



1.2

Purpose



Children’s play is central to this curriculum framework as an active, exploratory, creative, expressive process, deeply embedded in children’s everyday experiences and through which children participate in, learn about, and actively make sense of the world.

1.2 Purpose

Flight: Alberta’s Early Learning and Care Framework is intended to guide the significant work of early learning and child care educators with young children and their families in centre-based child care and family day home settings.

This curriculum framework is a flexible framework for thinking about how children learn and experience their worlds, as well as a guide that fosters strong early childhood communities. Developing the framework created spaces for early childhood educators to begin to articulate shared values, principles, goals, and **dispositions to learn** that are the foundation of curriculum **meaning making** in early learning and child care.¹ This framework may confirm what educators already do intuitively in their work with children and families; it may also provoke new ways of thinking about common practices.

This framework is deeply grounded in theories of learning that recognize the significance of family, social, and **cultural practices** and traditions. It focuses educator’s work on the integrated nature of children’s play and active learning, building inspiring curriculum content that relates to children’s and families’ experiences.

The purpose of this curriculum framework is:

1. **to articulate a set of holistic play-based goals for children’s learning and care** (Well-Being, Play and Playfulness, Communication and Literacies, and Diversity and Social Responsibility). Though each goal provides a particular frame for interpreting children’s daily experiences, educators will notice that they are overlapping and integrated. This is intentional—an effort to maintain focus on the whole child.

Prior to formal school entry, these goals are intended to nurture children’s:

- sense of **well-being and belonging** in a caring learning community.
- opportunities for **play and playfulness** with others in purposefully designed outdoor and indoor environments.
- growing confidence in **communication and literacies**, through opportunities to express and develop ideas with others using multiple representational languages.



- growing awareness of **diversity and social responsibility**, of their own and others' identities; their responsibility to themselves, one another, and the environment; and their emerging understanding of themselves as citizens.

2. **to nurture children's dispositions to learn** (Playing and Playfulness, Seeking, Participating, Persisting, and Caring). In this framework the dispositions to learn help educators to appreciate and nurture each child's unique identity as a learner. Though each disposition describes a particular set of inclinations towards learning, educators will notice how these dispositions to learn overlap within children's daily experiences. By focusing on dispositions to learn, we begin to value the diverse ways that children engage with others, ideas, materials, and the world.
3. **to work with families, building and strengthening early childhood communities, in the care and learning of their children.** **Family** involvement is essential for creating **places of vitality** as described in the curriculum framework **Vision**. A **practice of relationships** fosters places of vitality. Places of vitality are healthy communities—communities where “people exist in relationships that encourage growth, creativity, innovation, problem solving, and progress, as people come together and pool their individual perspectives, wisdom, strengths, and skills.”²

Understanding the complexity of working within a practice of relationships in early childhood communities calls upon educators to be open to the continual shifts, flows, and fluid structures in which early learning and child care practices are shaped and changed. It requires an approach to building early childhood communities where differences are the seeds for imagining possibilities.

4. **to engage educators as co-learners, co-researchers, and co-imaginers of possibilities with high regard for children's potential.** The framework is intended to help educators to notice and name how each child approaches play and learning. It provides a context in which educators can consider further curriculum possibilities and multiple perspectives regarding children's care, play, learning, and development. As well, it assists educators to make visible what each child is exploring through daily experiences using a shared professional language. In this framework, the role of the educator is to foster each child's sense of belonging and identity within safe, healthy and **responsive environments**.

Children's play and playfulness are recognized as both a goal and a disposition to learn in the curriculum framework.

A practice of relationships is created through complex and dynamic interactions among diverse community members and begins to grow and evolve as educators learn with and alongside children and their families.

