Professional learning: Creating a sense of community

Topic 2: Relationships

Leadership team guide
Acknowledgement:

KidsMatter Australian Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative has been developed in collaboration with beyondblue, the Australian Psychological Society and Early Childhood Australia, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health and beyondblue.

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While the resources are available freely for these purposes, to realise the full potential of KidsMatter Early Childhood, it is recommended that the resources be used with the appropriate training and support under the KidsMatter Initiative.
What will participants learn from this topic?

When you have completed this topic, participants will:

- have reflected on the ‘hub’ of relationships that exist in an early childhood community and how these can support children’s development
- be informed or reminded of the connection between positive relationships and early childhood mental health and wellbeing
- have developed a shared understanding of warm, responsive and respectful relationships and what these look like with young children
- have explored how educators and early childhood services can promote positive relationships within their community
- have further explored how positive working relationships between educators can support staff wellbeing.

Preparation for this session

Resources

- Component 1 Topic 2: Professional Learning Participant Workbook
- Whiteboard or butcher’s paper
- Video 2.1: Relationships in the early years
- Video 2.2: Positive relationships in an early childhood community
- Video 2.3: Working together
Suggestions for how to run this topic

1. Introduce the topic to the group

This topic focuses on the importance of positive relationships, and how these support children’s mental health and wellbeing.

Content includes:

- a video that explores how positive relationships support children’s mental health and wellbeing
- a discussion about the ‘hub’ of relationships children develop and how positive relationships support children’s mental health and wellbeing
- a video that provides information about the characteristics of positive relationships, and the key role that educators have in establishing and engaging in positive relationships
- an activity about how working together supports decision making in an early childhood service
- a video about how educators foster positive relationships with other educators and how this supports their day to day work and sense of wellbeing.
2 Video 2.1: Relationships in the early years

The video covers:
- the importance of relationships in early childhood

Tips for watching this video
- There is space for participants to make notes about this video in their Participant Workbook on page 2.

3 Discussion: About relationships

Instructions
- Facilitate a discussion using the following discussion points:
  - How do each of the relationships children experience in an early childhood community support their development? What might be some unique benefits of each relationship?
  - What are the relationships that children observe with others? How does observing these relationships support children’s development?
- Then ask participants to look at the diagram on page 4 of their Participant Workbook and to discuss the following:
  - What do each of these relationships provide for children?

Tips for this discussion
- It may be helpful to break into smaller groups initially before discussion as a whole group.
- There is space for participants to write notes on page 3–4 of their Participant Workbook.
4 Video 2.2: Positive relationships in an early childhood community

The video covers:

- how services can support the development of secure, responsive and respectful relationships
- what early childhood services can do to welcome families, children and educators to their community to establish and maintain relationships
- how a ‘hub’ of relationships is created in an early childhood service.

Tips for watching this video

- There is space for participants to make notes about the video on page 5 of the Participant Workbook.

5 Activity: Shared decision making

The aim of this activity is for participants to reflect on how working together as a team can help decision making at a service.

Instructions

- Ask participants to think about and write down three decisions that they have made in consultation with other educators or staff in the last week.
- Ask participants to then think about:
  - For each decision, how did working together in a team or with another educator assist you in making the decision?
  - What were the positive characteristics of the relationship that you noticed?
  - Were there any challenges in working together? How might these have been overcome?
  - How does shared decision making with families support your team to work together?
- Ask for volunteers to share their answers if they feel comfortable to do so.

Tips for this activity

- There is space for participants to write notes on page 6–7 of their Participant Workbook.
6 Video 2.3: Working together

The video covers:

- what it means to ‘work together’ in an early childhood service
- how working together supports staff wellbeing.

Tips for watching this video

- There is space for participants to make notes about the video on page 8 of the Participant Workbook.

7 Activity: Moving forward

The aim of this activity is for participants to set some short and long-term goals for supporting the development of positive relationships at their early childhood service.

Instructions

- Ask participants to answer the following questions individually:
  
  - What is one thing that I could do to support the development of positive relationships at my early childhood service over the next week?
  
  - What is one thing that I could do to support the development of positive relationships at my early childhood service over the next 12 months?

- Ask participants to answer the following questions as a large group or in smaller groups if there are a lot of people:
  
  - What is one thing that you could do as a service to support the development of positive relationships at our early childhood service over the next week?
  
  - What is one thing that you could do as a service to support the development of positive relationships at our early childhood service over the next 12 months?

Tips for this activity

- There is a worksheet for this activity in the Participant Workbook on page 9.
8 Reflective questions

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

- Consider a relationship you have built with a child. What characteristics of this relationship do you think are most important?
- How might you include the voices of children, educators and families in decision making?
- What might be some barriers to building collaborative relationships with others in the early childhood community? How might you try to overcome these?

Tips for this activity

- Reflective questions can be found on page 10 in the Participant Workbook.