



Discussion Paper:

2021 National Quality Framework Approved Learning Frameworks Update

August 2021

Section 2: Pedagogy and Educator’s Professional Practice

2.1 Strengths

EYLF

The NQS references the central role of the ALFs in guiding curriculum decision-making in ECEC and OSHC. The expectation is that educators will draw on the ALFs, their pedagogy and their in-depth knowledge and understanding of each child to inform their educational programs and practices. The attention to pedagogy and effective educational practices informed by theory, research and educators’ professional judgements are seen to be a point of distinction and a strength of the EYLF. In Stage 1, stakeholders’ strong endorsement (ratings over 90%) was evident for four aspects of early childhood pedagogy and professional practice (see **Table 3**).

Table 3: Per cent of stakeholders who rated early childhood pedagogy as extremely or very important

Features of Early Childhood Pedagogy and Professional Practice	Educators/ Approved Providers	Other Professionals
Professional knowledge and skills	97%	98%
Knowledge of children, families and communities	98%	97%
Awareness of how beliefs and values impact on children’s learning	94%	92%
Creativity, intuition and imagination	93%	91%
Theories about early childhood, including developmental, socio-cultural, behaviourist, critical, post-structural theories	77%	84%

In contrast, 77% of educators/providers and 85% of other professionals rated the EYLF listed theories about early childhood as extremely or very important. A narrow theoretical view has been found to diminish the professional role and agency of educators. Drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies supports reflection when

“interpreting the day to day experiences when working with young children and their families” (Anderson, 2014, p.81). This, in turn, builds professional knowledge and supports improved practice. Hurst (2017) invites consideration to be given to the theories used to guide programming in OSHC services particularly for older children. In updating the ALFs a short description of theories that inform pedagogy and educators’ perspectives about children and young people’s learning will be given.

2.2 Opportunities

2.2.1 Strengthening the link between the vision and the planning cycle

Enabling educators to support children's learning and development and to assess achievement of the learning outcomes is a key aspect of the ToR. The vision in both ALFs is critical and underpins every aspect of educators’ work in implementing the principles, practices and outcomes.

National Quality Standard Area 1: *The Educational Program and Practice* requires services to demonstrate how they plan and implement the program for both individual and groups of children and young people. Specifically, Standard 1.3 requires *educators and co-ordinators to take a planned and reflective approach implementing the program for each child.*

Planning includes a continuous cycle and high-quality programs have been found to have a strategic and reflective approach (Harrison et al., 2020). Digital documentation has changed the work of early childhood teachers, with digital platforms shifting what is shared about children’s learning and how it is shared with stakeholders and other interested parties, for instance policy and regulatory accountabilities (White et al., 2021). There was agreement across all stakeholders on ensuring the vision was more evident in educators’ planning and programming. However, the value of these in informing practice can be overshadowed by a narrow focus on the learning outcomes. Without adding to existing requirements for assessment and evaluation required under National Law, and the quality outcomes described in the NQS, there is opportunity to describe the importance of planning in both Frameworks to better inform practice and assessment of children’s learning, development, and wellbeing in ECEC and OSHC.

Example comments from stakeholder feedback

It would be helpful to have a basic structure for the time in after school care. If this was school three hours without a plan would not be acceptable (OSHC, Parent, ASC).

Learning Outcomes are the areas educators are most familiar with, but educators can lack real understanding of their intent or their basis in the principles and practices and how these are linked to the achievement of Learning Outcomes (Focus Group).

More clear guidelines for what a cycle of planning is, what’s required and best practice to achieve this (ECEC, Educational Leader, Room Leader, ECT).

Points of Discussion: Pedagogy and educator's professional practice

To what extent do you agree/disagree with updating the EYLF/MTOP by:

- 3. Adding detail on planning for learning that addresses the importance of, and explains the continuous cycle of planning, observation, documentation and reflection.*