

## Introduction

# Assessment for children's learning

November 2023

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This introduction is complemented by a set of 8 practice resources to support teachers and educators in early childhood education and care (ECEC) to improve their assessment for children's learning.

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**Before using any of the practice resources, read the following introduction to understand the importance of assessment in quality, evidence-based ECEC practice with cultural responsiveness at its heart.**

The Assessment for children's learning practice resources identify evidence-based assessment practices aligned with the 8 Principles of the [Early Years Learning Framework \(EYLF V2.0\)](#).

These resources can stand alone, or can be used with:

- [Early childhood learning trajectories](#) to improve your understanding of how children learn and develop in key domains, including how each of these domains contributes to the integrated Learning Outcomes in the EYLF V2.0.
- [Tried and Tested guides](#) to identify additional evidence-based practices to use in ECEC services to support children's learning and development.
- [Play-based learning and intentionality practice resources](#) to identify evidence-based practices aligned with the 8 Principles of the EYLF V2.0.

These practice resources align to the National Quality Standard (NQS), particularly in Quality Areas 1 (Educational program and practice), 5 (Relationships with children) and 6 (Collaborative partnerships with families and communities).

## Assessment in early childhood education and care services

Assessing children's progress is an important part of quality, evidence-based ECEC practice. It is one of the identified Practices used to promote children's learning in the EYLF V2.0 and to meet the NQS Standard 1.3 (Assessment and planning) and Element 7.2.2 (Educational leadership).

The EYLF V2.0 (p. 28) notes that:

Educators draw on a range of sources of information including their professional knowledge and early childhood theories to clearly identify children's strengths and capacities and consider these in relation to the Learning Outcomes and/or other assessment criteria. This includes children's awareness and understanding of their own learning, including the embodied nature of very young children's demonstration of their own learning goals. Educators draw on their knowledge and the expertise of the children, families, communities and other professionals they work with, to interpret their collection of information. Educators assess children's learning and engagement in a variety of ways, in the moment and over time, and in diverse context for and with children.

Assessment involves collecting and analysing meaningful evidence about each child's strengths, progress and needs. There are 3 main types of assessment:

- **Assessment for learning**, also referred to as formative assessment, occurs when teachers and educators use a range of strategies to gather detailed and meaningful information about children's interests, abilities, and learning dispositions. They then use this information to inform decisions about curriculum and pedagogy, to assist in responding to each child's different learning pathways.
- **Assessment of learning**, also referred to as summative assessment, sums up what children have learned at a point in time, such as mid-year or when they are transitioning to another room at the service. Teachers and educators are also able to identify how each child's learning progresses over time.
- **Assessment as learning** occurs when the assessment process is itself a learning experience that involves input from children. Children are supported to actively contribute to the assessment process. This supports a curriculum to reflect ways of knowing, being and doing.

The EYLF V2.0 identifies 5 stages of the planning cycle: observe, assess, plan, implement and evaluate.

Teachers and educators may use many different methods and tools to engage in assessment for learning as part of the broader, ongoing cycle.

These evidence-based resources identify strategies you can use to improve your assessment practice and align it with the EYLF Principles.

The EYLF V2.0 (p. 6) notes the following vision for children's learning:

All children engage in learning that promotes confident and creative individuals and successful lifelong learners. All children are active and informed members of their communities with knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

## Cultural responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness is a key focus in assessment for learning. This requires teachers and educators to be critically reflexive about their own identities, culture, histories and biases. They can then consider how this impacts the development of relationships with, and understanding of, the children and families at their service and within the communities in which they live and work. It is this capability that helps to create welcoming and culturally safe environments.

Critical reflection supports this process and includes in-depth thinking about practice and its impact. It involves teachers and educators becoming more aware of their strengths and preferences, as well as areas where they can further build their knowledge, skills and confidence. Reflexivity further extends on critical reflection to promote and foster culturally responsive practice.

Reflexive practice invites teachers and educators to engage deeply and honestly in conversations with themselves and others. This process provides opportunities to examine and unpack personal beliefs, attitudes, biases and ways of thinking, with a view to engaging with people in a culturally safe manner. This understanding is deeply connected to **knowing** (the knowledge we hold and our understanding of how we gained this knowledge), **being** (our self-knowledge and practices) and **doing** (the actions that we put into place).

These practice resources identify strategies you can use to improve your approach to assessment for children's learning and align it with the EYLF V2.0 Principles. In this way, these resources support practices that are both culturally responsive and informed by relevant research.

View the 8 practice resources in the Assessment for children's learning series using the links below.



**Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships**



**Equity, inclusion and high expectations**



**Partnerships**



**Sustainability**



**Respect for diversity**



**Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning**



**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives**



**Collaborative leadership and teamwork**