PRESCHOOL SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT (PRSIST)

PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Dr Steven Howard, Dr Cathrine Neilsen-Hewett
and Ms Elena Vasseleu

EARLY START

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Increasingly, children's self-regulation is being recognised as fundamental to their success in education and later life. Self-regulation refers the capacity to control urges, impulses and natural reactions, as needed, both by stopping something (even if one does not want to stop) or by starting something (even if one does not want to start). By the end of the pre-school years, well-regulated children can wait their turn, resist the temptation to grab a desired object from another child, tidy up after play with little prompting, and persist with a challenging activity. In later life, well-regulated adults (who were often well-regulated children) tend to have finished school, be employed, and have fewer problems with their health, substance abuse, financial difficulties and the law.

When considering the range of early-life factors that can influence children's developmental trajectories and later-life outcomes, the influential role of adults is clear. While the most significant influence is the home-learning environment and experiences, it is followed closely by the quality of out-of-home early childhood education and care experiences. While much has been written about what constitutes quality, the short story is that adults matter! Many of the things that are important for later life do not develop naturally, but rather benefit from adults' guidance, modelling, support and instruction. Children depend on adults to learn to talk, to read, to count ... and, of course, to self-regulate. This first section of this handbook overviews ways that adults can exert a positive effect on young children's emerging self-regulation. The second section outlines activities that give children opportunities to engage, challenge and extend their ability to control their thinking, behaviours, social interactions and emotional reactions. In each case, we draw important links to Australia's Early Years Learning Framework to support programming and planning.

Links to the Early Years Learning Framework

Given its significance for children's development, *self-regulation* and *persistence* both feature throughout Australia's Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). These terms are explicitly mentioned as sources of evidence within three of the five learning outcomes in the EYLF (Learning Outcomes 1, 3 and 4).

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for *self-regulation* (from Outcome 1.2)
- *Persist* when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, *self-regulate* and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others (from Outcome 3.1)
- *Persist* even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)

There are numerous adult practices, referenced in the EYLF, which can support children's developing self-regulation. Below we summarise these EYLF links for each of the pedagogical principles contained within this first section of the handbook.

Our first principle is to **monitor children's development and use this to shape learning environments and experiences**. To best support children's emerging self-regulation we need to develop an understanding of where children are up to. Understanding more about children's self-regulatory capabilities is an important first step in providing rich and supportive learning environments. This principle can be achieved, for example, by using observational tools and strategies as assessment for learning and focusing on all areas of self-regulation. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Ongoing learning and reflective practice (Principle 5)
- Responsiveness to children (Practice 2)
- Children are confident, involved learners (Outcome 4)

Our second principle is to **ensure children feel safe, secure and supported.** In doing so, children are provided with environments that they can confidently explore, and where they feel safe to make mistakes. This reduces feelings of loneliness, sadness, fear and stress that can undermine a child's ability to self-

regulate and their ability to benefit from adults' attempts to increase self-regulation. This principle can be achieved, for example, by being sensitive and responsive to children's needs, talking to children about their feelings, fostering secure attachments, creating safe places for children and having an open line of communication with families about how they support their child's emotions. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships (Principle 1)
- Responsiveness to children (Practice 2)
- Children feel safe, secure, and supported (Outcome 1.1)

Our third principle is to **model self-regulation skills and engage in sensitive responsive practices.** Modelling is one of the most powerful teaching tools we can employ. Much of what children learn as they develop is influenced by observing the behaviours of influential adults (and children). The development of self-regulation is no exception. This principle can be achieved, for example, through utilising children's play to model prosocial behaviours, showing children it is fine to make mistakes, and reflecting on your own self-regulation and how this may influence the classroom climate. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Intentional teaching (Practice 4)
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another (Outcome 4.3)

Our fourth principle is to **provide encouragement around children's processes to foster intrinsic motivation.** A key factor influencing children's ability to self-regulate is whether or not they are sufficiently motivated to do so. Intrinsic motivation is central to this, but can be undermined by some of our 'automatic' responses to certain situations (e.g., overuse of praise, so the reason for doing something becomes motivated by a reward). Instead, this principle can be achieved, for example, through demonstrating your own interest in children's activities, asking open-ended questions, and acknowledging children's ideas and efforts. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Intentional teaching (Practice 4)
- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity (Outcome 4.1)

Our fifth principle is to **encourage children to lead and make choices.** In addition to providing chances for children to regulate their thinking, this principle also requires children to shift their thinking from 'me' to 'we' and helps them to discover and work through problems. This principle can be achieved, for example, through providing opportunities for children to set their own goals, engaging children in making plans, offering genuine opportunities for children to engage in decision-making and to lead interactions, and making intentional mistakes so that children can identify and help to resolve these. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- High expectations and equity (Principle 3)
- Learning through play (Practice 3)
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency (Outcome 1.2)

Our sixth principle is to **engage children in problem solving and encourage them to take measured risks and persist with difficult tasks.** As successful self-regulation often requires effective social interactions, it is important that children are able to resolve conflicts and problems that may arise, persist when the going gets tough, and be willing to take measured risks to find new solutions. This principle can be achieved, for example, by supporting problem solving and persistence through open-ended questioning and engaging children in the scientific process. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- High expectations and equity (Principle 3)

- Intentional teaching (Practice 4)
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating (Outcome 4.2)

Our seventh principle is to **set and communicate appropriate expectations and boundaries relevant to the ECEC context.** In order for children to engage in what adults might consider to be 'appropriate behaviours' it is important for children to understand what is expected in a given context or situation. That is, expectations must be made explicit so that children can actively decide to act in a self-regulated way. This principle can be achieved, for example, by engaging children in the process of developing and upholding the expectations for the setting, focusing on positives, and ensuring all adults in the setting adopt a consistent approach to managing challenging behaviours. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Learning environments (Practice 5)
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect (Outcome 1.4)

Our eighth principle is to **support children to develop effective conflict resolution skills**. Where children have poorer self-regulation, they are at an increased risk of experiencing conflict with adults and other children. Conflict situations are a great way to teach children how to self-regulate: children learn to regulate their emotional reactions, consider others' perspectives and identify strategies for solving potential problems. While there are different approaches to solving conflict, one way this principle can be achieved is by adopting a problem-based approach that aims to increase children's sense of agency and involvement and promote problem-solving skills important for self-regulation. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships (Principle 1)
- Learning environments (Practice 5)
- Children become aware of fairness (Outcome 2.3)

Our ninth principle is to **foster children's capacity to recognise and appropriately respond to their own emotions and those of others.** Just as negative emotions may be difficult for children to manage, heightened positive emotions may be equally challenging for some. Adults can help children identify and cope with these emotions when they demonstrate understanding, help children express feelings without judgement, model positive interests for and among children and link children's experiences to others through literacy, music and art. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Holistic approaches (Practice 1)
- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing (Outcome 3.1)

Our tenth principle is to **develop a sense of community within the setting and encourage children to engage in thinking about others.** Self-regulation is rarely a solitary endeavour. Often, to be successful in self-regulating, a child must interact with others, utilising skills to cooperate in play, engage in reciprocal conversation, recognise and respond appropriately to the feelings of others, and develop strong relationships. This principle can be achieved, for example, through leveraging routines as an opportunity for children to engage in social interactions, engaging children in activities and play that explore social conventions and require a collective vision, and utilising small group activities that promote peer interaction and collaboration. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships (Principle 1)
- Learning environments (Practice 5)
- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation (Outcome 2.1)

Our last principle is to **promote effective communication by supporting children's language development.** Children who have better language ability should be better able to employ private speech or 'tap in to their inner voice' when facing challenging tasks. This principle can be achieved, for example, by encouraging and modelling thinking using language that extends children's own thoughts, encouraging children to use language to guide their actions, and using language to describe children's actions. This principle and associated practices are referenced in the following sources of evidence in the EYLF:

- Learning environments (Practice 5)
- Children are effective communicators (Outcome 5)

Summary

The question is no longer whether self-regulation is important, but instead how to optimally support its development. Research suggests the early years of life may be a particularly crucial period for supporting the development of self-regulation, as any changes are likely to be more pronounced, longer-lasting and will have more opportunity to alter other related developmental trajectories (e.g., school readiness and academic success). While effective practices that yield positive outcomes for children are many and broad, in this first section of the handbook we have isolated those that are not only central to quality ECEC provision, but can have a specific impact on the development of children's self-regulation. Two ingredients are important for any approach to supporting children: dose (how regularly children experience these practices and activities) and duration (for how long these practices are continued). To be optimally effective these practices should be embedded within everyday routines and pedagogical approaches.

Scenario: *An educator plays a memory card game with a group of four 3-year old children, and during the game one child stood out in particular. The child had trouble sitting still throughout the game, was distractible, and required a lot of prompting about when it was their turn and what to do next. At the same time, when the child was focused on the activity they were planful, considered and highly engaged. So much so that, when another child got a pair, they got frustrated and turned away from the game. That said, after about 15 seconds the child turned back to the game and happily re-engaged. The educator wonders: What does this tell me about the child's self-regulation? And what do I do next to help the child develop in areas of opportunity and extend them in areas of strength?*

Monitor children's development and use this to shape learning environments and experiences

Intentional teaching strategies are important for the development of self-regulation. Intentional teaching depends on effective assessment. To best support children's emerging self-regulation we need to develop a better understanding of where children are up to. Think of the child who is able to direct their attention and responds to requests, but dissolves into tears when things don't go according to plan. Understanding more about children's self-regulatory capabilities is an important first step in providing rich learning environments.

Practices

- **Use observational tools/strategies as formative assessment (Assessment *for* Learning).** While educators are used to observing children to learn about their developmental progress and needs, it is easier to extract this information in some areas than others. For instance, when matching digits, numbers and quantities, there are clear ways to capture a child's progress in this area and some clear strategies and activities to help support future learning. But what about the scenario above: What does this tell us about the child's developing self-regulation and what are some well-suited next steps? For self-regulation, we have developed a PRSIST formative assessment tool to help structure these observations of children, and provide readily actionable information about possible next steps (through the practices and child activities in this program).
- **Focus not only on behavioural self-regulation (e.g., fidgeting, lashing out, waiting for a turn, breaking rules), but also cognitive and social-emotional areas of self-regulation**. Cognitive aspects of self-regulation include paying and sustaining attention, resisting distraction, becoming and remaining engaged (e.g., involved, invested) in an activity, and being thoughtful and planful before acting. Social and emotional aspects of self-regulation include following social conventions (e.g., turn-taking in speech and behaviour, being helpful), being willing to try despite the risk of being wrong, controlling emotional impulses and, where emotions do overwhelm, being able to recover from them. Each of these areas – cognitive, behavioural and social-emotional – requires somewhat different approaches and strategies. Ensure that children's experiences are supportive of each of these areas of self-regulation.

Scenario: *At morning drop-off, Harry's Mum expresses that she is running late for work and needs to make a quick exit. Noticing Harry has become distracted talking with his friends she takes this as her opportunity to leave. Several minutes later, Harry runs over to the door as he realises his Mum is no longer there and becomes quite distressed.*

Ensure children feel safe, secure and supported

An important factor influencing children's social and emotional development is the nature of their relationships and interactions with educators. By engaging in warm and respectful interactions with children, educators can foster secure attachments that encourage children to explore and interact with their environment. Further, feelings of loneliness, stress, fear and sadness are among the factors known to undermine children's ability to successfully self-regulate. Thus, by ensuring children feel safe, secure and supported in the setting educators can establish a strong foundation on which to extend children's self-regulatory skills.

Practices

- **Be sensitive and responsive to children's emotional needs**. When children experience negative emotions, rather than distracting them from their feelings, be sensitive, responsive and empathic to children's emotions and needs. Give them time and support to deal with these emotions, providing physical comforts (e.g., pats, hugs, holding hands) and verbal reassurance to support children when they are feeling distressed.
- **Talk to children about emotions and feelings.** This helps them identify how they are feeling and understand others' behaviours. Books and felt stories are a great way to support emotional understanding (e.g., 'Have you filled a bucket today?', 'When I'm Feeling' collection).
- **Foster secure attachments by engaging in responsive practices**. In instances where it isn't possible to respond to children's requests straight away, communicate this by reassuring them that they have been heard and a response is forthcoming (e.g. 'Thank you for inviting me to come and play your game. I have to help Sarah pack these paints away first, but when I am finished I will come straight over').
- **Create places that children can go to when they are feeling overwhelmed by emotions.** For example, you can utilise quiet and cosy spaces in the room where children can feel safe to go. Provide emotional outlets where they can expend emotional energy (e.g., providing windmills for blowing, amygdala bottles, playdough, a calming water bowl).
- **Communicate with families about how they support their child to regulate their emotions.** Working with families ensures consistency across contexts. At times of stress, such as drop-off or pick-up, consistency can offer great comfort to children. Some families may be more challenged in this area and may benefit from your guidance and support. Effective communication between families and educators is key to establishing a supportive and responsive emotional context.

Scenario: *As the children finish lunch they join a small group activity where an educator is supporting a game of 'Duck, Duck, Goose'. As Sienna approaches the group she asks if she can join in too. Some of the children reply that there is no room and then continue playing. Pausing the game the educator comments, "I can see our friend Sienna would like to join in our game, but there is no room in our circle. I'm going to shuffle back to make some room for her. Why don't you come sit next to me Sienna?"*

Model self-regulation skills and engage in sensitive responsive practices

Modelling is one of the most powerful teaching tools we can employ. It is even more powerful when paired with communication. Much of what children learn as they develop is influenced by observing the behaviours of influential adults (and other children). The development of self-regulation is no exception. In order to support young children's self-regulation we must first reflect on our own behaviours. One of the ways we can teach self-regulation skills is by modelling appropriate interactions with children. Adult-child interactions are one of the most significant determinants of children's outcomes. Interactions characterised by sensitive and responsive educator practices are linked to enhanced social and emotional development for children.

Practices

- **Utilise children's play to model prosocial behaviours.** Engaging in children's pretend play can offer opportunities to model behaviours that may not be typical of the ECEC context. This can involve asking if you can join in play, making adjustments so that others may join in play, and demonstrating turn-taking. Support problem solving and resolution when conflicts arise around roles and responsibilities.
- Where possible, **pair modelling with communication**. Verbalising one's thought process can provide children with an insight in to cognitive processes including problem solving and dealing with strong emotions. For example, while moving equipment to create space for another child, an educator might at the same time say 'I'm just going to move the dolly's bed across, so Jodie can come in to play as well.'
- **Show children that it is perfectly fine to make mistakes**. Model coping with disappointment and making mistakes. For example: skipping words while reading, holding the book upside down or sorting the blocks incorrectly. Provide children with opportunities to correct your mistakes.
- **Reflect on your own self-regulation and how this may influence the classroom climate**. Stressors in our work and personal lives can have a negative effect on our capacity to self-regulate. When this occurs, it is important to recognise the "red-flags" and take action to prevent this impacting on practices. When personal strategies don't work (e.g., pausing, deep breathing, positive self-talk), communicate with your fellow staff members so that they may offer assistance (e.g., helping children to resolve a conflict or soothing a child who has become distressed).

Scenario: *After spending most of the morning play session building in the block construction area, Shaylan excitedly calls to an educator, asking her to come and see what he has made. As she approaches, the educator can see Shaylan standing proudly beside a very detailed structure and notes how much effort he must have put in to constructing it.*

Provide encouragement around children's processes to foster intrinsic motivation

A key factor influencing children's ability to self-regulate is whether or not they are sufficiently motivated to do so. When motivation is lacking, adults often seek to encourage positive behaviours by using external rewards such as stickers, treats or praise. Research in this area indicates that when adults rely on praise to shape children's behaviour, this undermines children's intrinsic motivation and results in an over-reliance on external rewards. If we are to take a behaviourist perspective, the implicit lesson being taught here is that a main reason for engaging in 'good' behaviours is to receive a reward. Children who are truly self-regulated are those who will engage in positive behaviours regardless of audience or reward (e.g., packing away their toys because it is time for lunch, even though they would prefer to keep playing). How can we foster children's intrinsic motivation? One important way is through the use of encouragement around children's processes by showing interest, asking questions and engaging in talk around what the child is doing or has done.

Practices

Praise and encouragement are not the same thing. While both acknowledge children's behaviour, praise comes with a value judgement (e.g., 'Wow, that's such an amazing tall tower. You're so clever.') Encouragement, on the other hand, involves children in the process and encourages self-evaluation (e.g., 'How were you able to build that tower so tall?') Try it. Have a colleague show you something that they have done. How would you demonstrate your appreciation for this without the use of praise? Below are some ways that you can encourage children and foster their intrinsic motivation.

- **Demonstrate your interest** in what they have done by playing alongside and participating in their play.
- **Ask open-ended questions**, encouraging children to describe their ideas, efforts and activities. Questions should be genuine and relate directly to what the children have done or are doing. For example: 'Why did you decide to use those particular blocks?' or 'Which part did you start building first?'
- **Acknowledge children's ideas** by making non-judgemental statements and describing what you see. Talk about what the children are doing rather than the children themselves. For example: 'You've used many different kinds of blocks to build this. I can see you've spent a long time working on this.' Avoid evaluating what they are doing. Engaging children in conversation also supports language development.
- **This is not to say that praise should never be used.** There are times when praise is valuable. For instance, if a child helps another child you might say 'Steven, I really like how you helped Shaylan sort the blocks at pack up time.' It is the *overuse* of praise that can undermine children's internal motivational systems.

Scenario: *There has been significant pressure placed on staff, from parents, to create a program that is around fostering school-readiness. This has resulted in a largely teacher-led context with only minimal allocated time for free-play. During free play, educators notice that children have a tendency to wander aimlessly, rarely engaging in play for prolonged periods. At the next staff meeting, the educators discuss whether perhaps this time would be better utilised engaging in more child-initiated or teacher-supported activities so as to give the children more direction.*

Encourage children to lead and make choices

An integral component of child-centred practice is affording children genuine opportunities to engage in decision-making and lead interactions. Engagement in such experiences provides children with the opportunity to develop their emerging self-regulatory skills, as they are required to regulate their own thinking and behaviours, while also considering the needs and perspectives of others. Active involvement in play requires children to be planful and reflective – two skills that are central to self-regulation. In supporting children's emerging autonomy, educators assist the transition from being externally regulated to more self-regulated individuals.

Practices

- **Provide opportunities for children to set their own goals.** Goal setting helps children consider their future possibilities, personal desires and needs, as well as the wants and needs of others.
- **Where choice can appear overwhelming, provide a limited range of choices**. Too many choices can be overwhelming to younger children and those with self-regulatory difficulties. In these instances, restricted choice (e.g., from three options) may be better suited to these children's developmental progress.
- **Engage children in making plans at the group and individual level.** You can make plans for food preparation, a simple science activity, or even what a child would like to do that day. Engage children in planning through open-ended questioning or encourage documenting of plans (e.g., mind mapping, or a 'passport' system where children plan their goals and 'travels' through the centre). Encourage the children to follow through with and reflect on plans, including discussing reasons for plans changing.
- **Offer genuine opportunities for children to engage in decision-making.** This may be getting children to choose a transition song or activity, helping decide what will be served on the menu, the theme for the home corner, etc.
- **Provide children opportunities to lead interactions.** Where children find tasks difficult, create roles where they may monitor and take responsibility for the process. For example, supervising tidying up, making other children aware when it is time to transition, etc.
- **Set up the environment in a way that facilitates independent engagement.** For instance, set up open-ended resources and activities that allow children to choose and explore. Scaffold children's engagement in these experiences to extend learning.
- **Make intentional mistakes so that the children may identify and help resolves these**. To encourage children to take appropriate risks (e.g., to attempt something even though they may not immediately be successful), it is important that they see it is perfectly fine to make mistakes. For example, putting resources in the wrong places, leaving resources out and getting things wrong (e.g. in counting, telling a story, holding a book upside down).

Scenario: *While supporting children to engage with a 'float and sink' experiment, educators encouraged children to select a classroom object and predict whether it would float or sink. Once each child had made their prediction they were asked to put it to the test. After watching several children place their object in the water Jacob realised that his prediction may have been incorrect. When it was time for him to test his prediction Jacob told the educator he didn't want to do this activity anymore.*

Engage children in problem solving and encourage them to take measured risks and persist with difficult tasks

To successfully self-regulate, children must control their thoughts, behaviours and emotions so that they can effectively manage social interactions and achieve desired goals. Central to this is the ability to engage in effective problem solving, take measured risks and persist when faced with difficult tasks. Encouraging measured risks may be done by supporting children to engage with tasks where they may not necessarily experience success (e.g., attempting a difficult puzzle, making a prediction or attempting to write their name). Learning to persist in the face of challenge is one of the most important outcomes of self-regulation. Without the ability to persist, children would rarely achieve desired goals.

Practices

- **Support problem solving and persistence through the use of open-ended questioning and engaging children in the scientific process.** This process involves:

1. **Observation:** The ability to observe accurately is an essential part of children's development. Young children pay attention with all their senses. Children's observational skills increase over time as their awareness of details progresses from few to many, simple to complex, and isolated to connected. The ability to 'read' our environment is important for children's emerging understanding of emotions, as well as understanding the needs and wants of others.
2. **Experimentation:** Children experiment for two reasons: (1) out of curiosity, in order to see how something works; and (2) to solve problems they encounter in play. Experimentation supports children's emerging understanding of cause-and-effect relationships. Use this to encourage persistence in instances where children make mistakes or are faced with challenge. Experimentation also teaches children that it is okay to make mistakes; this is how we learn!
3. **Prediction:** Encouraging children to make predictions supports them to think in new ways and is an important component of problem solving. You can help children make connections across experiences by drawing on prior knowledge and asking them to consider what will happen. Begin each new experience by reviewing what the children already know and conclude by reviewing what they have learned.
4. **Recording:** This is an important final stage in the scientific process. It gives children the chance to revisit their ideas, to reflect on what they have discovered and to evaluate their conclusions. Revisiting ideas and discoveries helps to build children's awareness of their own thinking and reasoning process. Encourage children to explain their ideas through the use of reflective and open-ended questions: 'Can you remember what you were thinking when...?

- **Where possible, encourage children to collaborate in the scientific process.** In doing so, children are encouraged to cooperate, negotiate and engage in effective communication with peers.
- While it is important to present challenges to children, **engage children in experiences that are developmentally appropriate to increase the likelihood that they will experience success.** Children who experience constant failure are much less likely to engage deeply with tasks and are less likely to persist in novel or challenging situations.

Scenario: *David and Beatrix have been working on constructing a 'city' for several days. At group time, the educator was talking to the children about being respectful of each other's work and reminded them to be careful when playing nearby the construction so as not to knock it down. Later in the day, Michael was excitedly running around in circles despite David asking him to move away and crashed in to the construction.*

Set and communicate appropriate expectations and boundaries relevant to the ECEC context

Behaviour is context-specific; what is appropriate in one context may not be acceptable in another. Engagement in appropriate behaviours depends on children's ability to understand what is expected in a given context or situation. In making expectations explicit, educators support children to set goals aligned with these expectations. By involving children in this process, educators can promote their understanding around why rules are necessary and enhance their motivation to comply with these. When children understand the reasons for these expectations, they may be better able to generalise and apply these across contexts.

Practices

- **Engage children in the process of developing and upholding the expectations for the setting**. Provide opportunities for children to monitor their own behaviours and the behaviours of other children. For example, you might engage children in deciding room rules or expectations. This is particularly beneficial for children who may find rule-following a challenge.
- **Where possible, employ the use of clear visuals to serve as reminders for children.** Discuss ways that children can support one another to abide by expectations before they involve an educator (although children should still be encouraged to seek the assistance of an educator where resolutions cannot be found).
- **Avoid negative talk, focusing more on the positives.** Frame instructions as telling children what you would like to see rather than what you don't want to see (e.g., rather than saying 'don't knock down David's tower' instead you might say 'when you go outside please walk carefully past David's tower'). The same applies when displaying expectations on signs around the room (i.e., provide visuals showing what you do want to see, rather than what you don't want to see).
- **Be prepared to follow up.** An important part of setting expectations for the setting is ensuring consistency. Young children have a rudimentary sense of causality. It is important for them to understand the link between actions and outcomes. When children are not successful in complying with expectations, ensure that the focus of follow-up is on the behaviour not the child.

Scenario: *During outdoor play, an educator observes Max happily playing with the fire truck he has shown interest in all week. After leaving the truck briefly to go to the toilet, Max returns to find Isla is now playing with the truck. Max instantly becomes upset and attempts to grab the truck back from Isla as the two children struggle over the toy.*

Support children to develop effective conflict resolution skills

Children with poor self-regulation skills are at increased risk for experiencing conflict with peers and educators. Conflict situations provide learning opportunities to promote self-regulatory skills. While there are different approaches to solving conflict, a problem-based approach, such as Highscope's Six Steps to Conflict Resolution, increases children's sense of agency and involvement and increases problem-solving skills important for self-regulation.

Practices

- **Ensure all adults in the setting adopt a consistent approach to managing challenging behaviours**. An example of one approach is Highscope's (2014) *Six Steps to Conflict Resolution* (for more detail, see www.kidsandconflict.com):

1. Approach calmly, stopping any hurtful actions.
2. Acknowledge children's feelings.
3. Gather information.
4. Restate the problem.
5. Come up with possible solutions and choose one together.
6. Be prepared to follow up.

- **Make sure children are aware of the steps.** Engage children in discussions around this process and make these steps explicit during times of conflict.
- **Use visual cues** where appropriate to help aid children's comprehension of, and engagement with, the process. These can be images of the children that map each of the above six steps, for display. Where possible, involve children in the process of making these.
- **Ensure children have a voice**. If conflict is to be a learning opportunity it is important that children are seen as active participants in the resolution process. This means being able to express their feelings and perspectives, and engage in problem solving to derive, implement and evaluate possible solutions. Children's solutions may not be what an adult would have come up with, but in order to truly involve children in the process their solutions should be recognised and appreciated.
- **Focus on problematising the issue rather than assigning blame**. For example, rather than trying to determine who had the toy first, an educator may frame the problem as two children wanting to play with the same toy, and ask the children to think about solutions that would give them both an opportunity to play with the toy (e.g., sand timers so children can manage turn-taking).
- **Engage children in the evaluative component of problem solving.** Children's reflective and evaluative skills are integral to their developing self-regulation. In acquiring these skills, children are able to respond to the behaviours and feelings of others. Opportunities to engage these skills can occur outside of highly emotional situations by encouraging children to provide constructive feedback on each other's work, paintings, constructions, etc. During this process it is important that children are guided away from assigning value to the work (i.e., deeming it 'good' or 'bad') and instead engage in their own questioning and suggestion making.

Scenario: *Brianna and Harrison have been busy playing with the playdough. When Harrison realises there is no extra playdough to add to his construction he slams his hands down on the table. Noticing that this has startled Brianna, an educator approaches and reassures her, explaining that people sometimes do this when they are feeling frustrated. The educator sits down to talk to Brianna and Harrison about their feelings, why they might feel this way, and what they or others could do to help.*

Foster children's capacity to recognise and appropriately respond to their own emotions and those of others.

Without adult support, young children are less likely to develop the ability to recognise and respond to their own and others' emotions. The best way to teach children about emotions is in context. Reading stories or engaging children in conflict resolution are meaningful ways to teach children about negative emotions. Managing positive emotions for some children can be equally challenging when they get over-excited about a new activity or a special visitor. Discussing children's behaviour at this time can be a useful way to help them manage these potentially disruptive behaviours. The key to fostering emotional literacy is to model, coach and provide opportunities for practice.

Practices

- **Demonstrate to the children that you understand how they are feeling.** Recognise and verbalise children's emotions (e.g., 'I can see from your frown that you might be feeling a bit sad. Would you like to tell me why you feel this way?')
- **Recognise and help children express feelings without judgement.** Support children to help control their emotions or explain other children's actions (e.g., 'Lizzie stamped her foot on the ground. Sometimes people do that when they are frustrated').
- **Model positive interest, and foster empathic interest for and among children.** This might include modelling appropriate concern when a child is hurt or distressed, but also showing an interest when they are engaged and excited. Encourage children to communicate with each other around their emotions as well, involving them in the interaction and encouraging them to talk to each other (including asking questions and responding to these).
- **Help children learn about emotional self-regulation through books, songs and art.** Preschoolers do not often talk about emotion in the abstract, but do so readily when reading books (e.g., *The Feelings Book, Eggspressions*) or through felt stories or imaginative play or when creating artwork. To ensure that emotions are meaningful and understood they need to be both relevant and contextual (e.g., one child may have a parent in hospital so you turn home corner in to a hospital).
- **Demonstrate an awareness of individual differences.** Address diversity and differences positively through displays, books and other resources. Provide non-stereotyped materials and role models (e.g., building and construction books that include women).

Scenario: *A number of children in the preschool room have become very interested in playing in the home corner, which has recently been converted to a Veterinary Surgery. The children have enjoyed playing out scenarios around going to the 'Vet' with many bringing sick animals and pets. Educators have begun to notice that one child in the group consistently insists on playing the role of the 'Vet' and refuses to switch roles with other children. This child is also acting as a gatekeeper, deciding who can and cannot play.*

Develop a sense of community within the setting and encourage children to engage in thinking about others

Early Childhood Education and Care services represent one of the first and most important socialisation contexts for young children. A core factor influencing how children participate in these learning environments is their ability to interact positively with peers and educators. The development of prosocial skills necessary for these interactions is closely linked with children's developing self-regulatory skills. These skills allow children to engage in cooperative play, reciprocal conversations, to recognise and respond appropriately to the feelings of others, and to develop strong relationships. Educators can support these emerging skills by creating a sense of community within the service whereby children are encouraged to adopt the perspective of others and collaborate in decision making.

Practices

- **Leverage routines such as meal times as an opportunity for children to engage in social interactions.** Organise the eating area so that meals are eaten in a manner that promotes social engagement. For example, children sitting at small tables of four wherein they all face in to each other. Where possible, sit with the children during meals and model and scaffold conversational skills. Support children to take on various roles during meal times (setting the table for everyone, cleaning the area once everyone has finished) and make explicit how their role supports others.
- **Engage children in activities that require them to develop a collective vision.** Facilitate experiences that require small groups of children to work together in planning. This may involve brainstorming around roles and resources for play scenarios. Another way to do this is to engage children in role-play around a prescribed story or scenario, like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. Where plans deviate, help children to understand others' motivations for these changes and how they can respond or adapt to continue the interaction.
- **Engage children in pretend play where they may further explore social conventions.** During imaginative play, children are able to take on the role of others and engage their perspective-taking skills. Using the example illustrated in point 2, you can extend children's understanding by getting them to consider this story from the perspective of the different characters. For example, you might ask 'How do you think the Three Bears felt coming home to see a stranger in their bed?' or 'Do you think that Goldilocks really meant to break the chair?'
- **Utilise small group activities that promote peer interactions and collaboration.** Activities where success depends on the cooperation of all children in the group are an ideal way to foster children's ability to negotiate and collaborate. An example of this might be a puzzle activity, in which four children are assigned the same number of pieces and each child has to contribute their piece to the construction of the puzzle.

Scenario: *Taylor and Hayley have been outside building a fort with sticks they have collected over the past three days. They have been busy for the last hour with the support of three other children and an educator. Just as they are starting to decorate their construction, one of the educators calls them inside for morning tea. Hayley says that she doesn't want to come in, but the educator insists that she does, and says that she can return to the construction later. Taylor, realising that they need to go inside, says 'Let's pretend we want to have a snack!'*

Promote effective communication by supporting children's language development

A child's language skills have been identified as a significant attribute influencing their developing self-regulation skills. Specifically, it has been suggested that children with greater expressive language skills experience more rapid developments in their ability to self-regulate. For example, children who have better language ability should be better able to employ private speech or 'tap in to their inner voice' when facing challenging tasks.

Practices

- **Encourage and model private speech.** Verbalising your thought process can provide children with insight around engaging problem solving skills and making mistakes (e.g., 'This is tricky but I can do it').
- **Model your thinking and use language that extends on children's own thoughts.** While modelling is one of the most powerful teaching tools early years educators can use, this can be further strengthened when paired with communication. Verbalising the choices you make or why you are behaving in a certain way can support children's understanding, while extending their language at the same time.
- **Encourage children to use language to guide actions**. This is particularly important where children have difficulties in expressive language skills. For example, during circle time, when a child comes to join the group you may verbalise that you are moving over to make room for them to join.
- **Tie language to actions and descriptions, and reinforce this across different situations.** For example, educators can support children's understanding of what 'paying attention' looks like across different situations by providing a running commentary and linking it to their actual behaviours (e.g., 'I can see that you were paying attention. Your eyes were looking right at the book like a beam of light and your hands were resting in your lap' and 'I like the way you were paying attention to Alyssa when she was telling you about her weekend. You were looking right at her eyes and your body was lovely and still').

CHILD ACTIVITIES

Child Activities
How to Use this Next Section

Increasingly, children's self-regulation is being recognised as fundamental to their success in education and later life. Self-regulation refers the capacity to control urges, impulses and natural reactions, as needed, both by stopping doing something (even if one does not want to stop) or by starting something (even if one does not want to start). By the end of the pre-school years, well-regulated children can wait their turn, resist the temptation to grab a desired object from another child, tidy up after play with little prompting, and persist with a challenging activity. In later life, well-regulated adults (who were often well-regulated children) tend to have finished school, be employed, and have fewer problems with their health, substance abuse, financial difficulties and the law.

Self-regulation can be considered in three areas: cognitive self-regulation; behavioural self-regulation; and social and emotional self-regulation, each of which we describe below. Then, in the pages that follow, we provide playful, low-cost and everyday activities that you can do to engage and support children's early self-regulation development in each of these areas. Many more activities are possible; consider these as a starting point from which to develop new activities that similarly engage and challenge children's emerging self-regulation abilities. At the end of this Introduction section we also provide links to the Early Years Learning Framework, which we also provide relevant links to on each activity page.

Cognitive Self-Regulation

The world is filled with all sorts of challenges, demands and distractions. There is so much going on that we can't possibly pay attention to it all. Instead, we need to be able to decide what is important to pay attention to, stay engaged, and resist distractions along the way. Our first attempts to solve a problem may not always be effective and we may have to think of alternative solutions, take risks, and deal with disappointment if we are not immediately successful. We also need to flexibly switch between tasks, disengaging (e.g., to go to the toilet) and reengaging (e.g., re-joining play) as necessary. All the while, we need to remember rules, roles and instructions, plan what to do, and monitor our progress in doing it. As with nearly everything, practice makes perfect. The first set of activities that follow aim to engage, challenge and extend these abilities by focusing on cognitive self-regulation – the ability to control and sustain thinking and attention, and resist distraction. The skills and abilities that the activities in this section try to promote include, but are not limited to:

- Paying and maintaining their attention
- Directing their focus and resisting distraction
- Being self-directed rather than directed by others, engaging in activities independently
- Persisting with a task even when it becomes challenging

Behavioural Self-Regulation

Life is full of urges and impulses, at least some of which we are better off resisting. A foundational and emerging skill in early childhood is the ability to resist urges and impulses that are contrary to our goals or current context. In childhood, the ability to control impulses allows us to refrain from verbally or physically lashing out, taking things that aren't ours or skipping someone else's turn. Yet these abilities don't develop on their own. As with nearly every skill, practice makes perfect. The second set of activities that follow aim to engage and extend these emerging skills, focusing on children's behavioural self-regulation – the ability to control our behaviour, inhibit first responses and alter them in accordance with the demands of the situation. The skills and abilities that the activities in this section try to promote include, but are not limited to:

- Abiding by established rules
- Following directions and requests
- Controlling natural urges and impulses
- Persisting with a task even when it becomes challenging

Social-Emotional Self-Regulation

Social contexts come with embedded expectations and rules, placing differing demands on children's behaviour. Our social success depends, in part, on our ability to alter our behaviours and control our emotions in response to these demands. Let's consider the example of 'turn taking'. We wait our turn to buy our groceries, at the bank, when we put our hand up in class, and even when driving (e.g., at stop signs). It is often difficult to do this when our urges and impulses (e.g., we are in a rush, so want to jump the queue) run contrary to what we should do. Even conversations, to be successful, require taking turns, carefully listening to others' words and meanings, reflecting, then appropriately responding to those words. Where conflicts arise, resolution additionally requires understanding the perspective of others and working together to find a solution or compromise. And in the end, we will not always get our way. Children need to learn to manage disappointment and other strong emotions, and this is not always easy. Even harder is considering *others*, how *others* might feel, and what we might do to help *them*. As with nearly everything, practice makes perfect. The third set of activities that follow aim to engage, challenge and extend children's social and emotional self-regulation – the ability to control our emotional reactions and social interactions. These abilities contribute to building positive relationships, dealing with the challenges and frustrations of life, as well as promoting mental wellbeing. The skills and abilities that the activities in this section try to promote include, but are not limited to:

- Following established social conventions
- Being helpful, respectful and supportive
- Exerting control over their emotional reactions, and taking an active role in recovering
- Willingness to take measured and appropriate risks (e.g., in thinking and action)
- Persisting with a task even when it becomes challenging

Links to the Early Years Learning Framework

Given its significance for children's development, self-regulation and persistence both feature throughout Australia's Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). These terms are explicitly mentioned as sources of evidence within three of the five learning outcomes in the EYLF (Learning Outcomes 1, 3 and 4).

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation (from Outcome 1.2)
- Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)

There are also many additional EYLF outcomes that require good self-regulation to achieve, and are supported by effective self-regulation.

One of these outcomes is the ability to direct our attention. In childhood, this is typically focused on their own perspectives, desires and needs, however, children must also learn to consider and respond to others' perspectives and needs. This requires a child to purposefully redirect their attention, despite competing urges, impulses and demands. It also supports children's consideration of what others think, feel and need (for example a child who shares their toy, even though they don't want to, because they are aware another child really wants it). This is a core ability that is underpinned by self-regulation. This is referenced in the following sources of evidence:

- Display awareness of and respect for others perspectives (from Outcome 1.4)
- Gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately (from Outcome 2.1)
- Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)

Second, children who are good self-regulators respond positively to new challenges. We often enjoy and persist with things that come easily to us, but how we respond to challenge and associated frustration is more variable. The urge to simply give up can be strong, but is not particularly helpful for later life. Instead, the ability to overcome or recover from frustration and continue to tackle challenges is a hallmark of successful self-regulation. This ability is referenced in the following sources of evidence:

- Be open to new challenges and discoveries; take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (Outcome 4.1)

Third, children's social interactions and emotional reactions depend on their ability to self-regulate. Good self-regulators are able to tailor their behaviour to the current situation, considering others' goals along with their own needs and wants. Emotional urges and impulses arrive quickly and often feel compelling. Yet giving in to these urges is often not compatible with our goals (e.g., to play a game with friends), the situation (e.g., the rules of the preschool room) or fostering positive relationships with others (e.g., how others respond to an emotional outburst). This ability is referenced in the following sources of evidence:

- Express a wide variety of emotions, thoughts and views constructively (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences (from Outcome 2.1)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others; remain accessible to others at times of distress, confusion and frustration (from Outcome 3.1)

Lastly, good self-regulators are planful and thoughtful in making choices and solving problems. We are not always planful and reflective, and instead we may pursue the first words, thoughts or actions that come to mind. However, these instinctive responses are often not the most ideal courses of action. Children's ability to be planful, and control their thinking and behaviours, is another hallmark of successful self-regulation. This ability is referenced in the following sources of evidence within the EYLF:

- Reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others (from Outcome 1.4)
- Begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour; contribute to fair decision-making about matters that affect them (from Outcome 2.1)
- Use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learnt from these experiences (from Outcome 4.2)

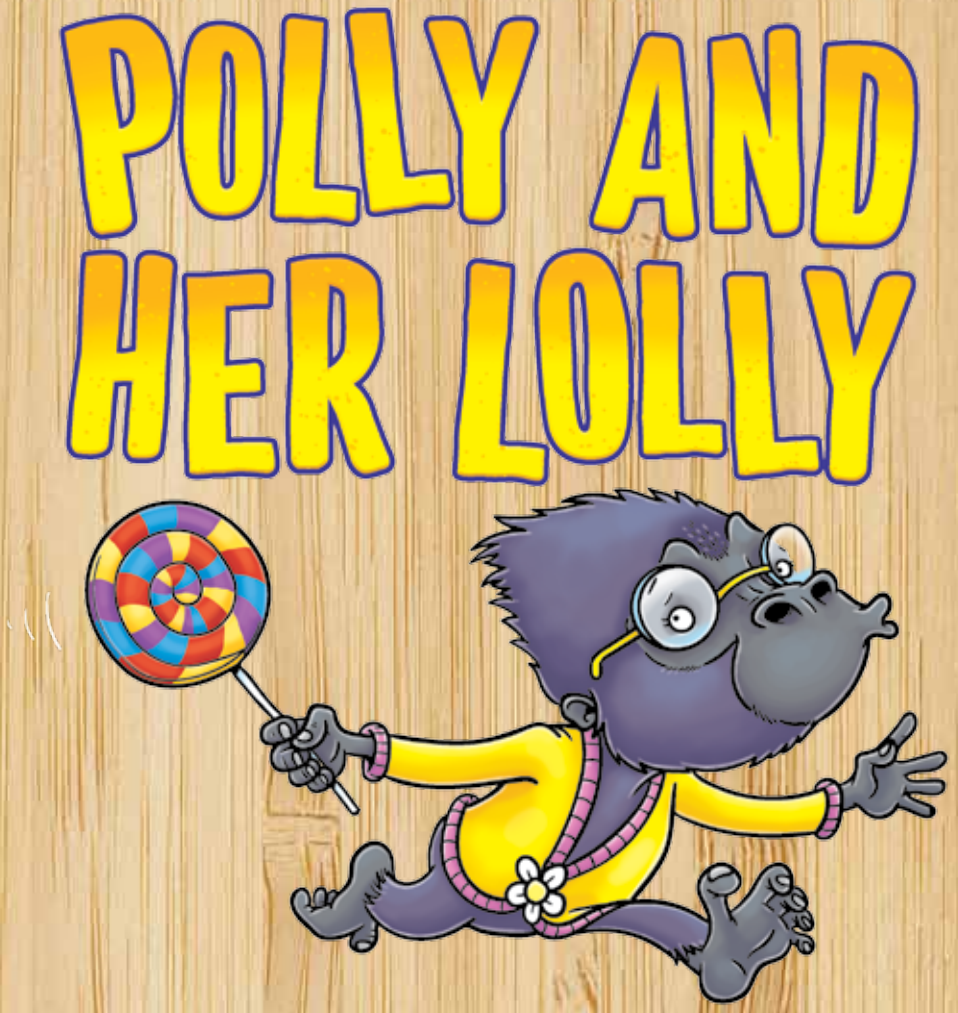
Summary

The question is no longer whether self-regulation is important, but instead how to optimally support its development. Research suggests the early years of life may be a particularly crucial period for supporting the development of self-regulation, as any changes are likely to be more pronounced, longer-lasting, and will have more opportunity to alter other associated developmental trajectories (e.g., academic success). While much of the research to date has typically sought to evaluate often expensive, time-consuming and burdensome approaches to enhancing self-regulation, our approach has been to identify low-cost, everyday activities that achieve similar, or superior, outcomes for children. Specifically, we: observed high quality practice to in early years settings to capture great practices that are already occurring; made minimal modifications to other existing practices to optimise their likely self-regulatory benefit; and introduced new activities that, while perhaps not already being done, considered the demands, practices and routines of early years contexts. These activities were then trialled by early years educators, who provided their valuable insights and feedback to ensure that the final activities were enjoyable, beneficial and compatible with the realities of early years contexts.

The activities that follow are a result of that approach, and have been trialled, tested and modified in consultation and collaboration with early childhood educators.

BEHAVIOURAL SELF-REGULATION

(As compiled in the children's book, POLLY AND HER LOLLY)



Same Kind

What to do: In this activity, name things within and outside a target category and have children take a step forward only when you say the things that are part of that category (e.g., animals, sometimes foods, living things, storybook characters). As a first step, decide with the children what category will be the focus of the game (or use the current theme/topic you have been exploring with children). For example, you may choose the category of animals, for which children would step forward if you say dog, but not if you say ball. Have the children line up across the room/playground from you. Then start calling out words, checking whether children step forward when they are supposed to and don't step when they are not supposed to. Whenever children take steps incorrectly, or do not step when required, have those children take three steps back, and then return to naming. The game ends when the first child (or all children) reaches the educator (for a cuddle). If desired, and appropriate, have that child lead the next round of the game and support them in this.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Name items more rapidly. You can also string a number of correct items one after the other (as in Simon Says) before an incorrect item, so children get into a 'habit' of stepping. *Even harder?* Have children return to the start line whenever they step when they shouldn't, or don't step when they should.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or large group.

What you need: A planned category and list of things that do and do not fall within that category. If you have children with English as an additional language, you could create a photo board where you group images under particular categories.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention on things they have to remember, and resist the impulse to simply do what they did last.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; (from Outcome 1.2)
- Are empowered to make choices and problem solve to meet their needs in particular contexts (from Outcome 2.3)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas; Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Begin to sort, categorise, order and compare collections and events and attributes of objects and materials, in their social and natural worlds (from Outcome 5.4)

Holding Fast

What to do: Prior to meal time (e.g., lunch), tell the children that you would like everyone to hold off eating until all children have their food, so they can thank the cook all together. Have the children serve themselves (or serve the children) one at a time, and then wait until everyone has been served. Once everyone has their meal, lead a thank you to the cook from the children prior to commencing eating. If children bring their own meal, you can have the children all wait while they open their first food item and take turns telling the group what their food item is, before eating. No one should start eating until everyone has shared with the group.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: You can emphasise how enticing the food is by having children sniff their food, talk about which part they are most excited to eat, etc. The process of description and careful observation (in this case, of food) is an important component of scientific thinking. *Even harder?* You can also have children wait to get up from the table (e.g., before they carry out an assigned duty), as this is often even more difficult. In all cases, stress the importance of waiting and congratulate children on how well they are doing.

Ideal formation(s): Large group or small group.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to resist the impulse to eat as soon as the food is in front of them. It also helps to place essential emphasis on lunchtime for social-emotional development (to interact, converse, share) and self-regulation (to wait, be polite and respectful, consider and help others).

Links to EYLF:

- Use effective routines to help make predicted transitions smoothly; Openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Demonstrate increasing awareness of the needs and rights of others; Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences (from Outcome 2.1)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others; Remain accessible to others at times of distress, confusion and frustration (from Outcome 3.1)
- Show increasing independence and competence in personal hygiene, care and safety for themselves and others (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)

Disciplined Dance

What to do: Tell the children that you are going to play some music to dance to, but they must freeze in place whenever the music stops. After playing the music for a short time, randomly stop the music and check whether children have successfully frozen within a reasonable amount of time. For those who did not freeze in time, introduce a series of 'penalties'. At the first non-freeze, have children continue the game from the kneeling position. At the second non-freeze, have children continue the game from a seated position. At the third non-freeze, have children continue the game from a laying down position. Each of these should make it easier to freeze, because fewer parts of the body will be moving. When a child succeeds, have them return to the previous position (e.g., if they successfully freeze when sitting, have them return to kneeling). The game ends when the last child is standing.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Reverse the game. Have children dance when the music is off, and be still while the music plays. Even harder, you can have the children dance with only the body part you name (e.g., left leg), keeping the rest of their body still while the music plays.

Ideal formation(s): Small group for younger children, until children are familiar with the instructions.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention and resist the impulse to continue dancing when the situation requires them to stop.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately; Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences (from Outcome 2.1)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity including dance, creative movement and drama; Respond through movement to traditional and contemporary music, dance and storytelling (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others, either immediately or later (from Outcome 4.3)

Who Says?

What to do: This game involves playing two characters, using two dolls or puppets as props. Introduce the game as children having to carry out the instructions of one character, but not the other (because they are tricky and like to tell you to do the wrong thing). The character to be copied should give the instructions most of the time, followed every so often by the character children should not listen to. After each 'don't copy' action, have children who were successful take a step forward and children who were unsuccessful take a step backward. The game continues until a child has reached the facilitator.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Revert to classic 'Simon Says' rules. Most of the time instructions should begin with "Simon says..." (e.g., "Simon says put your hands above your head"), in which case children should copy the action. However, every so often say an action that doesn't begin with "Simon Says" (e.g., "Put your hands on your knees"), which the children must ignore (they must remain in the previous pose). Give these instructions fairly rapidly, so it is challenging to resist carrying out actions. *Even harder?* After an initial run-through of this game, you can then select a child to be 'Simon' to lead the next round of the game.

Ideal formation(s): Small group, large group, or individual.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention, remember the rules, and resist the impulse to simply carry out all instructions provided. For children who lead the game, it also provides an opportunity for leadership and making choices.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns; Combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity including dance, creative movement and drama (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others, either immediately or later (from Outcome 4.3)
- Respond verbally and non-verbally to what they see, hear, touch, feel and taste (from Outcome 5.1)

Brace Race

What to do: Tell children that you are going to set up an obstacle course. However, the goal of this race is not to be the fastest. Instead, give each child an animal (or have children choose themselves) that they need to behave like and tell them the goal is to behave as much like that animal as possible (in walk, pace, sound, etc.) The methods of movement for each animal could even be drawn from Aboriginal dance representations of animals (see, for example, onechild.com.au). A discussion of what the children know about the different animals will be helpful. Line children at the start of the obstacle course, and have them start when you say 'Go!' Support the children to remain in their character, even if it means they are not moving as quickly or as naturally as they normally would. In each race, change the animal that each child plays, so they have to change their behaviour along with this switch.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Add additional features to each child's movement (e.g., a penguin walks with feet together, at moderate speed, without bending their knees), and rotate children's characters so they must flexibly shift into a new role.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or large group.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to stay in their character, and resist the impulse to go faster than their character allows. This may invoke some disappointment, but allows an opportunity to emphasise and engage children in the process rather than the outcome (i.e., it's not all about winning). It also provides an opportunity for conversations related to science and the living environment as underlying context.

Links to EYLF:

- Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences; Broaden their understanding of the world in which they live (from Outcome 2.1)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns; Combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity including dance, creative movement and drama (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult; Initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Explore ideas and theories using imagination, creativity and play (from Outcome 4.4)

Awkward Opposites

What to do: With a group of children, sing the 'Open Shut Them' song (lyrics below, although there are many different variants and additions you are free to use) doing the associated actions (e.g., open your hands at the word open, and close your hands at the word shut). Once children are familiar with this song, likely after at least a few sessions of singing the song, teach children the opposite actions to the song. Again, this will likely take at least a few sessions to become comfortable and competent with, but continually aim at successful completion of the opposite actions with each singing.

Lyrics:Actions:

Open shut them, open shut them. Shut hands on 'open', and open hands on 'shut'
Give a little clap, clap, clap. Snap fingers on 'clap'
Open shut them, open shut them. Shut hands on 'open', and open hands on 'shut'
Put them in your lap, lap, lap. Pat shoulders on 'lap'

Big and small hands. Big and small hands. Close hands for 'big', spread hands wide for 'small'
Big, big, big, big, small, small, small, small. Close hands for 'big', spread hands wide for 'small'
[Repeat these two lines]

Fast and slow hands. Fast and slow hands. Roll hands slowly for 'fast', and roll hands quickly for 'slow'
Fast, fast, fast, fast, slow, slow, slow, slow. Roll hands slowly for 'fast', and roll hands quickly for 'slow'
[Repeat these two lines]

Loud and quiet. Loud and quiet. Sing the word 'loud' quietly, and the word 'quiet' loudly
Loud, loud, loud, loud. Quiet, quiet. Sing the word 'loud' quietly, and the word 'quiet' loudly
[Repeat these two lines]

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Increase the tempo of the song, so children have to decide and execute the actions more rapidly. Other songs for variety could be *Upsy Down Town,* or make your own. In each case, involve children in planning/composing the words and actions for the song to enhance interest and enthusiasm.

Ideal formation(s): Small group, large group, or individual.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to resist the impulse to simply copy the lyrics, and instead exert control over the thinking and behaviour to do the requested actions. It also involve inhibiting a natural urge or response (to act in accordance with the lyrics) and instead behave in a different way.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs (from Outcome 5.2)
- Draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task (from Outcome 5.4)

Bursting Bubbles

What to do: Tell the children that you are going to blow some bubbles, and you want the children to pop them. However, the children must pretend that their feet are locked, as if in cement – they can't move them. The children can only pop bubbles that enter their space, involving no more than bending. If a child moves their feet to pop a bubble, have them sit and pop bubbles to further constrain their ability to move outside their allocated space. Once they have popped at least 5 bubbles without moving from their bottom, they can return to standing (with their feet locked in cement). If they move from their bottom, have them transition to lying down to pop bubbles (and return to sitting once they pop 5 bubbles while laying down). To further emphasise numeracy skills, have children say, count and keep track of the number of bubbles they pop. You should encourage the children to stop once they have hit their target number.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Introduce rules that the children can only pop bubbles using particular parts of their body (e.g., right arm and nose), and that their feet still cannot move. *Even harder?* Have the children predict how many bubbles they can burst in a set time period (e.g., 20 seconds), still with their feet planted, and have the children check their actual number against their predictions. You might also have another child (partner) monitor children's planted feet and number of bubble pops.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or individual.

What you need: Bubbles.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to resist the impulse to chase bubbles when the rules dictate that they shouldn't or they have already met their predictions (after which they must avoid bubbles). It also involves early numeracy skills (counting) and some elements of basic scientific reasoning (making and evaluating predictions).

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Make predictions and generalisations about their daily activities, aspects of the natural world and environments, using patterns they generate or identify and communicate these using mathematical language and symbols (from Outcome 4.2)
- Use feedback from themselves and others to revise and build on an idea (from Outcome 4.4)

Hot Potato

What to do: Seat children in a circle, putting a small plastic plate (or similar) in front of each child and then giving one of them the 'hot potato' (any object they can make-believe is a hot potato). Tell the children that they are going to pretend that the 'potato' is hot, so they want to pass it around the circle as quickly as they can when the music plays, and that they don't want to get stuck with it when the music stops (because they will be temporarily 'out'). However, explain that before passing the potato they first need to place the potato on their plate, and then lift their plate with the potato on it to the person beside them. If the potato falls off, the child must pick the potato back up and place it back on the plate. The next child in the circle then needs to use their hands to pick the potato up off the plate, put it on their own plate, and then lift their plate to the next person in the circle. Turn the music on (to start the passing) and off (to stop the passing) to start and stop the game - you can even use the hot potato song as the background music that you turn on and off ('Hot potato, pass it on, pass it on, pass it on...'). Stop the game either when a child forgets to put the potato on their plate, or when you stop the music and a child is holding the potato. In either case, that child is 'out' and should temporarily leave the circle. During the next round they can assist the teacher (e.g., checking that all of the children put the potato on their plate), and then can take the place of the next person who is out (so that children who need the most practice in controlling their behaviours will not receive the least opportunity to do so). Play to a defined number of rounds, or until there is one child left who has never been 'out'.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Select faster paced music and encourage children to pass the potato faster than they normally would.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or large group.

What you need: Something potato-shaped to pass around the circle and small plastic plates (or similar).

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to resist the impulse to simply pass along the object, without first carrying out the required action. This becomes increasingly difficult as time goes on, and the risk of being stuck with the object increases.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group (from Outcome 1.4)
- Remain accessible to others at times of distress, confusion and frustration (from Outcome 3.1)
- Engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task (from Outcome 5.4)

Head'n Shoulders

What to do: Singing the famous song, *Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes*, tell children that they are going to sing the song and perform the actions (touching the body part that corresponds to each word), but that you want them to omit saying a particular body part (e.g., knees). They will still touch this body part though, at the relevant time. Repeat the song, involving children in choosing which body part will be omitted next.

Lyrics:Example lyrics [and actions] with knees omitted:

Head and shoulders, knees and toes,Head [head] and shoulders [shoulders], ... [knees] and toes [toes]
Knees and toes,... [knees] and toes [toes]

Knees and toes.... [knees] and toes [toes]
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,Head [head] and shoulders [shoulders], ... [knees] and toes [toes]

We all clap hands together.We all clap hands [clap] together.

Eyes and ears and mouth and nose,

Mouth and nose,

Mouth and nose,

We all clap hands together.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Omit multiple body parts and/or omit body parts out of order (shuffle the order of omission from head first, then shoulders, etc.) *Even harder?* You can have children touch an opposite body part to the one they sing (e.g., touch their toes when they say head) or try singing the song backwards.

Ideal formation(s): Small group, until children are familiar with the instructions.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to resist the impulse to perform all the actions they say, or say all the actions they perform.

Links to EYLF:

- Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected (from Outcome 1.2)
- Combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity including dance, creative movement and drama (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs (from Outcome 5.2)
- Draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task (from Outcome 5.4)

Managing Musicians

What to do: Have children sit in a circle and place one instrument in front of each of them. Instruct children to place the instrument on their lap 'silently' (no sound) and not to play them until the conductor instructs them to – this is a good opportunity to discuss what a conductor is, and how they orchestrate a large number of musicians. Have the children play their instruments when the conductor is moving their arms, and stop as soon as the conductor stops. After each pause, have children move to the spot next to them with a different instrument – again being careful to put the instrument silently on their lap. In subsequent rounds, you can introduce playing loud or soft, fast or slow, etc. based on how the conductor moves their hands.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Have children do the opposite – play when the conductor is still and be still when the conductor is moving their arms. *Even harder?* Have children keep their legs still (feet firmly planted on the floor) as the rest of their body is active playing along with the music.

Ideal formation(s): Small group, until children are familiar with the instructions. You might also consider using a visual stop card to be inclusive of younger ages, developmental ranges and additional needs.

What you need: One instrument per child.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to inhibit/discontinue urges and natural reactions that may feel compelling, but should no longer be undertaken.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately; Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences (from Outcome 2.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others, either immediately or later (from Outcome 4.3)

COGNITIVE SELF-REGULATION

(As compiled in the children's book, I DON'T MISS THE SHOPPING LIST)

I DON'T MISS *the* SHOPPING LIST

Split Singing

What to do: Sit the children in a circle and split them into two groups (drawing an imaginary line bisecting the circle). Position two educators in the middle of the circle, one for each group. All of the children will be singing the same song (Row, Row, Row Your Boat), but each group will start at a different time. Have one group start singing. Have the second group start the song from the beginning when the first group begins the second line of the song ('...gently down the stream...'). Children need to sing along with their group (led by their nominated educator). The educator should sing along, signalling and giving support to children when they lapse. At the end of the song, switch which group starts first.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Split the children into more than two groups, that each start at a different time. Gradually remove educator support, only stepping in to help children get back on track if they falter. *Even harder?* Assign children to groups by numbering them (1, 2, 3, 4) so children are surrounded by other children singing a different part of the song.

Ideal formation(s): For 3-year olds, this is best attempted with four children split into pairs. For 4-5 year olds, larger groups (e.g., 10 children, split into groups of 5) can be attempted.

What you need: First, ensure that children know the song. If they do not, spend time over the next days teaching children the song. The song should be very familiar to children before this activity, so they are not having to think about what words come next, and can focus on not losing track of where they are up to in the song. This activity works best with two educators facilitating, so the children have the ability to look to their 'group leader' to refocus and recover when they lapse.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to focus and sustain their attention, and resist distraction.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences (from Outcome 2.1)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)

Mr Wolf

What to do: Select a child to be 'Mr Wolf', who stands across the yard with their back turned to the rest of the children. The rest of the children, facing Mr Wolf, ask 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' The child nominated to be Mr Wolf chooses a number, and the other children take that number of steps toward Mr Wolf. This sequence of asking 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' and Mr Wolf responding with a number continues until Mr Wolf thinks (without peeking) that the children are close enough to be able to turn, chase and catch. Mr Wolf indicates this by responding with 'It's dinner time!' instead of a number. Then Mr Wolf turns to give chase, and the children have to run back to their starting line (a safe zone) while Mr Wolf tries to catch one of the children. The first child who is caught becomes Mr Wolf. The emphasis of this activity is counting the number of steps and ensuring that the group stays together (safety in numbers). Where children are excited to become Mr Wolf, this also presents an opportunity to discuss turn-taking and coping with frustration.

When starting out, you might ensure a distance that is not too far from Mr Wolf so that the quantity of numbers that needs to be remembered is not overly large. As children get better at this game, you can increase the distance and the quantity of numbers that will be called out before Mr Wolf gives chase.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: As a twist on this game, introduce that, if caught, the child can save themself by recalling one number that was called before Mr Wolf turned to give chase. *Even harder?* Have a child who is caught recall all of the numbers that were called out before Mr Wolf turned to give chase.

Ideal location(s): Outdoors.

Ideal formation(s): Large group or small group.

What you need: A sufficiently large outdoor space, and an adult keeping track of the numbers called to check if children's recall is correct.

What it does: In emotional and stressful situations, self-regulation becomes even more difficult. This activity challenges children's ability to maintain their attention on things they have to remember, even in the face of anticipation and excitement.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences (from Outcome 2.1)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)

Mind Reader

What to do: Tell the children that you want to play a mind-reading game: That you are thinking of a particular way to sort objects, and you want to see if the children can 'read your mind' to figure it out. Use up to 20 objects that can be sorted according to different categories (e.g., colour, size, shape). You could introduce the activity in any number of ways but for example, you might say:

I am thinking of a way you could put these things into groups, and I want to see if you can read my mind and put them into the groups I am thinking. For example, I could put the blue ones together and the red ones together. But I'm thinking of a different way you could put them into groups. Can you guess which other way I am thinking to put them into groups?

Let the child decide when they are finished sorting the objects. If a child has sorted correctly, tell them *That's right. Now I'm going to think of a different way*. If a child sorts incorrectly, tell them *That's a clever way to put them into groups, but that's not the way I was thinking of. Let's try a different way to see if you can work out what I am thinking*. If you are doing this in a group, have children take turns sorting the objects. In between attempts to sort, support children to think and talk about ways the objects are the same and different from each other (and thus can be sorted).

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Choose sorting rules that incorporate two dimensions at once (sort by colour and size: large red, small red, large green, small green). This will require some explanation, demonstration, and practice with the children.

Ideal formation(s): Individual or small group (no more than four children).

What you need: A collection of objects that can be sorted by a number of different dimensions (e.g., colour, size, category, where it is normally located, its function, etc.) For example, these may be objects found in nature that can be sorted by colour, size, whether they are hard, whether they are found on the ground, whether they grow (stone, leaves of different types, stick, grass, pine cone, flower, etc.), blocks (of different colours, sizes, and shapes), or cards depicting digits and quantities (to be sorted as less or more than a specific number).

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to direct and redirect their thinking. It also supports problem solving and emergent classification.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group (from Outcome 1.4)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Begin to sort, categorise, order and compare collections and events and attributes of objects and materials, in their social and natural worlds (from Outcome 5.4)

Hidden Hunt

What to do: One morning, before most of the children arrive, recruit one or a few children to help you hide some obscure objects around the learning space (this can be indoors and/or outdoors). Tell these children that they have to keep the hidden objects and their locations secret. Later in the day, when the children are all there, read out to the other children the list of hidden objects (and parameters of where they are hidden, e.g., in this room) that they need to remember and then work together to find. Quick digital shots displayed on an interactive whiteboard or iPad can support those children who have English as an additional language.

Use the children who helped hide the objects to determine if all objects have been found, and devise good clues that you can give if the 'hunters' start to struggle (this can be done with guided questioning, so children lead in the creation of clues). You can also support 'hunters' in developing strategies to better remember the items (e.g., grouping items, each child remembering one) and more effectively search (e.g., all look together in one area first, before moving to the next).

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Tell children they have to find the items one at a time, in the order you said them. They can always ask for you to repeat the list, but when repeating say the entire list again, including the items already found, and challenge 'hunters' to remember two or more of the next items they need to find.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or large group.

What you need: Some obscure objects to hide around the learning space, that are not normally in those locations but could go unnoticed during normal routines and play (e.g., a pine cone, a baby's teething ring, a rarely used book, an unlit candle, etc.) To integrate this with other planned activities, you could hide things like the non-perishable ingredients to make playdough in advance of a cooking experience, or hide materials for an art activity. If using digital photos of hidden objects, you will also need a photo-taking device (e.g., phone, iPad, camera) and way to display the photos for children (e.g., iPad, interactive whiteboard).

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention on things they have to remember (find), as well as locations that have already been searched. It also encourages persistence in the face of challenge. For those children who help facilitate the activity ('hiders'), there are also opportunities for leadership, perspective taking, 'stretching' memory and resisting the impulse to tell their friends where objects are hidden.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group; Empathise with and express concern for others (for 'hiders'); Reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences;
  Take action to assist other children to participate in social groups (for 'hiders') (from Outcome 2.1)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)

Secret Shadow

What to do: Arrange all participating children in front of you and tell them you will be moving parts of your body, which you will describe as you do it. Tell the children you want them to listen carefully and match those movements. The tricky bit is that they have to match your movements with their eyes shut (and no peeking). Have them close their eyes, and keep them closed, until you give the instruction to open them. If the children initially have trouble keeping their eyes closed, you could move behind them while dictating the actions, and then move back to the front when the sequence is complete.

Say and do one movement at a time, and wait for the children to complete that movement to the best of their ability or recollection, before giving another. Children must hold that position, adding each new movement to it. For example, if you say *Put one hand on your head,* and next *Touch your nose with your thumb*, the child should then be doing both of these actions. In giving these instructions to children, be aware of children's language development (including children with English as an additional language) so instructions meet and/or appropriately challenge their language development. At the end of the sequence, have children open their eyes to see if their body position matches yours.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Do multiple movements at once, rather than waiting for children to complete one movement before moving on to the next. You might try two movements at once first, and eventually move to 3 or 4 movements if this becomes easy.

Ideal formation(s): Small group, large group, or individual.

What you need: A selection of prepared actions that children will be able to understand and replicate (e.g., moving arms, legs, hands, heads by bending, stretching up/out/sideways, sitting, kneeling, laying, crouching). Consider what direction of movements the children will understand (e.g., Left and right? Up and down? To the side?), ensuring an appropriate level of challenge.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention on verbal instructions. It also requires them to resist temptation (to peek), take considered risks (if unsure, try) and deal with disappointment (if incorrect). It also involves identification and development of language, in isolation of visible guidance.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others, either immediately or later (from Outcome 4.3)
- Respond verbally and non-verbally to what they see, hear, touch, feel and taste (from Outcome 5.1)

Market Mix-up

What to do: In this activity, lay out a number of grocery store items (or play versions of food items) on a table, next to a non-transparent bag. Beside you, obscured from view, have an identical bag with some food items already in it. Have the children choose three items that they want to purchase from the store to make breakfast/lunch/dinner. To enrich the experience, you can ask them about what and how they will cook with those items. Once the items are in the bag, place the children's bag beside the pre-filled bag and tell them there has been a mix-up. You aren't sure which bag is theirs? To ensure that you give the right bag to the right person, have the children tell you one or more of the items they purchased. You wouldn't want to give away someone else's groceries to them, or give their groceries away to someone else! This is ideally done in a small group or with individual children.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Have the children select and then recall an increasing number of items, and/or have them recall the items in the shopping bag in: (a) the order they first chose them; or (b) the order they would use them in their cooking.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or individual.

What you need: Two non-transparent bags, as well as a number of real or play (plastic) food items.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention on things they have to remember. Being 'successful' in the context of extended make-believe play requires children to hold in mind the co-constructed 'rules' of the play situation.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Show an increasing awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task (from Outcome 5.4)

Rhythm Repeat

What to do: Standing in front of the children, encourage them to watch closely as you perform a rhythm using claps, stomps, and knee slaps. Start with a short sequence in the beginning, having children repeat the sequence once it is complete. This might be *two claps, two foot-stomps, three knee claps*. Gradually lengthen the sequence, adding a new element to the original each time, until you reach an appropriate level of challenge for the children. Practice this sequence with children, aiming for successful completion by the end of the activity.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: The easiest way to increase challenge in this game is the make the sequence longer. However, you can also add elements of timing (children have to replicate pauses, as well as actions). You can also perform a new sequence each time, rather than lengthening the original sequence. *Even Harder?* You could choose a child to choose and carry out a sequence.

Ideal formation(s): Small group, until children are familiar with the instructions.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention on things they have to remember. For the children leading a sequence, it promotes leadership and requires them to consider how to clearly communicate their intent through non-verbal means.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others, either immediately or later (from Outcome 4.3)
- Draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task (from Outcome 5.4)

Favourite Things

What to do: Have children stand in a circle and give a ball or beanbag to one of the children. Explain that you want each child to name their favourite thing in a chosen category (e.g., vegetable, animal, day of the year, number, type of weather, place to visit). However, tell the children they can't repeat what someone else has said. If someone else says their favourite first, they must choose their next favourite. Have the child with the ball/beanbag name their favourite, and then toss or roll it to another child. That child must then name their favourite, and toss/roll to another child, and so forth. Children who repeat something that has been named are 'out'. Rather than exclude them from the game, have them work with you to identify when something is repeated. They can then swap back into the circle when the next child is 'out'. Make sure to choose categories that are aligned with children's interests, current topics or themes, or curricula.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Have children repeat the last person's favourite thing before adding their own.

Ideal formation(s): Small group, until children are familiar with the instructions.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to take turns, listen carefully to each other, and also consider multiple competing sources of focus/information (i.e., on one hand remember what has been said, on the other hand catch and throw). This capacity to divide attention across multiple sources (e.g., listening to an instruction while at the same time playing with playdoh) increases with age and experience.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group; Display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives (from Outcome 1.4)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Contribute their ideas and experiences in play, small and large group discussions (from Outcome 5.1)
- Draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task (from Outcome 5.4)

Eye Spy

What to do: Tell the children you are going to think of something you can see around you, and you are going to give them clues to see if they can guess what it is. Unlike the classic I Spy game, however, give multiple clues that children have to remember and consider at once. For instance, to have children try to guess a teddy bear, you might say *I spy, with my little eye, something that is brown, soft, and in the reading area*. Have children take turns guessing, and where necessary prompt the children to recall the clues. The child who guesses correctly first can pick the next object. Support them to give the same number of clues that you did, thinking of different ways to identify the object (they can whisper their choice to you if they are struggling). Have that child be the moderator of the turn-taking for children's guesses as well.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Indicate some properties that the object is not. For instance, to have children try to guess a doll, you might say *I spy, with my little eye, something that is not green, not hard, and not in the reading area*.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or large group.

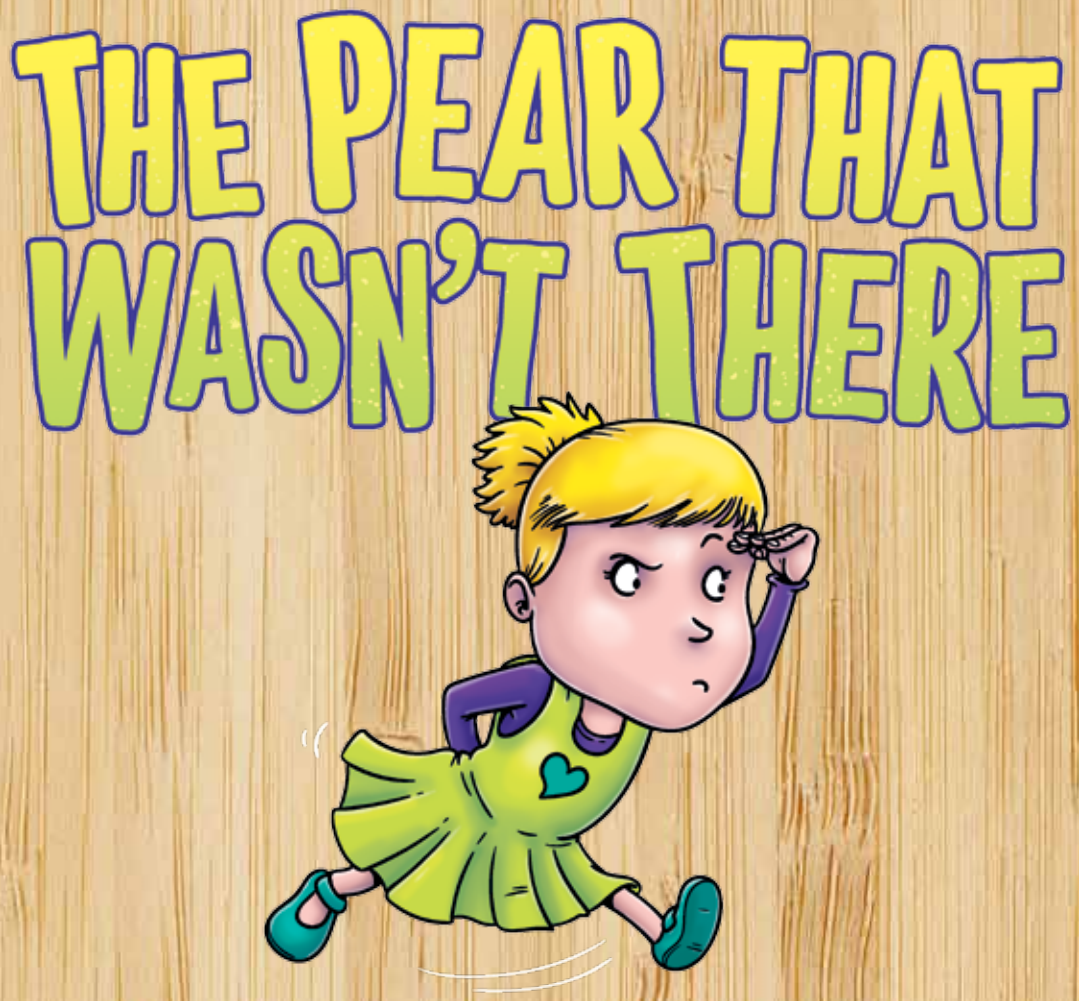
What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention on the clues they are given and what others have already guessed. It also requires persistence when success is not immediate, making further guesses, and dealing with disappointment if someone guesses before you.

Links to ELYF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group (from Outcome 1.4)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected(from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Draw on memory of a sequence to complete a task; Begin to sort, categorise, order and compare collections and events and attributes of objects and materials, in their social and natural worlds (from Outcome 5.4)

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SELF-REGULATION

(As compiled in the children's book, THE PEAR THAT WASN'T THERE)



Acting Out

What to do: Set up an activity in which children sustain make-believe play, which can involve scenarios like a visit to a zoo (with children taking on the roles of zookeepers, animals, visitors), a restaurant (with chefs, hosts, wait staff, patrons, kitchen staff), a doctors office (with reception staff, patients, doctors, and nurses), or a shopping centre (with store staff, shoppers, security guard, and centre managers). Involve each child in selecting and planning for a meaningful character to play that will require sustained control in interactions. Where possible, give children choice in which roles they would like to play. If selecting and planning a role is initially challenging for children, you can assign them a role and engage in discussions about how that character might speak, what they might do and how they might feel.

Throughout the make-believe play, encourage children to maintain their roles (e.g., in movement, voice, speech) and support this through open-ended and directed questioning (e.g., 'That plane is full – do you want to go somewhere else or go on a different day?' or 'What are you planning to make for dinner tonight? What ingredients will you need to buy to make that?'). Educators can serve as experts, such as 'zoologists' or 'supervisors', answering questions (or looking them up) as they arise.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Ask questions that will challenge the children to think and act deeper in line with their adopted roles. For instance, you might ask, 'What questions might the children most want to ask the zookeeper? What questions might adults want to ask?' or 'I wonder how the shopkeeper decides what to keep in their shop. How could we find out?'

Ideal formation(s): Small group, large group, or individual

What you need: Equipment (e.g., props, dress ups) to enrich the make-believe play, if available.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to maintain attention on things they have to remember, exerting control over their thinking, behaviour and social interactions to maintain their role. It encourages children to be flexible – when things don't go to plan the children have to think of alternative approaches. It also encourages perspective-taking skills, as children have to think about how others (the characters they are playing) would think, feel and act.

Links to EYLF:

- Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (Outcome 1.1)
- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Explore different identified and points of view in dramatic play (from Outcome 1.3)
- Display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives; Express a wide variety of emotions, thoughts and views constructively (from Outcome 1.4)
- Broaden their understanding of the world in which they live; Gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately; Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences; Begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour; Contribute to fair decision-making about matters that affect them (from Outcome 2.1)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected; Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others (from Outcome 3.1)
- Initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas; Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)

Reading Rounds

What to do: Using either a picture book without words, or a story that is familiar to the children, have the children take turns constructing or recalling the story. Set an order in advance, one child per page, and support children in maintaining this sequence. To enrich this experience, ask probing questions of the 'narrator' to gain further insight and detail into the part of the story that relates to their page. You can also involve other children, asking them questions and linking to their personal experiences. You can support the children in conversational turn-taking strategies – e.g., if they didn't want a story to go in a particular direction, they can acknowledge the current direction but begin to steer it back toward the original direction.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Don't use a book at all. Have children invent a new story, one plot point or sentence at a time, paying careful attention to what came before so that the next addition follows on.

Ideal formation(s): Individual (where adult takes a turn) or small group.

What you need: A picture book without words, or a book/story that is familiar to the children.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to take turns, listen carefully to others, and give appropriate responses that follow from what others have said (even when these are not preferred by the child). Children must also inhibit their temptation to interrupt or speak without pause, to instead give others a chance to speak and listen carefully to their words.

Links to EYLF:

- Openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others; Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Begin to initiate negotiating and sharing behaviours; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Display awareness of and respect for others perspectives; Express a wide variety of emotions, thoughts and views constructively (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences; Contribute to fair decision-making about matters that affect them (from Outcome 2.1)
- Listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing (from Outcome 2.2)
- Participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes (from Outcome 2.4)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected (from Outcome 3.1)
- Initiate and contribute to play experiences emerging from their own ideas; Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Contribute their ideas and experiences in play, small and large group discussions; Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)
- Actively use, engage with and share the enjoyment of language and texts in range of ways (from Outcome 5.2)

Balloon Bounce

What to do: Split the children into groups of 2-4 and give each group a balloon. Tell them that you want them to keep the balloon up in the air, but they have to take turns hitting it – no one can hit it a second time until all other children in their group have taken a turn. Have the children proceed with the game, supporting them to strategize and collaborate to keep it in the air longer and longer. Encourage children to count the number of hits each time, so they can compare which strategies are more effective. Other turn-taking games that can be played include card games, board games, and Bug in a Rug (children close their eyes and crouch down, an educator places a blanket over one of them, and then children take turns guessing who is under the blanket).

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Have children use only a specified body part, or one of a few specified body parts, to hit the balloon (e.g., only their left arm, only their head, only their knee). You can also have children decide fair rules for who should start and the order they should go in. You can also play games where not all children get a turn each game, to help them inhibit natural responses to disappointment, and recognise and resolve these feelings. Where turn-taking breaks down, use this as an opportunity to discuss – e.g., imagine yourself in another's shoes: 'Do you think X might also really want a turn? Imagine if you had waited patiently for your turn, but then X wanted to take a second turn before you. How might you feel? What might you want X to do if that happened?'

Ideal formation(s): For 3-year olds, this is best attempted with up to three children. For 4-5 year olds, larger groups (e.g., groups of 4+ children) can be attempted.

What you need: Thick (good quality) blown up balloons.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to take turns, inhibit responses and collaborate, even when it is difficult to do so (e.g., when the balloon is near them but it is not their turn). It also fosters core aspects of social development that underpin self-regulation, such as the developmental shift from considering 'me' to considering 'us'.

Links to EYLF:

- Begin to initiate negotiating and sharing behaviours; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Show interest in other children and being part of a group; Engage in and contribute to shared play experiences; Display awareness of and respect for others perspectives; Express a wide variety of emotions, thoughts and views constructively; Reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences; Begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour; Contribute to fair decision-making about matters that affect them (from Outcome 2.1)
- Participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes (Outcome 2.4)
- Increasingly cooperate and work collaboratively with others (Outcome 3.1)
- Engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns (Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)

Puppet Persuasion

What to do: Using a doll or puppet–let's call them Polly–tell the child(ren) that you are trying to encourage Polly to do something that will be good for them (e.g., eat vegetables, take a nap, clean up before lunch) but they don't want to do it. Have the children help you come up with strategies for how you might convince Polly to engage in this behaviour. Have the children speak to Polly to help in this persuasion. Feel free to get creative with scenarios, including making links to feelings (e.g., 'Polly climbed a tree, got stuck and started crying – how might we help?')

Don't make it too easy for the children; feel free to be less cooperative and tell the children a strategy hasn't worked (e.g., *I still don't want to*) and you need their help to come up with a different one. Putting on a character voice for Polly, or having Polly whisper a response in your ear that you then share with children, will serve to enrich the make-believe situation. Support children in generating new strategies that they may not have considered before (e.g., like the child who came up with the ingenious idea to 'pretend that we like to clean up – it will be like a game').

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Have children try these strategies with their peers at appropriate intervals, still supporting and moderating the interaction in case these strategies are not immediately effective.

Ideal formation(s): Individual or small group.

What you need: A doll or puppet, and props to enrich the make-believe scenario (if available).

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to consider others' perspectives and find new ways of thinking and persuading that the child may not have considered before. It engages children in problem solving and planning, as well as providing opportunities to develop higher levels of tolerance to frustration. While children may feel frustrated when the puppet is not initially receptive to their persuasions, success after repeated attempts highlights the value of persistence for children.

Links to EYLF:

- Openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others; Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Begin to initiate negotiating and sharing behaviours; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives (from Outcome 1.4)
- Gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately (from Outcome 2.1)
- Listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing (from Outcome 2.2)
- Participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes (from Outcome 2.4)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Apply a wide variety of thinking strategies to engage with situations and solve problems, and adapt these strategies to new situations (from Outcome 4.2)
- Contribute their ideas and experiences in play, small and large group discussions; Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)

Blind Spot

What to do: Create a simple obstacle course that can be completed by someone who has their eyes closed, but is assisted through verbal instruction, without risk of injury (e.g., lines of tape on the ground to balance across, plastic cones to walk around, a beanbag to put in a bucket). Assemble children into pairs, and tell them that one member of the pair will need to keep their eyes closed and the other will walk beside them and give them instructions on how to navigate the obstacle course. First demonstrate the obstacle course for the children, and then have one child in the pair close their eyes (no peeking!) As each pair progress through the obstacle course, encourage others to watch and talk about how they might avoid some of the difficulties they observe. There is benefit not only from being the pair doing the obstacle course, but also watching and considering what they will do during their turn.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Add elements to the course that require more precise actions (e.g., picking up a beanbag and putting it in a bucket, stepping only in some hula hoops and not in the 'swamp' that surrounds it, etc.) In all cases, ensure that the elements that are added emphasise accuracy (slowly and carefully) over speed (e.g., which could lead to running in to or tripping over things), and maintain safety in the activity.

Ideal formation(s): Pairs of children.

What you need: Obstacle course equipment (e.g., plastic cones, pieces of tape to mark off areas, etc.)

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to listen carefully to others and to follow instructions. It also requires children to resist temptations (to look). For those children leading others, it promotes leadership and effective communication. This can also be used as a stimulus to discuss how our actions have consequences for others.

Links to EYLF:

- Establish and maintain respectful, trusting relationships with other children and educators; Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Take considered risks in their decision-making and cope with the unexpected; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful; Increasingly co-operate and work collaboratively with others (from Outcome 1.2)
- Display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives; Reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others (from Outcome 1.4)
- Cooperate with others and negotiate roles and relationships in play episodes and group experiences (from Outcome 2.1)
- Listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing (from Outcome 2.2)
- Participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes (from Outcome 2.4)
- Make choices, accept challenges, take considered risks, manage change and cope with frustrations and the unexpected; Demonstrate trust and confidence (from Outcome 3.1)
- Demonstrate spatial awareness and orient themselves, moving around and through their environments confidently and safely (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Convey and construct messages with purpose and confidence, building on home/family and community literacies (from Outcome 5.1)

Filling Buckets

What to do: After reading the story, *Have you filled a bucket today?*, have children add coloured pieces of paper to their own 'bucket'. Tell children that each colour of paper represents a different emotion (*feelings*), and you can involve children in choosing which colour means which emotion. Once buckets are filled, this provides an opportunity to talk about reasons for those emotions and how children could cope with and/or change those feelings if necessary. You can also discuss the ways that children can fill others' buckets – and have each child make plans to do at least one of those that same day, and some over the remainder of the week. To start simpler, start with two buckets (e.g., happy, sad) and provide a literal bucket that children can add to in order to express how they feel.

Check in with children through the day and week to have them recall what their goals were, how they are tracking against their goals, what might have led them to deviate from these plans (either doing more, less or different than expected), and discuss any new ways they may have thought of to fill someone's bucket. You can use cues in other books you read to discuss more ways to fill people's buckets, through asking probing questions about emotions ('How are they feeling now?'), possible reasons ('What could they do next?'), and/or how others might be able to help ('How might you help if you had the chance?'). Link to children's own experiences so they can clearly see the applications and links to their own lives.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Have children consider more complex or mixed emotions, their causes and their remedies. At the end of the day, have children say how they filled someone's bucket and how someone filled their bucket today.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or individual discussions.

What you need: Preferable if the discussion follows a reading of the book, *Have you filled someone's bucket?*

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to shift their focus from their own emotions, to also understand and respond appropriately to others' emotions.

Links to EYLF:

- Communicate their needs for comfort and assistance; Openly express their feelings and ideas in their interactions with others; Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation (from Outcome 1.2)
- Express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively; Empathise with and express concern for others; Display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives; Reflect on their actions and consider consequence for others (from Outcome 1.4)
- Gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately (from Outcome 2.1)
- Begin to show concern for others; Listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing (from Outcome 2.2)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)
- Explore texts from a range of different perspectives and begin to analyse the meanings (from Outcome 5.2)

Actor's Studio

What to do: Tell children you are going to tell them some short stories, and you want them to act (make faces and use body language) the way they think the main character would feel. You can use scenarios like someone taking a toy they wanted to play with (e.g., sad), winning a race (e.g., happy), finding a coin on the ground (e.g., excited), or the group not reading the book they wanted (e.g., disappointed). Choose one child you think is acting out the character particularly well, asking the children: (a) how do you think they are feeling; and (b) how do you know (what cues about the person tell you that is how they are feeling). Support the children by drawing attention to particular features of the emotional expression.

Too easy? How to increase challenge: Give situations that may elicit mixed emotions, and choose children that seem to be portraying more than one emotion, or an unexpected emotion. You can scaffold children to consider and display mixed emotions. *Even Harder?* Have the children decide what emotion they would like to act out, and a situation that would make them feel that way.

Ideal formation(s): Small group for young children, or until children are familiar with the activity.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to think about how they can regulate their own emotions and influence the emotions of others. It also supports emotion identification, understanding of others' emotions, and the influence that they can have on others' emotions (positively and negatively).

Links to EYLF:

- Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Express a wide range of emotions, thoughts and views constructively; Display awareness of and respect for others' perspectives; Reflect on their actions and consider consequences for others (from Outcome 1.4)
- Gradually learn to 'read' the behaviours of others and respond appropriately (from Outcome 2.1)
- Begin to show concern for others; Listen to others' ideas and respect different ways of being and doing (from Outcome 2.2)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)

PRSIST Yoga

What to do: At regular intervals in the week, engage children in yoga to direct their attention and focus to calming and controlled poses. With each pose, ask children how the pose makes them feel, and which they might be able to use when they want to feel more flexible, calm, determined, or focused.

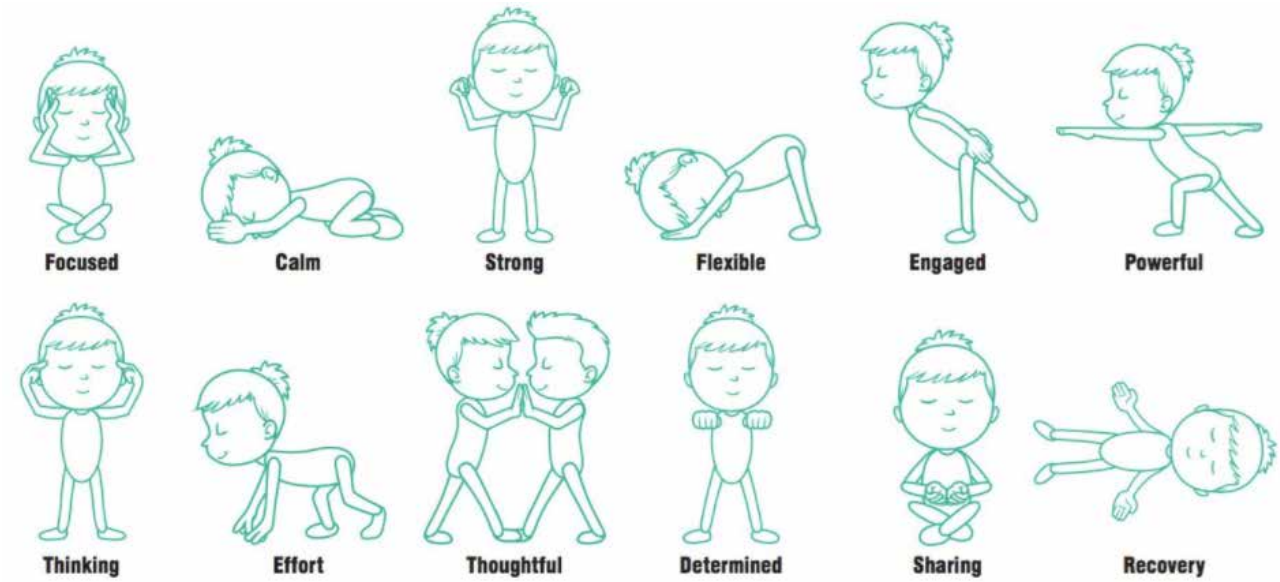
1. Focused – hands as blinders on sides of face, sitting cross-legged
2. Calm – sitting on knees, laying forward with arms outstretched
3. Strong – legs shoulder width apart, two arms flexed
4. Flexible – downward dog
5. Engaged – superman pose
6. Powerful – warrior pose (front foot lunge, arms stretched forward and back, looking forward)
7. Thinking – feet in second position, index fingers on temples
8. Effort – starting block position, but back leg stretched out
9. Thoughtful – two person pose: right foot touching in centre, two hands pressed against each other's
10. Determined – two fists held straight outward, straight legs in a V
11. Sharing – two cupped hands, sitting cross-legged
12. Recovery – lay on your back, arms to your sides, looking up to the ceiling

Ideal formation(s): Small group, until children are familiar with the poses and links to feelings.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to identify their emotions and think about how they can regulate their own emotions.

Links to EYLF:

- Demonstrate an increasing capacity for self-regulation; Be open to new challenges and discoveries; Persist when faced with challenges and when first attempts are not successful (from Outcome 1.2)
- Enjoy moments of solitude (from Outcome 3.1)
- Engage in increasingly complex sensory-motor skills and movement patterns; Combine gross and fine motor movement and balance to achieve increasingly complex patterns of activity including dance, creative movement and drama (from Outcome 3.2)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)



Song/Story Lucky-Dip

What to do: Write the titles of children's favourite songs and books on index cards and put these into a bag or box. Like a lucky dip, at story or song time select one child to draw an index card from the bag/box. This may not be the child's preferred choice, permitting discussion of how to manage disappointment. This might include discussions about fairness, understanding perspectives and preferences of others, and that we don't always get to do the things we want to do (although sometimes we do).

Too easy? How to increase challenge: After the child selects a story or song, have them find out whose favourite story or song it was, and why.

Ideal formation(s): Small group or large group.

What you need: Story or song titles written out, and added as index cards in a box or bag.

What it does: This activity challenges children's ability to manage (potential) disappointment and persist with tasks that may be less desirable.

Links to EYLF:

- Respond to ideas and suggestions of others (from Outcome 1.1)
- Display awareness of and respect for others perspectives; Express a wide variety of emotions, thoughts and views constructively (from Outcome 1.4)
- Begin to think critically about fair and unfair behaviour (from Outcome 2.1)
- Show an increasing capacity to understand, self-regulate and manage their emotions in ways that reflect the feelings and needs of others; Remain accessible to others at times of distress, confusion and frustration (from Outcome 3.1)
- Persist even when they find a task difficult (from Outcome 4.1)
- Express ideas and feelings and understand and respect the perspectives of others (from Outcome 5.1)

Building 21
University of Wollongong
Northfields Ave, NSW 2522
Australia

www.prsist.com.au

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