

MID-WEST EARLY YEARS GENDER EQUALITY



THE PROBLEM OF FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence can happen to anyone, in any community.

Family violence includes violent, threatening, or any other form of behaviour that coerces or controls a family member, or causes that family member to be fearful. It can include physical violence, sexual violence, financial abuse, stalking and harassment, isolation, emotional and psychological abuse, spiritual abuse, and honour-based violence (OurWatch).

Family violence in Geraldton is **significantly higher** than the state, metro and regional rates.



PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE

Family violence is preventable.

Primary prevention is about **stopping violence before it starts**.

Research over the last decade, has helped us identify the contributing factors that are common across all acts of family violence – things like attitudes that excuse or minimise violence, disrespect, rigid gender roles, and gender discrimination. To end family violence, we start by shifting the social conditions that drive family violence.

Everyone has a part to play. Prevention efforts are most effective when they are carried out across all areas of peoples' lives: where they live, work, study and socialise.

WHY IT MATTERS IN THE EARLY YEARS

The early years is a critical time when gender roles and stereotypes are first formed.

OurWatch reports that:



children become aware of gender stereotypes from as young as 18 months



children younger than 2 years of age are conscious of the social expectations that come with gender, through their observations of the world around them



by 2-3 years of age, children will be able to identify their own gender

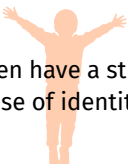
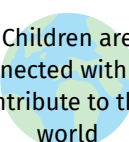
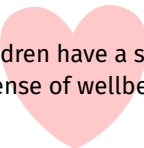
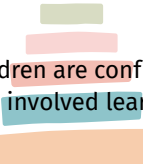



by 5 years of age, children feel pressure to comply with stereotypical behaviours

The beliefs, understandings and social expectations children form in their earliest years influence **every aspect** of their future.

Early Years Learning Development Framework

The teaching of gender equity is integral to the Early Years Learning Development Framework (EYLDF) - Belonging, Being, Becoming.

Learning Outcome 1	Learning Outcome 2	Learning Outcome 3	Learning Outcome 4	Learning Outcome 5
 Children have a strong sense of identity	 Children are connected with and contribute to their world	 Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	 Children are confident and involved learners	 Children are effective communicators

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WHAT IS A GENDER LENS?

A gender lens is a way of looking at everyday experiences—from play and routines to language and learning spaces—that helps educators notice how expectations about “girls” and “boys” might shape children’s opportunities. Using a gender lens means pausing to ask: Does this activity, environment or interaction support all children equally? It helps us create spaces where every child can explore, learn and express themselves freely, without being limited by stereotypes.



HOW CAN MY SETTING HELP?

Research indicates that the early years is when positive influences on children’s understanding of gender norms have the most impact. (UNICEF)

By applying a gender lens to your environment, language and planning, you can ensure you are providing inclusive and safe spaces for all early years children that **actively challenge traditional gendered stereotypes**. The level of engagement from families that occurs uniquely in the early years means not only will you support the development of **personal identities**, you also have the opportunity to help shift the **generational perception** of gender, which will set a strong foundation for future generations to experience a society that is free from violence and inequality.

HOW MEYGE CAN SUPPORT YOUR SETTING

It can sometimes be challenging to apply a gender lens to your environment, language and planning, as most if not all of us have been raised in gendered societies. The MEYGE Project has developed a suite of tools, resources and training to help your team reflect on all aspects of your educational setting and take steps to create a more equitable setting for all.

*In the early childhood setting curriculum means “all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development”.
[adapted from Te Whariki]*

Gender Equality All Access Guide
Self-Reflection Tool for Early Years Services

Child Reflection Cards

Gender Equity Action Plan

Training & Professional Development

Let’s Play! kits

Suggest Book Lists for children, families & services

For more information or to discuss how the MEYGE project can support your setting, contact Desert Blue Connect:
info@desertblueconnect.org.au