**[Catharine Hydon]:** So, I want to start by asking Kate to see if we can...asking Kate to define what we mean. Because this big idea of 'connection', it's a huge idea, and then 'contribution', that's a massive idea, and I wonder whether, Kate, you've done a bit of work in this definition space and whether you can illuminate it a bit for us and maybe...I think you've done some model or you can share a bit of a model with us that'll help us to understand this in more detail. So, Kate, can you take us to a definition space, please?

**[Kate Noble]:** Sure, um...Now, they are, indeed, very big terms.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Big ideas, yes.

**[Kate Noble]:** And what we really tried to do was distil them down into their, you know, real essence and to create some kind of really clear, simple definitions around these really sort of big concepts. So, we looked at connection in terms of how a child really engages with others and with the world around them. Um, and within the VEYLDF, you know, the, uh...the idea of connection is really focused substantially on social connections, as you might expect, so relationships being a big one, and we all know how important responsive relationships are in early childhood education and care, in learning and development. But not just relationships with people -relationships within community, values, traditions, and these ideas of respect and responsibility. But the VEYLDF also talks about connection in terms of connection to different kinds of environments that we interact with. So, there's quite a bit in there around children's connection with the natural environment, um, and their disposition towards the natural environment and their ideas about how we live in nature and connect with nature, but also constructed environments. And when we talk about 'built environment' in the Literature Review and Practice Guide, we're talking about, you know, human-made kind of elements, whether that be...it includes everything from furniture and rooms and buildings and houses to roads and playgrounds, et cetera. So, it's really everything we've built. Um, and when we started talking about the contribution, we're really building on that notion of connectedness. So, that definition was really around how a connected child engages with and starts to participate and shape their world. So, building on the connections that they have, making new ones, nurturing and kind of enhancing the connections that they have. And if we come back to the VEYLDF again, the VEYLDF in relation to children's contribution to their world talks a lot about group membership and the membership...you know, children being members of different communities and what that looks like and means to them, obviously contribution to family and social life, developing knowledge of the different kinds of environment that they live and engage with, and their sense of what rights and responsibilities are. And what that means to a three- and a four-year-old, obviously, you know, hugely different to what that starts to mean and how that understanding evolves as children grow up. And I'm so glad you asked about the conceptual model. What a wonderful...

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Oh, good.

**[Kate Noble]:** Thank you. We do happen to have one of those in our...

**[Catharine Hydon]:** That's so good. You don't you don't realise, Kate, how helpful it is to get a conceptual model going because I'm a bit of a visual learner. So, when you share those sorts of ideas with me...I think this happened at the last Twilight. It was...it's very…it's a bit of a light-bulb moment. So, I'm quite looking forward to that.

**[Kate Noble]:** Well, the alternative is just so many words, Catharine.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yes.

**[Kate Noble]:** So many words. And that can be quite difficult to digest. So many words and so many definitions, when you're starting to look at how we observe and think about and probe and assess these kind of complex constructs. So, what we didn't want to do was reinvent the wheel. And we came pretty early to Urie Bronfenbrenner the developmental psychologist's ecological model, for child development, situating...And, you know, almost everyone, I'm sure, on this webinar will be familiar with this.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Oh, we're familiar. Page 5, Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

**[Kate Noble]:** Yes. So, child obviously sitting in the centre and looking at these concentric circles...Thank you very much, Stephanie...looking at these concentric circles that emanate from the child, really, and it kind of depicts the world as seen by a child. Now, some of the language that's often used in...in, certainly, the original model was quite technical. But the VEYLDF kind of tries and distils that down into simpler language that we can really quite easily grasp. You know, what...what's the child relationship with their family, with their extended family, with community, with the broader community, and then with the kind of the world and societal influences around them? And if we can go to the next slide, Stephanie, what we...what we looked at doing for this 'connected' and 'contributing', how to unpack and understand these constructs was to use that model - so a reference point that, you know, so many people are familiar with and understand - and then explore that in terms of what it meant for a child to connect with their community, their family, others and the world around them, and what it meant for them to contribute. So, here on the left hand side, we have connection, and we talk about connection in terms of how a child explores their world. And we have their, you know, three constructs. I guess what was really challenging here was these two very kind of big ideas that are part of this outcome and then trying to distil them down into a couple of areas to really focus in on, because there could be so many terms and ideas under each of those, and our job was really to try and pick a few to really hone in on and what they mean and how we might go about observing and assessing these areas of learning and development. So, in Connection, we settled on orientation, curiosity and participation. And I'm not going to go into these in a huge amount of detail because I think, you know, they're quite self-explanatory. They're explained really well in both the literature review and the practice guide. And we can perhaps come back to specific areas in the question, if we want to do that. Although it is worth just spending a moment on orientation because that is perhaps less sort of...

**[Catharine Hydon]:** I was going to ask you about that one, Kate. What's the 'orientation' mean?

**[Kate Noble]:** Well, orientation, we really...you know, worked really well in this context because it actually has a couple of meanings. And the one that perhaps we'll all be so familiar with this is around, you know, the orientation and settling-in period into early childhood education and care, into school, into a new grade, whatever that might be. But it's...you know, in the context of connection, it's really about children finding and knowing and understanding their place in environments and their place in the world. So, it's from that...you know, that first kind of sense of a baby understanding...you know, orientating themselves to all of their body parts, their feet, the room, the floor, the sky. And, you know, as children grow older, sort of starting to...as their world expands, starting to orientate themselves in different ways, using different reference points. So, that's really what orientation is about. Of course, it also refers to, you know, a set of beliefs or viewpoints, which is...which is pretty relevant to this outcome and, as I said, you know, this sort of... this sense of how we settle and transition into new environments. Um, moving onto the right-hand side of the conceptual model, we start to talk about Contribution, and you'll see that there is two arrows there. We spent a lot of time talking about these arrows and they point outwards and inwards. And that's really designed to kind of reflect the idea that this is about how children look outwards and explore and understand and interact. But it's also about how those environments obviously interact with and influence a child's learning and development and their sense of connection. So, that's...that's why the two sort of double-headed arrows exist there. And when we start to talk about contribution, we're really talking about and coming back to that kind of, you know, straightforward, simple definition - um, how a child builds on the connections that they have and makes new connections to start to shape their world and to start to have a say and to really kind of reach out and...and start to influence the...you know, the world around them. So, that's really what we're talking about when we come to contribution. And the constructs within that that we looked at specifically and the assessment tools that we identified that starts to explore some of those areas in a lot more detail were decision-making, negotiation and responsibility. And obviously, on the flip side of responsibility being sort of rights as well.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yeah, great.

**[Kate Noble]:** And I guess if I can just have...Do I have one more minute?

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yes, you do. One more minute. We're having a little bit of difficulty hearing you, Kate. So, I think...

**[Kate Noble]:** OK.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yeah, holding your microphone like that is great 'cause I think it actually enhances the sound a little bit. But we might, um... Yeah, all good.

**[Kate Noble]:** And we looked at four environments as well, the environments in which all of these connections and relationships happen. The social environment - something we're probably all more familiar with - the natural environment, which I talked a little bit about before, along with the built environment and also the digital environment. And, obviously, that's an environment that's bigger now than it has ever been before. So, that's...that's really an introduction to how we define these big ideas, how we started to try and put some structure around them, and the conceptual model.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Thank you so much, Kate, 'cause I think this really helps us to be able to see that there's a difference between the two. I think one of the things that has happened - and our colleagues here online, Mary, might be able to give us some insight about how they've seen those outcomes working - but because 'connected' and 'contribute' are sort of in the same outcome, they get a bit conflated. So, they sort of squish together. So, one of the conversations I've often had with educators is when you go and connect to somewhere in your community, for example, it isn't the same as contributing. So, your presence in a place...You know, in the olden days, it seems like we went to aged care facilities and places like that. We will get there again. But just being present, is that a contribution? You know, and I think there's an interesting way of pulling the two ideas apart and thinking more about them.

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