Many practical ways of documenting and assessing babies and toddlers learning.

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Introduction

Documenting and assessing babies and toddlers learning is an opportunity to create meaningful and authentic documentation that creates not only fond memories of children’s learning and development, as well meeting the requirements the EYLF and NQS.
Three focus areas

- Collaborative Approaches
- Encounters with the Physical Environment
- Assessment for Learning
COLLABORATIVE APPROACHES TO DOCUMENTATION AND ASSESSMENT

“Including children, families and other professionals in the development and implementation of relevant and appropriate assessment processes allows for new understandings to emerge that are not possible if educators rely solely on their own “strategies and perspectives. Developing inclusive assessment practices with children and their families demonstrates respect for diversity, helps educators make better sense of what they have observed and supports learning for both children and adults.” (DEEWR:2009 p18)
Multi-perspectives

- Collaborative processes of documenting and assessing baby and toddler learning and development gives all participants a *voice*.

- Educators and families have diverse experiences and values, and visions for each child’s learning-this leads to a multi-perspective approach to recording each child’s learning.
1. Collaborative strategies

Orientation

- the orientation and transition to an early childhood service can be a valuable time for making connections with families that continue throughout their time with us

- a pedagogy of relationships—it is about Belonging
1. Collaborative Approaches:  

**Particular Routines**

- for each child highlight the family’s routines that are critical to the baby and toddler transition to the service
- throughout the day-a shared vision
Tom’s Particular Routine
• Likes to be fed lying on a cushion
• Prefers soft toys
• Has a routine sleep at 11am
• Loves being around others

Love Mike and Alissa
1. Collaborative Approaches

**A learning message to families**

- Learning messages to families create a vision of each child’s learning and development in the first few weeks of the transition to the early childhood service.

NQS QA:
Element 1.1.4
‘the documentation about each child’s program & progress is available to families’
Dear Families

Children, families and early childhood educators all contribute to successful transitions between home and early childhood services.

We hope you will tell us how the transition has been this year-so that we can include your feedback to plan transitions effectively for children’s current and future learning.

Thank you very much for your contribution.
1. Collaborative Strategies

Jottings

- are short notes about children’s interests, significant aspects of their learning and development
- may include text & actions and contextual details about family events and experiences
- provide an excellent opportunity for following children’s interests and a foundation for planning for each child’s learning
creating a jotting space

Jottings are short notes about children’s interests and learning and recorded by families and educators.

A JOTTING SPACE can be in a central location for families and educators

JOTTINGS can be created with post-it notes
1. Collaborative approaches

WORD KITES

when family members and educators collaborate to create a work kite to sample children’s words and to promote and celebrate children’s changing receptive and expressive language and vocabulary.
Educators promote this learning, for example, when they listen and respond to children’s approximation of words and value children’s linguistic heritage. Children act non-verbally and verbally with others for a range of purposes.

“a shadow came creeping”

BEBE’s WORDS

BEBE’S LANGUAGE

cat

He points with “oohs” and “ahs”

mouse

He points with “oohs” and “ahs”

shadow

“Ooh shadow!”

Jo was settling a child by reading to him. Jo’s expressive language caught Bede’s attention. He moved over to sit beside Jo and Charlie. He began to point to the pictures with “oohs” and “ahs” and saying “cat”, “mouse”, and “shadows”. When Jo had finished reading, Bede brought the book over to me. We sat together and read. Whenever I said “a shadow came creeping”, Bede would go “Ooh, shadow!” and laugh. I saw Bede with the book several times during...
WORD KITES continued…

Bilingual babies and toddlers

Creating and shared list

- Educators and families can record the words that are familiar at home and the early childhood setting.
Bilingual Word Kite

Educators promote this learning, for example, when they listen and respond to children’s approximation of words and value children’s linguistic heritage. Children act non-verbally and verbally with others for a range of purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Richard’ First Language</th>
<th>Richard’s Second Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INU</td>
<td>DOG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shōjo</td>
<td>GIRL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Creating environments or places that are completely soft stimulates a perceptual attention to new rules of behaviour of the space itself – with different consistencies and responses, and at the same time supports the children’s psychomotor activity, the interweaving of biological and psychological. REGGIO CHILDREN.”

2. ENCOUNTERS WITH THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
Powerful environments stimulate rich ‘stories’ of learning
The multisensory nature of an environment for young children is an important resource that supports the children’s cognitive processes – which are synesthetic, i.e. involving all the senses – and the formation of their perceptual abilities.

From the pedagogical point of view, any element that contributes to enriching the material complexity of the space, adding softness, pliability, or transparency to the traditional landscape of a place for young children, is a useful one.

REGGIO CHILDREN
It’s important to offer children the opportunity to create different landscapes by simply moving just a few elements, combining shapes and colours, thereby stimulating new environmental perceptions, new movements, and new mental images.

The particular density of the material gives children the possibility to venture ascents, descents, and trenches in which the body has to find new stability and equilibrium but can also be sheltered and protected. REGGIO CHILDREN
The floor is a special place for young children: a large surface that supports all their activities. The children observe and get to know the floors, they lie down, crouch, sit, and run on the floor. It’s an open “construction site” and when it’s wavy, colourful, or transparent, it becomes a truly special place.

REGGIO CHILDREN
Flexibility and reversibility are necessary characteristics in a space that fosters a pedagogy of listening, where strategies and objectives are modified based on what the children say and do, thus demanding that the space can be continually adjusted to new working scenarios. REGGIO CHILDREN
Movement also has a strong symbolic dimension that reveals how far and near, dividing and adding, inside and outside. Children have the dual need to be contained, “embraced” and on the other hand to take risks. For this reason, large objects like sofas and modular components can assume a meaning beyond the strictly functional, becoming “places” in which to lie down, pull yourself up, climb, and jump, but also to curl up, crouch, and hide.

REGGIO CHILDREN
moments of solitude
3. ASSESSMENT for learning

assessment involves making meaning of the observations that we document—that is we interpret or analyse the details from our documentation.
Assessment for learning

Assessment for children’s learning refers to the process of gathering and analysing information as evidence about what children know, can do and understand. It is part of an ongoing cycle that includes planning, documenting and evaluating children’s learning.

(DEEWR, 2009, p17)
To add in our educator voice apply our knowledge of:
dispositions, learning processes and child development

the EYLF Learning Outcomes and the associated various learning continua (QLD Kindergarten Guidelines)

Analyse for future planning possibilities
JOTTINGS
A number of observations were documented by educators at the time of the rabbit being part of the early childhood setting. Behaviours were recorded that indicated children-banging on the cage, poking the rabbit with sticks and feeding the rabbit plastic toys and play dough. These observations were discussed by educators and analysed to investigate the children’s capacity to care, empathise and respect the rabbit.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN ACTION
assessing children’s capacity to care, empathise and respect
Educators assessed children’s current knowledge by brainstorming with the children as to what they thought a rabbit would need to feel cared for and safe in the early childhood setting.

It was a short list.

From the list, an area was set up around the rabbit’s hutch, using the children’s ideas for the children to experience being a rabbit.
ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN ACTION cont..

DOCUMENTING

- EDUCATORS COLLECTED EVIDENCE AS THE INVESTIGATION UNFOLDED - the initial brainstorm list, children's drawings, work samples, photo samples, observations of the children being a rabbit, children's thoughts and comments about what children think, do and learn
SLOW & STEADY WINS THE RACE
A second brainstorm a week later revealed that after experiencing being a rabbit, the children thoughts had far more ideas and insights into a rabbit’s needs and feelings. These ideas were incorporated into the rabbit play area. Children’s play became more sophisticated than just hopping and chewing carrots. The play now involved person to care for the rabbit and began to focus on relationships between rabbits.

The documentation revealed rich and collective narratives of care and empathy and powerful evidence of learning across the investigation. These stories were shared through displays, learning stories and enabled educators to reflect upon the quality of the teaching and learning experience.

When educators assess children’s learning, their intention is to find out, make sense of what they discover and to use what has been learnt to facilitate ongoing learning. In this way, assessment becomes part of the day to day process of teaching and learning (Drummond, 2003:14)

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING IN ACTION cont.,
SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
Highlights of the profession of children’s learning and development

LINKS TO NATIONAL REGULATIONS (P.53) for children who are pre-school age and under: this documentation should include:
- Assessment of the child’s developmental needs, interests, experiences and participation in the educational program
- Assessment of the child’s progress against the learning outcomes of the educational program.
The five Learning Outcomes in this Framework, as outlined later, provide early childhood educators with key reference points against which children’s progress can be identified, documented and communicated to families, other early childhood professionals and educators in schools. Over time educators can reflect on how children have developed, how they have engaged with increasingly complex ideas and participated in increasingly sophisticated learning experiences.
Take time to celebrate
Images for documenting children’s learning have been sourced with permission from Cocoon Play Concepts (copyrighted through their partnership PLAY+, Reggio Children, ZPZ Partners and ‘The Soft and Light Things Project’-The Gap Child Care Centre, Brisbane, QLD) www.cocoonplayconcepts.com.au

Practical ideas for documenting children’s learning have been sourced with permission from Caroline Fewster, Geraldine Harris “Postcards of Possibilities”

References:

• ACEQA (2011) Guide to the National Quality Standard

• ACEQA (2011) Guide to the Education & Care Services National Law and Regulations


• DEEWR (2009) BE Longing, Be ing & Becoming The Early Years Learning Framework