



What does that mean: important terms from the EYLF

The Early Years Learning Framework A Resource Sheet for SA Aboriginal children's services

Early Childhood Educators

The EYLF doesn't talk about Child Care Workers, they use the term Early Childhood Educators. All of us who work with little kids are called Early Childhood Educators. Educators are teachers, we help kids to learn.

Kids are always learning, every minute of every day. Early Childhood Educators work hard to help them learn good stuff. The most important thing little kids need to learn is to feel safe in the world so they are able to explore and build relationships. Have a look at the EYLF Learning Outcomes. You will see they focus strongly on supporting kids to feel good about themselves and the world; to care for themselves and others; to explore and solve problems, as well as to develop skills and abilities.

Early Childhood Educators also need to feel a sense of Belonging, Being, and Becoming.

They need to feel they Belong in the Service, and that they have meaningful relationships with children, families and other staff. They need to experience Being able to enjoy the present, to be playful and to know that what they do is worthwhile and meaningful. And they need to be on the constant journey of Becoming as people and as Early Childhood Educators. They need opportunities to question, reflect and to learn.

Reflective Practice

As Early Childhood Educators we never stand still. We are always looking at the kids, at what they are doing, at the environment, at our programs and at our own actions and asking questions.

We want to know, "what is happening here?"; "How do we know what we know?"; "Are there other ways of looking at this?"; "Do all the things I know agree with each other?"

Then we can know what we don't know. We can ask – "Do I need to read more?"; "Talk to some more people?"; "Try some more things?". This is called Reflective Practice.

Pedagogy

To do our job well as Early Childhood Educators we need to know about how children develop, what things help them in their learning and growing journey. We also need to tune in to the things that are important to the individual children we are working with. We need to take time to be with them, to watch and to wonder with them and to celebrate their successes. When we do all of this we are using our teaching toolbox—our **Pedagogy**.

Pedagogy is a word used to describe the Early Childhood Educator's professional practice. It includes building relationships with the children, making decisions about the curriculum, teaching, listening, observing and learning.

When Early Childhood Educators use their knowledge about children and all aspects of their development to set up play and learning experiences, they are using their pedagogy.

Curriculum

Curriculum includes the way we plan and set up play and learning experiences for children. The EYLF curriculum emphasises play-based learning. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

Kids are always developing and learning and the job of Early Childhood Educators is try to make sure everything helps them grow and learn well.



You can see that an Early Childhood Educator has thought about the set up on the left and made a beautiful spot for a single child to sit quietly, investigate the resources and use their imagination.



Outdoor play and learning experiences are an important part of the curriculum too. The Early Childhood Educator who set up this imaginative block play (right), wanted the curriculum to include opportunities to use and develop some big muscles (shifting and carrying blocks), to use their imagination and to support the development of social skills (by setting up so that lots of children can play together).



Routines like washing hands (above) and sitting together for meals are also part of the curriculum and offer children lots of opportunities to learn self help skills—like hand washing as well as to learn about the importance of hygiene.

The Early Years Learning Framework is a national curriculum framework. Early Childhood Educators who travel to other areas or across State and Territory borders will still be able to work with the EYLF and follow its Principles, Practices and Outcomes.

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