

# Social and emotional learning

## Early childhood learning trajectory



### What is social and emotional learning?

Social and emotional learning (SEL) involves skills such as children distinguishing their own needs from those of others, learning to effectively identify and manage emotions, and building and maintaining positive relationships with others. Social and emotional learning includes 4 main components, listed below.

- **Self-awareness**: the child's emerging awareness of their uniqueness in relation to others, and of their own individual emotions, perspectives and capabilities.
- **Self-management**: ability to manage emotions and their triggers, regulate responses and behaviour, and cope in increasingly challenging situations.
- **Social awareness**: ability to understand others' feelings, preferences and perspectives, and to care for other people, animals and non-living things.
- **Social management**: ability to interact effectively and respectfully with others, using a range of social strategies to collaborate and build positive relationships.

### Early Years Learning Framework

AERO's early childhood learning trajectories align with the Principles, Practices and Outcomes of the **Early Years Learning Framework V2.0**. The learning trajectories **user guide** provides further information and demonstrates how the Learning Outcomes can be mapped to domains.

### National Quality Standard

**Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children**

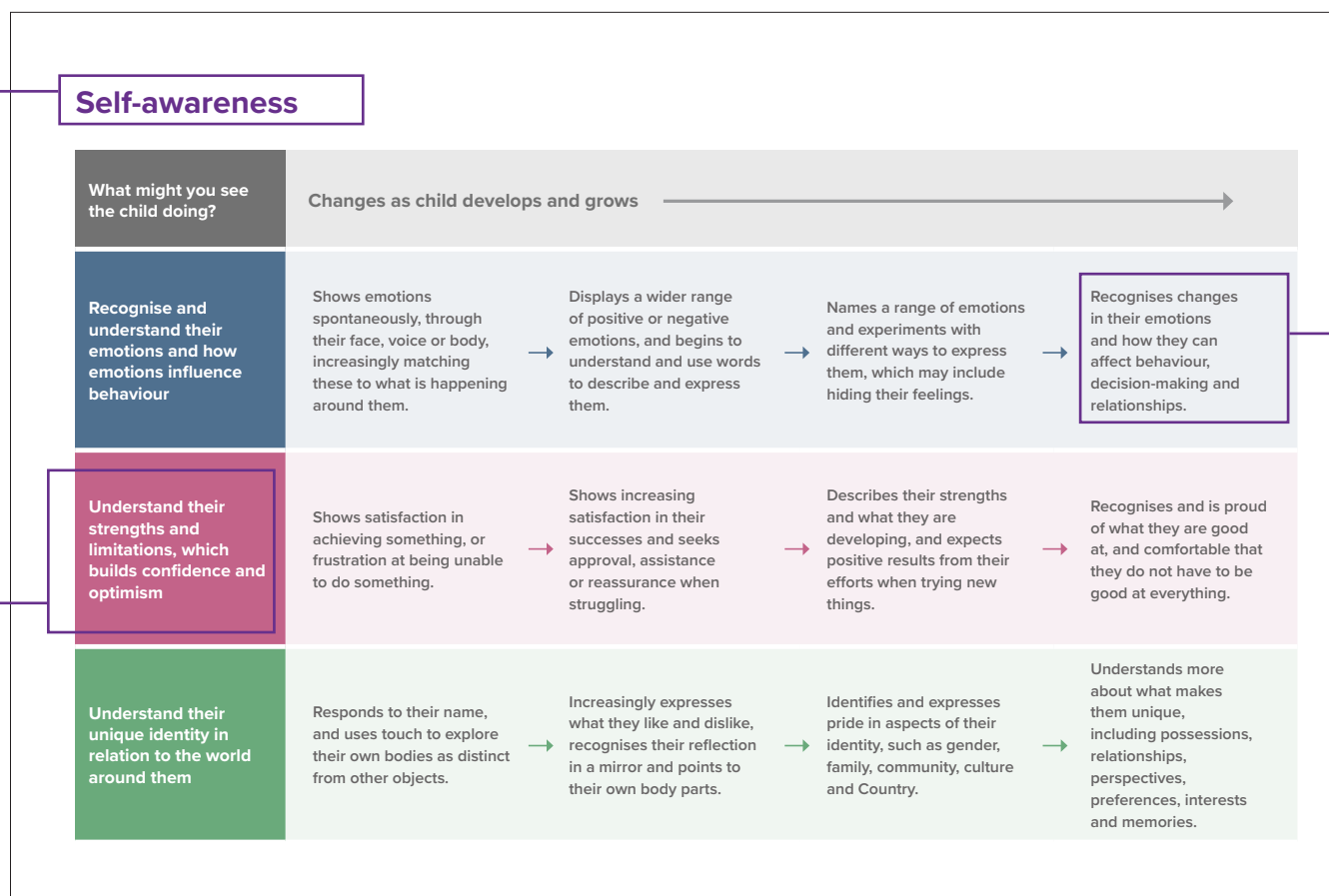
## How to use the early childhood learning trajectories

These learning trajectories will help you observe children’s progress in social and emotional learning, and plan the next steps in their learning and development. They will give you language and ideas for documenting children’s learning and development, and for your conversations with families and colleagues about children’s progress. The trajectory is not a checklist. You are encouraged to use your professional knowledge and judgement in determining how each child may demonstrate progress along each trajectory, and how best to support their learning.

The domain for this set of learning trajectories is social and emotional learning.

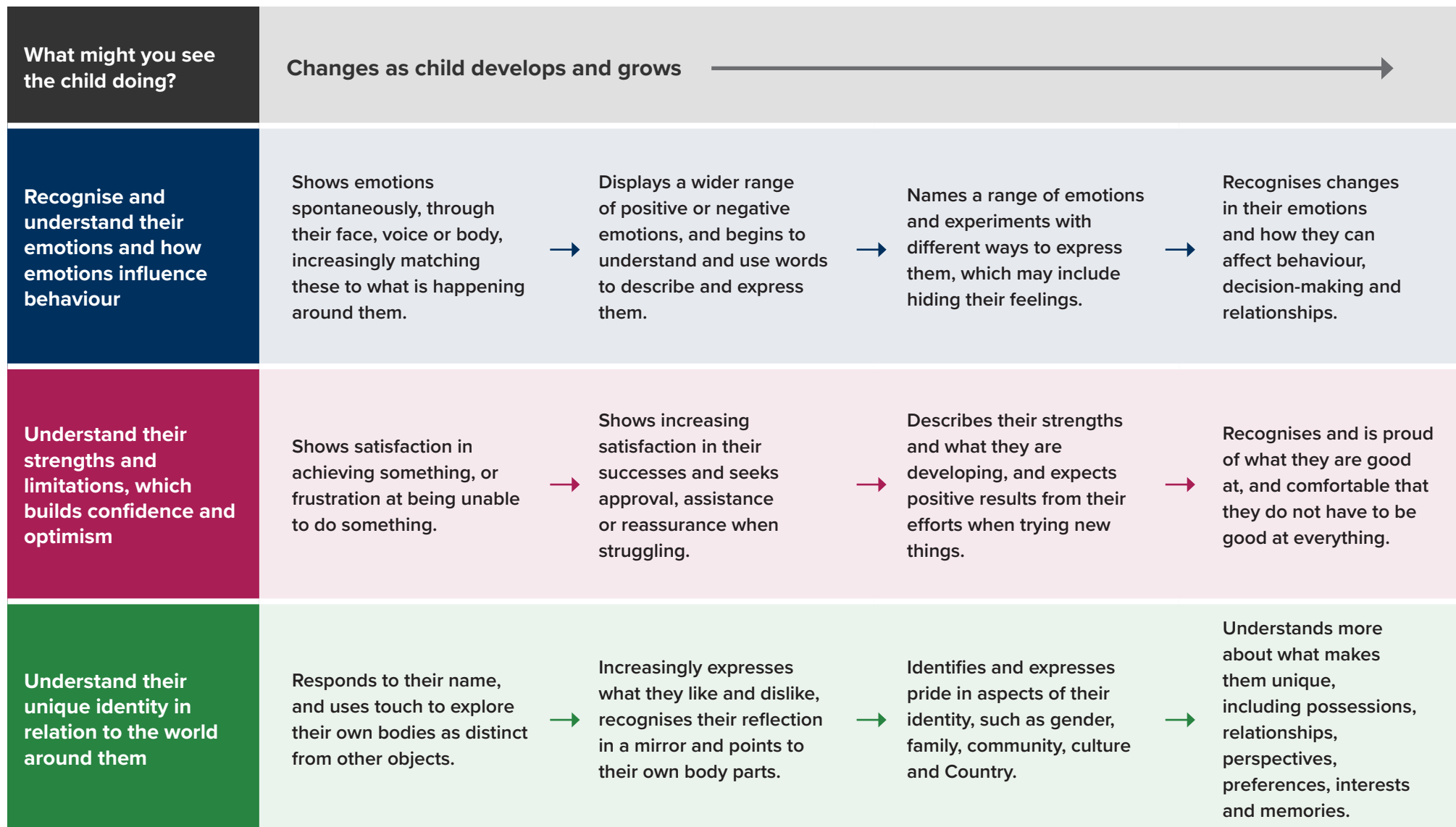
Within this domain, there are **4 subdomains**: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social management. Each subdomain is presented in a separate table.

Within each subdomain, there are **3 strands**, describing the capabilities that change over time as children learn and develop.

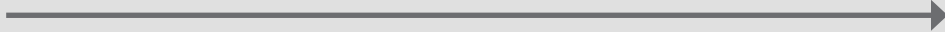


Within each strand, there are **indicators** that describe what you might observe as children progress along the trajectory. These indicators build on one another over time.

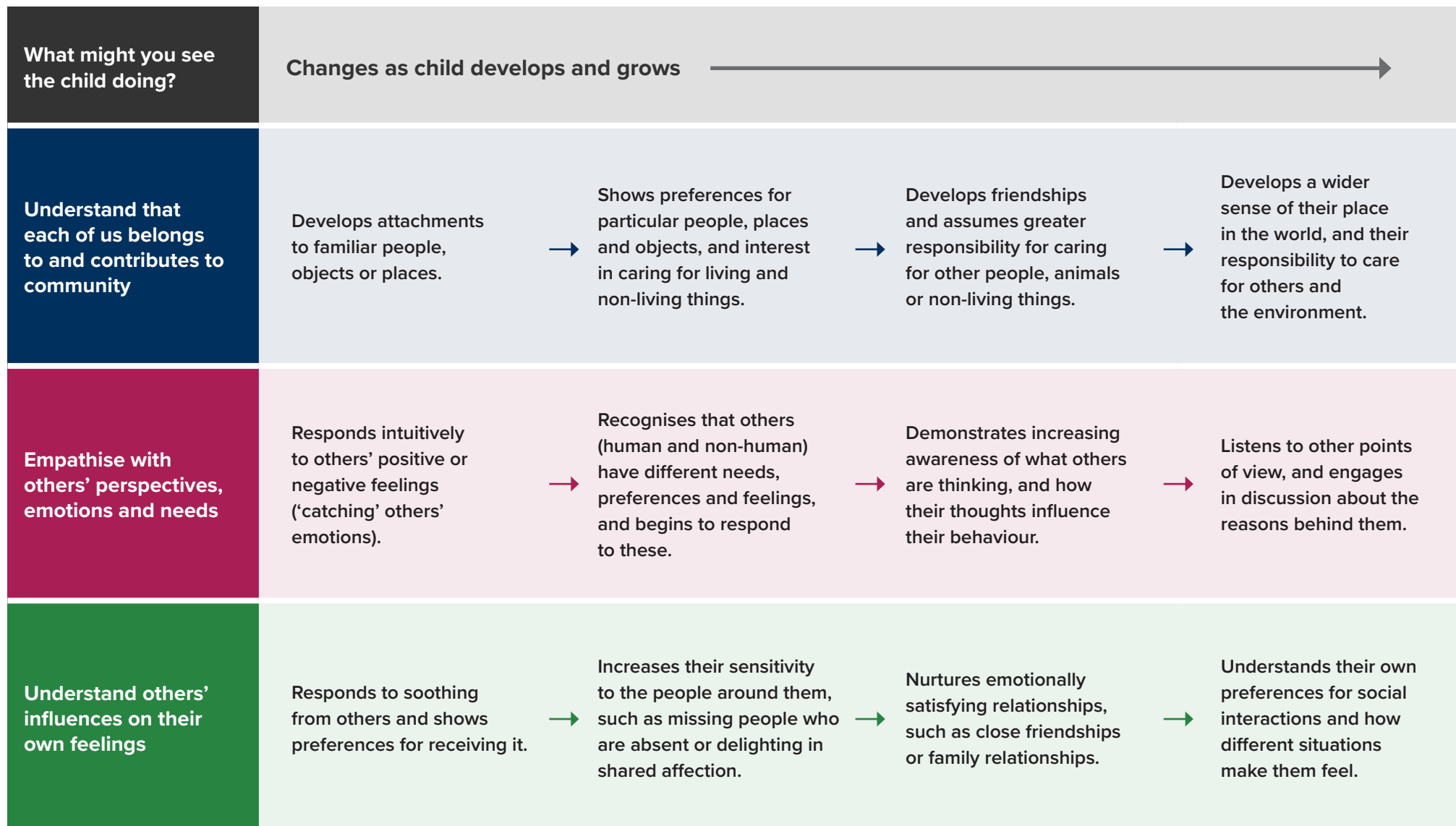
## Self-awareness



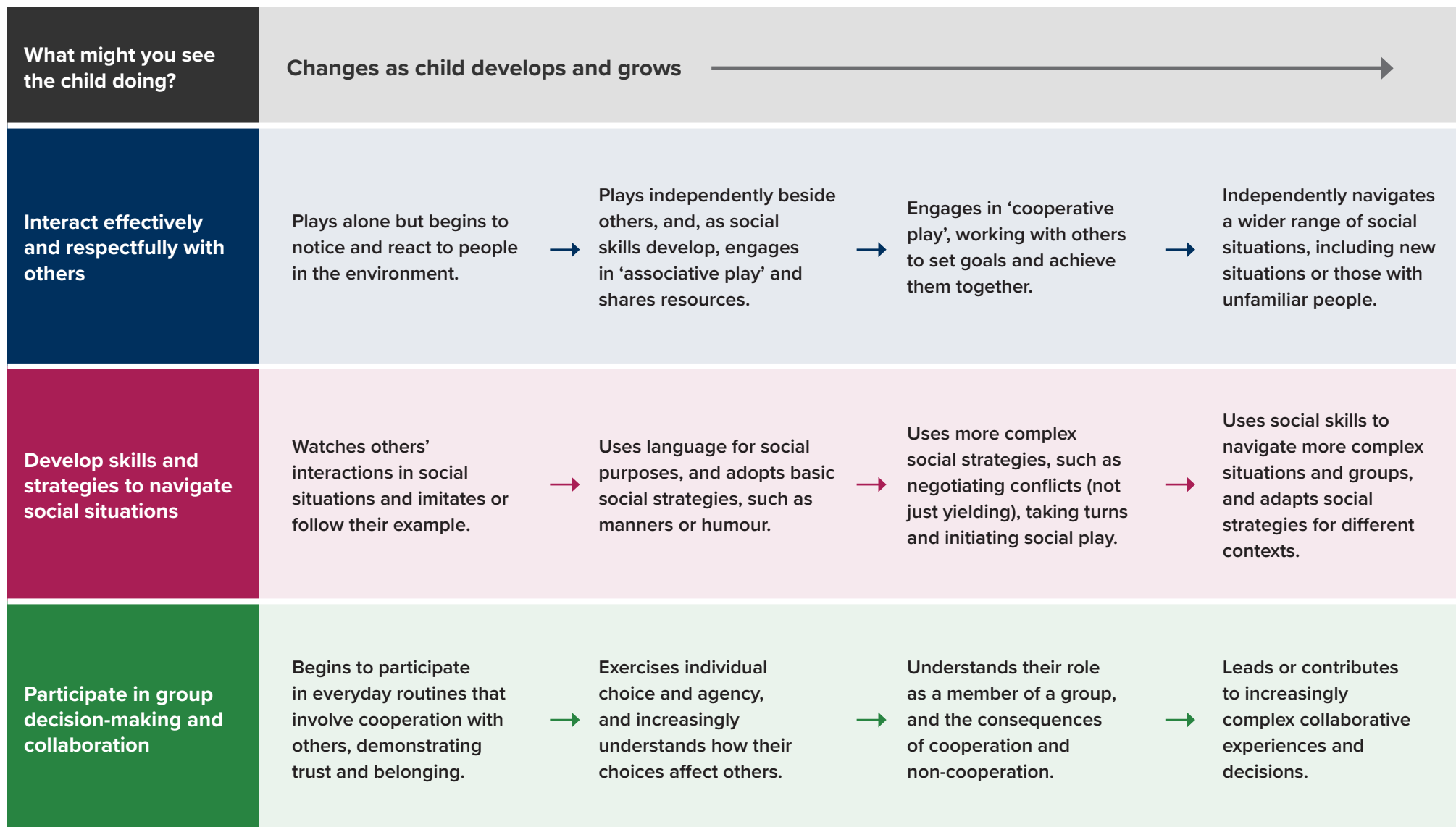
## Self-management

What might you see the child doing?	Changes as child develops and grows 			
<p><b>Manage the expression of their feelings based on situations and relationships</b></p>	<p>Uses facial expressions and gestures they associate with positive interactions.</p>	<p>→ Uses the expression of emotion to elicit responses from others (not necessarily positive), with gradual increases in self-control.</p>	<p>→ Uses a wide range of verbal and non-verbal expressions to communicate emotions in increasingly appropriate ways.</p>	<p>→ Deliberately chooses ways to express themselves based on the situation or context.</p>
<p><b>Understand emotional triggers and regulate their emotional responses</b></p>	<p>Seeks soothing or comforting experiences and begins to self-soothe.</p>	<p>→ Chooses (or avoids) interactions or experiences based on the emotions and other reactions they may cause.</p>	<p>→ Moderates their reactions to emotional triggers, appearing calmer or braver in a wider range of situations.</p>	<p>→ Transfers emotional management strategies across contexts (for example, breathing slowly or talking to a trusted person).</p>
<p><b>Cope with and recover from emotionally challenging situations</b></p>	<p>Recovers from being upset when they are distracted or refocused on something new.</p>	<p>→ Expresses 'big' emotions more often and gradually becomes better at calming down.</p>	<p>→ Uses deliberate strategies to manage emotions in difficult situations.</p>	<p>→ Anticipates and plans ahead for difficult situations, and elicits help from others to cope with emotionally challenging situations successfully.</p>

## Social awareness



## Social management



# Creating opportunities to support children's social and emotional learning and development

## Self-awareness

- Notice children's emotional responses during the day (such as at drop-off) and help them discover experiences they might enjoy.
- Respond to children's emotional cues, interests and achievements, and model language, actions and expressions.
- Encourage children to explore their own identity and feelings, and take on different identities (such as in imaginary and role play).

## Self-management

- Notice and discuss children's feelings throughout the day, helping them recognise and express both positive and negative emotions.
- Anticipate situations which may challenge children to manage their emotions, and gently encourage them to regulate their own feelings.
- Model and discuss the impact children's emotions can have on others, including by responding visibly to infants' emotional cues.

## Social awareness

- Create a sense of community connection by encouraging children to be aware of people, Country, and physical and natural environments.
- Encourage children to give and receive emotional support, and actively foster a positive emotional climate in rooms or groups.
- Encourage children to experience different social situations (such as large and small groups or 'alone time') to explore their social preferences.

## Social management

- Help children notice the social skills they are learning, such as listening, turn-taking, decision-making, negotiation and collaboration.
- Provide a variety of opportunities for individual, paired and small-group experiences, role-modelling the above skills.
- Encourage children to interact with you and facilitate their interactions with other children. Remember to do things 'with' rather than 'to' children.

## About this resource

Our early childhood learning trajectories are designed for teachers and educators working in early childhood education and care (ECEC) services with children in the years before school. They can support ongoing professional learning, for individuals, and entire ECEC services and teams.

The early childhood learning trajectories describe how children learn and develop in these key domains:

- [Executive functions](#)
- [Social and emotional learning](#)
- [Mathematical thinking](#)
- [Language and communication](#)
- [Physical development.](#)

While each learning trajectory describes children's progress in a single domain, they are designed to be used in interconnected ways. A single experience may support progress in multiple domains at the same time. Progress in one domain may depend on progress in another.

## Further reading

For more information on our learning trajectories research

- [Early childhood learning trajectory user guide](#)
- [Early childhood learning trajectories: The evidence base](#)

## More information

The AERO website features further guidance, including practice guides, case studies for early childhood practice. Visit the [Practice Hub](#) at [edresearch.edu.au](http://edresearch.edu.au) for more information.