

INTRODUCTION

Belonging is a foundation element of the Early Years Learning Framework. A sense of belonging is essential to becoming emotionally grounded individuals and culturally competent, sensitive, mutually respectful adults. The *Belonging* big book and notes will help you introduce and extend your conversation with children and families about who they are and how they belong.

QUESTIONS FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. What does it mean to belong? Why is this an important aspect to our identities as humans?
2. Who do we belong to? What family, school, religious, sporting and community groups might we belong to?
3. How do we know if someone else belongs to a particular group? Do they wear specific clothing, act in a certain way or have certain behaviours?
4. How do we know we belong? What does Belonging look like, smell like, taste like, what does it feel like on the outside (touch) or the inside (emotion)?
5. Where do we belong? What places – natural and man-made/built environments, community places, country and world places, places of cultural significance, special places to us personally and our family.

ACTIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT

1. *Belonging* can be read aloud to introduce the concept of belonging, being part of a group, family. Use the ideas on each page to promote discussion, expand knowledge and understanding.
2. Use displays and stories and natural materials in activities that embrace the individuality of the child and the connection to family and the wider world.
3. Discussion Starters:
 - a) What is belonging? Belonging is a feeling and an idea. Photograph, draw, build, create a belonging space, tree, wall, place
 - b) Do we always feel like we belong?
 - c) What does not belonging feel like, look like?
 - d) Why do we want to belong?
 - e) How do we help people to belong to a group or place?
 - f) Do we all have to belong to the same groups or places to get along? Example: Can I belong to the world community and natural environment, but not your family?
4. Conflict resolution; when a conflict arises have the children tackle it with a sense of belonging and understanding. Name the problem, express the feelings using “I feel... because... when” wording, listen without interrupting, thinking of ways to move forward with the new understanding.
5. Have the children do a talk each on the different places they belong and what they do at these places, for example; which sporting groups, religious groups, family groups, community groups they belong to and what they do with these groups.
6. Have the children talk about their hopes, ambitions and their future with the sentence “I would like to belong...”
7. Read Enlighten Press’ book “Mapping My Community” and pick out the points on the map in their own community. What happens at each of these places on the map? Have the children been to these places themselves?

8. Create a “in my classroom” page with various questions. In my classroom friends say I am _____, My teacher says I do _____ well, my favourite thing to learn about is _____ etc. Have the whole class autograph each other's paper.

THINKING POINTS FOR EDUCATORS

1. How are individuals recognized and represented in your space? Do they see reflections of themselves and their families?
2. Does your learning space investigate and extend music, art, people, places and ways of being that reflect the individual child, family and community?
3. What does it mean to truly belong? How can our classrooms and centres reflect a sense of belonging for everyone regardless of religion, ethnicity, ideals etc.

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK OUTCOMES

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

- 1.1 Children feel safe, secure, and supported
- 1.2 Children develop their emerging autonomy, interdependence, resilience and sense of agency
- 1.3 Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- 1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

- 2.1 Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- 2.2 Children respond to diversity with respect
- 2.3 Children become aware of fairness
- 2.4 Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

- 3.1 Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- 3.2 Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

- 4.1 Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- 4.2 Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- 4.3 Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
- 4.4 Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- 5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- 5.2 Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts
- 5.3 Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
- 5.4 Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work
- 5.5 Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas, represent their thinking

LINKS TO THE CURRICULUM

<p>Foundation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify personal strengths (ACPPS001) ● Practise personal and social skills to interact positively with others (ACPPS004) ● Identify and describe emotional responses people may experience in different situations (ACPPS005) ● Identify actions that promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS006)
<p>Year 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe their own strengths and achievements and those of others, and identify how these contribute to personal identities (ACPPS015) ● Practise strategies they can use when they feel uncomfortable, unsafe or need help with a task, problem or situation (ACPPS017) ● Recognise situations and opportunities to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS018)
<p>Year 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe ways to include others to make them feel they belong (ACPPS019) ● Identify and practise emotional responses that account for own and others' feelings (ACPPS020) ● Explore actions that help make the classroom a healthy, safe and active place (ACPPS022) ● Recognise similarities and differences in individuals and groups, and explore how these are celebrated and respected (ACPPS024)
<p>Year 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explore how success, challenge and failure strengthen identities (ACPPS033) ● Explore strategies to manage physical, social and emotional change (ACPPS034) ● Describe and apply strategies that can be used in situations that make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe (ACPPS035) ● Identify and practise strategies to promote health, safety and wellbeing (ACPPS036) ● Describe how respect, empathy and valuing diversity can positively influence relationships (ACPPS037) ● Investigate how emotional responses vary in depth and strength (ACPPS038) ● Examine the benefits of physical activity to health and wellbeing (ACPMP046)