their connectedness to others
- show genuine respect for all children and their ways of *belonging, being and becoming*
- listen to and learn about children's understanding of themselves
- provide many opportunities for children to interact with the culturally valued skills, languages, stories, music, dance, ritual, food and crafts of their families and community
- furnish the learning environment with resources and artifacts that show and celebrate the culture, values and beliefs of the children's family and community, e.g. family trees, photographs of community events, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
- involve family and community in gatherings and yarnning sessions, morning teas, BBQs, shared lunches and celebrations
- invite Elders to share aspects of children's traditional heritage and cultural roots, e.g. through storytelling or traditional music and dance
- model language to describe and celebrate the culture of the community in FLs and SAE
- provide many opportunities for children to explore different aspects of their identities through their everyday play, conversations and relationships, e.g. knowledge about the sea, bush, hunting, fishing, swimming, horse riding, camping or sport
- organise opportunities for children to participate in community events, e.g. Blessing Ceremonies, NAIDOC Week, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day (NAICD), Mabo Day, Corroboree and Nulpa.

 Documenting and reflecting

Educators look for evidence of children’s learning, for example:

In the familiar contexts of family and community when children:	In new and unfamiliar contexts of kindergarten when children:	In the familiar contexts of a culturally secure kindergarten when children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show pride in knowing that they are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander • confidently talk about or show they know who they are and who they are related to, and distinguish between family and non-family members • readily respond to a ‘nickname’ that has special meaning within the community • show understanding of their special place within family and community • respond to rules about interacting with family and community, Elders, Uncles and Aunties • show pride as they actively participate in community events and cultural ceremonies. <p><i>Add points relevant to your context</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prefer the assistance or closeness of Indigenous educators • prefer to observe and listen to others share information about family and community • approach experiences, people and situations with encouragement from familiar adults • share information about themselves or their family with the support of FL-speaking adults • talk about things of personal interest with some prompting • experiment with languages, creole and SAE in play with familiar peers, and like-language speaking adults. <p><i>Add points relevant to your context</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enthusiastically share information about family and community • ask questions about others’ family and friends • talk about or draw and label siblings, Uncles and Aunties and extended family members, pets and community heroes • share aspects of their cultural heritage • name family and community members during play • share or model their skills in making or contributing to traditional crafts and artifacts, e.g. weaving, spear making, traditional cookery • express ideas about their connection to country/homelands e.g. Dis my ‘ome ere-where Yarrabah, Dis bla my island dis one ‘ere, Nanna and Poppi live oba dere la. <p><i>Add points relevant to your context</i></p>



Being proud and strong

Confidence and resilience

A kindergarten child builds a sense of belief and confidence in themselves. They:

- delight in making decisions and choices
- develop courage and resilience to persevere and manage change and challenge.



Planned learning

Educators focus on the following aspects of children's learning:

- pride and confidence in their competence and capability
- confidence in making choices and decisions
- confidence to share experiences, feelings and ideas
- confidence in approaching tasks, people and situations
- courage and resilience to cope with challenge and manage change
- confidence to try new and challenging tasks
- motivation and readiness to persevere when faced with the new and unfamiliar
- enjoyment in sharing successes and achievements.

As you reflect on your practices, ask yourself:

In what ways do I demonstrate high expectations of the learning capabilities of all children within the program?

Do my interactions build each child's self-belief and validate who they are, what they know, what they can do and what they can be?

In what ways do the children experience success on a daily basis?

How can I involve families and community in supporting children to be confident and resilient?

Do I listen to the ideas of children, families and communities and build on the knowledge that they bring?



Pedagogy

Educators intentionally promote this learning, for example, when they:

- engage actively with children in their play, allowing the time and space to complete tasks, and supporting and extending their attempts to make choices
- acknowledge children's achievements and make suggestions that build on their ideas
- ensure all children experience daily and frequent opportunities for success
- encourage children to persevere at challenging tasks, e.g. 'Let's try it this way', 'We can do it together', 'Would you like me to help?', 'Let's see if we can find someone to help'
- model strategies for success, e.g. how to plan tasks to completion or how to seek assistance from others
- make connections with prior, present and future learning, e.g. 'Can you remember when ...?', 'We could finish this tomorrow', 'I wonder if we could do this in another way?'
- share the decision-making process with children, e.g. 'Can you think of another way?' 'That's a great idea' 'How would you like me to help?'
- value each child's attempts at personal decision-making, e.g. 'Wow, look how hard you tried'
- celebrate and share children's successes with peers and families, e.g. respectful display of children's artwork and constructions
- respond sensitively to children's emotional states, e.g. 'It's OK we can try again later', 'Let's go slowly', 'Would you like me to hold your hand while you try?'
- design an environment that enables children to make choices and decisions about their play and resources.

 Documenting and reflecting

Educators look for evidence of children’s learning, for example:

In the familiar contexts of family and community when children:	In new and unfamiliar contexts of kindergarten when children:	In the familiar contexts of a culturally secure kindergarten when children:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • show self-reliance and the ability to make decisions for themselves • regulate certain aspects of their own lives — including when to eat, what to wear, and about when and where to sleep • show that they are naturally observant and practically competent • adapt readily to new circumstances • seek help from peers as much as from adults • show caution in tackling new tasks • confidently explore their environment, take considered risks and accept challenges. <p><i>Add points relevant to your context</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seek close proximity to parent and familiar educators • spend a long time on activities that relate to prior knowledge • prefer to watch before gradually having a go in own time • prefer to remain in familiar play areas, to be by themselves or play with familiar equipment and resources • locate, select and manage resources for play with assistance • appear cautious when the room is rearranged or unfamiliar adults are in the room • seek reassurance and support from a familiar adult when entering or leaving the kindergarten environment. <p><i>Add points relevant to your context</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confidently explore the environment and engage with others across a range of learning contexts • approach tasks with curiosity, confidence and motivation • carry out tasks, or help others to do so, by planning, gathering resources and persevering • repeat, revisit and add to projects or experiences they have initiated • persist when faced with a challenge • manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected • attempt to complete new or challenging experiences before seeking help • share with others how they completed tasks and respond positively to encouragement from others. <p><i>Add points relevant to your context</i></p>

