

Educators - *Critical reflection on children's learning and development, both as individuals and in groups, drives program planning and implementation.*

A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 1.3.2 and understood when educators critical reflect they:

- look *closely* at events, experiences, guiding principles, and their practices from different viewpoints
- use what they discover to identify practice that can continue and practice that needs changing to improve children's participation, learning and development
- identify how they may improve the program.

What is critical reflection?

You probably don't realise how often you critically reflect. The EYLF and MTOP says 'Critical reflection involves closely examining **all aspects** of **events** and **experiences** from **different perspectives**. The easiest way to do this is by imagining ourselves looking at **events** and **experiences** through different people's eyes.

Look at the **events** or **experiences** through:

- children's eyes
- a parent's eyes
- other educators' eyes.

The next part of the element says **critical reflection drives the program, planning and implementation**.

Again, let's refer back to the EYLF and MTOP and interchange the word program for curriculum and use the definition from the EYLF.

Curriculum: in the early childhood setting curriculum means 'all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development'. EYLF Page 9

Let's pull this apart into individual words and add the critical reflection to see what we need to do to drive the program's planning and implementation.

Critically reflect upon:

- our **interactions** to drive program planning and implementation
- **experiences** to drive program planning and implementation
- **activities**, to drive program planning and implementation
- **routines** to drive program planning and implementation
- **planned events** to drive program planning and implementation
- **unplanned events** to drive program planning and implementation
- our **environment** to drive program planning and implementation.

After we reflect, we make a change and then evaluate if the change worked or not.

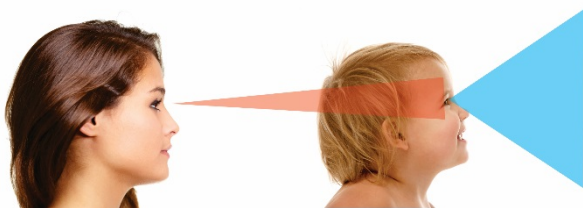
Reflection in action – a routine

Our centre is currently investigating the concept of children's rights and how educators may or may not be allowing children to have rights. We constantly ask ourselves if we as educators have taken rights away from the child by doing something they could have completed.

Week 17, 7 June - 11 June 2021- 1.3.2 Critical Reflection

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Our reflection started with looking at routines. We selected the afternoon tea routine and looked through the eyes of the children as a part of the reflective process.



What would the afternoon tea routine be like for a child?

Oh this again. Why can't we cook our own food. I help mum all the time to cook, but here I don't get to eat what I want to eat **and I can do it you know!**

What possible changes has this reflection made?

Closed Facebook Post by Room Leader Lucy

Hi all,

We hope you all have a great weekend and stay cool. I would like to ask if you could all share what foods your children particularly like or don't like. The reason being it's very important to us to make sure your children eat as nutritionally as they can. We have nutrition guidelines we are required to follow. We want to work with you to discover what your child likes and dislikes.

The second reason is **we'll be regularly cooking in our groups after school**, so having this information will assist in preparing recipes. Please if you have any concerns don't hesitate to come and see us and we will do our very best to solve it.

Lucy

Parent Feedback on closed Facebook post included:

- "Xavier loves pasta & rice, homemade pizza & burgers, fruit like pineapple, grapes, apples, strawberries, raspberries and sultanas"
- "**Asher suggests tacos**"
- "Kodi suggests beetroot rice crackers"
- "Aria loves spag bowl/lasagne, sausages, veggies like carrot, corn, beans, broccoli, curried sausage and rice, tacos/burritos/salad wraps ham or chicken with lettuce, cheese, cucumber. She doesn't like food with white/cheese sauce like chicken pie or tuna bake".

The reflection now has a plan - let's see the resulting actions

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Cooking Tacos! (Lucy)

To model and reinforce health, nutrition and personal hygiene practices with the children (LO 3.2) Miss Lucy provided each child with the opportunity to learn about food preparation and healthy eating as we prepared and cooked our own tacos. There was a big shout of excitement as Miss Lucy sat the ingredients on the table. "What do we need to get our ingredients ready?" asked Miss Lucy and Eli replied "a big knife." "Very good Eli" responded Miss Lucy. "We need meat" said Brandon. "That's mince. My mum cooks with that" said Ella sharing information of her home culture (LO 1.3). Miss Lucy asked Eli, Aria, Maddy, Nate, Olivia, Lucy, Lewi, Heath, Jake, Lila, Natasha, Xavier, Alexis and Bryce if they would like to help and if they did to please wash their hands to make sure we don't put bacteria on our food. "First we need to cut up our two onions so that we can fry them before we add the two and a half kilos of mince to the pan." Eli demonstrated safety using equipment (LO 3.2) as he used the knife correctly to slice the onion.

Next the onion was added to the pan and Xavier, Bryce, Brandon, Olivia and Nate used the spoon to stir the onion to stop it sticking to the pan. "How do we know when it's cooked asked Nate?" and Miss Lucy reflecting on what Nate asked (LO 4.1) replied "when the onion is soft and starts to change colour we can then add the mince."

After the mince was added each child had a turn squashing the mince to make it cook evenly. Heath and Natasha worked independently (LO 3.1) as they stirred and stirred commenting that "it smells so good."

Aria, Maddy, Lucy and Jake asked if they could cut up the tomato and lettuce and showing confidence while seeking out new challenges (LO 3.1) used the techniques demonstrated by Miss Lucy to safely and easily cut the tomato and lettuce up.

After the tacos were cooked each child served their own afternoon tea using soft tortillas and hard nacho cheese flavoured shells and the option of salsa for extra flavour. A collective "THIS IS THE BEST FOOD EVER" was heard THROUGHOUT THE SERVICE as they all ate while smiling happily.

Critical reflection- Miss Lucy thinks it was a great afternoon tea. How do our families feel about it!

Tracey - "What a fantastic activity/ learning experience the children did today."

Lucy - "thank you we all had a great time."

Kristy – "I have been hearing about this all evening. Thanks for a wonderful experience today."

Lucy – "Kristy not a problem. Maddy was definitely an excited little person today lol."

Emma – "Patrick loved this. He asked me if he could help cook tonight. What a fun activity."

Lucy – "Emma that's awesome. I'm glad he enjoyed it. He's a MasterChef in the making!"

Peta – "Torah loved cooking her own afternoon tea. She wanted tacos again for dinner."

RJ – "Fantastic experience for our children! So many life skills being taught and learnt. Lucy loved the experience with her friends. Thanks Lucy!!!"

Lucy – "RJ not a problem I can't wait to do more things like this with them. I'm so glad Lucy is so happy at the centre."

A change in practice has occurred due to the reflection.

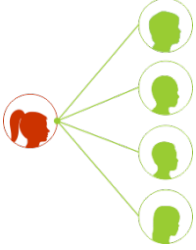
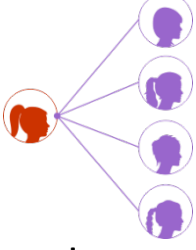
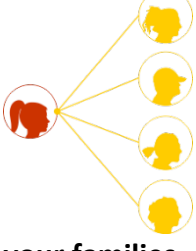
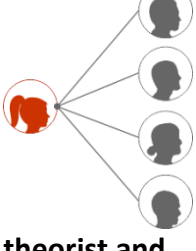
We now conduct a weekly cooking experience from scratch where we explore food from different cultures.

Week 17, 7 June - 11 June 2021- 1.3.2 Critical Reflection



The EYLF and MTOP says “Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives.” Pick one of the following reflection points to complete the table below:

- Are your reflections really evaluations of lesson plans or activities (included in improvement example)?
- Do your learning stories include your reflections where relevant?
- Could you contribute to the service QIP/SAT (more) using your critical reflections to demonstrate strong practice or show improvement plans (included in Improvement example)?

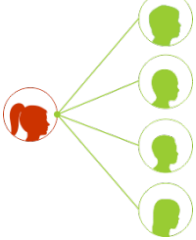
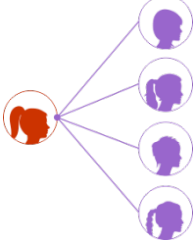
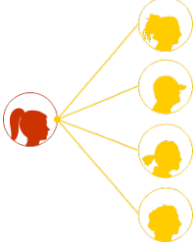
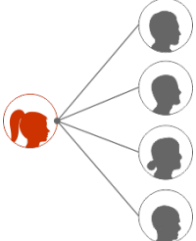
Critically reflect through the eyes of:	Write your critical reflection below	What changes did you or will you make because of the reflection?
 <p>a child</p>	<p>I liked the activity with our yoga teacher today, except for the kid who was upset and cried through the whole thing.</p>	<p>When the educator discussed her ‘reflection’ with the EL the EL explained this was an evaluation not a reflection and decided to schedule coaching and training support at suitable times for all educators to support their reflective practice.</p>
 <p>an educator</p>	<p>Yoga was great today but on reflection I think we should hold it the morning not the afternoon because it would help the children relax and get ready for their day.</p>	
 <p>your families</p>	<p>I like the look of the yoga teacher. I might have to try it.</p>	
 <p>theorist and current research</p>	<p>See ACECQA information “What is critical reflection” included in this week’s email which explains how reflection differs to evaluation.</p>	

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Critically reflect through the eyes of:	Write your critical reflection below	What changes did you or will you make because of the reflection?
 <p>a child</p>		
 <p>an educator</p>		
 <p>your families</p>		
 <p>theorist and current research</p>		

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Complete your QIP

The information you write below can go directly into your QIP or Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) (NSW ONLY)
Instructions

For a MEETING QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)	For Exceeding the QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)
<i>Please give a recent example of how you reflect during planned reflection times as well as spontaneously when opportunities arise.</i>	<i>Please give an example of the way you and your team of educators consistently use your reflections to improve the design and implementation of the program. (included in QIP example)</i>
<i>Please give an example of a reflection relating to a routine or transition and any changes made as a result.</i>	<i>Please discuss how all educators in your team have opportunities to contribute to critical reflection and are able to challenge taken-for-granted practices and assumptions. (included in QIP example)</i>
<i>Please give an example of a reflection that led to an increase in a child's participation and engagement in the program.</i>	<i>Please give an example of how you and your team use families' comments and feedback to inform your reflections. (included in QIP example)</i>
If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not meeting. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice	If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not exceeding. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice

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Checklist

Why are you doing the checklist?

The practices identified in the checklist are what the assessor needs to see you do so they can check you're 'meeting the NQS.' If you embed all the things in the checklist, then you are meeting the Element 1.3.2. If there's something on the checklist that you're not doing, then you need to either adjust your practice to do it, or ask for help and training to do what's on the checklist ie work with your educational leader or room leader who should teach/coach you how to do it.

The checklist keys to use.

- E = Embedded** I do that **ALL** the time
- K = I know** I need to do that, but I don't do it all the time
- T = Please teach** me how to do it or improve my understanding of why I need to do it.

Name Educator 1	
Name Educator 2	
Name Educator 3	
Name Educator 4	
Name Educator 5	

Do you use different methods to critically reflect eg jottings/notes, children's comments and work, photos, comments from team members or families?					
Do you critically reflect on planned and unplanned events and experiences, including routines and transitions, guiding principles and your practice eg intentional teaching, communication, relationships with children, and child-centred learning?					
Do you reflect from different viewpoints ie do you look through the eyes of a children, families, colleagues, the community and theorists?					
Do you sometimes use questions to help guide your reflection eg Who benefits when I work this way? What am I confronted by?					
Do you record your critical reflections eg diary/journal, reflection sheets?					
Do you use your critical reflections to improve each child's participation, engagement and progress towards learning outcomes?					
Is your critical reflection regular and ongoing?					
Do you critically reflect during planned reflection times as well as spontaneously when opportunities arise?					
Do you reflect individually and as part of a team?					
Do you make sure your reflections are true reflections, and not a description of what happened during the day or evaluation of a lesson or activity?					
Do you use your reflections to write strengths and improvement plans for your QIP?					