

Quality Support Program – Reflective session

The Assessment and Planning Cycle (OSHC)

PowerPoint Link:	The PowerPoint can be found on the ACECQA website		
Session title:	The Assessment and Planning Cycle (OSHC)		
Date:			
Session time:		Session length:	1-2 hours (depending on discussion time)

Resources/Set up	Confirmed
Laptop or data projector and or access to a computer (if available)	
PowerPoint presentation	
Facilitator's notes	
Handout – Planning cycle infographic from the ACECQA website	
Copies of the Guide to the NQF	
Copies of the Approved Learning Frameworks (<i>My Time, Our Place: The Framework for School Age Care</i> and, if relevant, <i>Belonging, Being, Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework</i>)	
Resources for activities and experiences e.g. whiteboard, paper, pens, textas, etc.	

Please note:

- Instructions and notes are in **[square brackets, bolded and shaded]**.
- Owing to its length, this session can be broken up into two or more reflective sessions.

National Quality Standard

Standard 1.3 Assessment and planning: Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.

Element 1.3.1 Assessment and planning cycle: Each child's learning and development is assessed or evaluated as part of an ongoing cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection.

Standard 7.2 Leadership: Effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and professional learning community.

Element 7.2.2 Educational leadership: The educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle.

Element 7.2.3 Development of professionals: Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

Approved Learning Framework:

Principle 5 Ongoing learning and reflection

Speaking notes:	PowerPoint
<p>Welcome/introduction</p> <p>Hello everyone. Thanks for joining me today. It's wonderful to have this opportunity to consider how we can improve our practice.</p> <p>I'd like to start by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of this land and pay my respects to Elders past and present (and any Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples here with us today).</p>	<p>Slide 1:</p> 
<p>Overview</p> <p>In this reflective session we'll be looking at the Assessment and Planning Cycle. We will: [read slide]</p>	<p>Slide 2:</p> 
<p>Activity</p> <p>We've all been quite busy, so let's take a moment for a reflective exercise while we have something to eat [if you have offered food].</p> <p>[Activity] Think back to a time when a learning experience you planned and implemented went well. This could be the cooking experience you facilitated, or an obstacle course you built with the children. Take a moment to reflect on what aspects of the experience went well.</p> <p>Once you've spent some time thinking about this, have a chat with the person next to you about what makes a successful learning experience.</p> <p>Let's take about 5 minutes to chat.</p> <p>What you have just done is to highlight the importance of good quality planning.</p> <p>Now let's share those reflections as a group, and see what we have come up with.</p> <p>[Share people's reflections and identify key points. Add the following points if they didn't come up in discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong links to an observation or children's interests. • Carefully planned process. • Challenging engagement. • Well chosen, engaging resources used in the experience. • Critical reflection played a part in the planning. • Aimed at children's interests, knowledge, abilities and ideas. • Skill development.] 	<p>Slide 3</p> 

Planning Cycle

In our discussion we have touched on aspects of the assessment and planning cycle.

This image shows the main steps that make up the assessment and planning cycle.

[Handout – Planning cycle infographic from the ACECQA website.]

Today we're going to reflect on each of these steps and break down what's involved in each and how it contributes to the overall planning.

Slide 4:



Importance of the assessment and planning cycle

Before we look at the steps in the assessment and planning cycle, let's think about why we need a planning cycle at all.

Let's take some time to think about this and chat together.

[Allow time for discussion, encouraging your team to think of possible answers.]

[Share people's reflections and identify key points.]

The assessment and planning cycle is a process of planning and documenting children's learning to ensure that you achieve the best quality outcomes for the children.

Element 1.3.1 of the National Quality Standard requires the use of the planning cycle to assess and evaluate children's learning.

The assessment and planning cycle makes the learning visible to all involved when done well. When the learning is visible it promotes our practice and raises the profile of educators as professionals within the community.

Now let's work on the assessment and planning cycle together as we look at each section and work on an example.

Slide 5:



Observing/collecting information

The first step of the assessment and planning cycle is **observing and collecting information**. This is **what we see** each day.

It is when we collect and gather information about a child or group of children.

It can be done in many ways.

What are some of the ways you do this?

Slide 6:



[Ask team members to call out suggestions.]

[Add the following examples if team members don't mention them:

- formal observations, such as running records, time samples
- learning stories
- work samples
- photos
- discussions with children and families
- entries in daily journals
- information from data collected, such as enrolment forms, child surveys and notes from meetings/conversations .]

Critical reflection should be part of every step in the cycle. This involves thinking deeper and reviewing practice as a result. When critically reflecting on observations, we need to ask ourselves:

1. Is the observation giving me rich, meaningful information?
2. Is the observation focused on the child's strengths?
3. Is our documentation here relevant and meaningful to the child and family?

Scenario:

Here is a scenario to consider, including a summary on the screen. We are going to use this scenario as the 'observe' phase of the assessment and planning cycle.

[Read scenario below to participants]

A group of older children are playing indoors.

You see they have created a hangout space and are frustrated when younger children enter the area. They try to hide behind recycled cardboard screens but this is not giving enough privacy.

They discuss amongst each other if they should move to another area but they would prefer to stay indoors. They decide to build a cubby house to enclose the space.

They excitedly spread out and collect:

- dress ups
- heavy objects
- a set of chairs and a table already in the area.

They organise the space and place dress ups over the chairs/table. To hold the dress ups in place, they place heavy blocks and books. Once complete, they celebrate their achievement and admire their space.

You then hear the group turning others away saying there is not enough room for more children.

Slide 7:



Scenario

- ▶ A group of older children are in an indoor play area.
- ▶ They are aiming to create an enclosed hangout space to relax with friends without being interrupted by younger children.
- ▶ The group builds a cubby house using items from the play area to meet their needs.



Other children begin to search for items they can build their own cubby houses out of and attempt to find nooks to hide in.

Record your observations:

Now let's discuss the scenario.

[Allow some time for group discussion. Use these questions when needed as prompts for the discussion:

- What stands out for you?
- How are the children engaged in the experience?
- How are children interacting with each other?
- What knowledge, strengths, interests and skills are they bringing to this experience?
- Based on what I can hear/see, is this going to be a valuable experience?
- Would you choose to document this observation?
- If you were writing an observation, what style would you use?
- How could this observation inform your program?]

Slide 8:

Record your observations

What stands out for you in this scenario?
Discuss your observations

Analysing learning

The next step in the assessment and planning cycle is **Analysing the learning**.

This is **what we think** about the observation and the information gathered. It's when we make meaning of the observation. In other words: What does it tell us about the child or group of children?

This is where we use our knowledge as professionals to link the learning to the Approved Learning Frameworks and current research and theories.

When **critically reflecting** at this stage in the cycle we can explore concepts around why children behaved a specific way.

Now let's look at the process of analysing learning in the scenario.

With the person next to you start to analyse your observations.

Break down the information into what you saw through the scenario (the observation) and what you think or know (analysis).

As part of the analysis, look at answering the following questions **[you could write these on the smartboard or paper for everyone to see]**:

1. What learning is occurring and what happened to make you think this?
2. What skills and dispositions are the group developing and would they be the same for each child?
3. What do our observations tell us about the children who built the cubby?

Slide 9:

Analysing learning

THE ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING CYCLE

REFLECT OBSERVE ANALYSE PLAN

What does this observation tell me about this group of children?

4. What do our observations tell us about the other children who wanted to join but couldn't?
5. Can you link this to the Framework for School Age Care?
6. What does current research tell us about this learning? Is our understanding of the learning impacted by any new knowledge or theories in this area?
7. What are the risks/benefits of this experience?

Take about 10 minutes to do this.

Let's look at our analysis together.

[Discuss what your team members' analysis was. Below are some points you could add if not mentioned in the discussion:

- **Skills/Dispositions: Cooperation, problem solving, perseverance and concentration, enthusiasm, resilience.**
- **The group are moving towards adolescence and seeking to spend a large portion of time among their peers.**
- **The children initiated a play experience from their own ideas and were successful in connecting concepts and processes.**
- **The group prefer to work amongst each other to solve problems rather than seeking educator support.**
- **The environment allowed them to competently manipulate equipment to meet their needs of privacy and relaxation.**
- **The group were able to express a range of emotions and thoughts constructively.**
- **The group practiced negotiation skills to come to a creative solution.]**

[Examples of linking with the FSAC:

- **1.2: the group developed their autonomy and resilience by participating in a range of feely chosen play opportunities. They organised an initial experience and then built on this by working together to brainstorm and implement a solution to a problem they were experiencing.**
- **3.1: the children are working towards becoming strong in their social and emotional wellbeing as they demonstrated trust in each other to work towards the proposed solution and celebrated their team effort when the solution met their needs.**
- **4.1: the children are working together and further developing dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity**
- **4.4: the group resourced their own learning through connecting with processed materials and manipulating them to reconfigure a space to suit their needs.**

If the team hasn't adequately made links between the Learning Outcomes and their analysis, support them to do so.]

Planning

Stay on same slide:

Slide 10:

The next step in the cycle is **planning** for the future learning.

The 'reviewing and observing' stage in the planning cycle is what we see, so the planning stage is **what we do**.

After reviewing our observation and analysis, we now look at opportunities for future learning.

To form the basis for our planning we look at and use the children's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and specific interests from the information we have gathered.

To begin our planning we need to identify a **specific intention**. This is when we work out our goal or objective for the plan. This links directly to the observation and analysis. What is the purpose for this plan? What is your 'intent' (Intentional teaching, 1.2.1) and what are you hoping to achieve?

Think about how you will do this, how you will engage the children and the resources you will need. Thinking about what teaching strategies you will use.

When **critically reflecting** at this stage, we could look at whether the plan is based on our perceived interests for learning or the children's interests, abilities and ideas. If the plan isn't successfully engaging or challenging the children, then maybe the problem is that it's based on our interests and knowledge, not theirs.

We could also ask: Generally, does our planning promote development in problem solving and higher-level thinking skills? How does this extend on the children's real interests, abilities and knowledge? This could lead to further learning on developing the overall curriculum to support dispositions of curiosity, investigation and problem solving.

Please work with the person next to you to develop a possible plan based on your observations and analysis. This means, what other experiences could you provide for both the group of older children and the other children who wanted to participate?

Think about:

- your intentions and strategies you may use
- the learning outcomes you are working towards and the principles and practices that are relevant for this plan

Let's take about 5-10 minutes to do this.

Let's look at our plans together.

[Discuss your team members' plans.]

Depending on the discussion, you could mention:

- **Further developing social skills and communication.**



Slide 11:

- Further exploring and developing problem solving skills.
- Strengthening cooperative skills through group tasks/projects.
- Encouraging children to reach out to educators to obtain more appropriate resources.

Specific examples could include:

- Organising a sustainability initiative where families can donate clean sheets and old pegs for cubby houses.
- Knot tying guidance to secure the sheets safely.
- Allocating a large space for more children to participate.
- Organising a vacation care experience so more time can be dedicated to the activity.]

Planning



- Discuss the plans you developed

Implementing

Implementing is the next step in the assessment and planning cycle and it is thinking about the plan and **how we actually do it.**

Here we would include the way we use the curriculum (program), the routine, interactions, environments and practice to support our plan and the children's learning.

Things to consider in our practice will obviously depend on which area we choose to develop in our plan.

Some examples could be the way we use our learning environment to engage the children with our set up. It could be:

- The use of thought provoking questions to inspire and engage children in a project.
- The way we structure groups that gives each child the opportunity for peer learning and knowledge sharing.
- Our encouragement of a child to reflect on their learning and how they could do things differently.
- The way we develop your relationships with the children and use our knowledge of the child to scaffold and extend their learning.

When **critically reflecting** at this stage we could look at whether our actual practice is reflecting the service philosophy, policies and practice. Does it support children's agency?

Spend a few minutes thinking about the implementation of the plan you created. What practices and/or strategies will you use to ensure the plan is successful?

Slide 12:

Implementing




How will I implement my plan?

[Discuss what your team members' plans were. Depending on the discussion, you could mention:

- Plan to develop cooperation and problem solving skills by facilitating team building activities and providing additional open ended resources/space for children to use freely.

Slide 13:

Implementing



- Discuss your plan and how to implement effective practice
- The following are starting points to think about:
 - Relationships
 - Learning environments
 - Support children's agency

- Use role modelling and modify resources to encourage younger children to participate and build foundational skills e.g. fine motor skills, abstract thinking, spatial awareness, sharing and cooperation.]

Reflecting/evaluating

The final step in the assessment and planning cycle is **reflecting and evaluating**, though it's not actually the last step as it is often the beginning of a new cycle.

Here we evaluate the learning that is occurring for the child. Our intentions, and where the child is in relation to the learning outcomes, is the starting point for the evaluation.

Then it is reflecting on the experience, how it went, were the outcomes achieved, the resources provided, and what we could improve on for next time.

We can reflect on any unanticipated outcomes. We can also reflect on our teaching strategies and use of educational practice. Does it reflect your philosophy on learning? How could we do things differently next time to extend the children's learning?

Critical Reflection can happen at any time in the cycle. As I mentioned earlier, it is the process of thinking more deeply about the decisions we make and our practice. This leads to action that improves the quality of the program for the children

It is a way for us to ask the 'big picture' questions, which helps us to identify improvements, strengthen professional practice and inform our practice. Through the process of critically reflecting as a team we develop a shared understanding, collectively raise our quality of practice and, in turn, try things in new ways.

Evaluating our plans for the scenario is not easy to do as we haven't implemented our plans, but let's think about some of the areas we could look at.

Some possible questions that would provoke evaluation and reflection may be:

- How did the children engage with the learning? What did they learn? How do you know what they learnt?
- How could we extend their learning further?
- Could we add further resources to assist this?
- Did they respond well to our teaching practices?
- Were the outcomes achieved and how do we know?
- Could we improve or modify these?

Collaborating with Children

Slide 14:

Reflecting/evaluating

THE ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING CYCLE

How did it go? What I can I do better?

Slide 15:

Reflecting/evaluating

- How would you evaluate?
- What are some of the evaluation questions you would ask when you have implemented your plan for the scenario?

Slide 16:

Something to consider as part of the assessment and planning cycle is how we collaborate with children in planning and evaluation.

The Approved Learning Frameworks (Outcome 1) and the National Quality Standard (Element 1.2.3) say that we need to foster children's sense of agency. When we invite children to make choices and decisions for planning, and comment on the subsequent evaluation, they become active agents in their own learning and development

Let's spend a few minutes discussing ways we can collaborate with children in our program.

[Ask team members to call out suggestions.]

Add the following examples if team members don't mention them:

- children's documentation
- reflections on their learning
- evaluation of a project, the program or specific interests within the curriculum
- the different ways we include the children's comments and their choices within the curriculum.]

Children's voices



How do we collaborate with children during our planning, reflection and evaluation practices?

So, this brings us to the end of our reflective session.

I would like to thank each of you for your commitment to ongoing learning, quality outcomes for our children and families, and for working together to make a positive difference.

Slide 17:

Imagine the possibilities



Thank you for making a positive difference

Further information

Here are some places we can go for further support and information.

Slide 18:

Further information

ACECQA
Website: www.acecqa.gov.au
Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au
Facebook: www.facebook.com/ACECQA
Phone: 1300 422 327

