

Be You In Focus
Play for Wellbeing



With delivery partners



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Be You In Focus Webinar Handout

Thank you for your participation in the Be You In Focus event: “**Play for Wellbeing**” on 3 March 2021.

Included below are the topics covered in the webinar, suggestions provided by attendees and references mentioned.

In practice reflective questions

These reflective questions can be used to form the basis of a conversation with your Be You Action Team or Learning Community Leadership.

- What does play in your learning community look, feel and sound like? Does it support mental health and wellbeing?
- Reflect on the role of play in supporting wellbeing with the children in your service.
- How does play support social and emotional learning?
- Consider and discuss the many roles of the educator in children’s play.
- Does the educator’s role with play change with different developmental ages?
- What role does the environment have in supporting children’s wellbeing during play?
- How can play be a protective factor for mental health?
- What is the value of collaborative planning for play with children?
- Reflect on how imaginative play can support the development of empathy.
- Can play reduce children’s stress?
- How can play be a part of wellbeing for educators?

Links to additional information, resources and references from the webinar

Always Be You

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/always-be-you>

Be You Professional Learning

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn>

Learning Resilience domain, Empower module

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/learning-resilience/empower>

Learning Resilience domain, Embed module

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/learning-resilience/embed>

Family Partnerships domain

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/family-partnerships>

Mentally Healthy Communities domain

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities>

Risk and Protective Factors

<https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities/understand/early-learning/risk-factors-and-protective-factors/>

Mental Health Continuum

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/mental-health-continuum>

Behaviour Emotions Thoughts learning & Social Relationships (BETLS) observation tool

<https://beyou.edu.au/-/media/pdfs/betls/be-you-betls-tool.pdf>

Connecting and reflecting through conversations with peers

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/news/connecting-and-reflecting>

Implementation and Reflection Toolkit

<https://beyou.edu.au/planning-and-implementation-tools/implementation-and-reflection-toolkit>

Be You Wellbeing Tools

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides>

Wellbeing Fact sheets

<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/wellbeing>

Planning for wellbeing – mine yours ours

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/tools-and-guides/wellbeing-tools-for-you>

Fact Sheets: Educator Wellbeing

<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/wellbeing>

Stress Management

<https://beyou.edu.au/fact-sheets/wellbeing/stress-management>

Bushfire Resources

<https://beyou.edu.au/bushfires-response>

COVID-19 Supporting early learning services

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/news/covid-19-supporting-early-learning-communities>

COVID-19 Supporting schools

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/news/covid-19-supporting-schools>

Attendee questions and answers

What is co-regulation?

- Co-regulation can take many forms. It typically involves warmth, a soothing tone of voice from a significant carer and communication that acknowledges the young person's distress.
- It can look very different for different ages. For babies and toddlers that can be physical comfort, supporting them to use self-soothing techniques that they developed.
- Children learn self-control and appropriate emotional expression and behaviour by watching and experiencing how other people manage their emotions and from their own experiences of how others behave.
- You can help contain children's stressful experiences (such as, when they feel overwhelmed, unsure or frightened) by showing them how to become calm. This might include sitting with the child, using soothing language, helping them take a few deep breaths and providing reassurance that they're safe.
- This can be achieved by educators not focusing on the behaviour but instead staying in the moment with the child, letting them know you are available and let them sit with their feelings whilst empathising with facial expressions and soothing gestures. You can also vocalise and name their feelings back to them, being accepting of their expression of their feelings.

How can you manage stress and anxiety in pre-schoolers?

- Using co-regulation: You can help contain children's stressful experiences (such as, when they feel overwhelmed, unsure or frightened) by showing them how to become calm and get their needs met. This might include sitting with the child, using soothing language, helping them take a few deep breaths and providing reassurance that they're safe.
- Consider the protective factors in a child's life and how they can be strengthened: see <https://beyou.edu.au/learn/mentally-healthy-communities/understand/early-learning/risk-factors-and-protective-factors/>
- Use the knowledge shared from families as to their child's interests and routines to assist settling at pick up and drop off, if a child is exhibiting Separation Anxiety. Let the child know when the parent is returning, e.g. after we have our afternoon tea or a time when they will return. Get the parent to leave photos so these can be re-visited throughout the day so the child can begin to recognise Object Permanency

I once had someone tell me that puzzles couldn't be play because they are not open-ended. It made me reflect on what could be considered play within my environment. Are books play?

- Play supports wellbeing. Children learn through play: they make decisions when playing, take risks and learn about self-regulation and relationships. Choosing a puzzle or a book is making a decision, perhaps choosing a more difficult puzzle is taking a risk. Social emotional learning can be about asking for assistance with a puzzle or about developing a relationship.
- Are these open ended experiences? What the child does with the book or puzzle or the experience they had with either can influence the child's thoughts, feelings and emotions; their influence may be seen in imaginative play or in some other creative experience: Children are naturally curious; story reading feeds this inquisitiveness and builds further curiosity in their world

What practical tips do you have for how educators can enjoy 'being' in the moment with children?

- Observing the play without 'barriers' between you and the child/ children such as documenting materials/devices
- If invited to enter the play ensure you are wholly present – not having other responsibilities such as supervision and be 'with' the child/children taking your cues from them
- Practicing mindfulness can help you really see what is occurring around you rather than focusing on tasks that you feel are important.
- Being involved in their imaginative play in a role they have invited you to take
- Feeling and sharing the child's satisfaction and enjoyment from the play
- Listening to the play and being present without participating or asking questions or making suggestions
- Sharing the feeling of relaxation when a child relaxes