Module 6
Putting it all together

What will participants learn from this module?

When you have completed this module, participants will:

▪ understand how social and emotional learning is embedded within the curriculum their service provides for children
▪ identify learning opportunities that support social and emotional learning
▪ recognise the impact of service policies on children’s mental health and wellbeing.

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standard

Educators call on a range of knowledge and skills in their daily practice. This includes the concepts of belonging, being and becoming and the Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes in the EYLF. The complexity and diversity of what educators consider in their practice is captured in part by the EYLF Practice of Holistic approaches – that they “pay attention to children’s physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing as well as cognitive aspects of learning”, “see children’s learning as integrated and interconnected”, and “recognise the connections between children, families and communities and the importance of reciprocal relationships and partnerships for learning” (EYLF, p.14).

Similarly, the Quality Areas, Standards and Elements in the NQS overlap and interconnect, and any interaction, learning opportunity or conversation with a child is likely to link to a number of parts of the NQS.

Preparation for this session

There are three videos in this module showing different ECEC settings and children of varying ages. You may choose to use one, two or all three videos. Watching more than one video encourages participants to consider alternative perspectives and adds richness to reflection and learning. An overview of each video is provided.

You will need:

▪ Component 2: Professional Learning Participant Workbook
▪ Video 6.1: Hakin and Liam
▪ Video 6.2: Lauren, Aysha, Isabella and Lucas
▪ Video 6.3: Zac
▪ Copies of your ECEC service Statement of Philosophy for reference
▪ Butcher’s paper
▪ Markers
Suggestions for how to run this module

1. Talk about ‘Making a difference’ in Module 5

Participants implemented change in one curriculum area that they felt would have an impact on children’s social and emotional learning.

Discuss the following as a group:

▪ What did you notice?
▪ What have you learned?
▪ What next?
▪ How will this affect your practice?

2. Introduce the module to the group

This module will bring together ideas from the preceding modules and apply these to practice.

Content includes:

▪ three short videos that illustrate children of different ages in a range of settings and engaged in a variety of learning experiences. You may choose to watch one, two or all three videos. Watching more than one video encourages participants to consider alternative perspectives and adds richness to reflection and learning.

▪ an activity about how your service Statement of Philosophy reflects the importance of social and emotional learning and development and how this might be maintained or enhanced in practice.
3 Activity: Looking at children through social and emotional lenses

The aim of this activity is to make connections with learning from prior modules and apply this to children’s experiences in their ECEC services.

Instructions

1. Watch the video/s you have selected.
2. Ask participants to break into small groups. Alternatively, you may decide to work together as a whole group.
3. Review and discuss the reflective questions for each of the videos. There are questions that apply to all videos and additional reflective questions specific to each.
4. If you worked in small groups, bring participants back as a whole group to reflect on their observations. In sharing observations, you may wish to refer to the general questions below and/or the specific questions for each video.

General questions

The following questions can be applied to all three videos. They are intended to guide participants to reflect on the footage and how it applies to their practice.

- How does the experience portrayed in this video support children’s mental health?
- What social and emotional skills are the children likely to be learning? How does the educator support this learning?
- What might the educator’s intentions be?

Tips for this activity

- To support group discussion, Leadership Teams can share the video overview with participants.
- Participants may find it helpful to watch each video more than once to enhance observations and learning.
- There is space to record observations and discussion in the Participant Workbook on pages 55-58.
Video 6.1: Hakin and Liam

Video overview
This video shows two babies and an educator interacting and playing with rattan balls and two baskets. Some key points for highlighting and discussing include the following:

The video shows sustained engagement.
These babies are comfortable being in close proximity to each other. They do not interfere with each other, they appear relaxed and they respond to and learn from each other (e.g., touching their shoes, tossing the balls, putting the basket on their heads).

This evidence contradicts the notion that babies don’t interact and play much with each other.
The educator is present throughout. Her contribution includes her presence (just being there), her responsiveness to each child’s cues and communication, the way she demonstrates tossing the ball, the running commentary she offers about what is happening, the delight that is evident in her communication, and the ‘spaces’ she leaves for the children to initiate. The power of learning by imitating is especially prominent. She also seems to understand and is very responsive to the babies’ verbal communication.

There is clear evidence that all three participants are enjoying the experience.
This situation may have been set up to some extent. The placement of the children and the materials contributes to the learning. They are situated off to the side of the action, there are few distractions that we can see, and the physical environment is neutral – in other words, the situation is somewhat contained. This placement supports the children to concentrate and focus on the experience and interactions rather than being pulled away by distractions.

Specific questions for Video 6.1:
Hakin and Liam

1. What keeps the interaction going?
2. What shows you the babies are learning from each other?
3. What tells you the babies are relaxed and feel secure?
Video 6.1: Hakin and Liam (continued)

4 What evidence is there that the educator has a strong, positive relationship with these two children?
5 In what ways is the educator supporting their social and emotional learning? What evidence is there that she is in tune with them?
6 How does the physical space support the children’s play and learning?
7 Is it the educator, the children or both directing the experience? What is the evidence of this?
8 What role does pleasure play in the children’s learning? How does it contribute?

Tip for Video 6.1
- Participants may notice that the video shows one educator seeming to focus her attention on two babies. Because we don’t see what is going on around them, and we don’t see the educator, we don’t know to what extent she is paying attention to other children as well. Whatever the ratios in group settings, one of the challenges that educators face is engaging with and focusing on individual children and at the same time supervising all children.

Video 6.2: Lauren, Aysha, Isabella and Lucas

Time: 5 mins 15 secs

Video overview
This video shows an educator, Janani, and four children – two children between two and three years and two four-year-olds – preparing for and having lunch.

Most services have routines around eating. These routine experiences provide many opportunities for social and emotional learning.

What stands out in this video is the relaxed atmosphere, the rich conversation and the feeling of community that is evident.

Janani shows great respect for the children. She gives choices, encourages independence, shares information, prompts the conversation without taking over, and acknowledges effort.

The conversation that the children and educator have is free-ranging and rich.

Janani nurtures a strong sense of belonging to a group with shared experiences and people, some
of whom are not present. She talks about visiting Bodhi, that he has chickens and that his mum gave her the flowers. She reminds Lucas about his family ski trip to France.

Mixed age groups are almost always a feature of family day care. Some centre-based services also have family grouping for at least part of the day. The opportunity to be with, teach and learn from older and younger children contributes to children’s social and emotional learning. A powerful example of children invested in other children’s learning occurs when Lauren is pouring her mint water (second pouring). Lucas and Aysha watch intently.

Janani encourages the children’s sense of agency and of being competent in a number of ways. She enlists their help in setting up for lunch, gives them a choice of foods, and acknowledges their help. She demonstrates that she knows these children very well.

Aysha is quiet during lunch and she is involved in less conversation than the other children. The video raises the question of whether or not quieter children sometimes miss out, or whether they engage in different ways – by listening and observing rather than participating.

Specific questions for Video 6.2: Lauren, Aysha, Isabella and Lucas

- What is the evidence that these children feel comfortable, secure and empowered in this environment?
- What supports the children in their discussions with each other and with their educator?
- How does the educator connect children with their families, their lives outside the service, and other families who are part of this ECEC service community?
- What is the evidence of the educator encouraging children’s sense of agency?

Tip for Video 6.2

- Participants who work with large groups of children could use this video to consider how similar experiences occur, or could be promoted, in their setting.
Video 6.3: Zac

Time: 7 mins 44 secs

Video overview

This video is a snapshot of Zac’s day in his ECEC service. He participates in a range of experiences, many of which relate directly to social and emotional learning.

Arriving and leaving offer important learning opportunities for Zac. The interaction with the educator while his dad is present helps Zac make the transition from home to the service and helps him re-connect with the educator. In addition, it would be reassuring for Zac’s dad to witness this interaction. At the end of the day the educator is quietly present while Zac tells his mum about his day. Zac appears to arrive and leave easily, which is a sign of being comfortable and secure.

It appears that Zac’s parents feel comfortable being present in the setting, which is likely to support his social and emotional learning and wellbeing. There is evidence educators intentionally make connections between children’s home and family life and their experience in the service. Photos and stories about Zac (and other children) are displayed. The educator shows interest in the card game Zac brings from home and invites him to share information about it with others.

Zac’s day includes independent learning experiences and times when educators support and extend his learning. There are individual experiences (Zac drawing his dinosaur), opportunities to explore and learn alongside one or two peers (water play, beginning to build the dinosaur), and larger group interactions (music, discussion of dinosaur model, shared discussion of a card game). There are several examples of Zac co-operating with other children – being part of a group. He seems to interact comfortably and easily. He seems very relaxed cooperating and collaborating with other children, and he also seems very self-motivated. Zac appears to be a reflective and articulate child. He appears to be comfortable receiving attention from others as well as being self contained and reflective at times. This happens in part because of his skills, understandings and personal style, but also because of the efforts of educators and some of the characteristics of the setting.
The setting appears to be well organised, spacious and well-equipped.

Educators interact respectfully with Zac, show interest, listen, ask questions, offer choices and encourage him to contribute. The educators’ ways of interacting and their relationship with Zac contributes in major ways to the social and emotional learning opportunities.

Specific questions for Video 6.3: Zac

- What is the evidence that Zac feels comfortable and secure in this environment?
- How does the educator support the connections between Zac, his family and his life outside the ECEC service?
- What learning opportunities are provided to support Zac’s social and emotional development?
- How would you describe the relationship between Zac and the educator?
4 Activity: How our Statement of Philosophy reflects social and emotional learning

The aim of this activity is to make explicit connections between your Statement of Philosophy and children’s social and emotional learning, mental health and wellbeing.

Instructions

1. This activity is designed for your team to complete together, although if your group is large you may prefer to break into small groups and share feedback at the completion of the activity.

2. Distribute copies of your Statement of Philosophy to your team.

3. Consider how the statement reflects the importance of social and emotional learning, mental health and wellbeing in your service. Also think about how you can build on your Statement of Philosophy. The following prompt questions may assist:
   - Does our statement specifically mention children’s mental health and wellbeing?
   - Can we apply our statement to all children in our service?
   - Is there an opportunity to update our statement to reflect our new understanding of children’s mental health?
   - Are there other policies within our service that need to be updated to reflect these changes?

4. Capture the feedback from this discussion. It may be helpful to consider implementing this at a later time; for example, a future team meeting or during planning.

Tip for this activity

- There is space for participants to do the activity in the Participant Workbook on page 59.
5 Introduce and discuss reflections

Reflecting on new content is a good way to wrap up each module and summarise what has been covered. The following questions can support reflection, although you may wish to add your own to suit your team. Reflective questions can be considered during the module, at the end of the module or at a separate time. Reflective questions can be completed individually, in pairs or as a group.

More information on using reflective questions can be found at the start of this manual on page 5.

Consider an experience you have provided to children recently.

▪ What was the intention of providing this experience?
▪ What curriculum decisions informed it?
▪ How did the experience contribute to the children’s social and emotional development?

Tip for this reflection

▪ Reflective questions are in the Participant Workbook on page 60.

6 Making a difference

This section provides an opportunity for participants to connect learning from this module with their daily practice outside of the Professional Learning. Participants are asked to engage with the content between modules through reflection, observation or action. There will be an opportunity to discuss experiences at the start of the following module. More information can be found at the beginning of this manual on page 6.

Here, participants integrate what they have learned in Component 2 so far and apply this to their practice.

▪ Think about what you have learned in Component 2 Professional Learning so far. What is one thing that you will apply to your practice:
  ▪ as an individual?
  ▪ as a service?
6 Making a difference (continued)

- What supports do you have to help you take this action?
- What additional supports do you need?
- Why have you identified this as significant?
- How will you know if you have been successful?

Tip
- There is space for participants to record reflections in the Participant Workbook on page 61.

7 Note the readings in You might also be interested in…


8 Planning your next Professional Learning module

Module 7: A community of learners is scheduled for:

Date:
Time:
Venue:
Plan for Module 6: Putting it all together

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