

Information sheet

BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

Learning environments

Quality indoor and outdoor active learning environments invite all children to participate at a level they are comfortable in, and introduces an element of challenge to scaffold their learning and build confidence in their abilities.

Environments that support learning are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the strengths, culture, languages, interests and capabilities of each child, and reflect aspects of the local community.

This information sheet highlights the changes to the *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0, 2022* (EYLF V2.0) Practice, Learning environments. It provides you with reflective questions as you consider your practice, service philosophy and children's program in relation to this practice.



Links to the [National Quality Standard \(NQS\)](#)

The NQS recognises the potential of the educational program and practices to enhance each child's learning and development. The EYLF V2.0 Practice, Learning environments is reflected in several quality areas of the NQS, with a particular focus in:

QA2: Children's health and safety

Element 2.1.1: Wellbeing and comfort – Each child's wellbeing and comfort is provided for, including appropriate opportunities to meet each child's need for sleep, rest and relaxation.

Element 2.2.1: Supervision – At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

QA3: Physical environment

QA5: Relationships with children

QA6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Element 6.2.2: Access and participation – Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

QA7: Governance and Leadership

Element 7.1.1: Service philosophy and purpose – A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

Element 7.2.1: Continuous improvement – There is an effective self-assessment and quality improvement process in place.

Educators promote holistic approaches to learning and teaching. They understand the integrated nature of the EYLF, and the connection between the various elements of it. The integration of the Vision, Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes are key to providing for children's holistic development.

What is the change?

- This practice has been expanded to provide a clearer definition of indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Descriptions of learning environments including physical, [temporal](#), social and [trauma-informed](#) elements.
- Environments are responsive to the strengths, culture, language, interests and capabilities of each child and reflect aspects of the local community.
- For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families these contributions can assist in building an [intercultural space](#) where both Western and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are shared.
- Opportunities for children to learn on Country are recognised.

Rationale for the change

- The elements of learning environments have been included as educators use the physical, temporal (how time is used), social and intellectual elements when they are preparing the learning environment.
- The theme of culturally safe environments is illustrated where environments are responsive to the strengths, culture, language, interests and capabilities of each child and reflect aspects of the local community. Added to this are the contributions that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families can provide to assist in building an intercultural space where both western and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are shared.
- The importance of opportunities for children to learn on Country is recognised.

What this looks like in practice?

- All indoor and outdoor learning environments are welcoming and culturally safe. Each child, family, educator and community member is respected. They share meaning, knowledge, and experience of learning, living and working together with dignity.
- Educators encourage children and families to contribute ideas, interests and questions to the learning environment. They support engagement by allowing time for meaningful interactions and providing a range of opportunities for individual and shared experiences.
- Educators identify opportunities for children to actively participate and contribute in their local community.
- There are intentionally planned learning environments catering for different learning capacities and learning styles, which support [reasonable adjustments](#) where required. Educators arrange resources thoughtfully, with respect and with the intent to engage, stimulate, extend, scaffold and facilitate learning through interactions.

- Educators plan and provide both active and calming spaces, as well as various times across the day for active and quiet play. They provide individual as well as group spaces that respond to children's interests and capabilities.
- The learning environments reflect an intercultural space where both Western and traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges are shared.
- Outdoor learning environments provide children with access to play spaces in natural environments and may include plants, trees, edible gardens, open spaces, sand, rocks, mud, water and other elements from nature.
- Educators participate in and offer opportunities for children to learn on Country and seek further information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander connections and relationships with Country.
- Approved providers and educators attend to all aspects of the environment to enable all children to participate, succeed in learning and develop positive feelings of self-worth.

Reflective questions and provocations

- How does your service philosophy guide and reflect a focus on active learning environments?
 - » Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority – [Active learning: Learning and development area](#)
- How often do educators critically reflect on the types of experiences, learning opportunities, materials and resources they provide? How have these critical reflections led to practice change?
 - » Child Australia – [How To: Create the Perfect Play Space. Learning Environments for Young Children](#)
- What strategies are in place to ensure all educators invite children and families to contribute their ideas, interests and questions to create unique and familiar learning environments?
 - » ACECQA – We hear you blog – [From soaring towers to inclusive playscapes: Exploring the journey of children's participation](#)
- How is the learning environment equipped and organised to cater for access and participation by children of all ages and levels of capabilities? How does the learning environment support access by children and adults with disabilities and enable a variety of uses by children and educators?
 - » ACECQA – [Information sheet – The Disability Discrimination Act: What do children's education and care services need to know](#)
- Explain how observed practices and discussions demonstrate a whole-of-service approach to the use of space and resources that is inclusive, purposeful, creative, and flexible, and enhances learning and development outcomes for all children?
 - » ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 The environment as the 'third teacher'](#)

- What additional resources or adaptations can be made to the learning environment to provoke interest, creativity, sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning?
 - » Gowrie – [Heuristic play materials: Unstructured play materials for infants and toddlers](#)
- What features in the learning environment encourage open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature?
 - » EcoKids – [Playing with Loose Parts \(YouTube\)](#)
- Take a walk around your service. How are the backgrounds and cultures of families and the broader community reflected in the environment?
 - » Child Australia – [How To: Create the Perfect Play Space. Learning Environments for Young Children](#)

ACECQA references and resources

- Australian Government Department of Education – [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0, 2022](#)
- ACECQA – [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 Inclusive environments](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 Babies and outdoor play](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – The Disability Discrimination Act: What do children’s education and care services need to know](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA3 The environment as the ‘third teacher’](#)
- ACECQA – [We hear you blog – From soaring towers to inclusive playscapes: Exploring the journey of children’s participation](#)
- ACECQA – [We hear you blog – Physical environment](#)
- ACECQA – [We hear you blog – Supporting indoor and outdoor play](#)

Other references and resources

- Child Australia – [How To: Create the Perfect Play Space. Learning Environments for Young Children](#)
- Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Learning Hub – [Have you thought about...? NQS PLP - Natural play in your environment?](#)
- EcoKids – [Playing with Loose Parts - YouTube](#)
- Gowrie – [Heuristic Play Materials Unstructured play materials for infants and toddlers information sheet](#)
- Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority – [Active learning: Learning and development area](#)