

# My Time, Our Place



FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOL  
AGE CARE IN AUSTRALIA

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# INTRODUCTION

## A NEW VISION FOR AUSTRALIA

The Council of Australian Governments has developed *My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (The Framework) to assist educators to provide children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in life. In this way, the Framework will contribute to realising the Council of Australian Governments vision that:

*“All children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation.”<sup>1</sup>*

The Framework has been designed for use by school age care educators working in partnership with children, their families and the community, including schools. It represents Australia’s first national framework for school age care to be used by school age care educators, and aims to extend and enrich children’s wellbeing and development in school age care settings.

This Framework is linked to the Early Years Learning Framework<sup>2</sup> which focuses on children from birth to five years. It extends the principles, practices and outcomes to the contexts and age range of the children and young people who attend school age care settings. Further, the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care<sup>3</sup> supports the implementation of this national framework by ensuring that necessary environments, facilities, staffing arrangements, resources and management structures are in place.

Educators guided by the Framework will reinforce in their daily practice the principles laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). The Convention states that all children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities. The Convention also recognises children’s rights to be active participants in all matters affecting their lives and respects their family, cultural and other identities and languages.

The Framework acknowledges the importance of play and leisure in children’s learning and development and that their learning is not limited to any particular time or place. Developing life skills and a sense of enjoyment are emphasised. The Framework recognises the importance of social and emotional development and communication in learning through play and leisure, and it forms the foundation for ensuring that children in all school age care settings engage in quality experiences for rich learning, personal development and citizenship opportunities<sup>4</sup>.

***Children in school age care settings are challenged to be curious about what is of interest to them while at the same time developing self-identity and social competencies.***

(adapted from Stig Lund, Danish National Federation of Early Childhood Teachers and Youth Educators and Nordic Teachers Council)

1. On 5 December 2008, State, Territory and Commonwealth Ministers of Education meeting as the Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs, released the Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.

2. Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (2009). *Belonging, Being & Becoming: Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. Canberra. Commonwealth of Australia.

3. Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (2009). *National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care*. Canberra. Commonwealth of Australia

4. *Investing in the Early Years - a National Early Childhood Development Strategy*, Council of Australian Governments

The Framework draws on conclusive international evidence that children learn and develop the skills and behaviours required for active citizenship in a wide range of settings. It has been developed with input from children, families, the school age care sector, academics and the Australian and State and Territory Governments.

More broadly, the Framework supports Goal 2 of the Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians<sup>5</sup>, that:

All young Australians become:

- Successful learners
- Confident and creative individuals
- Active and informed citizens.

The Melbourne Declaration also commits to improved outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

### **Educators:**

the term used to refer to practitioners whose primary function in Australian school age care settings (before and after school and vacation care) is to plan and implement programs that support children's wellbeing, development and learning.

### **Meaningful play and leisure:**

a context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects, ideas and the environment.

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<sup>5</sup> ib.i

# A VISION FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING THROUGH PLAY AND LEISURE

## MY TIME, OUR PLACE

In school age care settings educators collaborate with children to provide play and leisure opportunities that are meaningful to children and support their wellbeing, learning and development. School age care settings pay attention to the needs and interests of individual children within a context that promotes collaboration and active citizenship. Children in school age care settings have choice and control over their learning as they collaborate with educators to extend their life skills and develop dispositions towards citizenship.

From before birth children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world. As children transition to school their social worlds expand to include a wider range of relationships particularly with children of a similar age. Children's learning in school age care settings complements their learning at home and at school. In school age care settings there is great importance placed on relationships and developing and strengthening children's talents and interests. Children learn to know, to do, to be, to live together and to transform oneself and society <sup>6</sup> (UNESCO).

### All children experience meaningful and joyful learning, enriching their childhood.

The view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming* that underpins the Early Years Learning Framework is fundamental

to the *MyTime, Our Place* – Framework for School Age Care in Australia.

- Experiencing *belonging* – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. In school age care, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of *belonging*. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. *Belonging* acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. *Belonging* is central to *being* and *becoming* in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.
- Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world. *Being* recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. During the school age years children develop their interests and explore possibilities. School age care settings give children *time* and *place* to collaborate with educators to organise activities and opportunities meaningful to them.
- Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. *Becoming* acknowledges children's ongoing learning and development. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Five Pillars of Learning, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-sustainable-development/education-for-sustainable-development/five-pillars-of-learning/>

The Framework conveys high expectations for all children's play and leisure activities in school age care settings. It communicates these expectations through the following five Outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.

The Framework provides broad direction for school age care educators in settings to facilitate children's play, leisure and learning.

It guides educators in their program decision-making and assists in planning, implementing and evaluating quality in school age care settings. It also underpins the implementation of more specific experiences relevant to each local community and school age care setting.

The Framework is designed to inspire conversations, improve communication and provide a common language about children's play, leisure and learning among children themselves, their families, the broader community, school age care educators and other professionals.

#### **Outcome:**

a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in school age care settings, in collaboration with children and families.

#### **School age care settings:**

outside school hours care services, family day care, long day care, Multi-purpose Aboriginal Children's Services and similar services.

## ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

The Framework puts children's wellbeing and learning at the core and comprises three inter-related elements: Principles, Practice and Outcomes (see Figure 1). All three elements are fundamental to pedagogy and program decision-making in school age care. A school age care program encompasses all the interactions, experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned, which occur in an environment designed to support wellbeing and foster children's learning and development.

The emphasis in the Framework is on the planned or intentional aspects of the program which includes supporting spontaneous play and leisure experiences initiated by children.

Children are receptive to a wide range of experiences. What is included or excluded from the program affects how children learn, develop and understand the world.

Working in collaboration with children and in partnership with families, educators use the Outcomes to guide their planning for children's wellbeing and learning. In order to engage children actively in learning, educators identify children's strengths and interests, choose appropriate strategies and design the environments. The Framework supports a model of program decision-making as an ongoing cycle. This involves educators drawing on their professional knowledge, including their in-depth knowledge of children. In collaboration with children and families, educators carefully evaluate to inform further planning.

#### **Program:**

in the school age care setting 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's wellbeing, development and learning'.

#### **Pedagogy:**

educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, program decision-making, teaching and learning.



## CHILDREN'S LEARNING

School age children experience learning in a wide range of settings. Family, school and the community (including school age care settings) provide diverse opportunities for children to explore relationships and ideas, and build competence and skills. The diversity in family and community life means that school age children experience *belonging*, *being* and *becoming* in many different ways. They bring their diverse experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge and skills to their learning.

Children's learning is dynamic, complex and holistic. Physical, social, emotional, personal, spiritual, creative, cognitive and linguistic aspects of learning are all intricately interwoven and interrelated.

Play is a context for learning that:

- allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness
- enhances dispositions such as curiosity and creativity
- enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning
- assists children to develop relationships and concepts
- stimulates a sense of wellbeing.

Children actively construct their own understandings and contribute to others' learning. They recognise their agency, capacity to initiate and lead learning, and their rights to participate in decisions that affect them, including their learning.

Leisure time experiences constructed by children and supported by informed educators promote children's dynamic, complex and holistic learning. Children's happiness, optimism and sense of fun are dispositions that are significant to their emotional wellbeing and resilience. In school age care settings, children's sense of responsibility for their learning is co-determined and skills and attitudes towards life-long learning are consolidated. Children actively involved in community building develop common interests and learn about citizenship.

Viewing children as active participants and decision-makers opens up possibilities for educators to move beyond pre-conceived expectations about what children can do and learn. This requires educators to respect and work with children's unique qualities, abilities and interests. When children are given choices and control they experience connections between actions and consequences.

Educators' practices and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's sense of identity and wellbeing which impacts on children's involvement and success in learning. Children thrive when families, educators and the wider community (especially schools) work together in partnership to support children's wellbeing and learning.

The Outcomes section of the Framework provides examples of evidence of children's learning and the educator's role in school age care settings.

## PEDAGOGY

The term *pedagogy* refers to the holistic nature of educators' professional practice (especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships), program decision-making, teaching and learning. When educators establish respectful relationships with children and families, they are able to work together to develop programs and experiences which are relevant to children and build on individual and groups interests. These experiences create possibilities for children's own ideas and activities, allowing them to celebrate their own interests and friendships and express themselves in different ways.

Educators' professional judgements are central to their active role in facilitating children's learning. In making professional judgements, they weave together their:

- professional knowledge and skills
- knowledge of children, families and communities
- awareness of how their beliefs and values impact on children's wellbeing and learning
- personal styles and past experiences.

They also draw on their creativity, imagination and insight to help them improvise and adjust their practice to suit the time, place and context of learning.

Different theories about childhood inform approaches to children's learning and development. School age care educators draw upon a range of perspectives in their work which may include:

- developmental theories that focus on describing and understanding the processes of change in children's learning, development and wellbeing over time



- socio-cultural theories that emphasise the central role that families and cultural groups play in children's wellbeing and learning, and the importance of respectful relationships, provide insight into social and cultural contexts of learning and development
- socio-behaviourist theories that focus on the role of experiences in shaping children's behaviour
- critical theories that invite educators to challenge assumptions about programs, and consider how their decisions may affect children differently
- post-structuralist theories that offer insights into issues of power, equity and social justice in childhood settings.

Drawing on a range of perspectives and theories can challenge traditional ways of seeing children, facilitating learning, and encourage educators, as individuals and with colleagues, to:

- investigate why they act in the ways that they do
- discuss and debate theories to identify strengths and limitations
- recognise how the theories and beliefs that they use to make sense of their work enable but also limit their actions and thoughts
- consider the consequences of their actions for children's experiences
- find new ways of working fairly and justly.

### **Agency:**

being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world.

### **Involvement:**

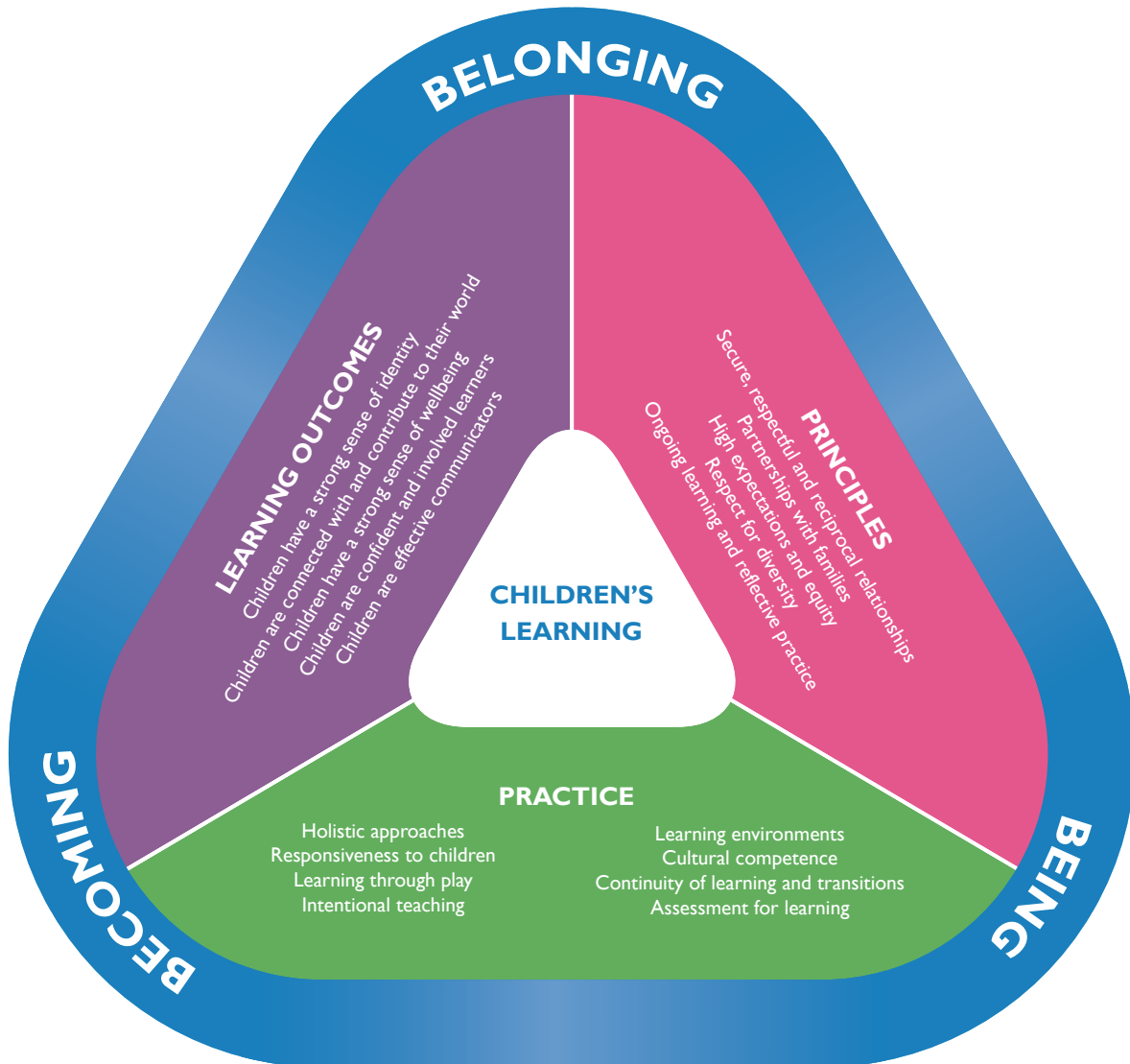
is a state of intense, whole hearted mental activity, characterised by sustained concentration and intrinsic motivation. Highly involved children (and adults) operate at the limit of their capacities, leading to changed ways of responding and understanding leading to deep level learning. (adapted from Laevers 1994)

### **Dispositions:**

enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to situations, for example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence. (Carr, 2001)

Figure 1: Elements of the Framework for School Age Care

This figure is a diagram showing the relationship between outcomes, principles and practice which centres on children’s learning. The three themes of Belonging, Being and Becoming are included, thereby overlapping all of these elements.



# PRINCIPLES

Refer to Figure 1 on page 9

The following are five Principles that reflect contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children's play, leisure and learning and pedagogy. In school age care settings the Principles underpin practice that is focused on collaborating with all children to make progress in relation to the Outcomes.

## 1. SECURE, RESPECTFUL AND RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS

Mutually supportive relationships are very important in school age care settings. Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships between children; between children and adults; and amongst adults provide the foundation upon which the community in school age care settings is established. When children feel safe, secure, respected and given appropriate responsibility<sup>7</sup> they feel like valued members of the school age care community. Children who are supported to understand themselves in this positive way, experience a sense of belonging that nurtures the development of their self esteem. Self esteem is critical to children's capacity to develop positive images about their abilities, interests and personal future.

Educators who are attuned to children's thoughts and feelings support the development of a strong sense of wellbeing and social competencies. Exhibiting qualities of fairness, humour, sympathy and understanding builds respectful and trusting relationships with children, families, colleagues and other professionals. Educators foster independence and initiative thereby nurturing children's agency and leadership skills.

## 2. PARTNERSHIPS

School age children are involved in a range of activities throughout their day. Children have the potential to be affected by people, places and events. Families, schools and local communities contribute to the opportunities provided for this age group. Children feel positive when there are strong links between these settings and outcomes are most likely to be achieved when educators work in partnership with these contributors. Educators recognise that families are children's first and most influential teachers. They create a welcoming environment where all children and families are respected and actively encouraged to collaborate with educators about program decisions in order to ensure that experiences are meaningful. Further, educators recognise the school setting and the significance of the learning and teaching opportunities provided for children. They are sensitive to the conduit role they provide between families and schools. Educators also recognise and explore community activities. These partnerships shape children's dispositions towards citizenship.

Partnerships are based on effective communication which builds the foundations of understanding about each other's expectations and attitudes, and build on the strength of each others' knowledge.

In genuine partnerships, children, families, schools, communities and educators:

- value each other's knowledge
- value each other's contributions to and roles in children's life
- trust each other
- communicate freely and respectfully with each other
- share insights and perspectives with and about children
- engage in shared decision-making.

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<sup>7</sup> Kennedy, A., & Stonehouse, A. (2004). *Shared visions for school age care (2nd ed.)*. Melbourne, Victoria: Department of Human Services.

Partnerships also involve children with additional needs, educators, families and support professionals working together to explore the potential in every day events, routines and play so that children are provided with opportunities to learn from active participation and engagement in these experiences.

“Our focus should be on recreation and fun, as families and the community are entrusting their children to us and they have the right to expect that their children will be cared for in an appropriate manner.” – Judy

### 3. HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND EQUITY

School age care educators who are committed to equity believe in all children’s capacities to access opportunities and succeed, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities. They nurture children’s optimism, happiness and sense of fun. Children progress well when they, their parents, educators and the community hold high expectations for achievements and contribution to the society.

Educators recognise and respond to barriers to children achieving a positive self identity, sense of purpose and positive view of personal future. In response they challenge practices that contribute to inequities and make decisions that promote inclusion and participation of all children. By developing their professional knowledge and skills, and working in partnership with children, families, communities, other services and agencies, they continually strive to find equitable and effective ways to ensure that all children have opportunities to experience a sense of personal worth and achieve outcomes.

### 4. RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

There are many ways of living, *being* and of knowing. Children are born *belonging* to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities. Being aware of and understanding diversity in school age care means taking into account the context of different family practices, values and beliefs. Educators endeavour to understand the

histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families so they can better support children in their care. They value children’s different capacities and abilities.

Educators recognise that diversity contributes to the richness of our society and provides a valid evidence base about ways of knowing. For Australia it also includes promoting greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and *being*. When school age care educators respect the diversity of families and communities, and the aspirations they hold for children, they are able to nurture children’s wellbeing and foster children’s development. They make program decisions that uphold all children’s rights to have their cultures, identities, abilities and strengths acknowledged and valued, and respond to the complexity of children’s and families’ lives.

Educators think critically about opportunities and dilemmas that can arise from diversity and take action to redress unfairness. They provide opportunities to explore similarities and difference and consider interdependence and how we can learn to live together.

### 5. ONGOING LEARNING AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Educators continually seek ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities. They collaborate with children, families and community, and value the continuity and richness of local knowledge shared by community members, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.

Reflective practice is a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. Its intention is to gather information and gain insights that support, inform and enrich decision-making about children’s wellbeing and development. As professionals, educators examine what happens in their settings and reflect on what they might change.

Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. Educators often frame their reflective practice within a set of overarching questions, developing more specific questions for particular areas of enquiry.

Overarching questions to guide reflection include:

- What are my understandings of each child?
- What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?

- Who is advantaged when I work in this way? Who is disadvantaged?
- What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?
- What aspects of my work are not helped by the theories and guidance that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?
- Are there other theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced? What are they? How might those theories and that knowledge affect my practice?

A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when educators and those with whom they work are all involved in an ongoing cycle of review through which current practices are examined, outcomes reviewed and new ideas generated. In such a climate, issues relating to program quality, environment design, equity and children's wellbeing can be raised and debated.

### **Collaboration:**

involves working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through information sharing, joint planning and the development of common understandings and objectives.

# PRACTICE

Refer to Figure 1 on page 9

The principles of school age care pedagogy underpin practice. Educators draw on a rich repertoire of pedagogical practices to promote children's learning by:

- adopting holistic approaches
- collaborating with children
- planning and implementing play and leisure activities
- acting with intentionality
- creating physical and social school age care environments that have a positive impact on children's development, wellbeing and community-building
- valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families
- providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transition
- using reflection and documentation about children's wellbeing and learning to inform and evaluate programs and to support children in achieving outcomes.

## HOLISTIC APPROACHES

School age care educators take a holistic approach to their roles and responsibilities recognising the connectedness of mind, body and spirit. They focus attention on children's physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well as cognitive aspects of learning as it pertains to lifelong learning. They are particularly concerned with how children's social and physical development and wellbeing impacts on capacity and potential to become effective citizens. Each outcome is viewed as being integrated and interconnected.

An integrated, holistic approach focuses on connections to the social and to the natural world. Educators foster children's capacity to value and

respect the broader social environment and to be world-wise; and as well understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land.

Educators recognise the connections between children, families and communities and the importance of reciprocal relationships and partnerships. They see learning as a social activity and value collaborative activities and community participation.

Each school age care setting can be considered as a community itself, just as it is also part of the local and global community. As such the school age care community has the power to affect and be affected by issues within and outside the setting. School age care educators consider children's needs including nutrition and safety. They see children as capable and responsible, and provide places for them to socialise and play with friends and to relax and have fun. School age care settings are places to learn about self, others and the world – in other words learning about living and learning through living<sup>8</sup>.

## COLLABORATION WITH CHILDREN

School age care educators are responsive to all children's strengths, abilities and interests. They value and build on children's strengths, skills and knowledge to ensure their wellbeing and motivation and engagement in experiences. They respond to children's expertise, cultural traditions and ways of knowing, the multiple languages spoken by some children, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and the strategies used by children with additional needs to negotiate their everyday lives.

Responding to children's ideas and play forms an important basis for program decision-making. In response to children's evolving ideas and interests,

8 Kennedy, A., & Stonehouse, A. (2004). *Shared visions for school age care (2nd ed.)*. Melbourne, Victoria: Department of Human Services.

educators assess, anticipate and extend children's ideas via open ended questioning, providing feedback, challenging their thinking and guiding their actions.

Responsive relationships are significant features of school age care settings. This form of collaborative engagement is evidenced between educators and children, among children, between educators and parents and various stakeholders including schools, working to support children, families and the community.

Responsive relationships are strengthened as educators and children share decisions, respect and trust each other and learn together. Responsiveness enables educators to respectfully enter children's play and ongoing projects, stimulate their thinking and enrich their growth and development. Responsive relationships with families and the local community including schools, enables educators to establish safe and secure environments for children.

“Our program is child orientated. We have group discussions with the children to find out what it is that they want to do. How can you plan for that? I don't spend hours writing things up but we do what the children suggest. We use a simple evaluation form to record the children's ideas. The children's comments are insightful.” – **Whitney**

## LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Play and leisure activities provide opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. When children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings. Play provides a supportive environment where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. Play can expand children's thinking and enhance their desire to know and to learn. In these ways play can promote positive dispositions towards learning. Children's immersion in their play illustrates how play enables them to simply enjoy *being*.

School age care educators take on many roles in play and leisure activities with children and use a range of strategies to enrich development. They allow *time* and create *spaces* that encourage children to explore, build relationships, solve problems, create and construct. They also recognise spontaneous 'teachable moments' as they occur, and use them to build on children's experiences.

Educators actively support the inclusion of all children in play and leisure activities. They also help children to recognise when play is unfair and offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair and inclusive community.

“My philosophy is that children have a structured busy day and that we need to be as unstructured as we possibly can within the bounds of reason. We give the children choice and freedom to play. We do things based on children's interests. We have a lot of fun.” – **Jackie**

## INTENTIONALITY

Intentionality refers to actions that are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful. Educators who engage in intentional actions recognise that learning occurs in social contexts, and that interactions and conversations are vitally important for learning. They actively promote children's learning through worthwhile and challenging experiences and interactions that foster high-level thinking skills and they seize opportunities in activities and conversations to extend or affirm children's learning. They listen with intent to the conversations of children and use strategies such as modelling and demonstrating, open questioning, speculating, explaining, engaging in shared thinking and problem solving to extend children's thinking and learning. Educators move flexibly in and out of different roles and draw on different strategies as the context changes. The documentation and monitoring of children's wellbeing and engagement with learning life skills and citizenship supports effective program planning. Intentionality utilises professional knowledge and strategies that reflect contemporary theories and research concerning children's play, leisure and learning.



School age care educators are conscious of making the most of opportunities to follow up children's needs and interests. They make use of spontaneous 'teachable moments' to scaffold children's development. These incidental opportunities are significant and meaningful to children's *being* and *becoming* and achievement of the Outcomes.

## ENVIRONMENTS

School age care environments are welcoming spaces when they reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the setting in response to their interests and needs. Environments that support wellbeing and development are vibrant and flexible spaces that are responsive to the welfare and abilities of each child. They cater for different needs and interests and invite children and families to contribute ideas and questions. Educators can support engagement by allowing time for meaningful interactions, by providing a range of opportunities for individual and shared experiences, and by finding opportunities for children to go into and contribute to their local community.

School age care is characterised by opportunities to develop relationships. Some children develop social skills through quiet play such as talking to friends. Accordingly, space needs to be available for small and large groups of children to gather. Other children socialise through physical play requiring open spaces to develop physical skills and social skills such as team building and leadership. Indoor and outdoor environments support all aspects of children's learning and invite conversations between children, school age care educators, families and the broader community. They promote opportunities for sustained shared thinking and collaborative activities.

Resources need to reflect the breadth of age groups and interests and capabilities that are sharing the environment and be accessible to children so they can choose and be responsible for their actions. Access to digital technologies can enable children to locate global connections and resources, and encourage new ways of thinking and communicating.

School age care environments and resources can also emphasise accountability for a sustainable future and promote children's understanding about their responsibility to care for the environment, day to day and for long term sustainability. These spaces promote the development of life skills such as growing and preparing food, waste reduction and recycling.

School age care settings are commonly located in a variety of venues and many are in shared facilities. The space should be flexible enough to allow for the range of activities necessary for children to participate in opportunities to achieve the Outcomes. Educators demonstrate high level communication skills with all stakeholders to ensure the environment supports children's wellbeing, development and enriched experiences.

“In this room with vinyl floor and sinks we do all our craft. Out there is our adventure playground. We use the verandah as well for activities. We keep two rooms clear for group projects or games and dancing. It works really well.” – **Wendy**

## CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences. This is evident in everyday practice when educators demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their own cultural competence in a two way process with children, families and communities.

Educators view culture and the context of family as central to children's sense of *being* and *belonging*, and to success in lifelong learning. Educators also seek to promote children's cultural competence.

Cultural competence is much more than awareness of cultural differences. It is the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. Cultural competence encompasses:

- being aware of one's own world view
- developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences
- gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views
- developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.

“It is naive to assume that there is a unified approach that we can take in order to determine the needs of children and families. Each family and each community has unique traditions specific to their cultural backgrounds. Just as non-Indigenous families are not all alike there is also diversity within Indigenous families.” – **Miranda.**

## CONTINUITY AND TRANSITIONS

School age care settings are situated in complementary relationships with homes, schools and community spaces with different places and environments having their own purposes, expectations and ways of doing things. In learning life skills children draw on the understandings, skills and attitudes from the range of settings in which they engage. Educators work with children, families, other professionals and the broader community to ensure successful transitions between settings and that children feel secure and confident. They assist children to understand the traditions, routines and practices of the settings to which they are moving and to feel comfortable with the process of change.

Children are likely to engage with other children and the educators in school age care settings over a significant period of time. Ensuring children have an active role in preparing for transitions helps them to feel motivated to contribute and become engaged with the activities within settings. As children make transitions between settings (including school) educators from school age care settings, schools and other children’s services, support the transitions by sharing appropriate information about each child’s capabilities and interests.

”The garden is tended by children in the afternoons and during vacation care. It is a great source of fresh herbs and vegetables for the school tuckshop and our cooking activities, especially for afternoon teas”. – **Sian**

“You don’t just have children for one year like a classroom teacher. At after school care, children are in your service for at least seven years. You see them grow up.” – **Jan**

## EVALUATION FOR WELLBEING AND LEARNING

Educators gather knowledge about children’s wellbeing and learning as they reflect and engage in processes such as scanning, monitoring, gathering and analysing information about how children feel and what children know, can do and understand. It is part of an ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children’s wellbeing, development and learning.

It is important because it enables educators in partnership with children, families and other professionals to:

- plan effectively for children’s wellbeing
- plan collaboratively with children
- communicate about children’s wellbeing and development
- determine the extent to which all children are progressing toward realising outcomes and if not, what might be impeding their progress
- identify children who may need additional support in order to achieve particular outcomes, providing that support or assisting families to access specialist help
- evaluate the effectiveness of environments and experiences offered and the approaches taken to nurture children’s wellbeing and to enrich children’s development
- reflect on pedagogy that will suit the context and children.

Educators use a variety of strategies to collect, document, organise, synthesise and interpret the information that they gather about children’s wellbeing and enrichment to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. They search for appropriate ways to collect rich and meaningful information that depicts children’s wellbeing and development in context, describes their progress and identifies their strengths, skills and understandings. When school age care educators and children collaborate about their wellbeing and experiences they use approaches that have become powerful ways to make the process visible to children and their families, educators and other professionals.

The five Outcomes in this Framework, as outlined later, provide school age care educators with key reference points against which children's experiences can be identified, documented and communicated to children, families and other professionals. Educators can reflect on children's wellbeing and how children have developed, how they have engaged with increasingly complex ideas and participated in increasingly sophisticated experiences. All children demonstrate their learning in different ways. Approaches to evaluation that are culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive to the social, physical and intellectual capabilities will acknowledge children's abilities and strengths, and allow them to demonstrate competence. Evaluation, when undertaken in collaboration with children can support and empower them to see themselves as capable and foster independence and initiative.

When educators reflect on their role in children's lives they reflect on their own views and understandings of theory, research and practice to focus on:

- the experiences and environments they provide and how that links to the intended outcomes
- the extent to which they know and value the culturally specific knowledge about children that is embedded within the community in which they are working
- each child's opportunities in the context of their families, drawing family perspectives, understandings, experiences and expectations

- the opportunities which build on what children already know and what they bring to the school age care setting
- evidence that the experiences offered are inclusive of all children and culturally appropriate
- not making assumptions about children's development or setting lower expectations for some children because of unacknowledged biases
- incorporating pedagogical practices that reflect knowledge of diverse perspectives and contribute to children's wellbeing and successful learning
- whether there are sufficiently challenging experiences for all children
- the evidence that demonstrates children feel safe and secure, and are engaged
- how they can expand the range of ways they debrief and reflect to make evaluation richer and more useful.

“Sometimes I am so absorbed in what is happening that to take a step back and reflect is very difficult. I want to know things like ... Do staff have time to talk to children? Are staff implementing routines effectively? Do children feel relaxed when they come to after school care?” – Jene



# OUTCOMES

Refer to Figure 1 on page 9

The five Outcomes are designed to capture the integrated and complex wellbeing, development and learning of all children. The outcomes are:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.

The outcomes are broad and observable.

They acknowledge that children in school age care settings have choices and opportunities to collaborate with each other and educators. Children learn in a variety of ways and vary in their capabilities and pace of learning. Considerations need to be given to *time* and *place*. Children engage with increasingly complex ideas and learning experiences, which are transferable to other situations.

Learning in relation to the outcomes is influenced by:

- each child's wellbeing, current capabilities, dispositions and preferences
- educators' practices and the environment
- engagement with each child's family and community including school
- the integration of wellbeing and development across the outcomes.

Children's wellbeing, development and enrichment is achieved in different and equally meaningful ways. Development is not always predictable and linear. Educators plan and collaborate with children and the Outcomes in mind.

The following Outcomes demonstrate how the three elements of the Framework: Principles, Practice and Outcomes combine to guide program decision-making and assessment to promote children's opportunities for *belonging, being and becoming*.

Key components in each outcome are expanded to provide examples of evidence that educators may observe in children as they engage in play and leisure activities. Examples of practice to promote children's wellbeing and enrichment are also included. There will be many other ways that children demonstrate wellbeing and capabilities within and across the outcomes. Educators understand, engage with and promote children's wellbeing and development. They talk with families and communities to make locally based decisions, relevant to children and their community.

There is provision for educators to list specific examples of evidence and practice that are culturally and contextually appropriate to each child and their settings.

The points described within each outcome are relevant to children of all ages. Knowledge of individual children, their interests, strengths and capabilities will guide educators' professional judgement to ensure all children are engaging in a range of experiences across all the Outcomes in ways that optimise their wellbeing and capabilities.





## OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

*Belonging, being and becoming* are integral parts of identity.

Children learn about themselves and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities. This includes their relationships with people, places and things and the actions and responses of others. Identity is not fixed. It is shaped by experiences. When children have positive experiences they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected, and feel a sense of *belonging*. Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity – ‘who I am’, ‘how I belong’ and ‘what is my influence?’

In school age care settings children develop a sense of *belonging* when they feel accepted, develop attachments and trust those that care for them. As children are developing their sense of identity, they explore different aspects of it (physical, social, emotional, spiritual, cognitive), through their play and

their relationships. When children feel safe, secure and supported they grow in confidence to explore and learn.

The concept of *being* reminds educators to focus on children in the here and now, and of the importance of children’s right to be a child and experience the joy of childhood. *Being* involves children developing an awareness of their social and cultural heritage, of gender and their significance in their world.

*Becoming* includes children building and shaping their identity through their evolving experiences and relationships which include change and transitions. Children are always learning about the impact of their personal beliefs and values. Children’s agency, as well as guidance, care and teaching by families and educators shape children’s experiences of *becoming*.

## OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- Children develop their autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

### Children feel safe, secure, and supported

#### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- establish and maintain respectful, trusting relationships with other children and educators
- use effective routines to make predicted transitions
- sense and respond to a feeling of belonging
- openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others
- respond to ideas and suggestions from others
- initiate interactions and conversations with trusted educators
- confidently explore and engage with social and physical environments through relationships and play
- initiate and join in play and leisure activities

#### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- spend time interacting and conversing with children, listening and responding sensitively as they express their ideas and needs
- support children's attachment through consistent and warm nurturing relationships
- support children in times of change and bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar
- recognise that feelings of distress, fear or discomfort may take some time to resolve
- acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways
- support the development of children's friendships
- acknowledge the importance of opportunities for children to relax through play and leisure

*Add your own examples from your context:*

## OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

**Children develop their autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency**

**This is evident, for example, when children:**

- participate in a range of freely chosen play and leisure opportunities
- demonstrate awareness of the needs and rights of others
- are open to new challenges and discoveries
- demonstrate awareness of the opinions of others about their efforts
- increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others
- take considered risk in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected
- recognise their individual achievements and the achievements of others
- demonstrate a capacity for self-regulation, negotiating and sharing behaviours
- persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful
- display a willingness to achieve to the best of one's ability

**Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- encourage children to make choices and decisions
- encourage children to collaborate with peers and educators to plan programs
- provide children with strategies to make informed choices about their behaviours
- promote children's sense of belonging, connectedness and wellbeing
- maintain high expectations of each child's capabilities
- mediate and assist children to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others
- display encouragement and enthusiasm for children's attempts
- motivate and encourage children to succeed when they are faced with challenges
- provide time and environment for children to engage in both individual and collaborative pursuits

*Add your own examples from your context:*



## OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

### Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities

#### This is evident, for example, when children:

- feel recognised and respected for who they are
- explore different identities and points of view in play and discussions
- develop a wider sense of the diverse values and beliefs held by others
- share aspects of their culture with the other children and educators
- use their home language to construct meaning
- develop strong foundations in both the culture and language/s of their family and of the broader community without compromising their cultural identities
- develop their social and cultural heritage through engagement with Elders and community members
- reach out and communicate for comfort, assistance and companionship
- celebrate and share their contributions and achievements with others

#### Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:

- listen to and learn about children's understandings of themselves, who they are and their connectedness to others – a shared identity as Australians
- ensure all children experience pride and confidence in their achievements
- share children's successes with families
- show respect for and a deep understanding of diversity, acknowledging the varying approaches of children, families, communities and cultures
- acknowledge and understand that children construct meaning in many different ways
- maintain and build on the knowledge, languages and understandings that children bring
- talk with children in respectful ways about similarities and differences in people, identities and culture
- provide rich and diverse resources that reflect children's social worlds

*Add your own examples from your context:*

#### **Inclusion:**

involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in program decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their understandings and to value difference.

## OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

**This is evident, for example, when children:**

- show interest in other children and being part of a group
- spend a large proportion of their time with peers
- establish and maintain relationships with peers
- engage in and contribute to play and leisure experiences
- express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively
- empathise with and express concern for others
- display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives
- reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others
- learn to control strong emotions and impulses

**Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- organise environments and spaces in ways that promote small and large group interactions and meaningful play and leisure
- model care, empathy and respect for children, staff and families
- initiate one-to-one interactions with children
- model explicit communication strategies to support children to sustain productive relationships with other children in play and social experiences
- acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote consideration of alternative perspectives and social inclusion

*Add your own examples from your context:*



## OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

Experiences of relationships and participation in communities contribute to children's *belonging, being and becoming*. School age children are increasingly involved in a wide range of communities. These might include families, schools, school age care settings or local communities. As children participate in these communities they develop their capacity for independence and self direction. Having a positive self identity and experiencing respectful, responsive relationships strengthens children's interest and skills in *being and becoming* active contributors to their world.

During childhood, a lot of time is spent by children in peer-related activities. Over time the variety and complexity of ways in which children connect and participate with others increases. Friendships are an important feature of children's relationships and assist children in building social capital and resilience. Children are mindful of the way others interact with them and they develop understandings that their actions or responses affect how others feel or experience *belonging*.

When educators create environments in which children can contribute in meaningful ways, they are supporting children to take responsibility for their lives. Children who experience mutually enjoyable, caring and respectful relationships with people including their peers and the environment, respond accordingly. As children participate collaboratively in everyday routines, events and experiences and have opportunities to contribute to decisions, they learn to live interdependently.

Children's connectedness and different ways of *belonging* with people, country and communities helps them to learn ways of *being* which reflect the values, traditions and practices of their families and communities. Over time this learning transforms the ways they interact with others.

## OUTCOME 2:

### CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

**Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation**

#### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- recognise that they have a right to belong to many communities
- cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play and leisure experiences
- take action to assist other children to participate in social groups
- broaden their understanding of the world in which they live
- express an opinion in matters that affect them
- build on their own social experiences to explore other ways of being
- learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately
- understand different ways of contributing through play and meaningful projects
- respond positively to others, reaching out for company and friendship
- contribute to fair decision-making about matters that affect them

#### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- promote a sense of community within the school age care setting
- build connections between the school age care setting, schools and the local community
- provide opportunities for children to investigate ideas, complex concepts and ethical issues that are relevant to their lives and their local communities
- model language and actions that children can use to express ideas, negotiate roles and collaborate to achieve goals
- scaffold children's opportunities to participate and contribute to group activities
- plan opportunities for children to participate in significant ways in group discussions and shared decision-making about rules and expectations and activities

*Add your own examples from your context:*

**OUTCOME 2:****CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD****Children respond to diversity with respect****This is evident, for example, when children:**

- use opportunities to develop understandings about the diversity of culture, heritage, background and tradition
- demonstrate awareness of connections, similarities and differences between people and react in positive ways
- listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing
- practise inclusive ways of achieving coexistence

**Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- plan experiences and provide resources that broaden children's perspectives and encourage appreciation of diversity
- engage in interactions with children that promote respect for diversity and value distinctiveness
- expose children to different languages and dialects and encourage appreciation of linguistic diversity
- encourage children to listen to others and to respect diverse perspectives
- demonstrate positive responses to diversity in their own behaviour
- explore the culture, heritage, backgrounds and traditions of children within the context of their community

*Add your own examples from your context:*

**OUTCOME 2:****CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD****Children become aware of fairness****This is evident, for example, when children:**

- become aware of ways in which people are included or excluded from physical and social environments
- develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness
- are empowered to make choices and problem solve to meet their needs in particular contexts
- think critically about fair and unfair behaviour
- understand and evaluate ways in which texts and media construct identities and create stereotypes

**Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- notice and listen carefully to children's concerns and discuss diverse perspectives on issues of inclusion and exclusion and fair and unfair behaviour
- engage children in discussions about respectful and equal relations such as when a child dominates in the use of resources
- analyse and discuss with children ways in which stereotypes are portrayed
- draw children's attention to issues of fairness relevant to them in the school age care setting and community

*Add your own examples from your context:*



**OUTCOME 2:****CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD****Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment****This is evident, for example, when children:**

- demonstrate an increasing knowledge of, and respect for natural and constructed environments
- demonstrate an awareness of the impact of human activity on environments and the interdependence of living things
- participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes
- explore, infer, predict and hypothesise in order to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants and animals
- show appreciation and care for natural and constructed environments
- act with moral and ethical integrity
- appreciate social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity

**Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- embed sustainability in daily routines and practices
- discuss the ways the life and health of living things are interconnected
- collaborate to develop daily routines and practices that embrace sustainability
- work together with children to show respect, care and appreciation for the natural environment
- provide children with access to a range of natural materials in their environment
- enable children to care for and learn from the land
- discuss the nature of children's connectedness to the land and demonstrate respect for community protocols

*Add your own examples from your context:*





### OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

Wellbeing incorporates both physical and psychological aspects and is central to *belonging, being and becoming*. Without a strong sense of wellbeing it is difficult to have a sense of belonging, to trust others and feel confident in *being*, and to optimistically engage in experiences that contribute to *becoming*.

Wellbeing includes good physical health, feelings of happiness, satisfaction and successful social functioning. It influences the way children interact in their environments. A strong sense of wellbeing provides children with confidence and optimism which maximise their potential. It encourages the development of children's innate exploratory drive, a sense of agency and a desire to interact with responsive others.

Wellbeing is correlated with resilience, providing children with the capacity to cope with day to day stress and challenges. The readiness to persevere when faced with unfamiliar and challenging situations creates the opportunity for success and achievement.

In childhood, dexterity and flexibility in physical development is evident in the wide range of activities children are able to perform. Their coordination allows children to undertake tasks such as needlework and playing a musical instrument, and ball sports and bike riding. They undertake more complex physical activities particularly in the outdoor environment.

Children's wellbeing can be affected by all their experiences within and outside of their school age care settings. To support children's learning, it is essential that educators attend to children's wellbeing by providing warm, trusting relationships, predictable

and safe environments, affirmation and respect for all aspects of their physical, emotional, social, cognitive, linguistic, creative and spiritual *being*. By acknowledging children's cultural and social identity, and responding sensitively to their emotional states, educators build children's confidence, sense of wellbeing and willingness to engage in learning.

Children's developing resilience and their ability to take increasing responsibility for self-help and basic health routines promote a sense of independence and confidence. In school age care settings, children are aware of the importance of living and learning interdependently with others.

Learning about healthy lifestyles, including nutrition, personal hygiene, physical fitness, relaxation, emotions and social relationships is integral to wellbeing and self-confidence and a core feature of the learning that occurs in school age care settings. Physical wellbeing contributes to children's ability to socialise, concentrate, cooperate and learn. In school age care, children take responsibility for their health, hygiene and personal care and become mindful of their own and others' safety. Routines provide opportunities for children to learn about health and safety. Good nutrition is essential to healthy living and enables children to be active participants in play and leisure. School age care settings may provide opportunities for children to experience a range of healthy foods and to learn about food choices from educators and other children. In play and leisure physical activities are prioritised to provide children with the foundations for their growing independence and satisfaction in being able to do things for themselves.

## OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

### Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing

#### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- demonstrate trust and confidence
- share humour, happiness and satisfaction
- celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others
- increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others
- enjoy moments of solitude
- make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations
- show self-regulation and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others
- use moral reasoning to solve problems
- assert their capabilities and independence while demonstrating increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others
- recognise the contributions they make to shared projects and experiences and anticipate realistic consequences

#### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- show care, understanding and respect for all children
- collaborate with children to plan and document their achievements and share their successes with their families
- challenge and support children to engage and persevere
- build upon and extend children's ideas
- maintain high expectations of each child's capabilities
- affirm children's decision-making and efforts
- welcome children and families, sharing aspects of their culture and spiritual lives
- discuss emotions, responses to events, emotional regulation and self-control
- collaborate with children to negotiate their rights in relation to the rights of others
- provide time and space for children to challenge and practice physical prowess

*Add your own examples from your context:*

## OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

### Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

#### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- are happy, healthy, safe and connected to others
- regulate their emotions by concentrating, focussing and calming
- combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve complex patterns of activity including dance, creative movement, drama, and sports
- manipulate equipment and manage tools with increasing competence and skill
- show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition
- show enthusiasm for participating in physical play
- negotiate environments to ensure the safety and wellbeing of themselves and others
- seek out positive experiences

#### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- collaborate to plan energetic physical activities, including dance, drama, movement, sports and games
- draw on family and community experiences and expertise to include familiar games and physical activities
- provide a wide range of resources to develop and consolidate children's fine and gross motor skills
- engage children in experiences, conversations and routines that promote safety, healthy lifestyles and nutrition
- provide a range of active and relaxing experiences throughout the day
- adjust transition and routines to take into account children's needs and interests

*Add your own examples from your context:*



## OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

Play and leisure activities undertaken in school age care settings provide children with the confidence to take responsibility for their own learning, personal regulation, leadership development and contribution to the social environment. School age children are involved in a wide range of activities throughout the day and they have a greater capacity for independence, self-direction and collaboration. Children are engaged with peers, family and educators and the community in formal and informal learning opportunities.

The environments for school age care settings provide children with access to opportunities for play and leisure activities in which they experience fun, enjoyment, mastery and success. When children participate in decision-making about indoor and outdoor spaces they experience a positive sense of self, sense of belonging and develop an interest in civic engagement. A sense of security and sound wellbeing gives children the confidence to experiment, explore and to try out new ideas. Children use processes such as exploration, collaboration and problem solving across all aspects of the program. Developing dispositions such as confidence, curiosity, persistence, imagination and creativity enables children to participate in and gain from learning. Effective learners are also able to

transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another and to locate and use resources for their own means.

Children engage when they are motivated and can participate in purposeful activities. Further they are more likely to be confident and involved when their family and community experiences and understandings are recognised and included in the school age care setting.

Educators' knowledge of individual children is crucial to providing an environment and experiences that will optimise learning. They support children to experience a sense of justice and a sense of security in the school age care community. Within this community children develop dispositions of citizenship which include empathy, moral reasoning and moral behaviour.

Active involvement in play and leisure activities builds children's understandings of concepts and the creative thinking and inquiry processes that are necessary for lifelong learning. Children can challenge and extend their own thinking, and that of others, and create new knowledge in collaborative interactions and negotiations. Children's active involvement changes what they know, can do, value and transforms their opportunities.

## OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

- Children develop dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children use a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

**Children develop dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity**

### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- freely follow and extend their own interests with enthusiasm, curiosity, energy and concentration
- investigate, imagine and explore ideas
- initiate and contribute to play and leisure experiences emerging from their own ideas
- participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences
- persevere even when they find a task difficult and experience the satisfaction of achievement

### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- recognise and value children's involvement in a variety of play experiences
- provide environments that are flexible and open-ended
- respond to children's dispositions by commenting on them and providing encouragement and additional ideas
- encourage children to engage in both individual and collaborative explorative and reflective processes
- listen carefully to children's ideas and discuss with them how these ideas might be developed
- model inquiry processes, including observation, curiosity and imagination, try new ideas and take on challenges
- explore the diversity of cultures and social identities

*Add your own examples from your context:*

## OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

Children use a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating

### This is evident, for example, when children:

- apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations
- create and use representation to organise, record and communicate ideas and concepts
- make predictions and generalisations about their daily activities, aspects of the natural world and environments
- manipulate objects and experiment with cause and effect through trial and error
- use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learnt from these experiences
- show leadership, and follow directions given by other children
- make choices and take control

### Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:

- plan environments with appropriate levels of challenge where children are encouraged to explore, experiment and take appropriate risks
- provide experiences that encourage children to investigate ideas, solve problems and use complex concepts and thinking, reasoning and hypothesizing
- encourage children to communicate and make visible their own ideas and theories
- collaborate with children and model reasoning, predicting and reflecting processes and language
- provide opportunities for children to initiate and lead activities and experiences

*Add your own examples from your context:*



## OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

### Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another

#### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- make connections between experiences, concepts and processes
- use the processes of play, reflection and investigation to solve problems
- try out strategies that were effective to solve problems in one situation in a new context

#### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- support children applying their learning in new ways and talk about this with them in ways that grow their understanding
- support children to construct multiple solutions to problems and use different ways of thinking
- plan for time and space where children discuss and reflect to see similarities and connections between existing and new ideas
- share and transfer knowledge about children's understandings from one setting to another, by exchanging information with families and with professionals in other settings
- understand that competence is not tied to any particular language, dialect or culture

*Add your own examples from your context:*



## OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

**Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials**

**This is evident, for example, when children:**

- experience the benefits and pleasures of shared exploration of new ideas
- explore the purpose and function of a range of tools, media,
- manipulate resources to investigate, take apart, assemble, invent and construct
- experiment with and use information and communication technologies (ICT) to investigate and problem solve
- explore ideas and theories using imagination and creativity
- use feedback from themselves and others to revise and build on an idea

**Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- provide opportunities for choice and collaboration
- involve children in the broader community beyond the school age care setting
- create possibilities for peer scaffolding
- introduce appropriate tools, technologies and media and provide the skills, knowledge and techniques
- develop their own confidence with technologies available to children in the setting
- provide resources that encourage children to represent their thinking

*Add your own examples from your context:*



## OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

In school age care settings children build individual capabilities as well as community connections. Children use their communication skills particularly as listeners and speakers to engage in relationships with others. Play in all its dimensions provides children with opportunities for communication. This is important to the development of self identity including sense of personal empowerment, a sense of purpose, *being*, a positive outlook, *becoming*, and community responsibility, *belonging*.

Children need effective communication skills to facilitate and maintain relationships with peers and the adults in school age care settings. They are highly motivated to exchange ideas, thoughts, questions and feelings. In exchanging ideas and participating in collaborative activities children are respectful listeners as well as thoughtful contributors. Further, the diverse range of capabilities and interests of children mean that children practice communication with others who are more and less competent than themselves. They learn to adjust their communication style to engage with the receivers of their messages.

School age care settings provide unique opportunities for children to utilise their literacy and numeracy capabilities for a range of meaningful activities and life skills. Positive attitudes and competencies in literacy and numeracy are essential for children's disposition for life-long learning. In play and leisure children use their literacy and numeracy skills and understandings in practical ways. Children practice their skills and understandings and use a range of tools and media to express themselves, connect with others and extend themselves. The tools and media used are similar to those used in more formal education settings.

However through play and leisure activities children experiment and gain confidence in using strategies such as music, dance and drama and various communication technologies such as computers and DVDs to access information and to convey ideas.

Children's use of their home languages underpins their sense of identity and their conceptual development. Children feel a sense of *belonging* when their language, interaction styles and ways of communicating are valued. They have the right to be continuing users of their home language as well as to develop competency in Standard Australian English.

“I wish it was my turn to choose cooking every week. I like the books Gail has at ‘afties’. I choose the food recipes and put stickers on the pages then Gail goes to the shop to get what we need. Sometimes she makes me write the shopping list.” – **Nicola**

### Texts:

things that we read, view and listen to and that we create in order to share meaning. Texts can be print-based, such as books, magazines and posters or screen-based, for example internet sites and DVDs. Many texts are multimodal, integrating images, written words and/or sound.

## OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- Children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies

### Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

#### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language
- convey and construct messages with purpose and confidence, building on home/family and community literacies
- use language and representations from play, music and art to share and project meaning
- contribute their ideas and experiences in play, small and large group discussions, including decision-making opportunities such as making group rules
- are independent communicators who initiate Standard Australian English and home language conversations and demonstrate the ability to meet the listeners' needs
- interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, clarify and challenge thinking, debate, negotiate and share new understandings
- convey and construct messages with purpose and confidence, for example expressing needs, conflict resolution, following directions
- express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others
- use verbal and non-verbal language to communicate thinking
- participate in play opportunities that promote social interaction with peers

#### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- respond sensitively and appropriately to children's conversations
- value children's linguistic heritage and with family and community members encourage the use of and acquisition of home languages and Standard Australian English
- collaborate about routines and procedures
- model language and encourage children to express themselves through language in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes including leading and following directions
- engage in sustained communication with children about ideas and experiences
- include real-life experiences and resources to promote children's use of literacy and numeracy
- allow children to direct their own play experiences with their peers

*Add your own examples from your context:*

## OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

### Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts

#### **This is evident, for example, when children:**

- enjoy stories, verse and lyrics
- view, listen to and enjoy printed, visual and multimedia texts
- take on roles of literacy and numeracy users in their play
- actively use, engage with and share the enjoyment of language and texts in a range of ways
- recognise and engage with written and oral culturally constructed texts
- use a range of texts for instructions for leisure activities such as sport and craft

#### **Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- provide opportunities for children to follow directions from everyday texts such as recipe books, instructions for craft, rules for sports or games.
- read and share a range of books, magazines and newspapers with children
- provide a literacy-enriched environment including display print in home languages and Standard Australian English
- incorporate familiar family and community texts and tell stories
- encourage children to share their interests in music and discuss lyrics
- engage children in discussions about books and other texts that promote consideration of diverse perspectives

*Add your own examples from your context:*

## OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

**Children collaborate with others, express ideas and make meaning using a range of media and communication technologies**

**This is evident, for example, when children:**

- engage with media and technology for fun and to make meaning
- use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts and ideas
- use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling
- use technologies in everyday life, for example recording daily activities in program journals
- use information and communication technologies to express ideas, access images, information and explore diverse perspectives
- engage with information and communication technology tools for designing, drawing, editing, reflecting and composing

**Educators facilitate this, for example, when they:**

- build on children's family and community experiences with creative and expressive arts
- provide a range of resources that enable children to express meaning using photography, visual arts, dance, drama and music
- join in children's play and leisure activities and co-construct materials, for example signs, posters and journals that extend and support literacy learning
- collaborate with children to record the shared activities undertaken
- integrate technologies into children's play and leisure experiences, projects and routines
- encourage the use of technologies between children, and children and educators
- discuss protocols about use of communication technologies

*Add your own examples from your context:*

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Agency:** being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one's world.

**Attuned:** "Attunement includes the alignment of states of mind in moments of engagement, during which affect is communicated with facial expression, vocalisations, body gestures and eye contact". (Siegel, 1999).

**Citizenship:** means being a member of and supporting one's community including the school age care community as well as the local and global community. Citizenship involves a range of key components such as opportunities for belonging and participation, contributing to decision-making and taking responsibility for actions to others and to the environment.

**Collaboration:** involves working together cooperatively towards common goals. Collaboration is achieved through information sharing, joint planning and the development of common understandings and objectives.

**Community participation:** taking an active role in contributing to communities.

**Co-construct:** learning takes place as children interact with educators and other children as they work together in partnership.

**Communities:** social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights and responsibilities and/or other bonds. 'Communities' is used variously to refer, for example, to the community within school age care settings, extended kinships, the local geographic community and broader Australian society.

**Critical reflection:** reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice. It involves examining and analysing events, experiences and practices from a range of perspectives to inform future planning and decision-making.

**Dispositions:** enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to situations, for example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence.

**Educators:** the term used to refer to practitioners whose primary function in Australian care settings is to plan and implement programs that support children's wellbeing, development and learning. In school age care settings educators are employed 'before and after' school and during vacation periods.

**Framework:** a guide which provides general goals or outcomes for children's learning and how they might be attained. It also provides a scaffold to assist school age care settings to develop their own, more detailed program.

**Inclusion:** involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in program decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.

**Intentionality:** involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions.

**Involvement:** is a state of intense, whole hearted mental activity, characterised by sustained concentration and intrinsic motivation. Highly involved children (and adults) operate at the limit of their capacities, leading to changed ways of responding and understanding leading to deep level learning (adapted from Laevers, 1994).



Children's involvement can be recognised by their facial, vocal and emotional expressions, the energy, attention and care they apply and the creativity and complexity they bring to the situation. (Laevers) *A state of flow* Csikszentmihayle cited in *Reflect, Respect, Relate* (DECS 2008).

**Learning:** a natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Life-long learning is acknowledged as self-motivated process that extends intellectual, vocational and personal horizons which begins in pre-school times, is continued throughout life.

**Literacy:** in school age care literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, story telling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing.

**Meaningful leisure:** in school age care meaningful leisure describes the opportunities for children to develop their imagination, social ability and the sense of community including participation, collaboration and responsibility.

**Outcome:** a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in school age care settings, in collaboration with children and families.

**Pedagogies:** practices that are intended to promote children's learning.

**Pedagogy:** school age care educators' professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, program decision-making, teaching and learning.

**Play-based learning:** A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

**Program:** in the school age care setting includes all the spontaneous and planned experiences for children at the service designed to support wellbeing and facilitate learning. It includes all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events.

**Reflexivity:** children's growing awareness of the ways that their experiences, interests and beliefs shape their understanding.

**Relationships:** interactions that further children's wellbeing, learning and development. Both the adult and the child have intent to learn from each other.

**Scaffold:** the educators' decisions and actions that build on children's existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.

**Spiritual:** refers to a range of human experiences including a sense of awe and wonder, and an exploration of *being* and knowing.

**Technologies:** includes much more than computers and digital technologies used for information, communication and entertainment. Technologies are the diverse range of products that make up the designed world. These products extend beyond artefacts designed and developed by people and include processes, systems, services and environments.

**Texts:** things that we read, view and listen to and that we create in order to share meaning. Texts can be print-based, such as books, magazines and posters or screen-based, for example internet sites and DVDs. Many texts are multimodal, integrating images, written words and/or sound.

**Transitions:** the process of moving between home and childhood setting, between a range of different school age care settings, or from childhood setting to full-time school.

**Wellbeing:** Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs - the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life (adapted from Laevers 1994). It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity and resilience.

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