



National Quality Standard Professional Learning Program



Connecting with practice—EYLF and NQS

Vignette: Discussing a drawing of a watermelon

Note: Use these notes in conjunction with the *General information* for *Connecting with practice*

Overview:

This vignette is of a conversation between an educator and a four-year-old child about his drawing of a watermelon in the community garden where they are working.

Possible focus points:

- Language-rich experiences
- Value of one-to-one times between an educator and a child
- Communicating to encourage children's learning
- Promoting creativity
- Ways of extending children's thinking.

Key Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) concepts:

- Respectful relationships and responsiveness to children
- Intentional teaching
- Belonging, Being and Becoming
- Learning Outcomes 1, 4 and 5
- Supporting creativity
- Responding to children's creative efforts.

Key links to National Quality Standard (NQS) standards:

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice.

Element 1.1.2: Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.

Element 1.2.3: Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

Element 1.2.2: Educators respond to children's ideas and play and extend children's learning through open-ended questions, interactions and feedback.

Quality Area 5: Relationships with children

Element 5.1.1: Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.

Element 5.2.2: Each child is supported to regulate their own behaviour, respond appropriately to the behaviour of others and communicate effectively to resolve conflicts.



First viewing: What did you notice?

Introduce the vignette, mentioning that it takes place in a community garden near an early learning setting and that the children go there regularly.

Ask participants to watch and listen to the vignette. After viewing it, ask some general questions to start the discussion:

- *What did you notice?*
- *What did the child do and say?*
- *What did the educator do and say?*
- *What did you notice about the setting where this experience took place?*

Participants are likely to notice different things—some may focus on the child, some on the educator and some on the setting in which this interaction took place. This itself is interesting, as in our work we pay attention to different things. If there are different perspectives on what was happening, highlight that there are always different ways of seeing the same practice or event. Each perspective enriches what we can learn from the vignette. This could prompt discussion after the third viewing about how to achieve similar situations—that is, opportunities to interact and engage with one or two children—in all types of settings.

Second viewing: Looking more deeply at learning and teaching and links to the NQS

The value of this vignette is in the detail of the conversation between the educator and the child. You may want to ask participants to pay careful attention in the second viewing to their conversation and to the educator's manner, especially the ways she promotes the child's learning about his work.

What do you think the child learned from the interaction with the educator? How did he learn these things? You may want to focus particularly on NQS Element 1.2.2 here.

- *How does the child's learning link to the EYLF Learning Outcomes?*
- *What are all the things the educator does and says—that encourage learning?*
- *How do the educator's questions and comments help the child to learn more about his own creative process and problem solving?*
- *How does the educator use questioning to extend this child's thinking and learning? How does she balance questioning and making statements?*

[**Note:** This could be a good opportunity to talk about avoiding 'overdoing' questioning and the importance of asking real questions (not ones for which the answer is obvious!) and open-ended questions to encourage thinking].

You may want to point out in this discussion that the educator's roles, interactions and conversations are examples of intentional teaching—being thoughtful, deliberate and purposeful.

- *Do you think that fact that the conversation is just between the child and educator (no other children nearby) contributes to the learning? If so, how?*
- *Do you agree that there is a naturalness and warmth in the conversation between the educator and the child? If so, what is the evidence? How does this vignette illustrate respectful relationships as outlined in NQS Quality Area 5?*
- *What do you think about the fact that the educator only made a 'judgmental' comment about the child's work at the end of the conversation, when she described it as 'beautiful'? What do you think is the effect of these kinds of comments on children's creativity?*
- *How does the educator encourage this child's sense of agency?*
- *How does the educator validate the child's creative expression?*
- *How might this interaction contribute to this child's sense of identity (Learning Outcome 1)?*
- *Do you think the child 'saw' his work differently as a result of the interaction? Why or why not? If so, what difference do you think the interaction made to him?*
- *How might the setting—being in the community garden—have contributed to this experience?*

Note: One way to help participants focus on the quality of the interaction is to ask them to contrast what the child might have learned from the experience if, instead of the interaction that occurred, he had brought over his drawing and the educator had said something like 'That's lovely—put it beside our bags so we can remember to take it when we leave.'

Third viewing: What have we learned? What next?

You may want to have some discussion about the value of one-to-one encounters between an educator and a child:

- *What opportunities do they offer?*
- *Do we have them more with some children than with others? If so why?*
- *What are the obstacles having one-to-one interactions in our setting?*
- *What steps can we take to overcome some of those obstacles?*

The educator and child appear to have a strong relationship. How does an educator's relationship with a child contribute to supporting that child's learning? How do we prioritise educator-child relationships in our service?

- *How can we create more one-to-one opportunities between educators and each child?*
- *How do we respond to children's creative works—for example, their drawings, paintings and block constructions? Do we do so in ways that:*
 - *are encouraging*
 - *support learning*
 - *help children think more about the process they went through*
 - *validate their unique creative expression?*
- *How might this child's parents interpret this vignette? What are they likely to see in it?*
- *What have we learned from this discussion that we can apply to our practice?*
- *What actions might we take as a result of the discussion about the vignette?*

References

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments (DEEWR) (2009). *Belonging, being and becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra, ACT: DEEWR.



An Australian Government Initiative

The NQS Professional Learning Program is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Brought to you by



**Early Childhood
Australia**
A voice for young children

