CHCECE001
Develop cultural competence

Learner guide

One World for Children Pty Ltd

Aspire learning resources

CHCECE001

Develop cultural competence

Release 2

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.2

Aspire learning resources

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Release 2, version 2.1	February 2018	First release
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CHCECE001 Develop cultural competence, Release 2

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE001 Develop cultural competence,* Release 2. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help.
Summaries	▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Definitions

Familiarise yourself with the following key terms used in this learner guide. Definitions are from oxforddictionaries.com unless otherwise specified.

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person: someone who is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person and who is accepted as such by the Indigenous community in which they live (https://aspirelr.link/snaicc).

Bias: the inclination or prejudice for or against one person or group, especially in a way considered unfair.

Cultural heritage: something that is passed down from preceding generations; the legacy of physical artefacts (cultural property) and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.

Cultural identity: the identity of a group or culture, or of an individual as far as one is influenced by one's belonging to a group or culture.

Culture: the ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society.

Discrimination: the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age or sex.

Diversity: a range of different things.

Equity: the quality of being fair and impartial.

Identity: the fact of being who or what a person or thing is.

Prejudice: a preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.

Racism: the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities or qualities specific to that race, especially as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races.

Stereotype: a widely held, but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular person or thing.

Traditions: the transmission of customs or beliefs from generation to generation, or the fact of being passed on in this way.

Values: principles or standards of behaviour; one's judgment of what is important in life.

Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

1A **Reflect on your cultural heritage**

1B **Understand cultural competence**

Reflecting on your own cultural identity and biases

Each individual has a unique lifestyle which is determined by a range of factors, including their:

- customs
- religious beliefs
- political beliefs
- background
- upbringing
- experiences.

To work successfully in a cross-cultural workplace, you must reflect on your own cultural values and understand how they influence your thinking and actions. You need to ensure you are working successfully toward an attitude of acceptance of other peoples' values, which may be different to yours.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard		
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework		**My Time, Our Place**
Principles		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice		
	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes		
	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to 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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1A Reflect on your cultural heritage

Before you reflect on your own cultural heritage, you need to understand what the term 'culture' means. For many, culture is about the country they are from, the language they speak and their physical features, such as or the colour of their skin. However, culture includes much more than this. It is influenced by the set of beliefs, values and traditions that have been instilled since birth through socialisation, and is influenced by family and the wider society.

Culture

Culture involves rituals, practices, stories, customs, beliefs and values. It includes how we live our lives, what we believe in and the values we hold dear. It influences goals in life and beliefs about others, and may change slowly over time through experiences that formulate views and understandings.

You may not realise your own culture until you are removed from it. This may occur when you are exposed to new experiences or new people who live in different ways to you.

Examining your own culture and how it has developed will help you to understand how the culture of others has evolved, and how important beliefs and values change to form new ways of viewing the world.

To become a culturally competent educator, it is important to respect and celebrate diversity.

Family history

If you research your own family history, you may identify many traits of your ancestors that are evident in your family's behaviours. For example, you may discover that your ancestors have lived through tragedies or triumphed against the odds. You may discover that your own attitudes are linked with this history.

Added to this is your own set of life experiences. Who you are today and the values and beliefs you hold have been shaped by these events, your family and your environment.

Here are some examples of how an individual's family background and environment influence their current values and beliefs.

Example 1	Phoebe was raised in a family that ran its own business. Phoebe and her siblings all worked in the business, where they learnt early about having a strong work ethic. Phoebe was always on time for her shifts and concentrated on her tasks, completing each one before beginning another. Now, as a mother, she promotes the same values and work ethics with her children, ensuring they are punctual and always focused on the job at hand.

Example 2	Sabine has always been surrounded by a large extended family. She spent a lot of her childhood with her aunts, cousins and grandparents. Sabine views family as being all of these people and always seeks advice from many of her extended family members when she is unsure what to do in a situation. Sabine always prioritises time with her family and never misses a gathering. She has taken on board many of the beliefs and values she has been exposed to throughout her life from close contact with her extended family. She feels enriched by the variety of viewpoints and ways of operating that have been modelled by them.
Example 3	Cole was raised in a family where education was highly valued and encouraged, as it was expected that it would lead to constructive thought and personal growth. Cole sees providing a good education for his own children as a huge priority for his family.

Cultural identity

Cultural identity is not only influenced by family background and the environment in which you were raised. The factors that influence cultural identity vary between different cultures, as detailed in the following table.

Factors	Description
Beliefs and customs	Every family has its own beliefs and customs, which reflect the family's values. These values are associated with a race, religion or other cultural aspect. Some families believe leisure time is the most important thing in their life; some value education; others place a high value on money, wealth and material possessions.
Race and ethnicity	Race and ethnicity refers to other members of someone's country of origin or ethnic group. Australia is home to many people who have different beliefs, lifestyles, racial and ethnic backgrounds.
Language	Australia hosts many languages, both verbal and nonverbal. Nonverbal languages include sign language, such as Auslan and nonverbal social customs, such as bowing. Each language should be respected as a valid form of communication. Some people may not be able to express themselves in the same language as you, but this does not mean they can't express themselves or do not have opinions, ideas and desires.
Religion	Religion can be a dominating aspect of family life and has a strong influence on the norms, beliefs, values and customs that families live by.

Life experiences, personal history and experiences of trauma	All people you make contact with are affected by their life experiences, many of which they will not share with you. Traumatic experiences can affect a person's outlook and the way they interact with others. In some cases, trauma can be easily noticed; for example, a person may have visible scars. There are other forms of trauma that may not be so obvious, such as an experience of war, death of a loved one, or a serious illness or accident. When you consider trauma as an influence in the cultural development of an individual or family, remember that many factors may be unknown to you and will require time and a strong trusting relationship to be revealed.
Family structure, gender, relationships and sexuality	Families have very different structures. The structure may include: ▶ parents who are heterosexual or homosexual ▶ families with one parent, or with two or more parents ▶ extended families, where a number of generations reside together or close by ▶ blended families, where more than one family group comes together and/or where custody is shared. By acknowledging different family structures, you can be sensitive to needs, respect the family and encourage children to feel valued. By talking openly about the different ways families are made up, children can feel included and can learn about the way others live. Treat children as individuals and use non-stereotypical interactions so that you can support them in discovering their own identity.
Age	Older people have adapted to many changes over their lives and may hold different values to younger generations. Some children will have contact with older adults, such as their grandparents, and others won't. Some children are brought up by older adults, such as their grandparents. The age of a child's parent may also influence the strategies they use to raise their child. The interactions children have with older people builds on each child's experiences and knowledge of the world.
Ability	People have diverse interests, which lead to developmental differences. One person may enjoy sport, and will be active and show strong hand-eye coordination. Another may prefer to read books, and will demonstrate high literacy skills. Some people are born with or develop a disability or impairment, but may develop skills in other areas. For example, someone with vision impairment may have excellent hearing or someone with an intellectual disability may be a talented sportsperson. Ability may also influence the language a person uses or how they interact with others.

Practice task 1

1. Create a short background story about your life based on significant events and environmental factors. Include how the story defines your attitudes and expectations now.

2. Think about your parents or grandparents and their parental values. You may need to ask them about these things to learn more about yourself.
   a. Do they have the same family values as you?
   b. Did they use the same disciplinary techniques?
   c. Are their lifestyles the same or similar to yours?
   d. Was the family structure the same as yours is today?

3. Extend your cultural snapshot by providing more information about your lifestyle, environmental factors and experiences. Remember to only include things you feel comfortable sharing. Identify significant influences linking to your heritage, including:
   - beliefs and customs
   - race and ethnicity
   - language
   - religion
   - life experiences
   - family structure
   - age
   - ability.

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1B Understand cultural competence

To appreciate the need for cultural competence, it is necessary to understand Australia's history of migration. The first human population in Australia was made up of Aboriginal people, who arrived in Australia around 60,000 years ago via India, Malaysia, Borneo and Papua New Guinea.

In 1788, the first European settlers arrived in Botany Bay, New South Wales in 11 ships carrying around 1,500 convicts and marines. By 1868, around 162,000 European convicts had settled in Australia.

Today, Australia recognises the importance of multicultural immigration. People from any country who meet immigration laws — regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, culture, religion or language — may apply without prejudice to live here.

Australia's total population is over 24 million people, with 3.3% being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island descent. According to Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for 2016, more than 28 per cent of Australians were born overseas, which indicates a strong link between the Australian population and the rest of the world. The number of people immigrating to Australia is increasing each year.

Cultural competence

Given this multicultural environment, it is essential that we build cultural competence. Cultural competence is the ability to effectively communicate and interact with people of different cultures.

Building cultural competence involves understanding your own culture and the different cultures of others. It means acknowledging the similarities and differences between cultures and breaking down stereotypes and biases.

Being aware of your own world view allows you to develop positive attitudes towards others, gain knowledge of different cultural practices and develop cross-cultural communication skills to use in your workplace and beyond. Understanding that culture is embedded in and meaningful to each individual allows you to work with children and families in a fair way that upholds principles of social justice and human rights.

Cultural competence allows us to take a stand when we encounter racism or bias. Research has shown that even young toddlers can show prejudiced behaviour and attitudes. Children learn through modelling and imitation, so your behaviours and attitudes have an impact on how children behave.

Children need to be taught respect and how to interact positively with adults and peers, including those who are different from themselves. Educators who are culturally competent are able to develop a culturally relevant and enriching curriculum. It also teaches children to reject bias and stand up for themselves and others who may be experiencing discrimination. When you bring this cultural competence to your work role, children can learn and experience acceptance for who they are. It encourages children to question behaviours that do not reflect respect or acceptance of others and diversity.

One of the best ways to develop cultural competence is to be curious about others and avoid making conclusions based on assumptions and generalisations. As you explore diversity and culture with children, competence develops.

Watch this video about developing cultural competency.

Skills to ensure cultural competence

Take the following steps to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes required for cultural competence.

Gain knowledge of different cultures	It is important to gain knowledge of the diversity in your local environment as this is what your families and children will be exposed to in their day-to-day lives. Many local groups support people who have similar interests, backgrounds and cultural beliefs. You may like to approach local community groups to gain new insights and information. Some community groups may invite you to share their culture. This is an excellent opportunity to learn, and you may be able to share this experience in the organisation as part of an excursion or incursion. This type of connection gives you a broader picture of cultural beliefs and practices. To gain deeper insight, engage in meaningful discussions with families at your service to ensure you are aware of their expectations and goals for their children. These conversations can allow you to understand what they consider to be important so you can support this in your program. Educational opportunities arise when parents are included in decisions about the curriculum and actively encouraged to participate in the program. Families can provide suggestions for culturally responsive activities for their children and can contribute relevant materials or artefacts that may provide a richer learning environment for everyone. You may also contact services that provide professional development opportunities in the area of cultural competence to further extend your skills and knowledge.
Model respectful behaviour	Part of your role is to help families feel welcome and respected. Your attitude toward others is reflected in your day-to-day interactions with families, children and colleagues, and these behaviours may be imitated by children. Provide an inclusive environment for children and develop respectful ways of supporting children's involvement in the program. Model respectful communication, such as listening and responding. This will be observed by children and incorporated in the way they respond to each other. Look for teachable moments where concepts of respect, fairness and equity can be shared with children in a developmentally appropriate way.

Reflect on your own culture	Ongoing reflective practice is a key skill that educators need to improve and grow in their practice. Reflective practice: ▶ allows you to examine your own beliefs and values ▶ helps you to develop an awareness of others ▶ enables you to think about why you behave in a certain way, and what is important to you as an educator ▶ assists you to identify any bias you may have, and develop a more inclusive view ▶ enhances your cultural competency.
Develop a positive attitude	Consider what in your culture is most important to your role as an educator, and focus on this. You may find that care practices and basic child-rearing beliefs are a good place to start as these are important to parents and help children feel a sense of belonging. As you develop cultural competence, you will celebrate the similarities and differences between yourself and others. You will recognise that there are many different ways of seeing the world and interacting with it. You will also develop responsive behaviours that ensure the uniqueness of each child and family is understood and represented in the environment you create.

Use inclusive language

The way you use language conveys a message to others about yourself and your attitudes. When you use language that is inclusive, you are being unbiased.

Biased language indicates that you value people differently based on their gender, race, age, economic status, sexual orientation, religion, politics or any other personal detail or characteristic. Unbiased language avoids any stereotyping or discrimination, so is objective rather than subjective language.

When you use words that are inclusive, you are also being politically correct. Unbiased, politically correct language avoids the use of words and phrases that are:

- racist
- sexist
- discriminatory.
- stereotypical
- derogatory

To be sure your language is unbiased and politically correct, think about whether it is possible that the words you use exclude a person or make a person feel less valued than others.

Try not to make generalisations. The words you choose should relate to the topic being discussed and should not be used to label individuals. For example, only include information like gender and physical characteristics when it is relevant to the discussion.

Example

Avoiding biased communications

Someone is telling a story. The person telling the story labels people by personal information, such as their gender, skin colour, age and health status. All of these factors are irrelevant to the issue being discussed:

'Two ladies from the morning shift accused the cleaner of not doing his job. Marilyn, the black educator, and Margaret, the cook, accused Mr Engerrand of not cleaning properly. Mr Engerrand is 42 years old and an epileptic, and he says that he has had no complaints before.'

The same information can be told in an unbiased way:

'Two staff from the morning shift accused the cleaner of not doing his job. Marilyn, an educator, and Margaret, the cook, accused Mr Engerrand of not cleaning properly. Mr Engerrand says that he has had no complaints before.'

Frameworks and legislation

The National Quality Framework (NQF), including the National Quality Standard (NQS), *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework* (EYLF), *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOP), and your service policies and procedures all support you to work toward developing cultural competence. Your pedagogy (the way you work with children) should demonstrate acceptance of others. This is supported by the principles and practices in the frameworks that emphasise respect for diversity and the need to develop cultural competence. Because they affect your daily work, these NQF components are available to you in every education and care organisation. You can also find them on the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) website: http://aspirelr.link/nationalqualityframework

In addition, anti-discrimination legislation should be represented in your organisational policies and procedures. This legislation includes the following Commonwealth Acts:

- *Age Discrimination Act 2004*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*
- *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*

Practice task 2

1. Read the following table and rate yourself out of 5 for each skill, where 0 means you have not obtained the skill and 5 means you are very skilled.

Rating	Skill
0 1 2 3 4 5	I reflect on my own skills and knowledge often.
0 1 2 3 4 5	I like to learn about different cultures.
0 1 2 3 4 5	I interact with a diverse group of people.
0 1 2 3 4 5	I attend professional development opportunities aimed at developing my cultural competence.
0 1 2 3 4 5	I model interest and respect for all people.

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2. Explain how you could improve one of the skills you rated lower than 5.

3. Give an example of how you interact in a culturally competent way with each of the following groups:

   - Children
   - Families
   - Members of the local community

4. List any cultural biases you have. Include aspects of others that you find challenging or concerning. For example, you may have difficulty understanding people who have a certain accent. Consider aspects of:

   - beliefs and customs
   - race and ethnicity
   - language
   - religion
   - life experiences
   - family structure.

5. Identify whether the following statements are inclusive or if they use labelling. Give reasons for your decision.

   - 'The black man bought some plants for the children to grow.'
   - 'The child from Sudan is great at counting.'

Summary

- Your life experiences, along with your cultural heritage, impact how you view and interact with others.
- A range of factors may influence cultural identity, including:
  - beliefs and customs
  - race and ethnicity
  - language
  - religion
  - life experiences
  - family structure.
- Reflect on the potential impact your own background may have on interactions and relationships with people from other cultures.
- Ongoing reflective practice allows you to identify any skills, knowledge and attitudes you need to develop to ensure cultural competence.

Learning checkpoint 1
Reflecting on your own cultural identity

Part A

1. Write down at least **three** significant events in your family background or history that have influenced your values, beliefs and attitudes.

2. Explain how at least **three** aspects of your environment have influenced your cultural identity.

3. What impact might your own background have on interactions and relationships with people from other cultures?

4. List any skills, knowledge or attitudes you need to develop to ensure cultural competency.

Part B

Access the National Quality Standard from the ACECQA website or your organisation.

List the National Quality Standard (NQS) concepts and/or descriptors you believe support the development of cultural competence. Choose one and briefly explain how this should be reflected in your practice.

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Developing cultural competency

2B Analysing the service

Identifying and developing cultural competency

When you are sensitive to children's individual differences and aware of the impact their families and communities have on them, you can create an environment that supports children's identities, wellbeing and engagement in learning.

Each child has the right to their own cultural identity, and they should be supported to develop pride in this. This is a starting point for developing cultural competency. Respectful relationships and environments that support diversity and inclusiveness enable children to gain skills and knowledge that help them to navigate their world in a fair and just way.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

	National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
	Early Years Learning Framework	**My Time, Our Place**
	Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
	Practice	
	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
	Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
✓	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

2A Developing cultural competency

The EYLF and MTOP both stress the importance of building a strong sense of identity among children. They embed the underlying principle of respecting diversity, and include developing cultural competency. As this awareness of cultural diversity becomes apparent in the learning environment, children develop a sense of belonging, which enables them to feel safe and secure, and supports their overall development and learning.

What is cultural diversity?

Cultural diversity includes the wide variety of ways we live and learn in society. It is about recognising the uniqueness of all people.

Cultural diversity is reflected in:

- the type of food someone eats
- the clothes they wear
- the music they listen to
- the language they speak
- attitudes about people's rights
- expectations of others.

Watch this video about culturally diverse behaviours.

Acknowledging cultural diversity gives you the opportunity to grow and explore other ways of being, and see things from a variety of perspectives. Awareness of cultural diversity can help you to be more respectful and equitable in the way you work with children and families.

To create culturally responsive and inclusive programs, educators need to be open to accepting differences and respecting multiple ways of being.

Here are some examples of how cultural diversity is taken into account in education and care services.

Example 1	Zheng is three years old. Her mother asks if her educators can feed her at the table at lunchtime. She believes it is important as she wants to ensure Zheng eats well and is able to grow up healthy and strong. The educators make sure that one of them is sitting with Zheng at mealtimes and continue to engage in discussions with Zheng's mother about this routine.
Example 2	Andrea has decided to put a full-length mirror into her home corner area to encourage children to explore their differences, such as differences in their height, eye colour and hair colours.
Example 3	Melissa has encouraged some of her families from non-English-speaking backgrounds to contribute recipes to enhance their menu at the centre. This will broaden the children's experiences with food and provide familiarity for others.

Getting to know families and children

Educators play a significant role in creating environments that reflect the diversity of the children and families in their programs. When you build strong relationships with families, you gain knowledge about their cultural backgrounds and practices.

Understanding who makes up a child's family, the significant people in their lives and the everyday experiences they are involved in outside of the service provides you with relevant information that supports children's learning and development. Having knowledge of the local community and networking with other relevant services and agencies ensures you are aware of the cultural diversity in the area and the impact this may have on your service.

Orientation

One of the first ways you can find out about the cultural identities of children and families in the organisation is through orientation. Orientation is an excellent opportunity for gathering and sharing information, which can form a basis for understanding each family and their expectations.

The questions in the following table may assist you to gather relevant information at orientation about children, their families and their local communities.

Child information
Language/cultural considerations ▶ What cultural practices does the child need to observe? ▶ What languages does the child speak? ▶ How long has the child lived in Australia? ▶ How well does the child communicate?
Learning and development ▶ What is the child's age? ▶ Does the child have a physical, sensory, intellectual, language or psychiatric disability? ▶ Are there behavioural or psychological factors you need to be aware of? ▶ What are the child's language, literacy and numeracy needs? ▶ How does the child learn best? ▶ What experience has the child had of previous learning environments? ▶ What experience has the child had of working in groups?
Health and wellbeing ▶ Does the child take any medications? ▶ What activities does the child engage in at home?

Family information

Living arrangements

- What is the family structure?
- Who lives with the child?
- Who cares for the child?
- Does the family live in a rural or remote location?
- How does the parents' work impact the life of the child, e.g. working long hours, or undertaking casual or shift work?

Boundaries and discipline

- What disciplinary methods are used at home?
- Who sets limits and are there particular expectations?

Customs and beliefs

- Are there particular routines the family follows?
- Are there set times for routines or is there flexibility?
- Are there limitations regarding physical contact?
- What does the family expect of the organisation?
- Is showing affection important?
- What occasions do they celebrate and how do they celebrate them?
- What religion is practised and how does it affect their day or week?
- What are the food preferences and health beliefs?
- Are there cultural clothing preferences?

Communication

- Which languages are spoken?
- What types of communication styles and techniques does the family use?

Local community information

Education and care

- Are there many services for supporting young children's education and care?
- What choices of education are available?

Demographics

- Is this a low socioeconomic or affluent (wealthy) area?
- Is the local community large or small, rural or metropolitan, isolated or well-serviced?
- Is the local community divided by different cultures and expectations, or is it supportive of all residents?

Family engagement

- Is the family a member of a minority group?
- Does the family get involved in community events?
- Does the community provide activities and support for children and families of this age?
- Are the preferences of the family met in the local community or does the family have to go outside the local community to have their needs met?

As you gather information, you can build a profile of each child and their family. This assists you to make decisions about ways to support their sense of belonging and provide for the child's individual needs and interests. Remember that this profile is unlikely to stay the same. It must be reviewed regularly to ensure you have up-to-date information.

As you form these profiles, the diversity in your organisation will become evident. You will see that there are some similarities and differences in the children and families. If you regularly review these profiles, you will discover how they change as children develop.

Watch this video about orientation for new families.

Practice task 3

1. Complete a review of cultural characteristics. You might focus on a group of families in a service, or the group you work with in a class. Identify the predominant cultural characteristics and an approximate percentage of people matching each characteristic. Note that there may be several items within each characteristic. An example has been provided.

Characteristic	Predominant cultural factor	Percentage of families
Ethnicity	▸ *Cantonese* ▸ *German*	*5%* *2%*
Language used at home		
Religion		
Family structure		
Age of parent (approximately)		

2. Discuss the cultural diversity you have identified in the organisation with other students.
3. National Quality Standard 6.2.2 has the concept 'Access and participation' and the descriptor 'Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program'. This means that services should prepare to communicate with families who have literacy difficulties or who speak English as a second language, even if this is not currently required. Research and find an example of materials that could be used to support a family with these needs.

2B Analysing the service

The National Quality Standard (NQS), EYLF and MTOP provide benchmarks to ensure that best practice is occurring. These allow you to critically analyse the way educators respond to the cultural identities of children and families, and help you assist with quality improvement goals and strategies. These benchmarks are based on inclusive practices that support the development of an anti-biased curriculum.

Inclusion provides children and adults with a diverse and responsive environment. During the formative years – birth to eight years – inclusion is particularly valuable, as children learn about others and their place in the world. During middle childhood, inclusive environments provide children the opportunity to have positive experiences that help them to develop strong identities and learn to accept others.

Relationships

A culturally competent environment includes the following:

- shared values and vision
- participation and openness
- parental support
- team approach
- clear goals and objectives
- family-focused approach
- opportunities to learn about development
- close links with the community
- relationships with other families
- teaching children to be accepting of individual differences
- available funding for support services and resources.

Curriculum and activities

The following outlines curriculum and activities that foster these relationships:

- Provide high-quality programs with a focus on individual children.
- Have clear goals and objectives.
- Adapt to children's needs whenever possible.
- Have different children doing different things, with educators helping where needed.
- Be engaging.
- Provide activities that have calculated risks, but are still safe.
- Offer choices.

- Provide activities that are suitable for small groups, large groups and individuals.
- Encourage children to support and help each other.
- Allow plenty of time for interaction to help children learn social and communication skills.
- Ensure activities are child-centred.
- Extend activities into the community.
- Model appropriate behaviour to children.
- Present realistic life experiences that help children to live in the community.
- Provide opportunities to develop friendships.
- Provide opportunities to learn more realistic and accurate views about other people.
- Provide opportunities to develop positive attitudes towards others who are different from themselves.
- Provide opportunities to learn altruistic behaviours (concern for others), and when and how to use such behaviours.

Philosophy, policies and procedures

A philosophy, policy or procedure is a written document that informs everyone of key expectations in the organisation. They inform you of the behaviour expected from you and make you accountable for your actions.

Parents can read philosophies, policies and procedures to see what is important to your organisation and whether they feel comfortable leaving their child in that environment. This information needs to be regularly reviewed to ensure it remains current. It also needs to take into account changing community needs, regulations and legislation.

Consultation is an important part of developing and reviewing philosophy, policy and procedure. This means that feedback on practices should be obtained from key stakeholders, including parents and older children. This allows the organisation to take different perspectives into account, ensuring that policies and procedures are culturally responsive and relevant to everyone.

Watch this video about developing policies and procedures.

When undertaking a review, consider these questions:

- Does the philosophy reflect the values and beliefs of those working in and using the service?
- Do policies and practices reflect the service philosophy?
- Do policies and procedures meet community needs?
- Is everyone at the service following policies and procedures?
- Are there any factors that would prevent someone from complying with the policy or procedure?
- Are there adequate strategies in place?
- Is the policy or procedure clear and easy to read?
- Has the current policy or procedure achieved its purpose?
- How have parents, children and educators participated in the policy and procedure development?

When reviewing your philosophy, policies and procedures for inclusion, multiculturalism and unbiased approaches, remember to always involve:

- management
- educators and other staff
- parents and children.

Example

Developing a culturally competent philosophy

Margie wants to develop a room statement to expand on the service philosophy and how it relates to the education and care provided in the infant room. Margie realises that she needs to ask families what is important to them rather than just writing down what is important to her. She speaks with each of the families to discuss this and develops a brief questionnaire that she has translated into the relevant community languages so everyone has an opportunity to contribute.

Building relationships

Building secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships (Principle 1 in the EYLF and MTOP) develops over time. It requires you to build trust and get to know children and families holistically.

Although there are common characteristics across cultural groups, each individual is unique. You must therefore develop a rapport with each family by asking relevant questions and listening to establish their needs and expectations.

Steps to build relationships with children and families:

- Provide time for families and educators to get to know each other.
- Offering multiple ways of communicating.
- Use interpreter services and bilingual support when required.
- Follow up parent requests and give feedback.
- Include parents and children's ideas in program planning and implementation.
- Interact with children in their first language.
- Incorporate links from the home environment into the setting.

Steps to develop the cultural competency of children and families:

- Encourage families to be actively involved in the program.
- Provide opportunities for families to meet and socialise with each other.
- Encourage families to talk about cultural diversity with their children.
- Display family photos to help highlight diversity in the organisation and the community.
- Acknowledge where all children come from and share this in a meaningful way.
- Intervene when incidents relating to discrimination arise and use these as learning opportunities.
- Incorporate the cultural backgrounds of families into the program and make parents aware of this.
- Share self-assessment tools such as the service quality improvement plan (QIP).
- Gain feedback from families and children to guide the QIP and ongoing development of cultural competence.

Critically analysing activities

Critical reflection and regular review of the learning environment enables educators to maintain a responsive and respectful program for all children and families.

When analysing the environment, experiences and materials for cultural relevance, consider the following questions:

- Do the activities relate to the cultural diversity found in the service?
- Are families happy with the cultural activities provided to children?
- What books do you have that relate to their culture? Are some available in their native language?
- What written languages do you have on display? Are they relevant to families and the community?
- What pictures do you have that relate to their culture? Are they modern, stereotypical or historic?
- How do your displays relate to children's cultures?
- How do singing and dancing activities relate to children's cultures?
- How do excursions/incursions relate to children's cultures?
- Are the props selected for dramatic play and home corner areas culturally diverse?
- Are excursions/incursions planned that allow children and their families to learn about their own cultures and ethnic history as well as those of others?
- Do meals provided include foods that are unique to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children and families?
- Are the celebrations at the organisation relevant to culturally diverse children and families?
- Do educators learn key words in other languages that the children speak?
- Are visual aids, gestures and physical prompts encouraged?
- Are notices, signs and other written communication translated into relevant languages used by families at the service?

You may wish to develop further criteria to analyse your environment and curriculum. As you develop skills in analysis, you will see how it enables you to continually improve and refine the program and its relevance to children and families.

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Practice task 4

1. Consider a program of activities you have experienced and analyse whether it reflects cultural competency. Use the following checklist to determine this.

   - ☐ The curriculum changes to meet the needs of the children present at the time.
   - ☐ Different children are encouraged to do different things with educators helping where needed.
   - ☐ The curriculum offers choices.
   - ☐ There are small-group, large-group and individual activities available.
   - ☐ Activities encourage children to support and help each other.
   - ☐ Activities allow plenty of time for interaction.
   - ☐ The curriculum extends into the community.
   - ☐ Activities are engaging.
   - ☐ Activities are sometimes messy and busy and involve calculated risks, but are always safe.
   - ☐ Activities are child-centred.
   - ☐ Parents are engaged in decision-making.
   - ☐ Educators share information with parents about what they think is important.

2. Identify one area where you could improve the cultural competence of your program of activities. Which policy or procedure does this relate to?

3. The following are strategies you would use if you were demonstrating culturally competent practice. Rate your skills in implementing each strategy from 1 to 5, with 1 being the strategy you identify as your most developed skill or attribute and 5 being your least developed skill or attribute.

Rating	Strategy
0 1 2 3 4 5	Gain a variety of viewpoints when making decisions.
0 1 2 3 4 5	Develop culturally sensitive posters and displays.
0 1 2 3 4 5	Follow up parents' requests and give feedback.
0 1 2 3 4 5	Interact with children in their first language.
0 1 2 3 4 5	Incorporate links from children's homes into the service environment.

4. For the strategy you identified as your least developed, provide one method for increasing your skills and knowledge in this area.

Summary

- Determine the cultural identities of the children in the organisation, their families and the local community.
- A child will feel like they belong when their culture is accepted and incorporated into the environment.
- Parents can use organisational philosophies, policies and procedures to see what is important to your service.
- Identify the skills, attributes and knowledge that need to be developed to ensure cultural competency.

Learning checkpoint 2
Identifying and developing cultural competency

1. Survey at least **two** people to find out more about their cultural identity. Create a questionnaire that addresses the following aspects of cultural identity:

   - Values
   - Beliefs/religion/spirituality
   - Language
   - Celebrations
   - Family structure

   The following are some sample questions to guide you:

   - What languages do you speak at home?
   - What are the key values you want your children to have?
   - What aspects of your culture would you like your child to experience more of?

2. As an educator, you must consider each child's cultural identity to create a culturally competent environment. Looking at the outcomes of the survey you conducted, describe how values, beliefs/religion/spirituality, language, celebrations and family structure could be reflected in an organisation's relationships, curriculum and activities.

3. As an educator, you can help develop the cultural competency of children and families. List at least **six** strategies that can be used to do this.

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Indigenous Australian relationships

3B Acknowledging impacts

Researching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities

The NQS, EYLF and MTOP require services to understand and educate young children about the history, culture and contemporary lives of Australia's first peoples. When involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures into service programs, it is vital to be aware of the historical issues and impacts that colonisation has brought to them. Today, Australia's Indigenous peoples are concerned with social justice, self-determination, and restoration of their lands, culture and traditions.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

	National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework		**My Time, Our Place**
	Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
	Practice	
	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
	Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

3A Indigenous Australian relationships

Archaeological evidence suggests that Aboriginal people have lived in Australia for over 60,000 years. Aboriginal culture is one of the oldest cultures in the world. Aboriginal people were traditionally hunter-gathers who lived off the land and had a strong spiritual connection to it. Before the white colonisation of Australia, Aboriginal families lived together in a communal environment with roles and responsibilities shared among the group; for example, men hunted, women were responsible for cooking and child-rearing, and the Elders shared their knowledge.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples inhabited most areas of Australia, speaking more than two hundred languages, and following distinct lifestyles and cultural traditions. Since colonisation, Aboriginal people have been denied their right to live according to their customs and are still experiencing lower health and educational outcomes than non-Indigenous Australians.

Legislation and policies

The word 'colonisation' means that a new group of people have come and settled an area of land and taken control of the territory or country. This usually involves mass migration of the colonising people, and incorporation of their own culture into the area. Often, colonisation does not take into account any indigenous people already occupying the land.

Following the British colonisation of Australia, the government put in place policies that took away Aboriginal people's rights. Many Aboriginal people were placed in reserves and missions outside towns or in remote areas. They had to cease their normal lives and could not continue to live the way they wanted, or express their values or beliefs. The new expectations forced on them created issues that were dealt with through government control using curfews, alcohol bans, separate education and restricted travel.

The government took automatic guardianship of all Aboriginal children, and between 1910 and 1970, forcibly removed Aboriginal children from their families and placed them into non-Indigenous homes and institutions. In 1937, the Australian government implemented an assimilation policy in which Aboriginal people 'not of full blood' were assimilated into the wider 'white' population.

This event, now referred to as the 'stolen generation', devastated many Indigenous families. Aboriginal people still remember this with fear and sadness. This period of history was documented in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission report of 1997, titled, *Bringing them home: National inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families*.

It was not until May 1967, through a national referendum, that the Australian government included Indigenous people in the national census. Five years later, the Australian government adopted the policy of self-determination for Indigenous communities, which recognised that Indigenous people had the right to be involved in decision-making about their own lives.

Relationship to land

The land that your service occupies was once inhabited by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people. Aboriginal people have a very strong relationship and connection to the Australian environment and consider the land as an important part of their culture. Aboriginal people believe they have a custodial role rather than ownership of the land. This connection to the land is based on traditional knowledge and practices that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Relationships to country are complex. The term 'country' is often used by Aboriginal people to describe family origins and associations. Consequently, the impact that colonisation had on Aboriginal people has been extreme. Much of the land was taken during settlement under the law of '*terra nullius*', which is a Latin term meaning 'empty land' — that is, the land was determined not to belong to anyone.

British colonists took over much of the Aboriginal land, and this resulted in a dramatic decline in the Aboriginal population caused by conflict and the introduction of diseases such as smallpox, influenza and measles.

In 1992, a precedent was set through the finding of the High Court of Australia in the Mabo case. It found that Indigenous people who maintained a continuing connection with their land, according to their traditions and customs, may hold the native title, legally recognising the traditional rights of Indigenous people to their lands and waters. This ended the longstanding ruling of terra nullius and allowed Aboriginal people to reclaim land that was rightfully theirs.

Kinship relationships

Kinship relationships have a special significance for Indigenous people. These are relationships that clearly define each family member's role and place in the family in relation to one another. They make up a complex network of extended family ties, which include grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins in the extended family.

Watch this video for more information about Aboriginal kinship relationships.

Demonstrating respect

To identify practical ways to demonstrate respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land issues, you should consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The following are some examples of ways you could demonstrate respect:

- Know the local community groups/languages and find out how to incorporate these into the service and curriculum.
- Display Indigenous Australian flags.

- Include information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land issues in displays, newsletter items or activities for children.
- Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to incursions or visit through an excursion.
- Implement traditional Aboriginal games, particularly if they are popular among Aboriginal children in the local area. Ask your local community or visit this website for ideas: http://aspirelr.link/aboriginal-children-activities

Practice task 5

Research a local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander organisation or cooperative in your local area.

1. What is the address and phone number?

2. Call or visit them and find out about the land in your local area. Provide some information in dot points.

3. Who are the Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people that lived on this land? Do they continue to inhabit this land?

3B Acknowledging impacts

Developing a basic understanding and awareness of different cultures will help you to create and maintain a culturally competent environment, and develop 'culturally safe' work practices.

To deliver culturally safe practices to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, you need to be aware of historical issues and how these are currently reflected. The following are some factors that may have an impact on the Indigenous people you interact with.

Factor	Effects on some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
Pre- and post-colonisation history	▶ Some still grieve the loss of their land and culture. ▶ Some have been forced to change their lifestyle to survive; their current lifestyle may contradict their beliefs and values. ▶ Some want their children to be raised in a traditional manner that reflects their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values.
Legislation and land rights	▶ Some feel their land and identity has been taken from them and find it difficult to work out how they fit in. ▶ Some have lost their individual or collective feeling of belonging or ownership.
Stolen generations	▶ Some were children of the stolen generations. ▶ Some find it difficult to leave their children in care due to these past incidents. ▶ Some may have attachment issues with children or other relatives due to having been forcefully separated.
Health	▶ Some need to develop trusting relationships with educators prior to accepting support and/or help to access required services. ▶ Some suffer from ongoing illnesses that are prevalent in their community.
Religion and spirituality	▶ Some want their spiritual beliefs to be respected as with any other religion or spirituality. ▶ Some wish to have dreamtime stories respected as their spiritual foundation. ▶ Some would be proud to share their stories and beliefs with others. ▶ Others may feel their stories and beliefs are personal and private.
Education	▶ Some need to be involved in the service to understand the value it has for their child. ▶ Some work best when they are involved with children of all ages (family grouping) as they support each other. ▶ Some prefer to participate as a member of a group and are embarrassed to be singled out.

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Educators have an obligation to ensure that children learn about the rich cultural history of Aboriginal people. This includes discussing aspects of land rights, family and relationships, and Indigenous values and beliefs in a developmentally appropriate way. By understanding the impact of historical events, aspects of diversity and social justice can be included in your program for Aboriginal families who attend. This also educates non-Indigenous families about Australian history and social issues.

One way to demonstrate respect is to use an 'acknowledgment of land'. This is usually a spoken or written statement; for example: 'I would like to show my respect and acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, of Elders past and present, on which this event takes place'. This may be used whenever you hold gatherings in the service, such as staff meetings and special days.

The acknowledgment may be used with older children to help them understand the unique relationship that Aboriginal people have with the land.

Watch this video about researching Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Practice task 6

1. To demonstrate your respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in your area, write or verbalise an 'acknowledgment of land' that reflects your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

2. Why do you think the use of the 'acknowledgement of land' might improve your relationship with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person?

Summary

- The land your organisation occupies was once inhabited by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people and may still be.
- To understand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, you need to be aware of the contemporary impacts of historical events and issues.
- You can investigate the land your organisation is on by visiting the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community resource service and consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Learning checkpoint 3
Researching Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities

Research a historical issue in relation to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and the land your organisation is on, considering the contemporary impacts this has had on the local region.

Write a one-page summary of your findings. In your summary:

- Identify the traditional people and land owners of your local area, and who to contact or consult with.
- Identify any historical issues that have affected the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples of your local area.
- Comment on how these issues still impact on current Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and the community.
- Provide details of where you found the information.

It is recommended that you research your local government website and relevant state/territory or Commonwealth organisations that provide information on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn about:

4A Identifying cultural groups

4B Demonstrating cultural sensitivity

4C Extending cultural knowledge

Supporting individual cultural identities

Children's personal, family and cultural histories shape their learning and development. Children have better outcomes when educators respect their backgrounds and provide them with support and opportunities to feel valued.

The EYLF, MTOP and NQS endorse programs that enhance opportunities for learning and development by providing experiences based on children's interests, cultural identities and strengths. They call for educators to recognise the importance of partnerships with families in achieving programs that deliver sound learning outcomes.

A commitment to supporting individual cultural identities is critical to develop strong partnerships with families for the education and care of their children. The best way to gather relevant information about cultural identity is from the families themselves. There are also people and organisations in your community who can assist you in supporting cultural understandings and relevance.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

	National Quality Standard	
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework		**My Time, Our Place**
	Principles	
	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
✓	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
	Practice	
	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
	Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

4A Identifying cultural groups

The importance of connecting to communities is highlighted in the EYLF, MTOP and throughout the quality areas of the NQS. By building networks with local services and groups, you increase the possibility for more inclusive practices to evolve and support effective transitions for children and families.

Consulting with local groups

In many communities, you can access services that link to particular cultural groups. Some services are not specific to education and care, but may still be able to provide some excellent resources to share, purchase or learn from.

You may be able to consult with:

- local government services
- community services managers
- organisational leaders
- cooperatives
- community groups
- community houses
- government-funded multicultural organisations such as FKA and AMES
- government-funded support for Indigenous Australians such as Koorie Engagement Support Officers (KESOs) in Victoria and the Indigenous Cultural Hub in New South Wales and ACT
- the Department of Education and Training, which can provide information about the Inclusion Support Programme (ISP).

Local community directories are also useful for discovering groups and contact details of their representatives. Each service has a different purpose and their own protocols to use when making contact. Some protocols may include a written referral process, some will invite you to visit and others will be used only within their own community group. If you contact any group they will be able to suggest an alternative service if they are unable to support you.

When you liaise with groups, you should identify their cultural expectations and be informed of their practices. For example, you may need to take your shoes off when you are visiting or wear specific clothing. You may also learn that some information is only available to men, some only to women, or there may be no conditions at all. If you watch others, you will learn more about protocols, and be able to gather and share relevant information respectfully. Most people will be aware that you are there to learn, so be open to asking about their expectations.

Promoting participation

Once connections have been made with local cultural groups, there is a range of ways you can promote participation and further links to these groups. These include:

- displaying the groups' materials around your service
- holding incursions or excursions
- making referrals by following the relevant protocols
- joining committees or attending meetings.

Many of the members from these groups have specific knowledge that may be shared with educators through professional development sessions and inviting representatives to staff meetings to discuss relevant issues.

Once key community groups are identified and contacted, the following benefits can be experienced:

- networking to share different philosophies and expertise
- raised awareness of cultural diversity
- more opportunities for the families and children to connect with the local area
- more opportunities for families and children to enhance their experience of cultural diversity.

Watch this video about promoting participation and awareness of differences.

It is likely that involvement with outside agencies and cultural groups will help you to respond more appropriately and promptly to children's individual needs and parents' expectations of your program. You will also be supporting the inclusion of relevant cultural groups into the service.

When you encourage families to attend events and activities that cultural groups provide, you are helping to strengthen links between families as they begin to make contact with others and see the service as a community hub that can be supportive as well as educational. This helps to develop positive attitudes and build connections for all families.

Practice task 7

Research a community cultural group in your local area. You may need to contact the group to find out the following information.

1. Record the group's name and contact details.

2. What respectful practices (protocols) should you observe when making contact and sharing information?

3. Why is the group important in your service community?

4. How many people are involved in the group?

5. How does the group support children in the community?

4B Demonstrating cultural sensitivity

The NQS requires educators to create an environment that reflects the lives of children and families in the service and the cultural diversity of the broader community, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This is part of demonstrating cultural sensitivity. This can be seen in the following quality areas.

Quality area	Concept	Descriptor
6.1.2	Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
6.1.3	Families are supported	Current information is available to families about the service, and relevant community services and resources to support parenting and family wellbeing.
6.2.2	Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.
6.2.3	Community engagement	The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

Ways to reflect cultural sensitivity include:

- Display service information and signs in relevant community languages.
- Display photos of educators, and photos of children with their families.
- Ensure that posters and other pictures are reflective of different families' cultural groups.
- Create an environment that has materials and props that reflect the everyday life experiences of children.
- Provide art materials, paints and crayons in a variety of tones to reflect the different skin, hair and eye colours of children.
- Play a variety of music from different countries in the service.
- Ensure books used in the program reflect non-stereotypical images of cultural groups or genders.
- Provide natural materials that are culturally neutral and allow for open-ended play.

Privacy and confidentiality

When working with families, it is important to communicate openly and ensure that privacy and confidentiality policies are explained and adhered to. You need to be aware of what information can be shared and under what circumstances, particularly when liaising with other community services and personnel. It is imperative in all circumstances to obtain parents' permission before sharing any personal information with other services. You need to be open about why this information needs to be shared and what outcomes can be expected. Refer to organisational policies and procedures to help you make appropriate decisions about this.

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By ensuring you are sensitive to family information, you will gain the family's trust so that they are willing to share cultural knowledge and participate in the program. They can contribute by spending time in the program with their children, supporting other families in the service, and assisting with experiences to enrich everyone's skills and knowledge of their culture.

Sharing information and ideas

Engaging with people from different cultural situations will help you to develop your cultural competence. As your understanding of others grows, so does your ability to help people feel validated and enhance their sense of belonging.

You will be able to bring the things they know and are familiar with into their experience at the service, which may include ideas that some children and families have not thought about before. This may receive varied reactions. Some children may not be interested, others may be wary and others may be curious to learn more.

Over time, you will help children to develop their own cultural competence. Children are generally very curious about new things in the world, particularly things about their peers and the different ways that people live. It is important to introduce relevant cultural experiences from your community regardless of whether families and children originate from that culture.

When you provide information and experiences that are relevant to children's lives, they are better able to understand and learn from the information you are offering. This allows children to learn about each other in a meaningful way that is authentic and reduces the development of stereotypical views. Involving parents in decisions about curriculum helps ensure you are able to accurately portray relevant experiences and materials that encourage their participation. Through this process, parents and children have opportunities to develop their understanding and knowledge of other cultures and the diversity that exists in the organisation.

Ask parents to donate props and materials from home that represent things that children are familiar with. This helps build a link between the home and service environment.

Example

Sharing information about Aboriginal culture

There is an Indigenous Australian community in your area. However, the children have never been introduced to Indigenous Australian culture through your service. Even though there are currently no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children in the organisation, you access community resources and identify people and materials you can utilise.

Over a number of weeks, you do the following:

- Include images and information showing Aboriginal children involved in everyday activities that the children participate in.
- Contact the local cooperative and arrange to meet with one of their Elders to gain more information.
- Incorporate Indigenous art, crafts and music in the activities.
- Introduce dreamtime stories and activities.
- Provide information and discussion about Indigenous communities.
- Offer a historical view of Indigenous culture.

Reflecting on cultural identities

When you take into account the families in the organisation, the cultures represented in the community and your own cultural beliefs, you have a myriad of information to explore. These aspects increase the connection between home and care, and extend the experience of each child as they share their skills and knowledge.

To meet the needs of the individual children you care for and their families, your curriculum must be flexible and responsive to needs, and must provide opportunities for development. This means you must always be prepared to adapt the day's activities to suit the situation.

Cultural priorities affect the way you present and teach your program, as well as how you communicate with people. These priorities might include the decisions you make on how you will provide activities, whether as open play activities or through intentional teaching.

To encourage children to respect individual cultural identity, you can take the following steps:

- Pick up on differences in opinion, ideas and goals, and encourage children to explore these.
- Use a democratic model for communicating with each other and solving problems.
- Facilitate situations in which children share skills and knowledge to support each other to achieve goals.
- Reflect on what children have learnt and use this to further develop your program.

Example

Representing modern Aboriginal culture

Mary's daughter attends an organisation that proudly displays a poster of a traditional corroboree to show a link to her Aboriginal culture. Mary is of Aboriginal descent, but she has never seen or been part of a corroboree. She does not want her culture to only be represented through traditional rituals. Mary discusses the corroboree poster with her child's educator and says she would like to see contemporary posters that reflect Aboriginal people as they are today.

Additionally, Mary does not believe that the sacredness of the corroboree and the protocol of only males attending is conveyed when pictures are displayed without conversation and context. She suggests to the educator that the children could look through reference books to find out more about corroborees. She offers to contact a person who is knowledgeable about traditional Aboriginal culture to talk about this to the group.

The educator agrees with Mary's ideas, and asks if Mary would like to attend a staff meeting and talk about how the organisation can respectfully and authentically begin to represent Aboriginal culture.

Practice task 8

Element 1.1.1 of the NQS expects you to use the approved learning frameworks to make curriculum decisions that contribute to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their:

- identity
- connection with community
- wellbeing
- confidence as learners
- effectiveness as communicators.

1. Choose **two** families and for each family identify:
   - their racial or cultural background
   - one aspect of their lifestyle
   - their language
   - their family structure.

2. For each aspect of the families you identified, explain how you could represent this in an image, book or resource. You might like to present the information in a table like the one below.

Aspect	Family details	Represented in the following
Family 1		
Racial background		
Lifestyle		
Language		
Family structure		
Family 2		
Racial background		
Lifestyle		
Language		
Family structure		

3. If you were collecting this information from families in your role as an educator, what could you say to each family to check their preferences to either authorise that they would like you to maintain their privacy and confidentiality, or incorporate their details into the program?

4C Extending cultural knowledge

When you are aware of each child's family background, you have information that allows you to make the service environment more like home and an enjoyable place to be. By focusing on specific attributes such as skills, knowledge and values that show the uniqueness of each child, you can create an environment that enables children to learn from each other.

Involving families

The following strategies may encourage parents to become involved in cultural activities:

- Encourage families and other community members to volunteer their support by attending service events.
- Ask family members how they would like to participate as volunteers and respond in a timely manner to those indications.
- Encourage family and community members to become involved as:
  - participants in meetings
  - presenters of activities
  - assistants with art shows, read-aloud events, workshops, book swaps and other activities
  - volunteers on excursions
  - instructional assistants in specific activities
  - non-instructional assistants in general activities
  - contributors working from home; for example, assembling materials and typing.

There is a range of ways you can provide opportunities for both children and families to enhance their experience of cultural diversity. Use the following checklist to assess whether you are providing these opportunities.

Questions	Yes	No
Are resources available in community languages?		
Do you know any non-English words used by children?		
Do you provide posters and resources that represent people from different backgrounds and abilities?		
Do you collect background information from families?		
Do educators represent a range of cultural backgrounds?		
Does the curriculum include aspects from a variety of cultures?		
Are the cultures of the children incorporated into the program?		
Do you encourage parents to become involved in the program?		
Do you celebrate a range of cultural occasions and celebrations?		
Are you aware of how to access the interpreter service, and is this service available/accessible for parents if needed?		
Are parents informed of your philosophy, policies and planned activities?		

Promoting language diversity

When a child's first language is maintained, this helps children to communicate effectively and stay tuned to their culture and heritage. It also lays the foundation for learning a second or subsequent language. Families who are supported to use their first language are also given validation of their cultural background and provided real opportunities for connecting and building strong bonds between child and parent.

Employing bilingual workers and learning key words in a child's language are ways that you can support the transition of children who speak a language other than English into the setting. Children will learn English through exposure and there is no need to force this process. Instead, allow it to unfold with quality language experiences.

Tips to provide quality language experiences:

- Encourage educators to use their first language with the children, especially when it is the same as other families using the service.
- Access bilingual support where necessary to support children's participation in the program.
- Learn some words in relevant languages to show an acceptance of diversity in the learning environment.

Exposing children to different languages

When children are exposed to a variety of language experiences, including languages other than their own, they are exposed to opportunities to explore and play with sounds and words, and broaden their skills and knowledge about language and diversity.

Educators can expose children to different languages by:

- discussing the variety of languages used by children in their home environment
- sharing words and stories in other languages
- learning songs in other languages
- listening to music from many cultures
- providing multilingual listening posts
- displaying signs in different languages
- introducing newspapers and magazines into play areas that reflect a variety of written languages
- using online interpreter programs to translate words of interest in a variety of languages.

Dialects are specific to a particular region or cultural group. Ask families about their language and whether they speak a particular dialect. By sharing this information and exposing children to different languages and dialects, you can encourage an appreciation of language diversity.

Watch this video about children with different language needs.

Example

Promoting language diversity

Patrick, an educator, is leading a group experience reading a book about children playing on a hot day.

After the story, Patrick asks the children what they do on hot days. Nevin explains how he likes hot days as his mum lets him wear his jandals and play in water.

The children laugh and say, 'Jandals! What are jandals?'

Patrick explains that sometimes different countries call things different names and that in New Zealand, thongs are called jandals.

Another child, Gail, tells the group her grannie calls her underarms her 'oxters' and if something is small, she says it is 'wee'. Again the children laugh and say the words. Patrick comments that he thinks Gail's grannie must be Scottish.

Patrick says some other words the children might not be aware of and suggests they work out what each word means. He plans to ask families for examples to add to these and will prepare a world map or globe so the children can see where the words come from.

Practice task 9

Access at least **three** resources in different languages, such as a newspaper, book, video or poster. Describe one way you could use each resource in your activities with children to help encourage an appreciation of linguistic diversity.

Summary

- Access community services that link to local cultural groups to learn more about them and discover resources you can use with children.
- When you engage with people in different cultural situations, you are developing your cultural competence.
- Provide opportunities for all families to share their context and cultural knowledge. This enhances the children's experience of cultural diversity.
- By demonstrating respect for all home languages and exposing children to different languages and dialects, you are encouraging an appreciation of language diversity.

Learning checkpoint 4
Supporting individual cultural identities

1. Identify and contact a local cultural group. Document the following:
   - The name of the group
   - The services they provide
   - What the cultural group could contribute to the service

2. The concept surrounding NQS 6.2.3 is 'Community engagement'. The descriptor states: 'The service builds relationships and engages with its community'. Describe an activity the cultural group could be involved in that would enhance the experience of cultural diversity among children and families.

3. Read a confidentiality policy and procedure. How did the policy explain culturally sensitive information management?

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4. Describe **three** opportunities you could provide that would enable families to share their cultural diversity.

5. Discuss **three** ideas for promoting language diversity in your organisation.

Topic 5

In this topic you will learn about:

5A Planning inclusive experiences

5B Supporting cross-cultural relationships

Supporting children's cross-cultural understanding and relationships

The environments you provide for children give a clear message about the philosophy of your service, its commitment to inclusion and support for diversity. When children's cultural backgrounds are reflected in the service, diversity can be celebrated.

Your programs and behaviour should reflect inclusive and ethical practices, and assist children to participate in cross-cultural relationships.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard		
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework		**My Time, Our Place**
Principles		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
✓	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice		
	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
✓	Learning through play	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes		
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

5A Planning inclusive experiences

Many experiences and opportunities can be provided in the learning environment to assist children to develop an understanding of themselves and others.

Embedding respectful and inclusive practices in your program helps to ensure that everyone's rights and needs are addressed. The best opportunities for helping children develop inclusive attitudes occur during day-to-day interactions and events. Making the most of these opportunities enables you to explore the similarities and differences between the children and families you work with, connect children to their world and develop respect for diversity. By doing these things, you will be meeting the principles of the learning frameworks.

Meaningful and inclusive experiences

The experiences you provide should be inclusive and meaningful. To do this, good relationships with families and wider support networks are essential.

Tokenistic use of cultural materials and equipment does not lead to positive learning and sharing of cultural knowledge. Likewise, cultural artefacts may not always be the most appropriate way to promote or represent a cultural group; for example:

- Allowing all children to play a didgeridoo to represent Indigenous Australian culture may not be appropriate as these are only played by males.
- Providing Vietnamese play money (known as 'joss paper') may not be appropriate as this is generally used at funerals.

If you are unsure of the cultural relevance and appropriateness of any experience or activity, it is important to check with families or your local contacts before incorporating these into your program. Being open to parents' ideas and ensuring each child is represented in the environment helps you build and maintain a responsive and meaningful learning environment where diversity is acknowledged and celebrated.

The following table provides some experiences that may be used to help create an inclusive learning environment.

Experience	Details
Props in the home area	Avoid big cultural displays or specific themes such as disability. Instead, create an inclusive view by adding one item that represents each group to the regular home corner; for example, crutches, a sling, chopsticks, a wheelchair, a walking stick, sari, bamboo steamer or flag.
Treasure hunt	Have children hunt for natural items outside, such as stones, bark and leaves. Talk about how these natural items have similarities and differences just like people.
Polls	Ask children to identify which things they like most and which they do not like, then discuss the similarities and differences in these choices. You might poll children about: ▶ experiences ▶ activities ▶ celebrations ▶ events ▶ foods ▶ indoor or outdoor play.
Discussions and group times	Spontaneous or planned discussion can be used to share information and learn about each other. Talk about family structures, what children do on the weekend, how they celebrate Christmas (or another celebration) at their house and what it is like to live in or visit another country.
Human bingo	Ask questions such as: ▶ Who has the same colour hair? ▶ Who has the same colour eyes? ▶ Who has a baby in their house? ▶ Who knows someone who lives in another country? ▶ Who celebrates Easter?
Using mirrors	Encourage children to look at themselves and others, and highlight their similarities and differences.
Disability activities	Choose a disability or impairment and discuss what it means with the children; for example, vision-impaired means that you cannot see very well. Have children complete tasks or activities simulating this impairment. Support the children to identify the difficulties, but also work out alternative ways to be successful. Point out skills that are not affected by the impairment.

Exploring culture in the community

The environment should reflect and explore each child's culture, heritage, background and traditions. Some of the most common and simple ways you can encourage children to explore these factors and learn about each other is through their community.

The local community is full of people and places that can be safely and appropriately explored. Some of this exploration can occur through excursions, but other possible options are incursions (where people come to the organisation) and affiliations (where the children participate with parts of the community from the organisation).

Here are some ways you can help children explore the community:

- Go on neighbourhood walks, pointing out statues, gardens, buildings and signs.
- Use maps and photos of familiar places for discussion and activities.
- Ask families about their community interests and include this information in your program.
- Invite community members or parents to visit and share information about their job.
- Provide props that link with community interests and activities such as grocery items and puppets.
- Visit libraries, museums, markets and parks.
- Organise picnics, library story time and children's art shows.
- Encourage children to write letters or send pictures to local organisations.
- Participate in environmental care projects, such as Clean Up Australia Day.

Practice task 10

A child who speaks a language other than English has come into your organisation. Describe an experience you could implement to encourage all children to value this child's language abilities.

5B Supporting cross-cultural relationships

To develop a trusting and positive relationship with all children and families, it is important to create a setting where individuals can be accepted for who they are. It takes time to develop this trust: you need to understand the experiences of families and the effects these experiences may have on children's behaviour.

You can find out about families from parents by informally discussing children's home lives and interests. This helps you to provide appropriate activities.

Involving families directly in the program provides many opportunities to interact with them and gather information. It is crucial that you listen to the views of parents and educators on different issues. You also need to accept and respect the fact that each individual has their own world view.

Establishing constructive relationships

Constructive relationships are based on trust, respectful interactions, understanding of alternative world views and the celebration of diversity.

Trusting relationships

Trusting relationships can only be established through open communication. This is achieved over time and with the input of all people involved.

You can start to build mutual trust when you help a new child settle into your organisation, as you must work with the child's parents to find out more about the child's home life and the family's beliefs and values. This helps you to develop a bond of trust with and gain the confidence of the family.

The following strategies can be used to help build a trusting relationship with children and families:

- Welcome all children and their families to the service each day.
- Engage with the children and help them participate in different activities.
- Approach parents and welcome them into the service, show them around and chat about their child's day.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each child and family, and incorporate any relevant information into your organisation.
- Actively listen to children and their families.
- Engage in regular communication.
- Keep any promises made.

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Respectful interactions

You need to be aware of the following to establish constructive relationships based on respectful interactions:

- Personal space: people have different preferences for personal space when interacting socially. Some people believe you should create an arm's length of space, while others believe in physical contact while communicating.
- Eye contact: some view eye contact while communicating as a sign of honesty and respect, but it may also be a sign of disrespect in some cultures.
- Tone of voice: some people use loud and direct language for communication; others may find this rude or obnoxious.
- Nonverbal hand communication: hand gestures such as shaking hands or giving a thumbs up are common. This may be polite to one person and offensive to another. The same goes for smiling or bowing your head.
- Communication and language: if you are aware of the communication styles and languages families use, you can respond appropriately and provide support and resources to aid communication.

You may need to support children to interact respectfully, as young children may not pick up on the cues you provide. To do this, you can discuss people's personal needs or involve the children in activity groups where they think about how they would like to be treated, then share this information with others.

A constructive relationship with children can only be established if you make them feel included. To do this, you should:

- Show children you enjoy their company and value them.
- Make children feel good about themselves to develop their self-esteem.
- Encourage children to care for others.
- Appreciate children's efforts and teach them to appreciate others.
- Use respectful and positive communication.
- Teach social skills such as saying good morning, goodbye, thank you and please.
- Set clear guidelines on expected behaviours.

Understanding alternative world views

To develop constructive relationships with all children and families, you need to accept that they may hold world views that differ to your own. These differences may relate to a range of factors, including:

- religion
- discipline
- responsibility and autonomy
- family.

When you are culturally competent, you can demonstrate to others that, despite your alternative world views, you can provide education and care that is appropriate for each child.

Some ways to prepare for and learn about alternative world views include:

- asking parents what is important to them
- networking with different cultural groups
- participating in reputable forums or reading relevant journals.

Celebrating diversity

There are many ways you can celebrate diversity and, in turn, demonstrate respect for all families. Your curriculum should be rich and varied. Parents should be able to see that children are interacting with culturally diverse materials and messages.

There should be evidence that:

- learning resources represent a wide range of people, customs and cultures
- the menu is diverse
- activities focus on:
  - diversity
  - language and bilingualism
  - gender differences and similarities
  - family lifestyles
  - festivals and celebrations.

To truly celebrate diversity, you need to be committed to developing an understanding of the diversity that exists both within and outside your service community.

Ways you can celebrate diversity in your curriculum:

- Include photos of cultural events, children, educators and families.
- Provide books, magazines, music and brochures in other languages.
- Include cultural items in the home corner.
- Provide mirrors for children to look at themselves.
- Provide multicultural resources as part of the normal play equipment, such as mobiles and toys.
- Provide multicultural dolls of both genders.
- Display words in languages other than English.
- Provide art supplies using colours or materials common to a particular culture.
- Tell stories that reflect non-stereotypical attitudes.
- Have visitors from different cultural backgrounds.
- Provide small group activities for children to work together so they learn to listen to and value each other's opinions.
- Allow parents to visit and share their experiences and skills, or join in regular activities.
- Have interpreters to encourage interactions between parents and educators.

Role-modelling inclusion

Role-modelling is an effective teaching technique that allows children and adults to observe and learn desirable behaviour. Through modelling, you can show others how to:

- empathise
- show affection
- help and share with others
- respect others' opinions and needs
- observe cultural customs.

Children use behaviours and attitudes they see adults modelling in their everyday play and social interactions. For this reason, it is important to use oral communication skills to role-model open, inclusive and ethical interactions with all children, families and colleagues.

Children can feel comfortable with diversity and see it as positive if you encourage open exploration and discussion. New or different things are usually interesting to children and prompt them to ask questions.

Take the following steps to role-model appropriate behaviours:

- Use open communication in which each person is treated equally and is provided the information they need. When open communication is occurring, each person communicating will feel safe to share their views and ideas, and participate in decision-making.
- Use inclusive communication by ensuring you use language that everyone understands; this may mean presenting information in a simple way and avoiding jargon.
- Engage in ethical interactions that demonstrate your respect for the rights of others and their importance as part of your service and curriculum.

Watch this video about working with others appropriately.

Challenging stereotypes

You may notice that children's reactions or participation suggests a need for additional cultural support or further understanding of cross-cultural concepts.

To avoid children developing fears and concerns about differences, which may cause them to form stereotypical or biased views, you can:

- encourage children to ask questions about differences they notice
- help children feel comfortable about asking questions
- answer questions honestly
- avoid criticising children
- make sure your answers match the children's level of understanding
- guide children to ask questions in positive ways
- let children know that biased words are inappropriate and can be hurtful.

Consider the following example.

Michaela: 'Why does Azara always wear that scarf?'

Educator: 'Azara's scarf is important to her. In her family all the girls and women wear a scarf. It is part of their culture.'

Identifying and addressing prejudice

Some educators believe that if they challenge prejudiced comments or actions of children and others it may create conflict. However, by being open, honest and succinct in your responses, you can successfully manage situations where prejudice occurs and develop confidence in your ability to promote the value of diversity.

The following table sets out some strategies for addressing prejudice.

Strategy	Explanation
Lay ground rules	Let children know it is unacceptable to use words or actions that hurt or exclude others. Encourage children to identify how they make others feel happy or sad, then use these ideas to set limits.
Allow mistakes	An environment that allows mistakes is one where children will learn. If they are able to identify these situations as mistakes, they will be more willing to apologise in a meaningful way. This helps them to understand what the consequences of their actions are.
Address non-inclusive actions	Be prepared for prejudiced behaviour or communication. Identify topics that may arise and keep some books, puppets or other materials ready to help explain situations.
Share real experiences	Talk to children about the times when you personally felt left out or excluded. Discuss how it made you feel.
Encourage empowerment	Support children who have not been included or have been made to feel uncomfortable about an aspect of themselves. Help children develop the ability to share information about themselves to help them feel confident speaking about themselves and proud of their differences.

Practice task 11

1. How would you respond and start a meaningful discussion with children in the following situations?
   a. A maintenance person comes to your service to fix an appliance. The children stare at the person as she is wearing a headscarf.

   b. A child in the home corner is heard saying, 'I don't want to play with that doll – it's ugly!', referring to a dark-skinned doll.

2. You are including a celebration of National Aboriginal and Torres Islander children in your plan. A parent comments, 'Why do we need to do that when there are no Aboriginal people in the service?'

   How would you respond to this parent's comments in a way that strengthens your relationship and respects the parent's views?

Summary

- There are many activities and opportunities that allow you to help children develop an understanding of others.
- Experiences that share similarities and differences are useful for sharing ideas and finding out about others.
- To develop a trusting and positive relationship with parents, create a setting where individuals can be accepted for who they are and be sensitive to the needs of others.
- Children can learn desirable behaviours through positive role-modelling.
- Implement strategies to ensure children reject stereotyping and/or biased views.
- Part of modelling inclusion is addressing prejudice when it happens.
- Through role-modelling, you can educate children on how to respect the communication styles of others.

Learning checkpoint 5
Supporting children's cross-cultural understanding and relationships

Read the following case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Abi is from a dark-skinned African culture. He has recently joined your service and the other children are interested to find out more about where he is from and why he doesn't understand English very well. To introduce Abi's culture to the whole group, you need to plan an activity that will inform the group and help them all to understand some of Abi's traditions. You want to focus on Abi's uniqueness, yet link this to things the children already understand. In this way you will develop a respectful and inclusive activity.

1. Describe an experience that would promote Abi's uniqueness by exploring his culture, heritage, background and/or traditions.

2. How would you link the experience you described with things the children already understood and so promote understanding, celebrate diversity and build constructive relationships?

3. Identify one action of additional cultural support you think you may need to provide based on the scenario. Include a question the children might ask you about Abi, how you would respond and an activity you might include to help the children understand.

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Topic 6

In this topic you will learn about:

6A Providing diverse experiences

6B Implementing cultural events and celebrations

Implementing inclusive learning experiences

Play can assist children to learn to accept and value all people. It can also help children to learn positive attitudes of acceptance and respect for a range of different ideas and opinions.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

	National Quality Standard	
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework		**My Time, Our Place**
	Principles	
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
✓	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
	Practice	
	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
✓	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
	Outcomes	
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

6A Providing diverse experiences

All the experiences you provide for children should be meaningful and based on their interests. They should stimulate children's curiosity and support their feelings of belonging, being and becoming. This is reflected in Element 1.1.2 of the NQS, which has the concept 'child-centred' and the descriptor: 'Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program'.

Each experience you provide can be embedded with aspects of culture, while still focusing on a particular area of learning. Discussion allows children to see the reasoning behind your activities and how it links to people and their heritage or lifestyle. Through learning experiences and the support of attentive educators, children can explore their own identities and those of others in a fun and non-threatening way.

Watch this video about organising activities for children.

Encouraging an appreciation of diversity

Encourage children to take an interest in each other through discussion and encouraging them to have a positive attitude toward diversity. Some suggested strategies are set out in the following table.

Type of difference	Strategies
Cultural differences	▶ Encourage children to use play that depicts a range of cultures, through role-playing, modelling or language. ▶ Be aware of children's cultural heritage and traditions and, if possible, incorporate resources that are relevant to the program; for example, Chinese cookware for the home corner, cultural dress-ups, dolls with a variety of skin colours or musical instruments from another culture. ▶ Include cultural resources as part of the day-to-day environment rather than just bringing them out on special occasions. ▶ Realistically depict cultural aspects that are relevant to children away from the care setting. ▶ Continually educate yourself about aspects of the children's lives outside the service. ▶ Avoid stereotyping any child or family; everyone is unique and has their own needs and interests. ▶ Include special occasions that some or all children participate in. ▶ Remember that culture does not only relate to country of origin or religion, but encompasses all the differences between one family and another.

Type of difference	Strategies
Gender differences	▶ Never label the children's activity as best suited to boys or girls. Provide a range of open-ended, non-gender-specific options and challenge children's perceptions of girls' and boys' play. ▶ Be aware that all children play differently. ▶ Encourage all genders to participate in all areas of play in the environment you set up; for example, encourage boys to dress up and girls to engage in messy play, and initiate spontaneous interactions with all children in the group.
Additional needs	▶ Include all children in types of play for all areas of development. ▶ Participate in play to model ways to include children and encourage interactions. ▶ Provide specific equipment or set-up to ensure success. ▶ Ensure that children's individual programs are incorporated into the overall play setting to provide an inclusive experience for each child.

Example

Incorporating cultural items into play

Elise, an educator, has placed a sari and a pair of chopsticks in the home corner. These items were added to the regular items in the area, which include pots and pans, dolls, dress-ups, plates, cups and cutlery. Elise remains close by for most of the morning so that she can listen to and observe the children.

Elise enters the area when a child does not know what the chopsticks are. She explains that they are used to eat food and that if you go to an Asian restaurant, you might use them. She also explains that Ling uses them at home to eat.

Sharing and exploring diverse backgrounds

Experiences that you may find useful for sharing and exploring diverse backgrounds are detailed in the following table.

Experience	Details
Human show and tell	Small groups of children talk about special things in their home life, such as: ▶ celebrations ▶ where they live ▶ what they do at home ▶ who lives at their house ▶ their favourite games and activities. You may extend this by including some of these things in your program.

Experience	Details
Display table	Provide a small table where children can bring in special things from home. You may specify a topic (for example, something the child thinks no one else has seen before or something from another country) or leave it open for the children to choose. Provide clear limits so that children take care of and respect other people's property.
Face-matching games	Take photos of the children's faces and develop: ▶ jigsaw puzzles ▶ bingo games ▶ matching games ▶ a family tree or matching game using additional family photos.

Practice task 12

1. Identify and describe one experience that broadens children's perspective and understanding of diversity.

2. Provide one example of how diversity and inclusion could be incorporated into everyday activities.

3. Access your organisation's philosophy, policies and procedures. What do they say about experiences that promote diversity?

6B Implementing cultural events and celebrations

There are many events that are celebrated across the world. The events your service participates in often depend on the cultural mix of families in your service.

Events and celebrations include:

- birthdays
- name days
- festivals
- celebrations of achievements
- religious occasions
- community events
- the beginning and end of a school term or holiday
- cultural events
- graduation.

You can incorporate various types of events and celebrations into the service's routines; for example, singing 'Happy birthday', or learning Christmas carols or about Hanukkah in December. This provides children with a variety of social experiences, while also acknowledging diversity and that it is valued and respected.

Discuss with parents what events and celebrations they participate in and explore how these can be incorporated into your program. Parents can provide information and support you by helping children prepare for and participate in events and celebrations. This can even help to broaden your own view of the world and other cultures, and to gain a better understanding of how to approach your role.

Cultural and religious events

Religious and cultural calendars alter each year. In Australia, some events always occur on particular dates; for example, Christmas is always on 25 December. However, there are also events that are based on a lunar calendar, such as Easter, which occurs on the first Sunday after the Paschal full moon. In addition, there are days that acknowledge particular celebrations or events, such as Anzac Day, Father's Day and National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.

There are calendars available online that outline most national events, national weeks of celebration, and cultural and religious dates. These calendars can be found on the Australian Government website: http://aspirelr.link/special-events-calendar

Experiences based on these events and celebrations need to be well-planned and appropriate to children's development and learning. They need to be presented in a way that meets children's needs and is relevant to the families and communities who use your service. There is no need to celebrate every event: consult with families, colleagues and children to determine what is relevant. If you work out what the main emphasis of each event is, this will assist you to create sensitive, meaningful experiences and activities for children.

The following table provides a sample of events taken from the cultural and religious events calendar for October 2017, published on the Australian Government Department of Social Services website.

October 2017 (extract)		
1 Sun	National Day	China
1 Sun	Ashura	Islamic
3 Tues	Queen's Birthday	Queensland
4 Wed	Succot (Tabernacles)	Jewish
9 Mon	Independence Day	Uganda
12 Thurs	National Day	Spain
19 Thurs	Bandi Chhor Divas	Sikh
19 Thurs	Deepavalia – Festival of Lights	Hindu
21 Sat	Birth of Báb	Baha'i faith
29 Sun	Republic Day	Turkey

Community events

Community events provide children with opportunities to see how they can make a difference to others and how the community values their contributions. The type and size of events vary greatly, so consider their relevance to the individual children you care for.

Community events may be based on state or national activities, or be focused on local community interests. They may include occasions for:

- specific groups (for example, a seniors day or toddler library session)
- whole communities (for example, the Melbourne Show)
- education (for example, a Vietnamese cultural day)
- charity (for example, a fundraising event to raise money to build a playground in a park).

Your local council or shire website provides information on upcoming community events.

Family celebrations

Family celebrations are usually linked to parental religious beliefs and heritage, and to the family's priorities and interests. The best way to find out about each family's celebrations is to ask them directly. You will find that many families celebrate similar events, such as birthdays, but they are likely to celebrate them differently.

Example

Implementing cultural events and celebrations

Gabby, an educator, decides to develop a group time about Ramadan (the ninth month of the Islamic calendar), as this is a big event in the local community. Along with the photos she has collected from last year's Eid festival (the final day of Ramadan), she decides to include the following information as she feels it will be of interest to the children:

- Ramadan is celebrated by most Muslims.
- Adults who celebrate Ramadan only eat in the night time, but children can eat at any time.
- When the adults eat, they might invite their friends over at night to share a meal.
- During Ramadan, people try to do good things for others; for example, donate to charities.
- At the end of Ramadan, people dress up and go to their place of prayer, which is called a mosque.

At the end of Ramadan, there is also a celebration at the leisure centre with stalls, face painting and other children's activities. Those attending give presents to each other.

Practice task 13

1. Ask **two** different families how they celebrate a common cultural event. Identify the similarities and differences in their celebrations.

2. How could you respect and reflect these differences in your planned activities?

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Summary

- All the experiences you provide for children should be meaningful and based on their interests.
- There are many occasions for celebration, and the variety your service celebrates often depends on the cultural mix of families in your care.
- Family events and celebrations are usually linked to parental customs and beliefs, and to the family's priorities and interests.

Learning checkpoint 6
Implementing inclusive learning experiences

Element 1.1.2 of the NQS includes the concept 'child-centred' and the descriptor 'Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program'.

Describe an experience you could plan that supports this standard by focusing on the events, customs and beliefs of a child and their family.

Your description should include:

- any cultural characteristics of the family/child
- the event being celebrated
- the beliefs that are connected to the event
- the celebrations that are linked to the event
- how this experience could be implemented
- how you could use the experience to build on the children's understanding of each other.

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Topic 7

In this topic you will learn about:

7A Creating a sense of belonging

7B Engaging and collaborating

7C Supporting specific needs

Supporting personal and cultural identity

There are many ways you can encourage children to be connected to their family, their community and your service. By providing secure environments where relationships with others extend knowledge and develop connections, children will develop an understanding of others and feel a stronger sense of self.

The following table maps this topic to the National Quality Standard and both national learning frameworks.

National Quality Standard		
✓	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice	
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety	
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment	
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements	
✓	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children	
✓	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities	
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership	
Early Years Learning Framework		**My Time, Our Place**
Principles		
✓	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships	
✓	Partnerships	
✓	High expectations and equity	
✓	Respect for diversity	
✓	Ongoing learning and reflective practice	
Practice		
	Holistic approaches	Holistic approaches
✓	Responsiveness to children	Collaboration with children
	Learning through play	Learning through play
✓	Intentional teaching	Intentionality
✓	Learning environments	Environments
✓	Cultural competence	Cultural competence
	Continuity of learning and transitions	Continuity and transitions
✓	Assessment for learning	Evaluation for wellbeing and learning
Outcomes		
✓	Children have a strong sense of identity	
	Children are connected to and contribute to their world	
	Children have a strong sense of wellbeing	
	Children are confident and involved learners	
	Children are effective communicators	

7A Creating a sense of belonging

Belonging is a fundamental need for human beings. Without this sense of belonging, a child may be fearful and anxious. This can influence their behaviour, including their choices and reactions to those around them. Creating a sense of belonging ensures that children feel valued, have a purpose and have connections.

If diversity is valued in your service, children are more likely to experience a sense of belonging. They will also experience what it is like to be part of a group. They will learn how their actions and behaviours affect others, and that respectful communication and behaviour is paramount to building positive self-esteem and identity.

Respectful and reciprocal relationships

The EYLF and MTOP stress the importance of belonging and providing children with opportunities to experience secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships. They describe what actions educators can take towards this.

Some key points are set out in the following table.

EYLF/MTOP outcomes	How you can support this
Children feel safe, secure and supported	▶ Acknowledge and respond sensitively to children. ▶ Support attachment relationships. ▶ Support change. ▶ Bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar. ▶ Build on cultural practices. ▶ Support children's thoughts and feelings. ▶ Acknowledge uniqueness. ▶ Interact and converse with each child.
Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities	▶ Promote a strong sense of connectedness. ▶ Help children to develop feelings of pride. ▶ Share successes. ▶ Show respect for diversity. ▶ Demonstrate an understanding of each child and their family. ▶ Introduce children to a variety of ways to express their identity and culture. ▶ Build on language, knowledge and understanding. ▶ Talk about similarities and differences. ▶ Provide rich and diverse resources. ▶ Support the maintenance of a home language and culture.

To create an environment that is conducive to respectful and reciprocal relationships, you need to consider factors that create a feeling of security and familiarity for each child and their family.

Tips to create a feeling of security and familiarity:

- Display photos of families around the room.
- Include materials and props that children will recognise from their home environment.
- Provide many small group spaces.
- Join in activities with children, and talk about what they are doing, feeling and thinking.
- Learn key words in a child's first language from the parents or other language speaker.
- Ask parents to contribute to the program; for example, by reading stories, repairing something, sharing skills with the children or joining in a cooking experience.
- Make time each day to talk with each parent about their child's day and use information from these discussions in the program.
- Provide regular opportunities to share children's learning and developmental progress with parents.
- Enlist the assistance of an interpreter where necessary.
- Document and display children's learning.

Sense of identity

There is a broad range of experiences you can provide for children to encourage a sense of identity, wellbeing, being connected to and contributing to their world. They include actions to show you are listening and are interested in the child's life.

Here are some examples:

- Use children's names.
- Use photos of children and their families.
- Display children's individual work.
- Use cultural items relevant to children's families and the community.
- Visit or talk about places in the local community.
- Listen to children and encourage them to participate in discussions.
- Ask children about their home life, pets and what they did on the weekend.
- Provide spaces that belong to the child, such as lockers or hooks for personal items.
- Look at the child's portfolio or samples of their work and talk about their activities.
- Provide books, posters and puzzles that depict a variety of different people, cultures, homes and lifestyles.
- Include dolls with features similar to the child.
- Add cultural items to play areas.
- Celebrate each other's important days or traditions.
- Incorporate excursions and incursions into the curriculum.

Practice task 14

1. Create a log of when you have been involved in or provided one of the following activities:

   - ☐ Using photos of children and their families.
   - ☐ Displaying children's individual work.
   - ☐ Visiting or talking about places in the local community with children.
   - ☐ Talking about a child's home life, pets and what they did on the weekend.
   - ☐ Asking a child to help you do something.
   - ☐ Providing spaces that belong to a child, such as a locker or hook for their personal items.
   - ☐ Providing a book, poster or a puzzle that depicts a variety of different people, cultures, homes and lifestyles.

2. When you have completed all items in this log, access a copy of the EYLF or MTOP. How do the things you did in your log connect to the following outcomes?

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

7B Engaging and collaborating

Communicating in a culturally sensitive way enables children to develop a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, and helps them form connections with their world. These are fundamental outcomes of the EYLF and MTOP. Educators who engage with children positively help build strong reciprocal relationships that enhance children's understandings about how to interact and exchange ideas in a sensitive way.

Engaging and collaborating with children enables them to develop a sense of belonging and ownership in their environment, as well as agency in their own learning.

When you encourage children to be involved in everyday choices, decision-making and problem-solving become part of normal thinking. These skills assist children as they grow and develop to deal with larger issues when they arise.

Watch this video about engaging with children.

Supporting interactions

You may support children's interactions by involving them in:

- recognising problems
- clarifying goals
- planning strategies
- finding solutions
- answering open-ended questions
- sharing their ideas with others
- using open-ended materials
- using new and stimulating materials
- using everyday events to explore the world
- talking about routines and choices
- consulting children about their ideas.

Working collaboratively

Collaborative problem-solving involves parties working side by side to solve a problem and find a solution that is acceptable to everyone involved. The group activities you implement need to include children in this process so the solutions reached meet the majority of needs and interests. This process can increase the group's satisfaction with what is agreed to. It also helps to establish positive working relationships as no child should dominate another. When you plan group collaboration tasks, check that the children are interested.

Trying to include all children in problem-solving when some may not be interested can cause disruption. Sometimes a working group can be formed. You can do this by introducing a topic, then asking who would like to be part of a decision-making group.

Research has shown that, in a collaborative environment, children learn to appreciate others' ideas and points of view sooner. They also gain knowledge and develop problem-solving skills.

A collaborative approach to play can be achieved by:

- planning activities where children have a shared goal
- ensuring the goal is based on children's interests
- making it possible for children to achieve their goal through their own actions
- making the results of an activity visible and immediate.

Collaborative problem-solving in its simplest form can be broken down into four simple steps.

Step	Action	Example: How will we celebrate Father's Day?
1. Share perspectives	Use communication skills to share and understand each other's ideas and needs.	▶ During a group discussion, ask questions such as: – Do you have a father or is there someone else just as special in your family? – What sort of things do you do with your father or other special person? – What do you call your father or other special person? – Do you celebrate Father's Day at home and what do you do? – Why is Father's Day important to you?
2. Define the issue	Define and agree on the topic or issue being discussed.	▶ We need to think about whether or not we should celebrate Father's Day. ▶ If we agree to celebrate Father's Day, we need to think about how we should celebrate and if we will call it Father's Day or something else.
3. Generate options	Generate ideas through brainstorming. Try to consider as many ideas as possible.	▶ How could we celebrate Father's Day here? ▶ How can we celebrate fathers or the other special people in our lives? ▶ Will we call this day Father's Day or is there another name we should call it so everyone can celebrate someone special? ▶ How would other children feel if they don't have a father? What might they do instead?
4. Evaluate and reach agreement	Evaluate the options and encourage the group to agree.	▶ Which of the ideas do you think is best? ▶ Do you think the idea about … would work?

To encourage a collaborative process for solving problems, provide suggestions for consideration rather than being directive, which reduces the amount of thinking or exploring that children can do. The following are examples:

- Encourage children to interact with each other. Introduce activities that are open-ended and involve children in planning and implementation. This encourages children to feel important and put forward their own ideas.
- Help children clarify or adapt their shared goals. To successfully make a decision, all participants need to have the same or a similar goal. You can help them talk about what they want to achieve.
- Involve children who are unlikely to initiate ideas to support their involvement.
- Avoid constantly demonstrating or solving problems for children. Allow the children to think about their options and consider all outcomes.
- Ask the children to share their ideas and listen to others. They can be supported to problem-solve by considering the opinions of others.

Example

A collaborative approach to problem-solving

Ashleigh, an educator, has observed a small group of four-year-olds playing with blocks for long periods. She often needs to go in and solve problems when the children have conflicting ideas about their play. She decides that she wants to teach the children strategies to help them solve problems for themselves.

To encourage a collaborative problem-solving approach to their block play, Ashleigh moves the blocks to the bark area outside. She places posters of farm animals on a divider that she uses to define the area of play. She chooses a farm setting because one of the children's grandparents lives on a farm, which they visit every weekend. She knows this will engage the children and give her an opportunity to model a problem-solving approach during the course of their play.

To ensure the problem-solving approach goes according to plan, Ashleigh does the following:

- She is present in the block area when the children arrive and she shows them the area, assisting them to talk together and identify what they would like to achieve. The goal they set is to create a farm.
- When an issue arises about who will be the farmer and who will build the paddocks for the animals, Ashleigh assists by asking the children what the problem is (defining the issue). She restates the goal the children set (identifying the interests) and then facilitates a discussion that enables each child to share a solution they believe will fix the issue (generating options). Ashleigh then states the agreed option (deciding on objective criteria) and obtains agreement from each of the children to implement the solution (evaluating and reaching agreement).
- She observes the children's reactions to the agreed solution and ensures they participate to implement it.
- She ensures any required materials are provided, and assists the children to talk about new ideas and how to solve further issues.
- She discusses the children's progress, takes a photo of their work and encourages others to have a look.
- She encourages the children to stand back to look at their progress and reflect on how they have all worked together to achieve their goal.

Practice task 15

Read the case study and explain how you would help the children to problem-solve in this situation.

Case study

You are working with four children who are playing with blocks. Three of the children want to work together and take the whole space to create a train station, track and cityscape. One child wishes to create a space-age car from the blocks.

Use the **four** steps associated with collaborative problem-solving to work through this issue.

7C Supporting specific needs

Children and their families may come to you with specific cultural requirements that need to be taken into account. These may include:

- child-rearing practices
- clothing
- religious practices
- customs
- social values
- family obligations
- language spoken
- non-verbal behaviour.

Obtaining support to meet children's cultural needs

At times you may need support to meet a child's specific cultural needs. To succeed, all educators need to be involved, work towards the same goals and implement the same practices.

To develop successful plans, you should meet with parents to discuss how you will meet their needs and develop a management plan specific to the child. As you develop this plan, you may need resources and support from a mentor, a more experienced educator or an external agency that can provide additional assistance and guidance.

You are likely to have possible mentors and supervisors in your organisation who provide guidance to you when children need additional support. This mentoring process may involve:

- attending meetings to discuss and develop the management plan
- the mentor directly observing the program
- further individual work with the child
- participating in professional development to increase your skills and knowledge.

External organisations that specialise in dealing with specific cultural needs may be required. The Inclusion Support Programme (ISP) supports services to provide inclusive environments for children via direct service support, resources and training.

Applications can be made to attract funding for specific children who fit the program's guidelines to better provide for their participation in the service. Bicultural support is one component of funding provision. Inclusion Agencies (IAs) provide resources and training to early childhood and child care (ECCC) services, including:

- mentoring/professional supervision
- networking and collaboration
- flexible training options/customised support and professional development
- online resource collections, including fact sheets, information and useful links
- telephone advice and support
- resource materials.

Local government children's services departments also provide professional assistance for supporting the inclusion of children into the program. They have dedicated workers who provide hands-on support to services and assistance with submitting funding applications and making assessments of children's needs.

These support services are usually contacted directly via your Inclusion Agency. When accessing external agencies, parental permission and continued consultation with the parent is required.

Community members

To support children with specific cultural needs, you may be able to involve community members who have some experience or knowledge relevant to the cultural group. These community members may be able to assist with the child's integration into the service and improve the knowledge of educators working with the child and the family. They may also be able to access specific information and resources.

When contacting community members, it is important to be aware of any protocols that may affect the type of contact you can have and what may be provided to the organisation. These protocols may relate to customs and traditions that need to be respected. For example, you may need to:

- have contact with a sponsor or someone in the community group to introduce you
- gain permission to access information and resources
- read and acknowledge the group's charter before working together
- follow customs such as taking off shoes before entering their space or participating in rituals such as special mealtimes.

Example

Supporting a child's cultural needs

Rani, an educator, is making arrangements for a child who will be commencing at the service tomorrow. Her name is Abelia and she has some specific lifestyle and cultural needs that must be met. To meet these, Rani has made contact with others to ensure Abelia will have a successful orientation.

Rani contacted:

- the cook and educators in the room to let them know that Abelia does not eat pork
- the director to arrange the purchase of a sling so that Abelia can be carried if she is unable to settle in a cot when she sleeps
- the educator in the room next door, as Abelia's sister will be commencing in this room and Abelia may like to spend time with her during the day.

Practice task 16

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Akma has enrolled in your service. She identifies as Aboriginal and is part of the local Aboriginal community. There are no other Aboriginal children in the service.

1. How would you introduce Akma to the children in the group in a way that supports her cultural needs and enhances her sense of belonging?

2. What are some community members or organisations that could support Akma and her family, and could provide advice and information about her culture to your service?

3. Contact the community organisation in your area and ask if you should follow any protocols to access information and/or resources from community members. Record their response.

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Summary

- The learning frameworks help you understand the importance of belonging and providing children with opportunities to experience secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
- Experiences and environments can be used to establish secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships between children, families and other adults.
- When used regularly for everyday choices, decision-making and problem-solving become part of normal thinking. This helps children deal with larger issues when they arise.
- If children are supported to use collaborative processes to solve problems, they are more likely to have their needs and interests addressed.
- Children and their families may come to you with specific cultural needs. You can engage with peers, mentors and others to gain support to address these.
- When supporting children with specific cultural needs, you may be able to involve community members. Specific community protocols may need to be observed as part of this process.

Learning checkpoint 7
Supporting personal and cultural identity

For each of the following questions, provide an example of an experience, discussion, excursion/incursion or some involvement with the community. Use a different option and example for each one.

1. Describe an experience that you could use to establish a secure, respectful and reciprocal relationship with children and their families. Include how you would set up the environment.

2. Describe a discussion you could initiate with children that would help them work towards a strong sense of identity, wellbeing, and feeling of connectedness with and contribution to their world. Include the topic and at least **three** questions you would ask.

3. Describe how you would encourage children to collaborate and solve problems together. Use the four steps of collaborative problem-solving.

4. Identify one peer or mentor in the community that you could engage with when working with children who have specific cultural needs. Include any contact details, protocols or rules you need to follow to access this community peer or mentor.