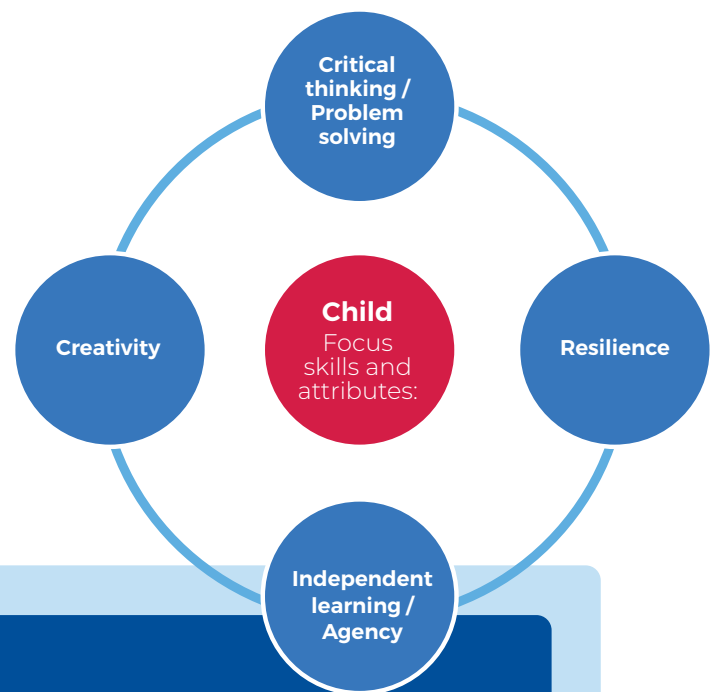




Belonging at school



Learning Goal

To develop diverse perspectives within children to encourage greater acceptance, understanding and belonging within their new school environment.

Learning Objectives: (What will children learn?)

- To develop a sense of belonging and identity within the school community.
- To expand children's tolerance, understanding and vocabulary around diversity.
- To foster inclusive behaviour and promote kindness.
- To protect the rights of children in supporting their personal safety.
- To help children understand emotions associated with conflict, encouraging positive interactions in achieving conflict resolution.

Suggested Activities

What is a 'school'?

Explore with children the concept of a school environment.

- What do children currently know about the school environment? What would they like to know and how can you help them find out?
- Help children to discover the extent of school connections, including their place in the wider community, the types of people, experiences and opportunities children might encounter throughout school.
- Build familiarity and encourage curiosity of the school environment.

Literature

- We Love School (Lucie Billingsley)
- Starting School (Jane Godwin and Anna Walker)
- Sumi's First Day of School Ever (Soyung Pak)

Suggested Activities

Respect for diversity

School environments are diverse communities. Acknowledging diversity and reinforcing respect for diversity are key in creating inclusive communities in which all children can belong.

- Explore the concept of similarities and differences. This can include in families, in children, in objects, in animals or characters. Ensure positive language is used to promote and celebrate differences and similarities.
- Encourage questioning from children, and be open and honest in answering.
- Work in partnership with families to develop deeper knowledge.

Social justice

Introducing the concept of social justice allows children to explore real issues in meaningful ways, having a positive impact on children, educators, families and the wider community.

- Introduce concepts of social justice in a thoughtful way to children.
- Choose a focus area or project to research and explore that is relevant to the children in your context – for example, homelessness, asylum seekers and supporting disadvantaged communities.
- Consider taking action as part of the project, and involve families and the broader community. This could include fundraising or research.

Keeping kids safe

Develop support for the rights of children in understanding personal safety and appropriate behaviour.

- Assist children in identifying parts of their body that are private.
- Encourage children to think about five people they trust to help them if they feel scared, sad or upset.
- Help children to use their voices, prompting children to share the things that make them unhappy or scared.

Daisy's First Day



Building belonging

A toolkit for early childhood educators (Australian Human Rights Commission): <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/building-belonging-toolkit-early-childhood-educators-cultural-diversity-and>

Literature

[Education for Social Justice in Early Childhood \(Swadener & Kessler\)](#)

SAFE series

<https://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/child-safe-organisations/training-and-resources/child-safe-resources/safe-series-resources>

Suggested Activities

Conflict resolution and anti-bullying

Children experience a range of emotion when they are angry or don't get what they want. Supporting children in their social and emotional development in times of conflict is critical in preventing bullying behaviour.

- Set clear expectations for children.
- Look for early warning signs and assist children in exploring problem solving methods in resolving conflicts.
- Role model positive behaviour.
- Introduce and explore concepts through dramatic play.

Bullying no way

<https://bullyingnoway.gov.au>

Nurturing friendships

Introduce 'friendship chairs' into the learning environment as a place where children who are lonely can sit. Children should be encouraged to approach the seat and invite whoever is on it to play with them. The seat can promote friendship, kindness and belonging for children.

Chairs

Links to Approved Learning Frameworks

Early Years Learning Framework:

- 1.1 Children feel safe, secure and supported.
- 1.2 Children develop emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- 1.3 Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.
- 2.1 Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an emerging understanding of reciprocal rights and responsibilities.
- 4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.
- 4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials.