

## Engaging children e-learning suite

This suite of courses offers a range of practice skills for working with children in relation to their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing. These skills are underpinned by a commitment to accountability to children's experience and enabling children's participation in the therapeutic process through attending to children's strengths, skills, know-how, values, and preferences.

This suite has been developed to support practitioners to develop a range of practice skills for working with children in ways that are helpful and hopeful, and that are further supported by child-focused supervision, reflective practice and an organisational authorising environment.

Broadly, this suite of courses will support practitioners to:

- understand the importance of engaging children in therapeutic practice for children, families, practitioners and organisations;
- become familiar with some key perspective shifts that practitioners can implement to place the child at the centre of their work;
- increase their confidence in the practice skills of beginning to engage children;
- increase their confidence in the practice skills of exploring children's strengths, skills, know-how and values;
- increase their confidence to explore children's perspectives on the problems they are facing.

### Who is the suite of courses for?

This suite of courses is designed for all practitioners who work with children, particularly those where this may not be a regular focus but is within their scope of practice. General practitioners, paediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, allied health professionals, child protection workers, social workers, child mental health practitioners and counsellors may all find this suite of courses of interest and relevance to their work.



## What are the courses about?

The below three courses each present a range of practice skills that are adaptable to diverse service contexts, applicable to a wide range of presenting concerns brought by children and families, and are flexible enough to be used alongside of other practice modalities and interventions. The courses feature interviews with practitioners, video demonstrations of experienced practitioners working with child and adult actors, reflective exercises, reflections from parents, and the opportunity for course participants to contribute additional content.



### ***Engaging with children: (45–60 minutes)***

This course introduces practitioners to the concept of engaging children as partners in practice, as a foundation for responding to child mental health concerns. Through this course, learners will become familiar with the key values that underpin engaging with children and consider how these relate to the values and practice ethics they bring to this area of their work. Learners will also be introduced to the key shifts in position and perspective required to effectively engage children as partners in practice.



### ***Engaging children: Good beginnings (2–3 hours)***

This course will assist practitioners to develop a range of practice skills to draw on at the beginning of working with children in relation to their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.



### ***Engaging children: Rich pictures (1–2 hours)***

This course will assist practitioners to develop a range of practice skills for beginning to explore children's strengths, skills, know-how, and values that can provide a foundation for reducing the impact of problems on their mental health and social and emotional wellbeing.



### ***Engaging children: Shrinking problems (1–2 hours)***

This course will assist practitioners to develop a range of practice skills for working with children to understand the child's perspective on the problems they are contending with, and begin to reduce their impact on the child's mental health and wellbeing.

## Why was this suite of courses developed?

It was developed to promote the enabling of children's active participation in service delivery, and in particular therapeutic practice, in ways that acknowledge, expand and draw on children's agency in helpful and hopeful ways. It explores what these intentions might mean for seventeen areas of therapeutic practice with children.

## How was this suite developed?

A literature review was initially undertaken into what Australian children had reported as being important to them in terms of how adult practitioners seek to work with them. Additional literature was reviewed, child and family practitioners were consulted and interviewed. The content was then reviewed by Emerging Minds and Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) staff, and tested via a presentation to practitioners from diverse contexts and a Child Family Community Australia (CFCA) webinar.

## What are the learning outcomes of these courses?

### *Engaging with children*

In this course you will work towards:

Understanding:

- the meaning of 'engaging children as partners in practice' and why it is important for children, families, communities, practitioners and organisations
- how 'engaging children as partners in practice' can provide a foundation for responding to concerns about the effects of 'adult problems' on children's mental health and wellbeing

- the practitioner position/perspective that is required to do this work well.

Envisaging:

- the possibilities and benefits of engaging children as partners in practice in your own context
- some of the potential challenges and dilemmas that accompany this work.

Beginning:

- to take steps to adopt the practitioner position/ perspective that supports engaging with children as partners in practice

### *Engaging with children: Good beginnings*

In this course you will work towards developing your confidence to utilise a range of practice skills in:

- Creating a child-friendly, welcoming physical and emotional space.
- Deciding whether to meet with children and parents separately, together, or a combination of both.
- Talking about your role and the purpose of the consultation in ways that resonate with a child.
- Talking with children about privacy and confidentiality.
- Exploring children's experience of safety.
- Beginning to engage the child in your work together.

### *Engaging children: Rich pictures*

In this course you will work towards developing your confidence to utilise a range of practice skills in:

- Enabling collaboration with children to be present throughout your work.
- Beginning conversations with children about their strengths, skills and know-how.
- Beginning conversations to parents about the child's strengths and skills and know-how.
- Responding when children say very little.
- Responding when the conversation does not go well.
- Utilising toys to support engagement with children.

### *Engaging children: Shrinking problems*

In this course you will work towards developing your confidence to utilise a range of practice skills in:

- Enable children to describe problems in their own terms and in ways that are meaningful and useful.
- Understanding children's views on how problems are impacting on their lives, and noticing the limits of these impacts so that children's strengths, skills and know-how can be explored.
- Inviting children to describe why problems are problematic for them so that what is important to them becomes more visible.
- Ensuring problems are understood in the social context of children's lives as a way to lessen experiences of shame.

Visit the courses at: [emergingminds.com.au/training](https://emergingminds.com.au/training)