PROVOCATIONS ON ASSESSMENT in Early Childhood Education
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Acknowledgement

*Provocations on Assessment in Early Childhood Education* and *Making Sense of 'Intentional Teaching'* are complementary resources to support educators to further engage with the *Early Years Learning Framework*. The concepts of assessment and intentional teaching can be challenging to understand but are most important elements of analyzing and appreciating children’s learning.

This work is a collaboration between Semann & Slattery and Sally Barnes. These resources were developed on behalf of the Professional Support Coordinators Alliance (PSCA). They seek to support educators to investigate assessment and explore intentional teaching by breaking down the terminology into everyday language to support practical implementation of these skills.

We hope you enjoy these publications.

*Children’s Services Central*

About the author

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Introduction

The recently introduced *Early Years Learning Framework* challenges educators to think deeply about young children's learning. However, whilst the Framework reaffirms many existing practices and beliefs – including the centrality of relationships and the importance of partnerships with parents, play-based learning and the need for safe, stimulating and challenging learning environments – as central to quality practice in early childhood education, it has also ‘departed from tradition’ (Grieshaber, 2010) and introduced concepts and ideas that are much less familiar to the field. This book is concerned with one of those concepts – assessment for learning in early childhood education.

For many in early childhood education, the notion of assessment is an unfamiliar and somewhat intimidating concept and its association with notions of pass and fail and with testing regimes makes some educators uncomfortable about the inclusion of the term in a framework focused on children’s learning from birth to age 5. The aim of this book, however, is to demystify the notion of assessment and to help educators recognise it as an already established, if not immediately familiar, practice in early childhood education.

To achieve this goal, this book begins with a simple explanation of what is meant by the term ‘assessment’ in early childhood education and explains why assessment has been included as a pedagogical principle in the *Early Years Learning Framework*. It outlines the difference between approaches to assessment and explains the difference between goals and outcomes. Following this, a three-step process for assessing children's learning is described, along with some suggestions for reporting on children's learning and some tips for ‘getting started’.

Educators should work their way slowly through the concepts and ideas presented in this booklet. Sharing ideas with others and reviewing existing practices is a crucial first step in thinking about how to assess in ways that capture the complexity, richness and depth of children's learning.
What is ‘assessment’ in early childhood education?

Put simply, assessment in early childhood education refers to the processes that educators use to gather and analyse information about children and their learning in order to inform a continuous cycle of planning and evaluation (DEEWR, 2009). This means that whilst the term ‘assessment’ might not be widely used by early childhood educators, the practice of assessing children’s learning and development in order to plan further, should already be familiar to early childhood educators and a practice that is well established in the early years education sector.

Why assess children’s learning?

When assessment is understood as a process of gathering and analysing information about children and their learning in order to inform a continuous cycle of planning and evaluation, the reasons for assessing children’s learning become clear. In addition, regular assessment of children’s learning helps educators to understand and to demonstrate the difference that their teaching has made in children’s lives.

According to Harley (2006, p. 3) early childhood educators assess children’s learning for many reasons, but specifically they do so in order to identify and understand:

1. What each child knows and can do (including strengths and challenges, interests, attitudes and dispositions)
2. Each child’s attachment patterns, relationships and management of transitions
3. How each child is progressing developmentally
4. Each child’s physical health and emotional well-being
5. What needs to be planned and implemented next for children to master developing skills and to extend each child’s developmental and learning needs
6. Children who may require additional assessment and intervention
7. How effective the curriculum and planned experiences are for a specific child or group of children.

Reflective point

• In what ways does this explanation of assessment challenge your previous understandings of assessment?
• What do you currently do to assess children’s learning in your program?

Reflective point

• Can you think of any other reasons for assessing children’s learning?
Types of assessment

Broadly speaking, approaches to assessment can be categorised in three ways:

1. **Assessment of learning**;
2. **Assessment for learning**; and
3. **Assessment as learning**.

Implicit in these descriptions is a statement about the purpose behind different approaches to the assessment of children’s learning and development.

1. **Assessment of learning**

Assessment of learning is assessment that occurs after children have engaged in a particular activity, completed a task or engaged in a sequence of play. For example, when a child has finished playing a matching game, an educator might draw conclusions about the child’s ability to match similar objects or to match objects according to a variety of criteria (colour, shape, size, etc). Assessment of learning can also occur at the end of a defined period of time (for example, as a child is transitioning to school) where the educator seeks to ‘sum up’ what the child has learnt during that time in order to report to parents on their child’s progress over time or to prepare a transition statement that supports a child’s continuity of learning as s/he enters a new learning environment. Assessment of learning (and also development) is also associated with specialist forms of assessment – for example, assessments of children’s language development by speech pathologists or assessments of children’s cognitive development by psychologists. In these instances, specialists use their assessments to make normative judgments (meaning judgments about children’s learning and development in relation to what are understood to be typical developmental milestones) about children’s learning and development. However, because it occurs at the end of an experience, task or period of time and is not necessarily acted upon by the person who does the assessment, assessment of learning is frequently referred to as summative assessment.

Nutbrown (2006, p. 126-127) describes assessment for learning as ‘the process of identifying the details of children’s knowledge, skills and understanding in order to build a detailed picture of the child’s development and subsequent learning needs’. For this reason, Nutbrown argues that assessment for learning is the only form of ‘assessment which extends children’s learning because it enhances teaching. All other forms of assessment serve as checks on whether or not learning has occurred, not as a means – in themselves – of bringing about learning’ (p. 126).

2. **Assessment for learning**

Assessment for learning describes an ongoing process of gathering and analysing information about children’s learning in order to enhance their learning. It occurs whilst children are playing or participating in activities and on a regular basis. For example, an educator working with a baby who is just beginning to reach for objects may observe that when an object is not in the baby’s line of sight, she does not reach for it. Having assessed the situation, the educator moves the object into the baby’s line of sight and the baby is able to see and reach for the object. Once the baby is reaching for the object, the educator might place the object slightly further away to encourage the baby to roll towards the object. However, if the educator observes that this frustrates the baby, she will move the object closer to the baby.

Educators assess for learning in order to enhance children’s learning rather than to make comparative judgments. Because it is ongoing, frequent and usually in context (meaning that it is not necessary to remove the child from the situation in order to assess that child’s learning and development) and intended to support learning (meaning that the person who conducts the assessment is the one who acts upon what she or he has learnt from the assessment), assessment for learning is frequently referred to as formative assessment.

Nutbrown (2006, p. 126-127) describes assessment for learning as ‘the process of identifying the details of children’s knowledge, skills and understanding in order to build a detailed picture of the child’s development and subsequent learning needs’. For this reason, Nutbrown argues that assessment for learning is the only form of ‘assessment which extends children’s learning because it enhances teaching. All other forms of assessment serve as checks on whether or not learning has occurred, not as a means – in themselves – of bringing about learning’ (p. 126).
When educators assess for learning, they are mindful that:

- Children develop at different rates and in different ways
- Children should have a voice in the assessment process
- Narrative approaches to assessment are required if the aim is to capture evidence of deep learning; and
- Collaborative interpretations, which allow input from children, educators and families, of collected observations are helpful in gaining a more comprehensive picture of the child’s learning and development (Carr, 2001).

3. Assessment as learning

Assessment as learning refers to the processes that educators use to support children to learn more about themselves as learners, including what they have learnt, how they learn and what they would like to learn next. For example, an educator who takes photographs of a toddler engaged in a particular task over a period of time and then talks with that toddler about the changes that can be observed in the photographs is supporting the child to see him or herself as a learner and to understand what he or she has learnt.

Educators who look for ways to use assessment as learning recognise that children’s learning is a dynamic and interrelated process and they honor and respect children’s right to have a voice in matters that directly affect them.

Reflective point

- How would you describe your current approach to assessment – assessment of learning, assessment for learning and assessment as learning?
- What changes would you need to make to assess for learning in your program?
- How could assessment as learning enhance children’s learning in your program?
Assessing what?

When we assess, we are always assessing something. Prior to the introduction of state-based curriculum frameworks, early childhood educators usually relied on their knowledge of child development to assess young children's learning and development. For example, educators applied their knowledge of developmental norms to assess children's ability to engage in social play. Following the introduction of outcomes-based curriculum frameworks, educators assessed children in relation to the outcomes associated with each of the learning areas described in the framework. For example, educators working with the New South Wales curriculum framework, The Practice of Relationships, assessed children's learning in relation to the creative child, the social child, the feeling child, the spiritual child and the thinking child.

The Early Years Learning Framework is different to the frameworks that have preceded it, in that it is not a curriculum framework. This means that rather than describing the type of curriculum children should be exposed to, it describes the types of learners that it is hoped children will become as a result of their participation in prior to school early childhood programs. Thus, what educators are being asked to assess in relation to the Early Years Learning Framework is not children's learning in relation to a series of curriculum outcomes, but children's development in relation to five learning outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators (DEEWR, 2009)

Key components of each outcome are also described in the Early Years Learning Framework. For example, children are seen as having a strong sense of identity when they:

- Feel safe, secure and supported
- Develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect (DEEWR, 2009, p. 21)

Indicators suggest how educators might know if a particular component has been achieved. For example, an educator might assess a child as feeling safe, secure and supported if they observe that the child:

- Builds secure attachments with one and then more familiar educators;
- Senses and responds to a feeling of belonging;
- Communicates his or her need for comfort or assistance;
- Establishes and maintains respectful, trusting relationships with other children and educators;
- Openly expresses his or her feelings and ideas in his or her interactions with others;
- Initiates interactions and conversations with trusted educators;
- Confidently explores and engages with social and physical environments through relationships and plays;
- Initiates and joins in with play; and
- Explores aspects of identity through role play (DEEWR, 2009, p. 21)

What is important to note here is that the indicators provided in the Early Years Learning Framework are suggestions only; they do not define the full scope of the outcome and are not a ‘checklist’ of things to be ticked off by an educator. It is expected that children will demonstrate that they are feeling safe, secure and supported in a range of other ways and in these instances, educators are encouraged to use their professional judgment to highlight how each child demonstrates achievement against each outcome. It is also important to note that there is no expectation that one child will demonstrate achievement against any of the outcomes in the same way as another child in the group. The non-normative nature of the outcomes (meaning that there is no expectation that all children will achieve the outcomes in the same way) values and respects the diversity of children’s lives, abilities and experiences.

Reflective point

- How familiar are you with the outcomes described in the Early Years Learning Framework?
- Thinking of the children who participate in your program, can you think of different ways that they might demonstrate their achievement of one of the outcomes?
Goals and outcomes – what’s the difference?

Many people confuse goals and outcomes, and assume that they are the same thing. They are not. Outcomes are the end result of a series of actions, a consequence of what has happened before. In contrast, goals are the planned steps that educators take in an effort to achieve a particular outcome.

Confused? Okay, let’s start with a gardening analogy to make it clearer.

Imagine that you decide that you want to have a vegetable garden that is full of organic vegetables to feed yourself and your family. This is the outcome that you are hoping for. So how do you plan to achieve that outcome? Well, there are many things you might plan to do – clear a space to create the vegetable garden, create borders to define the vegetable garden, add soil or compost to the existing soil, plant seeds or seedlings, install a watering system, fertilise regularly, etc. – in an effort to achieve that outcome. Which steps you take will depend on what you already know – for example, if there is an existing garden bed, you may not need to make a new one, if the soil is good, you might not need to add any compost to it, if there is already a watering system in place, you might not need to construct one – but the steps that you take are the goals that you set toward achieving your desired outcomes.

Here, one of the important elements of outcomes can also be seen – that is, that outcomes are aspirational. They are what we hope or aspire to achieve, but there is never a guarantee that they will be achieved. That is as true of an organic vegetable garden (where an unanticipated hail storm might destroy the crop) as it is of any human endeavor. We cannot ‘make’ children fit an outcome but we can interact with them in deliberate and thoughtful ways and we can provide rich and meaningful experiences in an effort to support children to become the type of learners we would like them to be.

With this in mind, see if you can apply the same principle to one of the learning outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework. For example, children are confident and involved learners. This is what you are hoping that children will be and become as a result of their participation in your program. What do you already know about each child as a learner? How do the children in your care currently demonstrate that they are confident and involved learners? What differences do you observe between individual children? Now, thinking about the children – as a group and as individuals – identify what steps you might take to support them further? How do you want to expand the ways in which they demonstrate that they are confident and involved learners? How can you support them to develop this competency in more complex ways? Your answers to these questions will help you to establish the short-term goals that you set to support children to become confident and engaged learners.

Reflective point

• What does the notion of an ‘aspirational’ outcome mean to you?
• How does this description of outcomes and goals confirm or contradict what you previously understood about outcomes and goals?
• How would you describe outcomes and goals to someone unfamiliar with the term?
Some things to consider when thinking about the outcomes in the *Early Years Learning Framework*

It has already been noted that educators should not assume that all children will demonstrate achievement of a particular outcome in the same way. This means that educators need to be alert to the diverse and individual ways that children demonstrate that they are an effective communicator, have a strong sense of identity, are connected with and contribute to their world and are confident and involved learners. For example, it could be said that a baby who cries for adult attention when he is hungry is communicating his needs as effectively as a four year old child who asks an adult for assistance with moving some equipment.

Another important thing to note about the outcomes in the framework is that they are not linked to a particular age or stage in a child's development. Thus, an infant, toddler or older child can demonstrate that they have a strong sense of wellbeing, although how they demonstrate it at different points in their lives might change. The challenge for educators is to first recognise how children demonstrate their competence in relation to a particular outcome (regardless of age) and then to think about how to expand that child's repertoire beyond what they can already do or what they already know. This means building on what children can do, rather than using the outcomes as a checklist to hone in on the things that children can't do.

Finally, the outcomes articulated the *Early Years Learning Framework* do not attempt to reduce young children to five outcomes and nothing else. Indeed, it is well recognised that children are more than people with a strong sense of identity and well-being, confident learners, effective communicators and connected with and contributing to their worlds. A more useful way to think about the outcomes in the *Early Years Learning Framework* is to consider them as a public statement about the difference it is hoped early childhood programs will make to one aspect of children's lives – their lives as learners. The outcomes provide a point of public accountability – to children, to families, to communities and to governments – about the impact of early childhood programs can have on children's development as learners.

**Outcomes and intentional teaching**

One of the concerns that is frequently expressed about outcomes is that they reduce children's ability to control or direct what is happening in the program. This is because it is assumed that the adult's concern with achieving particular outcomes can override children's interests and desires and their ability to control the curriculum. However, although this is something that potentially can happen, it isn't essential that it does and it certainly isn't what is intended to happen when educators work with the *Early Years Learning Framework*.

An alternative way to think about outcomes is to consider them in relation to the notion of intentional teaching. In brief, intentional teaching describes an approach to teaching that is thoughtful, deliberate and purposeful (DEEWR, 2009). In this way, the term 'intentional teaching' does not describe an approach to teaching that is formal or structured or a specific teaching technique; rather it is understood as educators developing a more conscious awareness of what they do to support children's learning in a play-based program. Outcomes contribute to an educator's ability to be intentional because they provide a purpose for what the educator is doing or how the educator is interacting with a child. Furthermore, because they are aspirational, they provide educators with a reference point for thinking about the difference that quality early childhood programs can make to children's learning and development.
How do we assess children’s learning?

Writing from the United Kingdom, Mary Jane Drummond (2009, p. 13) uses the term assessment ‘to describe the ways in which, in our everyday practice, we observe children’s learning, strive to understand it, and then put our understanding to good use’. What Drummond is saying here, is that assessment in early childhood education is not about removing children from situations or implementing testing regimes; rather it is a process of observation, interpretation and analysis that is embedded in our everyday practice with children. Considered in this way, many educators will recognise assessment of children’s learning as a familiar and already established practice in early childhood education, rather than something additional that the Early Years Learning Framework requires educators to do.

STEP 1: OBSERVING CHILDREN’S LEARNING

Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett and Farmer (2008) describe a range of techniques that educators can use to observe and document children’s learning. These include:

- Time samples
- Anecdotes
- Jottings
- Language transcripts
- Running records
- Video recordings
- Learning stories
- Children’s self-reflections
- Checklists

The selection of an observation technique is determined by what an educator wants to observe. For example, if an educator wants to observe a child’s range of physical skills (for example, a child’s ability to climb a ladder or catch a ball) she may decide on a checklist or make a quick jotting, noting which skills the child has already developed and the skills that the child is only just beginning to acquire. In contrast, educators who want to understand the social dynamics within a group of children will look to a method of observation, such as a running record, that enables him to capture the complexity of those relationships as children play. An educator who wants to observe how children apply problem solving skills and critical thinking skills to real-life problems might choose a learning story or take photographs and ask children to provide a narrative of what is happening in the photograph. The important point here is that the technique that is used depends on what an educator wishes to observe – simple methods, such as checklists and jottings, can only provide basic information. More complex methods, such as learning stories, video recordings and running records, provide educators with a more comprehensive and complex picture of what children are learning, when and how.

One question that is often asked at this point is how many observations does an educator need to take? The answer, of course, is however many observations it takes for an educator to feel that she or he has enough information about a child to develop and understanding of children’s learning and development. In some instances, one observation may be enough, whilst in others, a range of observations need to be gathered before educators feel that they have enough information to start their plans.

Likewise, another issue is how much should be written down and how much can be remembered? Again, there is no hard and fast rule for how many observations need to be written down. A better way to think about this issue is for educators to ask how they can demonstrate that the curriculum decisions they have made are informed by what they have learnt about the children in their program. Locating these decisions in a planning and learning cycle can help to make the documentation of children’s learning a more manageable process, as educators document only what they need to inform their curriculum decision making processes rather than to create something that serves as a souvenir of a child’s time in an early childhood program. Whilst these can be nice for children and parents to receive, creating collections of children’s work and photographs as a souvenir can be time-consuming and of little value if they contribute nothing to an educator’s understanding of a child or to the plans that an educator makes to support a child’s learning.

Reflective point

- What strategies do you currently use to ‘find out’ about children’s learning? Are some more effective than others?
- What strategies would you like to learn more about?
- How do parents help you to ‘find out’ about children’s learning in your program?
STEP 2: UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN’S LEARNING

Whilst observing in order to ‘see’ children’s learning is important, it is the second stage of the process where the assessment of children’s learning takes place since it is at this stage where educators analyse, interpret and make a judgment about what they have observed in order to plan further. For many educators, it is the thought that they are required to ‘judge’ children’s learning that makes them uncomfortable with the concept of assessment. However, it should be noted that early childhood educators have always made judgments about children’s learning and development. The only difference now is that those judgments are being made in relation to a series of learning outcomes instead of developmental norms.

When educators analyse, interpret and make a judgment about what they have observed, they are considering children’s achievements in relation to each of the outcomes described in the Early Years Learning Framework. However, since there is not one way to achieve any of the outcomes, educators should anticipate that children will demonstrate their achievement in multiple ways and be alert to this diversity. For example, a two year old child might use simple sentences to communicate with adults whilst another two year old child uses a combination gesture and two word utterances to communicate her needs. If both are successful in communicating with adults in this way, both could be assessed as being effective communicators – even though their modes of communication differ greatly. Here, the assessment is not a judgment about who has achieved the outcome and who hasn’t; rather, the assessment focuses on how each child, in their own unique way, is demonstrating that he or she is an effective communicator.

To assess children’s learning in relation to the outcomes described in the Early Years Learning Framework without assuming that there is one way for a child to demonstrate that they are achieving the outcomes means that educators must develop a detailed understanding of each outcome and consider the many ways that children can demonstrate that they have achieved each outcome. Since the outcomes are not tied to particular ages or stages of children’s lives and are not simply exit point outcomes (meaning that they are outcomes to be achieved by the time that a child is about to start school), educators must also consider how children’s achievements in relation to the outcomes might change over time. Even more importantly, educators must resist the temptation to reduce the outcomes to a narrow checklist of skills and abilities, where the assumption is that there is only one way for a child to demonstrate his achievement.

Making judgments that are reliable and valid

Two important considerations at this stage of the assessment process relate to the reliability (meaning can the interpretation be trusted?) and validity (meaning is the information sound?) of the information gathered. One way of checking the reliability and validity of the interpretations that have been made is to consider whether or not other people would reach the same conclusions as the educator making the assessment. Here it is also important to consider families – do the interpretations of children’s learning and development match the families understanding of their child? Is there additional information that a parent can provide that would change the interpretation of what has been observed? For example, an observation of an ‘aggressive’ toddler might be re-interpreted as a ‘tired’ toddler after a conversation with a parent.

The reliability and validity of the judgments that educators make can also be enhanced if they consider the frequency with which a child demonstrates a particular skill or understanding and where that demonstration occurs. Generally speaking, if a child demonstrates that they have acquired a particular skill or have a particular understanding over time and in a range of contexts then the educator’s judgment about the child’s achievements is likely to be more reliable and valid.

Another important consideration is the relationship between regular program evaluation and assessment since what children can do is linked closely to what they have opportunities to do. For example, how does a child demonstrate that he or she has problem solving skills if the program provides few opportunities for children to confront real-life problems? How does a child demonstrate that she is an engaged learner if the daily schedule provides few opportunities for children to play without interruption. How does an infant demonstrate that they are taking increasing responsibility for their physical wellbeing if they are never left on the floor to roll and wriggle and stretch? Regular evaluations of the program, that include reviews of the daily schedule and adult interactions, support educators to make judgments about children’s learning that are more likely to be valid and reliable.

Reflective point

- What opportunities do children have to influence the judgments that you make about their learning?
- What opportunities do parents have to influence the judgments that you make about their children?
- How do you ensure that the judgments that you make are reliable and valid? What could you do to improve their reliability and validity?
STEP 3: PUTTING OUR UNDERSTANDING TO GOOD USE

In the third stage of the assessment process, educators use what they have learnt to create new plans to extend children’s learning. Here, the goal of the educator is to try to expand children’s repertoire – to recognise and honour what they can already do and to extend them beyond this point. In this way, assessment recognises the child as a competent and capable person.

As the educator uses what they have learnt about each child and group of children to make new plans, the assessment process begins over again. This diagram, taken from the Educators Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework, highlights this process:

![Early Years Planning Cycle Diagram](https://example.com/early-years-planning-cycle)

(DEEWR, 2010, p. 11)

**Reflective point**

- How do you currently use the information that you have gathered and analysed about children’s learning to inform ongoing plans?
- How do children contribute to the setting of goals for their ongoing learning?
- How do parents contribute to the setting of goals for their children’s learning?
Reporting children’s learning

Although the primary reason for assessment is to inform an ongoing cycle of planning, reflection and evaluation, educators are also responsible for reporting or communicating about children’s learning. Assessment processes produce a wealth of information about children’s learning that can be shared with parents, children and, with the permission of parents, with other educators to support continuity of learning between different educational settings. Reporting children’s learning also acts as a form of public accountability, allowing educators to demonstrate the difference that the program has made for each child.

Children’s learning can be reported in many different ways. For example, educators can provide regular verbal updates to children and parents, hold regular parent-educator interviews where there is a formal exchange of information, create portfolios which contain annotated work samples and photographs, write learning stories that place children’s learning in the context of a particular play scenario or use displays or prepare a written transition statement that accompanies the child to school. Which method an educator selects will largely depend on what the educator knows about the children and their families. For example, if the educator is aware that a parent cannot read, she is likely to communicate with that parent verbally. Alternatively, if a parent is rarely able to visit the centre and speak with the educator, an educator may decide that a portfolio collection that includes photographs and annotated samples of the child’s work might be the best form of communication. In many settings, educators will use a range of different techniques to report on children’s learning.

Celebrating the ‘distance travelled’ by each child with each child and their family is an important part of the learning process. There is no expectation that all children will have achieved the same thing at the same time and celebrating each step, no matter how small it is, honours and respects each child as an individual.

When reporting on children’s learning, it is essential that educators respect children’s and parents’ rights to confidentiality. Information between settings should only be shared if parents have given their written permission for that to occur.

Where to from here

If assessment in early childhood refers to the process of gathering and analysing information about children’s learning in order to inform an ongoing cycle of planning, reflection and evaluation, educators should begin by reviewing their current practices. How is information about children’s learning currently gathered, how is it analysed and how is it used to inform ongoing plans? It would also be opportune to reflect on the processes that educators currently use that do not contribute to an understanding of children’s learning and do not support educators to plan effectively or well. Yet another consideration is the manageability of the current processes that are used to ‘find out’ about children’s learning – are these processes time consuming and ineffective? Are there better ways, more time-effective ways to gather useful and usable information?

Another way to begin is by reflecting on what is already known about the children in the program. How does each child already demonstrate their achievement against each of the outcomes? How many different ways do the children in the program show that it is possible for an outcome to be achieved? As educators answer these questions, opportunities arise for discussions about the outcomes to take place. How can a child demonstrate that she or he is achieving each outcome? What evidence can educators gather to highlight children’s achievement?

Taking slow, reflective steps will result in assessment practices that capture the complexity, richness and diversity of children’s learning.

Reflective point

• How do you currently report on children’s learning? Who do you report to and how often?
• Are there any aspects of your reporting processes that you would like to change? If so, how would you like to change them?
• How can children’s voices be included in the reporting processes used in the program?
Further reading


Stonehouse, A. (2011). The more you know, the more you see. Babies’ and toddlers’ learning and the EYLF. Canberra, ACT: Early Childhood Australia.

References


