



The Early Years Learning Framework Unpacked

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Overview of my talk

- Key ideas guiding the Consortium
- Ideas likely to underpin the Framework
- Some terms that might be unfamiliar
- Getting started





Key ideas guiding the Consortium

- Educators are professional, knowledgeable, skilful, ethical and intentional.
- Children are capable. They are active participants in their families and communities.
- Diversity is something to value and respect.
- But it brings many responsibilities, especially in relation to equity.



Belonging, being and becoming





Guiding principles (Feb 09 draft of the EYLF)

- The Rights of the Child
- Relationships
- Partnerships
- Respect for diversity
- Equity
- Reflective practice
- Play-based curriculum
- Intentional teaching
- Continuity



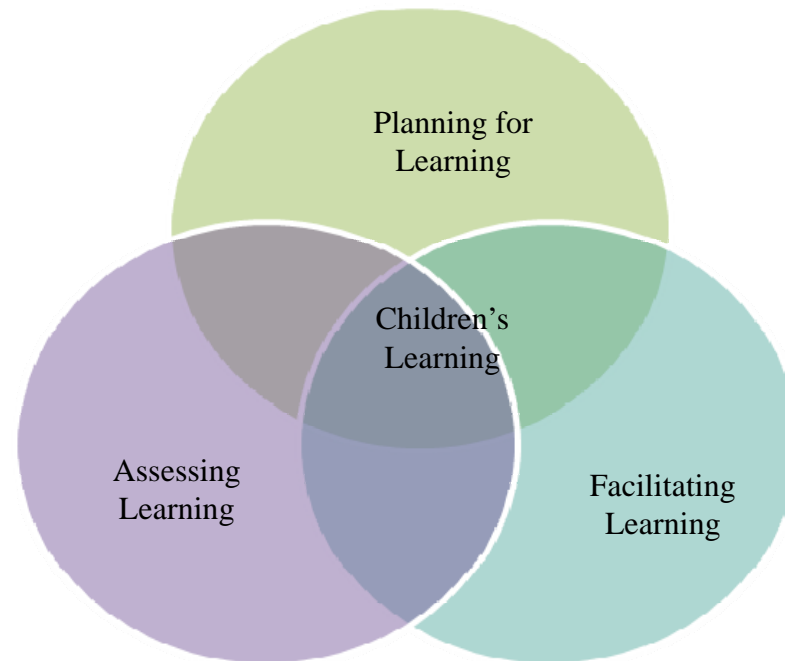
Learning outcomes

- identity
- wellbeing
- confident, involved successful learners
- effective communicators
- participants and contributors





Educators' [curriculum] decision-making





Theories: different ways of looking at things

Theories are like lenses we can use to help us to interpret and gain insight into complex issues (e.g, like looking through a magnifying glass / telescope)

Theories enable educators to see the world to be seen differently – just like different pairs of glasses (e.g, sunglasses / reading glasses).

Educators can use different theories to suit different situations and to interpret things different .

All theories have strengths and limitations, so it's not such a good idea to rely only one theory. Where possible, it's better to try to develop some understanding of a few theories (maybe 2-3?)



Some theories...

- **Developmental theories:** describe and help to understand changes in children's learning and development over time
- **Socio-cultural theories:** central role of families and cultural groups play in children's learning; need for respectful relationships and insights into social and cultural contexts in which children learn and develop
- **Socio-behavioural:** focus on ways that children's experiences shape their behaviour
- **Critical theories:** challenge our assumptions about curriculum, and consider how their decisions may affect children differently.
- **Poststructuralist theories:** offer insights into issues of power, equity and social justice in early childhood settings.



How theories can be helpful

From a behaviourist perspective:

Children are learning to sit at the table by themselves and not to walk around while eating.

From a developmental perspective:

Children are learning the skills of holding a serving spoon and bringing food to the plate independently. Children are seating themselves at the table independently (*Fenua pulled a chair over to sit beside Fanisha*).

From a socio-cultural perspective:

Children are choosing to be seated in friendship groups. Children are learning from each other.

From a critical perspective:

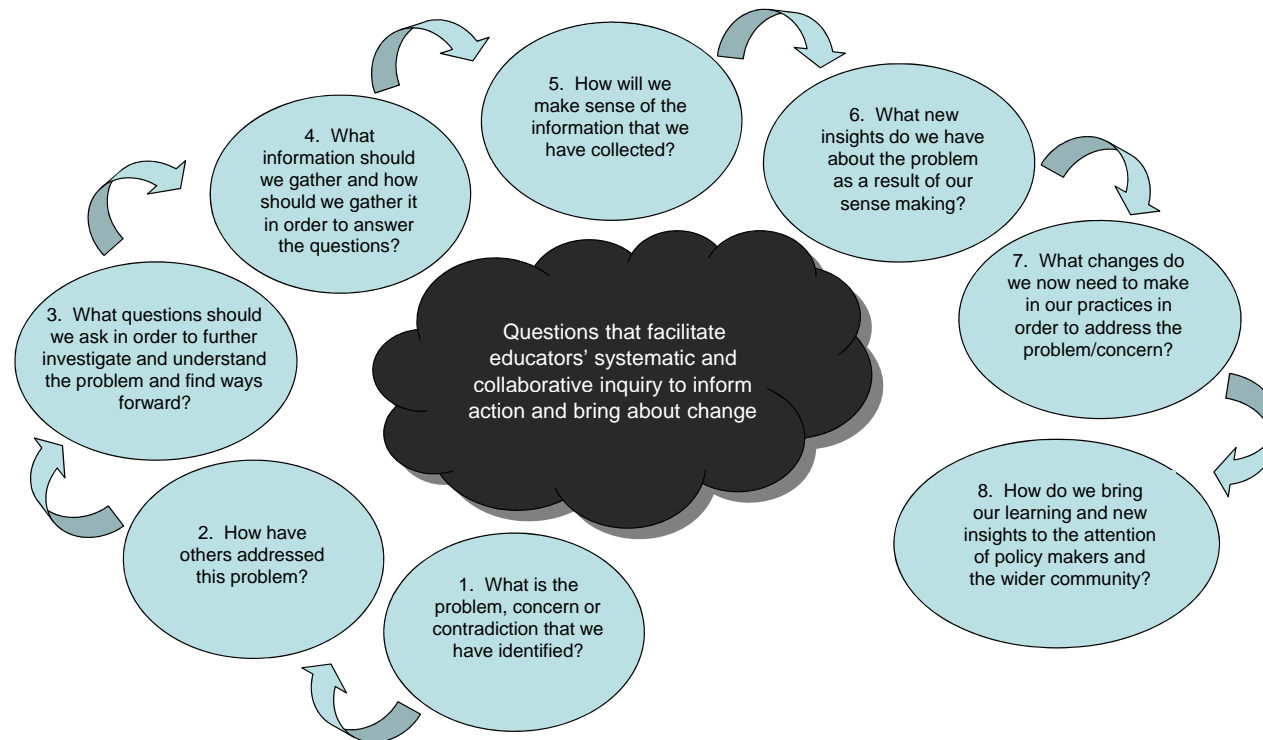
Children are noticing diversity (You talk funny). They are making choices about who to sit next to sometimes on the basis of gender.

From a poststructuralist perspective:

Children are using difference as a way to include and exclude (*Then I saw Fenisha say something to Micha across the room like 'you are a girl'. Micha then said 'you talk funny' and they both ended up in tears*). They are negotiating power relations that influence how they think about themselves.



Practitioner inquiry





Practitioner inquiry with babies

A group of educators who were working with babies knew that crying is an effective way for babies to communicate but they wanted to know more about other vocal cues the babies used.

They searched for information about early communication and read about the importance of reciprocity and turn-taking. They also read about the need for adults to communicate in ways that convey respect, empathy and understanding for babies to feel secure.





The educators decided that they would record the communicative sounds that each baby made during certain times throughout the day.

From these records, they grouped the sounds into categories e.g., crying, screaming, burbling and squealing. They also identified how often each baby used particular sounds.





To help them understand the messages that the babies were conveying, the educators discussed the evidence they had gathered with the babies' families. The educators also asked the babies' families for more information and advice about strategies they could use to respond to the babies' communications so that their communication meaningful communication.



Explaining some terms:

- **Agency:** being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events, and to have an impact on one's world
- **Children:** an inclusive term to refer to babies, toddlers and three to five year olds. When referring only to three to five year olds, we used the term 'older children'





- **Communities:** social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights, responsibilities and / or other bonds. e.g. the community within early childhood settings, extended kinships, the local geographic community and broader Australia society.
- **Curriculum:** all the interactions, experiences, activities, and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development.





- **Intentional teaching:** involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and action; knowing why they are doing what they are doing

the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have 'always' been done that way.





Involvement:

concentration,
persistence,
fascination, intense
experience, intrinsic
motivation,
explorataion, a flow
of energy and a high
level of satisfaction





Inclusion:

- taking account of all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity including (learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes
- trying to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued.
- trying to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and multiple opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.





Pedagogy: educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision making, teaching and learning.

