

Let's Talk Early Years Conference 2026

Foundations of the Future: Innovating Childhood



MOSAIC
Digital Solutions for Early Education



MOSAIC
A Portrait of Early Learning

Rethinking Documentation – What Are We Really Capturing?

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INTERNATIONAL
CERTIFICATION &
QUALITY ASSESSMENT
in WELLBEING UK





Who Am I — and what are we here to explore?

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- 35+ years - early years practice, academia and government policy development.
 - Founder of MOSAIC Digital Solutions, supporting early education through innovative EdTech products, accredited training and quality supports.
 - Passionate advocate for authentic documentation and child-led practice to support each child's wellbeing, learning and development.
 - Bringing this passion to life through a published book and the development of a digital care, learning and assessment system for early childhood settings.
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Overview

Defining the method, defining the purpose.
Seeing the whole child behind the learning.
Emotionally strong- learning long.
Authentic child-centred documentation.
Stories of learning.



Defining the method, defining the purpose

- Predetermined generic tracking.
- Documentation for learning.

To determine the best fit for your practice, firstly you must consider the reason why you assess.

Who are we actually documenting for? -children, families, educators—or the system?

Positive bi-product partnership with parents and education accountability.





The primary rationale must always be **child-centred and pedagogical**, ensuring that assessment practices deepen our understanding of each child's unique needs, strengths and interests, while meaningfully supporting and nurturing their wellbeing, learning and potential.

To substantiate this position, it is essential to remind ourselves of the **fundamental purpose of early childhood education** and to consider how each child's **unique learner identity** informs and shapes educational practice.





Emotionally Strong, Learning Long: why resilience comes first

A fundamental distinction - nurturing **positive learning dispositions** that provide the foundation for lifelong learning, wellbeing and development.

Developing the security to learn precedes the child's ability to learn.

By nurturing resilience through responsive relationships, emotional connection and supportive learning environments, educators empower children to develop self-regulation, adaptability and a positive sense of self.





**The primary function of early education
is to nurture the disposition to learn and thrive.**

Developing the security to learn
precedes the child's ability to learn.

The
MOSAIC
Method

DISPOSITIONS TOP 10

1



Curiosity

Natural state of inquisitiveness
and desire to find out more.

2



Empathy

The ability to understand
how another feels.

3



Cooperation

The ability to work with peers
towards common goals.

4



Confidence

The belief in one's own abilities
to learn and know.

5



Creativity

The ability to be able to express
oneself in different ways..

6



Independence

Ability to do things for oneself.

7



Enthusiasm

The feeling of motivation.

8



Persistence

Continuing to do or to try to do
something that is difficult.

9



Imagination

The ability to mentally visualise
new and different possibilities
and scenarios.

10



Resilience

The ability to recover from
experienced difficulty.



➤ Seeing the whole child behind the learning ➤



There is only one version of me..

"The things that interest me and make me curious

My emotions and sense of belonging

Things that I am cautious about - where I need encouragement

My unique strengths, capabilities

My preferred learning style and preferred means of communication

My relationships, culture, identity and lived experience

My voice, choices and decisions

My dispositions to learn - curiosity, independence, problem solving

My persistence and progress

My dispositions to learn".



Same activity, different experience..

How children are able to engage with activities and learning opportunities, is directly related to how they feel about themselves.

The same activity can evoke different emotional responses in each child.





Taking any number of circumstantial variables into consideration, the need to view each child as an individual with their own voice and life story is not only obvious, but essential.

We do this through child-centred documentation.

“

Grounded in longstanding educational research, **authentic child-centred documentation** is an intentional process of **‘listening-in’** to children’s stories, emotional states, interests, and preferred ways of learning. Within this framework, assessment is not positioned as a means of proving that learning has occurred, but rather as a **catalyst for learning itself**. Meaningful assessment for learning is therefore not an add-on to the curriculum, but an **integral component** of holistic pedagogical practice.

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- A powerful advocate for the competencies and voice of young children.
- Tells the story of how learning came about.
- Captures the process of learning, the place and time and who was involved.
- Takes place over time and in a variety of social and environmental contexts.
- Does not pass unsubstantiated judgement but instead focuses on where learning can go with educator and family support.

Documentation-
a reliable instrument for
child-centred learning





The questions that count..

Child-centred documentation goes beyond tracking activities. It typically answers:

- **What happened? (Observation)**
- **What learning is evident? (Analysis and connection to curriculum)**
- **What are the next steps? (Curriculum planning).**

We can achieve all this through the Learning Story Approach and Multi-modal digital documentation.





Making Learning Visible through Multimodal Digital Stories

Multimodal documentation is a way of capturing and assessing children's learning **through a combination of:**

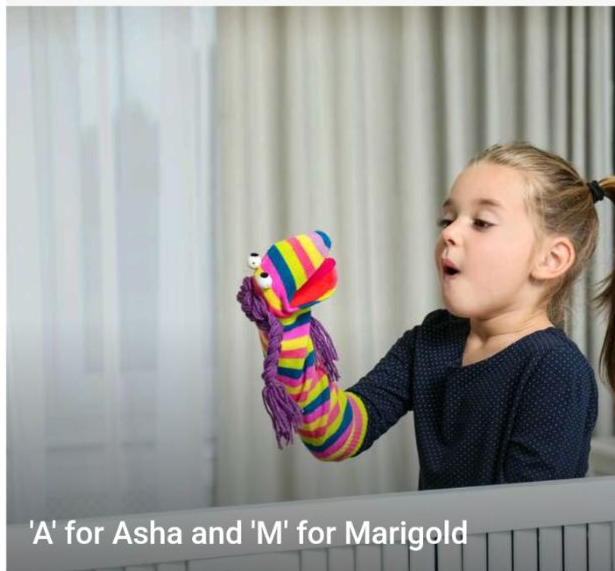
- **Photographs,**
- **Narrative observations,**
- **videos, audio recordings,**
- **Children's voices,**
- **Work samples.**

This supports Educators to understand children's learning journeys, recognise their capabilities, and inform future planning.



Asha has formed a relationship with Marigold. They have lots of interesting chats and Asha is determined to teach Marigold lots of new things.

"I'm teaching Marigold how to sing the ABC song. I sing it and then she sings it. Her voice is quiet (lowers voice) but I am helping her to speak loud. Marigold doesn't know the what the letters look like so I showed her 'A' for Asha and 'M' for Marigold on the on the wall (alphabet poster).



'A' for Asha and 'M' for Marigold



Read by parent

[Click here to read more >](#)

When did it happen: 20 March, 2025 02:30 PM hrs

Learning goals achieved:

- 1 I am an active communicator who can influence/ initiate interactions/ cómhra (conversations).
- 2 I can communicate my interests through play.
- 3 I use oral language(s) with muinín (confidence) and competence for a range of purposes.
- 4 I interact with others for giving and receiving information/ listening/ taking turns in cómhra (conversations) /storytelling.
- 5 I can use language during role play to imagine and recreate roles and experiences.

Dispositions/Schemas

Imagination

Communication

Role Play

You can help me build on this by:

When asking Asha what she would like to do next she suggested extending Marigold's learning a little further.

"I want to write letters 'A' and 'M' or maybe paint them. Marigold will like purple paint like her hair".

..and so they did!

Educator: Linda C.

Parent's comment

This story reveals -

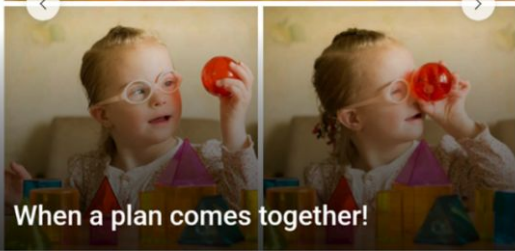
1. **WHAT happened?**
2. **WHAT dispositions/ learning is evident?**
3. **WHAT next?**

Learning Story



✓ Read by parent

I really do like these coloured blocks - I spent some time today exploring what I could do with them. I looked at the blocks closely, turned them over in my hands and held them up to the light - I even tasted one of two! After a few attempts and a little encouragement, I succeeded in building a tower! I clapped my hands and used gestures and my voice to get everyone to look! Of course, I was delighted with all the attention!



When a plan comes together!

Where did it take place: Table Top activities

When did it happen: 17 January, 2025 11:15 AM hrs

Learning goals achieved:

- 1 I can interact and connect with my friends/key person/ educators.
- 2 I am learning to cope with challenge.
- 3 I am gaining increasing physical coordination and control (small motor skills and large motor skills).
- 4 I show bród (pride) in my achievements.
- 5 I am developing sensory awareness of colours/ shapes/ smells/ sounds/ textures/ movement.
- 6 I can use my imagination to make things with loose parts and open-ended materials.

Dispositions/Schemas

Purposefulness

Concentration

Motivation

You can help me build on this by:

Encourage my achievements by naming them and tell me why you are proud of me. Use exaggerated facial expressions and shared clapping as well.

Build on my ability to concentrate for sort periods of time by giving me lots of sensory loose parts to explore and manipulate.

Play close contact throwing and catching activities (small coloured beanbags/small ball) to help strengthen my coordination.

Educator: Ellie B.

Parent's comment

This is lovely to see - we are so proud 🥰. Thank you.. Marie

Inclusive and equitable practice.

Recognises diverse learning styles, including non-verbal communication that traditional methods may miss.

Capturing diverse learning: Uses photos, videos, audio and multiple voices to show how children learn and communicate.

★ *I am pre-verbal or non-verbal, but I still have a 'voice'.*

I am telling you about my lived experience and what is meaningful to me at this time.

My story reveals how I am able to apply prior learning and my ability to reflect, recall and communicate positive memories.

My educator uses this information provide meaningful activities for me.



Learning goals achieved:

- 1 I can reflect and discuss my past experiences/achievements/contributions.
- 2 I am learning to build respectful relationships with others.
- 3 I can interact with others cooperatively.
- 4 I understand that digital technology is used to communicate with others.
- 5 I can use my imagination to make things with loose parts and open-ended materials.

Dispositions/Schemas

Communication

Manipulating

Kindness

You can help me build on this by:

It sounds like you had a great time on holiday- have you any other ideas about things you could do about your holiday?

'I'm going to draw a picture of me in the swimming pool'.

Great idea! How about if you choose some figures and you can make a swimming pool in the water tray and see what happens! Maybe we will look for something to make a curly slide!

Educator: Helen J.

Parent's comment

She loves chatting about her holiday! Her favourite book at the minute is Peppa Goes on Holiday - every night 😊

Educator's comment

I think we have a couple of holiday story books here too, I'll find those for her.



CJ

Posted on 11...



Read by parent

CJ spent a long time today drawing circles, adding face features and making marks. He was absorbed for at least 15 minutes, working quietly and with purpose. He frequently changed marker colours and diligently replaced the tops as he worked. He navigated drawing space on the page, filling in empty spaces and creating repeat images using both fine and large motor movements.



Exploring how circles work

Where did it take place: Creative table

Learning goals achieved:

- 1 I am making decisions and choices about my own learning and development.
- 2 I am discovering, exploring and refining my gross and fine motor skills.
- 3 I enjoy being creative.
- 4 I use mark-making to show meaning.
- 5 I can concentrate and I am purposeful and absorbed in my play.
- 6 I am demonstrating positivity in my own abilities.

Dispositions

Purposefulness

Concentration

Perseverance

Manipulating

Exploring

Symbols

Pattern

Creativity

You can help me build on this by:

I am interested in rotation and how this works. I am showing you this interest through my drawings. Build on my understanding by giving me things with wheels and cogs to play with, let me draw circles in sand and with paint, let me roll hoops and give me objects that spin, give me old bracelets, bangles and cd's to explore, give me windmills and spinners to observe in the wind, and help me make a ribbon stick to rotate... these things will help me learn more about my special interest in circles and things that rotate.

Educator: RS... Toddler Room

I am just over two years old and I have am exploring rotation schema. I am not yet able to explain this interest, but I am speaking to you through the repeated drawing of circles.

I have progressed to drawing facial features inside some of my circles showing that I am making sense of my drawings in a way that I understand.



Rolling, Rolling Rolling

Where did it take place: Baby Room Floor

When did it happen: 10 March, 2022 12:00 PM hrs

Dispositions/Schemas

Interest

Having fun

Crawling

Throwing

Space

Trajectory

Comments

I am interested in a trajectory schema at the moment. I use floor space well and you can see me crawl back and forth at high speed rolling and throwing coloured balls.

I am working out how things move and I watch movement closely. I am clearly 'having a ball' as I clap my hands and laugh after I complete every lap of the baby room!

The use of video, particularly for educators to rewatch short clips of natural play interactions or episodes, enables the educator to **'slow down'** the observation and consider the child's play in greater detail. Key moments **can be missed** in a busy room or with children who may be more difficult to observe.

- ★ *I am practicing trajectory schema.*
- ★ *Plan activities that will support met to progress this interest.*
- ★ *Notice my developmental progression.*



The big pink obstacle

Where did it take place: Babyroom

When did it happen: 26 September, 2022 10:27 AM hrs

Dispositions/Schemas

Perseverance

Problem solving

Balancing

Crawling

Climbing

Exploration

Comments

As I explored the soft play area, I could see myself in the wall mirror and I was interested to find out more. But the big pink cube was in my way! I solved the problem by climbing over it - this involved a few brave attempts and huge perseverance, but I was successful in the end.

Educator: Asha Mc.

Parent's comment

Well done Aoife 🍌... our little explorer x 😊



The Quality Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education in Dubai

Domain 1: Learning and Curriculum

Education, teaching and care and Learner identities.



Systematically observe, analyse, plan, reflect and evaluate to support children's holistic progress.



Share assessment information with parents and families so that they may understand, appreciate and contribute to their child's evolving capabilities and learning.



The uniqueness of each child is represented in practices that consistently reflect and celebrate their individuality, including their cultural, linguistic and personal identities.



Each child is a unique member of the ECCE setting with preferences, communication style and interests.



Children's voice and self-assessment capabilities are reflected in practice.



A record of achievement is not
necessarily a record of the
child



Child-centred, authentic documentation has the potential to transform early education by **amplifying children's voices, strengthening agency, promoting inclusion, and deepening partnerships with families**. Through multimodal approaches such as narrative, video, audio, and family contributions, platforms like **MOSAIC** can make children's diverse ways of learning visible, valued, and heard.



A record of learning is
not necessarily a
record of the child.

When implemented with integrity,
documentation becomes more than a
record of learning — it becomes a catalyst
for dialogue, connection, and equity.

Above all, it positions children not as objects
of assessment, but as capable, active, and
rights-bearing participants in their own
learning journeys, **with voices that matter
and stories that deserve to be heard.**

Thank you!





Generic Child Tracking

1

Limited view of the child:

Focuses on specific skills rather than the whole child.

2

One-size-fits-all approach:

May not reflect individual abilities, interests or lived experience.

3

Focuses on outcomes:

Records whether a skill is achieved, not the process of learning.

4

Limited child participation:

Children may have little input into their assessment.

5

Can encourage labelling:

Focuses on milestones achieved or not yet achieved.

6

Provides a snapshot:

May not capture progress over time or across different situations.

7

Limited use:

does not provide insight for planning for individual interests or progression.

8

Limited family insight:

Provides little detail about a child's unique strengths or needs.

9

Can overlook diversity:

Standardised expectations may not reflect cultural and individual differences.



Child-centred Documentation

1

Holistic learning:

Captures children's cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

2

Individual stories:

Recognise each child's unique strengths, interests and developmental pace.

3

Makes learning visible:

Documents children's thinking, exploration and problem-solving.

4

Promotes agency:

Includes children's voices, choices and ideas in their learning journey.

5

Strengths-based approach:

Celebrates children's capabilities and emerging skills.

6

Shows progression:

Documents learning and development through ongoing observations.

7

Encourages responsive planning:

Uses children's interests and strengths to guide future experiences.

8

Strengthens partnerships:

Helps families understand and contribute to their child's learning.

9

Supports inclusion:

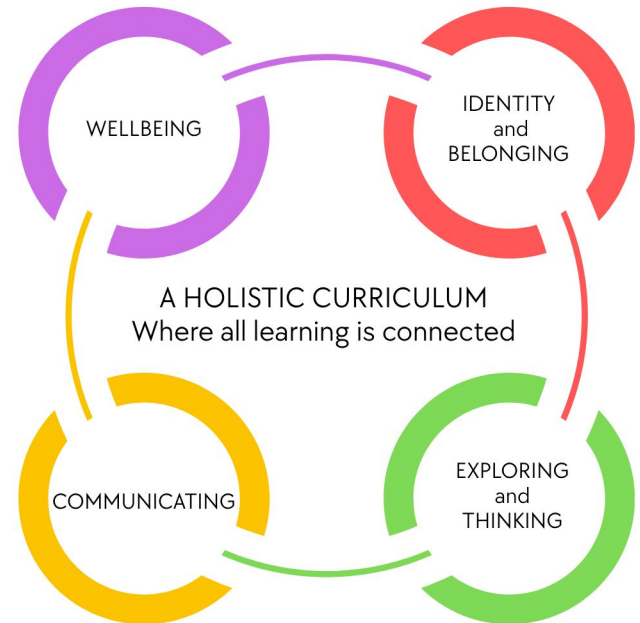
Values children's diverse backgrounds, experiences and ways of learning.



Holistic wellbeing, learning and development

Contemporary early childhood curriculum frameworks recognise that children learn in a **holistic way**. Children learn multiple skills and dispositions at once and learning cannot be segregated into specific categories or subject areas.

Unlike other stages of education, early childhood curricula place greater emphasis on nurturing the development of **positive learning dispositions for life**.





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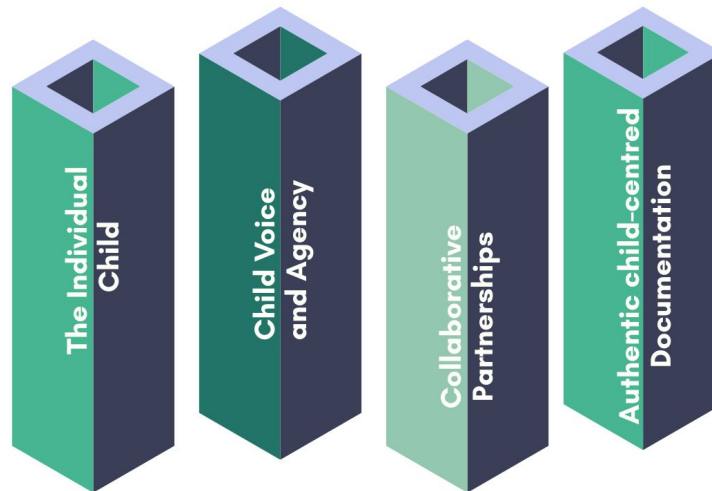
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Foundational Pillars



The **MOSAIC**
Method

Together, these four pillars form the foundation of the MOSAIC Method, providing a common thread that connects philosophy with practice across every learning environment.