The Smart way to set goals for children

Setting goals can provide children with valuable life skills such as commitment, persistence and responsibility. Goals can be used to help extend the capacity of a child and provide a sense of achievement upon completion of a goal. It is also part of the pedagogical practice of educators to develop ‘planned experiences’ in which learning objectives such as goals are used in order to assist children to achieve developmental expectations and milestones¹.

NQF 4.1 Children develop dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.

Knowing a child’s strengths, weaknesses and interests is essential in formulating relevant and engaging goals for a child. As an educator it is good practice to use intentional teaching strategies to scaffold and extend a child’s learning to build the necessary confidence and skills to achieve successful outcomes.

NQS 1.2.2 Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning.

Utilising the S.M.A.R.T. system to design well defined goals will assist in the assessment of goal achievement.

S.M.A.R.T. is an acronym for the 5 steps of: specific,
measurable, attainable, relevant and timely goals.

**Specific**

The goal is clear and specific.

- What is going to be achieved?
- What are the steps involved in achieving the goal?
- When will it start and finish?
- Where will it take place?

**Measurable**

The process of achieving a goal must be observable and measurable. To define a goal answer quantifiable questions such as:

- How much?
- How many?
- How will I know when it is accomplished?

**Attainable**

The goal should be age appropriate and within the developmental realms of achievement. Further consideration should be given to the individual’s ability to achieve the goal.

- How can the goal be accomplished?
- Is this goal challenging or too hard/easy?
- How realistic is the goal based on the child’s ability currently or developing?
Relevant

Choosing goals that matter and are relevant to a learning proposition.

- Does this relate to a learning opportunity?
- How is the goal going to develop the child in this context?
- Does the child need development in this area?
- Does the child care about the outcome?

Timely

A goal limited by time will help focus efforts. The time limit must be considered carefully as allowing too much or too little time can de-motivate a child. A shorter time period for younger children is ideal to maintain interest.

- Is there enough time to complete this?
- When is the earliest this could be finalised?
- Is there a contingency for unforeseen setbacks?

Are there other things which need to be considered when setting goals for children? Please feel free to share your thoughts and experience with others in the comments section below.

References

¹ Educators Guide to the early years learning framework (p55).

Check out Reflective practice for educators for great tips of improving reflective practice, or 15 Questions to help find your intentionality.
Aboriginal Animal Dance

This game will encourage children to think about the animals which live in Australia. It will also provide an active link to traditional aboriginal dance highlighting cultural diversity and respect. This activity will align with NQF outcome 2.2.

Plan Type

Educator Planned

Intentionality

- Promote awareness of aboriginal culture.
- Develop respect for diversity within society.
- Build upon knowledge of indigenous fauna.
- Promote creativity and movement.

NQF Outcomes

2.2 Children respond to diversity with respect.

Activity Description

1. Arrange the children in a circle facing inwards.
2. Ask each child to think of an Australian animal.
3. Ask each child to think about how each animal would move in the bush.
4. Select a child or ask for a volunteer to go first.
5. As the child to mimic the animal by hopping, jumping, crawling, walking etc. by moving away from the circle and get everyone to copy that child.
6. Everyone return to the circle.
7. Continue around the circle until each child has had a turn.

Resources

- Dance of the crane video. Total 1:36 sec.
- Dance of the Kangaroo and Emu. Watch until 2:14 sec.
- Kangaroo dance. Total 1:43 sec.
- Deamtime. Total 7:31 sec.

Reflection

Were the children able to think of Australian animals?

Which animals (Australian or otherwise) were nominated for this activity by the participants?

Were children aware of Australian aboriginal dance before this activity?

Were the video’s used to assist in the activity?

Was there any bias in this activity?

Notes

Aboriginal Dance is used for story telling and passing on lessons through the generations. Many dances include native animals portrayed in the dance. Aboriginal dance is associated with music and instruments such as the didgeridoo. A general term for aboriginal dance is Corroboree.
Preps breakfast & afternoon tea support plan

This is an exemplar plan outlining support for prep children, new to the OSHC centre, around food service for morning and afternoon. This plan is specific in its intentionality and is accurately linked to the NQF outcomes 1.1 and 3.2.

Plan Type
Support Plan

Intentionality
Use effective routines to make predicted transitions, sense and respond to a feeling of belonging. This will be achieved through helping the children develop a routine for eating at the centre, and working with them to develop this so that they feel comfortable and have a sense of belonging.

Children that are happy, healthy, safe and connected to others, show an increased awareness of healthy lifestyles and good nutrition. This plan will help the preps develop this by encouraging them to eat a nutritious breakfast/afternoon tea each day, while providing support to them to achieve successful outcomes.
NQF Outcomes

1.1 Children feel safe, secure and supported

3.2 Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

Activity Description

To help new prep children settle into the breakfast and afternoon tea routine I will be supporting them through the entire process. This includes washing and drying hands, waiting with them in line, getting them to tell me what they want to eat and helping them order at the counter.

Some children need me to order food for them at this point. Over the course of the term I will slowly decrease my involvement until they can confidently and independently order their own food.

I will be supporting each child and keep a record of how they are progressing over time. I will cross check with the roll to make sure that all the preps have had an opportunity to eat. I will implement this plan daily with the preps that are attending.

It is important for the preps to develop confidence with this system so that they feel comfortable getting food whenever they are at the centre.

Follow Up

Monitoring and follow up with each child will be continuous throughout this planning period. As children become become confident with the process they will be assisted less and less until they no longer require any assistance. A note of the child’s progress to independence will be made on their file and linked to this plan.
Notes

This plan has been implemented at an OSHC centre to assist in transitioning of prep children into the routines of the centre around food service. There has been minor adjustment to this plan to maintain anonymity for the service and children at the centre. Children depicted in the photograph attached to this article are not the subjects of this plan.

Other Planned Activities

Musical Bob – A twist on musical chairs.

Paper Planes – A planned activity for paper plane making.

Egg Carton Creations

Using a craft activity can be an excellent way to expose children to a range of learning opportunities in a controlled environment. This activity uses empty egg cartons and other craft materials to create anything imaginable. It will assist students to achieve NQF outcomes 1.4, 2.3 and 4.2.
Plan Type
Educator Planned

Intentionality
With a group of children students will learn to:

1. share resources fairly developing their awareness of fairness,
2. ask for help and communicate with others respectfully,
3. solve problems through experimentation, inquiry and investigation,
4. work independently in a group environment.

NQF Outcomes
1.4 Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
2.3 Children become aware of fairness.
4.2 Children use a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.

Activity Description
Students will be supplied with a selection of empty egg cartons and a variety of art and craft materials. The students will then build their creations with the materials supplied. Ideas for their creations may be supplied with images from the resource link.

Resources
- Empty egg cartons
- Pipe cleaners
- PVA glue
- Scrap colour paper
- Cardboard cylinders
- Paints

Ideas can be sourced from https://www.pinterest.com/Milla03/egg-carton-craft-ideas/.

**Reflection**

Were children able to complete their own creation with minimal assistance?

Were children able to communicate effectively and negotiate to avoid conflict?

Were students able to solve problems during the activity by themselves?

Could the activity have been resourced better?

Was there an opportunity to develop a particular child in any of the selected outcome areas?

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**Truth Truth Trick**
Social interaction, inquiry, problem solving and negotiation within a group are used in this activity to determine which statements about a person are the truth and which are a trick. NQF outcome 4.2 is the focus of this activity.

Plan Type

Educator Planned

Intentionality

Develop problem solving skills, inquiry and hypothesising to reach a logical conclusion and negotiate with the group to agree on a solution/answer to the problem.

NQF Outcomes

4.2 Children use a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.

Activity Description

A participating student has to tell the group two things about themselves which are true and one thing which is a trick (untrue). The others in the group will confer with each other and decide which two statements are true and which one is the trick.

Students must work together by sharing and inquiry from others what they know about the person. They will utilise skills of reasoning to develop a logical conclusion to differentiate the truth from the trick.
Reflection

Discuss which truths and tricks worked best? Realistic (believable) vs unrealistic (unbelievable).

How did discussions, between the group members trying to guess, evolve?

Were there any strategies used to determine the result?

Did all group members work as a team or was there particular students which became leaders and directed interactions?

Was co-operation evident during the game?

Follow Up

Were their particular students who participated less? Could they benefit from further activities to develop confident self-identities (outcome 1.3)?

Were their particular students who controlled the group? Could they benefit from developing skills in fairness (outcome 2.3)?

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Chinese Whispers

A great way to engage children in communication activities is to play simple games such as Chinese Whispers. This plan looks at NQF outcome 5.1 to develop communication skills of active listening and speaking clearly for children.
Targeted Children: Year 3 Children, Ella, Charlie, Cooper, Mitchell, Mia, Conner, Jack, Thomas, Tristan, Alecia, Bella, Sophie.

_N.B. names are for illustrative purposes only._

**Plan Type**

Educator Planned

**Intentionality**

Children engage in the traditional, verbal game of Chinese Whispers. Children identify the importance of speaking clearly and listening carefully when communicating with others.

**NQF Outcomes**

5.1 Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.

**Activity Description**

1. Explain to children the importance of speaking clearly and listening when communicating with others.
2. Explain how to play the game ‘Chinese Whispers’.
3. Get children to predict what might happen to the message as it is passed down the line.
4. Write down the message on a piece of paper before whispering the message to the first child.
5. The final student is to write down the message they received.
6. Educator to facilitate discussion on reasons why the message changed (e.g. low voice unable to be heard, not concentrating when the message is given, intentionally changing the message).
7. Discuss comparison about writing message verses giving a
8. Continue playing the game until all students have had a turn at being the final message giver.

Reflection

All students enjoyed playing the game with Ella and Sophie continuing to playing the game with other children later in the afternoon. Towards the end of the session, students enjoyed playing with words by intentionally changing them.

Bias: Hearing impaired children.

Follow Up

Engage Ella and Sophie with other interested children to explore limericks and funny poems to capitalise on playing with words for both communication and fun.

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