# Teacher resource: An integrated approach to planning and learning

This resource accompanies the professional learning session ‘An integrated approach to planning and learning’. It may be used to support professional dialogue to facilitate deeper understandings within the preschool team or to supplement the corresponding professional learning.

## Purpose

To support how learning environments in both the home and education setting can be constructed to provide a continuity of learning for all children. This resource supports an integrated approach to planning and learning across both learning environments, particularly while children are experiencing long absences from the educating setting.

## Key messages

Integrated learning refers to learning that is blended across both the home learning environment and the education setting. Young learners are identified as children from birth to eight. In the department this broadly includes children in preschools, early intervention, Kindergarten and Stage 1. Families and communities are pivotal in supporting young learners.

### Identifying the unique characteristics of young learners

It is important to identify the unique characteristics of young learners. Understandings of early years pedagogy and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) leads us to form an image of the child as a learner. For example, children as learners are:

* social beings
* learners through play
* competent and capable learners
* learners through strong identity
* creative learners.

### Teaching strategies that support integrated teaching across settings

Practices of the Early Years Learning Framework inform the teaching strategies that educators use to support children’s learning. Of note, when supporting children learning at home are:

* continuity of learning
* intentional teaching
* learning through play
* learning environments.

Home environments can and do offer an abundance of learning opportunities that are acknowledged by educators. Educators are encouraged to:

* connect children’s learning and build security through familiar experiences
* build on children’s learning through interactions across settings
* build on children's play experiences across settings
* create links between learning environments in both settings.

### Developing a plan

In planning for learning, the principle of Partnerships is pivotal. Opportunities to enhance partnerships with families is a positive outcome as educators strive to integrate the learning across settings.

Learning environments in both settings can be considered in terms of children’s social worlds, the effectiveness of intentional teaching and how integrated learning is organised and scheduled with families.

Considerations for planning include:

* Flexibility in facilitating learning across environments considering children holistically in the context of their families and communities, the family's engagement in the process and the resources available to families.
* Everyday interactions, routines and events in families support children’s learning.
* Ways to provide joint projects across settings by utilising learn from home resources that have been developed for preschool educators and families.

### Reflecting on your approach across both settings

It’s important to reflect on current practices in terms of integrating learning across settings and develop improvements to strengthen your practice.

## Examples of practice

### Teaching strategies

Continuity of learning

* Develop a process where you have regular contact with families for a two-way conversation about the child’s learning.
* Provide a regular routine for children to be in contact and reflect on learning experiences.
* Introduce new traditions to connect absent children with preschool and friends.

Intentional teaching

* Use projects for learning and set up a challenge for both groups.
* Set up an online meeting where children can see what’s been done in preschool and have conversations with all children about it.
* Film an interaction where you are modelling, demonstrating or speculating and share this with the children learning from home.

Learning through play

* In having regular contact with families, you will be able to provide feedback to children based on their play.
* Joint projects could be provided, and results compared to expand all children’s thinking.
* Providing encouragement, idea sharing and modelling to support families, and including families in your social ‘get togethers’ online or via telephone.

Learning environments

* Read with a child on the couch while you read the same book at group time.
* Engage with pop culture through show and tell. Interview a child at home about their favourite toy.
* Compare equipment such as blocks or LEGO and children share their creations in various ways.

### Planning

The projects for learning resources for educators and the family resource booklets have been developed to support integrated planning and learning in the home learning environment and educational setting.

For example, the Projects for learning – STEM, outlines concepts and strategies for making a boat that floats. Go to [Projects for learning – STEM](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/learning-from-home/teaching-at-home/early-learning-at-home), for more information.

#### Projects for learning - Making a boat that floats

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Learning Outcomes | Concepts | Strategies |
| Child/ren will:* take an active role in the projects, recognising the contribution they make to shared projects and experiences
* interact with others to explore ideas and concepts to clarify thinking
* engage in a process for solving problems to activate a wide range of thinking strategies
* explore a cycle of research that includes investigating, hypothesising, experimenting, collecting and recording data and interpreting results
* use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learned from this
* create and use representations to organise, record and communicate scientific and mathematical ideas and concepts, incorporating aspects of engineering and technology.
 | Child/ren will:* explore pliable materials that can be used for different purposes
* engage in a design process that can lead to solutions for problems
* explore concepts of floating and sinking
* make predictions about what might happen
* communicate learning by representing the processes used.
 | Roll a lump of playdough and put it in the water. Watch it sink. What could make it float? Gather the children’s ideas and test them. Draw their attention to boats that float.Explore ideas of why they float. Research why they float.Support the child/ren to keep experimenting and refining their design.Discuss and trial other things that could be used as a boat and might float (paper, alfoil, plastic, clay, leaves, woodchips). |

The family resource booklet is designed for educators to share with families to support the learning to occur at home. The table below provides an example that can be used in conjunction with the projects for learning.

#### Family resource booklet - Making a boat that floats

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Questions to support your child’s learning | What your child will learn |
| Roll a lump of playdough and put it in a bowl of water. Watch it sink.What could make it float? Gather your child’s ideas and test them.Draw their attention to boats that float and explore ideas of why they float. Research why boats float.Keep experimenting and refining the design. | Tell me what you think.What do you think might happen?Tell me what it looks like, feels like, sounds like, smells like and tastes like?Why do you think that happened?I wonder what might happen.I wonder why it happened.What else could we try? | Learning how to research an idea by making predictions, testing ideas, observing what happens and recording results.Engaging in scientific approaches to see how things work.Actively contributing to shared experiences.Knowing its ok if something doesn’t quite work out, we can celebrate ideas as well as successes.Being reflective about why things happen and what can be learned from experimenting and trying things out.Problem solving to extend thinking. |

## Questions to guide reflection

* Are you aware of what outcomes the children may be working within as they engage in learning experiences throughout the day in both settings?
* How do you progress the learning for individuals in both settings?
* Is there continuity of experiences for all children? How do you plan for this?
* How are children given opportunities to represent their learning to you?
* What opportunities do children at home have to reflect on and receive feedback on their learning?
* How are ideas for learning and about learning shared in a two-way interaction with families and children?