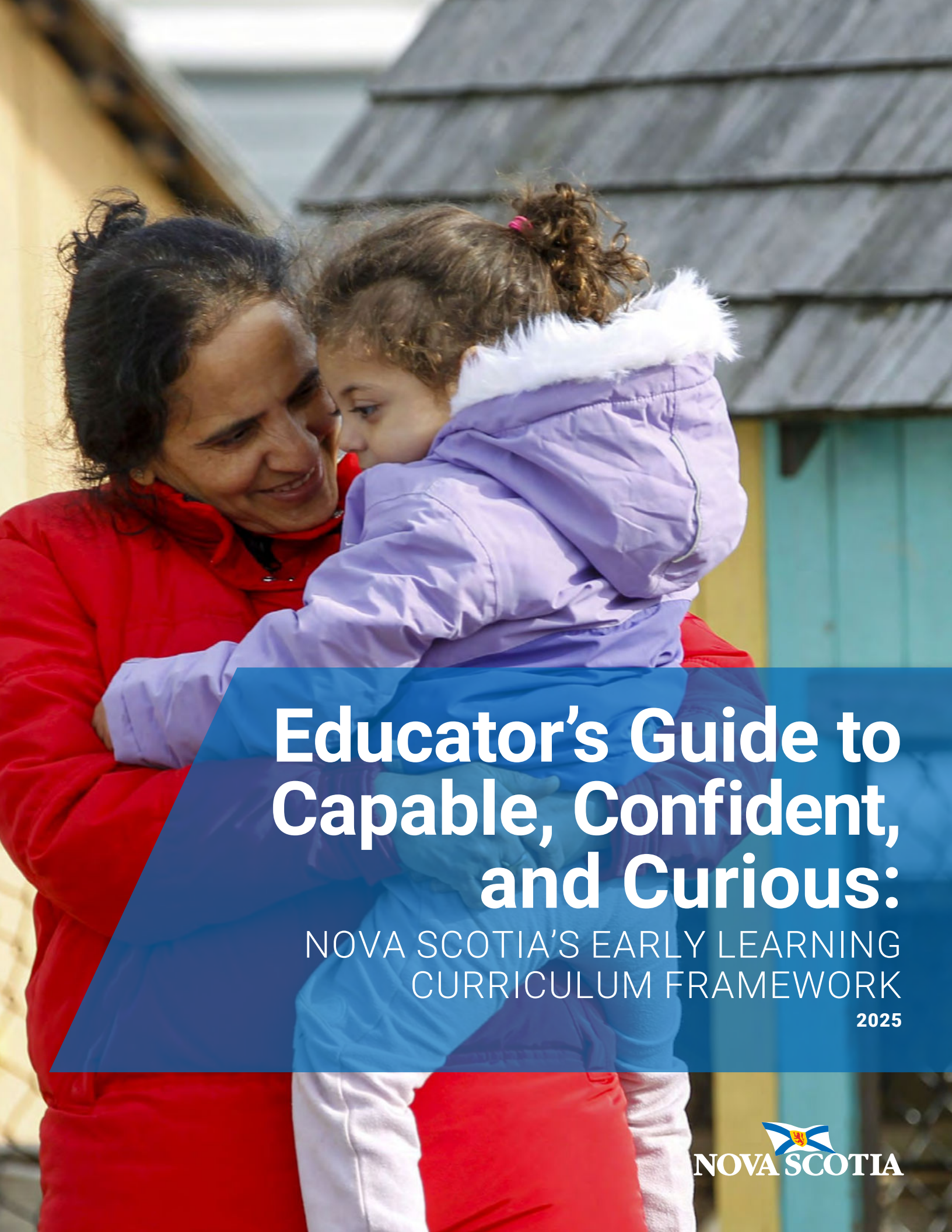


A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a red jacket, hugging a young girl from behind. The girl is wearing a purple jacket with a white fur-lined hood and has her hair in a small ponytail. They are outdoors, with a building and a roof visible in the background. A blue triangular graphic is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

Educator's Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious:

NOVA SCOTIA'S EARLY LEARNING
CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

2025

The contents of this publication may be reproduced in part provided the intended use is for non-commercial purposes and full acknowledgment is given to the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Where this document indicates a specific copyright holder, permission to reproduce the material must be obtained directly from that copyright holder. Photographs in this document may not be extracted or re-used.

Please note that all attempts have been made to identify and acknowledge information from external sources. In the event that a source was overlooked, please contact education.permissions@novascotia.ca.

Educator's Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework

ISBN: 978-1-55457-717-0

© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, 2025.

Prepared by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Acknowledgements

The Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development acknowledges the many internal and external partners for their contributions in the development of the *Educator's Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*.

In particular, a special thank you is extended to Susan Stacey for her contributions in the development of a guide that supports educators' ongoing professional growth and reflective practice for high-quality early learning and child care programs.

Sincere thanks to the following early learning and child care programs that have shared stories of the work they are doing with children and adults to help make Nova Scotia's framework "come to life" for the reader, as well as images and documentation of early learning in action:

- Allegro Child Care Centre
- A Tiny Lab for Early Learning
- Beechville Lakeside Timberlea Junior Elementary (Pre-primary)
- Chebucto Family Centre Home Child Care Agency
- Children's Place Early Learning Centre
- Dr. Jane Norman Child Study Centre
- Duc D'Anville Elementary (Pre-primary)
- Early Years Daycare Paqtnkek
- East Hants Family Daycare Agency Ltd.
- Emma Cyr, ECE student
- Fairview Heights Elementary School (Pre-primary)
- ForestKids Early Learning
- Health Park Early Learning Centre
- Jane Norman College Family Home Child Care Agency
- La P'tite Académie
- Le Petit Voilier (Centre le Tournesol Pre-primary)
- Leeds Street Child Care Centre
- Lunenburg Day Care Centre
- Mawio'mi Child Care Centre
- Mount Saint Vincent Child Study Centre
- New Glasgow Academy (Pre-primary)
- Point Pleasant Child Care Centre
- Sarah Perry, ECE student
- Small World Learning Centre
- YWCA Early Learning Centre

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are in *Mi'kma'ki*, the ancestral homeland of the *Mi'kmaq*. We recognize the *Mi'kmaq* as the original people of this land, who, since time immemorial, have moved freely throughout the land for purposes of trade and resources, as well as to establish relationships with neighbouring nations. It was customary to acknowledge yourself as a visitor to the area that you did not steward.

As with all Indigenous Peoples, the *Mi'kmaq* share a foundational connection with the land. They honour *Wskitqamu* (Mother Earth) through a relationship of respect, assumed responsibility, and reciprocity, the four values of *Netukulimk*.

In the 1700s, the *Mi'kmaq* entered into Peace and Friendship Treaties with the British Crown. These treaties were established on the premise of nation-to-nation relationship building and continue today.

Acknowledging the ancestral lands of the *Mi'kmaq* is a way of honouring our shared Treaty relationship and its inherent responsibilities—a critical step towards Reconciliation.

We are all Treaty People. *Msit no'kmaq* (All my relations).



🔊 **MI'KMA'KI**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/mikmaki.mp3>



🔊 **WSKITQAMU**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/wskitqamu.mp3>



🔊 **NETUKULIMK**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/netukulimk.mp3>



🔊 **MSIT NO'KMAQ**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/msitnokmaq.mp3>

Contents

Acknowledgements i

Land Acknowledgement ii

About This Guide 1

Quality in Practice 7

Image of the Child 12

Image of the Educator 16

Early Childhood Pedagogy 19

Planning with Intentionality 23

The Reflective Planning Cycle 25

Pedagogical Documentation 29

**Supporting Children’s Optimal Learning:
Learning Goals and Objectives 35**

Well-being 38

Discovery and Invention 52

Language and Communication 64

Personal and Social Responsibility 84

Bibliography 101



About this Guide

Note: *Throughout this document, the term educator refers to adults who work directly with children in early learning and child care programs (licensed child care centres, family child care homes and Pre-primary programs) including early childhood educators and care providers.*

The terms “team” and “colleagues” refer to other educators, leaders, and professionals who support you, your practice, and the children and families in your program.

About This Guide

What the framework says ...

"The framework's image of the child sees children as capable, confident, and curious. To support this image, educators must be willing to grow in their practice through critical reflection, and intentionally design play-based outdoor and indoor early learning environments."

(Capable, Confident, and Curious 2025, 3)

The *Educator's Guide to Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* (referred to as the "guide" throughout this document) has been developed as a supporting resource to *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework* (referred to as the "framework" throughout this document). The guide has been designed as a practical, interactive tool to facilitate in-depth conversations about the key concepts of the framework and to support you to put aspects of the learning into action in your everyday practices. While the framework identifies expectations for the optimal learning of children who are capable, confident, and curious beings, this guide focuses on you—a capable, confident, and curious educator. It has been developed to assist all educators, inclusive of all held experiences, values, and beliefs about children and childhood.

Both the framework and the guide aim to promote and increase overall pedagogical growth, professional judgement, and practice. The guide is meant to encourage the use of a simple cycle of questioning, planning, action-taking, and reflecting that will build your professional knowledge, confidence, and curiosity. This will support you to make informed judgements so all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

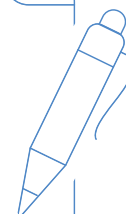
To achieve this, the guide is organized around learning goals, learning objectives and strategies that are important for children to grow and flourish. It is grounded in the view of the child as being capable, confident, and curious, and organized around the four goals of well-being, discovery and invention, language and communication, and personal and social responsibility. The goals are intended to help you in planning and creating early learning environments, experiences, and opportunities for children's learning and development. The learning objectives identify specific aspects of children's progress toward attaining the learning goals. The strategies align with the goals and objectives to provide concrete ideas of how educators, pedagogical leaders, families, and communities can work together for children's learning and development. They are not an exhaustive list but are meant as a starting point for thinking about the types of environments, experiences, and interactions that support each goal and objective.

In this resource you will find real-life local examples, documentation, and photographs of educators putting the framework into action, inclusive of ages of children and diversity in programs and communities. Some examples may help you visualize educator practices or children's learning while others may demonstrate ways that the framework principles and practices have been implemented to support children's learning around the goals and objectives.

You will also find questions for reflection throughout the guide. These questions have been included to promote the practice of critical reflection, whether individually or as part of a team. They have been strategically placed to support deeper and more intentional reflection on each of the key sections of the guide. Your responses to the questions will most likely change as you continue to evolve as a capable, confident, and curious educator and pedagogical leader.

As you move forward on your journey to implement the framework, record your learnings and experiences in a daily journal. This is an informal way to track your ideas, thoughts, questions, discoveries, actions, and needs. It is a practical, confidential way to document your own professional growth. Doing so provides you with the opportunity to continuously reflect on your implementation of the framework principles and practices and support the learning goals and objectives of each child.

Over time, you will see your pedagogical practice evolve to further support Nova Scotia's vision for children's learning: All children are joyfully engaged in spaces intentionally designed for early learning that support them to flourish as capable, confident, and curious individuals.





Quality in **Practice**

Quality in Practice

What the framework says ...

"The framework recognizes that both the child's and the educator's journeys are influenced by individual, social, and cultural experiences, shared histories, and diverse values. Within the framework's structure, each educator embarks on their own continuous learning journey alongside the children."

(Capable, Confident, and Curious 2025, 9)

This section of the guide will provide you with opportunities to

- reflect on how the framework impacts quality
- examine your image of the child
- reflect on your image of the educator
- examine your early childhood pedagogy

Quality in early learning and child care programs has "the potential for rich educational experiences for children ... that can vary based on individual perspectives and experiences." (McLean et al. 2022, 1267). Although elements of quality such as nurturing environments (e.g., staff interactions with, and responsiveness to, children) are difficult to measure, they are known to have the most positive impact on quality learning for children. For this reason, the framework outlines guiding principles and exemplary practices that promote quality in early learning and child care programs by

- encouraging the development of a shared image of the child
- identifying the important influences of families, cultures, and communities
- emphasizing the importance of inclusion for all children, as well as respect for diversity
- outlining high-quality pedagogical practices
- focusing on authentic assessment



The framework also provides educators in all early learning and child care programs a common language to share learnings, describe the work they do, and explore challenges.

The table below serves as a visual reminder of the specific terms used to identify the framework's vision, principles, practices, and learning goals.

VISION		
All children are joyfully engaged in spaces intentionally designed for early learning that support them to flourish as capable, confident, and curious individuals.		
PRINCIPLES	PRACTICES	LEARNING GOALS
• Holistic Development • Reciprocal Relationships • Partnerships with Families and Communities • Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Accessibility, and Anti-racism • Critical Reflection	• Responsiveness to Children • Linguistic and Cultural Responsiveness • Play-Based Learning and Intentionality • Inclusive Learning Environments • Authentic Assessment • Continuity of Learning Experiences	• Well-being • Discovery and Invention • Language and Communication • Personal and Social Responsibility

The framework identifies principles, practices, and learning goals and objectives that directly influence program quality. The principles and practices are interconnected and can be applied to different situations based on the diverse beliefs, values, cultures, and experiences of the children, families, and educators who make up early learning communities. As you implement the principles and practices of the framework, you leave a lasting impression on your relationships with the children and families in your program. Reflective practice and relationship building are important parts of your role. They help you to adapt the way you work in response to the needs of children, families, and communities.

The learning goals and objectives of well-being, discovery and invention, language and communication, and personal and social responsibility, are not meant to be learned in a specific order, nor used to assess children's achievement in the four areas. Rather, they are intended to guide educators in making decisions around program design in order to create inclusive learning environments that are linguistically and culturally responsive to children. The learning goals and objectives are meant to support the design of learning experiences that help children to be capable, confident and curious.

By continuously applying, reflecting on, and adjusting your use of the principles, practices, and learning goals and objectives, you become more confident, capable and curious as educators. In turn, you improve the quality of your relationships with children, families, and communities and the overall quality of your program.

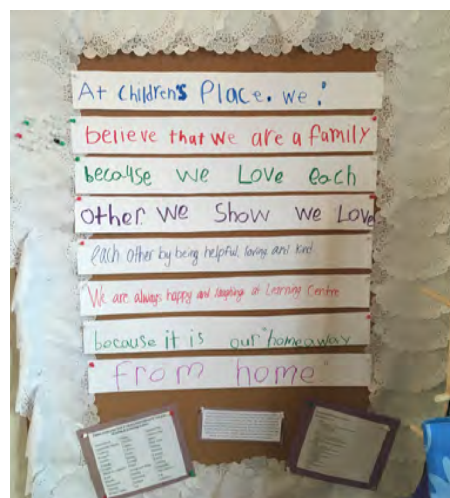




Image of the Child

Adopting a positive image of the child is one of the ways educators can have a pivotal impact on children's learning and the quality of early learning environments. Each educator's image of the child influences the responsiveness of their interactions and relationships with children and families in the program. It forms the basis for the decisions they make about children, families, and the learning environments. The image of the child also evolves as the educator develops personally and professionally. This is evident when an educator believes that children are independent and capable of making their own choices; the learning environments created will provide children with many opportunities to explore and allow them to make independent decisions. They see children as capable of being and thinking independently. They plan activities with the input of children and schedule routines and transitions in ways that reflect the needs and preferences of the children.

While each educator's unique image of the child must be recognized and acknowledged, it is equally important that each program develop a collective image of the child as a starting point for its overall vision for children's learning. This program-wide image of the child and vision should be evident to all who enter the program in both direct and implicit ways (e.g., in a visual display, in family and educator handbooks, or in the way that the program environment is arranged, and the materials included, etc.).



Scan this code to refer to the Image of the Child section on page 10 of the framework.
<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nscelcurriculumframework.pdf>

A student educator in a practicum placement in an infant room shares their reflections on what happened when they examined their image of the child:

The image of the child has helped me shape my practice as an ECE [early childhood educator] in a number of ways. When I first heard the phrase "children are confident, capable, and curious," I understood how it applied to older children but did not realize that infants show their confidence, capabilities, and curiosity in their own ways as well.

After a workshop I completed [about] the importance of using your image of the child to inspire your activities, environment, and attitude, I noticed that the infants were particularly interested in activities that require an element of problem-solving. For example, many of the infants have been attempting to buckle and unbuckle the buckles on the wooden chairs. Rather than assuming that they are just messing around with furniture, the framework has helped me recognize that their behaviour is driven by the fact they are capable of complex tasks and curious about everyday materials. Because of this, I went to the fabric store and got the materials to sew together buckle loops that the infants could practise buckling and unbuckling. It was a successful activity, and I would not have thought that infants were interested in, or capable of, such an activity if it wasn't for my changing image of the child.

Likewise, once my image of the child expanded to understand that infants are confident, I started to notice their engagement in new and risky activities brought me significantly less anxiety. I used to feel so much anxiety watching infants wobble while learning to walk or trip while attempting to run. I especially used to feel stress watching them climb in and out of this wooden wagon we have outside. I used to rush to their aid, or hover closely behind them. Once I accepted that infants are learning and expanding their own physical limitations, I started to let them make their own calculations of what situations they were ready for. What I realized is that they are intuitive to their own capabilities, and incredibly resilient. They are willing to take the risks because they are confident, and they are able to pick up new skills so quickly because they are capable. Without me projecting my anxieties onto the situation, the infants started to explore more freely, and I now have an easier time encouraging skill development (even when wagons are involved).

Another way that the image of the child has changed my practice is in how I approach mealtimes. I used to spoon feed infants as much as I could, because I wanted to make sure they were eating the food. The image of the child got me to reflect on how I am encouraging the infants' confidence during meals, as well as how I am fostering and respecting their capabilities. Instead of spoon feeding them when it is not necessary, I now encourage them to explore the foods on their trays by using a spoon or their fingers to break it up and feed themselves at a pace that feels natural to them. Allowing the infants to exercise this independence has resulted in improved fine motor skills, less power struggles over spoons, and a much happier mealtime together.





As part of your ongoing professional learning, take time to reflect on your beliefs, values, practices, and image of the child often. You may wish to do this as an individual activity, or you may wish to take the lead and have a collaborative discussion with colleagues in your program. Either action serves as a means to continuously reassess professional practice within your program.



Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- How would you describe your image of children and childhood? What personal values influence this?
- How have your views about children and childhood changed since you became an educator? What has influenced those changes?
- What is your program's image of the child and vision for children's learning? How might you articulate it to someone who does not know your program and practice?
- How does your own image of the child align with that of your program? What are the similarities and differences? How does that make you feel personally and professionally?
- How is your image of the child visible in your program or practice? If it is not visible, what gets in the way and how can you work towards change?
- How well do your families understand your program's image of the child? What are their images of the child? How can you find out?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



Image of the Educator

Essential as it is to think about your image of the child, it is also important that you reflect on your image of the educator—or what you believe about the educator's capabilities, knowledge, practice, and role. Thinking deeply about this helps increase your awareness of how your beliefs, values, image of the child, and practice impact children's learning and lives. Like the image of the child, one's image of the educator evolves as knowledge and skills continuously develop. Over time, you become more confident and more skilled in your interactions with children, families, educators, and others in your community.



The image of the educator whose work aligns with the framework principles, practices, and learning goals and objectives, is one where they

- develop pedagogical practices based on evidence about how children develop and learn
- use critical reflection to continuously assess their practice
- partner with families, colleagues, and others to discover and understand diverse perspectives
- seek opportunities for improving knowledge and competency
- understand the principles of early brain development
- acknowledge the interconnectedness of a child's early experiences, interactions, and relationships with adults

- recognize the importance of family relationships and peer friendships
- understand and adopt practices that support children's social-emotional development
- work as part of a team to cultivate co-operative and professional relationships with other educators within and outside their program and with other professionals who work with children
- honour and respect children's competencies, ideas, and opinions, and allow for the co-construction of learning
- have awareness of program expectations, policies, and regulations and how these support educators, children, and families

Capable, confident, and curious educators embody unique and diverse combinations of both the theoretical and the creative side of early learning and child care. This, along with personal qualities such as being caring, open-minded, thoughtful, and imaginative, supports educators to provide linguistically and culturally responsive practice that is responsive to children, play-based and intentional, inclusive, authentic, and continues to positively impact children consistently over time.

Engaging in dialogue on the image of the educator with others may raise awareness of similarities and differences in how you view yourselves and your work. Over time, you may notice that it leads to a deeper understanding of your approach to early learning and of your practice. You may also discover that confidence in your role—your own and that of others—grows, increasing your overall capacity to make decisions based on professional practice and sound judgement.

Your program's collective image of the educator can be influenced by the beliefs, values, interests, and knowledge of each educator, past and present, and the impression made by their perspectives, their pedagogy, and their relationships. You are encouraged to regularly reflect on and re-examine your image of the educator collectively, adjusting as needed.



Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- How do you currently examine your practice?
- In what ways do you currently plan for improvement in your practice?
- How may your cultural experiences and perspectives influence your planning, practice, and relationships with children and families?
- What systems and processes do you have in place to meet with colleagues and talk together about children's learning? What might a learning community look like in your program?
- How do your personal beliefs, values, and biases regarding equity and inclusion, influence your work with colleagues, children and families?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



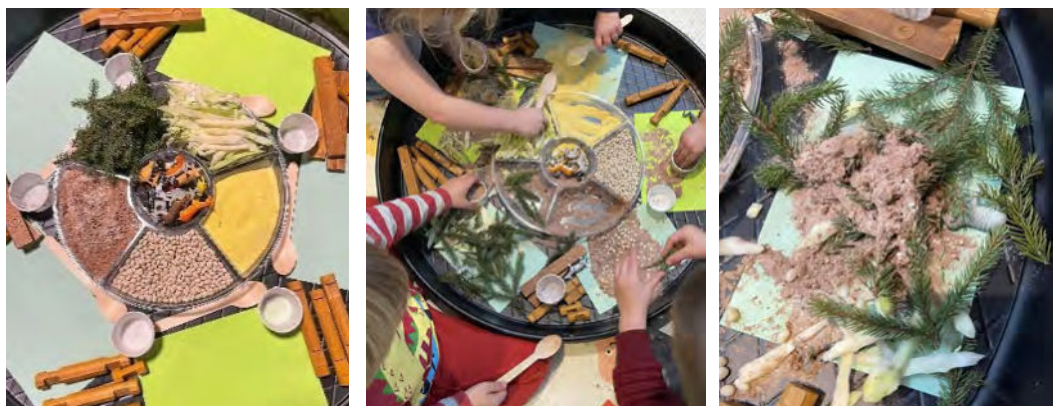
Early Childhood Pedagogy

What the framework says ...

Pedagogy, as described in the framework, refers to how an educator's beliefs, a program's philosophy, and a child's life experiences all come together to create a "big picture"—a whole program—that is reflective of and responsive to the children and adults who work, play, and learn there.

Your early childhood pedagogy is your awareness of how you affect children's learning with

- the decisions you make about learning opportunities
- the way you create the learning environment
- how you respond to and extend children's inquiries and interests
- how you engage with children in the learning environment and play experiences
- how you reflect children and their families in the learning environment



Something to consider as you reflect on your own pedagogy is that when you

"approach being and learning with children from a perspective of awareness—listening, observing, reflecting, and documenting—you can transform your pedagogy from cookie-cutter and traditional to rich and inspirational."

(Curtis and Carter 2022)

Scan this code to refer to the Early Childhood Pedagogy section on page 15 of the framework.
<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselearningframework.pdf>



Pedagogical leadership is an extension of pedagogy. It is about supporting educators on their professional and pedagogical journey. A pedagogical leader supports educators' capacity for observation, reflection, documentation, and responsiveness. An example of pedagogical leadership in practice is when you use innovative practices to make time and space for yourself and other educators to think together, discuss possibilities, and help ideas come to life.

Pedagogical leaders are

- aware of and promote the value of enriching and engaging programs
- creative problem-solvers and strategic thinkers
- good relationship-builders and motivators
- knowledgeable and experienced in child development
- mindful to include children in planning and decision-making
- passionate about scaffolding children's (and adults') learning
- proactive and responsive to the everyday work in early learning environments
- skilled mentors and sharers of knowledge
- vital for a culture of innovative thinking and practices

"For us, pedagogical leadership is not about rank or status. It is not about teaching others what to do or how to think, and it is most assuredly not about ensuring quality. Pedagogical leadership is about creating conditions for relationships to flourish. It is about nurturing a very particular kind of culture where connections are formed between the kind of work we do and the kind of world we want to live in."

(Coughlin and McGee Baird 2022, 174)

All educators have the potential to assume the role of pedagogical leader. In addition to the characteristics identified above, a professional disposition that includes an open mind, flexibility, passion for the field, and a growth mindset is essential. Being a pedagogical leader requires experience, education and training, as well as a commitment to ongoing professional development. This builds educator capacity to mentor others, bring new and exciting ideas to the table, and identify professional learning that is intentionally planned and responsive to specific needs.

Early childhood professional organizations across Canada, including the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Nova Scotia (AECENS), are committed to monitoring professional standards of practice, guiding ethical decision-making, and supporting educators to care for, respect, and protect children and their families (Canadian Child

Care Federation 2023). These standards of practice highlight how all educators have a responsibility to be knowledgeable of child development, to assess learning authentically through observation and documentation, and to develop a deep understanding of children's strengths, interests, and learning needs. Accountability to these, and other educator responsibilities, is key to providing professional practice and sound judgement.

You are encouraged to be proactive and demonstrate initiative to improve your pedagogical practice and professional judgement. Plan for opportunities to talk with your program leader, pedagogical leader, or other professionals about ways to increase your knowledge in early learning and child development, develop your pedagogical leadership skills, and improve planning for children's learning in your program.

Scan this code for more details or to become a member of the AECENS.
<https://aecens.ca>



Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- How do you strive to be positive and inspire those around you?
- How do you create a learning environment that is inclusive and responsive to the diverse languages and cultures of the children, families, educators, and communities within your program?
- How do you work to improve relationships and enhance your leadership skills?
- How do you stay current and engage with provincial initiatives and training (e.g., Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework, Culturally Responsive Practice professional learning modules, and Quality Matters)? Where can you find out more information?
- How can you make your professional development choices more relevant to your individual practice and learning needs?
- How do you seek out professional and pedagogical guidance? What other options are out there that provide support?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.





Planning

with Intentionality

Planning with Intentionality

At first glance, successful implementation of the framework may seem like a monumental task. However, implementation can be achieved when approached with intention and use of the Reflective Planning Cycle to guide decisions and thinking about next steps to support children's growth.

This section of the guide will provide you with overviews of

- the Reflective Planning Cycle
- various types of pedagogical documentation

The more you are aware of how you are incorporating the framework's principles and practices into your daily work with children, the better your capacity to support the learning goals of all children. As a result, children will be better able to reach their full potential and optimal learning.

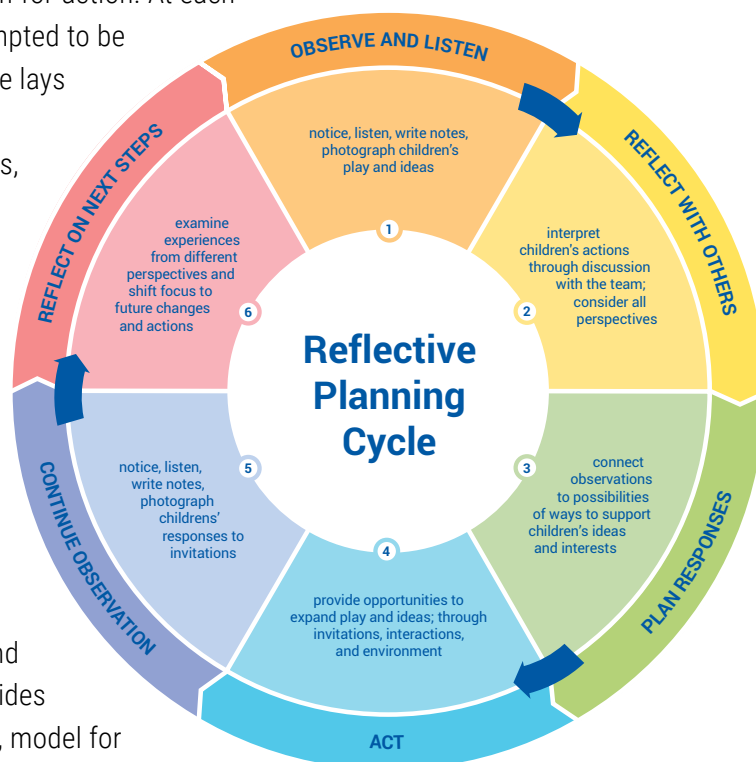


Scan this code to refer to the Reflective Planning Cycle section on page 37 of the framework.
<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/nselearningframework.pdf>

The Reflective Planning Cycle

The framework's Reflective Planning Cycle, shown below, is a well-defined process of observation, planning, and evaluation. The cycle supports you in gathering information and gaining insights that inform intentional teaching. It also promotes enriching decision-making around children's learning. As you move through this cycle, you will engage in reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action. At each stage of the reflective planning process, you are prompted to be mindful of your practice and your pedagogy. The cycle lays out the steps and actions required of you to observe, hear, document, respond, and assess children's voices, actions, experiences, learning, and growth.

You will find the actions required during each of the six stages of the Reflective Planning Cycle broken down below. Each stage can be viewed as being a step in the cycle, and educators would work their way through the complete cycle before beginning again. As you read and critically reflect on each of these phases, you will notice that you already perform many, if not all, of the actions in your current role as an educator. To support high-quality early learning and child care for all children and families throughout Nova Scotia, the framework provides this Reflective Planning Cycle as a simple, yet logical, model for best practice.



OBSERVE AND LISTEN

Observation is an ongoing process of noticing, listening, and gaining an authentic and holistic awareness of children in a community, linguistic, and cultural context, to provide individualized learning experiences. Educators observe and record children's personalities, actions, emotions, interests, strengths, abilities, and behaviours, individually or as a group, as a means of understanding their developmental and learning needs in a community, linguistic, and cultural context.

Questions to support educators:

What do you see? What do others see? What are the children saying/doing? How are they saying/doing it? What are the children engaging with? How are they engaging with the environment and others?

REFLECT WITH OTHERS

Reflection is a continuous open-minded process where educators carefully consider and re-imagine their practices through collaboration. This is largely where reflection-on-action takes place. Effective reflection involves interpreting observations, sharing perspectives, and formulating questions to move forward in the planning process, in an objective way.

Questions to support educators:

What do you wonder about when you review your observations? What strengths and interests do you see? How has your practice influenced the child's experience? How can you better support children's full participation?

PLAN RESPONSES

Planned responses are direct connections between the insights gained from observation and new opportunities for programming (environment, materials, and invitations to learning). At this point in the Reflective Planning Cycle, educators are beginning to engage in reflection-for-action. This involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives as well as supporting and exploring children's ideas and interests. Educators use this new insight to consider and plan opportunities to engage children's interests and extend play and exploration.

Questions to support educators:

What additional knowledge or resources do you need to support the program? How can you extend children's learning? How will you balance child-initiated and educator-initiated experiences?

ACT

Reflective educators provide invitations and support opportunities for extended play and investigations through child-directed, play-based learning experiences, based on planned responses. All parts of the curriculum are considered at this stage (e.g., routine, schedule, transition, and indoor and outdoor environment).

Questions to support educators:

What are you doing to directly relate your program plans to your observations and reflections? How are you being intentional with the choices you provide for children's resources, materials, and experiences? How will you track evidence of children's learning in response to the invitations and opportunities to play you have planned?

CONTINUE OBSERVATION

The beginning of the cycle started with engaging in observation and listening. In addition to educator's prior knowledge of children's dispositions, educators now gather information from how the children respond to the materials, invitations, and opportunities provided.

Questions to support educators:

What observations are you making throughout the day? How can you be more objective and avoid making assumptions about what the children think or feel? When can you find time to mindfully and authentically explore your observations?

REFLECT ON NEXT STEPS

At this stage, educators continue to closely examine all aspects of prior events and experiences, taking time to think about them more critically and from different perspectives. In addition, the focus shifts toward considering future changes and actions. Much reflection-in-action takes place here.

Questions to support educators:

What might need to change for your program plans to relate more directly to your observations and reflections? Why do you think the children are responding the way they are to the resources, materials, and activities you intentionally chose? What evidence demonstrates children are learning?

As the Reflective Planning Cycle becomes a more natural part of your practice, you can expect to become a more capable educator in many areas, including

- observing and listening
- identifying children's ideas and interests
- documenting information and children's learning
- reflecting critically on children's specific strengths and areas for opportunity or growth
- setting individualized learning goals and objectives
- planning inspiring learning experiences and environments
- authentically assessing and sharing children's learning with families and the community
- extending and scaffolding children's learning over time and across different environments (e.g., home, early learning program)

Where you find yourself in the phases of the Reflective Planning Cycle depends on what is happening in children's and families' lives, in your own and that of other educators, within the program, and in the greater community. It depends as well on pedagogical leadership and support, your professional knowledge and experience, and your level of comfort with change and innovative problem-solving. It should, like all educators' practice, align with the framework principles, practices, and learning goals. Further on in the guide, you will see more specific and practical examples of working through the Reflective Planning Cycle.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions or your own questions to support reflective practice:

- How can you make time in your schedule for critical reflection?
- What are some ways your team can collaborate more often? More effectively?
- What happens when your reflections and those of a colleague are very different? What impact does it have on children's learning and the environment? What other options may improve the outcome?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.





Pedagogical Documentation

The Reflective Planning Cycle is critical to support all the framework practices, including authentic assessment. Pedagogical documentation, a vital component of this cycle, plays a crucial role in validating and lending authenticity to assessments of children's development and learning. This process involves continuous observation of children during play, over time, in their early learning environments, and in their interactions with peers and adults.

When coupled with authentic assessment practices and pedagogical documentation, the Reflective Planning Cycle forms a comprehensive approach to understanding and supporting children's development and learning journeys. By embracing these practices, educators can cultivate meaningful insights into children's growth and provide tailored support to facilitate their ongoing learning experiences. Additionally, the four learning goals outlined in the framework (well-being, discovery and invention, language and communication, and personal and social responsibility) provide educators with a structured framework to guide their authentic assessment, observation, and documentation practices.

Pedagogical documentation makes children's thinking and ideas come to life for the viewer. Unlike a simple display, pedagogical documentation makes thinking and learning visible by showing both the children's and the educator's thinking, learning, ideas, and strategies. It is often shared with others, such as children, colleagues, families, and the community, using both text and photos shared in digital or hard copy formats.

It is also an important thinking tool for educators. Putting documentation together requires reflection on what has happened, dialogue with peers, thinking about what is important to document and why, and how to articulate this. Therefore, educators can learn and grow as professionals as they document children's actions and attempt to interpret their thinking. In addition, documentation of actions and learning can further support children and educators to expand on children's exploration and learning.

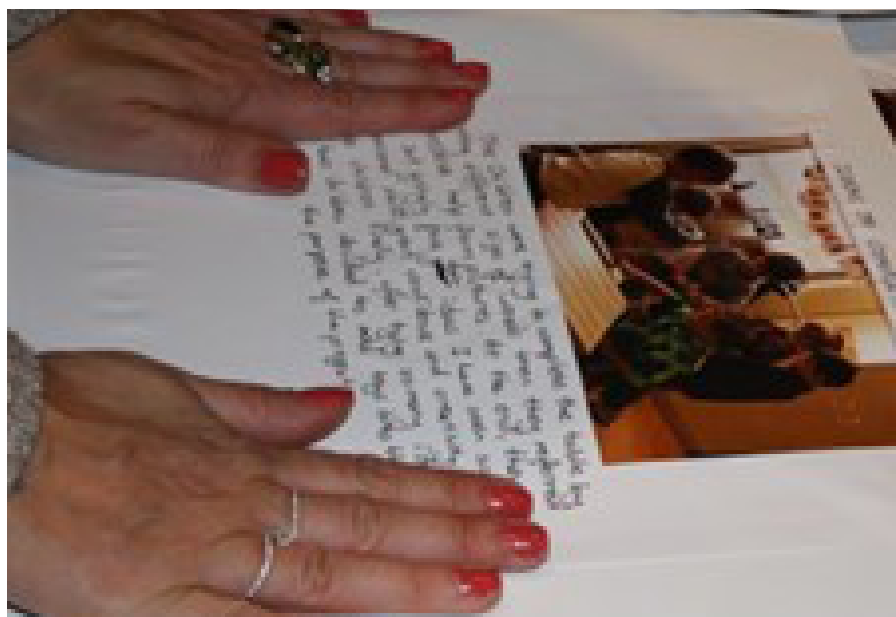
"Pedagogical documentation supports us in our work. It provides a mirror that reflects our practice. When we view this mirror with an open mind and heart, it quickly becomes a tool for learning—not only for us and the children but also for families and other caregivers who may wonder why we do things the way we do. Documentation can provide clarity when we look back over what has happened over the last few days or weeks. Typically, when children see themselves in action, they have something additional to say about what they did, and so the thinking and learning continues."

(Stacey 2023, 3)

There are many forms of documentation, and which one you choose will depend on who it is intended for, what you want to highlight, and personal preference.

Here are some examples:

Learning Stories are narratives that describe learning and help children see themselves as powerful learners. Developed by Margaret Carr and Wendy Lee in New Zealand, the narrative is written for and to the child, and the primary audience is the child and their family. (Carr and Lee 2015, 1)



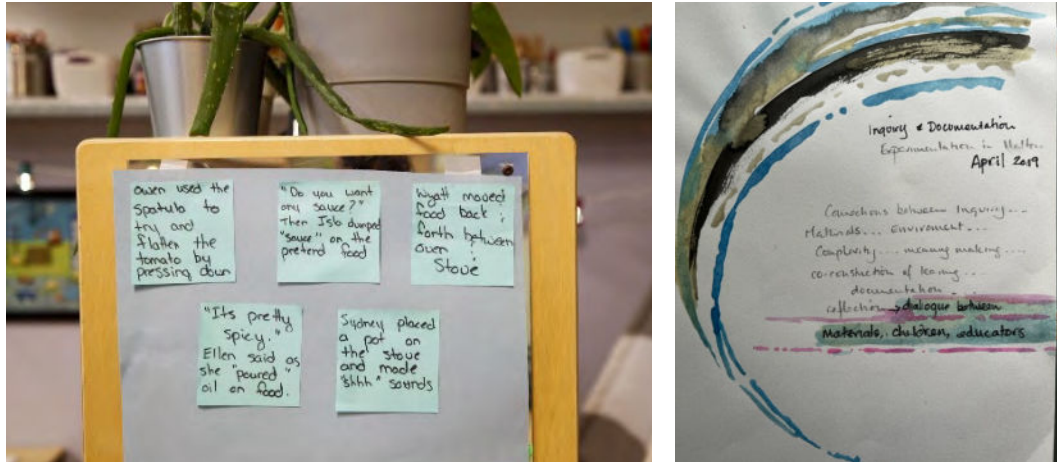
Hard copy panels consist of photographs, text, and children's work usually mounted on a sturdy surface. These panels can describe short- or long-term projects, play, or processes in which the children are engaged. You might want to choose to create one panel, or several panels that connect pieces of the story as it unfolds over time.



Digital documentation is created using apps and other online tools and platforms on laptops, tablets, and smartphones. Perhaps you use a digital app to document in your setting. There are many apps to consider, and whether you work alone or in a team, this approach can make producing documentation extremely convenient, easy to share with families, and quick. Beware, however, of the speed of documentation. When too fast, sometimes the reflective stage of documentation can be missing. Although digital documentation is more difficult for children to access by themselves, intentional planning can lead to creative solutions (e.g., digital photo frames, slideshows, printed digital documentation).



Raw documentation refers to the quick and easy on-the-spot jottings, sketches, wonderings, anecdotal records, and samplings of children's work such as mark making or drawings that help us to "hold in mind" what happened that day. They can be tacked onto a "reflective wall," or held in a sketch notebook or binder. A reflective wall demonstrates the complex process we use to notice, reflect upon, understand, and respond to children. Sketch notebooks are rough notes educators use when assessing children's learning and development. They may contain points for discussion with other educators, observations of children at play, or quick and rough sketches of construction. At some point, you may want to take this raw data and produce a more complete version of the documentation, for sharing with others. Again, this involves reflection about what to share, why, and how.



Portfolios provide an authentic and accurate picture of what is happening in terms of a child's learning on a day-to-day basis through interactions with materials, other children, adults, and the land. These forms of documentation may go into the child's portfolio, which can then inform semi-annual progress reports, authentic assessment processes, or facilitate discussions with families.



No matter which form of documentation you choose, it

"serves to communicate with all who participate in the education process what is happening, what children are expressing, and what is being experienced in the program. It serves as a way to learn more deeply and reflect more complexly on what we do with children. In the process of documenting we are communicating, in a concrete way, that what this child is doing is important and worthy."

(Chaillé 2008, 7)

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What do you typically document while engaging with or observing children at play?
- Which form of documentation do you use most? If this is a new practice, which form intrigues you or what would you like to try?
- How do you use your documentation to assess each child's learning and development? How are you making children's learning and progress visible to others including families and the community?
- What kind of resources do you need to improve your capacity for authentic assessment?
- Who may be able to provide you with advice on documentation and what professional development opportunities are available on the topic of authentic assessment and documentation?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.





Supporting

Children's Optimal Learning:
Learning Goals and Objectives

Supporting Children's Optimal Learning: Learning Goals and Objectives

As discussed throughout the guide, educators must reflect deeply on their practice to successfully implement the framework. Intentional reflection promotes the inclusion of actions and strategies in educators' program planning and pedagogy that are based on foundational principles and practices. It then provides them with the information they need to authentically support each child's learning goals and objectives as they develop as capable, confident, and curious beings.

In this section, you will find

- quotes from the framework for each of the four learning goals, along with learning objectives for each goal
- strategies for educators to support children's learning
- evidence of children's learning related to each learning objective
- sample Reflective Planning Cycle using local stories of putting the framework into practice
- practice snapshots offering local examples of how learning goals, objectives, and strategies are applied in early learning and child care programs

As you continue to reflect on your practice as an educator, remember that everyone is on their own unique journey in life, including you. Children—and families and educators—are full of potential to learn and grow. Everyone needs to feel welcomed, supported, heard, respected, and treated equitably. What you do as an educator matters. You make a difference in children's and families' lives every day.



WELL-BEING



What the framework says ...

"The framework views children's learning as dynamic, complex, and holistic. Educators understand that physical, personal, social, emotional, linguistic, cultural, spiritual, and cognitive aspects of learning are all interrelated. Children come from many different family backgrounds and cultures. Similarly, educators all draw on a vast range of life experiences to inform their own image of the child. "

(Capable, Confident, and Curious 2025, 11)

Learning objectives to support the goal of well-being:

1. children feel safe, secure, and supported
2. children become strong in their social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being
3. children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical well-being
4. children develop knowledge and confidence in their own identity
5. children build the capacity and skill to observe and develop awareness and respect for the well-being of others

WELL-BEING

Strategies to Support Children's Learning for Well-being

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1:

Children feel safe, secure, and supported

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• plan for consistency in routines • acknowledge and respond sensitively to children's cues and signals • respond quickly and respectfully to children's attempts to initiate interactions and conversations • make time to interact and communicate with each child in consistent, warm, reassuring, and nurturing ways • provide extra support during times of change and to bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar (e.g., educator is out sick, going outside at a different time than usual) • acknowledge, value, and build upon families' culturally valued child-rearing practices and approaches to learning • create culturally safe and appropriate learning experiences and spaces (e.g., reflect children's cultures in the setting) • provide opportunities for children to practice expressing their thoughts and feelings • recognize that feelings of distress, fear, or discomfort may take some time to resolve • model kindness and empathy toward others • acknowledge each child's uniqueness in positive ways (e.g., greeting by preferred name) • build positive and lasting relationships with families, early childhood professionals, and communities • develop an authentic understanding of the historical experiences of the Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotians, Gaels, Acadians/Francophones, and other cultures that make up Nova Scotia's diverse population • acquire knowledge of and are respectful of newcomer families, their communities, and their lived experiences	• know what comes next in the daily routine and transition easily between activities (e.g., use visual schedule) • communicate their needs for comfort and assistance • demonstrate a feeling of belonging through their behaviour and language • engage in respectful and trusting relationships • build secure attachments with one and then more familiar educators • express feelings and ideas openly when interacting with others • respond to ideas and suggestions from others • initiate interactions and conversations with trusted educators • explore and engage in relationships with confidence • initiate and join in play in all learning environments • explore aspects of roles and identities through imaginative and dramatic play • recognize various materials within the program to be representations of themselves and of their family, language, and culture (e.g., family photos) • remember and greet others by their preferred name • recognize representations of their learning and growth represented in the learning environments • show respect for Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, Gaelic, Acadian/Francophone, and people from other underrepresented groups • interact and speak with children and adults from diverse cultures with respect

WELL-BEING

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Ensure children have access to comfort items when they are experiencing discomfort, fear, or other strong emotions.
- Respond positively and immediately to children's concerns.
- Remind children they can turn to the adults in the program if they need help.
- Ensure there is time for introductions between yourself and families when they join the group.
- Offer reassurance and comfort if children become confused, or express sadness.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What other strategies may help children feel safe, secure, and supported in your program?
- How else do children demonstrate feeling safe, secure, and supported in their play, interactions, and conversations?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



WELL-BEING

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2:

Children become strong in their social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- show genuine affection, understanding, and respect for all children
- collaborate with children to document their achievements and share their successes with their families
- ensure that all children experience pride in their attempts and achievements
- promote children's sense of belonging, connectedness, and well-being
- challenge, encourage, and support children to engage in and persevere at tasks and play
- build upon and extend children's ideas and skills (e.g., add a new and more challenging puzzle to the peg puzzles)
- maintain high expectations of each child's capabilities while also being available to offer physical and emotional support as required or requested by children
- value children's personal decision-making
- welcome children and families into the program space
- share aspects of children's cultural and spiritual lives
- talk with children about their emotions and responses to events with a view to supporting children's understandings of emotional regulation and self-control
- acknowledge and affirm children's effort and growth with positivity and encouragement
- mediate and assist children in negotiating their rights in relation to the rights of others, such as helping children resolve who gets to use the painting easel first

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- demonstrate trust and confidence
- remain accessible to others at times of distress, confusion, and frustration
- share humour, happiness, and satisfaction
- seek out and accept new challenges (e.g., zipping a coat, putting on boots) and make new discoveries
- celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others
- co-operate and work together with others
- enjoy moments of solitude
- recognize their individual as well as group achievements
- make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change, and cope with frustrations and the unexpected
- show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others
- experience and share personal successes in learning and initiate opportunities for new learning
- assert their capabilities, independence, and interdependence while demonstrating increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others
- recognize the contributions they make to shared projects and experiences
- seek out adults and peers when they need help

WELL-BEING

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Provide opportunities for children to have increasing chances to practice sharing, taking turns, and participating in a group.
- Make space for each child's personal belongings and comfort items to be easily accessible in all common areas and learning environments.
- Involve children of all ages in the development of visual representations of program expectations for interacting with others and practical conflict resolution strategies. Ensure visual representations are accessible and referred to on a regular basis.
- Offer learning materials and experiences that challenge children to practice new skills without being overwhelmed.
- Invite open and meaningful conversations with families about culture and language.
- Provide larger loose parts (e.g., boards, tires) that need two or more children to work together to manipulate and build structures, collaboratively.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What other strategies help children to become strong in their social, emotional, cultural, linguistic, and spiritual well-being?
- How else do children demonstrate strength in their social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual well-being in their play, interactions, and conversations?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



WELL-BEING

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3:

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical well-being

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- plan for and participate in child-led and educator-led energetic physical activity with children, such as dance, drama, movement, and games
- draw on family and community experiences and expertise to include familiar games and physical activities in play
- provide a wide range of tools and materials and loose parts to resource children's fine and gross motor skills
- actively support children to learn hygiene practices
- promote continuity of children's personal health and hygiene by sharing ownership of routines and schedules with children, families, and the community
- discuss health and safety issues with children and involve them in developing guidelines to keep the environment safe for all
- engage children in experiences, conversations, and routines that promote healthy lifestyles and good nutrition
- model and reinforce health, nutrition, and personal hygiene practices with children (e.g., handwashing)
- provide a range of active and restful experiences throughout the day and support children to make appropriate decisions regarding participation
- provide opportunities for children to learn to assess and manage risk in their play activities
- recognize that some children may require assistive devices and accommodations to promote their physical participation (e.g., mobility devices)

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- recognize and communicate their physical needs, such as thirst, hunger, rest, comfort, and physical activity
- are happy, healthy, safe, and connected to others
- engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns, such as clapping, jumping, running, climbing, and turning around in a variety of indoor and outdoor environments
- combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity, with assistance when necessary
- use their sensory capabilities and dispositions with increasing integration, skill, and purpose to explore and respond to their world
- demonstrate spatial awareness and orient themselves, moving around and through their environments confidently and safely
- manipulate equipment and manage tools with increasing competence and skill
- respond through movement to traditional and contemporary music, dance, and storytelling
- show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition
- show increasing competence in personal hygiene, care, and safety for themselves and others
- show enthusiasm for participating in physical play and negotiate play spaces to ensure the safety and well-being of themselves and others
- understand and assess risk, and accept challenges in their play

WELL-BEING

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Provide children opportunities for gross motor play that supports physical literacy and active movement (e.g., climbing, running, jumping).
- Present snack and lunch options in ways that allow children to select and serve their own food from a range of healthy options.
- Sit with children routinely during snack and mealtimes and have conversations about what they eat at home and what they like about the foods they try.
- Invite children to participate in a walk about the playground to identify any hazardous objects.
- Provide children with opportunities to practice self-care tasks that are age appropriate (e.g., scraping food into the compost bin).
- State clearly to children and adults that space needs to be made for children's adaptive equipment (e.g., wheelchair, talker) to be used when and where needed throughout the day.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What other strategies help children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical well-being?
- How else do children demonstrate taking responsibility for their own health and physical well-being in their play, interactions, and conversations?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



WELL-BEING

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4:

Children develop knowledge and confidence in their own identity

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• promote a strong sense of who children are and their connectedness to others • ensure all children experience pride and confidence in their achievements • share children's large and small successes with families • ask families questions about their diverse cultures and communities • celebrate diversity, acknowledging all children, families, communities, and cultures • acknowledge and understand that children construct meaning in many ways • demonstrate deep understanding of each child, their family, culture, and community contexts in planning for children's learning • provide children with meaningful examples of the many ways identities and culture are recognized and expressed • talk with children in respectful ways about similarities and differences in people • provide rich and diverse resources that reflect children's social worlds • listen, respond positively to, and learn about children's understandings of themselves • share meaningful descriptions of accomplishments ("Today your child helped another find their mitten") • respect individual personalities, learning approaches, communication styles, etc.	• feel recognized and respected for who they are • explore diverse social and cultural identities, traditions, and points of view • feel safe to equally learn about and express various types of gender identities and non-traditional roles • use resources that reflect their own experiences and identities • share aspects of their culture with the other children and educators • share stories of their home life and things they do with their families and community with confidence • use their family language to construct meaning • develop strong foundations in both the culture and language(s) of their family and broader community without compromising their cultural identities • develop social and cultural knowledge of their heritage through engagement with community members • reach out and communicate for comfort, assistance, and companionship for themselves and others • celebrate and share their contributions and achievements with others • reach out to different educators for support for specific needs based on the relationship developed and consistency of the educators' responses

WELL-BEING

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Create documentation that contains pictures of each child's family such as a family tree or family books.
- Create a communication or relationship building process that supports family perspectives in the program such as providing a space for families to respond to documentation or learning stories.
- Assess whether the book area includes books and pictures depicting children from many cultural backgrounds and family composition, including, but not limited to, those that reflect children in your program.
- Encourage children to ask questions and share experiences while at play and in group activities, and provide children who choose not to respond or participate with alternate opportunities, such as private or quiet activity choices.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What other strategies may help children develop knowledge and confidence in their own self-identity?
- How else do children demonstrate development of knowledge and confidence in their self-identity in their play, interactions, and conversations?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



WELL-BEING

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 5:

Children build the capacity and skill to observe and develop awareness and respect for the well-being of others

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• provide opportunities for children to learn about mental health and well-being in age-appropriate meaningful ways • respond to expressions of emotions, stress, and other signals of distress in a calm and respectful manner • ask children what they need to comfort them when experiencing big emotions • model how to clearly communicate an individual's need for emotional and physical support • provide support for children's and adults' feelings of stress, anxiety, and worry (e.g., validate and label feelings; problem-solve together) • model and engage in mindfulness and calming activities with the children including yoga, meditation, expressive arts, breathing exercises, and drumming • implement strategies from evidence-based mental health prevention and promotion programs (e.g., <i>Greenspan Floortime</i>; <i>Roots/Seeds of Empathy</i>; <i>Reaching IN Reaching OUT</i>; <i>Kids Have Stress Too!</i>; <i>Handle with Care</i>) • reflect on and adjust biases regarding risky play and view children as being capable, confident, and curious learners • expect and accept that children respond differently during transitions	• learn to appreciate that some of their peers and others may not always experience a sense of wellness • show compassion toward their peers • recognize when their peers are feeling sad or scared • show ability to understand and share peers' expressions of strong emotions or signs of distress • initiate engagement in mindfulness and calming activities including yoga, meditation, expressive arts, breathing exercises, and drumming • practice mindfulness and calming activities with peers • notice when peers need help with an object (e.g., paint, mittens) • ask for help for themselves and other children and adults • help others to do tasks both when asked and of their own initiative • express feelings of being capable, confident, and curious in various ways • ensure peers have access to the equipment they need to participate fully (e.g., wheelchair, talker) • suggest things that make them feel better to problem-solve when a peer is feeling big emotions • use images and words to describe a variety and range of emotions

WELL-BEING

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Create an easily accessible “I feel/I need” visual for children to place an image representing their current emotion or need next to a photo of themselves.
- Inquire how family members are doing when they arrive at the start and end of the day.
- Have conversations with children and adults to promote safe risk-taking, prevent injuries, and develop competence.
- Practice breathing techniques with children who are experiencing big emotions, supporting the child and co-regulating with them.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What other strategies may help children to build the capacity and skill to observe and develop awareness and respect for the well-being of others?
- How else do you see children building the capacity and skill to observe and develop awareness and respect for the well-being of others, in their play, interactions, and conversation?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



WELL-BEING

The Framework in Action: Reflective Planning for Well-being

The following is an example of how the Reflective Planning Cycle can be used to promote children's well-being, in action. It builds upon a local story shared by a Nova Scotia educator and a learning experience shared with children around the loss of a pet and the conversations and actions that followed.

Burying a Pet



This example shows how educators are promoting children's well-being by creating opportunities for them to

- *become strong in their social, emotional, linguistic, cultural, and spiritual well-being.*
- *develop knowledge and confidence in their own self-identity.*

Children show evidence of these learning objectives when they

- *recognize the contributions they make to shared projects and experiences.*
- *explore other diverse social and cultural identities, traditions, and points of view.*

Example Reflective Planning Cycle

OBSERVE AND LISTEN

When a class pet—a hermit crab—died, we, the educators, listened to the discussions being had by the children. We observed them as they played and spent time together following the death. A small group of children decided that “we have to have a funeral; that’s what you do when someone dies.” This motivated us, the educators, to consider this learning opportunity on a deeper level.

REFLECT WITH OTHERS

Pausing to reflect, we asked ourselves, “What do children know about what is, for them, a social and cultural norm or tradition? What is their prior knowledge of funerals and what have they experienced? How can we provide time, space, and resources for the children to process their understanding of loss and tradition?”

PLAN RESPONSES

We took these questions to the children. Their responses helped us to plan a meaningful experience for them:

“You dig a hole and put him in there.”

“You put flowers on—I did that before.”

“You have to say something—or you could sing a song.”

ACT

We acted by providing time and space for the children to enact what they knew. We provided materials that they could use to support this exploration and help process their understanding of the concepts of death and burial.

CONTINUE OBSERVATION

During the experience, we continued to observe them interact. The children smiled as they covered the grave and put dandelions on top. They seemed satisfied with their actions and held hands as they sang a song.

REFLECT ON NEXT STEPS

We continued to wonder: When children lead a tradition such as a funeral, does it provide closure for them? How might they remember their pet? We offered drawing as an option.

Connections to the Principles and Practices

To support children's *holistic development*, educators must reflect on and attend to each child's spiritual health, emotional reality, and cultural identity. In the example above, the educators do this by giving children the opportunity, time, and space to participate in a funeral for a pet to help them process feelings of grief and loss.

By listening to the children's ideas and allowing them to take the lead and share in decision-making, the educators foster *reciprocal relationships* and respectful interactions that build mutual trust and collaboration with children.

Practice Snapshots: Well-being



Observation is necessary to learn things about the needs of children. In this example, the educator noticed that children needed a quiet space and time for relaxation. The educator adapted the indoor learning environment with the addition of this cozy space.

This example shows how an educator can create opportunities for children to

- *take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical well-being.*

Children show evidence of this learning objective when they choose to use the space to rest, demonstrating that they can

- *recognize and communicate their physical needs.*

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some ways you will acknowledge and grow children's well-being?
- What cultural considerations are/should be taken in account when promoting children's health and well-being?
- How might you enhance children's sense of responsibility for their own well-being and that of others?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



DISCOVERY & INVENTION



What the framework says ...

“When children are in an open and flexible learning environment, they develop curiosity, persistence, and creativity. This occurs as children explore, investigate, and test the world around them from infancy.”

(Capable, Confident, and Curious 2025, 71)

Learning objectives to support the goal of discovery and invention:

1. children develop curiosity, co-operation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination
2. children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching, and investigating

DISCOVERY & INVENTION

Strategies to Support Children's Learning for Discovery and Invention

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1:

Children develop curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- recognize and value children's involvement in learning
- provide indoor and outdoor learning environments that are intentionally planned, easily adapted, and offer a wide selection of loose parts that reflect children's play and exploration
- respond to children's displays of learning dispositions and approaches by providing encouragement, suggestions, and related materials to extend thinking and learning
- encourage children to engage in both individual and collaborative exploratory learning processes
- listen carefully to children's ideas and conversations to support and extend their learning
- promote and support children's problem-solving skills to address concerns, challenges, and curiosities with others and independently
- encourage children to participate in oral storytelling and role-play
- provide opportunities for children to revisit their ideas and extend their thinking and understanding
- model inquiry processes, including wonder, curiosity, and imagination, try new ideas, and take on challenges
- try new ideas and plan experiences that are outside their comfort zone and challenge their knowledge and skill set
- reflect with children on what and how they have learned
- share and celebrate the processes involved in children's discoveries and inventions with families, others in the program, and within the community regularly
- build on the knowledge, language(s), and understandings that children bring to the program
- explore the diversity of cultures and social identities
- provide opportunities for children to learn about and develop a strong sense of who they are as individuals

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- express wonder and interest in the natural world
- express curiosity and enthusiastically engage in their indoor and outdoor learning environments
- use play to investigate, imagine, and explore ideas
- follow and extend their own interests with enthusiasm, energy, and concentration
- initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas
- use creative and innovative thinking with others and use various methods (e.g., loose parts, books, knowledge holders) to solve a problem
- invent and share stories with peers, families, and the community
- participate in a variety of rich and meaningful inquiry-based experiences
- persevere even when something is difficult (e.g., putting on snowpants)
- experience the satisfaction of achievement
- engage in new experiences, materials, and people with excitement, curiosity, and a positive mindset
- engage in creative art and play on their own and with others
- use materials and other resources in innovative, creative, and unexpected ways
- repeat discoveries and other learning experiences many times over
- adopt a positive attitude when working with and helping other children and adults
- take risks and explore new ways of doing things

DISCOVERY & INVENTION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Provide easily accessible loose materials such as feathers, shells, and paints in the art area for children to build their imagination and creativity.
- Foster children's thinking with the use of blank sheets of paper for colouring, drawing, scribbling, and printing.
- Introduce children to new interesting, complex, or fragile objects to explain what they are, how they work, and how and when to play with them safely in the learning environment.
- Ask questions and talk to children about their interests as they play to get inspiration for materials, loose parts, books, and images that will build upon and enhance their play experiences.
- Provide play opportunities for children to work with peers collaboratively such as puzzles, role-play, or games.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some other new ideas or materials you would like to explore with the children?
- What are some ways you will acknowledge and grow children's curiosity, co-operation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination?
- What evidence of children's developing curiosity, co-operation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination do you see in your work?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



DISCOVERY & INVENTION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2:

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

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• design indoor and outdoor learning environments with appropriate levels of challenge where children are encouraged to explore, experiment, and take appropriate risks in their learning • recognize mathematical understandings that children bring to learning and build on these in ways that are relevant to each child • regularly prompt children to extend their thinking, asking “what if”-type questions, and encouraging children to try something different • provide children with resources that challenge, intrigue, and surprise them, support their investigations, and share their enjoyment • encourage children to use language to describe and explain their ideas • provide opportunities for involvement in experiences that support the investigation of ideas, complex concepts and thinking, reasoning, and hypothesizing and problem-solving • encourage children to make their ideas and concepts visible to others • model scientific language and language associated with the arts (e.g., mixing, gradient blending, incline) • join in children’s play and model reasoning, predicting, and reflecting processes and language • encourage children to explain what they know and ask questions about things they wonder and are curious about	• recognize and invite children to share what they already know, have experimented with, explored, or solved • apply a wide variety of thinking strategies, such as reviewing and questioning, to engage with situations, solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations • create and use representations to organize, record, and communicate mathematical ideas and concepts, such as conducting a survey or creating charts • make predictions and generalizations about their daily activities and aspects of the natural world and environments • use patterns to generate or identify observations, such as how many children are wearing a blue t-shirt, and communicate these findings using language and symbols • manipulate objects and experiment with cause and effect, trial and error, and motion • contribute constructively to discussions and debates • use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learned from these experiences • hear and use scientific language and language associated with the arts • share information about things they know and are interested in

DISCOVERY & INVENTION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Include open-ended materials throughout the learning environments to encourage children's experimentation and discovery.
- Provide opportunities throughout the daily routine for children to experience new and interesting textures, smells, tastes, and visually stimulating objects.
- Encourage children to inquire and hypothesize about everyday things using surveys, asking "what if"-type questions, and tracking and tallying responses with charts.
- Offer opportunities for children to visually chart information relevant to them (e.g., who has been on a plane, how many rulers tall they are, their favourite colour).

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (or STEAM) ideas or materials that you would like to explore with the children and add to the indoor and outdoor learning environments?
- What are some ways you could reflect on this together with your team of educators?
- What are some ways you will support and acknowledge children's range of skills and processes, such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching, and investigating?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



DISCOVERY & INVENTION

The Framework in Action: Reflective Planning for Discovery and Invention

Through the images and text below, a Nova Scotia educator documented children's play and learning related to the learning goal of discovery and invention. The educator's reflections included ongoing questions and wonderings about how to extend children's play and exploration of aerodynamics. The Reflective Planning Cycle is shared to demonstrate how the educator uses the tool to support critical thinking and consideration of what step could come next.

This example shows how educators promote children's discovery and invention by

- supporting the development of qualities such as *curiosity, co-operation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination.*
- nurturing skills and processes such as *problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching, and investigating.*

Children show evidence of these learning objectives when they

- *engage in new experiences, materials, and people with excitement, curiosity, and a positive mindset.*
- *manipulate objects and experiment with cause and effect, trial and error, and motion.*



Aerodynamics: a Toddler's Perspective.

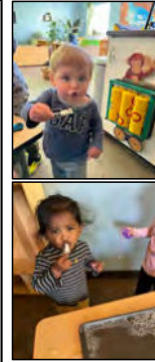
Aerodynamics is a pretty big word and concept to use when referring to Toddler's learning. Over the last few months this has been their interest - observing, manipulating, and exploring how different objects move through the air when interacting with various speeds of air. Toddlers are intelligent and capable of BIG learning, even aerodynamics!

Our aerodynamic journey begins with bubble popping and chasing in the classroom. The children showed delight and interest in the bubbles by chasing after the bubbles, clapping them between their hands, standing back and watching how they moved, and popping them with different body

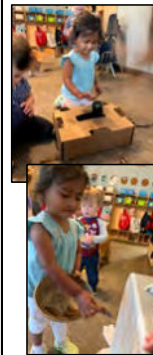
parts. Here, Jaxton is using his feet to kick at, and pop the bubbles. He was a little unstable standing on one foot to kick, so he moved to a shelf and held onto it for support. This decision displayed his ability to problem solve, and his body awareness.



The toddlers took control of their exploration of bubbles by making their own with wands. Greta, Jaxton, Hudson, and Max preferred to dip the wands into the solution and shake them. Aadriti and Finley tried to blow the bubbles with their mouths. Through much trial and error, the toddlers made bubbles! As the toddlers experiment with different motions and speeds to create bubbles they are practicing problem solving skills and scientific thinking.



In our next phase of learning the children were presented the opportunity to explore with forced air. Using a hair dryer propped up inside a box, and feathers, the children were able to manipulate the feathers within the air to produce different reactions. We also tried a large box fan and bubbles with forced air as well. The toddlers were free to explore with the materials however they chose. As you can see from the expressions on the children's faces in the photos, they were thrilled at the effects of the air on the feathers. Up until this point, the toddlers had only experimented with objects and stagnant air. Changing the speed of air challenged what they had already learned about aerodynamics and allowed them to investigate further uncovering new truths about their environment.



Aadriti held tightly to her feather and watched closely how the air affected the tiny hairs of the feather instead of letting it fly through the air.

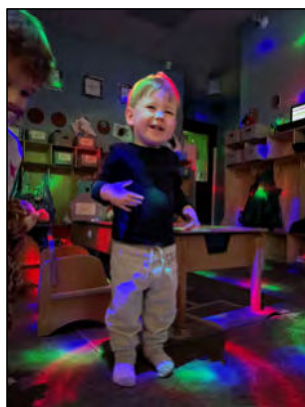


Greta held a car up to the air for a couple seconds before saying, "That can't work."



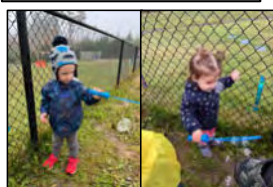
While the children were exploring with feathers, I placed the basket of scarves nearby. Greta discovered them first and after watching her make one float into the air, others quickly followed suit. This induced lots of giggles as they flew back up into their faces. The scarves moved differently in the air than the feathers, adding another level of discovery and exploration.





So far the toddlers have had the opportunity to explore and experiment with bubbles, feathers, scarves, and cars in both stagnant and forced air. All of these materials have been tangible, and it appeared that this was a conclusion the toddlers had made about these types of moving objects. Here, the toddlers are seen trying to catch the moving lights on the floor and pointing to them in the air. While these lights are not technically affected by aerodynamics they provided a very similar experience that prompted thought and joy from the toddlers.

Blowing bubbles outside in a slight breeze is different than using bubbles in the classroom.

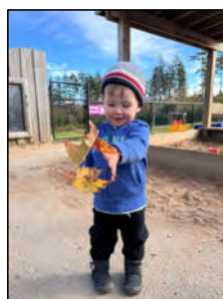


Last time we used the hair dryer with feathers, Aadriti held the feathers and watched as it moved with the wind in her hand. Today, I provided strips of streamers thinking the longer material would accentuate the movements in the air for her to observe. She held the streamers close to the air source with two hands and looked up at the long streamer as it flapped in the air. Once she was satisfied, she would let go, and watch it fly up over her head into the air. She was overjoyed with this reaction and let out a big giggle and smile every time. The streamers provided a very different reaction to the air than the feathers. They went higher, stayed in the air longer, and floated back down more softly. These movements were exciting and satisfying to all.



Throughout our aerodynamics journey the toddlers have worked on both discovery and invention goals from the NS Early Learning Curriculum Framework. The toddlers displayed and developed curiosity, confidence, creativity, commitment to an idea, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination. This was evident as they expressed wonder and interest in their environment and were curious and enthusiastic participants in their own learning. They also practiced a range of skills and processes such as problem-solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, and investigating. This looked like applying a wide variety of thinking strategies, such as reviewing and questioning, to engage with situations, solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations.

If the toddlers could effectively express verbally, what would they tell us they've learned about aerodynamics? What about weight? Space? Gravity? Movement? Cause and effect relationships? I wonder what questions they would still have unanswered. Will any of these experiments help them to understand what is happening when they see an airplane, bird flying, or the leaves or snow falling from the sky?



Finn throwing some leaves he found on the playground.

A side by side look of Aadriti engaging in the same type of investigation with different materials.



The educator's pedagogical documentation provides an example of how the Reflective Planning Cycle can be used to support children's discovery and invention. Referring back to the documentation above, consider how the observations of the children, collected by the educator, can be applied to the various stages of the Reflective Planning Cycle.

Example Reflective Planning Cycle

OBSERVE AND LISTEN

During bubble play, the way that the children were playing with and reacting to the bubbles was noticed and documented. The toddlers responded in an excited way and used their body to pop the bubbles. Other questions guided me as I observed and listened: What else did I see and hear the children saying and doing? What more did I notice about how the children continued to engage with the bubbles?

REFLECT WITH OTHERS

Over time and reflecting on the children's continued play and exploration, I interpreted what the children may have been learning. My observations showed me that the toddlers were practicing problem-solving skills and scientific thinking as they experimented with different motions and speeds to create bubbles.

PLAN RESPONSES

I recognized that the children were ready to expand on and deepen their learning and move to a next phase. How could I connect what I was observing with new opportunities? What were some of the ideas about air and bubbles moving that I could enhance and support?

I thought about what made me, as an educator, curious alongside the children. What strengths and interests did I continue to see the children expressing?

I considered what additional knowledge or resources I needed to further this learning through playful engagement. I also considered what else I could introduce to extend the children's learning.

ACT

One of the new ideas that I considered and offered to the children was a way to explore with forced air and new light objects that could be used. I introduced feathers and a hair dryer and also shared the bubbles again. I encouraged the children to explore with the materials however they chose.

CONTINUE OBSERVATION

As the children continued to explore with air and materials, I had an opportunity to again notice, listen, and observe the complex learning and play. I wondered how we could continue to use our observations and reflections to further plan for and continue the children's learning. I saw that changing the speed of air challenged what the children had already learned about aerodynamics. The play continued to provide opportunities for new learning and new understanding.

REFLECT ON NEXT STEPS

Documenting the exploration of aerodynamics, I could see what happens when children are provided with new materials to extend play and enhance learning. New materials like the scarves, lights, cars, and streamers provided new ways to explore and new, complex understanding. As I continued through the process, I considered what changes I could make to program plans to relate more directly to our observations and reflections? What steps could I take to continue to support children's discovery and invention?

Connections to the Principles and Practices

The educator in this example prioritized *holistic development* as toddlers explored aerodynamics through hands-on activities that fostered cognitive, physical, social, and emotional growth. The educator engaged in continuous *critical reflection* to support the toddlers' exploration in a responsive way. The toddlers engaged in *play-based learning* experiences guided by the educator, who used *authentic assessment* methods to evaluate the children's understanding and problem-solving skills. *Continuity of learning experiences* is maintained through expanding opportunities for investigation and discovery.

Practice Snapshots: Discovery and Invention



Having interesting materials on hand in this program helps children discover new and unique perspectives. In this photo, a child curiously considers what happens to print when it is seen in a mirror.

This example shows how educators can create opportunities for children to

- *develop curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination.*

Children show evidence of this learning objective when they

- *use play to investigate, imagine, and explore ideas.*



In these photos, educators promote children's discovery and invention by providing easy access to open-ended materials that are interesting and well-organized in various areas of the early learning environments.

This example shows how educators can create opportunities for children to

- *develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching, and investigating.*

Children show evidence of this learning objective when they

- *manipulate objects in creative ways and experiment using trial and error.*



In these photos, educators provided an enticing mix of plants and bugs on a table for children to explore. Unknowingly, they also provided unplanned opportunities for other learning to take place.

Noticing an array of bowls on another table, the toddler chose to use the bugs with the bowls and the bugs “ate and talked” with each other.

This example shows how educators can create opportunities for children to

- *develop curiosity, co-operation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, and imagination.*

Children show evidence of this learning objective when they

- *initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas.*

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What observation and documentation strategies do/can you use to capture what children are communicating through their interactions, actions, and play?
- What steps can you take to more regularly use your observations and reflections of children's discovery and invention to inform program planning?
- In what ways can you be more intentional with the choices you provide for children's resources, materials, and experiences?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION



What the framework says ...

“Educators understand that children are social beings who are intrinsically motivated to exchange ideas, thoughts, questions, and feelings. They know children use a range of tools and media—including music, dance, and drama—to express themselves, connect with others and extend their learning. They make space for each child’s unique expression of their language, culture, and community, recognizing that this space allows each child to strengthen their sense of self.”

(Capable, Confident, and Curious 2025, 73)

Learning objectives to support the goal of language and communication:

1. children interact verbally and nonverbally with others
2. children engage with a variety of texts and gain meaning from them
3. children express ideas and make meaning with a variety of media
4. children begin to understand how symbols and patterns work
5. children use technology, with guidance, to access information, investigate ideas, and express their thoughts
6. children communicate in their heritage and family languages including Sign language, augmentative, and alternative communication strategies
7. children cultivate language skills in French, one of Canada’s two official languages, and deepen connections to Acadian and Francophone language, culture, and heritage in official-language minority communities

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

Strategies to Support Children's Learning for Language and Communication

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1:

Children interact verbally and nonverbally with others

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
- engage in enjoyable interactions with babies as they make and play with sounds - respond positively and promptly to children's cues and requests for support (e.g., facial expressions, body language, vocalized needs, infants' cries) - understand and respond to the communication styles of individual children - repeat sounds and squeals of babies and toddlers to create an exchange of sounds with non-verbal children - listen to, respond to, repeat, and expand upon children's approximations of words and sentences - value children's linguistic heritage, and, with family and community members, encourage the use of and acquisition of language, including non-verbal forms of language (e.g., Sign language, picture exchange communication) - recognize that children enter early learning and child care programs having begun to communicate and make sense of their experiences at home and in their communities - demonstrate respect for each child's family language - model and encourage the use of developmentally appropriate words with adults and children in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes - engage in sustained communication with children about ideas and experiences, and extend their vocabulary - include real-life resources to promote children's use of mathematical language, such as larger, more, and fewer - design language-rich learning environments that provide opportunities for children to build their vocabularies and experiment with expressing themselves through media such as visual arts, play in nature, music, literacy, and movement	- engage in playful interactions using verbal and non-verbal communication - build on home, family, and community literacies to convey and construct messages with purpose and confidence - respond verbally and non-verbally to what they see, hear, touch, feel, and taste - use language and representations from play, music, and art to share and project meaning - contribute their ideas and experiences in play in small and large group discussions - give cues that they are listening to and understanding what is said to them - initiate conversations and demonstrate the ability to meet the listener's needs - interact with others to explore ideas and concepts, clarify and challenge thinking, negotiate, and share new understandings - exchange ideas and feelings using language and representations while playing - express ideas and feelings, and understand and respect other perspectives - use language to communicate thinking about quantities to describe attributes of objects and collections, and to explain mathematical ideas - show increasing knowledge, understanding, and skill in conveying meaning - express themselves in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes - play with vocalizing sounds, learning new words and their meaning - make plans, work together, make compromises, and negotiate (e.g., taking turns riding a bike) - express how they and others feel, and how they might support each other

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Become familiar with infants' different cries to be more responsive when they are hungry, need to be changed, or need to be comforted.
- Plan for children to regularly play miming and improvisation games like charades for indoor or outdoor transition times or at other routine times.
- Invite children to share stories or experiences verbally, by having their words written down and using photos with the group.
- Develop professional relationships with speech language pathologists to learn strategies and play-based activities that support language development.
- Promote the exploration of language in all learning areas and experiences, being attentive to words that children know and use, and creating excitement around learning new words and their meaning.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some strategies you would like to explore to support children's verbal and non-verbal interactions?
- How can you work with your team of educators to promote continuity of learning verbal and non-verbal language?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2:

Children engage with a variety of texts and gain meaning from them

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• read and share a range of books and other texts with children • provide a sufficient number of books so all children have access and choice • display print in languages spoken or communicated by children in the group • sing and chant rhymes, jingles, and songs • engage children in play with words and sounds • talk explicitly about concepts such as rhyme, letters, and sounds when sharing texts with children • incorporate familiar family and community texts and stories • join in children's play and engage them in conversations about the meanings of images and print • engage children in discussions about books and other texts that promote consideration of diverse perspectives • teach art as language and how people use artistic elements and principles to construct visual, musical, dance, and media texts (e.g., display permanent artwork, carvings, and signs that honour the diverse populations in Nova Scotia) • provide opportunities for children to engage with familiar and unfamiliar culturally constructed stories and texts • design learning environments to engage children in a range of activities accessible to all abilities, languages, and experiences	• listen and respond to sounds and/or patterns in speech and language, stories, and rhymes in context • view and listen to printed, visual, and multimedia texts and respond with relevant gestures, actions, comments, and questions • sing and chant rhymes, jingles, and songs • begin to understand key literacy and numeracy concepts and processes, such as the sounds of language, letter-sound relationships, concepts of print, and the ways texts are structured • take on roles of literacy and numeracy users in their play, such as using pencil and paper to take orders in a restaurant • explore texts from a range of different perspectives and begin to analyze the meanings • actively use, engage with, and share the enjoyment of language and texts in a range of ways • recognize and engage with written, oral, or signed constructed texts • experience diversity, cultures, and languages

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Provide a range of books from picture books to books with simple and more complex text in the reading area and in various areas of the learning environments.
- Provide books that have diversity in representation of language and culture for all children to enjoy and experience.
- Share written lyrics of songs, rhymes, jingles, and finger plays regularly throughout the daily routine with families so they can use them at home with their children.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What actions can you take to ensure the texts and materials available to children reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the children in your program to foster a sense of belonging and promote inclusivity?
- In what ways can you incorporate discussions about diverse perspectives and experiences into interactions with texts to ensure children can engage with a wide range of viewpoints and ideas?
- How can you scaffold and support children's understandings of key literacy concepts, such as letter-sounds and concepts of print, through playful and interactive activities?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3:

Children express ideas and make meaning with a variety of media

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• 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 visual arts, dance, drama, and music • ask and answer questions while reading or discussing books and other texts • provide resources that encourage children to experiment with images and print • facilitate the development of children's skills and techniques that will enhance their capacity for self-expression and communication • join in children's play and co-construct materials such as signs that extend play and enhance literacy learning • respond to children's images and symbols; talk about the elements, principles, skills, and techniques they have used to convey meaning • give children opportunities to engage in activities and stories using a variety of their senses (e.g., reading a book and then making a song and dance out of it, reading about deserts and then playing in the sand) • incorporate signage or carved images of musical instruments important to diverse cultures, including the drum in its cultural variations • display and share documentation of children's learning with others using a variety of media including text, photos, audio/video recordings, text message, and email	• use language and engage in play to imagine and create roles, scripts, and ideas • share the stories and symbols of children's own cultures and re-enact well-known stories • use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music, and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning • experiment with ways of expressing ideas and meaning using a variety of media • begin to use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning • use increasingly complex and rich expressions of meaning • share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings with others • write or attempt to write letters, names, and other familiar words • look at, recall, and describe documentation that is displayed and shared (e.g., of experiences, objects, people, and places)

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Record children vocalizing songs, rhymes, jingles, and finger plays for them to playback, listen to, and share with families.
- Invite children to draw or paint their favourite part of each field trip, helping to provide text to each drawing and using the child's own words to describe what is happening.
- Encourage children and families to share photos, videos, and stories about activities they do at home, in the community, and on vacation together.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some strategies you would like to explore to support children's expression of ideas and meaning-making through visual arts, dance, drama, and music?
- Who could you invite from your community to support children's expression of creative arts?
- How and when do you communicate with families about children's strengths and challenges with regards to expressive language and comprehension? In what ways can you improve your communication with families?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4:

Children begin to understand how symbols and patterns work

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- draw children's attention to symbols and patterns in their environment, and talk about patterns and relationships, including the relationship between letters and sounds
- provide children with access to a variety of everyday materials they can use to create patterns and sort, categorize, order, and compare
- engage children in discussions about symbol systems, such as letters, numbers, time, money, and musical notation
- provide children with opportunities to engage in patterns in movement, such as dancing, finger plays, and clapping
- encourage children to develop their own symbol systems
- provide children with multiple opportunities in the learning environment to use both symbols and patterns in everyday activities, such as all the children wearing red, or anyone whose name begins with a particular sound
- use simple images to represent program expectations, behaviours, feelings (e.g., egg-shaped faces depicting "quiet" or "sad")
- incorporate first/then boards to communicate sequence of activities
- use images throughout the learning environment and while communicating to reinforce frequently used words
- use Sign language or body language in addition to speech with non-verbal and children learning a new language
- label material and equipment with corresponding word and visual representation
- experiment with music patterns (e.g., tempo, beat, variations, structure)

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- use symbols in play to represent and make meaning
- begin to make connections between, and see patterns in, their feelings, ideas, words, and actions, as well as those of others
- notice and predict the patterns of regular routines and the passing of time and seasons
- develop an understanding that symbols are a powerful means of communication, and that ideas, thoughts, and concepts can be represented through them
- develop awareness of the relationships between oral, written, and visual representations
- develop skills in recognizing patterns and relationships, as well as the connections between them
- develop skills in sorting, categorizing, ordering, and comparing collections and events, and attributes of objects and materials, in their social and natural worlds
- listen and respond to sounds and patterns, such as rhyme and alliteration in speech, stories, finger plays, and songs
- develop skills in recognizing, sequencing, and prediction, and draw on memories of sequences to complete a task
- draw on their experiences in constructing meaning using symbols
- engage in play using symbols and patterns, such as clapping games, preparing the table for a snack, and arranging boots in the coat room

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Provide for a variety of opportunities that introduce the concept of quantities and measurements to children (more, less, short, long), how to name them ("one cracker," "more rocks than," "big steps," "four blocks long") and associate them using symbols (1, 2, 3).
- Provide children with opportunities to explore activities that involve recognizing and creating patterns, such as sorting objectives by colour, shape, or size, or creating patterns using loose parts or blocks.
- Ensure that there are many examples of written words and language around the early learning environment, printed and hand-written, alongside images so that children are making connections between what they recognize and the letters that are associated with it.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What strategies would you like to explore to support children's understanding of how symbols and patterns work?
- How can you work with your team of educators or other community partners to support literacy development for non-verbal children and children learning a new language?
- What steps can you take to further develop your knowledge of the role symbols, patterns, and phonological awareness play in communication, literacy, and learning?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 5:

Children are guided in using technology to access information, investigate ideas, and express their thoughts

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- integrate technology into children's play experiences and projects
- provide props for children's play to represent various forms of technology
- explore and introduce children to digital design (e.g., digital art, die-cutting systems, 3D printing)
- encourage collaborative learning about and through technologies between children, and between children and educators
- encourage children to use technologies to explore new information, skills, and techniques, and to represent their ideas (e.g., use Google to search for information)
- discover and share age-appropriate information about internet of things, including connectivity, smart systems, data management, and storage within the learning environment

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- identify the uses of various technologies in everyday life
- use information and communication technologies to access images and information, explore diverse perspectives, and make sense of their world
- use information and communication technologies for designing, drawing, editing, reflecting, and composing
- engage with technology to make meaning of the world around them
- engage with technology in fun, interesting, and educational ways
- use real or imaginary technologies correctly while at play (e.g., texting someone, making a telephone call, looking something up on the internet)
- show peers and adults how to use information and communications technologies

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Invite a community member to demonstrate how a 3D printer works, search for and create digital models of children's ideas, and construct them in 3D.
- Provide real props and materials (for example, old cell phones, laptops, or keyboards) that children can use when they are engaged in pretend play.
- Videorecord children as they engage in dramatic play activities, dance, and telling stories to the group, then replay the video at another time. Ensure that proper consents and protocol are in place.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- How can you build your program's capacity to support children's use of technology to access information, investigate ideas, and express their thoughts?
- How can you involve children in planning activities that involve the use of technology?
- Who could you invite to your program to facilitate an engaging technology-based activity based on children's interests and ideas?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 6:

Children communicate in their heritage and family languages, including Sign language, augmentative, and alternative communication strategies

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• invite children to share their heritage and family language • include children's books and materials (e.g., food boxes in dramatic play area) that reflect the children's heritage and family languages • know at least two or three common words in languages spoken by children and families (e.g., <i>Bonjour</i> ("Hello" in French), <i>Wela'lin</i> ("Thank you" in Mi'kmaw), <i>Tapadh leibh</i> ("Thank you" in Gaelic)) • express common words such as "Hello," "Thank you," and "See you later" in children's heritage and family languages • develop and share authentic understandings of Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotia, Gaelic, and Acadian/ Francophone people • play music in the children's heritage and family languages other than English • learn how to pronounce, sign, or alternatively communicate children's names without shortening or anglicizing unless following the children's lead • help children, parents, and staff acquire knowledge of and a positive attitude toward other languages and augmentative and alternative communication strategies • work with speech language pathologists in introducing augmentative and alternative communication strategies • model language, including Sign language and augmentative and alternative communication, for all children • ensure that the augmentative and alternative communication tools are in an accessible location	• hear or see diverse languages spoken by children, families, and educators • use Sign language to express songs or rhymes • speak their heritage and family language with others • know at least two or three common words in languages spoken by children and families (e.g., <i>Bonjour</i> ("Hello" in French), <i>Wela'lin</i> ("Thank you" in Mi'kmaw), <i>Tapadh leibh</i> ("Thank you" in Gaelic)) • express common or familiar words such as "Hello," "Thank you," and "See you later" in children's heritage and family languages • learn how to pronounce, sign, or alternatively communicate each other's names

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Encourage families to record themselves singing songs and reading books in their heritage and family languages so children can listen to them independently or as a group.
- Invite family members of children who use alternative/augmentative means of communication such as Sign language or PECS (picture exchange communication system) to support the educators' and children's understanding, acquisition, and use.
- Ask families for suggestions of children's books in their heritage and family language, and that are about Sign language and augmentative and alternative communication strategies.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What strategies would you like to explore to support children's learning to communicate in their heritage and family languages, including Sign language, augmentative, and alternative communication strategies?
- How will you partner with families and community members to better understand how to promote this learning objective in your program using strategies that are linguistically and culturally responsive?
- What, if any, language policies are in place at your program (e.g., French language policy) that require you and other educators on your team to reflect more critically and intentionally about implementing linguistically and culturally responsive strategies to promote this learning objective?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



 **BONJOUR**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/bonjour.mp3>



 **WELA'LIN**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Welalin.mp3>



 **TAPADH LEIBH**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/tapadh-leibh.mp3>

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 7:

Children cultivate language skills in French, one of Canada's two official languages, and deepen connections to Acadian and Francophone language, culture, and heritage in official-language minority communities

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- promote French as a language of learning, discovery, and communication
- provide learning environments rich in French materials and experiences including music, books, print
- speak among staff in French (or other non-majority languages)
- make every effort to communicate with French-language learners in French, supported by gestures, movements, body language, and facial expressions
- ensure children and families with limited French language abilities understand what is going on in ways that sustain a trusting and reassuring relationship
- conduct all activities in French including routines, special guests/events, meetings, and fundraising
- help children, parents, and staff acquire knowledge of and a positive attitude toward French, including Acadian and other dialects
- reassure children, families, and staff who may feel insecure in their French communication skills
- support children and families to develop and feel safe and confident practicing French communication skills
- respond positively to children and adults' French language efforts and strengths
- create meaningful and fun experiences that reassure children of their language abilities
- model French language to support children as they learn to express their emotions and needs in French
- assume the role of Acadian and Francophone cultural ambassador with children, families, other educators, and community members
- support families whose children have the right to education in French with transition to French language school
- recognize the linguistic and cultural realities in official-language minority communities
- maintain and expand upon Acadian and Francophone children's French vocabulary
- protect and promote French and French language rights and reinforce a sense of linguistic security for Acadians and Francophones

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- always hear French spoken during daily activities
- acquire and use new French vocabulary and sentence structures
- experience French music, books, and print
- speak to their peers, staff, and parents in French
- hear and take part in conversations in French
- engage in French learning experiences and projects
- are aware that there are French-speaking people
- understand what others are saying in French
- begin to identify with or recognize the French language, cultural symbols, customs, and traditions
- express their emotions and needs in French
- listen to and sing French music
- listen to, look at, and read French books and other printed material
- interact with peers in French
- explore French arts, media, resources, and information from various Canadian and international sources
- develop a strong cultural identity and a sense of belonging to the Nova Scotian and Canadian Francophonie
- show confidence and pride in their French language skills
- become aware of and recognize Acadian and other French dialects and accents

LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Connect with and become members of local, provincial, and national Acadian and Francophone cultural associations, including local schools.
- French print-related material and resources intended for children's learning (e.g., books, literacy/numeracy supports, posters, schedules, signage) are visible or accessible to children.
- Seek out family or community members with good French writing skills to support with editing of outgoing documentation including memos, written displays, policies, and publicity materials.
- Develop a language policy that supports the protection and promotion of minority languages (i.e., languages other than English).

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- How will you and your team help cultivate French language skills and deepen connections to Acadian and Francophone language, culture, and heritage with French-speaking families and with families for whom French is not their first or home language?
- How can you or your program strengthen connections with groups, organizations, and institutions that promote Acadian and French art, culture, language, education, and living?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION

The Framework in Action: Reflective Planning for Language and Communication

Below is an example illustrating what reflective planning to promote children's language and communication may look like in action. It builds upon a local story shared by an early learning program in Nova Scotia. The example also demonstrates how the educators used the Reflective Planning Cycle to support their work in engaging the children and extending opportunities for learning.

Cultivating heritage and family language



Being responsive to each child's linguistic and cultural identity requires that educators mindfully support and respect each child's strengths, challenges, lived experiences, languages, and culture. In this Acadian community, many of the children's family members are fishermen and fisherwomen or work in the industry. The educators wanted to incorporate that aspect of the local culture into the outdoor learning environment—so they brought in a ship!

The children played on it daily. Once their family members saw it, they brought in authentic fishing-themed loose parts including buoys, fishing rope, and even a net. One child named the boat *Le Tasha Marie*, like the one her father fishes on, that is named after her mother. The children can be heard using French words like *attraper* (to catch), *poisson* (fish), *flotter* (to float), *pêcher* (to fish). The educators have added fish toys and the children have added chairs, buckets, and planks to climb aboard.

This example shows how educators are promoting children's language and communication by creating opportunities for them to

- *interact verbally and nonverbally with others.*
- *cultivate language skills in French ... and deepen connections to Acadian and Francophone language, culture, and heritage ...*

Children show evidence of these learning objectives when they

- *speak their heritage and family language with others.*

Example Reflective Planning Cycle

OBSERVE AND LISTEN

As educators, we felt that it was important to include materials and equipment that were realistic and representative of the children's families, cultures, and communities. We brought a ship into the playground to see how the children would engage with it. We noticed that their play extended not only to learning about a fishing culture but also increased evidence of the children sharing French language and learning new words.

REFLECT WITH OTHERS

This was an opportunity for us as educators to consider how we could encourage this learning, play and exploration, and also to engage more with the families. As families noticed the play and heard the conversations of the children, they wanted to find ways to contribute.

PLAN RESPONSES

We wondered what would happen if we added more materials, equipment, and loose parts from our fishing and family communities. Families were excited to bring in materials to see how children would use them and how this could also expand language and communication.

ACT

Adding new, authentic fishing materials as loose parts provided the children with many opportunities to engage ... with us, with the materials, and with others. We wondered what new words we would hear and how the children would express their learning and exploration.

CONTINUE OBSERVATION

We continued to hear children using French language that was aligned with the culture of families and the community, more and more. Children were sharing new words, labelling objects, naming the boats, and helping each other understand meaning and how to use the items.

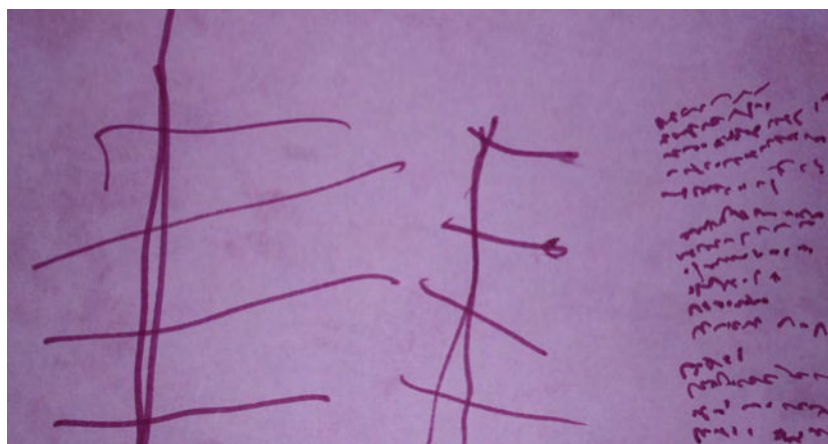
REFLECT ON NEXT STEPS

As the play exploration continues, observation remains a large part of how we see and document children at play. Interacting and seeking input from families to inform how we plan for diversity and inclusion, as well as the learning goal of language and communication, is key. This is happening at the same time as we continue to look for additional opportunities for children to speak French and increase communication skills, overall.

Connections to the Principles and Practices

Educators demonstrate *linguistic and cultural responsiveness* when they provide culturally safe and *inclusive learning environments*. Through *play-based learning* opportunities, the educators in the above example support children to confidently engage in their heritage language and demonstrate evidence of their growing linguistic capabilities.

Practice Snapshots: Language and Communication



Children can communicate in a variety of ways when given materials and time. In this image, a child experiments with a letter that appears in their name, and with cursive writing. They work from left to right, top to bottom, demonstrating an understanding of how print works in Western languages.

This example shows how educators can create opportunities for children to

- *express ideas and make meaning with a variety of media.*

The child shows evidence of this learning objective when they begin to

- *use images and approximations of letters and words to convey meaning.*



Children of all ages and abilities have a desire to communicate their ideas and what they feel is important. They can do this either verbally or by using non-verbal means like drawing or physically showing others those thoughts. Depending on the children's individual needs and the program materials and tools available, the communication may require the use of advanced, low, and even no technology (e.g., talker device, first/then boards, Sign language). In this image, a child was invited by an educator to draw her favourite spots in the environment and the routine because they were reluctant to move around the classroom to explore and play. The drawing helped the educators to understand the child's preferences and that the child preferred group times to play and to be with peers.

This example shows how educators can create opportunities for children to

- *interact verbally and nonverbally with others.*

The child shows evidence of this learning objective when they

- *exchange ideas and feelings using language and representations while playing.*



Inclusive learning environments are adapted to and reflect the lives, interests, and needs of the children, families, educators, and others who are connected to the early learning and child care program. In this photo, the program created a display in a prominent place that showed the word “welcome” translated into the many different languages spoken by the children and their families. This display is one way the program visually represents their commitment to *equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism*.

This example shows educators are promoting children’s language and communication by creating opportunities to

- *communicate in their heritage and family languages, including Sign language, augmentative and alternative communication strategies.*

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- How intentional are you being with the choices you provide for children’s resources, materials, and experiences, considering language and communication? What is your process for deciding what to include?
- What evidence of children’s learning are you observing in your practice and how are you building on your observations and reflections to plan for children’s growth in language and communication?
- How can you collaborate with families to prioritize and plan learning for children around language and communication? How does your program reflect the unique identities and communication needs of the children and community? Who can you ask to provide further support?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY



What the framework says ...

Children who grow and develop in safe, secure, responsive, and consistent environments are more likely to develop the confidence to explore their environment and seek out new experiences. Children and families who are respected for their ideas, competencies, and aptitudes, develop a sense of themselves as competent individuals.

(Capable, Confident, and Curious 2025, 75)

Learning objectives to support the goal of personal and social responsibility:

1. children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy, and respect
2. children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities, and how they can actively participate in them
3. children respond to diversity with respect and pride
4. children become aware of fairness, equity, and social justice
5. children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment
6. children connect with the Mi'kmaq through their language, culture and teachings of *Netukulimk*

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Strategies to Support Children's Learning for Personal and Social Responsibility

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1:

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

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• initiate responsive one-on-one interactions with children, particularly infants and toddlers, during daily routines • model language children can use to express ideas, negotiate roles, and collaborate to achieve goals • develop and implement strategies and play-based experiences to improve children's skills for group play and project work • plan opportunities for children to participate meaningfully in group discussions and shared decision-making about rules and expectations • organize learning environments in ways that promote small group interactions and play experiences • model care, empathy, and respect for children, staff, and families • model explicit communication strategies to support children to initiate positive interactions • join in play and social experiences in ways that sustain positive and responsive relationships with other children • acknowledge children's complex relationships and sensitively intervene in ways that promote understanding of alternative perspectives and social inclusion	• show interest in other children and in being part of a group • adopt a positive self-image, sense of self-respect, and confidence in their potential to succeed • assist other children to participate in the daily routine and in peer groups • express an opinion in matters that affect them • participate in relationships where each person feels cared for and their needs are met • enjoy playing and respond positively to others, reach out for company, and develop friendships • initiate, engage in, and contribute to shared play experiences • express a wide range of emotions, thoughts, and views constructively • empathize with and express concern for others • display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives • reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others • develop social skills and strategies to express their own feelings and opinions • engage in conflict resolution through play • attempt to share, take turns, and join play activities • use language to express their opinions and defend their positions with persuasion

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Ensure there are small intimate areas that support children to gather in smaller groups (e.g., a small table for two children so the children get to have a special time with a peer and engage in conversations).
- Provide times when children of mixed ages come together.
- Encourage children to help or offer to help peers, younger children, and adults with tasks when and if needed.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What would be helpful to you and your team to improve how you model explicit communication strategies to support children to initiate interactions?
- How could your program involve children in creating an expectation that values interacting with others with care, empathy, and respect?
- What connections do you see between children's interpersonal skills and challenging behaviours in your program?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2:

Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities, and how they can actively participate in them

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• promote a sense of community within the early learning and child care program • build connections between the early learning and child care program 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 • provide opportunities for children to participate in and contribute to community life and events (including parades, projects to beautify the environment, and food banks) • explore the <i>Nguzo Saba (Kwanzaa)</i> principles regarding the relationships which people of African ancestry have with self, family, and community • explore <i>Umoja</i> (unity) by asking Elders about traditional outdoor games and activities • explore the African Nova Scotian tradition of “call and response” through spoken word and <i>Kujichagulia</i> (self-determination), giving children an opportunity to share their hopes, dreams, and goals • ensure the learning environments include books and materials (e.g., toy figures, dolls, fabrics, images) that accurately reflect diverse cultural backgrounds including those of children and families	• share their culture, identity, and traditions with confidence • read books that reflect their heritage and identify with the characters • share their hopes, dreams, and goals within the context of themselves, their family, and their community • know about and share stories of truth about the history and contributions made by diverse cultures • develop an awareness of their right to belong to many types of communities: racial, cultural, social, geographic, etc. • demonstrate an interest in group-type activities including sports, dance, and music • co-operate with others and negotiate roles during play in relationships • assist other children to participate in cultural and social groups • build on their own social experiences to explore other ways of being and knowing • interpret some body language and facial expressions and respond appropriately and with empathy • play and contribute to group projects with confidence and in different ways • contribute to fair decision-making about matters that affect them

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Encourage children to discover where their families and ancestors originate from using a globe or map in relation to their community.
- Involve children in making decisions about field trips, the layout of learning environments, and materials for new or updating learning areas.
- Partner with families, neighbours, local businesses, the municipality and local Mi'kmaw Knowledge Holders to plan a community garden and sitting areas in ways that the land and existing plants are treated responsibly and respectfully.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some strategies you would like to explore to support children in your program as they develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities?
- How many books and play materials can you see in the play environments that connect to children's cultural histories? What else could you include and how?
- Where can your team get professional development on important aspects of equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism as informed and guided by first voice perspectives and experiences?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



KWANZAA

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/kwanzaa.mp3>



NGUZO SABA

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/nguzo-aba.mp3>



UMOJA

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Umoja.mp3>



KUJICHAGULIA

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Kujichagulia.mp3>

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 3:

Children respond to diversity with respect and pride

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• reflect on their own responses to diversity • design and plan for environments that reflect diversity in race, culture, gender identity, and family structure, such as books, materials, and curriculum planning • plan experiences and provide resources that broaden children's perspectives and encourage appreciation of diversity • expose children to different languages and dialects and encourage appreciation of linguistic diversity • explore diverse cultural values, principles, and traditions (e.g., Mi'kmaw Ways of Being and Knowing and <i>Netukulimk</i>; Acadian <i>tintamarr</i>; Africentric principles and concepts <i>Sankofa</i> and <i>Nguzo Saba</i>; Gaelic <i>seanchaidh</i> and <i>céilidh</i>) • appreciate that diversity presents opportunities for new learning and encourage children to listen to others and to respect diverse perspectives • quickly respond to and address all forms of racism by children and adults if they arise in play, interactions, communications, and behaviours • grow your knowledge of linguistic, cultural, educational, and other rights of children and adults including people who are Mi'kmaw, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, and members of the Disability and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities • demonstrate positive responses to diversity in their own behaviour and in conversations with children and their colleagues • engage in interactions with children that promote respect for diversity and value distinctiveness • design environments that reflect diverse cultural practices for well-being by designing a healing path/space both indoors and outdoors • explore the culture, heritage, backgrounds, and traditions of each child within the context of their community • explore with children their ideas about diversity and provide opportunities for them to ask questions that lead to new or affirmed learning • acknowledge and appreciate that diversity presents opportunities for new learning • provide children with social and communication strategies to prevent or respond to bullying	• perform random acts of kindness and show concern for others • participate in learning experiences that explore origins of diversity, such as race, culture, heritage, gender identity, background, values, and tradition • show they are aware that people have different ideas and ways of doing things • become aware of connections, similarities, and differences between people • listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing • invite a child who is alone to join in play • notice and react in positive ways to similarities and differences among people • grow their knowledge of linguistic, cultural, educational, and other rights of children and adults including people who are Mi'kmaw, Acadian, African Nova Scotian, Gaelic, people with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ • recognize and speak up about bullying behaviours • know that a treaty is an agreement made between two groups that is to be respected • feel confident and able to speak out when they are faced with racism and discrimination • know some of the heritages, cultures, and traditions from people of African ancestry, such as the principle of Sankofa, and respecting the past as we grow • understand and appreciate that their peers and educators are different than themselves • show interest in learning about the families of their peers

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

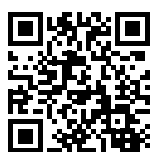
- Grow authentic relationships and partnerships with members of diverse groups to consult with and to provide guidance to ensure the learning environments, pedagogical practices, and planned experiences are authentic, appropriate, and linguistically and culturally responsive.
- Learn about the values, traditions, and history of the people of historical cultures living in Nova Scotia (e.g., Mi'kmaq, Acadian, African Nova Scotian, Gael) through story and song, and share with others.
- Learn about environmental racism impacting underrepresented communities across Nova Scotia and share the information with the children in age-appropriate ways.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some strategies you would like to explore to support children in your program as they begin to respond to diversity with respect and pride?
- How familiar are you and your team with inclusive language, the power of language, and terms that are harmful to underrepresented communities? How can you ensure you do your due diligence in the appropriateness and relevance of the language you choose to use?
- How do you support those on your team to learn more about intersectionality, microaggressions, and unconscious bias?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



ETUAPTMUMK

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Etuaptmumk.mp3>



TINTAMARRE

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Tintamarre.mp3>



SANKOFA

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Sankofa.mp3>



SEANCHAIDH

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/seanchaidh.mp3>



CÉILIDH

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Céilidh.mp3>

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4:

Children become aware of fairness, equity, and social justice

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY	THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN
• listen carefully and respond quickly to children's and families' concerns • discuss diverse perspectives on issues of inclusion, exclusion, fairness, and expectations regarding actions with children, families, and staff • engage children in discussions about respectful and equitable relationships • provide opportunities for children to recognize behaviour that is considered bullying, racist, and discriminatory, whether through real-life experiences or books, stories, and songs • facilitate development of social and communication skills to use in cases of bullying behaviours, and how to support victims of bullying • analyze and discuss with children ways in which texts construct a limited range of identities and reinforce stereotypes • point out and draw children's attention to issues of fairness relevant to them in the early childhood program and broader community • speak to children candidly about discrimination and prejudice • integrate anti-racist and anti-bias language and strategies in their practice • identify and address anti-racist language and behaviour including microaggressions (e.g., comments and actions that negatively target marginalized people and group) quickly, sensitively, and respectfully • become informed and feel comfortable discussing the impact of colonialism with children in an age-appropriate manner • celebrate days of cultural significance in authentic ways that are meaningful to children and families.	• discover and explore a variety of connections among people • become aware of the ways that people are included or excluded from physical and social environments • develop the ability to recognize unfairness and bias • develop the ability to recognize various forms of racism and bias, whether intentional/unintentional or overt/covert • develop the capacity to act with compassion and kindness • make choices and problem solve to meet their needs in different contexts • begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour • recognize bullying behaviours and the harm they cause • recognize, call out, and address bullying tactics and support others being bullied • recognize and identify stereotypes and diverse linguistic and cultural identities when present in books, images, and conversations

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Invite families to share information about cultural traditions, holidays, festivals, and other events celebrated in their culture to authentically recognize them with all children and families.
- Connect with local social enterprises and community groups to develop innovative partnerships that involve children and their families and promote fairness, equity, and social justice.
- Invite members of diverse communities to visit the program to speak to children and their families about fairness, equity, and social justice with sensitivity and in an age-appropriate way.
- Participate in culturally responsive practice training.
- Grow your knowledge of the four historical cultures. For example, attend local professional learning; visit cultural centres and museums; and contact local cultural education organizations.
- Use strategies such as role-play, group discussion, and dramatic play as a means to help children understand bullying.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some strategies you would like to explore to support children in your program as they become aware of fairness, equity, and social justice?
- How familiar are you and your team with issues of racism, discrimination, inclusion, and colonialism? Where can you learn more and increase your level of comfort discussing these issues in age-appropriate ways?
- How do you think your own biases influence your pedagogy? How can you be more intentional about regularly reflecting on your biases?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 5:

Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- provide children with access to a range of natural materials in their environment
- model respect, care, and appreciation for the natural world
- find ways of enabling children to care for and learn from the land
- consider the nature of children's connectedness to the land and demonstrate respect for community protocols
- share information and provide children with access to resources about the environment and the impact of human activities on it
- embed sustainability in daily routines and practices
- share stories of children and adults who have taken the initiative to lead community activities that support sustainable environments
- explore opportunities for children to become involved in relevant community initiatives
- use outdoor learning spaces to build capacity for self-care, and respect for self, others, and nature
- provide opportunities for children to learn about various species of animals in Nova Scotia
- learn how to identify tracks of dogs, cats, birds, and other creatures in their neighbourhood
- create a space for all children to share their gifts and celebrate their heritage both indoors and outdoors

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- participate with others to solve problems, such as caring for the environment, recycling, and respecting nature
- demonstrate an increasing knowledge of, and appreciation and respect for the environment
- show, through their behaviour and actions, how they can care for the environment
- explore, infer, predict, and hypothesize to develop an increased understanding of the interdependence between land, people, plants, and animals
- explore relationships with other living and non-living things and observe, notice, and respond to change
- develop an awareness of the impact of human activity on the physical environment
- understand that we are all part of the natural world and must have respect for all living things
- describe living things they see in their play environment such as trees, plants, birds, and animals
- know the difference between buying food in a store and living off the land by hunting, fishing, and gathering
- develop an awareness of the interdependence of living things
- adopt responsible and respectful environmental stewardship practices by composting, recycling, and re-using materials

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Explore the Kwanzaa principles of *Kuumba* (creativity—leaving the community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it) and *Ujima* (collective work and responsibility) by planting flowers and seeds, painting rocks, building boxes for raised garden beds, and cleaning up the outdoor play area with the children.
- Invite children to explore the Gaelic belief in *sìthichean* (fairies) and the tradition of assigning language to animals (e.g., mammals, birds, amphibians, fish, invertebrates) and giving them human-like qualities to better understand the interconnectedness of all living things.
- Encourage children to regularly and safely collect litter found around the neighbourhood and dispose of it in appropriate containers.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some strategies you would like to explore to support children in your program as they become socially responsible and show respect for the environment?
- How can you and your team partner with families and communities to foster social and economic sustainability?
- Where in your program's indoor and outdoor learning environments can you be more intentional about involving children in showing respect for the environment? What would that look like?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



KUUMBA

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Kuumba.mp3>



SÌTHICHEAN

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Sithichean.mp3>



UJIMA

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Ujima.mp3>

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNING OBJECTIVE 6:

Children connect with the Mi'kmaq through their language, culture and teachings of Netukulimk.

EDUCATORS PROMOTE THIS LEARNING WHEN THEY

- grow their knowledge of the Mi'kmaq and their teachings from authentic sources
- grow and share their knowledge of Mi'kmaw ways of being and knowing to include in daily practices and relationships
- recognize the interconnectivity between children and their natural environments
- model respect, care, and appreciation for the natural world
- practice the four *Netukulimk* values (i.e., respect, relationship, responsibility, and reciprocity) as in our lived relationship with ourselves, each other, the land, and all living and non-living beings, with the understanding that we are all connected
- include experiences and discussions relating to Mi'kmaw culture and teachings
- invite a Mi'kmaw Elder Knowledge Holder or community member to share traditional artistry such as beading, basket making, and drum making
- grow their knowledge of the Peace and Friendship Treaties between the British Crown/Canada and the Mi'kmaq, which have no end date
- share with children in respectful and age-appropriate ways the true history of how the Mi'kmaq lived before colonization
- learn to pronounce Mi'kmaw words by checking with Mi'kmaw speakers or a Mi'kmaw education organization and by accessing auditory files through the QR codes included in this resource
- learn and talk with children about our responsibility to take on actions of reconciliation
- promote actions of harmony by discussing the authentic and sacred practice of smudging with a Mi'kmaw Elder or Knowledge Holder and designate an area for smudging
- design small group seating areas in outdoor learning environments to promote and honour interconnectiveness of the natural world

THIS IS EVIDENT WHEN CHILDREN

- participate in experiences relating to Indigenous culture and traditions
- interact with the natural world with respect, care, and appreciation
- interact with the earth, air, and water with respect and care
- provide resources to feed, care for, and protect local wildlife (e.g., bird seed, water, material for shelter, and nest building)
- talk about and participate in Mi'kmaw cultural experiences including smudging, talking circles, *Mawio'mi*, drumming, beading, and hunting and gathering
- understand the importance of agreements and negotiating as ways to keep peace and facilitate friendships
- participate in Orange Shirt Day activities and have an age-appropriate understanding of its meaning
- participate in learning experiences that are representative of the ways Indigenous People lived with the land before colonization
- know some Mi'kmaw words relating to Wskitqamu (e.g., animals, trees)
- understand the importance of speaking the truth and restoring harmony in healthy and positive relationships
- play and take pleasure in being with nature in all seasons



 **MAWIO'MI**

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/mawiommi.mp3>

PERSONAL & SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

EXAMPLES OF PRACTICE

- Engage in Mi'kmaw-guided professional development about Mi'kmaw ways of being and knowing.
- Attend a smudging ceremony or invite an Elder to lead one for children, families, and staff.
- Grow authentic relationships with members of a local Mi'kmaw community to learn how to respectfully and appropriately include the truth, traditions, cultural objects, and language of the Mi'kmaw people in the program.
- Enhance children's understanding of *Netukulimk* by reminding them of the connects between acts of kindness and inclusion and the four values (respect, relationship, responsibility, and reciprocity).
- Explore our relationship with the world of bugs using the book *Jujijk: Mi'kmaw Insects* by Gerald Gloade.

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What are some strategies you would like to explore to support children in your program as they increase knowledge of the Mi'kmaw people, their language and culture, and become aware of traditional ways of life of the Mi'kmaw people as part of the natural world and stewards of the land?
- How can you and your team partner with families and communities to foster awareness of the traditional ways of life of the Mi'kmaw people as part of the natural world and stewards of the land?
- What can you do to be more intentional about including Mi'kmaw language, images, artifacts, and celebrations in your program?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



JUJJK

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Jujijk.mp3>



NETUKULIMK

<https://www.ednet.ns.ca/mp3/Netukulimk.mp3>

The Framework in Action: Reflective Planning for Personal and Social Responsibility

In the example below, an educator recounts and reflects on how participation in Earth Day activities and how the Reflective Planning Cycle can be used to support each step in critical reflection. This was an experience that was inspired by the reading of a book and then developed directly from the interests and ideas of the children and educators.

The experience of the Earth Day activities helped to foster children's personal and social responsibility by supporting children to

- *develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities, and how they can actively participate in them.*
- *become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.*

Children show evidence of these learning objectives when they

- *play and contribute to group projects with confidence and in different ways.*
- *participate with others to solve problems, such as caring for the environment, recycling, and respecting nature.*
- *show, through their behaviour and actions, how they can care for the environment.*

Environmental Engineers



Earth day clean-up was a big success with both our Part Day Forest and Nature group and the Afterschool children. We read *Pattie Pitter, She Hates Litter*, by Jill Hickey, and set out to work on our Earth Day challenge.

Levi got the wagon and brought it to the area we intended to clean-up, also where the preschoolers had worked that morning. They geared up with rubber gloves, work gloves, and garbage bags nearby, but tossed most of their findings into the wagon to place by the side of the trail.

Corey had called the town to let them know where we had placed the large pieces of garbage. They were pleased to come pick it up and were very happy that the children were cleaning up the wooded area.

Jackson was excited to begin the clean-up and found old metal scraps to put in the wagon. Eddie and Wesley also worked hard to fill the wagon with metal, glass, tires, and plastic remnants.

When the wagon was full, after some discussion on who would pull it and who would push it, they headed to the edge of the trail.

Ruby was focused on the salamander she found when she lifted up an old piece of wood, and there began a new adventure to re-home the salamander in a safe spot.

"There are bones here too," Brooklyn discovered. The old beef bones, from an old butcher shop, estimated over a hundred years old, will make for an awesome discovery for the "dinosaur pit" in our forest pod! The boys said "They are not dinosaur bones," but I thought, "Hey, why not use a little imagination"

I found some scallop shells that I intend to repurpose.

The wagon was overloaded and the boys learned that is why it got stuck in the ditch, but after unloading it, they figured out as a team a way to turn it and get back for one more load before wrapping it up for the day! Tired and thirsty, we all headed out of the woods.

Luke and Emmy then completed the task by taking the garbage bags that were filled with smaller pieces of rubbish to the outside garbage box to complete a job well done.

The children are looking forward to the day we can clean out the rubble and build a tree house in the amazing tree that stands there! Maybe we could recruit some volunteers to help us to make a treehouse!

The next day and the next week, Levi and Jackson asked if they could go back there again to clean up the area. The Earth Day cleanup continues—even after the scheduled Earth Day challenge!

Amazing work by the children well done over a couple of days and fine participation in our community.

Example Reflective Planning Cycle

OBSERVE AND LISTEN

After reading *Pattie Pitter, She Hates Litter* by Jill Hickey, the children and educators began a conversation about litter and responsibility for the environment. The Earth Day challenge was coming, and questions were generated by adults and children about how they could be involved in cleaning up parts of their community. The children were excited to set out to work on our Earth Day challenge.

REFLECT WITH OTHERS

We asked ourselves: "How can we bring the children, families, and the community together to address the litter problem in our area? What do we need to do to host a community cleanup day along our street? Who do we need to connect with to pick up the litter collected after a community cleanup?"

PLAN RESPONSES

The children were involved in preparing for the event. One child got the wagon and brought it to the area we intended to clean up, where the preschoolers had worked that morning. The children geared up with rubber gloves, work gloves, and garbage bags nearby, but tossed most of their findings into the wagon to place by the side of the trail.

An educator had called the town to let them know where we had placed the large pieces of garbage. They were pleased to help and were very happy that the children were cleaning up the wooded area.

ACT

We were excited to begin the cleanup and one child found old metal scraps to put in the wagon. Others also worked hard to fill the wagon with metal, glass, tires, and plastic remnants. When the wagon was full, after some discussion on who would pull it and who would push it, they headed to the edge of the trail.

I found some scallop shells that I intend to repurpose.

CONTINUE OBSERVATION

A child was focused on the salamander they found when they lifted up an old piece of wood and there began a new adventure to re-home the salamander in a safe spot.

"There are bones here too," shared a child as they discovered something very unique. The old beef bones, from an old butcher shop, estimated over a hundred years old will make for an awesome discovery for the "dinosaur pit" in our forest pod! The boys said "They are not dinosaur bones," but I thought, "Hey, why not use a little imagination."

The wagon was overloaded, and the boys learned that is why it got stuck in the ditch, but after unloading it, they figured out as a team a way to turn it and get back for one more load before wrapping it up for the day! Tired and thirsty, we all headed out of the woods.

Two children worked together and completed the task by taking the garbage bags that were filled with smaller pieces of rubbish to the outside garbage box to complete a job well done.

REFLECT ON NEXT STEPS

The children are looking forward to the day we can clean out the rubble and build a tree house in the amazing tree that stands there! Maybe we could recruit some volunteers to help us to make a treehouse!

The next day and the next week, some of the children asked if they could go back there again to clean up the area. The Earth Day cleanup continues on—even after the scheduled Earth Day challenge!

Amazing work by the children over a couple of days and fine participation in our community.

Connections to the Principles and Practices

In the above example, educators foster *reciprocal relationships* between children, families, educators, and community members to promote children's personal and social responsibility. Through *partnerships with families and communities*, educators organized outdoor cleanup activities, providing children with opportunities to actively participate in their communities and develop a sense of responsibility toward the environment and the well-being of others. These practices align with the learning goal of personal and social responsibility, emphasizing the importance of care, empathy, respect, belonging, and active participation in fostering children's social responsibility and environmental stewardship.

Practice Snapshots: Personal and Social Responsibility



Drumming and song are important aspects of Mi'kmaq culture and heritage. In this photo, an educator shares with children her cultural identity and heritage as a Mi'kmaq person through drumming.

This example shows how, by incorporating drumming into various aspects of the program in a respectful, authentic way, the educator is promoting children's personal and social responsibility by creating opportunities for children to

- *connect with the Mi'kmaq through their language, culture and teachings of Netukulimk.*

Children show evidence of this learning objective when they

- talk about and participate in Mi'kmaq cultural experiences including smudging, talking circles, Mawio'mi, drumming, beading, and hunting and gathering.



Loose parts and other natural elements allow children to develop reciprocal relationships with living things found outdoors. This photo shows the results of children weaving brightly coloured strips of material around some trees. The children interacted closely with the elements of the natural world for a long time. They explored the art of weaving and learned about the trees through their sense of smell and touch as they carefully and respectfully moved back and forth through them.

This example shows how educators are promoting children to

- *become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.*

Children show evidence of this learning when interesting material in the outdoor learning environment was provided as an invitation to play and they

- *demonstrate an increasing knowledge of, and appreciation and respect for, the environment.*



Family home child care programs offer multiple opportunities to build strong relationships—both with people and the outdoors.

In this program, relationships with the community were highly valued by the educator, strengthened over the years and contributed greatly to the quality of experiences provided to

the children. For example, since the outdoor learning environment bordered on a park, a neighbour built a small bridge so the children could more easily enter the back of the park. Another neighbour, who worked for the Department of the Environment, would sometimes walk with the children in the park, becoming their resident expert on all things environmental.

At this program, the children spent considerable time exploring and making discoveries outdoors. While sitting outdoors in comfy Adirondack chairs with a parent, the educator was pleased when the parent asked "So what are they curious about today?" It was evident the parent understood the role of curiosity in the program. The educator answered that the children were watching bugs and using picture frames with magnifying glasses for the exploration. The parent said "They need microscopes" and showed up with one the next day.

These examples demonstrate how educators are building and maintaining genuine and respectful relationships with children's families and members of the local community. The educators in this program are promoting children's personal and social responsibility by creating opportunities for children to

- *develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and how they can actively participate in them.*

Children show evidence of this learning objective when they

- *discover and explore a variety of connections among people.*

Questions for Reflection

You are invited to use these questions to support reflective practice:

- What actions can you take to bring diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice to life in your programs?
- How can you and your team partner with families and communities to nurture children's sense of personal and social responsibility?

Be sure to document your ideas in your daily journal for future reference.



Bibliography

Canadian Child Care Federation "Our Values. Our Code of Ethics." CCCF-FCSGE.
<https://cccf-fcsge.ca/about-canadian-child-care-federation/values/code-ethics/>.

Canadian Heritage. "English and French: Towards a Substantive Equality of Official Languages in Canada." Gatineau, QC: Government of Canada, 2021.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/corporate/publications/general-publications/equality-official-languages.html>.

Carr, M. and W. Lee. *Learning Stories: Constructing Learner Identities in Early Education*. Washington, DC: Sage Publications Inc., 2015.

Chaillé, Christine. *Constructivism Across the Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms: Big Ideas as Inspiration*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc., 2008.

Coughlin, A. and L. McGee Baird. *Creating a Culture of Reflective Practice: The Role of Pedagogical Leadership in Early Childhood*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2022.

Curtis, Deb, and Margie Carter. "Chapter 1 - A New Way of Being with Children: An Overview of The Study Sessions." Essay. In *The Art of Awareness: How Observation Can Transform Your Teaching*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2022.

McLean, C., J-L. D. McIsaac, , O. Mooney, S. B. Morris, and J. Turner. "A Scoping Review of Quality in Early Childhood Publicly-Funded Programs." *Early Childhood Education Journal* 51 (July 28, 2022): 1267–1278. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-022-01372-9>.

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. *Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework*. Halifax, NS: Province of Nova Scotia, 2025.

Stacey, Susan. *Pedagogical Documentation in Early Childhood: Sharing Children's Learning and Teacher's Thinking*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2023.

