



National Quality Standard
Professional Learning Program



Connecting with practice—EYLF and NQS

Vignette: Enjoying the vegetable garden

Note: Use these notes in conjunction with the [General information](#) for *Connecting with practice*.



Overview:

This vignette shows an educator and three children outside focusing on a small vegetable garden in the educator's back yard.

Possible focus points:

- Authentic learning opportunities
- Educators' language and responsiveness
- Value of small groups
- Promoting cooperation.

Key Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) concepts:

- Respectful relationships
- Intentional teaching
- Responsiveness to children
- *Belonging, Being and Becoming*
- Holistic definition of curriculum
- All Learning Outcomes.



Key links to the *National Quality Standard (NQS)*:

Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice

Element 1.1.1: Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

Element 1.1.3: All aspects of the program, including routines, are organised in ways that maximise opportunities for each child's learning.

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.

Quality Area 3: Physical environment

Element 3.1.1: Outdoor and indoor spaces, buildings, fixtures and fittings are suitable for their purpose, including supporting the access of every child.

Standard 3.2: The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.

Element 3.2.3: The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

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.

Standard 5.2: Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships.

First viewing: What did you notice?

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 were the children doing?*
- *What was the educator doing?*
- *What did you notice about the setting and the experience itself?*

Participants are likely to notice different things—some may focus on the children, some on the educator, some on the small group of children and some on the setting or experience itself. 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.



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

- *What are the children learning or demonstrating that they have learned?*

Note that what children are learning is likely to be different to what children are doing. Pay attention to their verbal and non-verbal communication as well as what the children are doing.

- *What Learning Outcomes does this vignette illustrate?*
- *What roles does the educator play? What does she do and say to encourage learning? What more could she do or what could she do differently?*
- *What about her language? What do you notice about it?*

Point out that she talks a lot, probably in part because she's being filmed, but she also leaves spaces for children to respond. Both the talk and the spaces are really important for children's learning.

Note: the educator's actions in pulling the carrot a bit to make the task easier. How did that affect the children's learning?

- *What did you notice about the interactions between the educator and the children?*
- *How might this experience contribute to children's sense of belonging?*
- *What examples of cooperation did you observe in the vignette?*
- *In what ways does this vignette illustrate children having a sense of agency?*
- *The educator suggests that the child could take the carrot home. What might this small gesture mean to that child, to her family and to the other child with her?*

This gesture is one that illustrates making connections between the child's experience at home and in the early learning setting.

- *How does the set-up of the physical environment affect the learning possibilities? What is the significance of having a watering can for each child?*
- *Would you agree that the impression from the vignette is that the garden is an important part of the children's experience on an ongoing basis?*
- *How do you think that contributed to the learning that occurred?*

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. Pay particular attention to the language the educator uses and the ways she responds to children.

Reflect on the kinds of learning opportunities that planting and looking after this small garden can offer. How do those opportunities link to the NQS? Discuss the point that it is the **intentional teaching, the ways educators encourage learning**, rather than simply the presence of the materials or equipment that makes the difference between a great learning experience and an 'ordinary' one.

Third viewing: What have we learned? What next?

You may want to have some discussion about the value of small groups.

- *What opportunities do they offer?*
- *What are the obstacles to offering them in our setting?*
- *What steps can we take to overcome some of those obstacles?*
- *How might the parents of these children interpret this vignette? What are they likely to see in it?*
- *What would the children involved see in the vignette?*
- *What have we learned that we can apply to our practice?*

If participants don't have a garden in their setting, they may want to discuss how to start one. Participants who do have gardens that they use as part of the curriculum can share their experiences to support educators who want to start a garden.

- *What actions might you take as a result of the discussion about the vignette?*
- *What are some of the ways you connect children's experience in your setting and their experience in their family?*

Part of the value of the garden is that it's always there, always changing, accessible and the children are obviously familiar with it. It appears to be part of their everyday experience.

- *What is the evidence for this?*
- *What parts of your curriculum—materials, equipment, experiences—are always available to children?*
- *Why is familiarity a valuable contributor to learning?*



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