

Deep Dive into the Safety Cup



OVERVIEW

Deep Dive into the Safety Cup® is an evidence-informed professional learning workshop that supports educators to understand how children and young people experience and seek safety.

Grounded in the Phoenix Cups® Framework and contemporary neuroscience, the workshop explores how physiological and psychological needs for security, predictability, rest, nourishment, movement, sensory regulation and trust influence behaviour, wellbeing and learning. Educators examine safety as a relational and environmental experience, rather than a compliance-based outcome.

Participants explore the neuroscience of emotion and the role of sensory development, routines, transitions, relationships, movement and emotional literacy in helping children and young people feel safe. Using real scenarios and practical strategies, educators learn to identify the Will to Fill™ and intentionally build the Skill to Fill™ in ways that uphold children's rights while supporting group needs.

This reflective workshop supports educators to reimagine environments, routines and interactions as opportunities to strengthen trust, stability and resilience. Participants leave equipped with practical strategies to create predictable, nurturing and flexible spaces where children and young people feel safe to learn, play and engage.

WE WILL...

- examine the Safety Cup® through the Phoenix Cups® Framework, exploring how physiological, emotional, sensory and relational needs shape behaviour, wellbeing and learning for children and young people.
- analyse real scenarios, videos and workbook activities to identify low Safety Cups and practise responsive, evidence-informed strategies that uphold safety needs and children's rights.
- explore theory, neuroscience and sensory development to understand emotional regulation, the importance of predictability, and how routines, transitions, relationships and environments foster security.
- engage in critical reflection and collaborative planning to embed Safety Cup® strategies, trust-building and predictability into everyday practice across a range of educational settings, including outside school hours care.

DELIVERY MODE OFFERINGS:

- Self-paced online course
- Full-day face-to-face session (up to 5 hours)
- Live online webinar
- After-hours in-service workshops with teams (up to 2.5 hours)

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PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES

By the end of this workshop, participants will possess:

1. A deep understanding of the Safety Cup® and how physiological, emotional and sensory needs influence children and young people's sense of security.
2. The ability to recognise the signs of an empty or emptying Safety Cup® and respond with attuned, predictable and relational strategies.
3. Confidence in designing environments, routines and rituals that balance structure with flexibility to nurture trust and stability.
4. Practical skills for supporting emotional literacy, co-regulation, and resilience-building based on neuroscience and sensory development.
5. Increased capacity to help children and young people develop the Skill to Fill™ their needs in considerate, cooperative and rights-respecting ways.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Theory of Constructed Emotion Dr Lisa Feldman Barrett

The workshop draws on Barrett's research that emotions are constructed, not innate. This underpins our focus on teaching emotional literacy, supporting sensory awareness, and creating environments that help children interpret and regulate their experiences and responses.

Self-Determination Theory Ryan & Deci

Self-Determination Theory highlights children and young people's basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. A full Safety Cup supports relatedness and physiological security, which are foundational for children and young people's wellbeing and capacity to learn.

Paediatric Occupational Therapy Angela Hanscom

Children and young people's sensory, movement and play needs are essential for healthy development, focus and emotional regulation. Children and young people seek physical input to feel grounded and secure, directly supporting the filling of their Safety Cup.

Young Minds Matter Australian Government Department of Health

Many young children experience significant emotional, behavioural and developmental challenges, with anxiety, attention difficulties and early signs of stress emerging far earlier than previously recognised.

KEY LINKS – NATIONAL

Alignment with National Quality Standard

- **QA1** – Educational Program and Practice (Element 1.1.3): Strengthens predictable, responsive routines and transitions that maximise children’s security and learning.
- **QA2** – Children’s Health and Safety (Elements 2.1.1, 2.1.3): Deepens educator capability to meet children’s needs for rest, sleep, nutrition, physical activity and emotional wellbeing.
- **QA5** – Relationships with Children (Element 5.1.1): Promotes trust-building, stability and relational approaches that enhance children’s sense of safety and belonging.

Alignment with EYLF v2.0

Principles

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships: Emphasises attunement, trust and predictability as essential foundations of safety.
- High expectations and equity: Supports equitable access to sleep, rest, nutrition, movement and emotional support.
- Holistic, integrated teaching and learning: Recognises the interconnectedness of sensory, physiological, emotional and relational needs.

Practices

- Responsive and meaningful interactions: Uses connection, co-regulation and trust-building in moments of dysregulation.
- Learning environments: Creates calm, predictable, sensory-aware environments that foster security and autonomy.

Learning Outcomes

- Outcome 1 Identity: Supports children to feel safe, valued and secure through stable, trusting relationships and predictable routines.
- Outcome 3 Wellbeing: Strengthens emotional literacy, resilience, co-regulation and healthy patterns of rest, nutrition and movement.

Alignment with MTOP v2.0

Principles

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships: Emphasises attunement, trust and predictability as essential foundations of safety.
- Equity, inclusion and high expectations: Supports equitable access to safety needs such as rest, nourishment, movement, emotional support and sensory regulation, recognising diverse needs and experiences.

Practices

- Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches: Recognises the interconnected nature of physiological, sensory, emotional and relational needs, and how these collectively shape safety, wellbeing and behaviour.
- Collaboration with children and young people: Strengthens co-regulation and shared understanding by working alongside children and young people to support safety, trust and emotional regulation.
- Play, leisure and intentionality: Uses intentional play and leisure experiences, including calm spaces, movement and sensory supports, to promote regulation, predictability and wellbeing.

Outcomes

- Outcome 1 – Children and young people have a strong sense of identity: Supports children and young people to feel safe, valued and secure through consistent relationships, trust-building interactions and predictable experiences.
- Outcome 3 – Children and young people have a strong sense of wellbeing: Builds emotional literacy, resilience and self-regulation by supporting healthy patterns of rest, nourishment, movement and sensory regulation.

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KEY LINKS – NATIONAL CONTINUED

Alignment with Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

- **Standard 1.1** – Physical, social and intellectual development: Develops understanding of how physiological, sensory and emotional needs impact behaviour and learning.
- **Standard 1.2** – Know learners and how they learn: Strengthens educators' ability to identify signs of unmet safety needs and respond with evidence-informed strategies.
- **Standard 4.1** – Support student participation: Builds skills to create predictable, supportive environments where all children feel safe to engage.

Alignment with National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

- **Principle 1** – Child safety and wellbeing are embedded in organisational culture: Supports environments where children's physical and psychological safety guide decisions.
- **Principle 2** – Children are safe, informed and participate: Helps children express needs, understand emotions, and participate in routines with agency and predictability.
- **Principle 3** – Families and communities are informed and involved: Strengthens communication around sleep, nutrition, sensory needs and wellbeing.
- **Principle 5** – People working with children are suitable and supported: Develops educators' capacity to provide attuned, consistent and safe relational practice.
- **Principle 6** – Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused: Promotes needs-based responses to behaviour and distress.

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KEY LINKS – QLD

Alignment with the Kindy Uplift Key Priority Areas

Culturally Safe, Inclusive & Responsive Programs

- Promotes predictable, trusting relationships that honour children’s backgrounds and lived experiences.
- Ensures all routines, rhythms and rituals including sleep, food and transitions, reflect the child first and consider family, cultural and individual needs.
- Strengthens respectful communication and safe participation.

Social and Emotional Learning

- Builds educator confidence in co-regulation and emotional literacy.
- Strengthens children’s resilience, trust and sense of security.
- Supports predictable yet flexible spaces where children can manage emotions safely.

Physicality

- Highlights movement, proprioception, vestibular play and active learning for regulation.
- Promotes environments that allow children to climb, balance, run and explore safely.

Executive Function

- Supports play, predictability and calm environments that reduce cognitive load.
- Builds children’s ability to plan, wait, organise, transition and regulate.

Mathematics & Numeracy

- Supports predictable rhythms, sequences and routines, helping children understand order, time and pattern.

Alignment with QKLG

Wellbeing

- Deepens understanding of physical, sensory, emotional and mental health needs.
- Builds children’s capacity for resilience, co-regulation and emotional safety.

Identity

- Promotes trusting relationships that help children feel secure, confident and connected.
- Encourages predictable, stable environments where children develop a strong sense of self.

Active Learning

- Encourages movement, sensory exploration and predictable play environments to enhance engagement.
- Supports focus, persistence and curiosity through regulation and stability.

Connectedness

- Supports belonging through consistent routines, relational interactions and community-responsive practices.
- Values children’s cultural and family contexts in meeting safety needs.

KEY LINKS – VIC

School Readiness Funding Menu

Please note this workshop is not on the SRF menu. It can however be utilised under flexible funding provisions. For more information on flexible funding go to the Victorian Department of Education website here:



For more information on the Phoenix Support SRF offerings, including those on the menu as well as flexible funding options, head to our website here:



Alignment with the SRF Priority Areas for use under Flexible Funding Options

Access & Inclusion

- Promotes equitable access to rest, movement, nutrition, sensory supports and emotional safety.
- Reduces barriers for children experiencing anxiety, dysregulation or unpredictability.
- Builds educator capacity for inclusive, needs-led responses.

Communication (language, literacy and numeracy)

- Enhances emotional vocabulary and children's ability to express needs.
- Strengthens serve-and-return communication through trust and attunement

Wellbeing (Social & Emotional)

- Builds skills in co-regulation, emotional literacy, resilience and trust.
- Helps educators identify unmet needs and respond with relational, predictable strategies.

Alignment with the VEYLDF

Outcome 1: Identity

- Builds emotionally safe, predictable environments where children feel secure and valued.
- Strengthens children's confidence by meeting their needs for stability, trust and attuned relationships.

Outcome 3: Wellbeing

- Deepens understanding of stress, emotions, sensory needs and co-regulation.
- Builds children's resilience, emotional regulation and physical wellbeing through movement, rest and nourishment.

Outcome 4: Learning

- Enhances engagement by reducing stress and promoting safety, stability and curiosity.
- Supports children to participate confidently in routines, play and collaborative experiences.