



Equity, inclusion and high expectations:

Play-based learning and intentionality

November 2023

This Equity, inclusion and high expectations practice resource is part of a series of 8 practice resources for Play-based learning and intentionality in early childhood education and care services (ECEC). Each resource is aligned with the Principles of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF V2.0).

Before using this resource, read the [Introduction: Play-based learning and intentionality](#). The introduction provides insights into the importance of intentionality in play-based learning in quality, evidence-based ECEC practice with cultural responsiveness at its heart.

Intentionality in play-based learning is underpinned by a commitment to equity and an understanding of each child's potential. It involves understanding children's rights and believing in every child's ability to progress in their learning and development in their own unique way, as well as providing the support needed to overcome any barriers to learning.

Strategies for intentionality within play-based learning that can support this Principle include:

- Use your understanding of how learning progresses over time to inform your expectations and strategies for supporting each child's learning and development.
- Use assessment to monitor what each child knows and can do and resources such as the [early childhood learning trajectories](#) to help you decide what to focus on next to support children's learning, development and wellbeing.

- Recognise that children may have strengths in different areas of learning and development and use these strengths to help them progress in areas that they find more difficult. Understand how different types of learning and development connect to and reinforce each other, to ensure that your pedagogical practice focuses on the whole child.
- Build on what each child knows and can do and help them to progress from assisted to independent action. Provide support in a way that enables children to maintain agency and build confidence in themselves as thinkers and learners. Encourage children to show persistence even when things seem difficult.
- Help children set appropriate challenges in their play that progress their thinking and abilities. Design play-based experiences for and with children that enable them to demonstrate and extend their emerging knowledge and skills and to build confidence in themselves as thinkers and learners.
- Recognise inequities and other barriers to inclusion, and work proactively and responsively with children, families and other professionals to address them. Work with each child and family to create a shared view of what success will involve, and how you will work together to achieve it.
- Make authentic connections to children's social and cultural backgrounds in the curriculum, linking new knowledge to children's lived experiences. This promotes equity by making the curriculum accessible and engaging for all children and reflects high expectations by recognising that each child already has valuable knowledge and skills.

Reflection questions

- How do you know what to expect next in each child's learning and development? How might resources such as the [early childhood learning trajectories](#) support you in strengthening your understanding?
- How might you ensure the environment provides all children with equitable and participatory experiences to promote their learning, development and wellbeing?

This practice resource is part of a series of 8 Play-based learning and intentionality resources including:

- [Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships](#)
- [Partnerships](#)
- [Respect for diversity](#)
- [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives](#)
- [Equity, inclusion and high expectations](#)
- [Sustainability](#)
- [Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning](#)
- [Collaborative leadership and teamwork](#).

Before using the other resources in this series, read the [Introduction: Play-based learning and intentionality](#).

They link to the [early childhood learning trajectories](#) suite of resources including the [Learning trajectories user guide](#), [Evidence report](#) and the [Assessment for children's learning practice resources](#).