Early Childhood Program Examples
Ideas and Inspiration

Gowrie
South Australia
When developing programs, educators generally consider what’s working well and what might need improving to support the most effective and engaging programs for children. Having other programs to look at can offer inspiration and ideas for getting started or to use as a reflection tool for your own programs. As part of this process educators may have questions like “What should the program look like?” or “Am I doing it right?”

In this resource, you will find a selection of real examples of programs that offer ideas and inspiration for possible program formats to support working with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the National Quality Standards (NQS). These programs have been developed over time in response to the introduction of the EYLF and NQS and to fit a particular context. With this in mind, you will need to make sure that ideas you get from these fit your own context and that they are understood and engaged with by educators within your team.

The guiding documents in the development and delivery of a program are:

- the EYLF,
- the EYLF Educators Guide,
- the National Quality Standard,
- the National Law, and
- the National Regulations.
Ideas and inspiration for program formats for Belonging, Being, Becoming, the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

These documents provide information about what is required and who is responsible.

The Early Years Learning Framework guides educators in developing quality programs for children. It describes the early childhood pedagogy (principles and practice) and the outcomes required to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, including their transition to school. (ACECQA 2011, Guide to the National Quality Standard, p.8.)

The National Quality Standard, 2011 requires all services to work towards continuous improvement. That means that the program design as well as its implementation needs to be thought of as an evolving process over time.

Standard 1.2 Educators and co-ordinators are focused, active and reflective in designing and delivering the program for each child. (ACECQA 2011, Guide to the National Quality Standard, p.38.)

The educators whose programs are included in this document all talked about different versions of the formats, and that there was still work to be done.

When educators are on the lookout for ways to improve program processes and formats they are engaging in the cycle of continuous improvement and reflective practice.

We hope that this resource is the beginning of a networking and sharing portfolio which is designed to be built upon and added to. You can do this in your service by using a folder to include copies of formats from this resource and any others that you develop or borrow from other services. We also hope to develop an online portfolio of programming examples. You can share your program formats with us by emailing us at train@gowriesa.org.au and find out what others are doing via our website www.gowriesa.org.au
In developing this resource, we had many conversations and debates about:

- What do we mean by program?
- What does a program look like?

We suggest this is a really useful place to start. Have conversations at staff or team meetings about your program. Talk with each other about what you mean when you say “the program”. You might also want to talk about what the program is for and what you want to include in your program. This is a great time to do some research into the guiding documents to find out what is required.

Having this conversation with all educators in your service will prepare you for the assessment visit and support understanding of your programming process.

**NQS 7.2.3** You may need to discuss with the Assessor how your service uses information about children’s learning and development based on reflection and documentation to inform and evaluate programs to support children in achieving outcomes. (ACECQA 2011, Guide to the National Quality Standard, p.184.)

In the development of this resource, we engaged in discussions with a number of educators about their perspectives on “What is a program?” and “What is it for?” We were amazed at the differing perspectives around these questions.
A program is a planned approach to implementing the curriculum with children. It is highly contextualised on the individual needs and dynamics of the children, families and educators it is designed for and with.

..... Lyndsay

A program is the documentation which is used to make sense of and plan to extend the learning that has been happening with children. The documents are a record of the learning journey and a guide for educators to direct their thinking and enrich the curriculum.

...... Michelle

A program is a document which helps educators map the journey of the children in their care - both where they’ve been and where they are going. It guides the educators, children and families and helps identify goals and opportunities.

...... Freya

What is it for?
What could our program look like?
How could we display it?
The Planning Cycle

This will look different in each service and maybe even within services because the program reflects the context – the children, the families, the educators, the environment, the community, the philosophy. Taking time to explore and understand your context will really help in the development of your program. Having professional conversations with each other about your philosophy and how it relates to the program provides a solid foundation to work from.

On the following pages we have adapted the planning cycle diagram from the EYLF Educators Guide (DEEWR 2010, p.11.) At each step there are some reflective questions to consider which will help you to reflect individually and/or with other educators and to think about how you make decisions about planning and documentation.

As the Early Years Learning Framework suggests, the program encompasses far more than just a list of planned experiences. So when program planning, educators need to consider such things as the environment, the routines, the everyday resources, and even the skills and knowledge of the educators who work with the children.

The Guide to the National Quality Standard (2011) says:

“An ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children’s learning underpins the educational program and involves educators in critically thinking about what is offered and why.

Written plans, records of child assessment and evaluations underpin practice with children and families and enhance the accountability and professionalism of the service”

(ACECQA 2011, Guide to National Quality Standard, p.22.)
Conduct Personal and Site Philosophy

Plan Learning Experiences

Implement Plans

Assess and Evaluate Teaching and Learning

Question

Individually and Group Goals

Environment, Educator Role, Assessment and Evaluation Methods

Reflect/Review

Belonging, Being and Becoming

Adapted from ‘Early Years Planning Cycle’ (DEEWR 2010, EYLF Educators Guide, p.11.)
How have our conversations with families helped us learn more about each child?

What have we noticed about how the children have been using the environment?

What do I want to find out about who this child is?

“Identify individual and group strengths, interests and goals in conjunction with the Framework’s Learning Outcomes”

(DEEWR 2010, *EYLF Educators Guide*, p.11.)
How will I extend on what I’ve discovered and know about this child?

How will we build on the children’s resourcefulness within our environment?

How have I used the learning framework to guide my planning and practice?


(DEEWR 2010, EYLF Educators Guide, p.11.)

How have my ‘everyday’ conversations with families given me inspiration to plan and respond to children?
“Assess and evaluate teaching and learning (planned and unplanned) using the Framework’s Outcomes, Principles and Practices”

(DEEWR 2010, EYLF Educators Guide, p.11.)
“Rich documentation incorporates multiple perspectives and makes learning visible to the learning community. Multiple perspectives include voices of educators, children, peers, families and other professionals” (DEEWR 2010, EYLF Educators Guide, p.37.)

The following pages provide a range of different examples which we hope will provide you with ideas and inspiration to get started or make changes to your program.

To support you in reflecting on and developing programs in your service you may be interested in accessing the wide range of training workshops we have available at the Gowrie Training Centre or we can come to your service and customise training to meet your specific needs. We also have on-site mentoring and consultancy available where we can work with educators to reflect on programs, environments, engaging learning experiences, documentation and the Early Years Learning Framework.

For more information, contact Gowrie SA on 1800 129 606 or email train@gowriesa.org.au.

You can also find upcoming training, resources and useful links on our website www.gowriesa.org.au
These are the learning opportunities we hope to offer from 16th July to 27th July

**Group times**
- Welcoming our new friends. Play simple circle games to support our new friends learn children's names. How can we help and support our new friends?
  - **Yellow group**
    - Welcoming Hannah, Thomas & Abyu into the Yellow group.
    - Talking about “Earth and beyond”, about what we already know about Earth and Space.
    - Drawing pictures of what we think Space looks like.
    - Teaching our new friends the 5 L’s.
    - Welcoming Oliver, Heath & Hudson into the red group—getting to know how they enjoy spending their time
    - Sharing the 5 L’s with our new group and practicing by looking at the pictures
    - Thinking about our new term plan—Earth and Beyond...
    - Asking the children ‘what do you know about space and what would you like to learn about? Documenting our thoughts and ideas into our primary care floor book
  - **Red group**
    - Meeting our new group and introducing ourselves.
    - Introduce our project for the term and our take photos of ourselves to put in our floor book. Read the “Very Busy Spider”.
  - **Kelly’s Group**
    - Meeting our new group. Circle games of sharing our names.
    - Introduce making project book for our group. Taking photographs and placing them in book. What would you like to explore / learn about? Collect children's ideas and discuss. Group decision about focus for term and begin collecting resources and ideas together about learning to take place.

**Project group time**
- **Taegan’s Group**
  - Meeting our new group and introducing ourselves. Introduce our project for the term and our take photos of ourselves to put in our floor book. Read the “Very Busy Spider”.
- **Hannah’s group**
  - Getting to know the new group. Introducing the term project ‘Dr Seuss’ books. Collecting children’s ideas for the term project in a floor book

**Learning from Term Plan**
- What do you know about space? Collect children’s ideas. Children to draw a picture of what they think space looks like.
- Looking at maps of Australia and the world. Exploring globes. Naming a variety of countries? Where have you visited? What places do you know? Looking at position of countries, sizes and distances.
- Where do you live? Discuss address, Adelaide, South Australia, Australia., Begin pictorial representation in room.
- Putting a map in the hallway to see how far we travel to kindy
- Kelly to share experience and knowledge of living in England. Show on map and globe. Discuss similarities and differences.
- Hannah talking about her family in New Zealand—looking at a map and sharing her family experiences
- Use models to demonstrate to the children how the Earth moves round slowly throughout the day and how we have day and night. Talk about how the other side of the world has the opposite to us.
- Make Earth pendant necklaces using card and string.
- Children to use papers to make Earth image collages on circle paper.
- Exploring the hanging planets in the hallway—what planets do we already know?
- Thinking about how we can transform our ‘super hero training camp’ into a space training camp

**Individual Learning for children**
If you have not already done so, please check parent pocket for a ‘planning partnership form’ and return by July 16th.

This will support us to plan a goal for your child over the next six months, in partnership with families....

the people who know their child best!

**Children’s Interest’s**
- Using large wooden construction blocks to build models. What have you made? Can you tell me about it? Record as part of children's voices project. Reflect through the construction book in the block corner—what can we improve or recreate?
- Using paints and craft materials to create pictures and images that reflect space and what we know
- Cutting along lines—developing fine motor and scissor skills.
- Sensory experiences eg: slime, finger paint, gloop, bubbles. Welcoming all children to investigate the different properties of sensory play
- Looking through recipe books and cutting recipes out that we would like to cook. Writing a shopping list for the chef to buy us in the shopping
- Looking through different song books and then making a song book together of our favourite songs. Linking this to a picture to support our non-verbal children in having a voice

**Term Goal**
Earth and Beyond

**Happenings**
Excursion to Bennett’s house—July 25th
Would any of our families be interested in hosting a home visit?

- **Excursion to ‘That’s not garbage’**
  - Collecting resources to create an outdoor rocket
  - Welcoming Ahmed, Lily, Oliver, Siara, Maisy, Heath, Hudson, Thomas, Abyu and Hannah to Jacaranda

- Taegan's Group
- Hannah's group
- Kelly's Group

- **Project group time**
  - Meeting our new group and introducing ourselves. Introduce our project for the term and our take photos of ourselves to put in our floor book. Read the “Very Busy Spider”.
  - Getting to know the new group. Introducing the term project ‘Dr Seuss’ books. Collecting children’s ideas for the term project in a floor book
  - Meeting our new group. Circle games of sharing our names.
  - Introduce making project book for our group. Taking photographs and placing them in book. What would you like to explore / learn about? Collect children's ideas and discuss. Group decision about focus for term and begin collecting resources and ideas together about learning to take place.
Term 2 Jacaranda Program

Family Kinship Tree

Dear families,

we would like to invite you to come and have a party to welcome the new kindy teams and celebrate the learning that has happened during term 2!

Please bring a plate of food to share with everyone.

(Date: Thursday 29th June in Week 10)
(Time: 3.00-4.30pm)

There will be face painting, and special tricks to be performed throughout the party by Edie's Grandpa the Magician!

Hope to see you there, from the kindy teams
Term goal: Children co-construct their own learning through connecting with educators, families and the community to construct lines of inquiry from their own ideas

**Term 3 Plan**

**Earth and Beyond!**

**Belonging**

Involving children in the process of selecting topics for investigation. Using a voting system for children to contribute to the group learning and fortnightly plans

Indigenous Literacy Day 7th September. Celebrating this as a week long event of Sharing books, and reading and telling dream time stories. Inviting Gloria and Ruby to do this with us

Going on an excursion to 'That's Not Garbage' to collect materials to construct rockets, astronauts and aliens. Writing lists to take with us of materials we are going to look for

Exploring telescopes, maps, and constellations to explore where we fit within the world and solar system

Astronauts-- exploring the idea of becoming become an astronaut. What do they wear? What do they eat? How do they live in space?

Exploring the concept of aliens. Are they real? What aliens do we know about from popular culture TV, movies? Creating OUR OWN alien stories

Researching and designing our own rocket and space shuttles What parts do they have? How do they move?

Conducting experiments using bottle rockets and making moon-sand during science week. Holding a 'launch day' where we put our rockets to the test

Watching video of astronauts in space. Filming children's movements and space dance. Use footage to reflect with children to find similarities and differences between our movement and the astronauts movement.

**Being**

Celebrating the Chinese Moon Lantern Festival leading up to Sunday 30th September. Writing invitations for our families to join us at Elder Park on the Sunday evening to watch the Lanterns and share a moonlight picnic.

Making planets with clay, then taking them to The Pugmill on Rose street to be fired. Researching the colours of the planets so we can paint them once they are hard

Exploring star constellations and their significance to Aboriginal cultures

Reading information books-- bringing in any information books from home to share at kindy.

Making our own big books and floor books about 'Earth and Beyond'. Documenting children's knowledge at the start of the term and then again at the end of the term so we can track the threads of learning we have followed.

Watching any scheduled shuttle launches live from NASA TV on the internet.

Weaving the concepts of distance and time into our numeracy learning through exploring the questions-- How long does it take to get to space? And How far away is space? Talking about time in terms of day, week, year etc.

Looking at photograph images of space from the NASA website. Having a different image to explore each week. What can we see? What colours are there? Are there planets? Stars?

Holding a 'moot boot day' wearing your moon boots, slippers, ugg boots to kindy

**Becoming**

Creating a night sky in our cubby spaces with glow in the dark planets and constellations for us to practice star gazing

Transforming our outdoor stage into a rocket, spaceship and making a moon in the sandpit

Exploring the concepts of night and day, sun set and sunrise and the earths rotation to inform us about 'time passing'.

Using our rocket ship/s to go on our own space explorations.

Listening to and moving to space music by the composer Holst. Exploring gravity and movement-- can you move your body like an astronaut? Weaving thoughts about movement in space into yoga/relaxation stories

Using moon-sand to create space landscapes

Using correct scientific words with children to promote a knowledge base for science.

Changing the 'training camp' into a 'space camp'-- rockets as jumping launching off of the planks, tyres as craters, adding pictures to make moon rocks etc.

Exploring Earth-- talking about taking care of our planet-- watering our garden, not leaving taps running, recycling etc

Having a star gazing evening to watch the sun set, moon rise and to see the stars come out.

Using a voting system for children to contribute to the group learning and fortnightly plans
Oliver

For Stephanie to support Oli in taking risks in his play by providing him with new challenging experiences that will provide him with opportunities to make a risk-assessment and make decisions about what is safe or not safe as well as what he feels he can and cannot do.

Stephanie will do this by spending time with Oli outside, climbing the trees and exploring different levels and slopes in the climbing.

Becoming

Partnerships

As we get to know our new families to Kurrajong we begin building relationships with families by introducing them to the room through visits and sharing information, communicate with families at drop off and pick up times and continually work towards building strong partnerships.

Principles!

May/June 2012

And we are always working to find new ways to support new families to the room, we are able to adapt our induction style to suit each family’s needs—some families want to know about certain things, so we take time to answer these questions first before we give them other information.

Group

Kurrajong has had some new children start! Steph, Kate & Jecintra will focus on building strong, safe & secure relationships with Andrew, Grace, Robert, Moses, Michael, Felix & Skye as they begin their transition & get settled in their new environment. We will take time to introduce them to the children in the room & support them with connections & social understanding.

Program

Andrew, Grace, Robert, Moses, Michael, Felix & Skye have all settled in well now and we are preparing to welcome more new families to the room, we have noticed that we are really communicating well with our families, and that the B-3 model allows us to build strong, deep connections with our families. We look forward to beginning this with our new families.
WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE?

PLANNING

GROUP OUTCOME 2.
- We will support children to develop respect for the environment and play spaces by modelling respect for the environment.
- By assisting children to pack up spaces, children will begin to show opportunities for children to be involved in the development and care of spaces.
- We are planning gardening projects.

EVALUATION
- See 'Planting Native Plants'.
- We have been supporting children by role modelling packing up and assisting them to pack away with verbal encouragement.
- We will continue to implement this over coming months.
As the wheels turn... the mind discovers.

Children as Scientists
Opportunities to...
Wonder
Be curious
Research
Inquire
Experiment

A vision for children’s Learning

Bike Day

Science Skills:
- Collecting
- Observing
- Measuring
- Classifying
- Ordering
- Making data tables and graphs
- Predicting
- Establishing cause and effect

Classification of vehicles

Science Topics:
- Air
- Machines
- Space Wheels

Signs and Symbols

Beings
- Children have a strong sense of belonging
- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities
- Children develop a sense of belonging to the world, the universe
- To be connected
- To wonder and notice

Outdoors
- Create vehicles with children
- Train and have stops and stations
- Children as Artists
- Revisiting and refining skills
- Exploring new art mediums

Open-ended materials

Cars and trucks and things that go!
- Explore questions such as:
- What vehicles do you know off?
- What do you want to learn?

Science and technology
- Explore the world of materials
- Investigate different materials
- Conduct experiments

Children as effective communicators
- Children act as information gatherers
- Children act as information processors
- Children act as information synthesizers
- Children act as information evaluators

Parents:
- Share with educators milestones and ideas!
- Share with educators your child’s interests and ideas!
Cars and trucks and things that go! Explore questions such as: What vehicles do you know of? What do you want to learn?

Classification of vehicles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1-3 Special events</th>
<th>Children as scientists</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exploring - Curiosity - Notice - Wonder - Discover - Experiment - Research</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Different size brushes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Water wash with crayons</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Still life pictures – flowers, fruit</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Faces in mirrors</td>
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<td>Mixing colours</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Books for inspiration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Making boats – floating and sinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Books, songs and Story Table</td>
<td>What ever next!</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>There was an old sailor...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group times</td>
<td>Inquiry questions: What is a scientist?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What do the words discover, experiment, science mean?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is a machine?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What machines do we want to learn about?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Literacy: Week 1 -Rhyme</td>
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<td>Week 2 – Initial sounds</td>
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<td>Week 3 - Syllables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spontaneous Experiences</td>
<td>Light table</td>
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<td>Scales</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Compare sizes</td>
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<td>Sand wheels</td>
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<td>Gears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writing for different purposes – cards, shopping lists, names, numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside Experiences</td>
<td>Science tub – binoculars, drawing, measuring tapes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Open ended resources</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planting</td>
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<td>Dancing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcome 5

Children are effective communicators

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

This is evident when children:

- Engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language
- Respond verbally and non-verbally to what they see, hear, touch, feel and taste
- Use language and representations from play, music and art to share and project meaning

As educators we will promote this learning by:

- Engaging in enjoyable interactions with children as they make and play with sounds
- Being attuned and responding sensitively and appropriately to children’s efforts to communicate
- Recognizing that children enter early childhood programs having begun to communicate and make sense of their experiences at home and in their communities

We believe that children feel valued and respected and safe when they have educators who are available to listen carefully and respond accordingly. We understand listening to be a reciprocal experience and incredibly important to learning in a collaborative environment. This forms the basis for children to develop as effective communicators and members of a literate community. We will sing, chant and share rhymes and jingles, and will also include songs from children's home languages.

We will support children to develop in their abilities to interact with others as well as their skills and understandings around literacy by including visual reminders of common words and phrases in children’s home languages. We will also be intentional about using story and song times to support learning about how books work and that print contains a message by pointing out words, labelling parts of a book such as ‘page, front cover, back cover, writing’ and by showing them the direction that print takes.

We will add to our collection of Sunflower Room books and ensure that print is seen to match the photos. We will use this format as a way of documenting the many wonderful events that take place which are not necessarily planned, because this will enable children to revisit learning.
Outcome 3
Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing

This is evident when children:
- Demonstrate trust and confidence
- Seek out and accept new challenges, make new discoveries, and celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others
- Assert their capabilities and independence while demonstrating increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others

As educators we will promote this learning by:
- Showing genuine affection, understanding and respect for all children
- Collaborating with children to document their achievements and sharing their successes with their families
- Promoting children’s sense of belonging, connectedness and wellbeing
- Challenging and supporting children to engage in and persevere in tasks and in their play
- Welcoming children and families to share aspects of their culture and spiritual lives

Wellbeing is all tied up with close and nurturing relationships—we know that children grow and thrive as learners and in communities when they are secure in their attachment to primary caregivers. From this place they are able to move out and explore and make discoveries and develop dispositions which will support them to be life-long learners. We will support children and families to feel a sense of belonging by sharing their cultures with us by including home language and celebrations in our program. We will ensure that indigenous culture is also included throughout our days by learning and using Kaurna words, by ensuring that our environment reflects Aboriginal stories, and customs and beliefs in the resources that we choose, and that we include an acknowledgement of land in our programme. We will encourage families to contribute to children’s portfolios, and will ensure that we celebrate learning with them whenever possible.

When visiting our garden, we will ensure that children are included in the documentation process, and that their voice is heard.

Outcome 4
Children are confident and involved learners

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity

This is evident when children:
- Express wonder and interest in their environments
- Are curious and enthusiastic participants in their learning
- Follow and extend their own interests with enthusiasm, energy and concentration

As educators we will promote this learning by:
- Encouraging children to engage in both individual and collaborative learning experiences
- Providing opportunities for children to revisit their ideas and extend their thinking
- Modeling inquiry processes, including wonder, curiosity and imagination and encouraging children to try new ideas and take on challenges
- Welcoming children and families to share aspects of their culture and spiritual lives
- Challenging and supporting children to engage in and persevere in tasks and in their play
- Supporting children to inquire about light and shade as the days begin to lengthen and the sun changes the way our courtyard looks and feels. We will add an overhead projector for the children to explore light, shade and colour, as well as providing the light table for a time during the term.

Wellbeing is all tied up with close and nurturing relationships—we know that children grow and thrive as learners and in communities when they are secure in their attachment to primary caregivers. From this place they are able to move out and explore and make discoveries and develop dispositions which will support them to be life-long learners. We will support children and families to feel a sense of belonging by sharing their cultures with us by including home language and celebrations in our program. We will ensure that indigenous culture is also included throughout our days by learning and using Kaurna words, by ensuring that our environment reflects Aboriginal stories, and customs and beliefs in the resources that we choose, and that we include an acknowledgement of land in our programme. We will encourage families to contribute to children’s portfolios, and will ensure that we celebrate learning with them whenever possible.

When visiting our garden, we will ensure that children are included in the documentation process, and that their voice is heard.
Whole Program Reflection:
Linking our reflection/evaluation to a particular Principle, Practice and the birth-three routines and general running of the room.

Mallee Program Reflection

Practice:
I feel as a team we are more aware of children’s interests and are more supportive when responding to each child acknowledging what they have been told. This helps to our image of the child and whether or not we see them as capable or not. Hopefully, it is capable!! I know I am more aware of how my practice with children influences their perception of how they view themselves.
What are your thoughts on this and what are you wondering about for your children in regards to your practice?

I think this means we are creating strong secondary attachments – knowing other children not only the children in your group.
Agree, Jo
I have been thinking about this too but still have questions around high expectations – are we providing experiences that challenge and extend their learning – it all comes down to how we view the child.

Principle:
- What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work? Are they visible in the room?
- Mathe Mee – naming/following connecting these actions
- Circle of Security – looking at where our children are in the circle. Are they supported in both sections?
- I would like to explore our drop off/pick up times.

B-3
I’m really enjoying our dramatic play at the moment. I feel as though we are extending & scaffolding this well. I would like to see more painting/craft/comic – messy play occurring each day. Any ideas?
I think it will be great to extend the dramatic play by adding different props or that extend on play by adding different props or that extend on children’s interests.

Yes, Roses
Green, sharp + Sally Ann.
Professional conversations take us outside of ourselves and our context, they provide an opportunity for reflection and consideration of multiple perspectives.

“A professional conversation draws together a group of early childhood professionals to engage in constructive dialogue on a topic of shared interest and importance.... In terms of practice, conversations are designed to be responsive to the strengths, interests and needs of participants, and seek to build on prior learning, connecting current and new ways of thinking and working” (Irvine, S and Collie, M 2011, p.3-8.)

Engaging in professional conversations with other educators about your practice, programming and documentation will support a deeper reflection and understanding to underpin and enhance your practice.

On the following three pages you will find example templates that can support you in having professional conversations and documenting them. You can use these, or create your own.
In a group discussion, you could document in each of these circles your different responses to these questions. You could also then decide what this collectively means at your service.

What do we mean by program?

What is the purpose of our program?

What do we want to achieve with our program?
# Professional Conversation Planner Template

**Date:** _________________________________________________  **Time:** _________________________________________________

**Where:** _______________________________________________  **Who:** _______________________________________________

## Preparation required:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discussion Topic:</th>
<th>Discussion Starters:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Focus for discussion: | What will we talk about today?  
<table>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why will we talk about this?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Process for discussion:</th>
<th>How will you structure the discussion?</th>
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<tr>
<th>Documenting discussion:</th>
<th>How will you document the key aspects of the discussion?</th>
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<th>Ending the discussion:</th>
<th>Will you use an evaluation tool?</th>
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<th>What next?</th>
<th>What will we do to explore and learn about this further? Will we do anything differently?</th>
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The following activity could be used with your staff team to explore the types of documentation you use to develop and display your program.

Critically reflecting on your current formats and planning process helps everyone involved to understand and be able to articulate why you use a particular format rather than another one.
Activity 7: Reviewing your approach to documentation

Rationale

The focus in EYLF on learning outcomes provides the foundation for our documentation about children in the new system. It will now be important to focus on both development and outcomes, which should be the focus of professional conversations in every service. It is important to remember that sharing our work this way can be uncomfortable unless it is done in a supportive way. This activity is not about being ‘critical’ in the usual sense. Rather, it is about looking at a range of examples ‘critically’ to see what things are most useful and relevant in meeting NQS requirements. It may be that you find that what you are doing currently isn’t really about learning and therefore this area will become a key priority for professional learning in your Quality Improvement Plan.

Estimated time: To be determined by service – consider using regular staff or team meetings for this activity

People involved: All educators

Resources required: Examples of current documentation (e.g. observations, learning stories, portfolios, etc.)
Copy of the Early Years learning Framework

Procedure:

1. Everyone participating selects examples from their current documentation to discuss

2. The examples are distributed and discussed in relation to the following questions:
   • Why was this moment considered to be an important window on the child’s learning?
   • What learning outcomes are ‘visible’ in this documentation?
   • Why has this form of documentation been used?
   • How as this documentation being shared with families and children?
   • How does this documentation relate to the opportunities planned in the program?

3. After each professional conversation about documentation, record thoughts/feelings and ideas as well as possible areas for further learning/change in the Activity Record on page 29

For further reading and examples of how other approach documenting learning see:

Early Childhood Australia EYLF Professional Learning Program Newsletters,


Click here for more information about the NQF Workbook, including an order form.
Adapt or adopt?

How could you use this in your service?

How will you decide what to use from this resource?

How will it fit with your existing programs?

Documentation that makes learning visible is a vital part of our work in early childhood education and care. Understanding and being able to talk about the processes you use to document children’s learning, and why you are using particular formats are a necessary part of this. That’s why just taking someone else’s format whether it is commercially produced or borrowed from another service and putting it on your wall is not always the best option because it’s not yours and doesn’t reflect who you are.

Both formal conversations, at a staff meeting and informal conversations, in the staff room will provide opportunity to wonder about how your program might look and understand the meaning behind it. Thinking and talking about the formats you have seen in this resource will help you explore your current practice and what things you might like to change and improve on. In this resource you will find formats for documenting professional conversations which can be used as evidence for NQS and as a tool for reflection.

Keep in mind that these examples only represent what “goes on the wall”. There are a range of other formats that you may want to explore for other aspects of the planning cycle.

We would like to thank all the educators, children and families who have generously contributed their programming formats to this resource (Gowrie SA, Margaret Ives Community Children’s Centre, Halifax Street Children’s Centre & Preschool and il Nido Children’s Centre).

We are hoping to continue collecting and showcasing different examples on our website. If you would like to contribute, contact us:

Email train@gowriesa.org.au
Phone 1800 129 606