AGE-APPROPRIATE PEDAGOGIES

Characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies
Questions to support teacher reflection

The characteristics of age-appropriate pedagogies listed below represent a set of desirable qualities that educators can consider when designing learning experiences for children in the early years of school.
The questions can be used to assist teachers to engage in the reflective processes required to embed these characteristics into planning and practice.

Characteristic	Description	Questions for reflection	My reflections/examples of my practice
Active	Requiring physical and embodied engagement across all areas of learning. Whether this is indoors or outdoors, activity is essential in order to activate children's full potential. Their focus, concentration, motivation and self-regulation are enhanced through moving, doing and interacting within a range of learning environments.	• What opportunities do I currently provide for children to engage in physical and embodied learning? How can these opportunities be extended? • In which learning areas am I currently providing opportunities for active learning? How can I build upon these opportunities? • How and when do I provide opportunities for children to access the curriculum using active learning processes in both indoor and outdoor learning spaces? • What open-ended materials, including realistic, symbolic and unstructured resources do I provide to support active learning? How and when can these materials be used? • What do I notice about children's focus, concentration, motivation and self-regulation when they engage in active learning experiences as individuals, in small groups and as a whole class?	
Agentic	Ensuring that children have voice in their learning. Their ideas and interests initiate, support and extend learning possibilities in order to build on their real-world understandings and experiences.	• What opportunities do I provide for children to make decisions about their own learning? • How do I respond to children by incorporating their ideas and interests into classroom planning and practices? • In what ways do I build on children's real-world understandings and experiences? • When and how do I provide opportunities for children to collaboratively plan for, co-construct and reflect on their learning? • How do I model processes that show respect and support for all ideas and contributions?	
Collaborative	Being social and co-constructed. Children and educators work together to identify ways of learning and understanding through sustained shared thinking and action.	• How do I engage children in purposeful and relevant shared decision-making? • How do I model ways to share ideas and listen to others? • In what ways do I ensure that children have opportunities to participate in learning experiences that are social and co-constructed? • How do I collaborate with children using processes that encourage sustained shared thinking?	
Creative	Inviting children to consider 'What if?' They encourage investigation, inquiry and artistry to explore new possibilities and ways of thinking.	• How do I initiate wondering moments inviting children to consider "What if?" • How do I provide opportunities for children to explore new possibilities and ways of thinking? • How do I encourage investigation, inquiry and artistry? • How do I use a range of questions to extend and encourage new possibilities and ways of thinking?	
Explicit	Making conscious for both learner and educator the relationships between the learning purpose and processes employed and the skills and understanding these processes support.	• Does my planning reflect a strong understanding of the Australian Curriculum that underpins each learning experience? • Am I able to articulate clearly, to myself and my children, the curriculum intent that underpins each learning experience? • Am I able to identify the curriculum intent within child-initiated/negotiated learning experiences? • How do I provide feedback to children to connect them with the strengths of their current learning and then co-construct future learning goals? • How do I assist the children in my class to identify and articulate learning and learning purposes?	

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Language rich and dialogic	Ensuring that learning occurs in environments where rich language is modelled and employed by both children and educators. Meaningful dialogues between children, as well as between children and educators, are created to support thinking, learning, engagement and imagination.	• How do I model and teach the kind of language that I want children to use? • How do I plan for and take the time to engage in meaningful conversations with children? • Do I work alongside children within a range of pedagogical approaches to support the development of dialogue? • Does my questioning cognitively challenge children and encourage them to extend their views and ideas, and open opportunities for dialogue? • How do I provide a range of language models for the children to engage with e.g. narrative, persuasive, dialogic, metaphoric, poetic, informative?	
Learner focused	Recognising that all children learn in different ways and that learning is a highly individualised process. They also acknowledge differences in children's physical, intellectual, cultural, social and personal experiences and perspectives.	• What strategies do I use to discover links between children's emerging interests, ideas and views and their wider family, community and cultural experiences? • How do I provide a range and balance of pedagogical approaches, practices and strategies to cater for individual development and ways of learning? • How do I adapt the physical, social and temporal environment of the classroom in response to children's individual development and ways of learning? • How do I provide encouragement and feedback, celebrating children's attempts to try and retry new and challenging tasks?	
Narrative	Thus acknowledging the important role that personal, written, oral and digital stories play in all our lives. They support both the production and comprehension of narratives through active processes, especially play.	• In what ways do I share my experiences, modelling personal oral narratives? • How do I include opportunities for children to produce and comprehend personal written, oral and digital stories? • Do I ensure that I share literature (by reading, reciting or retelling) to children as an everyday, pleasurable, shared experience? • How and when do I encourage children to share their experiences through personal narratives?	
Playful	Encouraging children to make connections through imagination and creativity to explore alternate worlds and ways of thinking. These worlds, not bounded by reality, offer the freedom children need to innovate and enact new possibilities.	• How do I plan for extended periods of time, appropriate spaces and imaginative resources for children to engage in playful learning? • Am I clear about the curriculum intent that underpins each playful learning experience? • How do I encourage children, through my playfulness, to explore alternate worlds and ways of thinking? • How can my classroom become a place where children have the freedom to innovate and enact new possibilities?	
Responsive	Incorporating a willingness to be flexible, to ensure that learning is always child, context, content and discipline appropriate. To achieve this, educators will balance opportunities for structure and spontaneity, open-ended and specific tasks, and child-led and educator-led learning.	• To what extent am I willing to be responsive, flexible, and open to alternate learning possibilities? • Are there opportunities for children to engage in learning experiences that they have initiated? • In what ways does my program provide opportunities that balance structure and spontaneity? • How do I promote co-construction of the learning environment with children?	
Scaffolded	Including such actions as modelling, encouraging, questioning, adding challenges, and giving feedback, provide the support needed to extend children's existing capabilities. Effective scaffolding by both educators and other children provides active structures to support new learning; it is then progressively withdrawn as learners gain increasing mastery.	• In what ways do I ensure that children know how to seek help and from whom? • How do I model, encourage, question, add challenges and give feedback to support and extend children's learning? • How do I establish a problem-solving climate, encouraging children to experiment and take risks? • How do I ensure learning experiences of growing complexity with considered use of interactions, resources and the environment? • Do I recognise when and how to gradually withdraw support?	