17.3: Conclusion

Evaluating children in early childhood education settings is an ongoing process of using observations and other evidence to make judgements about children’s development and learning. The purpose for regular evaluation through a process of documentation and assessment is to enable responsive, well thought out long-term and short-term planning to promote the optimal growth, development, and learning for all children in the program.

Approaches to evaluation that are culturally and linguistically relevant and responsive to the social, physical and intellectual capabilities will acknowledge children’s abilities and strengths, and allow them to demonstrate competence. Evaluation, when undertaken in collaboration with children can support and empower them to see themselves as capable and foster independence and initiative.

When educators reflect on their role in children’s lives they reflect on their own views and understandings of theory, research and practice to focus on:

- the experiences and environments they provide and how that links to the intended outcomes
- the extent to which they know and value the culturally specific knowledge about children that is embedded within the community in which they are working
- each child’s opportunities in the context of their families, drawing family perspectives, understandings, experiences and expectations
- the opportunities which build on what children already know and what they bring to the school age care setting
- evidence that the experiences offered are inclusive of all children and culturally appropriate
- not making assumptions about children’s development or setting lower expectations for some children because of unacknowledged biases
- incorporating pedagogical practices that reflect knowledge of diverse perspectives and contribute to children’s wellbeing and successful learning
- whether there are sufficiently challenging experiences for all children
• the evidence that demonstrates children feel safe and secure, and are engaged
• how they can expand the range of ways they debrief and reflect to make evaluation richer and more useful.

FIGURE HERE
Figure 17.17: The process of evaluation completes the cycle of curriculum planning.[1]

This process of reflective evaluation can lead to quality early childhood education programming that supports the optimal development of each child it provides care and education for.[2]

Pause to Reflect

Summarize what you now know about documentation and assessment in a paragraph. What are your key takeaways from this chapter?

References

[1] Image by CollegeDegrees360 is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

[2] My Time, Our Place - Framework for School Age Care in Australia by the Department of Education and Training is licensed under CC BY 4.0