

Early Childhood Learning Trajectories

The Early Childhood Learning Trajectories are resources that support early childhood education and care (ECEC) educators, teachers and leaders to describe how children learn and develop from birth to just before full-time schooling.

The Early Childhood Learning Trajectories *are*



Evidence-based

They cover 5 key interconnected domains – executive functions, social and emotional learning, mathematical thinking, language and communication, and physical development. Each domain includes subdomains, strands and indicators describing children's learning and development.



Practical

They provide a continuum of children's knowledge, skills, understandings and capabilities, supporting teachers and educators in identifying what children already know, what may come next and how to support that growth.



A resource for inviting deeper conversations

They provide a common vocabulary for reflecting on and communicating children's learning and development, which supports curriculum decision-making.

The Early Childhood Learning Trajectories *aren't*



A checklist or assessment tool

They're a guide, not a list that should be ticked off. They show where a child has been, where they're currently at and where they might progress to next.



Aged-based

Children learn differently, at different rates, and are shaped by relationships, culture, strengths and everyday experiences.



A one-stop-shop

Professional judgement, critical reflection, further reading and collaboration are still required.



A replacement for existing frameworks

They complement, rather than replace, existing state or territory frameworks already in use.



Why they work

- **Informed by the sector** – They're based on current international and Australian research, expert review and extensive ECEC practitioner consultation.
- **Grounded in practice** – They're built to strengthen professional knowledge and intentional teaching when observing, planning and engaging with children in a range of service contexts.
- **Supports assessment for learning** – They inform curriculum and pedagogical decision-making alongside other state-based tools.
- **Aligned with frameworks** – They're aligned with the [Early Years Learning Framework V2.0](#) and the [National Quality Standard](#). They can be used to support Quality Area 1: Educational Program and Practice.

In practice

An educator with English as his second language finds it challenging to write his analysis of his observations of children in his service. Focusing on one learning trajectory at a time, the Educational Leader supports him in identifying phrases and words from the strands and indicators that he can use in his written documentation. Using the phrases and words from the learning trajectories, the educator gradually builds his confidence and vocabulary for articulating the children's learning and development in his written observations.

A teacher collects numerous jottings and observations of a child's social and emotional development over a few months as there's concern about the child's ability to engage with others. Reflecting on the jottings and observations alongside the social and emotional learning trajectory, the teacher identifies where the child's development is at within the strands and indicators of the subdomains of social awareness and social management. The teacher then sets a goal to ensure the child's ability to interact effectively and respectfully with others is supported through intentional teaching.



For more about [Early Childhood Learning Trajectories](#), take a look at AERO's resources.

AERO's work is made possible by the joint funding it receives from Commonwealth, state and territory governments.