

Educator Reflection Guide: Supporting children's regulation

This guide encourages educators to pause, reflect and consider what children's behaviour may be communicating. Through a series of prompts, it supports teams to think critically about their practice, environment and responses, and align their actions with inclusive, child-centred approaches guided by the VEYLDF.

Pause & name the situation

What's happening?

- Example: A child is biting during transitions (e.g. mealtime → rest time)

1. Observe & notice (What do we see?)

- What is happening before, during and after the behaviour?
- Are there patterns? (e.g. transitions, waiting times, noise levels).
- What might the child be trying to communicate?
- What data or documentation do we have?

2. Understand the child (Why might this be happening?)

- How are we responding to the child's developmental and regulatory needs?
- Are the child's strengths, interests and identity reflected in the program?
- Could this relate to overstimulation, fatigue, frustration or unmet needs?
- How are we supporting their sense of safety, belonging and wellbeing?

3. Reflect on our practice (What are we doing?)

- What assumptions are influencing our response?
- What theory of change or approach are we applying? (e.g. co-regulation, trauma-informed).
- Are our responses consistent across educators and settings?
- How are we using intentional teaching to support regulation skills?

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4. Align with policy & frameworks (Are we consistent?)

- Policy & Planning.
- Have we reviewed our Inclusion Support Policy?
- Are we following our Behaviour Guidance/Management Plan?
- Have we documented and followed agreed steps?
- Educational Framework (VEYLDF / EYLF).
- Are we placing the child's needs at the centre of the program?
- Are we supporting equity and inclusion in our decision-making?

5. Collaborate & learn (Who can support?)

- Have we had meaningful conversations within the team and between rooms?
- What strategies have worked for others in similar situations?
- Have we engaged families as partners in understanding the child?
- Do we need additional support? (e.g. inclusion support, Preschool Field Officer, allied health)

6. Adjust the environment

- Can transitions be smoother? (visual cues, smaller groups, predictable routines).
- Is the environment calm, predictable and supportive?
- Are there opportunities for movement, sensory regulation and rest?
- What proactive strategies can reduce stress and support regulation?

- **Acknowledgement:** This resource draws on guidance from the Victorian Department of Education and is informed by the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), EYLF v2.0.
- **Reference:** KU Children's Services 2024, Talking with families: sharing understandings of development: guidebook, KU Children's Services, Sydney.



 **Tip:** Regulation develops through relationships – how we respond matters just as much as what we do.