



WORKING WITH YOUNG
CHILDREN WITH TRAUMA —
APPLYING PRACTICE
PRINCIPLE 7 ASSESSMENT
FOR DEVELOPMENT AND
LEARNING



discussion starter

Carla is interested to assess the communication skills of Mali, a 30-month old child in her group. Mali's family are refugees who have been in the country for just over a year. Carla knows that Mali understands much of what is said to her, but she speaks infrequently. Carla has only heard her use a few words in English that she recognises. Occasionally Mali speaks in her home language but when she realises that no one understands she stops. Carla and the educators she works with are concerned that there may be a need for a more formal assessment, but they want to collect some information first.

1. What would be general considerations about the way you would go about doing this assessment?

2. What would you do first?

3. Who would you involve?

4. What specific approaches might you use and why?

Notes



discussion starter

Melissa, an educator in a toddler room, encourages her team to be on the lookout for new learning that the children are demonstrating. She says that becoming really familiar with the Outcomes in the Frameworks has given them a *mindset* about two things: 'We're really aware now that evidence of learning happens all the time, and also that it doesn't make sense to look at the Outcomes in isolation. An example of one is usually an example of two, three, or more.' She gave an example of walking with a 17-month-old to the office to hand over a form. The child stopped to point out fish in the aquarium, said the word 'fish', handed the form confidently to the person in the office, led the way back to the room and stopped at her locker to show Melissa the photo of her family displayed there. Melissa said, *In that simple everyday activity there's evidence of learning in most of the Outcomes. For example, the child understood this routine in the way she confidently participated and led the way back to her room (Outcome 5: Communication - children understand the pattern of routines; Outcome 3: Community - children make predictions about their daily experiences). The important thing is for us to be aware of learning and to plan how to extend or consolidate the child's learning and to ask the question, what does this mean for my practice?*

1. What other learning in the five Outcomes can you identify in this example?

2. What might you plan next for this child based on your analysis of her learning? Try to think of plans other than or in addition to traditional learning experiences.

3. How do you and your colleagues look for evidence of learning over the entire day or session?



Reflective questions

1. Do you always think of boys and girls as learners in the same way? Please give reasons for your answer.

2. Have you encountered different expectations for boys and girls in your professional experience? If so, where do these ideas come from?

3. Do you talk with families to challenge their expectations of boys and girls?

4. How do you ensure that your program and practice do not reflect or reinforce gender stereotypes? What about stereotypes related to language and cultural background?

5. How do you ensure that your approach to assessment fosters positive attitudes to children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and minimises stereotypes or judgemental attitudes?

Notes



DISCUSSION STARTER

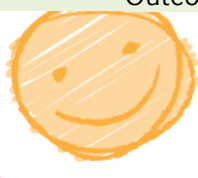
In the following table, read the assessment example in the left hand column.

1. Is the example familiar?
2. Are you using this type of observation, analysis and planning? Why?
3. What are the limitations of this approach when you are using the VEYLDF and the EYLF?

Now consider the example on the right.

1. What is different about this approach?
2. Does this approach mean developmental information doesn't matter? Why or why not? Think about the child's age.
3. What do you notice about the planning and practice decisions? How do they connect with the VEYLDF Practice Principles and the Outcomes?

developmental domain-focused assessment	Learning-focused assessment
<p>Place: Toddler room, drawing table Child: Asher. Age: 2.6 years Observation: Asher is holding a large crayon in her right hand, using a full handgrip and making marks on the paper. Developmental domain: Fine motor. Asher is using fine motor skills using her hand and wrist to draw marks on the paper. She is unable to use a pincer grip. Planning objective: For Asher to improve her fine motor skills. Activities: Playdough and tearing paper to strengthen hand and wrist muscles and flexibility.</p>	<p>Place: Toddler room, drawing table Child: Asher. Age: 2.6 years Observation: Asher is confidently holding a large crayon in her right hand and making circular marks on the paper. She does this over and over and smiles at me and at the drawings she makes and says, <i>Look, look, me, draw!</i> She chooses to do this activity many times each day this week. Analyse/Question: What is Asher learning as she makes marks? Asher is learning about being a mark maker, which is an important way to communicate with others and make meaning. She seems to understand the power of making marks, as she wants to repeat this over and over. Maybe she has some awareness of its importance in our community? Her parents said she likes being near them when they are writing at home and that she wants to join in. She is writing on everything at home including the walls! Links with Learning and Development Outcomes Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators and Outcome 4: Children are confident and</p>



DISCUSSION STARTER

Read this transcript of a conversation about dinosaurs between two four-year-old children and their educator and answer the following questions.

Brian and Kylie, playing together at the collage table, are talking about making dinosaurs out of boxes. Paula, the educator, also sitting at the table, is listening to their conversation.

Brian: *Dinosaurs live in the bush!*

Kylie, shaking her head: *No! I went to the bush and I didn't see dinosaurs.*

Paula: *Brian, why do you think dinosaurs live in the bush?*

Brian: *My big brother told me.*

Kylie: *No, I didn't see any dinosaurs in the bush.*

Paula: *Remember when we read those books about dinosaurs? What did they tell us about dinosaurs?*

Kylie: *Some of them were very big and some were small.*

Brian: *Yeah, the big one is called T Rex and he could eat us.*

Paula: *Yes, you're right, there were different sizes and the biggest was called Tyrannosaurus Rex. Do you remember where they lived?*

Brian: *In a jungle I think.*

Kylie: *No, in a forest, not a jungle, wasn't it Paula?*

Paula: *Yes, more like a forest. Are the dinosaurs still alive?*

Brian: *No, they got extinct.*

Paula: *You've got a good memory Brian, to remember the word 'extinct'. What does that mean do you think?*

Brian: *When things are gone, like King Kong and things.*

Kylie: *It means you are dead.*

Brian: *And it means there aren't any more like you too.*

Paula: *So if the dinosaurs are extinct Brian, do you think they are living in the bush?*

Brian: *Maybe they are living in bush far away from here.*



1. How does this example demonstrate shared, sustained thinking and interactions? Use the dot points below which list the features of sustained shared interactions and conversations, to assist your thinking.

Shared, sustained interactions and conversations between adults and children promote learning when adults:

- ask authentic open-ended questions
- encourage children to ask questions
- make meaningful comments
- offer explanations at times and also encourage children to explain
- promote collaborative problem-solving
- clarify concepts or ideas
- collaborate to create new ideas together (co-construction)
- make connections with previous learning
- extend conversations
- discuss children's theories and hypotheses.

2. How did Paula prompt the children's thinking and extend their learning?

3. Why were her strategies effective?

4. How could a transcript of an interaction like this example be used as an assessment strategy or tool?

5. What learning processes were happening during this conversation?



Reflective questions

1. How do you involve families in assessing children's learning and development? What more could you do?

2. How do families know that you value their knowledge about and perspectives on their child? What is the evidence?

3. How do you involve other professionals who work with a child in assessing their learning and development?

4. What more could you do or what can you do better?

5. How do you share assessment information with families to support learning and development in the home?

Notes



discussion starter

In a study of children's literacy and numeracy experiences in the year prior to school entry, families took photographs of these experiences in their home and community contexts. In the photographs one child was shown doing word-finder puzzles with her mum, using a calculator to do simple addition and making up songs to sing on her toy karaoke machine. This child's meaningful and interesting literacy and numeracy learning at home contrasted with the experiences available in her kindergarten program, where she often seemed uninterested and disengaged as she wandered around the room. Reflecting on the photographs and having a discussion with the parents and the child, the educator recognised that she needed to plan differently to extend this child's learning. For example, she provided word games and puzzles, encouraged the child to teach other children her own song compositions and helped her to write the words down. She also introduced calculators for children to use in their dramatic play. She noticed that other children were also ready for these literacy and numeracy learning experiences.

1. How does this example show the link between thinking about practice and curriculum decision-making that supports or extends children's learning?

2. What was the benefit to the educator from what the parents shared with her?

3. How does your literacy and numeracy curriculum build on what each child knows, understands and can do from their home and community experiences? How could you improve this knowledge sharing with families and children?

Notes





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