

## Understanding of children as competent, curious, capable of complex thinking and rich in potential

### Belonging #1 – Strengthening Relationships

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will reflect on how they currently build relationships and identify new ways to strengthen relationships within the program.

#### Materials Required:

- A copy of the Belonging #1 chart (page 3 of this booklet)
- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf)  
(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

#### Activity:

1. Complete the “Today I Do” section of the chart (page 3 of this booklet)
2. Read pages 26 and 27 of “How Does Learning Happen?”
3. Complete the “Tomorrow I Will” section of the chart.
4. Share with the group, if applicable.
5. As a pedagogical leader, reflect on the “Points to ponder for pedagogical leaders.”

#### Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:

How does strengthening relationships enhance the program?

**Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:**

Do you or the team see the importance of strengthening relationships with children, the team, families, and the community? How do you know?

How do you support the team in strengthening these relationships, if applicable?

## Belonging #1 Chart

### Strengthening Relationships

If you make just one change to strengthen relationships...

	Child	Family	Educator	Community
My current practices that strengthen relationships with . . . (Today I do)				
Read pages 26 and 27 HDLH				
Tomorrow I will				

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### Belonging #2 – Feeling Safe and Included

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will reflect on how they help children feel included and safe in relationships with adults and other children in the early year's environment.

#### Materials Required:

- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf)  
(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

#### Activity:

1. Review Dr. Jean Clinton's video: [“Brain Development in the Early Years – Connecting with Children vs. Directing their Behaviour”](https://youtu.be/fU2GrSRqoz4?si=Jsj0xubkBHEM9Aov)  
<https://youtu.be/fU2GrSRqoz4?si=Jsj0xubkBHEM9Aov>
2. Reflect on the following:
  - Connecting versus directing
  - Internal versus external reinforcement
  - Quality interactions

**Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:**

How do you promote children's comfort?

How do you recognize when a child feels safe?

How can you ensure the environment is inclusive and nurturing?

**Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:**

How do you ensure you or the team feels safe and included?

How do you or the team support the physical and emotional state of each child?

Share positive observations individually or with the group. Consider posting these observations in a common area.

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### Belonging #3 –

### Different Ways Children Demonstrate their Sense of Belonging

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will demonstrate different ways children exhibit a sense of belonging.

#### Materials Required:

- Belonging #3 photos found below (page 9)
- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf) (<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

#### Activity:

1. Study the photos included below (page 9)
2. Consider the following questions:
  - Do you think these children feel a sense of belonging?
  - Why do you think this?
  - What are some other ways you have observed children demonstrating a sense of belonging?
3. Ask for volunteers to role play a few ways to demonstrate how they would create a sense of belonging, if applicable.

**Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:**

How are you going to use this information in your practice with young children?

**Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:**

How do educators:

- Identify what brings the children joy and how they relate to others and to the environment around them?
- Support inclusion by considering each child's capabilities rather than focusing solely on his or her needs and challenges?

How can you support the team or yourself to focus on children's capabilities rather than their challenges?



### Belonging #3 – Photos



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### Belonging #4 – Building Relationships with Families

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will understand the importance of creating an atmosphere inclusive of families.

#### Materials Required:

- Scenarios for Belonging #4 copied below (page 12)
- A copy of [The College of Early Childhood Educators' Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice](https://www.college-ece.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Code_and_Standards_2017-4.pdf)  
([https://www.college-ece.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Code\\_and\\_Standards\\_2017-4.pdf](https://www.college-ece.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Code_and_Standards_2017-4.pdf))
- A copy of [“How Does Learning Happen?”](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf)  
(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>)

#### Activity:

1. On page 25 of the document “How Does Learning Happen?”, read the paragraph that begins “Relationships matter for families....”
2. Review each of the included scenarios:
  - Brainstorm ways to enhance family’s inclusion based on these scenarios.
  - Determine the strategies within this discussion that you would bring into your program.
3. How can you find new ways to build and maintain supportive relationships with families?

**Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:**

How do these discussions connect to the College of Early Childhood Educators' Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice?

**Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:**

How do educators bring aspects of children's home life into the program?

How can you support families' capabilities rather than their challenges?

## **Belonging #4 – Scenarios**

### Scenario A)

A preschool child arrives with their guardian at 9:15 a.m. The guardian is visibly upset, and the child appears to be happy. The child is wearing pajamas and their guardian states, “Their clothes are in the backpack, and they haven’t had breakfast yet.” the guardian leaves the program immediately.

### Scenario B)

A guardian calls 10 minutes before the program closes stating they are running behind and will be late.

### Scenario C)

A guardian arrives at the program and tells the educator that the children’s grandparents are moving into the same neighbourhood next month and will be assuming the family’s child care needs.

### Scenario D)

A guardian in the program arrives daily and rarely communicates with the educators during arrival and departure. They typically respond to direct questions with yes/no answers, however, offer little information regarding the home environment.

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### Belonging #5 – Personal Beliefs about Children's Sense of Belonging

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will evaluate their personal beliefs on how belonging impacts how children learn.

#### Materials Required:

- A copy of “Belonging – Reflection” (page 24 of this booklet)
- A copy of “How Does Learning Happen?” <https://files.ontario.ca/edu-how-does-learning-happen-en-2021-03-23.pdf>

#### Activity:

1. Review and complete the “Belonging – Reflection” (page 24 of this booklet). These reflections will be reviewed in a future inquiry.
2. Refer to page 24 of “How Does Learning Happen?” and read the grey text box outlining “**Goal for children**” and “**Program expectation.**”
  - Review the questions for reflection listed below.
  - Discuss as a group, if applicable and if time permits.
3. Read pages 23 to 25 of “How Does Learning Happen?” prior to the next team meeting.
4. As a pedagogical leader, take time after the meeting to reflect on the ‘Points to ponder for pedagogical leaders.’

**Possible Questions for Reflection during Activity:**

Reflect on your current practices utilized in the program to support a sense of belonging.

Reflect on additional ways that you can support a sense of belonging in your daily practices.

**Points to Ponder for Pedagogical Leaders:**

How do you, as a leader, model, support and demonstrate a sense of belonging among team members?

How do you model, support and demonstrate a sense of belonging among children and families?

**Review the following questions and provide examples for each:**

Do you understand the importance that a sense of belonging can have on children's learning?

How do you foster caring relationships and connections with children?

How do you foster caring relationships and connections with families and co-workers?

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### Belonging #6 Think, Feel, Act – Empowering Children in the Middle Years

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will foster warm and responsive relationships, which contribute to the healthy growth of children in the middle years.

**[The Power of Positive Relationships by Mary Gordon and Lisa Bayrami](https://files.ontario.ca/edu-think-feel-act-empowering-children-in-the-middle-years-en-2021-01-29.pdf)**  
(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-think-feel-act-empowering-children-in-the-middle-years-en-2021-01-29.pdf> )

#### **Materials Required:**

- Copy of the above article, which is on page 37 of “Think, Feel, Act.”

#### **Activity:**

1. Review the article.
2. On page seven of the article, you will find questions for reflection.

#### **Reflection Questions from the Article:**

1. Choose questions for open discussion within the group, if applicable
2. Base these discussion questions on the environment within the program, if applicable.

#### **Additional Extensions:**

1. Create/find a map of the world. Have each child identify what country their ancestry originated in.
  - Discover and explore each of the unique cultures.
2. View the [“Bullying”](https://youtu.be/nJTy4ciH4mo) (youtu.be/nJTy4ciH4mo) video.

As you watch the video, you may need to stop and pause for discussion.

- Observe details throughout the video. What are you observing?



Reflect on the thoughts and feelings of those watching the video.

- How would you manage these behaviours in your program environment?
- What strategies would you suggest to children experiencing these challenges?
- How could this video be introduced to the children in your program?
- Outline next steps for your program.

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### Belonging #7 Think, Feel, Act – Empowering Children in the Middle Years (2018)

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will reflect on their responsibility in creating an environment that supports Francophone culture and all its diversity. Educators will be able to support other cultural identities utilizing these same practices.

#### Cultivating a Francophone Identity in French-Language Before- and After-School Programs by Paulette Rozon, PhD., pg. 58

(<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-think-feel-act-empowering-children-in-the-middle-years-en-2021-01-29.pdf>)

#### **Materials Required:**

- Copy of the above document.

#### **Activity:**

1. Distribute a copy of the article approximately one week prior to session.
2. On pages eight and nine of the article, focus and discuss the **Cultural Role of Educators**.

#### **Reflection Questions from the Article:**

Consider the three cultural roles:

1. What cultural role do you feel most comfortable playing? How can you better perform this role in your daily professional practice?
2. What cultural role do you feel least comfortable playing? How can you support your own development within this cultural role in your daily professional practice?

**Additional Extensions:**

1. Consider **The Acquisition of Culture** diagram on page six. When looking at this diagram, make connections to your own environment and cultures. How does the Francophone identity and culture fit in? How can you include a Francophone culture or make it more apparent within the program?

2. With the children, explore different French cultural references that may be meaningful to them and your individual programs. These can be in literature, art, architect, technological developments, scientific discoveries, music, dance, etc.
  
3. Try exploring the environment with the children to find French influences or culture. How has this supported the development of a Francophone identity for the children in the program?
  
4. Discuss how the above strategies can also be utilized in supporting a variety of cultural identities.

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### Belonging #8 Think, Feel, Act – Lessons from Research about Young Children (2013)

**Learning Outcome:** Educators will reflect on their current practice to ensure the unique needs of children and families are supported within their program.

**Everyone is Welcome: Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care** by Dr. Kathryn Underwood (pages 31 to 36)  
<https://files.ontario.ca/edu-think-feel-act-lessons-from-research-about-young-children-en-2021-01-29.pdf>

#### Materials Required:

- Copy of the above document.

#### Activity:

1. Distribute a copy of the article approximately one week prior to the session for review.
2. Read the article: Think, Feel, Act – Everyone is Welcome: Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care by Dr. Kathryn Underwood (2013).
3. Consider the individual and unique needs of the children and families in your program.
4. Consider potential barriers for the children and families in your program.
  - Layout of the physical environment.
  - Adaptive and developmentally appropriate materials.
  - Strategies to support the individual and unique needs of the children and families.
  - Languages spoken by the children and families.
  - Cultures represented within the families in your program.
  - Family structures.

Develop two strategies to assess your program on an ongoing basis to ensure barriers are reduced for all children and families within your program.

**Additional Extensions:**

1. Consider the above activity. How does your program currently plan to meet the individual needs of all children and families in your community?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Reflect on how you could better enhance current practices to plan for the individual needs of children and families.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Is the goal of participation of all children and families a key component of your environment? How do educators ensure parent engagement is a consideration in this process?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Consider what resources are available within your community to support families whose first language is not English.

5. Make a list of special needs resourcing agencies available within the community and the referral process to access these agencies.
6. What components should be considered when developing an Individual Support Plan (ISP)?
7. How do we support a collaborative model of teamwork with families, community support agencies and partners?
8. How do we establish a culture of inclusion and incorporate policy statements into our day-to-day interactions with children and families?

## Belonging Reflection

### Personal Reflection

Please document your personal beliefs on the following:

- What does it mean for a child to have a sense of belonging?
- How does a sense of belonging impact children's learning?
- Do you believe that children in the program feel they belong?
- How do you know when children feel a sense of belonging?