**[Catharine Hydon]:** Today is an opportunity where we're going to take a bit of a dive into this particular resource. So, I'm about to show, I've got it in front of me right here. So the resource we're talking about of course, is the Early Years Planning Cycle Resource for the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. But I wanted to first open it up to Mary to give us a sense of how this, how this resource came about. It's got lots of attention Mary, people are quite interested in this document. We can see by people's requests to get themselves a copy and I'm sure that's been the case for people downloading it as well. But maybe if you can tell us about what led to the document being launched, and what's the backstory of this resource? So, over to you, Mary.

**[Mary Holwell]:** Okay. Thanks very much Catharine. Look, I think the backstory is really that we wanted to create a resource that answered something that we were hearing through the NQS data that was a problem for educators. So, what we sought to do, and that sits as our underlying aim really, is to create a resource that would model the process of the VEYLDF early years planning cycle. So, it's important that you remember, as we talk through this, this evening, that it's about the process of the cycle. It's not so much about the content that sits under each little observation, but rather how that leads into the whole of the cycle. So, Steph, do you think you could show us now the slide from page 2 in the resource, which is the slide of the early years planning cycle? Thanks very much Steph. So you can see here, that we've got each of the tabs that are represented in the planning cycle and some information underneath those tabs. I don't expect you to be able to read that information now. It's very small, but it's there for you to look at later. I wanted to put that up because, one of the things that we were thinking about when we designed this resource, is that it's one way of demonstrating that the early years planning cycle can be applied to observe, assess, and respond to experiences of children's learning. Or, the evidence of children's learning. You can see on the slide here that there are arrows connecting each of those tabs. And one of those reasons that those arrows are there and so obvious, is that we also wanted to highlight to you or to anyone who is looking at the resource, the interconnection of each of those stages, or phases in the planning cycle. That each step is contingent on the step before it, and that, as the cycle, as you move around the cycle, you're demonstrating the connection between each of those phases and the continuity of children's learning becomes apparent. You will remember that I said that the resource is one way of demonstrating the cycle. So it's only one way, and you might already have documentation that has significant breadth and depth, is organized differently, but still shows the elements of the cycle. And for you this evening, this might be very affirming, or it might help you increase some evidence in some area in relation to the way that you're currently documenting. So, we think it's useful no matter where you see on the on the trajectory of your own professional development. If you do use a model like this and this was something that we were thinking about as we were working through the process, then you're able to demonstrate that you have individual cycles of learning for children, and that in creating those individual cycles, you're making children's learning visible. It gives you something that you can share with colleagues and families, and you can share with the children as well, and you're able to demonstrate children's progress over time. And that's a very important concept. It's not just about the point in time, but as you gather several iterations of cycles, then you're gathering some evidence that shows progress over time. Publishing learning sample plans in the resource, gave us opportunities to illustrate and provide a model for the teaching of very specific concepts to children in early childhood settings. And in the early years of school. So, it's important that you're aware that not only are there learning sample plans in here that apply to children in the early years of, the prior to school years, but there are also samples that apply to children in the early years of school. And that they are happening within a play-based context, they're not formal instructional situations. And I think that's an important thing. And I think that's probably, that's probably where I'll stop. Otherwise I'll start answering questions that you'll propose to me a little bit later on.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Yes, I think one of the things that might just be helpful to clarify. And maybe people who are looking at this and going, does this mean I have to do this Mary? Does this mean I am required to plan like this? So, can we just sort of deal with that elephant in the room?

**[Mary Holwell]:** Yep, we can deal with that right now. There is a requirement in the context of the National Quality Framework, that you do document individual cycles of children's learning, or you have individualised plans for children's learning, and that you collect your observational data. The VCAA doesn't have a compliance or regulatory role here, but our thinking here was to try and develop a resource that might help you meet that requirement that's led by another area of education. So this is about helping you and creating some provocation or some motivation to think about alternative ways. You don't have to do it exactly this way. But the steps that exist in this cycle, are the steps that you do need to record. So this is one way of bringing those steps to life.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** And I guess the other thing that's particularly noteworthy for me is that, and we hear this through the data coming back from the National Quality Standard process at ACECQA, is that this is an area that people sometimes really struggle with. So, I guess anything that helps to illuminate or stimulate conversations around what we mean by that planning cycle is a good thing. So, if it leads to conversations and dialogue between you, and families and educators and various things, then, hey, bring it on. It's a good way for us to be able to figure out what we mean by what we say.

**[Mary Holwell]:** Absolutely. And I think one of the things that we laughed about as we were preparing for this webinar, is already we've had lots and lots of conversations about the early years planning cycle. Caroline and I have had many conversations about it, Catharine and I've had many conversations about it. And then the three of us together have had lots of conversations. It's like the gift that keeps on giving, there's always something there that you can be thinking about and turning your mind to, in the context of heightening your understanding or building the way your collecting and organising information that you have about children's learning.

**[Catharine Hydon]:** Mary, I might get you to put yourself on mute, because I think I can hear a little bit of an echo coming through. One of the things that I think is particularly helpful for us to consider and any material that helps stimulate that, that lively culture of professional inquiry as it's described in the early years learning framework, anything that does that I think really contributes to us having greater clarity about what we mean by what we say. I did naively think about 10 years ago that we would have one conversation around the planning cycle and we would be done, and that is just so not true. So, if you feel like you are in a situation where you want to keep debating some of these ideas, then, again, bring it on. I think this is really a fantastic way to showcase some ideas. And this is, one thing just Mary, these particular examples, they've been sourced from multiple places. Can you just clarify where they come from?

**[Mary Holwell]:** Sorry, I was just struggling with getting myself off mute. So they've been written by educators and the thing that's important to remember when you dive into the resource, and you read some of these learning sample plans, is to position them in the context of an educator having a whole wealth of other understanding about the child. So, for example, you might read what's there and think that's not what I would have done or not the next opportunity I would have offered. That's okay, because this educator, imagine, what you need to do is imagine that this educator had a wealth of other experience about the child that took them to this place.

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