

CASE STUDY



BUILDING CONNECTEDNESS

The following case study explores how one early childhood service has used practices from the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to build children’s road safety knowledge and skills as well as providing opportunity for them to practise safe road safety behaviours.

In a small regional town, educators in a three year old Kindergarten wanted to strengthen children's connectedness to their town and develop their sense of community. Through discussions with educators, and parents and carers, it was decided that one effective way to achieve this was through a series of neighbourhood walks. Recognising that there were several safety concerns to manage before and during the neighbourhood walks, the educators conducted a small series of intentional teaching experiences for children. These experiences covered the 'stop, look, listen and think' steps to crossing the road, 'hands are for holding', and using all of their senses to make safe decisions in the traffic environment.

At the service children were provided with the opportunity to practise road safety rules such as crossing the road safely, through the use of a black plastic 'road' that was set up in the outdoor play area. Children practised walking, stopping, waiting, looking, listening and then crossing the 'road' holding an adult's hand. Signs were also used to direct traffic eg 'Stop', 'Give Way'.

Children were encouraged to discuss the senses they used in each of the steps to cross the 'road' safely. For example, feet – stopping

back from the edge of the road; eyes (sight) – looking and checking traffic; ears (sound) – listening and sensing traffic noises and direction; brain – thinking if it is safer to cross; hands (touch) – holding hands with an adult. Explicit questions were asked after the experience such as: *Show me how you stop before you cross the road with an adult. Show me how you turn your head to look for traffic. If you can see a car coming, is it safe to cross the road? What do we use to listen for traffic? Show me how you cross the road. Why don't we skip or run across the road? What do we do when we are crossing the road?*

Children from the service then engaged in a series of small neighbourhood walks where they practised the simulated road safety skills they had learnt in a 'real world' environment. Parents and caregivers were encouraged to join in on the neighbourhood walks.



This series of road safety learning experiences supported children becoming more confident road users and encouraged their connection to their community. The experiences also encouraged children to acknowledge their bodies and in particular their senses when engaging with the traffic environment.

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) Practices highlighted in this case study

HOLISTIC APPROACHES

Holistic approaches recognise that children's learning is integrated and interconnected. When early childhood educators provide a learning environment that recognises the complex interplay between a child's physical, personal, social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, as well as the connections between children, family and communities, the child's ability to learn is maximised.

When making curriculum decisions about road safety education, educators need to consider the 'whole-child'. Children will already have had experiences of travelling as passengers, pedestrians and perhaps cyclists. Connecting these experiences to key road safety messages and the child's physical, personal, social, and cognitive learning, will promote more relevant and meaningful learning opportunities.

INTENTIONAL TEACHING

Intentional teaching can be described as deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful with the aim being to support and extend children's learning. Strategies such as modelling and demonstrating, and open questioning and problem solving, are used to encourage children to question, to think critically and to share their thoughts and ideas.

Intentional teaching occurs through creating engaging learning environments that explore children's strengths and interests and through understanding each child, and how they learn.

When educators intentionally teach key road safety messages and make deliberate choices about including discussions and resources that support these key messages, road safety education is reinforced.