



## Developing a holistic understanding of children's learning and development while learning at home

**During learning at home it is vital that Early Childhood Professionals maintain and continue to engage in their collaborative partnerships with families. The common goal both early childhood services and families have is to re-enter the early childhood service for face to face learning.**

To support a positive transition back to the learning environment, strong connections can be maintained by prioritising enjoyable and achievable learning at home ideas and suggestions for families to feel empowered to support their child's learning and development without feeling pressured to replicate the early learning environment.

### Identifying and supporting learning at home

In early childhood, professionals use the dispositions for learning (VEYLDF, 2016) to encourage and support children's learning and development. Early Childhood Professionals know that these are the skills that support children in becoming lifelong learners. These skills do not only develop in the service environment, children are practicing these skills within the context of all their daily life experiences

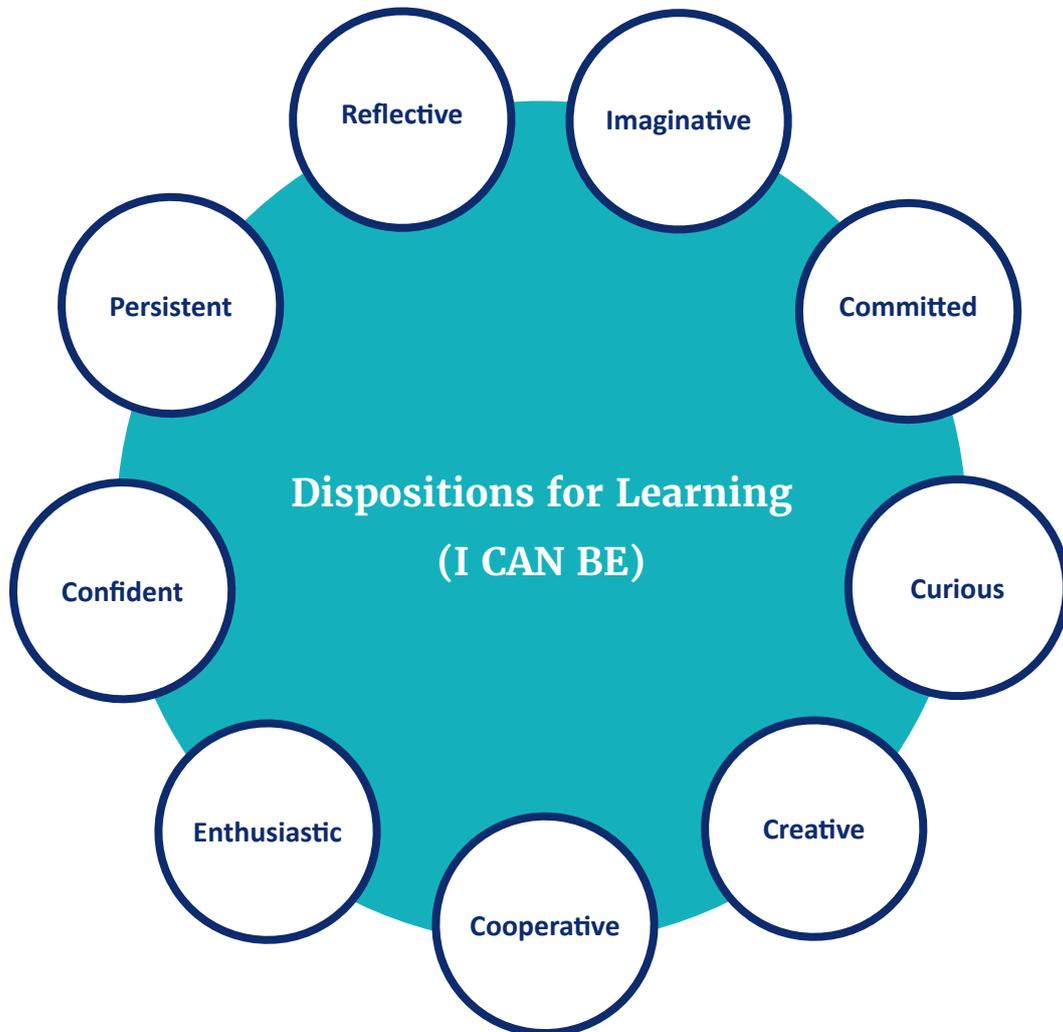
To support the ongoing assessment of learning and development and to ensure children's continuity of learning, Early Childhood Professionals can support families to promote and engage in these long-term learning skills through children's daily life activities and experiences.

Early Childhood Professionals can use a variety of communication tools and methods to support a shared understanding and active engagement in learning at home. You may consider;

- Using social stories
- Engaging in regular telephone or video meetings with the family and an interpreter
- Record videos of teachers and educators engaging in daily life activities and modelling how to support learning through conversations

## Dispositions for learning

Learning dispositions are the “enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to learning situations, for example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence” (VEYLDF, 2016, p.35).



Using the dispositions for learning, Early Childhood Professionals can consider how each disposition might be engaged in within the home environment, and develop strategies to support families in their engagement without adding multiple tasks or activities that could become overwhelming.

Taking a holistic approach to your conversations with families and developing a good understanding of the family’s perspective, current challenges and their capacity should influence the ways early Childhood Professionals engage with families. Nurturing a supportive and respectful relationship will be the most important factor in supporting the overall wellbeing of the child and family.

Importantly, Early Childhood Professionals should be able to identify children’s learning through their connections with families.

In the table below, there are examples of how an Early Childhood Professional may utilise the dispositions for learning to support the child and family engage in learning together, and the questions and conversations Early Childhood Professionals can engage in to identify learning and development. It is important to remember that each family’s context will be different, and each family may need a range of multimodal approaches to support in engaging in the types of example conversations listed.

Disposition for Learning	What this could look like at home	How you can support families to promote these	Identifying Learning
<p><b>Reflective</b></p> <p>Children are able to reflect on what is happening, they begin to develop explanations about what is happening around them. Children begin to think aloud.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Noticing what is happening in the natural environment, when outside or at the park</i></li> <li>– <i>Provide children with opportunities to develop language that will help them describe what they see and know (replace telling with asking)</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to ask questions such as:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– “I wonder why that happened”</li> <li>– “What do you think will happen next?”</li> <li>– “Can you remember how we did this last time”?</li> <li>– “Why do you think the tree fell down?”</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>Has your child been talking about what they see around them when you go for a walk?</i></p> <p><i>Does your child enjoy coming up with ideas about what they see?</i></p>
<p><b>Persistent</b></p> <p>Children complete tasks, or continue to try and master tasks even when things get difficult.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Completing a pack up task</i></li> <li>– <i>Completing a puzzle or game even though it is hard</i></li> <li>– <i>Dressing themselves</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Encourage children to “finish what you start”</li> <li>– Encourage children to help with tasks around the house, or clean up their toys</li> <li>– Encourage children to complete a game or a puzzle</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>Did your child enjoy finishing the puzzle?</i></p> <p><i>Last week you said they were trying to put their own socks on, how is that going?</i></p> <p><i>Did they enjoy the counting pack up game we talked about last week?</i></p>
<p><b>Confident</b></p> <p>We all know that our confidence in our abilities can have an impact on how we approach new tasks. Teaching children that they don’t have to get things right the first time will help them feel good about trying new things.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <p><i>Children develop confidence when they are able to control the small things in their lives, e.g.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <i>Making a sandwich</i></li> <li>– <i>Making a choice</i></li> <li>– <i>Learning how to dress themselves</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Praise the child for specific skills that they have shown</li> <li>– Give the child time to complete a task</li> <li>– Tell the child that it is ok not to get things right the first time</li> <li>– Focus on teaching the child self-care skills</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>How did they go trying the big swing at the park next week?</i></p> <p><i>How have they been going at making their own lunch this week?</i></p> <p><i>You said that they were going to teach grandma the kinder song, last week how did that go?</i></p>

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<p><b>Enthusiastic</b></p> <p>Children are interested and enthusiastic about trying and learning new things.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children are happy to go outside and engage in physical activities</li> <li>– Children experiment and try new things in play</li> <li>– Children talk to others about their ideas and experiences</li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Role model enthusiasm, ask questions and make comments</li> <li>– Role model trying new things and show enthusiasm for learning or doing something with your child, e.g. making a cubby or building a Lego house</li> <li>– Do physical activities with their children such as hopscotch on the pavement or running races at the park</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>Did they enjoy/what did they enjoy doing at the park?</i></p> <p><i>You said you got them to help you unpack the dishwasher, were they happy to do that?</i></p> <p><i>How many times did they enjoy playing the hopscotch game that we sent home?</i></p>
<p><b>Imagination</b></p> <p>Using our imagination helps us come up with new ways of doing things.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children use household objects for a number of purposes</li> <li>– Children make up stories and scenarios sometimes using props such as dolls and action figures</li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Read books and ask children to predict the ending</li> <li>– Provide limited toys but lots of things for children to make things out of, e.g. sheet for cubbies</li> <li>– Boxes for costumes and homemade toys</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>What did they say about the story we read?</i></p> <p><i>Did they find it hard or easy to make a cubby in the garden?</i></p>
<p><b>Creativity</b></p> <p>Children come up with multiple ways of solving problems and achieving their goals.</p> <p>Creativity is a form of problem solving.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children create their ideas out of materials such as household objects, art supplies and blocks</li> <li>– Children use literacy to express ideas and imaginings</li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Get children to come up with their own ideas</li> <li>– Make comment such as “ I wonder what you could do here”</li> <li>– Avoid telling them what to do, try to help them find the solution themselves</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>How did they go making the Lego spaceship you were telling me about last week?</i></p> <p><i>Last week you were telling me the story they made up, have they added to their story or made any more?</i></p>

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<p><b>Cooperation</b></p> <p>An important indicator of successful learning is how well we can work with others, share ideas and take turns.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children engage in turn taking games with family members</li> <li>– Children are able to contribute to household tasks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Play short games that require turn taking</li> <li>– Help children develop the language of cooperation, e.g. asking for a turn</li> <li>– Read stories and use puppets to practice sharing and turn taking</li> <li>– At home, practice everyone having a turn of each others ideas</li> <li>– Practice everyone having a turn of talking about their day</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>Did they play any games with you this week?</i></p> <p><i>Did they help you with any tasks or chores?</i></p> <p><i>Did they enjoy doing that?</i></p>
<p><b>Curious</b></p> <p>Children use play to investigate and explore ideas and develop new understandings.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children develop an interest in how everyday activities such as cooking and washing up</li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Ask children what they are doing and seeing</li> <li>– You can also say “that was a good question”</li> <li>– Don’t underestimate children’s ability to remember and understand facts</li> <li>– Role model finding out the answer’s to things you do not know</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>What questions have they been asking?</i></p> <p><i>What have they been interested in?</i></p> <p><i>What did you do this week that they enjoyed?</i></p>
<p><b>Committed</b></p> <p>Feeling that we are responsible for important things, or that our contributions are valuable, improves our confidence and sense of self worth.</p>	<p><b>Example</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Children can be encouraged to practice being an active contributor in the household</li> </ul>	<p><b>Encourage families to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Give children responsibilities in the home:</li> <li>– Helping with a pet</li> <li>– Setting the table</li> <li>– Looking after a plant</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ask families:</b></p> <p><i>How are they going looking after the plant we grew?</i></p>

**For further support in engaging actively with multilingual families, get in touch with fkaCS:**

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