

Diversity in Early Childhood Education

In most of western countries such as Australia, United States of America and in many European countries there is a growing cognizance that people from different background live in a society marked by diversity. This means many of people live together and have differing standards, values, and ideas about how to raise and educate their children. This diversity of values, and ideas may have potential impact on educational systems as well as early childhood education and services. New challenges confront early childhood educators every day and make them to think how to cope with diversity of parents and their standards and values. In this research paper, first, what diversity means in early childhood education, how it has been defined and where it has emerged and discussed as a dominant issue in the past and in the present time, will be discussed. In this part, diversity and its theoretical underpinnings, and the discourses and perspectives that can be implicated in its development, will be identified. Then, migration and its impact on diversity in early childhood education which has given essential and formative principle and quality to curriculum and practice in early childhood education, and the need for further research in diversity in early childhood will be outlined.

What is diversity?

Lévi-Strauss (as noted in Equal Employment Opportunity, 2008) states "We can see the diversity of human cultures behind us, around us, and before us. The only demand that we can justly make ... is that all the forms this diversity may take ... contributes to the fullness of all the others (EEO, 2008, p.1)." In defining diversity, Equal Employment Opportunity (2008) notes the concept of diversity is based on individual acceptance and respect. It is an understanding that individuals are unique and different. Diversity comprises culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical ability and religious, political and other beliefs. Diversity includes cultural diversity which confirms the existence of broad cultural groups within one country's culture. "Cultural diversity has been part of Australia's history, and through it, Australian culture is constantly developing" (Equal Employment Opportunity, 2008, p.1). MacNaughton and Hughes (2007) write that cultural diversity refers to the differences in language, customs, beliefs,

meanings and values between people from differing ethnic backgrounds that are expressed in their daily lives.

The Staff Equal Employment Opportunity Compliance Office (2008) offers another broader but similar definition saying that people's qualities are different from one to another and those of groups to which one belongs. Diversity has many dimensions such as age, gender, race, religion beliefs, ethnicity, sex, educational background, income, marital status, parental status, work experience, and job classification.

How diversity was emerged and discussed?

Hill, Stremmel, and Fu (2005) observe that an awareness of history of diversity in early childhood education positions the educators to better understanding of the approaches to teaching and learning in the context of how teaching has developed and changed over time and how it has been influenced by social demands and diversity.

Hill et al. (2005) write how Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi's sense of social justice let him to promote education for poor in 18th century. Pestalozzi (1746-1827) is recognized for setting the stage for early childhood education and kindergarten movement (Hill et al., 2005). John Dewey (1859-1952) is another thinker who has contributed to current understanding of teaching as inquiry in social context. Garrison (as cited in Hill et al., 2005) mentions that Dewey's vision was to extend, broaden and improve the social constructions of culture at educational system that begun at home and the community. Hill et al. (2005) state that Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-) is one of the thinkers who views a child as a developing individual engaging in reciprocal relationship with people in his or her environment. Bronfenbrenner believes that teaching and learning in early childhood education are influenced by social and political structures, beliefs, values, and ideologies of a culture (Hill et al., 2005).

For decades, the issues of diversity may seem to have gained reliable grounds in the works of researchers and practitioners. Yet, considerable differences in the conceptualisation of diversity in early childhood education are to be observed both among and within different networks that do research and practice in early childhood areas. For instance, Bernard van Leer Foundation which has funded and shared knowledge about work in early childhood development and child rights since 1949,

through their *Social inclusion and respect for diversity* ("Diversity") programme, aim to promote equal opportunities and skills that will help children to live in diverse societies.

Bernard van Leer Foundation Diversity programme is two-stranded. The first strand, social inclusion, is about ensuring equal rights and access for disadvantaged children. The second, respect for diversity, aims to help children to develop the attitudes, skills, and habits that will help them to grow up in their diverse and often conflict-ridden societies (Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2009). It is very important to understand how and when these goals were initially set and decided, and where this big idea of diversity originated from. Weber (1984) observes that there have been so many diverse ideologies impinged upon educational practice as in the 1960s. On January the 8th, 1964, the War on Poverty was introduced by United States President Lyndon B. Johnson. As a part of War on Poverty, ideas and then programs in early childhood education were shaped and mainstreamed politically. Weber (1984) writes "Political change and social conflict spawned a conception of the 'great society' as a national goal and embraced early childhood in its formulations."

The Head Start and Follow Through programs were brought to existence because of increased recognition of the crucial significance of the diversity in the early experiences of the child (Weber, 1984). He says that based on premises about the effectiveness of early intervention as a means for breaking the cycle of economic deprivation, federally funded programs were extended to the young. Although, this was not the first time that educators have utilized early childhood to gain social reform, the main difference in the 1960s was the prominence given to environmental factors that originated from newly recognized theoretical ideas of diversity and its relation with cognitive growth.

Weber (1984) supports this noting that through the ages, from Plato to the present time, education has been considered a means for reducing social problems and this has consistently driven a look at the roots of problems at the beginnings of learning in school and in the home. For instance, over the past decade there has been a major peek of interest in Soviet developmental/educational psychologist, Lev Vygotsky's beliefs as potential alternatives to current existing psycho-educational theories. According to ERIC (Educational Resource Information Centre) Vygotsky's theories and practices have become a powerful "identification figure" in developmental psychology, psycholinguistic, in

education and early childhood education. Vygotsky believes that there is connection between socio-cultural processes happening in society, and mental processes in every individual. To support this, Hill et al. (2005) observe that Vygotsky's theory pays particular attention to the socio-cultural context of development and how development cannot be separate from social and cultural activities.

In contrast, Winsler (2003) writes although the ideas of Vygotsky are now central theoretical bases within the field of early childhood education, it is still a challenge to understand and implement Vygotskian ideas in early childhood classrooms. Winsler (2003) notes perhaps one of the reasons is because many of the Vygotsky constructs like scaffolding, have often been experienced at the one-on-one or adult-child level, rather than at the level of classroom processes and child-child level, or perhaps the diversity of socio-cultural and historical analyses have become an obstacle in this area. According to Winsler (2003), Vygotskian theory endorses not only the child and his or her current activities, but also the child's history of previous experiences, the cultural backdrop and meaning that such activities have for the child. In addition, the social context in which that particular activity occurs in the classroom, the structure of the larger classroom context and the opportunities afforded by the available tools, and the way that teachers and other children "mediate" children's experiences in the classroom via social interaction and language use, should be very carefully taken into account in early childhood education field.

Migration, diversity, and diversity in early childhood education

Many countries have experienced migration, and now have broadly constructed culturally and linguistically diverse communities. United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (2008) states that the international migration rate is growing fast every year. UNESCO (2008) says that "International Migration Report 2002" of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs has estimated the number of migrants doubled since the 1970s. "We live in an increasingly diverse and heterogeneous society" UNESCO (2008, p.1) says.

As in education, diversity has become an issue receiving growing attention in European childcare. Over the last decade, many publications have been published to address policy-makers, practitioners, managers, and trainers on issues of diversity, equity and social inclusion (Vandenbroeck,

2007). The European DECET network (Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training) plays a major role in the spreading widely and mainstreaming of these issues. Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2006) says that the research network "DECET", brings together researchers and practitioners interested in resolving issues of appropriate access to ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) for families and children from diverse cultural backgrounds. DECET research and action focuses essentially on methods, training, and quality evaluation, from perspective of diversity. Eight European countries are represented in the network: Belgium, Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, the Netherland, Spain and the United Kingdom (England and Scotland). OECD (2006) continues to describe the major goal of the network as below:

- To promote actively equity and respect for diversity in early childhood education and care service.



Diversity in early childhood education has expanded its prominence not only in Europe or America, but in Australia as well. Fleer (2006) notes the early childhood education has been established in the early nineteenth century, and it has moved beyond European communities and has become institutionalized in countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and Singapore. DIMIA (as cited in MacNaughton and Hughes, 2007) writes that Australia is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. It has one of the world's most diverse immigration programs and, between them, its citizens speak over 200 languages. Most recently, one of the best examples of valuing diversity in early childhood education in Australia is the Australia's first national Early Years Learning Framework for early childhood educators (EYLF) that was developed by The Council of Australian Governments in June 2009. This framework aims to extend and enrich children's learning from birth to five years and assist educators to provide young children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in learning (EYLF, 2009).

One of the reasons such frameworks are being developed in these countries and diversity is being more identified as a "big idea" and a prominent issue in early childhood education is the high numbers of refugees and immigrant in recent decades. Souto-Manning and Dice (2007) write that

students diversity in classrooms is on the rise and with it, a need for teachers who recognize the needs of diverse student population. Including diversity and equity issues in services requires changes in the role of the early childhood educator and consequently, changes in training approaches and courses. By respecting the diversity of families, and the expectations they hold for children, early childhood educators are able to develop children's motivation to learn. They are able to make curriculum that maintain all children's rights to have their cultures and identities accepted and valued. Then, they are able to think critically about difficult situation that can arise from diversity and cultural differences.

The descriptive part of most of the frameworks has given a very strong signal about diversity in early childhood education as a prominent issue. Yet, it does not provide educators with details how to deal with different issues when new traumas being faced in new immigrants lives most of the time. For instance, there is not any guide for the educators on how to work with a war-driven dislocated 5 year-old Iraqi refugee. Regarding the refugee-related issues in early childhood education and diversity, MacNaughton and Williams (2009) observe that to build respectful and responsive relationships in services where staff may be working with families who have experienced refugee-related traumas, it is particularly important to allow time for children and families to settle into new routines and expectations without experiencing hurrying or stress. If the staff do not speak the same language then bilingual support workers can be helpful in building understandings and relationships. However, they should not be suddenly withdrawn from children and families which require the childcare centres to remunerate more salaries and benefits.

Before 1999, Australian government and politics in the government have not been able to provide an explicit and carefully planned transition in which early childhood staff take increasing responsibility for building relationships with the child and the family. The government did not want to inject enough finance during the last prime minister of Australia when it came to children's right and early childhood education for the refugees' children. However, Australian society benefitted from new strategies of the current prime minister to fill the gap that have already been existed since 1999, when the refugee boats were coming to Christmas Island and Ashmore Island from everywhere. The new immigration laws and strategies have let the policy makers, politicians, and educators to think about

diversity more than a decade ago. MacNaughton and Williams (2009) write that it takes regular amount of in-depth time to make anti-discriminatory perspective work, and staff should recognize this when timetabling specific work to learn about and respect cultural and 'racial' diversity and they should make sure that this work develops slowly and with care. This is what has been happening in Australian system since 1999. One obvious example of development in sharing cultural and language respect and caring for the diversity in early childhood settings is the EYLF's multilingual Parents' Guide which has been available in twenty languages online (EYLF, 2009).

EYLF says, "There are many ways of living, being and of knowing" (2009, p.13). It describes how diversity influences children of different culture and this influence is by not only traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but, also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities. EYLF indicates that the respect to diversity is valuing and reflecting the practices, values, and beliefs of families within the curriculum. Through a well-established educational system, educators honour the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices, and lifestyle choices of families, they value children's different capacities and abilities, and they respect differences in families' home lives.

In conclusion, according to EYLF (2009), it is believed that the current circumstances of Australian society demand inclusion and respect for diversity and equity (regarded as "big ideas" in this paper) in early childhood education for all children and families. Consequently, children interact with one another in a way that respect and preserve everyone's identities. Such an educational approach in the early childhood education will help to thwart social exclusion in schools and childcare centres. Simultaneously, as the migration of people to Australia has increased the population diversity, diverseness has highlighted the need for more inter-cultural and diversity research. By understanding better the theoretical underpinnings have based the diversity in early childhood education and how they have supported the development of diversity in this field, further research need to be conducted. Research not only on diversity in culture, but in language, religion, ethnicity, age, special needs, originality, health status and income, and also research in different family expectation from early childhood education need to be done .

A critical analysis of diversity in Early Childhood Education in the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework is segment of the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) reform programme for early childhood education and care and is a key part of the Australian Government's National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care. Reviewing the document as a whole, diversity as a big idea in this field is valued and recognized as a prominent issue in early years education.

The Early Years Learning Framework outlines the principles, practice and results fundamental to enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age in a culturally diverse Australia, along with their transition to the local schools. Statements in the document frequently emphasize diverse abilities and cultural backgrounds of children attending Australian childcare settings. It places importance on the role of diversity in communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development (COAG, 2009). This paper will first, critically analyse the EYLF document, to examine how particular statements shape diversity as a big idea. Second, it will evaluate the document view of diversity, holistically and within more specific sections including the vision for children's learning, elements of the framework and early childhood pedagogy. Finally, the theoretical underpinning used in the document, will be identified and discussed.

A VISION FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

FYLF (2009) indicates that all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life. The Framework recognizes the importance of culture from the beginning and points out that before birth children are connected to family, community, culture and place.

The central and primary principle of the Framework is a view of children's lives as characterized by three terms of belonging, being and becoming.

The diversity in family life means that children experience belonging, being and becoming in many different ways (FYLF, 2009). Children bring their diverse experiences, perspectives, expectations, knowledge and skills to their learning (FYLF, 2009).

In the *BELONGING* phase of the vision, FYLF (2009) states that experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is fundamental to children existence and children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighborhood and a wider community FYLF (2009). In this phase the document is directly referring to the importance of culture and community that children belong to and later on it discusses how this would affect children's learning and development.

In the *BECOMING* phase, the document has tried to lay stress on children's identities, knowledge, understandings and their relationships. It states that children's learning will shape differently in culturally diverse environment and the way they participate in the society and group activities.

In the *Being* phase, as one of the prominent segments of the Framework which could potentially hold a great stance to discuss diversity, there has not been anything mentioned related to diversity. As childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world (FYLF, 2009), diversity could be stressed in here and the importance of the family and the culture could be widely pointed out.

ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN

In a bigger scale the Framework guides early childhood educators to reinforce in their daily practice the principles laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (the Convention). The Convention states that all children from all different backgrounds have the right to an education that lays a foundation for the rest of their lives, maximizes their ability, and respects their family, cultural and other identities and languages (FYLF, 2009). It goes further by declaring the Melbourne Declaration principles that there are commitments to improve the outcomes of education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and strengthening early childhood education. The Framework acknowledges the commitments of the Council of Australian Governments to closing the gap in educational achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and that early childhood education has a critical role to play in delivering this outcome (FYLF, 2009).

Recognizing this, a separate document has been developed and being made available for educators with additional guidance on ensuring cultural security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families. As this separated guidance manual has got its advantages for the

Aboriginal children and families, it indirectly and most probably unintentionally sends signals to the younger educators that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families are considered as “minorities”. Although, some educators might have never had chance to see the Aboriginals as “minorities”, and have included them same as other habitants in Australia, this will make them think of the Aboriginals as different people who need more attention or sympathy. In this case, discrimination and racism towards the minorities can be critiqued. A simple resolution to tackle this issue is simple to include the additional guidance all-together in one complete manual but not as a separated document.

EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

In defining early childhood setting, the Framework has included Multi-purpose Aboriginal Children’s Services, Churches, and also early intervention settings. This shows how the document is paying attention to the diverse settings in early years. It also underpins the implementation of more specific curriculum relevant to each local community and early childhood setting (FYLF, 2009). However, pointing out to the Churches but not to the other religious gathering places such as Muslim Mosques or Jewish Synagogues is also another issue that shouldn’t be overlooked. It might send negative impression to the already very sensitive Muslim communities that the Framework is not going to equally provide quality education and care for their children and that the Education is only for Christian children, but not theirs.

ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

FYLF (2009) indicates that the Framework puts children’s learning at the core and comprises three inter-related elements: **Principles, Practice and Learning Outcomes** (see Figure 1).

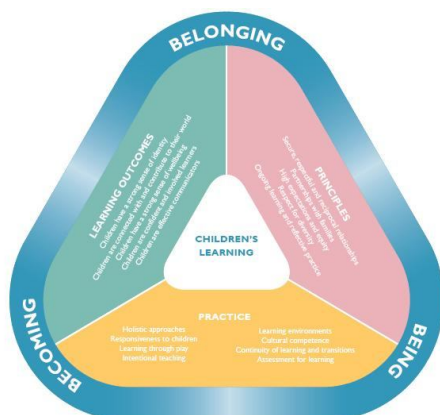


Figure 1: Elements of the Early Years Learning Framework

PRINCIPLES

There are five principles which has been introduced by the Framework that represent contemporary theories and research evidence concerning children’s learning and early childhood pedagogy. These Principles underpin practice that is focused on assisting all children of different background to make progress in relation to the Learning Outcomes which will be discussed later in this paper. The issue of diversity as a big idea has been emphasized in most part of the five principles and mainly has been related to children’s development of a strong sense of wellbeing. These principles are:

1. **Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships**
2. **Partnerships**
3. **High expectations and equity**
4. **Respect for diversity**
5. **Ongoing learning and reflective practice**

By discussing every principle in details, the Framework mostly encourages the educators to create a welcoming environment where all children and families from different backgrounds are respected. It supports that all families are actively encouraged to collaborate with educators about curriculum decisions in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful.

The Frameworks lay importance on the educators’ dedications and states that early childhood educators who are committed to equity believe in all children’s capacities to succeed, regardless of diverse circumstances and abilities (FYLF, 2009). They challenge practices that provide inequities and make curriculum decisions that support inclusion and participation of all children. The Framework encourages the educators to think critically about dilemmas that can arise from diversity and take action to remedy injustice and unfairness.

In the fourth principle, respect for diversity, the Framework clearly states that there are many ways of living, being and of knowing. Children are born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities (FYLF, 2009).

Furthermore, it again promotes better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being and focuses on the learning outcome for all children. FYLF (2009) states when early childhood educators respect the diversity

of families, they are able to foster children's desire to learn and strengthen their sense of themselves as competent learners.

Eventually, the document encourages educators again to become co-learners with children, families, and value the richness of local knowledge shared by community members, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

PRACTICE

The Framework acknowledges that the principles of early childhood pedagogy underpin practice. In regard to diversity in young learners the Framework encourages educators to approach collections of pedagogical practices to promote children's learning by responsiveness to children and valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families. This will help educators to respond to children's cultural traditions and the multiple languages spoken by them, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honor differences.

In this part which can be considered as the only section that the Framework is taking the diversity of the educators into account; the framework appreciates that the educators need to demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their own cultural competence in a two way process with families and communities. Educators understand culture and the context of family as the most important part to children's sense of being and belonging, and to success in lifelong learning. This will eventually promote children's cultural competence.

FYLF (2009) notes that cultural competence is not just the awareness of cultural differences, but the ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures. One significant issue that may arise in here is that except a brief statement in above paragraph, the Framework has not put satisfactory amount of support and guidance to address the diverse backgrounds of educators and how to deal with the diversity within the educators themselves or even how families should communicate with non-native teachers. There are hundreds of teachers, group leader and teacher assistance from different diverse background being employed in Australian educational settings and this issue need to be more investigated and dealt with more understanding of their cultural competences as well. To support this notion Cochran-Smith &

Zeichner (2005) observe that much of the arguments for increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of the educators to reflect the diversity of the student population are based on the belief that a diverse teaching force is good for all children and the health of the democracy. Cochran-Smith & Zeichner (2005) further lay more importance on the diversity in educators by stating that teachers of different races and ethnicities can better prepare children for life in a multicultural society like Australia and United States.

In many sections in the documents in regard to the children and students diversity, the Framework encompasses cultural competence in being aware of one's own world view, developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences, gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views, and developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures. However, it does not adequately include educators' population.

Assessment for learning

The key focus of the Framework on learning assessments corroborate clearly that all children demonstrate their learning in different ways. Methods to assessment that are culturally and linguistically relevant to the intellectual capabilities of children will show their abilities and strengths. Inclusive assessment practices with children and their families demonstrates respect for diversity, helps educators make better sense of what they have observed and supports learning for both children and adults (FYLF, 2009).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Framework holds the highest expectations for all children's learning in their early years. It conveys these expectations through the five Learning Outcomes in which diversity as a big idea has been frequently looked upon. It explicitly explains how the three elements of the Framework combine to guide curriculum decision-making and assessment to promote children's learning. In below, how diversity has been demonstrated in each outcome will be briefly discussed:

OUTCOME 1:

- Children feel safe, secure, supported and they knowledgeable and confident self identities

The framework states that children learn about themselves, about their social and cultural heritage, about the impact of their personal beliefs

and values, and construct their own identity within the context of their families and communities (FYLF, 2009). Educators promote this outcome when they build upon culturally valued child rearing practices. This outcome is evident when children share views of their culture with the other children and educators use their home language to construct meaning without compromising their cultural identities (FYLF, 2009).

OUTCOME 2:

- Children respond to diversity with respect

FYLF (2009) notes children's different ways of belonging with people, country and communities improves their learning outcomes which reflect the values, traditions and practices of their families and communities. They become aware and react in positive ways to similarities, differences between people and respect different ways of being and doing. Educators promote this outcome when they reflect on their own responses to diversity by exposing children to different languages and dialects and encourage appreciation of linguistic diversity. They explore with children their ideas about diversity, culture, heritage, backgrounds and traditions of each child within the context of their community.

OUTCOME 3:

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing

The Framework clearly notices that wellbeing incorporates both physical and psychological aspects and is central to belonging, being and becoming. By acknowledging diversity and each child's cultural and social identity, and responding sensitively to their emotional needs, educators increase children's confidence and sense of wellbeing. Educators promote this outcome when they show genuine affection, understanding and respect for all children by welcoming them and their families sharing aspects of their culture and spiritual lives.

OUTCOME 4:

- Children are confident and involved learners

Educators promote this learning when they explore the diversity of cultures and social identities and promote in children a strong sense of who they are and their connectedness to others – a shared identity as Australians. They appreciate that competence is not tied to any particular language, dialect or culture.

OUTCOME 5:

- Children are effective communicators

In this section the Framework has laid stress on the diversity of the language spoken at home. DIMA (2007) writes that about 200 languages are spoken in Australia. This makes it clearly very difficult to the educators to understand all these languages. Yet, as children communicate and interact verbally and non-verbally with others for many purposes, they give cultural signals that they are listening to and understanding what is said to them. It can be nodding, pointing or moving their head from one side to other. In the end, they all initiate Standard Australian English and home language conversations and demonstrate the ability to meet the listeners' needs. Educators promote this learning when they value children's linguistic background and encourage the use of and acquisition of home languages and Standard Australian English.

EARLY CHILDHOOD PEDAGOGY AND SOCIO-CULTURAL THEORIES

When educators construct respectful and caring relationships with children and families, they are able to work together to design curriculum and learning experiences relevant to children in their local, social and cultural context. As in this document, Soviet developmental/educational psychologist, Lev Vygotsky's beliefs have been repeatedly observed while addressing diversity.

The connection between socio-cultural processes happening in society, and mental processes in every individual have been approached fairly in various parts of the document. The Framework strongly promotes Vygotsky's beliefs concerning the socio-cultural context of development in the early childhood. To support this notion, Hill, Stremmel, and Fu (2005) observe that Vygotsky's theory pays particular attention to the socio-cultural context of development, and how development cannot be separate from social and cultural activities. The Framework promotes this by asking educators to draw upon these theories that emphasize the central role of the families and cultural groups in children's learning and provide insight into social and cultural contexts of learning and development. In addition, the Framework indicates that different theories about early childhood inform approaches to children's learning and development. It encourages the educators to draw upon a range of perspectives in their work which may include post-structuralism theories that offer insights into issues of power, equity and social justice in early childhood settings.

INCLUSION

The document clearly states that inclusion involves taking into account all children's social, cultural and linguistic diversity such as abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location, in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children's experiences and differences are recognized and valued.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, diversity as "big idea" has been addressed sufficiently in the whole document. The Framework has specified that the current environment of Australian society stipulate inclusion and respect for diversity and equity in early childhood education. That education is for all children and families with various cultural and ethnical backgrounds. The vision the Framework has worked hard to express is an educational approach in the early childhood education which helps to thwart social exclusion in early childhood settings. Simultaneously, as the migration of people to Australia has increased the population diversity, diverseness has highlighted the need for more educators with diverse backgrounds and more inter-cultural and diversity research. However, the Framework should have discussed the theoretical underpinnings that have based the diversity in early childhood education more explicitly. It should have utilized some hints or tools to inspire the educators to conducting further research, studies, and to developing diversity in early childhood teaching field.

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Thank you.
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