Module 7
A community of learners

What will participants learn from this module?

When you have completed this module, participants will:

▪ understand the valuable role of professional development and support for educators when supporting children’s relationships, experiences, development and learning
▪ understand the professional development and support that is currently available to them at their ECEC service and explore additional sources of development and support (e.g., the wider ECEC service, the community)
▪ explore and value the role of sharing knowledge, mentoring and joining in professional conversations, knowledge sharing, mentoring, and reflective practice.

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standard

The EYLF highlights the importance of ongoing learning and reflective practice (Principle 7). The aim is for educators to see themselves as both teachers and learners along with colleagues, children and families.

Implementing the EYLF and the NQS and the requirement for continuous improvement requires working to create a community of learners and openness to other perspectives within the service.

The NQS asks educators to make a commitment to continuous improvement (Standard 7.2), including the implementation of an effective self-assessment and quality improvement planning process (element 7.2.3). Effective engagement in this module will support this outcome.

“A lively culture of professional inquiry is established when early childhood 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 curriculum quality, equity and children’s wellbeing can be raised and debated.” (EYLF, p.13)

Preparation for this session

You will need:

▪ Component 2: Professional Learning Participant Workbook
▪ Video 7.1: The role of professional development and support
▪ Video 7.2: Reflection with intention
▪ Participant Feedback Forms (available on the KidsMatter website)
Suggestions for how to run this module

1 Talk about ‘Making a difference’ in Module 6

Participants thought about something they learned through the previous modules that they could apply to their own practice and that could be also applied at the service level to support children’s social and emotional development.

Discuss the following as a group:
- What ideas did you write down?
- Why did you choose these?
- What support do you have and what additional supports would be required to apply these ideas?
- How will you know if you have been successful?

2 Introduce the module to the group

This module focuses on the role of professional development and support in ECEC services.

Content includes:
- a video about the benefits of professional development and support
- a video about different types of professional development and support and examples from ECEC services
- an activity to explore the existing professional development resources and what else might be helpful
- an activity that looks at participants’ past experiences of professional development and support and their ideas about future possibilities
- an activity where your team will set some personal and service goals around professional development and support at your service.
3 Video 7.1: The role of professional development and support

Time: 9 mins 3 secs

This video covers:

▪ When working in relationship with others, reflection, support and professional development enable you to work more effectively.
▪ Professional development can occur in a number of ways, including discussions and everyday interactions with peers.
▪ Professional development includes a range of practices that foster a culture of learning in order to support children’s social and emotional development.
▪ Professional development involves practices that support the mental health and wellbeing of educators and staff.
▪ Reflective practice can help educators examine their practice, identify what they find challenging and assist them to further their skills.

Tips for watching this video

▪ It might be helpful for participants to reflect individually on some of the comments made. What stood out for them? Is there anything new that they haven’t thought of before?
▪ Ask participants to keep these ideas in mind for the following activity.
▪ There is space for participants to make notes about this video in the Participant Workbook on page 64.
4 Activity: Features of professional development and support

The aim of this activity is to draw out some of the features of professional development and consider creative ways of doing this within an ECEC service.

Instructions

Educators can work on their own, in pairs or as a group to reflect on all/some of the following questions:

- Describe the best professional development session you have ever attended. What made it the best?
- Describe the worst professional development session you have ever attended. What made it the worst?
- How is professional development and support done at your service? What is done well? What could be done differently?
- If you could do any type of professional development to help you support children’s social and emotional learning and development, what would you like to do? Which aspect would make this of most value?
- Imagine the educators at your service want to do some professional development, but you don’t have a budget for it. What options can you come up with using the resources that you already have?

Tips for this activity

- Remind participants to think about any kind of professional development they have been part of; it doesn’t necessarily have to be something they have done as part of their role at the ECEC service.
- There is a worksheet for this activity in the Participant Workbook on page 65.
5 Video 7.2: Reflection with intention

Time: 8 mins 11 secs

This video covers:

- Professional development and support can be part of every ECEC service. This will look different across services and educators might find some types meet their needs better than others.
- Professional development and support can help educators find increased satisfaction and meaning in their work.
- Professional development and support can lead to positive service-wide changes.
- Relationships between educators enable knowledge sharing, skill development and increased confidence in supporting children’s development.

Tips for watching this video

- It might be helpful for participants to reflect individually on the comments made. What stood out for them? Is there anything new that they haven’t thought of before?
- Ask participants to keep these ideas in mind for the following activity.
- There is space for participants to make notes about this video in the Participant Workbook on page 66.
6 Activity: Professional development and support at our service

The aim of this activity is to reflect on professional development and support at your ECEC service.

Instructions

Have educators work as a team to brainstorm the different types of professional development and support at their service, guided by the following questions:

▪ What kind of professional development and support do we already do at our service?
▪ Where are the gaps?
▪ Are there any areas of practice that we haven’t looked at for a long time?
▪ How can we work together to support each other in our professional development.

Tips for this activity

▪ Encourage participants to think about what can realistically happen at the service, keeping in mind time, resources and costs involved.
▪ There is a worksheet for this activity in the Participant Workbook on page 67.
▪ This activity follows on to the next one, so it is useful for participants to keep these ideas in mind.
7 Activity: Professional development and support stocktake

The aim of this activity is to give educators the opportunity to do an audit of the resources for staff development and support that they have available to them. It also provides a space for future planning and development.

Instructions

1. Ask participants to turn to the worksheet on page 68 of the Participant Workbook.
2. The worksheet is divided into three columns:
   - Column 1: Provides scenarios where staff development and support may be of benefit (e.g., where can I get support if I want to arrange a meeting with a family?).
   - Column 2: Provides space for educators to list team members who have the skills/knowledge to support them with a particular scenario.
   - Column 3: Provides space for educators to list resources they may tap into outside the service to support their roles in a given scenario.
3. Ask your team to work individually or in pairs.
4. Ask your team to consider the scenarios listed in column 1 of the worksheet.
5. Once they have had a look at the scenarios, ask participants to go around the room and fill in column 2 with as many names as they can of educators who can provide knowledge/skills/support with a particular scenario.
6. Once your team has done this, they can then try to fill in column 3 with any outside supports that they are aware of that can help improve any of the scenarios.
7. Debrief: Ask your team to look at their worksheets and answer the following questions:
   - What did you notice by doing this activity?
   - Were there any surprises? Was there more or less support at your ECEC service than expected?
   - Were there many ideas listed for external support?
   - Were there any obvious gaps on the worksheet?
   - What could be done to fill in those gaps?
7 Activity: Professional development and support stocktake (continued)

- Is there anything getting in the way of implementing some of these ideas?
- What are some ideas for further enhancing professional development and support?

Tip for this activity
- Leadership Teams may ask participants to pass on their worksheets for further planning outside the session.

8 Activity: Moving forward

This aim of this activity is to have participants set some short- and long-term goals for professional development and support at your service.

Instructions

1. Ask participants to answer the following questions individually:
   - What can you do in your individual practice to encourage professional development and support:
     - over the next week?
     - over the next 12 months?

2. Ask participants to answer the following questions as a large group or in smaller groups if there are a lot of people:
   - What can you do as a service to encourage professional development and support:
     - over the next week?
     - over the next 12 months?

Tip for this activity
- There is a worksheet for this activity in the Participant Workbook on page 69.
9 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.

- What are the strengths that you see in your colleagues?

Tip for this reflection

- Reflective questions are in the Participant Workbook on page 70.
10 Note the readings in You might also be interested in…


These can be downloaded from the KidsMatter website. Completed forms should be forwarded to your Facilitator.

11 Distribute Participant Feedback Forms for completion

12 Planning for Wrapping up (optional)

Information about Wrapping up can be found in ‘When you reach the end of Component 2 Professional Learning’ on page 6.

Wrapping up is scheduled for:

Date:

Time:

Venue:
Plan for Module 7: A community of learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Time allocated</th>
<th>Covered</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review of Module 6 ‘Making a difference’</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the module</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 7.1: The role of professional development and support</td>
<td>9 mins 3 secs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Features of professional development and support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video 7.2: Reflection with intention</td>
<td>8 mins 11 secs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Professional development and support at our service</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Professional development and support stocktake</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity: Moving forward</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant Feedback Forms</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content from previous session to come back to

Total time