



Reflecting On Pedagogy



1. Pedagogical Intent

What is the purpose of this learning experience?

- ☒ Foster emotional safety and regulation
- ☐ Amplify child voice and agency
- ☐ Support developmental milestones
- ☐ Embed cultural responsiveness
- ☐ Encourage inquiry and exploration

This experience was designed to foster emotional regulation and peer connection through sensory-rich play. By offering water beads, calming music, and soft lighting, we aimed to create a space where children could explore textures, express feelings, and co-regulate with peers.

2. Theoretical Alignment

Which pedagogical approach informs this practice?

- ☐ Play-Based Learning
- ☒ Reggio Emilia
- ☒ Socio-Cultural Theory (Vygotsky)
- ☐ Constructivist (Piaget)
- ☐ Trauma-Informed Practice
- ☐ Montessori / HighScope / Forest School

This practice draws on socio-cultural and trauma-informed pedagogies, particularly Vygotsky's emphasis on co-construction and the Reggio Emilia view of the environment as a third teacher. By embedding child voice into the setup and allowing children to rearrange materials, we honoured their agency and cultural knowledge.

3. Learning Environment Design

How is the space prepared to support this pedagogy?

- ☒ Emotionally safe and predictable
- ☐ Culturally inclusive and sensory-friendly
- ☐ Rich in open-ended materials
- ☐ Reflective of children's interests and identities

The environment was intentionally designed to be emotionally safe and sensory-friendly. Soft cushions, natural light, and calming scents created a soothing atmosphere. Materials were accessible at child height, with visual cues and photo prompts to support autonomy.

4. Child Voice & Participation

How are children involved in planning?

- ☒ Child-led inquiries or provocations
- ☐ Captioned documentation of child thinking
- ☐ Emotional check-ins or co-regulation rituals
- ☐ Family input and cultural storytelling

Children co-designed the play invitation by selecting materials and naming the experience "Squishy World." Their ideas were documented using caption kits, with quotes like "It feels like jelly rain!" displayed alongside photos.

5. Educator Strategies

What intentional teaching moves are used?

- ☒ Scaffolding through open-ended questions
- ☐ Emotion coaching and co-regulation
- ☐ Modeling respectful dialogue and problem-solving
- ☐ Observing and documenting learning trajectories

Educators used open-ended questions ("What might happen if we mix these?"), emotion coaching ("I see you're frustrated—can I help?"), and modeling of respectful dialogue. Observations were recorded using trauma-informed documentation tools, noting emotional cues and peer interactions.

6. Outcomes & Impact

Which EYLF outcomes are supported?

- ☒ Outcome 1: Identity
- ☐ Outcome 2: Community
- ☒ Outcome 3: Wellbeing
- ☐ Outcome 4: Learning
- ☒ Outcome 5: Communication

This experience supported Outcome 1 (Identity) by affirming children's emotional expressions and cultural stories, and Outcome 3 (Wellbeing) through co-regulation and sensory play. Outcome 5 (Communication) was evident in children's storytelling and captioned documentation.

7. Next Steps & Adaptations

How will this pedagogy evolve?

- ☒ Extend inquiry or project
- ☒ Introduce new materials or provocations
- ☐ Reflect with families or colleagues
- ☐ Adjust for trauma-informed or sensory needs

Next week, we'll extend the experience by introducing natural elements like leaves and stones, based on children's interest in "forest jelly." We'll invite families to share calming rituals from home, and adapt the environment to include a visual schedule for predictability.

What will I do differently next time?

Next time, I will introduce a visual schedule and emotion cards earlier in the day to support smoother transitions and emotional regulation. I'll also offer a choice between quiet sensory play and group storytelling.