CHCDIV003
Manage and promote diversity

Learner Guide

Updated to include National Quality Framework changes

Aspire Learning Resources

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Aspire Learning Resources
Supporting Vocational Education and Training for 30 years
1991 to 2023

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Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCDIV003 Manage and promote diversity*, Release 1.

Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. Information regarding how this Learner Guide relates to this unit of competency is detailed in our mapping guide.

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 action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
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 activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

This table maps each topic in this Learner Guide to the National Quality Standard and national learning framework: Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
	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
T1–T4	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
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T1–T4	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
T1–T4	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
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	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
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	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	4. Children are confident and involved learners
T3	5. Children are effective communicators

Research diversity in the workplace

Now, more than ever, workplaces must be in tune with their workforce.

The diversity of staff and the families and children they service has grown exponentially in the past 20 years. There are many reasons for this, and employers need to ensure they are developing a workplace culture of inclusion or they will be left behind.

Researching how an organisation fits in with their local community, what their ratios are in comparison to the rest of the world and how they measure up in regard to diversity and inclusion is paramount.

Diversity comes in many forms. It can be as simple as how old you are, or as complex as how you think and experience emotions. Collecting information on diversity of a workplace can be the key to unlocking the potential of your workforce.

1A Understanding diversity

People are good at different things and a workplace needs a wide variety of skills.

We all learn from each other's different experiences and skills. Interacting with a diverse range of people at work can mean we are challenged to think differently about the world around us.

Diversity is about the inclusion of people who are different. *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework of Australia* (EYLF). It describes respecting diversity as appreciating and respecting the practices, values and beliefs of families in the curriculum.

Educators must value children's different capacities and respect differences in their home lives. Children learn through modelling and imitation, so the behaviours and attitudes of the people that care for them will have an impact on how children behave and see the world.

One principle of the EYLF – Respect for diversity – states that 'When early childhood educators respect the diversity of families and communities, and the aspirations they hold for children, they are able to foster children's motivation to learn and reinforce their sense of themselves as competent learners.'

'Cultural responsiveness' is another of the principles of the EYLF. It states culturally responsive educators are:

> knowledgeable of each child and family's context
> active in embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all aspects of the curriculum
> implementing anti-bias approaches, including social justice approaches to address racism and bias in the setting/community
> embedding democratic and fair practices in their setting, including the importance of being a responsible citizen
> supporting children to take culturally responsive actions in the face of unfairness/discrimination, collaborating with colleagues, children, families and their communities to build culturally safe learning spaces.

Read more about the EYLF here: aspirelr.link/acecqa-approved-frameworks

Diversity concepts

Diversity brings together different points of view, ways of doing things and methods of solving problems.

A service-wide approach to diversity means positive responses will be demonstrated in the behaviour and actions of staff and will be reflected in the development and planning of programs.

There are several ideals that a service can work towards that reflect an acceptance and welcoming of diversity:

> to treat all people fairly and respectfully
> to take responsibility for creating an inclusive environment
> to be responsible for improving diversity and inclusion measures.

Here are some key concepts and definitions related to diversity:

Cultural competence	Cultural competence is the ability to effectively communicate and interact with people of different cultures. Building cultural competence requires that a person understands their own culture and what drives their beliefs and values. It means acknowledging the similarities and differences between your own culture and those of others and breaking down stereotypes and biases.
Cultural sensitivity or awareness	Cultural sensitivity involves being receptive to the different needs and values of people from other cultures. For example, a culturally sensitive approach means adapting to the values, opinions, customs and specific practices of others. Being sensitive is being aware of the cultural differences of others.
Cultural safety	A culturally safe environment is created when people show respect to others. It means considering your own needs but acknowledging that these needs do not overshadow the needs of others.
	To create cultural safety, you must act in a way that shows others you care about their needs and are interested in their choices. This helps others to feel respected and included. When people feel welcomed in this way they feel empowered, valued, understood, supported, willing to participate, and open to the feelings and ideas of others.

Work culture

Human differences play an important part in determining the culture of a workplace.

Workplace culture and practices can change dramatically according to the diversity of people working there. Respect for diversity is essential if a team is to work cooperatively and share similar values, beliefs and attitudes towards to the education and care of young children.

When a new person joins a team, it is unfair to expect them to give up their beliefs or values in order to fit in with a group of people. Some work practices must be adhered to for compliance, safety and as an industry requirement. However, a person should be able to maintain their cultural identity and not have it absorbed or lost into the dominant culture of the workplace. Valuing diversity means having educators with a wide variety of cultural influences, and recognising the value that their different experiences can bring to the team and the programs.

Prejudice and stereotyping

A person from one type of community group does not necessarily represent that entire group.

Prejudice and stereotyping are common practices but are not helpful to teamwork or maintaining a positive work culture.

Prejudice	Prejudice is an opinion or attitude that is based on a preconceived idea, rather than an experience or fact. It means 'pre-judging'. Prejudice involves believing something about a situation or person before knowing enough to make appropriate judgments. Prejudice is often unfair and inappropriate.
Stereotyping	Stereotyping is the process of unfairly or incorrectly making assumptions or generalisations about all of the people in a certain group. Examples of stereotyping include saying or believing that, 'all women want to have children' or 'men do not do any housework'.

Prejudice and stereotyping can be found in a workplace in relation to a number of aspects of diversity such as:

> gender

> sexual orientation

> age

> ethnicity

> personality type

> visual appearance or physical features

> dress standards

> personal interests or differences.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust or negative treatment of someone based on a personal characteristic.

Discriminatory behaviour might be on the grounds of the person's race, age or gender, or any other key area of diversity. It can also be demonstrated as harassment, victimisation or bullying.

It is illegal to discriminate against others. Discrimination can result in legal prosecution and behaviour that discriminates is outlined in legislation such as:

> *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)

> *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth)

> *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)

Discrimination occurs when rules or conditions that apply to everyone have an unfair effect on some people because of their different circumstances. This applies to staff but also educators' relationships with families.

In a workplace, seemingly harmless joking based on a person's race, sex, religion, sexual orientation or appearance is a form of discrimination. These types of jokes hinder, rather than promote, understanding because they can be demeaning to the people concerned. The victim of the jokes is being treated less fairly than other people. Most humour of this sort, including mimicry of a person, is based on prejudicial and discriminatory stereotypes. Such humour can be extremely hurtful and is unacceptable both inside and out of the workplace.

Discrimination in the workplace can occur in direct and indirect ways.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when a person with an attribute is treated less favourably than another person without the attribute in the same or similar circumstances.

For example, an employee is not offered a promotion to a senior educator role because she is Asian and the employer believes that this would make her unpopular with the non-Asian families who use the service.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when a condition, requirement or practice is imposed and a person with an attribute does not or is not able to comply. An example would be if a workplace planned a social outing that required people to compete in a physically active running sport; that would discriminate against staff members who are unable to run.

Racism

Racism is the belief that some people are superior or inferior to others.

Racial vilification refers to behaviour that insults individuals and groups on the grounds of their colour, race, ethnicity or national origins. This includes racist jokes and racially offensive terms, stereotyping, provocative media reporting, historical revisionism and racist hate propaganda. Most countries have legislation prohibiting racism.

In a setting that provides care to children, racism can prevent children from contributing, and from feeling worthy or welcome. In addition, if it is known that a service has racist attitudes towards staff, families or children, the reputation of a service will suffer and perhaps lose its registration.

Characteristics of diversity and cultural identity

Culture refers to the social behaviour, lifestyle and characteristics that describe a group of people.

Cultural identity is about how well a person understands who they are, why they are like this and what they believe in. People with a strong cultural identity are more likely to show confidence in themselves and to feel a sense of belonging. They are also better able to understand diversity and work positively with others.

Here are examples of factors that may influence a person's or family's cultural identity.

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; whereas others place a high value on money, wealth and material possessions.

Race, culture and ethnicity

Race is a term applied to people based on their genetic heritage. It is often difficult to say a person belongs to a specific race because there are so many individual variations (such as skin, eye and hair colour).

An ethnic group is a distinct group with specific characteristics. People of the same ethnicity have a shared past or culture and might share the same:

> physical characteristics (such as shape of the nose)
> linguistic characteristics (language or dialect spoken)
> behavioural or cultural characteristics (religion or customs)
> environmental characteristics (living in the same area).

Australia is home to families who are influenced by many races and ethnicities. These families are also influenced by their life experiences in Australia and will follow different beliefs and have different styles of living.

Family history

Ancestry or family history may influence traits or behaviours 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 and beliefs 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.

Language

Many languages are spoken in Australia – both verbal and non-verbal. Many people are able to speak more than one language. Some people may communicate using sign language. People may also demonstrate particular communication styles and non-verbal social customs, such as bowing.

Each language should be respected as a valid form of communication.

Age and generation

Research shows that each generation approaches life and work in a different way. Their unique attitudes, ambitions and world views have been shaped by the social and historical events that they have lived through.

The different generations include:

> Silent generation (born approx. 1925–1945)
> Baby boomers (born approx. 1946–1964)
> Generation X (born approx. 1965–1979)
> Generation Y or Millennials (born approx. 1980–1994)
> Generation Z (born approx. 1995 to 2010)
> Generation Alpha (born since 2011).

Some children may be raised or regularly cared for by grandparents and this will influence their own world views.

Religion and spiritual beliefs

All Australians are free to practise any religion they find appropriate to their beliefs, faith and values, and have the right to express those religious beliefs or to practise no religion at all.

Religion is a specific set of organised beliefs and practices, focused on the belief in and worship of one or more gods. Religion is usually practised by a community or a group.

Spirituality is a broader concept than religion. It is more of an individual practice and has to do with having a sense of peace and purpose.

Religion and spirituality often have a strong influence on the norms, beliefs, values and customs that determine family culture. Many individuals and communities frame their values in religious or spiritual terms.

A colleague or family should only be asked about their religious habits if it affects the way they provide services.

Life experiences, personal history and experiences of trauma

All people are affected by their life experiences. Whether traumatic or positive, experiences affect the way people live their lives and interact with others. In some cases, life experiences are visible, such as a scar. Other life experiences may not be as obvious, such as a chronic illness, the traumatic experiences of war, the death of a loved one or a serious illness or accident.

Families granted political asylum or refugee status

People who have been granted political asylum have been in danger in their home country due to their race, nationality, religion, political opinions or social group. They have come to Australia and been recognised by the government as needing protection.

Refugees are people who have left their own country to escape war, persecution or natural disaster. They may not have chosen or wanted to leave their own country.

When gathering background information about families who have been granted political asylum or refugee status, questions about cultural background or family history may be confronting.

Children may experience developmental or emotional challenges due to the trauma or uncertainty they have experienced. They may be confused about their identity and where they belong.

Family type

Families are structured in many different ways. They might be:

> nuclear families – two parents raising children (may be male/female parents or same-sex parents)
> single-parent families – one parent raising children
> extended families – two or more adults raising children in one home
> step or blended families – two separate families merged into one
> grandparent families – a grandparent or grandparents raising children.
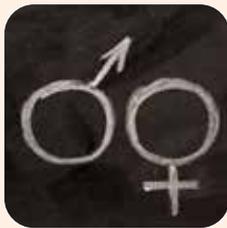
Gender, gender identification, relationships and sexual orientation

Families include people with various gender characteristics or sexual orientations. These characteristics or orientations are based on the individual's perception of their own identity, including those identifying as:

> male or female
> heterosexual (people attracted to those of the opposite sex)
> homosexual (people attracted to those of the same sex)
> bisexual (people attracted to both males and females)
> transgender or trans (people whose personality does not correspond with their birth sex)
> gender diverse, gender neutral (people who do not connect to being either male or female).

A term commonly used to describe those other than heterosexual individuals is 'LGBTQ+'. This term describes a range of sexual orientations including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and those questioning their sexual orientation. The '+' shows inclusiveness.

Intersex status refers to people who have physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:

> neither wholly female nor wholly male
> a combination of female and male
> neither female nor male.

Being intersex is about having biological variations, not about gender identity. An intersex person may have the biological attributes of both sexes, or lack some of the biological attributes considered necessary to be defined as one sex or the other.

Discrimination against people on the basis of their sexuality or sexual orientation is illegal in Australia. Being intersex must be considered as another aspect of the person – just like race, culture and ethnicity.

Ability, disability

People have diverse interests that lead to developmental differences; for example, one person may enjoy sport and show strong hand–eye coordination; another may prefer to read books, demonstrating high literacy skills.

Some people are born with or develop a disability or impairment.

Categories of disability include:

> physical – affects a person's mobility or dexterity

> intellectual – affects a person's ability to learn

> psychiatric – affects a person's mental health

> sensory – affects a person's ability to use senses such as sight, hearing, touch

> neurological – results in the loss of some bodily or mental functions.

There may also be disabilities resulting from physical disfigurement or from the presence of organisms causing disease in the body.

Example
Encouraging cultural diversity

Kirra's mother, Merindah, asks the educator, Bernice, if she should stop speaking to her child in her own language so she will learn English without being confused.

Bernice explains that being bilingual or multilingual is of benefit to a child. She explains that it will contribute to Kirra's success and she should continue to encourage and support her child to use and develop her first language. Bernice points out that Kirra's linguistic diversity will help her become confident in the use of language. She shows Merindah a program planned for the children that aims to expose them to different languages and dialects, and encourages appreciation of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Merindah is relieved that encouraging Kirra to speak her first language would add to Kirra's positive sense of identity and wellbeing. Speaking in their first language is important to the family as it demonstrates a connection with family values and cultural heritage and traditions.

Australian culture

Australian culture is made up of Indigenous Australian cultures, Anglo-Celtic culture (due to Australia's history of British settlement) and a diverse mix of cultures from all over the world.

There is evidence that many non-Aboriginal children and adults have limited knowledge of, or misunderstandings about, Aboriginal communities and culture. Stereotypical views about Aboriginal peoples are common, inaccurate or outdated.

For example, many people believe that the majority of Aboriginal people live traditional lifestyles in remote parts of the country. However, while this is the case for some, most Aboriginal people live in urban environments and have diverse lifestyles.

Cultural diversity in Australia has continued to grow in the post-war period of migration, and as more people born overseas migrated to Australia. People immigrate because they believe they can make better lives for themselves, while some are also trying to escape war-torn countries, or political and social persecution. Immigrants come from a wide range of social, technological, industrial, political and economic backgrounds; a unique multicultural landscape has developed in Australia as a result of people from diverse backgrounds and cultures converging.

Example
Celebrating religious events

Practising respect for diversity includes choosing experiences that are authentic and relevant to the community, the families and the children who use the service. In addition to embedding culturally appropriate practices throughout the program in different ways, a service in Melbourne celebrates important cultural events in the community and gives information to all families about their meaning.

The centre held a celebration at the end of Ramadan, as many of the families are Muslim. All the families and children joined in, and those from other religions and cultures learnt about what Ramadan means for the Muslim families.

The service also celebrates Diwali, a Hindu festival, the Chinese Moon Lantern Festival and Easter. The staff always consult with families before deciding what to celebrate and how to celebrate these special events.

✏ Practice Task 1

1. Which of the following statements about diversity are correct? Select all that apply.

    ☐   Families should be asked about their religious faith during induction to the service.

    ☐   It is illegal to ask a family for information about their sexual orientation.

    ☐   Diversity is appreciating and respecting the practices, values and beliefs of families.

    ☐   Cultural sensitivity is being receptive to different needs and values of various cultures.

    ☐   Everyone should think the same way and adopt the dominant culture while at work.

2. Draw a line to match each of the terms with its description.

    * Stereotyping

    * An opinion or attitude that is based on a preconceived idea, rather than experience or fact

    * Prejudice

    * When a person is treated less fairly than another person because of differences outside of their control

    * Discrimination

    * A category that refers to physical characteristics and is usually dependent on someone's genetic makeup

    * Race

    * The process of unfairly or incorrectly making generalisations about all the people within a certain group

3. Explain the differences between direct and indirect discrimination.

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4. Which one of the following are examples of cultural identity and diversity?

    ☐ People who identify as gender neutral don't identify as being either male or female.

    ☐ A parent who is unable to communicate their child's needs will likely have a disability.

    ☐ Intersex parents like to be described as male.

    ☐ Children who are cared for by their grandparents will hold some 'old world' views.

    ☐ A transgender person may feel their personality does not correspond with their birth sex.

    ☐ Many people frame their values in religious or spiritual terms.

1B Research diversity

Understanding differences will improve communication, tolerance and acceptance of other people at work.

It is worth investing time and energy into learning how to accommodate and adapt to different people and different practices. This can lead improved workplace relationships that can in turn lead to better understanding of the contributions each person can make in terms of their individual talents and skills.

By accepting and utilising diversity, you can the different qualities, skills and experience of people can be harnessed to accomplish goals and provide a positive and valuable environment for children.

Benefits of a diverse workplace

➤ Promotes diversity and welcomes others, attracting staff to the workplace

➤ Encourages open, innovative approaches and new ideas for programs and practices

➤ Improves social justice and equal opportunities for all

➤ Ensures staff are given the opportunities to share a variety of ideas, skills, knowledge and talents

➤ Shows that life experiences, values and perspectives are represented and acknowledged

➤ Offers a workplace and service where people feel supported and welcome

➤ Improves the communication between people where they are required to meet the needs of a diverse community

➤ Staff demonstrate tolerance of others and role model these values to children

Diversity objectives

Diversity objectives are the goals or aspirations that an organisation works towards.

Objectives are statements that form part of the organisation's vision, mission or philosophy statements and are embedded across various policy documents. The service may have a specific diversity or inclusion policy that has explicit objectives on ways diversity is to be demonstrated in the workplace. This policy may be known by different names across different organisations, such as equal opportunity policy, diversity policy or by other names. The objectives might apply to the program and follow the NQF regulations and requirements. They may also apply to staff and the expectations for them to encourage and support diversity across all aspects of the business.

Examples of diversity objectives might include:

➤ improved workplace relationships

➤ an improved understanding of the contributions each person can make in terms of their individual talents and skills

➤ a harmonious and accepting workplace where staff, families and children feel supported and welcome

> creating, maintaining and encouraging a culture that accepts, respects and promotes our differences and values diversity in the workplace
> improving communication skills of staff to meet the needs of diverse families.

Diversity objectives may also include that the service will:

> value diversity by maintaining a safe and secure work environment and acting against inappropriate workplace behaviour including discrimination, harassment, bullying and victimisation
> recruit staff and educators impartially from a diverse field of suitably qualified candidates
> provide learning and development strategies and opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and experience of all staff
> embrace the range of cultural perspectives displayed in multicultural Australia and the key issues impacting on workplace communication
> build an understanding of the benefits of encouraging and valuing diversity in the workplace
> treat every person fairly and equally regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, culture/ethnicity, language and religious beliefs, abilities or disabilities.

Here is a list of workplace strategies that demonstrate diversity in action.

Recruitment

Recruitment practices should not present barriers to diversity. This means regularly looking at when and how recruitment is taking place.

Promotional and marketing

Ensure advertising does not draw on stereotypes or generalisations such as in language and use of images.

Encouraging an inclusive work culture

Ensuring the attitudes are practised at all levels to ensure the culture succeeds.

Sharing information, celebrations and acknowledging differences between people to foster understanding and respect.

Using data to measure diversity objectives

Relying on a set of written objectives doesn't mean diversity is practised.

If objectives work towards goals, then how do you determine if the objective is being met?

Data can be collected and used to measure and monitor the effectiveness of objectives. Some examples are listed below.

> If the objective is to improve the communication between the service and the diverse range of families using the service, then they need a way to be able to measure improvements in communication. The service may collect data from families, staff and other stakeholders to determine their level of satisfaction and identify work that still needs to be done.

➤ If a service has a key objective to encourage inclusion, then staff may be required to complete diversity training at least once a year. Data could be collected on the numbers of staff and the frequency of training. To identify if the training was effective in changing attitudes and behaviour in work practices, then a different type of data, such as a staff survey, may need to be collected.

➤ If an objective was to represent a range of cultural perspectives from the local community in programs, the service will need to know the range of diversity represented amongst the staff, families and local community that it provides services for. This may require looking at statistics from enrolments, employment records and local area demographics (population data).

➤ If data needs to be accessed from staff employment records, from enrolment information or from opinions in a survey, permission will need to be sought. It is reasonable that some staff or families may refuse to share this personal information or participate. To be able to give permission to participate, families and staff need to be provided with the purpose or reason for the research. This needs to be clearly stated and described, as does how the information will be used to the benefit of the service or implemented to enhance the experience for children.

➤ When determining the size and scope of research, consider keeping the collection of data manageable in terms of its size in terms of numbers of people, but also in the expectations you have for people such as the number of questions, etc. Having a valid sample means having enough people participating to be able to draw conclusions that are meaningful and useful. For example, can your conclusions or findings apply to the service as a whole or to just a few staff or families?

➤ Depending on the way the results are presented, information can be de-identified, or responses presented anonymously. For example, some participants may be prepared to participate in an interview, but not wish to be identified. Early education services, like all organisations, must comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act that covers the collection of personal information from others, including information about children and their families.

Quantitative data

Quantitative refers to quantities and is represented in numbers.

This type of data provides answers to questions such as how much, how many and how often.

For example, quantitative data includes how many people are employed in the organisation that are aged between 30 and 40. When you are dealing with quantitative data, the results are numbers, quantities or values. They can be collated from information already held by the organisation or researched externally. For instance, a service could access data from the employee records in regard to gender, age or location of employees or the families that use the service. Data held by government agencies of research bodies set up to provide information specialising in early childhood, can be a great resource for quantitative data. Remember that you must not trust everything you read online.

The following table provides some examples of peak bodies in early childhood education and care that are a good place to begin searching for data applicable to the industry.

Peak body and government organisations	Website
Early Childhood Australia (ECA)	aspirelr.link/early-childhood-australia
National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA)	aspirelr.link/noshsa
Community Child Care	aspirelr.link/ccc-inc
Family Day Care Australia	aspirelr.link/family-day-care
Department of Education	aspirelr.link/department-of-education
Gowrie Australia	aspirelr.link/gowrie-vic

Ways to collect quantitative data
➤ Surveys with closed questions, including paper-based, mobile, email and internet surveys such as survey monkey
➤ Data downloaded from information databases or from hard copy documents.
➤ Interviews with closed questions via the telephone or face to face
➤ Observations of a person at work with a set number of items that you would be looking for to be demonstrated

Qualitative data

Qualitative data deals with quality and represents personal opinions.

Qualitative data refers to information collected on attitudes, opinions and thoughts. This data can provide information on the way people feel, their attitudes to topics and an understanding of their behaviours.

Data gathered in this way is not measured in specific numbers. Examples of qualitative data includes asking people to rate a service as 'poor', 'adequate' or 'excellent'. Open-ended questions require a more detailed response. For example, 'What parenting information would you find useful?' A closed question is one that receives a 'yes' or 'no' response such as, 'Would you be interested in a behaviour guidance workshop?'

Qualitative data collection is subjective because it is based on opinion. Motivations and underlying beliefs and attitudes can be uncovered using this type of questioning.

Participants can be asked direct questions in a focus groups (group discussions) or in face-to-face interviews.

Analysing diversity data

When data is collected it will need to be analysed and evaluated to draw conclusions.

The information collected from research can be used to identify ways to improve things. The findings can be reported and used to determine to what extent the organisation is meeting its objectives for diversity.

Analysis will usually require some interpretation of results. Present the information collected in a logical and clear manner. Often data is best represented in tables, graphs or pie charts. Begin with a description of what you found and highlight areas that need to be addressed, including recommendations. This will provide valuable information so the service can target areas that may need development.

For example, qualitative data may be collected in the form of a staff survey, capturing the opinions of staff on the gap between its policies or procedures and the actual practices that occur during staff interactions with families. The results may show that there is little alignment between the diversity objectives and actions outlined in its diversity policy.

Example
Diversity as a strategic priority

Susan is the director of a large childcare service and has made diversity a strategic priority. The overall strategy is to promote a diverse and inclusive workforce that will better reflect the diverse population where the service is located. Susan has been collecting workforce data to gather information on the diversity of staff. She wants to use this information to help design and pilot some initiatives such as advertising for new educators and other staff and update employment contracts and policies.

The data will also be used to target specific training and professional development activities for staff on diversity issues. Susan aims to create a more inclusive work environment, enhancing communication and building relationships among all staff and the families they interact with.

✏ Practice Task 2

Part A

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

Case study 1

A childcare service prides itself on its equal opportunity policy and procedure. The owner is aware of a significant gender imbalance in the industry, with very few men being employed as childcare educators. The organisation has a policy of equal opportunity, but also has a diversity plan that states by the beginning of 2023 they expect 30 per cent of their employees to be male. By the end of 2021, they collected data and found that:

The following information was discovered using quantitative data:

➤ Five out of six (83 per cent) leadership positions were filled by a female.
➤ Only 12 per cent of employees were male.

The following information was gathered using qualitative data:

➤ All staff thought that more women were employed as childcare workers because women have a more caring nature.
➤ Males felt that they didn't have many opportunities for promotion as only women were employed in higher positions.

1. Give three examples of ways the organisation could have collected quantitative data about the workforce.

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2. What is qualitative data? Give an example from the case study of the type of information it collects.

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3. Why did the organisation summarise its findings? What might be the next steps for the organisation based on the data it has analysed and evaluated?

Part B

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

Case study 2

Sunset Childcare encourages diversity in the workplace. The owner, Mitchell, has a very specific agenda to promote diversity among staff and also encourages strategies that involve the families and broader community to be actively engaged in programs and activities that promote diversity.

To ensure these practices are being implemented, Mitchell develops a staff and service users survey. He has arranged for an outside organisation to conduct the survey to gather quantitative data and contact staff via the phone for interviews to collect qualitative information.

The survey from staff identifies the following information:

Gender		Nationality		Age		Disability		First language	
Male	8	Greek	1	20–24	13	Physical	1	English	16
Female	21	Vietnamese	5	25–34	8	Intellectual	0	Mandarin	5
		Australian	12	35–44	6	Sensory	1	Italian	1
		Chinese	5	45–54	2	Cognitive	0	Greek	0
		Italian	1	55–59	0	Neurological	0	Vietnamese	5
		Brazilian	2	60–64	0			Portuguese	2
		Thai	3	65 and over	0			Thai	1

The interview identifies the following information:

The majority of staff responded positively to the promotion of diversity in the workplace. Most staff felt that the staff got along well and there were few tensions amongst staff. If there were any disagreements, they seem to be dealt with in a way that respects both parties and do not leave any tensions to be dealt with later.

All staff enjoy the monthly cultural celebration where each day someone brings in a different dish from their country to share with the rest of the staff.

1. Summarise two conclusions made about the inclusiveness of this workplace from the results.

2. Give an example from the quantitative data that indicates a diverse workforce.

3. Provide two examples of the benefits the owner may see in promoting and encouraging diversity in the organisation.

4. Give an example of a strategy the owner might have used to promote diversity among his workforce.

Summary

- Diversity challenges people's assumptions and makes them think differently about the world around them.

- Diversity is described as appreciating and respecting the practices, values and beliefs of families in the curriculum.

- Children learn through modelling and imitation, so the behaviours and attitudes of the people that care for them will have an impact on how children behave.

- Valuing diversity can mean employing educators because they have different experiences and ways of looking at things.

- There are many factors influencing cultural identity such as religion, sexual orientation and identity, disability and gender.

- The service may have a specific diversity or inclusion policy that would include outline explicit objectives on ways diversity is to be nurtured and encouraged in all aspects of the workplace.

- There needs to be a match between the objectives of the organisation in the promotion of diversity and the practices that occur in the workplace.

- When researching workplace diversity, you need to determine how you can use the information to better understand the workforce and help you make better decisions for the organisation.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Research diversity in the workplace

Part A

1. An educator is discussing a family from Africa and you hear that she has some prejudiced and stereotypical views. Which of the following suggests that she has prejudicial or stereotypical opinions? Select all that apply.

☐ She has formed an opinion about the family based on a preconceived idea, rather than experience or fact.

☐ She has made this judgment based on past experience and without knowing enough about that situation or person.

☐ She admits she doesn't know much about people from Africa and wants to find out more.

☐ The educator has made assumptions about all the people from Africa.

2. Provide three examples of the potential benefits to an organisation of a diverse workplace.

3. Give two examples of ways diversity practices can impact on the experiences and relationships of staff.

4. Explain the difference between quantitative and qualitative data. Give an example in relation to diversity.

5. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. Diversity is about the inclusion of people who are different.   * Yes   * No

b. Culture is the social behaviour, lifestyle and characteristics that describe a group of people.   * Yes   * No

c. Race refers to the characteristics of a group of people with a shared past and culture.   * Yes   * No

d. Ethnicity refers to physical characteristics and is usually dependent on a person's genetic makeup.   * Yes   * No

e. Discrimination is when a person is treated less fairly than another person because of differences outside of their control.   * Yes   * No

6. Draw a line to match each of the areas of diversity to their meaning or description.

* Gender neutral

* Sexual orientation

* Religion

* Disability

* Generational

* Characteristics that may impair, limit or compromise a person's movements, senses or activities

* Systems of faith and worship such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Paganism, Shinto and Sikhism

* People whose personality does not correspond with their birth sex and people who do not connect to being either male or female

* A set of unique attitudes, ambitions and world views that develop from social and historical events that occur throughout a person's life

* Often described using the term 'LGBTQ+'

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Abdul is Muslim and works as an educator. The childcare service he works for has a policy that indicates the workplace will be respectful of people's religious beliefs, but it has no place for him to pray during the day. He asks the owner if he can have some space made available to him during prayer times. The owner tells him no one should be given special treatment. He emphasises that every employee must be treated equally, and he must make do with the area already allocated to staff, such as the staff room and the meeting rooms.

1. Identify two ways in which Abdul's employer is failing to respect his religious diversity.

2. What suggestion could you make to Abdul to encourage his employer to meet his needs for a prayer space?

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Demonstrating respect for diversity

2B Planning work practices that respect diversity

2C Promoting the value of a diverse workforce

Foster diversity

Everyone needs to cooperate, respond positively to differences and respect the rights of all individuals to ensure that your organisation performs successfully.

You will interact with many groups in the service and everyone you deal with will be different from you in some way. Some of these differences may not concern you at all, while for others you may need to adjust your work practices or your usual way of thinking. Other people may need to adjust to accommodate your differences.

2A Demonstrating respect for diversity

You can be a positive role-model for others by demonstrating respect for diversity.

An effective leader is to be able to recognise and understand the characteristics that make people different from each other, and know how to harness and accommodate these differences. This begins with developing cultural awareness, and as you gather experience from interactions with people from different social and cultural backgrounds to your own.

Once you recognise the perceptions and attitudes you have towards others, you will learn that everyone sees, interprets and evaluates things differently. Misunderstandings and conflict often arise as a result of one person applying their own view of the world on others.

Cultural competence

Cultural competence grows from cultural awareness.

According to the EYLF, cultural competence is much more than awareness of cultural differences. It is the ability to understand, communicate with and effectively interact with people across different cultures.

Cultural competence encompasses:

➤ being aware of one's own world view
➤ developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences
➤ gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views
➤ developing skills for communication and interaction across cultures.

At an organisational level

At an organisational level, cultural competence should be:

➤ embedded in the philosophy, mission statement, policies and objectives
➤ demonstrated by leaders in their communications and interactions with staff and all stakeholders including families
➤ promoted through programs for children
➤ supported by resources on cultural competence, including professional development activities available to all staff.

A culturally competent organisation is likely to have:

➤ a strong understanding of the cultural profile of the local community
➤ a set of objectives to promote diversity that are monitored and promoted
➤ staff who seek information on specific cultural behaviours or understandings
➤ people in charge who actively promote the benefits of cultural competence
➤ access to essential services, such as interpreters and translators, if required
➤ a system of reward or recognition for initiatives that are culturally competent.

At an individual level

At an individual level, cultural competence involves becoming culturally aware. It is the ability to:

➢ identify and challenge one's own assumptions, values and beliefs
➢ develop empathy for other people and cultures
➢ see the world from a variety of different points of view.

A culturally competent individual is likely to have:

➢ a strong knowledge of how one's own culture shapes attitudes, perceptions and behaviours
➢ a willingness to learn about other people's cultures
➢ specific knowledge of the language, customs and values of particular cultures
➢ the skills to feel comfortable and communicate effectively with people from diverse cultural backgrounds
➢ an unwillingness to stereotype individuals from certain cultures or ethnicities.

Role model best practice

Cultural safety describes an environment that is accepting of all people and is free of discrimination.

A culturally safe workplace is an environment where everyone feels safe to express their identity and describe what they need and who they are without fear of being challenged or having that request denied.

Developing a culturally safe workplace should be one of the objectives of an organisation and the motivation behind people's behaviours and actions.

A culturally safe workplace is a place where:

➢ everyone is treated with dignity and respect
➢ different cultures, languages, experiences, customs and obligations are identified and respected
➢ individual differences are acknowledged and celebrated
➢ pathways are provided to empowerment and self-determination such as an individual being involved in decisions that affect their work role
➢ people feel comfortable discussing, promoting, and maintaining their distinctive customs, traditions, procedures and practices.

For a workplace to work effectively, staff need to identify as being part of a team working towards shared goals. Each person should be encouraged to use and share their unique qualities, skills or backgrounds in ways that will enhance the team. Trust is an important characteristic of a team. When people feel culturally safe, they feel valued and are more likely to share their experiences and display their cultural identity.

Team leaders can model the practices and behaviours they want to encourage. Modelling behaviour is encouraging others to behave in the way they have seen someone they trust and respect behave. When leaders respond effectively and sensitively to issues in day-to-day work interactions, they are demonstrating their respect for diversity.

Through modelling, you can show others how to:

➤ empathise

➤ show affection

➤ help and share with others

➤ respect others' opinions and needs

➤ observe cultural customs.

Modelling diversity might include:

➤ encouraging families to participate in activities with their children

➤ arranging for collaboration sessions to share ideas and encouraging participation from every team member

➤ using opportunities to promote the advantages of diversity such as during staff meetings or in newsletters etc

➤ celebrating everyone's contributions through newsletters and notices

➤ focusing on positive outcomes and strengths of individuals and teams

➤ asking others to mentor, teach a skill or share knowledge in which they are proficient to another staff member

➤ refusing to tolerate discrimination and call out stereotyping or prejudice.

Encouraging inclusivity

Inclusivity is treating all people fairly and equally.

Stereotyping and allowing prejudices to be unchallenged stops people from seeing the qualities and attributes a person has that might be useful to their team. It can lead to people feeling alienated, unwelcome and outside of the team. Staff can be reluctant to express themselves if they feel that differences are not tolerated, and that everyone is expected to conform to the norm.

Finding points of commonality between people can counter prejudice and be used to recognise the links that already exist between people, such as a personal shared area of interest or professional development topic. The link that brings a team together is a common work objective. A shared purpose can be help bring people together and build an inclusive environment and a place of cultural safety. For example, organising recreational and social activities allows families with similar values, experiences and interests to feel a sense of value and belonging. Showcase events that encourage staff to share an activity, such as a morning tea to celebrate a culturally important event.

Leaders can encourage collaboration as a way of sharing their experiences and working together as a team.

Tips to encourage collaboration and cooperatively
➤ Approach people in a way that respects their work style.
➤ Listen to different opinions and don't judge others based on what you perceive their work style to be.
➤ Give criticism sensitively and receive criticism open-mindedly.

Tips to encourage collaboration and cooperatively
➤ Work together to solve problems, such as differences in values, opinions and beliefs.
➤ Ask yourself what others need to be able to work effectively.
➤ Be open to new ideas and be open to learning new ways of doing things.
➤ Discuss tensions before they escalate.
➤ Use the talents of others to help you carry out your own work more effectively.
➤ Know the difference between personal and professional opposition.
➤ Recognise the talents of others and acknowledge their contribution.

Coaching and mentoring

Many workplaces recognise the benefit of more experienced staff assisting others with less experience to practise their skills in a supportive environment. In some organisations a coach or mentor from outside of the organisation will be used.

Coaching and mentoring can reinforce positive work practices through encouragement and reward. This arrangement can promote and encourage the use of diversity practices in an organisation or as a way of improving the cultural awareness of an employee.

Selecting the right person for the role of coach or mentor involves planning, and the input of several people. The person being coached needs to be able to see the benefits of the relationship and how it will be of benefit to them. For example, the employee may discuss setting a particular goal that they would like to achieve such as improving their communication skills. The ground rules such as the duration of the relationship, and the timing (how often), need to be arranged. This relationship is targeted at the employee being coached/mentored but people who act as a coach or mentor also benefit from the recognition and validation of their own skills as a result of their role.

Coaching provides continuous feedback. The coach or mentor can pick up on attitudes, feelings and behaviours they observe or hear and can provide insights.

The differences between coaching and mentoring are described here.

Coaching
Coaching is generally a one-to-one relationship, but can also be used for a team, such as a team of educators who work together. A coach is likely to be in a more senior role than the person they are coaching, with more experience and/or higher qualifications.
The focus is to engage with the people under their supervision, observe them when they are working and provide feedback. Often the people using the coach want to achieve a goal, which may relate to diversity or inclusivity.

Mentoring

Mentoring is where a staff member is paired with a colleague with significant experience, skills, knowledge and desired attributes in an area or across a broad area or topic. This person takes on the role of an advisor or role-model who works closely with the staff member over an extended period of time.

Example
Becoming culturally aware

Rohini has just started her new job in an early learning education and care service. Although she is aware of her own cultural background, she has had little interaction with the cultures of the other staff, families and children using the service. To improve her cultural awareness, she asks her supervisor, Alain, for advice. Alain provides her with some ideas for resources, and suggests she shadows another educator during her first week.

One of the more experienced staff members, Betty, happily agrees to be a coach for Rohini. Rohini works alongside Betty and during her first week, Rohini has asked questions about the operations of the service and discussed situations that may arise and how to deal with them effectively.

Rohini reflects on her experiences. She makes a mental list of the things she has learnt from Betty and how she benefitted by working alongside an educator with so much confidence and knowledge. Rohini thinks about:

➤ the experience and skills Betty brings to her job
➤ Betty's willingness to share her knowledge
➤ how much she gained in confidence and ideas by listening to Betty and observing her do her job.

Professional development opportunities

Training is one way to encourage staff to embrace diversity in the workplace.

Training needs can be identified through observation, discussion, interviews, performance appraisals and surveys. Training can also become necessary as a result of complaints, incidents and issues.

There are several traits and behaviours that you would be able to identify in staff who are culturally competent. This includes an understanding of the benefits of having a diverse staff working in a diverse community. It also involves the skills of being able to self-reflect, check their own bias, listening skills and cultural awareness. Training in cultural competence can be used to provide staff with the skills they need to practise and promote diversity. Existing training programs can be reviewed and adapted, such as recruitment or interviewing skills to include diversity issues.

Types of training

The aim of diversity training is to raise participants' awareness of aspects of diversity and determine how these are applied in a workforce.

This will be of benefit to both the organisation and the team as well as individual staff. It should focus on a practical application of how diversity can be embedded at work on a daily basis.

Here are some examples of different areas of diversity training.

Cultural competence

Cultural competence training can be general or specific. Staff may need to be trained in skills to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds. It can also refer to an ability to interact effectively with one cultural group through having a foundation of knowledge about its history and culture that serves as the basis for skill development. This enables effective and appropriate communication and engagement with people of that cultural group, because of an increased understanding of the issues relevant to the culture (both historically and in the present day).

Equal opportunity

Equal opportunity training focuses on reducing an organisation's risks of claims for sexual harassment, bullying and bias against promotions based on age, sexuality or gender. It can be used to help staff explore strategies for ensuring everyone has equal opportunities in the workplace.

Workplace bullying

Workplace bullying, discrimination or harassment training informs employees about what is unacceptable behaviour in the workplace. It also covers the consequences of this behaviour in line with organisational policies and procedures, which are underpinned by relevant legislation.

Grievance management

Employees need to know how to make a complaint about alleged discrimination, harassment or bullying. Managers and HR team members need to understand the workplace's grievance and dispute-handling procedures. Training may also include how to identify grievances before they are formally lodged.

Recruitment and selection

Recruitment and selection training emphasises the need for non-discriminatory practices during the recruitment and selection process. Strategies to avoid indirect and direct discrimination in recruitment and selection should be explored.

Ethics

Ethics training focuses on an industry, such as the early childhood education and care industry, and the established ethics for working in that industry. Definitions of ethics and codes of conduct are discussed. This may be a part of an induction course for new staff or for ongoing professional development.

Human rights

Human rights training focuses on human rights legislation and people's rights and responsibilities. This is especially valuable for people working with young children who may be from refugee and asylum-seeker families, and links human rights legislation and day-to-day work with these families.

Training design and delivery

Workplace training sessions are useful to provide input and share ideas and thoughts.

Training can be provided by an internal staff member (such as a Human Resources manager) or by an external agency or trainer. Training provided by someone external to the organisation can be particularly useful as it can introduce new ideas and perspectives presented by someone who is unknown to the team. These activities can require active participation from staff, such as in role-plays, acting out situations and practising communication skills in interactions with others.

Types of training include:

➤ training sessions offered by specialist learning and development staff employed by the organisation
➤ an online course or module for staff
➤ attendance of staff at a formal training course.

Example
Providing training on appropriate behaviour

A provider of early learning services has several centres located around Australia. There has been some rising tension between the staff of the head office (based in Sydney) and the staff of the Northern Territory centre, which is predominantly made up of Aboriginal staff.

It has become known that the staff based in Sydney (who are mainly of European descent) do not respect the Aboriginal staff at the NT centre and believe them to be too laid back and not committed to their work. The head office has decided to conduct training for all employees on cultural awareness and the importance of appropriate behaviour in their interactions with each other.

🖉 Practice Task 3

Part A

1. Draw a line to match each term about diversity and culture to its definition.

* Cultural competence

* Inclusivity

* Cultural awareness

* Cultural safety

* Being aware of your own cultural values, beliefs and perceptions

* Interact effectively with people of different cultures and backgrounds

* An environment that accepts all people and is free from discrimination

* Treating everyone fairly and equally

2. Give two examples of practices that a leader can use that demonstrates their respect for diversity to others.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Kim has been nominated as a coach for a newly employed, inexperienced educator, Paula.

Kim observes the following conversation between Paula and one of the children in the family room where she is working.

Jack, four years, says, 'Look at that funny hat Avi is wearing.' Paula responds by saying, 'I think it's interesting, Jack – let's ask Avi why he wears it.'

Avi tells Jack that he wears the hat called a yarmulke because he is Jewish. Then Paula starts a conversation with the children about cultural differences and similarities in the group.

Avi has questions about some of the things Jack wears and wonders why he always wears shorts to childcare. Paula encourages the interaction between the two boys by helping them find other similarities. They both discover that they have the same favourite food, toys and outside games.

1. Identify three things Kim could say to Paula as encouragement for respecting differences in her interactions with the boys.

2. Kim has suggested some training options that she feels Paula may find interesting. Draw a line to match each type of training to the description.

*   Grievance management training

*   Cultural competence training

*   Human rights training

*   Recruitment and selection training

*   Equal opportunity training

*   Skills needed to effectively interact with people of different cultures and socioeconomic backgrounds

*   Covers appropriate behaviour and the risk of claims for sexual harassment, bullying and bias against promotions based on age, sexuality or gender

*   Information on how to make a complaint about alleged discrimination, harassment or bullying

*   The exploration of the use of non-discriminatory practices during the process of selecting new employees for particular positions

*   Understanding of everyone's rights and responsibilities

2B Planning work practices that respect diversity

It takes time to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

As a worker in the early childhood industry, you will be aware of the various compliance requirements of your role. Several of these frameworks, approaches and instruments used for planning programs and work practices are listed below.

Guides for appropriate practice
➤ National Quality Framework, including laws, regulations and standards
➤ National learning frameworks (EYLF and/or MTOP)
➤ Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics
➤ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child – human rights
➤ National and state/territory legislation, such as age, racial and sex discrimination, health and safety rights and responsibilities and equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws
➤ Organisational policies and procedures that reflect legislation and provide guidelines for staff on ways to implement laws and regulations

Anti-discrimination legislation

Services providing care to children are under the same federal laws and national standards as other businesses across Australia.

National anti-discrimination legislation are outlined below.

Age discrimination – *Age Discrimination Act 2004* (Cth)	The Age Discrimination Act protects people who are discriminated against because of their age. It states that, regardless of age, everyone has the same right to equality before the law. The Act also allows appropriate benefits to be given to people of a certain age, particularly younger and older people, according to their circumstances. Objectives also include removing barriers to older people participating in society and changing negative stereotypes about older people.

Disability – *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)	The Disability Discrimination Act gives a broad definition of disability and prohibits direct or indirect discrimination based on disability. It also prohibits discrimination against people who associate with anyone who has a disability; these may be friends, relatives, carers and co-workers. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in the areas of: ➤ employment ➤ education ➤ access to public premises ➤ purchase of house and land ➤ provision of goods, services and facilities ➤ administration of Commonwealth Government laws and programs.
Racial discrimination – *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* (Cth) *Racial Hatred Act 1995* (Cth)	The Racial Discrimination Act prohibits racial discrimination and offensive behaviour based on racial hatred. It covers discrimination based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin. It also protects those who may be discriminated against based on their association with people of a particular ethnicity. The Racial Hatred Act forms part of the Racial Discrimination Act and provides an avenue for people to complain about racist behaviour that offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates others in public.
Sex discrimination – *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth)	The Sex Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy. It sets out laws against sexual harassment as well as dismissal from work based on family duties including pregnancy. According to the Act, it is unlawful to refuse to provide goods or services, education or employment based on a person's sex. The Act also covers discrimination within awards and enterprise bargaining, insurance and superannuation, Commonwealth laws and programs, and accommodation. Sexual harassment is included in the Act because it is a form of discrimination to treat a person unfairly because of their sex.
Human rights – *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)	The Act promotes human rights for all people, and covers most forms of discrimination not already covered in the other Acts, including discrimination on the basis of: ➤ criminal records ➤ marital status ➤ medical records ➤ political opinions ➤ religion ➤ sexual preference ➤ social origin ➤ trade union activity. The Australian Human Rights Commission deals with breaches of anti-discrimination laws and promotes human rights education.

Privacy – *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)	The Privacy Act covers all organisations that collect personal information from others, including information about children and their families. Personal information covered by this Act includes:
	➤ criminal records ➤ medical and health records ➤ membership of a professional or trade association ➤ membership of a trade union ➤ political affiliations or opinions ➤ racial or ethnic origin ➤ religious affiliations or beliefs ➤ sexual orientation or practices. Every organisation should inform its users of its responsibilities regarding privacy requirements. It is always advisable to take any information provided to you about any individual as confidential. People generally have a right to be provided with any personal information stored about them by an organisations.

State/territory anti-discrimination law

Anti-discrimination legislation varies between states and territories with respect to the specific aspects that each cover.

However, the overall intent of each piece of legislation is the same – to prevent unlawful discrimination and harassment of individuals in the Australian community. The table below lists the agencies that deal with anti-discrimination legislation in each state and territory.

State/ territory	Agency	Legislation
ACT	ACT Human Rights Commission	*Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT)
NSW	Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
NT	Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission	*Anti-Discrimination Act* (NT)
Qld	Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (QLD)
SA	South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission	*Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA)
Tas.	Equal Opportunity Tasmania	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (TAS)
Vic.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	*Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (VIC)

Equal employment opportunity

Everyone is entitled to equal opportunity in employment, benefits and associated services in the workplace.

Equal employment opportunity laws are aimed at ensuring that the job recruitment and selection process is fair, and that workplace outcomes with respect to supervision and management are not biased.

Commonwealth laws and the state/territory laws overlap in relation to discrimination in the workplace. The Commonwealth legislation is referred to as the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*.

Equal employment opportunity legislation is designed to ensure that:

➤ fair practices are in place in every workplace
➤ the best person is recruited and/or promoted when there is a position vacant, and skilled staff are retained
➤ workplace management decisions are fair to all employees
➤ training and development needs address the community and staff requirements
➤ the workplace is free of harassment and discrimination
➤ social and cultural differences between staff are recognised and respected.

Codes of conduct

A code of conduct offers guidance on a range of ethical issues that people may confront in their day-to-day work.

A code includes a collection of policies, or guidelines that define the specific actions or procedures applicable to an organisation or workplace. A code of conduct usually applies to anyone who conducts business or provides services to an organisation. It will be developed with consultation from staff and be underpinned by a range of federal Acts, national standards and state or territory legislation.

A code of conduct is a reminder of an employee's responsibilities to other people and can overlap or support the diversity objectives of a workplace.

A code of conduct can cover standards of behaviour relating to:

➤ personal behaviour
➤ honesty, integrity, fairness and equity
➤ performance of duty
➤ conflicts of interest
➤ acceptance of gifts and benefits
➤ outside employment and voluntary work
➤ public comment
➤ use of facilities and equipment

➤ intellectual property or copyright
➤ use of computer, intranet, internet and email services
➤ bullying, harassment and discrimination
➤ breaches of codes of conduct, privacy and confidentiality
➤ corrupt conduct and maladministration
➤ workplace health and safety.

Workplace health and safety

Everyone in the workplace needs to understand the importance of health and safety.

Employees rely on commitment, consultation and cooperation from everyone as they carry out their responsibilities and obligations under health and safety laws.

The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth) was designed by the Commonwealth Government as a model law aimed at harmonising health and safety laws across all states and territories. The aim was to make sure that, regardless of where a person works in Australia, they have the same rights and protection as everyone else. All states and territories (also called jurisdictions) except Western Australia and Victoria have adopted harmonised work health and safety (WHS) laws in line with the Commonwealth legislation.

Western Australia works under the *Occupational Safety and Health Act 1984* (WA), while Victoria operates under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* (Vic.).

Under health and safety legislation, the term 'person conducting a business or undertaking' (PCBU) is used to describe a range of individuals, including business owners, or a person with management or control of a workplace such as a manager of an early childhood service.

PCBUs and workers have different health and safety rights and responsibilities based on the concept of duty of care. PCBUs have a primary duty of care, while workers have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety of themselves and others. Understanding and applying health and safety legislation relates to the rights and responsibilities of staff and management. For example, an employer has the responsibility to protect their staff from harassment, bullying or discrimination and prevent discrimination.

The differences between PCBU and employee responsibilities are described below.

Employer duties	Worker duties
➤ Provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace. ➤ Provide and maintain safe plant (equipment) and structures. ➤ Provide and maintain safe systems of work. ➤ Ensure safe use, handling and storage of plant, structures and substances. ➤ Provide adequate facilities for the welfare of workers. ➤ Provide information, instruction and supervision. ➤ Monitor workplace conditions and the health of workers.	➤ Take reasonable care for their own health and safety. ➤ Take reasonable care of others. ➤ Comply with any reasonable instruction given by the PCBU. ➤ Cooperate with the PCBU in matters of health and safety.

Example

Assist colleagues to accept diversity

David often uses offensive language in the staffroom when talking with other staff. He thinks it's funny and anyone complaining should just 'get over it'. After receiving several complaints from other staff and witnessing the language herself, David's supervisor decides to speak to him.

David explains that he has always spoken like that with his colleagues and that at his previous workplace, no one ever mentioned it as being a problem. The supervisor explains to David that it is not acceptable to use abusive language as a joke in the workplace. She discusses the diverse make-up of the staff and tells him he needs to be aware of the workplace culture of acceptance and harmony the organisation wants to encourage.

With some follow-up meetings and coaching from his supervisor, David better understands he needs to have more awareness of his behaviour and be more considerate of the opinions and values that may be different to his own.

✏ Practice Task 4

1. An applicant for a position as an educator is told that her application for the position has been unsuccessful because the employer wants more males in the workplace.

    a. What legislation has been breached in this scenario?

    b. What form of unlawful discrimination has taken place?

2. A person with a disability who applies for a position as an educator is requested to have a driver licence even though that is not a requirement of the job.

    a. What legislation has been breached in this scenario?

    b. What form of unlawful discrimination has taken place?

3. An applicant for a position as an educator is told that his application for the position has been denied because he is too old.

   a. What legislation has been breached in this scenario?

   b. What form of unlawful discrimination has taken place?

4. Draw a line to match each term about legislation on the left with its description.

* WHS rights and responsibilities	* Covers most forms of discrimination not included in the other Acts, including discrimination on the basis of criminal records, marital status, medical records, etc.
* Equal employment opportunity	* Covers discrimination based on race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin and association with people of a particular ethnicity
* Racial discrimination	* An employer has the responsibilities to protect their staff from harassment, bullying or discrimination.
* Human rights	* Ensures that the job recruitment and selection process is fair, and that workplace outcomes with respect to supervision and management are not biased

Equitable activities

It is important for everyone to feel that they belong and feel valued.

Recreational and social activities arranged for staff and families can be help build rapport and positive relationships. These can be used as part of an induction program for new families or as a way of welcoming new staff or celebrating a particular milestone or special day such as twenty years of service or Children's Day. Getting people together can help them establish relationships and make everyone feel part of the community.

When planning is being undertaken , it is essential that organised activities do not limit or restrict participation. Activities need to be planned with a diverse community in mind, including making it possible for everyone to participate.

For example, instead of, or as well as, offering a physical activity task, plan to provide options for other activities that involve other skills such as teamwork or cooperation.

Considering the diversity of the group may include:
➤ ensuring activities do not coincide with any religious holidays
➤ considering the physical requirements of the activity
➤ providing information in a variety of languages and accessible in various formats such as hard copy, from the web or sent in an email
➤ incorporating activities that require individuals to develop a better understanding of each other.

Principles and practices of inclusion

Your organisation is likely to have a diversity policy and procedure in place.

These should reference how the organisation will ensure inclusivity in the workplace. The simple principle of inclusivity is to ensure that no one is left out – that no matter where they come from, what they know, how they speak or their belief system. They have a right to be included.

The key for organisations is to have work practices that nurture a sense of community. Inclusivity does not mean that everyone must conform to one way of thinking or behaving. In fact, the opposite is true – celebrating everyone's differences and accepting those differences is the path to inclusivity.

Some inclusive practices and ways of supporting diversity are outlined below.

Inclusivity practices	**Diversity practices**
➤ Identify individual needs and differences.	➤ Ensure senior leaders model inclusive behaviour.
➤ Create opportunities where everyone can participate.	➤ Ensure physical access to a workplace is not limiting.
➤ Respect the rights of the individual.	➤ Communicate in different ways to ensure understanding.
➤ Encourage people to reflect on their attitudes to other people's differences.	➤ Allow for flexible working hours.
➤ Continuously improve policy, procedure and practices to ensure inclusivity.	➤ Provide continuous education for all staff on diversity and inclusive practices.

You can show your support for families and demonstrate your commitment to equity and inclusion by:

➤ helping families build strong social networks by participating in community-based services, such as playgroups

- understanding the different types of support required for children and families at risk, including:
  - children experiencing trauma
  - children living in out of home care
  - refugee children
  - children experiencing intergenerational poverty
- providing a range of useful information about local community services that cater for diverse families
- providing opportunities for collaboration and sharing of ideas and experiences
- empowering families to make decisions about appropriate support for their child
- ensuring a welcoming and accessible physical environment for all families.

Barriers to inclusion

Barriers to inclusion can be overt, while other barriers are more subtle, and may take more time to recognise and address.

Here are some examples of barriers to inclusion that you might look for:

Physical barriers

These barriers prevent participation for some people with disabilities. Often, these physical barriers are an immediate exclusion from participation; for example, stairs can make it impossible for some people to access the required area or information being distributed that uses overly complex language or is not provided in a language spoken and used in the home.

Social/emotional barriers

These barriers might be psychological and more difficult to detect. They may include factors that make it difficult for a person to participate at work, such as prejudice attitudes, socioeconomic status (lack of money) or lack of confidence in being able to understand what is required or what is being asked.

Lack of cultural competence

In some cases, the lack of knowledge of managers or staff can be a barrier to inclusion. Sometimes people's words or attitudes foster an atmosphere of exclusion, but the person is unaware of the effect they are having on others. For example, they may unknowingly exclude staff from their conversation or invitations to social activities outside of the workplace.

Managing tensions

Tensions and issues sometimes arise between people who see themselves as different from one another.

Conflict can arise in a workplace due to several reasons. It may be due to a lack of cultural awareness or it may be a purposeful set of behaviours or actions aimed to hurt or inflame another. This might be as a result of an unresolved issue or a world event that may inflate tensions between staff from different backgrounds.

Tensions can often be the result of poor or miscommunication. This may occur because a team member:

> does not understand another person because they have an accent, are softly spoken or misuse the English language
> interprets directness as aggression or indirectness as evasiveness
> has a different sense of humour or laughs when nervous, which another person sees as being dismissive or failing to take a matter seriously
> becomes annoyed with a person who always needs to be shown how to do something rather than working it out themselves
> is frustrated with always having to watch what they say in case they make a comment that is unintentionally offensive to another person
> attempts to resolve a difference of opinion by argument, rather than an exchange of views in a structured discussion.

When conflict occurs, a team leader's role is to listen to each party and negotiate a solution. Unresolved and ongoing conflict can lead to poor team morale and affect a harmonious workplace culture. There are several ways to get the parties together to discuss and collaborate a solution, including:

> An individual meeting can provide an opportunity for the parties to air their differences, understand each other's points of view and come to an agreement. This can be done in a safe environment where the team leader acts as a mediator and helps the parties find a common ground or way to move forward.
> Staff meetings can be used to discuss tensions and work together to solve problems that affect the whole workplace, such as divisions between groups that result from differences in values, opinions and beliefs.
> Informal opportunities for discussion are useful, as they may defuse a situation before a small difference escalates into a bigger issue.

Example
Work plans that support diversity

The staff at an early learning centre have a diverse range of requirements. There are several single parents with young and school-age children, a person with a chronic health issue who requires additional sick leave, and one employee who is a carer for an ill parent.

To manage and support staff, team leaders have a schedule for supervision of the various age groups and children's rooms that aims to give the children consistent care and not disrupt their continuity of care. Each staff member has an individual work plan which allows them some flexibility with their working hours with early starts and early finishing times and other options for later start and finishing times.

The staff all work hard and are appreciative of the work culture that strives to support them and values their contribution.

✎ Practice Task 5

1. Which of the following are correct statements about diversity and inclusive practices? Select yes or no for each one.

    a. To ensure inclusive practices, you should consider the physical requirements of an activity.   * Yes   * No

    b. The principle of inclusivity is to ensure no one is left out.   * Yes   * No

    c. Diversity practices mean that everyone has the same work hours.   * Yes   * No

    d. Equitable practices can help to establish a sense of value and belonging.   * Yes   * No

2. Outline three barriers to inclusion with an example for each one.

2C Promoting the value of a diverse workforce

Working effectively with difference is a strength that can improve a workplace's services and relationships.

A supportive workplace that encourages diversity might receive public recognition and respect, high staff retention and a high degree of satisfaction and approval from families.

In order to be strong in this area, staff need to understand diversity, either through their own lived experience or though more formal training and intervention. The role of a team leader is to help foster understanding of the benefits of diversity with each staff member. They can make sure the diversity objectives as stated in a policy are implemented . This means promoting the workplace's diversity policy whenever the opportunity arises to enhance the organisation's image and reputation.

Benefits of a diverse workforce

As a leader of a team, you need to believe in the benefits of a diverse workforce.

Remember, your words and actions need to match. Take time to reflect on your own cultural competence and if you are role-modelling appropriate behaviour in the workplace.

Consider how you:

› interact with staff
› respect their differences
› listen to other people's points of view
› learn about the backgrounds, beliefs and cultures of staff to improve your relations with them
› encourage collaboration between groups of people
› take action to manage tensions and to deal with complaints of discrimination.

Some benefits of a workplace that values diversity include:

Staff morale	Having a range of cultures, backgrounds, ages and abilities contributes to an interesting and lively workplace, with high staff morale and a variety of opinions and points of view.
Productivity and conditions	Working harmoniously with others lessens tensions and increases work productivity. Understanding different cultures, points of view and opinions leads to a workplace that is free from harassment, discrimination and bullying.

Ideas and access	A workplace can use ideas and information from the diversity of its workforce to contribute to its competitive advantage. For example, having staff who speak other languages and understand other cultures provides a pool of people to help resolve problems when working with people (both inside and outside of the organisation) from diverse backgrounds.
Trust and connection	Understanding clients' situations and backgrounds helps you develop rapport and improves the services offered.
	Demonstrating a commitment to diversity helps to raise the organisation's profile and build trust within the community.

Strategies you can employ with staff to promote its diversity objectives include:

> informal discussions with the team when an issue arises based on a person's differences

> formal discussion of the benefits of a diverse workforce during a team meeting

> holding a session in which team members talk about their culture, traditions and life experiences

> highlighting instances where gender and age balance have changed, with statistics and examples to support; for example, in leadership positions for women

> acknowledging and celebrating people's achievements

> inviting experts in diversity to speak to the team.

Staff induction sessions are a key opportunity to discuss the issue of diversity and promote the workplace's policy and commitment to diversity. This message can be repeated at regular intervals during staff meetings, refresher training, team meetings, staff communications (such as newsletters) and performance appraisals. By reinforcing the message it makes it clear to staff that diversity is important at all levels of the organisation.

Diversity can be referred to in informal situations, as well as formal ones, so that diversity is seen as part of day-to-day operations and the culture of the workplace, rather than as a separate issue that needs to be addressed.

When promoting the benefits of diversity, use examples to demonstrate ways the workplace is meeting its diversity objectives.

Action on diversity objectives might include:

> the availability of flexible working arrangements to support parents of school-age children

> increasing the number of older workers employed

> employing a mix of genders

> employing staff who can speak the languages of the local community, to meet changing needs and nurture relationships

> offering services to the broader community, such as having a liaison officer who speaks a specific language

> seeking ideas and information from people from other cultures to obtain a greater understanding of other people's points of view

> increasing interactions with the local community and representatives of diverse groups

Action on diversity objectives might include:

> ensuring families have a choice of genders available if cultural restrictions on interacting with someone of the opposite sex are applicable.
> seeking input from staff with disabilities on ways to improve the workplace to assist them work more effectively.
> actively promoting diversity as a strategy to attract new families.

Example
Establishing a network of diversity contact officers

A team leader is aware of increasing numbers of complaints about harassment, bullying and discrimination being reported widely in the media. She decides that the service should remind staff of the discrimination legislation and benefits of a diverse work force and what this means to the service and the children and families involved with the organisation.

The manager suggests that one of the staff be allocated the role of diversity officer. This has been done in some other early childhood learning organisations to great success. This person can raise the diversity profile of the workplace in the community and with their families, act as a sounding board for staff and promote compliance with the organisation's diversity policy. The committee decides to prepare a proposal for a diversity contact officer to be appointed in the organisation. The team leader says she will take the proposal to the business owner for discussion.

Promoting diversity to staff and families

Take every opportunity to support the diversity objectives the organisation has in place.

Ideas and information can come from collaboration with a variety of people, including:

> staff who have overseas work experience and contacts that they can ask for information
> staff or families who speak different languages and understand different cultures and traditions
> men and women who have experienced discrimination because of age, gender, sexual orientation or disability
> staff and families who care for someone with a disability.

Here are methods to promote the diversity objectives to staff and families.

Newsletters and bulletins

Include articles on difference such as learning styles, staff profiles to demonstrate the organisation's diversity or improvements that provide better access for people with disabilities.

As a manager, you can:

➤ use the newsletter to promote the diversity of staff and celebrate important cultural events
➤ offer help to organise, attend and participate in a range of cultural activities
➤ write articles for the newsletter about cultural activities.

Staff updates

Staff updates can be used to celebrate achievements associated with diversity, such as an employee's return to work after maternity leave or a male staff member changing to part-time hours in order to care for his children.

Posters and noticeboards

The organisation can translate posters and notices providing safety, quality and other important information into relevant community languages.

Recruitment and induction

Staff induction materials should explain the diversity policy and associated procedures, and can include a component that provides training in cultural awareness.

As a manager, you can:

➤ set up a mentorship program for new staff from diverse backgrounds
➤ offer to conduct this part of the induction training or write this part of the induction training kit.

Website

The organisation's website or intranet may be used to showcase events where people get together to share an activity, such as a morning tea to celebrate a culturally important event. A website can use images that reflects a wide and diverse population.

Promote workplace efforts

As a manager, you can:

➤ promote workplace efforts in the media and at conferences
➤ research suitable industry journals, magazines and other publications and suggest writing an article for them
➤ apply for awards for excellence in diversity.

Example
Spreading the word

Kim works as a manager of an early learning centre and has been awarded the title of 'Most inclusive manager' by her employer. The business has been expanding based on its enhanced reputation, including its diversity and inclusion practices that have been promoted widely across the local community.

Kim has been asked by the director to represent the organisation at an early childhood education conference to explain the benefits of the programs she has initiated to the organisation, the children and families who use the service, and the local community.

Kim prepares the following outline for the presentation at the conference:

➤ an overview of the organisation, including the diversity objectives, philosophy statement and diversity policy.
➤ examples of how the diversity policy is implemented when:
  – recruiting staff
  – providing services
  – planning programs for the children
  – when interacting with families
  – implementing opportunities for children,, such as during mealtimes, use of equipment and toys and celebrations of religious festivals and events.

✎ Practice Task 6

1. Give three examples of diversity objectives in action.

2. Provide three examples of methods that would promote an organisation's reputation as valuing a diverse workforce.

Summary

> An effective leader is able to recognise and understand the characteristics that make people different from each other and know how to harness and accommodate these differences.

> This begins with cultural awareness from experience with interactions with people from different social and cultural backgrounds to your own.

> A culturally safe workplace is an environment where everyone feels safe to express their identity and describe what they need and who they are without fear of being challenged or having that request denied.

> Modelling behaviour is encouraging others to behave in the way they have seen someone they trust and respect behave.

> Coaching and mentoring can be used to promote and encourage the use of diversity practices in an organisation or as a way of improving the cultural awareness of an employee.

> People may require training to see the benefits of diversity and to effectively address issues of difference in a workplace.

> Training in cultural competence can be used to provide staff with the skills they need to practise and promote diversity.

> As a worker in the early childhood industry, you will be aware of the various compliance requirements of your role, including anti-discrimination legislation underpinning your work practices.

> Equitable activities need to be planned with a diverse community in mind, including making it possible for everyone to participate.

> The principle of inclusivity is to ensure that no one is left out – no matter where they come from, what they know, how they speak or their belief system.

> Barriers to inclusion can be overt, while other barriers are more subtle, and may take more time to recognise and address.

> The principle of inclusivity is to ensure no one is left out – that no matter where you come from, what you know, how you talk or what your belief system is, you still have a sense of belonging.

> Use examples of objectives and actions when promoting the benefits of diversity.

> Take every opportunity to support the strategies that the workplace has in place to demonstrate it values diversity.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Foster diversity

1. Provide two examples of behaviours a leader could role-model to demonstrate to staff that they value diversity.

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2. Draw a line to match each term about diversity and culture to its description.

* Inclusivity   * Reflecting on your own cultural values, beliefs and perceptions of others

* Cultural awareness   * Feeling comfortable about interacting with others from different cultures and backgrounds

* Indirect discrimination   * Developing a workplace culture where people feel accepted and free from discrimination

* Cultural competence   * Making an effort to include everyone in workplace activities

* Cultural safety   * Using the links that exist between staff to bring them together

3. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. Coaching is a way of practising skills in a supportive environment.　　* Yes　　* No

b. The purpose of coaching is to recognise and validate the skills to the mentor or coach.　　* Yes　　* No

c. A formal report is required at the end of a mentoring program.　　* Yes　　* No

d. Coaching is generally preferred because supervision doesn't need to occur in the workplace.　　* Yes　　* No

e. Mentoring involves pairing up with someone with significant experience, skills and knowledge in a particular area.　　* Yes　　* No

4. Which of the following statements relate to legal and ethical considerations for diversity practices for managers? Tick all that apply.

☐ An organisation's code of conduct is used to ensure workers get the promotion they deserve.

☐ Anti-discrimination legislation covers age, disability, racial and sexual discrimination.

☐ The Australian Human Rights Commission Act covers aspects of discrimination not covered by other anti-discrimination laws, such as criminal and medical records.

☐ The Equal Opportunity Act aims to free workplaces of discrimination and harassment.

☐ Under the Work Health and Safety Act, the worker has the primary duty of care.

5. Identify three things that are important to consider to ensure activities planned for staff are equitable and show respect for diversity.

6. Give two examples of professional development activities for a staff member in an organisation who requires training in cultural competence.

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7. Which of the following demonstrate a supportive workplace that values its diversity objectives? Tick all that apply.

☐ Using induction programs to reinforce the diversity objectives and policies of the service

☐ Providing flexible work arrangements that support staff with children or who are caring for a family member

☐ Arranging training on ways staff can practise their values and beliefs at work

☐ Referring to the code of conduct document to address prejudice and to deal with complaints of discrimination

☐ Translating information for families into relevant community languages

☐ Using images in promotional information that reflects a wide and diverse population

8. Collaboration can give rise to ideas that can help an organisation meet their diversity objectives. Give two examples of the skills or knowledge that may be useful.

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9. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

   a. Inclusivity means that everyone must conform to one way of thinking or behaving.   * Yes   * No

   b. To maintain and ensure inclusivity, policies, procedures and practices need to be continuously reviewed and improved.   * Yes   * No

   c. Some situations act like barriers that make it difficult for people to participate fully at work.   * Yes   * No

   d. Cultural competence means inclusive behaviours can be identified and staff can be supported to be part of the team.   * Yes   * No

Adapt communication strategies

Good communication skills are essential if you are to share ideas with the people you interact with.

There are several ways of communicating with people who don't understand English, including those who do not speak English as a first language. You should select an appropriate communication technique to get your message across, and to obtain feedback and any important information you need. This will be appreciated by both your staff and families who use the service.

3A Communicating to diverse groups

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.

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, consider whether the words you use may exclude someone or make them 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, there is no need to include information like gender, skin colour or physical characteristics unless it is relevant to the discussion.

To be sure about the words you use, you can ask the person you are referring to how they would like to be described; for example, asking a family member how they would describe their impairment. This can be different for each person. Some will feel uncomfortable with particular words, others will be open to a range of terms.

Strategies for the use of inclusive language
> Avoid using 'he/him' or 'she/her' by using plural pronouns or other nouns such as 'they/them', 'the manager', or 'the doctor'.
> Avoid asking about a person's 'husband/wife' or 'girlfriend/boyfriend' when you don't know the person well. Many people do not marry or have a romantic relationship and their relationship may not be heterosexual. Using the word 'partner' can avoid making people feel left out or embarrassed.
> Revise the wording so that gender is not an issue; for example, 'Each staff member should sign their timesheet', rather than, 'Each staff member should sign his timesheet'.
> Don't use broad categories to describe groups of people. Terms such as 'blind people', 'Asians' or 'the gay community' exclude the possibility of differences within these wide definitions, and focus on one characteristic that the individuals themselves may object to being categorised by.

Example

Avoiding biased communication

The following is a story told in two different ways. The first story uses labels placed on people using personal information, such as their gender, skin colour, age and health status. All of these factors are irrelevant to the issue being discussed. The second story uses only the information that is relevant.

Example 1

Two ladies arrived at work and accused the cleaner of not doing his job properly. Marilyn, the black educator, and Lulu, 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.

Example 2

Two staff arrived at work and accused the cleaner of not doing his job properly. Marilyn, an educator, and Lulu, the cook, accused Mr Engerrand of not cleaning properly. Mr Engerrand says that he has had no complaints before.

Forms of communication

Communication is a two-way process involving sending and receiving messages.

Negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork, collaboration and the completion of work practices all rely on communication skills. Effective communication skills are essential for ensuring communication is appropriate.

Here are explanations of different methods of communication.

Verbal communication	Verbal communication occurs when a person sends a message by speaking. This can be done in person to an individual or group, or over the phone.
	For example, verbal messages may be used in meetings, when exchanging information formally or informally, or when telling others about your opinions and ideas.
Gestures	Gestures are forms of body language that convey specific messages in a particular culture or group. Some gestures have different meanings in different cultures; for example, you might give someone a thumbs up sign to communicate everything is okay. However, in some cultures, this gesture is considered rude.
Body language	Body language is a way of communicating by using body movements or gestures to give more meaning to verbal communication. It is often done unconsciously and helps express how you feel without having to say anything at all.
	For example, if you are uncomfortable talking to someone, you may look at the ground. If you are feeling worried or anxious, you may wring your hands or tap your foot.

Facial expressions	The way your face moves as you deliver information provides messages about your internal state.
	For example, facial expressions may indicate illness, tension or stress. A smile or frown may indicate pleasure or concern, respectively.
Written communication	Letters, emails, memos, text messages and newsletters are all forms of written communication. Effective written communication is clear, concise and can be easily understood by others.
Signs	Signs are pictorial or written messages that are usually displayed in a prominent location. Signs with pictographs are often used so those who are unable to read are still able to understand the message; for example, toilets may have a male and a female image on doors.
Sign language	Sign language may be used by those with a hearing impairment or learning difficulty as an aid when language is a barrier. In Australia, people use Auslan (Australian sign language). Other sign languages include Compic, where pictographs are used to communicate, and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, where a computerised sign interface produces verbal language.

Cross-cultural communication strategies

As well as language differences, non-verbal communication differs between cultures.

Here are some common factors that may impact on communication, including those related to cultural differences.

Attitudes

Your attitude towards the message or the person you are communicating with may reduce how well you communicate. Approval or disapproval of the other person may determine what you tell them and how you communicate with them. Prejudices or biases about the message may stop effective communication.

For example, if you ask personal questions of a family member without explaining why, the person may answer briefly and leave out important information.

Stereotyping

Stereotyping assumes people will think or behave in a certain way. When you stereotype, you may not receive and understand the other messages that are being communicated. You may dismiss people without hearing what they have to say because you have stereotyped them as having particular beliefs and attitudes.

Assumptions

An assumption is when you take for granted that something is true without thinking about it or enquiring; for example, assuming that all Indonesian people are of Muslim faith. Making assumptions about people has the same effect as stereotyping them: if the assumption is wrong it can reduce how well you communicate.

Values

Values describe the beliefs and morals of an individual, culture or organisation. Values often have an emotional element and therefore have considerable influence over communication with others.

It is not realistic to be completely value-free in your judgments or communication. Instead, you need to understand that other people may be viewing the same situation or issue from a different value stance, and to take these differences into account when you are discussing or trying to reach an agreement.

Environment

A friendly, trusting and quiet environment is important if people are to communicate effectively. Noise is an obvious barrier to effective communication.

For example, if you try to talk while there are roadworks in the background, your communication would be difficult due to the distractions in the surrounding environment.

Body language

Body language can tell us as much about feelings as the words someone uses.

With this in mind, think about the body language displayed and look to see if there is a consistent message in the body language that reflects the tone of voice being used.

Crossing your arms, keeping your head down or frowning may show others that you are not interested in what they are telling you, that you are angry or upset. Smiling, facing the other person and maintaining eye contact can show you are interested and welcoming. Sometimes there is a mismatch between the verbal and non-verbal messages a person communicates; for example, if what the person is saying is positive but their body language is negative.

Here are some actions that communicate non-verbal messages when interacting in person.

Touching	Touching another person may communicate that you are being friendly; however, be aware that this may make some people feel uncomfortable and that you are moving too close.
Glancing	Glancing away may tell a person that you are not concentrating on what they are saying or that you are distracted.
	Looking directly at the person and maintaining eye contact communicates that you are listening and taking the conversation seriously. However, be aware that some people find constant eye contact intimidating.
Proximity	If you physically distance yourself from the other person, it may indicate that you are uncertain or feel your space is being invaded. If you stand too close, it may make the other person feel uncomfortable.

Posture	A straight and open posture can imply interest or confidence. In contrast, it may suggest a lack of empathy or confidence if you have your arms crossed or your body is slumped or turned away from the other person.

Communication barriers

A communication barrier is something that stops communication from being effective.

Communication barriers might happen due to differences in language, culture or communication methods. Barriers might also occur due to a disability, a misunderstanding or due to someone's level of reading or writing skills.

There may be a problem with communication if the sender and receiver can't see each other. For example, if communication takes place on the phone there may be distractions, interruptions or body language that cannot be seen.

Email, text messages and social media posts also have missing visual information. Typing errors, incorrect spelling or grammar and inability to express tone might lead to the information being misunderstood. The person sending the message and the person receiving the message may have a very different understanding of the communication.

By being aware of possible communication barriers, you can remind staff of the strategies that will help to establish relationships, such as being polite, showing empathy, being honest and maintaining trust.

Language resources

People who do not speak fluent English may need more time, resources and encouragement.

They may need information in their first language, particularly when the details are important for their decision-making and developing relationships. For example, a family handbook might be translated into a first language so the family is able to understand the curriculum and your expectations.

A translator converts text from one language into another. Translated information might include enrolment documents, newsletters, forms or records. An interpreter translates speech from one language into another, including spoken words into sign language.

Translation programs can be found online or as an application for a mobile device. Some programs will translate text to speech, allowing you to hear pronunciation. These programs are great for translation of single words or basic phrases.

Multilingual staff members can help to make sure information is shared fairly and clearly.

FKA Children's Services Inc. is an Australia-wide support service that provides materials, resources, interpreters, translators and other types of support to assist and respond to diversity. More information regarding FKA's support services and mission statements can be found at: aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services.

An interpreter used in a family meeting can help:

> identify and discuss values, needs and expectations
> relay information, particularly early in the relationship, so you can develop understanding and create a relationship
> understand specific signs or body language that are used to convey needs
> understand how a person is feeling, and explain their concerns or worries
> communicate key information regarding routines and transition times throughout the day.

Other communication resources include basic brochures and signs, communication aids that are targeted to specific groups of people, or resources from particular cultural or ethnic groups.

You may be able to locate these resources from:

> industry-specific organisations such as The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).
> local communities, which may have cultural education for specific cultures in their area such as libraries or a contact from the local council directory
> the internet, which has information including resources about particular cultural or ethnic groups such as support groups, peak bodies or representative groups.

Example
Cross-cultural communication strategies

Emma is meeting a family that has recently moved to Australia from Japan. To ensure she is being respectful and not rude, Emma researches Japanese culture prior to meeting with them and their child. Emma discovers that non-verbal communication plays a large part in the Japanese language. Eye contact is considered rude and body language speaks louder than words. Emma decides to study and practise her communication techniques before meeting with the Fumio family.

✏ Practice Task 7

1. Identify three types of resources that can be accessed to help with effective communication in the workplace.

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

2. Outline the exclusive language used in the case study.

3. Reword the policy statement so that the language is inclusive.

3B Tailoring communication strategies for individual and group needs

To make communication effective, you need to think about the specific needs of the person or group.

The information provided to staff would be quite different to the information provided to families or to the wider community. Tailoring the information for different target groups means asking yourself some questions about the group or individual:

➤ What is the purpose of the information?
➤ Where will the target group find or access the information?
➤ What tone is appropriate to the resource (practical, professional, fun, etc.)?
➤ What mix of text and visuals will work best?
➤ What information is most important?
➤ How can I make my message easy to understand?

Clear communication

Direct communication can be defined as a clear message without room for misinterpretation.

This is a challenge as each type of communication requires different actions. For example, if you are speaking to a colleague you might use language relating to learning frameworks or child development. If you are speaking to a family, you might use descriptive rather than professional language.

Use direct communication with people who need clear instructions. For example, the sentence 'I need you to move from Position A to position B immediately' is direct communication. The instruction cannot be misunderstood.

Indirect communication is open to interpretation and can be taken in different ways by different people. People who communicate indirectly tend to use body language, silences/pauses, tone and/or act out their needs instead of being direct and verbalising what they want or need.

When a language barrier exists, you may use simple words and accompany these with gestures or body language.

Tips for using clear communication
➤ Gain the person's attention.
➤ Provide a suitable environment, such as a quiet and private area for discussion.
➤ Use words that the person can understand, considering their age, race, abilities and culture.
➤ Use clear, specific and relevant words and avoid slang or abbreviated terms.

Tips for using clear communication
➤ Speak to the person directly.
➤ Use sentences that are easy to follow and interpret.
➤ Use active listening, in which the listener restates or paraphrases what they have been told in order to confirm understanding.
➤ Ask if the person needs more information and explain yourself in different ways.
➤ Use body language, words and a tone of voice that matches and try to avoid giving mixed messages.
➤ If communication barriers still exist, seek permission to ask for assistance from their friends or family members.

Communication resources

The way information is presented must consider the specific needs of the audience you are targeting.

Every person will have a preferred way of processing and understanding information. Communication involves more than just speaking and writing. It should include opportunities for two-way interaction, listening, exchanging ideas, consultation and negotiation, as well as non-verbal communication.

When presenting information or asking people for their opinions, consider their personal preferences and needs where you can. There are many ways to present and gather information from individuals or a group. Here are some options to consider.

Information for listening
➤ Discussions
➤ Meetings
➤ Face-to-face training sessions
➤ Online webinars
➤ Online meetings or web conferences
➤ Recordings or podcasts

Information for reading
➤ Books
➤ Fact sheets
➤ Brochures or pamphlets
➤ Noticeboards
➤ Posters
➤ Reports or documents
➤ Emails
➤ Websites
➤ Maps
➤ Charts
➤ Checklists

Information for doing

- ➤ Face-to-face training sessions
- ➤ Demonstrations
- ➤ Checklists
- ➤ Diagrams using symbols
- ➤ Role-plays
- ➤ Case studies and scenarios

Example
Observing body language

Elise wants to make all families feel welcome each day. She likes to approach the families as they arrive and speak to them individually. Over time, she has identified the best body language to use with each family member. One of her strategies is to watch their body language and then copy it.

One of the parents, Renee, has touched Elise on the arm before, so Elise knows that touching is acceptable for her.

Lauren, another parent, steps back a little if Elise moves too close. She also doesn't make eye contact; however, they have great conversations and Lauren is happy to share lots of information about her family. Elise knows to keep a little distance between herself and Lauren and not to keep constant eye contact with her.

✏ Practice Task 8

1. Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

a. A direct communication statement would be, 'Meet me on the corner of Montgomery and Princeton streets at 9am tomorrow'.
    * Yes   * No

b. Indirect communication would be a statement like, 'Meet me by the tree around lunchtime'.
    * Yes   * No

c. Use sign language, writing or miming when communicating to groups who speak English as second a language.
    * Yes   * No

d. Clear communication involves adjusting your tone, using body language, and avoiding using jargon and idioms.
    * Yes   * No

e. Allowances are not required for the different groups if the same information is being communicated on several occasions.
    * Yes   * No

3C Reflecting on the use of communication strategies

Reflection is an important aspect of communication.

No matter who you are communicating with, you should take time to reflect on the communication and consider what worked well and if you could do better. Misunderstandings can occur when information has not been received in the way it was intended. This means the communication process was ineffective and should be improved.

Using a reflective cycle is one way to examine and monitor communication strategies. You can follow these steps yourself and encourage others to reflect on the effectiveness of their communication. Reflections can be recorded in a journal or other document or discussed with a colleague.

Reflect on your communication strategies	
1	**Description** Think of a recent incident where you were communicating with a socially and/or culturally diverse person or group. What happened?
2	**Feelings** When you were communicating with this person or group, what feelings were you experiencing and what feelings do you think they were experiencing?
3	**Evaluation** Do you think that the communication strategy you used created effective communication?
4	**Analysis** What did and did not work in your communication?
5	**Conclusion** What do you conclude about this situation?
6	**Action** If you had the opportunity to communicate with this person in the same situation, what would you do differently? Why?

Use feedback to reflect on communication strategies

Feedback helps people to improve their understanding and performance.

Feedback allows you to reflect on communication skills and identify ways to improve. Feedback received on the effectiveness of communication may come via formal feedback such as a survey or questionnaire to staff or families. It may be informal feedback gathered from a conversation or by observing the way people behave during a conversation or other method of communication.

When using feedback, consider the following:

Tips on giving feedback to others

Make it a positive experience

Be positive. If you are giving feedback, deliver it in a pleasant way that enables others to learn. If you are receiving feedback, accept it as a positive way for you to learn.

Be timely

Feedback works best if it is shared soon after an event. Make sure the feedback discussion occurs when it is convenient.

Make it regular

Set periods of time for revisiting feedback and any goals. Goals can get lost in the day-to-day work you do, so make specific times to discuss and review them.

Prepare your comments

Think about what you want to say or talk about. Be reflective and clear. Make notes, if needed, so that you remember the important points.

Consider the location

Use a space that is comfortable and private, especially if the feedback is personal and important.

Always make sure you have the other person's full attention and try to avoid interruptions.

Avoid blaming and shaming

'You' statements take the form of finger-pointing, so feedback should include 'I' statements. For example, instead of saying, 'You don't seem to see the importance of greeting all parents', try saying, 'I think it is important to greet all parents'.

Allow input

Encourage the other person to give their comments and ideas or explain their understanding.

Include positives

Include praise and encouragement. Mention positives, not just negatives. Look at feedback as something that identifies where things can be improved, rather than where things are wrong or incorrect. Everyone can improve in some way.

Provide suggestions and follow up

Everyone needs support and suggestions. Suggestions may range from ideas on what to do next to professional development ideas.

Set clear times and dates for follow-up. If goals are set and then forgotten, the process is of little value.

Identify areas of improvement

Focus on improving your communication skills and think about ways to effectively communicate.

Communication skills might need to be improved in areas such as:

- dealing with conflict or difficult situations
- making the first contact with an unfamiliar person
- giving instructions
- listening
- interpreting body language
- talking to people who have difficulty communicating
- giving and receiving feedback
- clear writing.

✎ Practice Task 9

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

Case study

Sanjet is meeting with the room leader to discuss the needs of his three-year-old who will soon be joining the service. He does not speak English, but he has relatives who speak English. They have arranged for a family member to act as his interpreter during the interview. Unfortunately, Sanjet became agitated and upset during the discussion. It became clear that there was some friction between the family members and the information was not being communicated in the way it was intended.

1. Comment on the effectiveness of communication strategy used.

2. What could the room leader have done to ensure Sanjet was communicated with appropriately? Explain your answer.

Summary

> 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.
> Negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork and the completion of work practices all rely on communication skills.
> Several factors can impact on communication, including those related to cultural differences such as attitudes, values, assumptions, stereotypes, the environment etc.
> By being aware of possible communication barriers, you can use strategies that help to establish relationships, such as being polite, showing empathy, being honest and maintaining confidence.
> There are resources that will assist in the development of targeted resources to specific groups of people, or resources from particular cultural or ethnic groups.
> When presenting information or asking people for their opinions, consider their personal preferences and needs where you can.
> Reflection is an important aspect of communication; no matter who you are communicating with, it is always a good idea to reflect and consider what went right and if anything was misunderstood.

Learning Checkpoint 3
Adapt communication strategies

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

Case study

You have been asked to explain the newly modified diversity policy at a session on an organisation-wide planning day. The planning day is occurring in another state with accommodation provided. There will be up to 25 participants including representatives from the board of management, senior educators, admin staff and educators from across the various centres. The participants will represent a diverse group of people, who speak a range of languages and who have had a variety of professional and personal experiences with cultural diversity.

1. Identify the purpose and describe the target group for your communication. Briefly explain why this is important.

2. List three resources for information you could use when communicating your message.

3. Provide three options for ways you could present the information to the group.

4. Identify three things you need to keep in mind when planning to communicate to a diverse group.

5. Identify how you could adapt your communication to accommodate a representative from the people and culture team who is considered an expert in working with teams to develop cultural competence.

6. How can you determine if the communication strategies you used were effective? Why is this important?

Contribute to workplace diversity policies and procedures

As a manager, you will need to be aware of all policies and procedures.

An organisation must consider diversity in their workplace when developing and reviewing policies and procedures. Your role may be to communicate and consult with key target groups to collect information about their needs and incorporate this into diversity policies and procedures.

Once any new or updated policies and procedures have been implemented, there needs to be an evaluation of their effectiveness in terms of meeting the diverse needs of every employee. From there, a report can be compiled that notes whether they have been successful or need to be reviewed further.

4A Developing diversity strategies

Providers of childcare services in Australia must meet their legal obligations and adhere to the regulations of their industry. Legal requirements and the standards expected of the early childhood education and care industry are reflected in the policies developed by each service.

A diversity policy represents the objectives and values of the service. For a policy to be meaningful and practical, it requires input from its key stakeholders, so diversity practices can be embedded in the workplace in a way that will best suit its operations.

Policy and procedural documents are a work in progress and require review and updating on a regular basis. This may occur when there is:

> updated legislation, such as a change to anti-discrimination laws
> an emerging need or change in the industry, such as funding changes or the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
> an identified risk to the organisation, such as needing to review equal opportunity or language in position descriptions
> a change that means the policy is no longer workable such as an enlarged business as a result of a merger to a larger company
> an identified gap in the policy – i.e. some information is missing or is not robust enough.

Procedures provide guidelines to assist staff and outline the work practices required to implement a diversity policy. A procedure that accompanies a policy will also require regular updating as job roles change or new staff are employed.

For example, a diversity policy may include a section directed at the delivery of programs and require an anti-bias approach be applied when planning of programs. The procedures that accompany the policy include steps that staff must follow in order to implement the policy such as:

> make sure planning programs promote diverse cultural practices
> allow for the participation of all children
> remove gender-assigned toys, books and play activities
> promote the development of social skills through cooperation.

Diversity strategies

All organisations must adhere to the principles of diversity and equity.

Early learning and education centres need to show how they are implementing diversity under the standards and the Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics, which states:

'In relation to community and society I will…advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.'

Under Commonwealth anti-discrimination legislation, an employer may be held legally responsible for any discrimination or harassment that occurs in the workplace or in connection with a person's employment, unless it can be shown that all reasonable steps have been taken to reduce this liability.

Usually a team of people will work together to develop a diversity policy that will guide the organisation to plan and implement diversity strategies. For example, if a diversity objective is to have a diverse workforce that is representative of the local community, then the employment and recruitment procedures and practices would reflect this objective. The advertising, interviewing, selection and employment of staff would encourage educators with different characteristics of diversity, including culture, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation to apply. The language used in an employment advertisement for a position in the service would be attractive to a diverse range of applicants.

Consulting with others

Consulting means capturing the opinions and concerns of others.

Stakeholders in an organisation can be broadly defined to include anyone who has an interest in or interacts with the organisation. Stakeholders can be internal (such as staff and management) or external (such as families, children, local community groups or representatives, consultants and industry associations).

Everyone who is affected by a policy (either directly or indirectly), should be consulted when developing a policy or reviewing an existing one. The number and range of stakeholders will differ according to the size of the service and level of interaction with the community. For example, a small regional centre may have a large number of families enrolled in the service, and the interactions with community organisations and services may be extensive. This could include families, local cultural groups, disability support staff and visiting volunteers etc.

Consultations aim to collect valuable, valid and honest responses. Some consultation methods are more suitable for certain groups than others; for example, it is unlikely that families would be well represented at a daytime information session.

Method of consultation	Description	Pros	Cons
Surveys and opinion polls	➤ Can be face-to-face interviews, surveys conducted by phone, online or on paper. The same set of questions is used for every person surveyed	➤ Quantitative information can be obtained if a wide group of people is surveyed ➤ Can be relatively cheap to organise and run	➤ Can have low response rates ➤ Information gathered can be superficial and the reasons behind an opinion may not always be clear

Method of consultation	Description	Pros	Cons
(cont.) **Surveys and opinion polls**	➤ Can include open and closed question styles ➤ An incentive can be used to encourage responses, such as entering a prize draw	➤ Responses are more likely to be based on individual opinions rather than guided by the group	➤ Closed questions mean there will be little explanation for why people responded the way they did
Focus groups/ workshops	➤ A small number of people, such as staff or families (or both) who have been asked for their opinions on the topic ➤ May require a note-taker to record all of the responses	➤ Good quality qualitative information can be captured ➤ Allows in-depth discussion of issues and potential resolution of problems ➤ Face-to-face contact ensures participants can be given further explanation of the issues and their opinions can be obtained	➤ A relatively small number of people are usually involved, meaning that information gathered will not be quantitative ➤ Groups may not represent the majority opinion ➤ Can be difficult to get people to be involved and offer their time
Meetings with key target groups	➤ May include meetings with staff or a sample of parents	➤ Allows specific groups to be targeted ➤ Face-to-face contact ensures participants can be given further explanation of the issues	➤ Time available for discussion may be limited ➤ Topic may not be of interest to participants
Individual interviews and meetings	➤ One-on-one interviews to discuss details on specific issues	➤ Meeting location can be flexible ➤ Allows for in-depth discussion and understanding of issues	➤ Likely to be very focused on individual issues ➤ Time-consuming to conduct ➤ Little quantitative information gathered and not majority opinion

Components of a diversity policy

A diversity policy should be relevant to the specific workplace and have the endorsement of the director, manager and board of management.

The policy should begin with a framing statement on diversity that affirms the organisation's philosophy and values. A diversity policy that focuses on staff may cover areas such as:

> ➤ hiring and promoting staff (recruitment)
> ➤ the allocating tasks
> ➤ staff activities where diversity practices can be embedded
> ➤ the training offered to staff
> ➤ the position the service has on tolerance for harassment and discrimination

A final version of a policy document can be distributed to stakeholders involved in its development for review and feedback. The document may include supporting documentation, such as the services code of conduct. It may also refer to other relevant policies, the procedural documents related to the policy such as the service's complaints procedure that outlines the steps the organisation will take when investigating a claim, including a timeline for actions.

Components of a diversity policy
➤ Scoping statement outlining the key personnel, issues and context for the organisation
➤ Purpose statement or objectives explaining the intent of the policy and what the organisation hopes to achieve
➤ Compliance with specific legal requirements such as Acts and regulations
➤ Definitions or terminology used in the policy, such as discrimination, inclusion etc.
➤ Performance indicators that will be used to measure the effectiveness of the objectives
➤ Activities and strategies to achieve the objectives as well as time frames and associated costs for the implementation process
➤ Key roles and responsibilities required to carry out key tasks and duties
➤ Record-keeping processes that explain how the policy will be stored and where it can be found
➤ Evaluation processes that explain how the policy will be reviewed and improved over time

Example

Introduction to a diversity policy

Here is an example of an introduction or opening statement to a diversity policy.

Philosophy

We believe in having a workforce that comprises people from a range of backgrounds and of varying ages, genders, abilities and outlooks. We believe that our organisation will prosper and grow by effectively utilising staff and their full range of capabilities and by valuing their contributions. The organisation will ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated fairly and equally, and in accordance with relevant Commonwealth and state/territory legislation.

Policy application

➤ All employees have the right to a safe and healthy workplace free from discrimination and harassment.

➤ Selection and recruitment, training, promotion and leave must be based on a person's individual ability regardless of their human characteristics. Recruitment should reflect the Australian community and include people of different abilities, ages, genders, cultures and religions.

➤ Leave may be given for cultural and religious events if prior notice of four weeks is provided. This will be based on individual circumstances and be at the manager's discretion.

➤ Maternity, paternity and carers leave is offered (see leave policy).

➤ Leave may be given for other reasons. This will be based on individual circumstances and be at the manager's discretion (see leave policy).

➤ Employees must follow organisational policies and procedures and work cooperatively, fairly, respectfully and without bias or prejudice.

➤ The CEO will handle breaches of the policy.

Example
A manager contributes to an organisation's diversity policy

Sue, a manager in a community-based, not-for-profit organisation, attends a meeting of a local support group for educators. Today they have a guest speaker who discusses information published by the state's EEO commission on the way services can work with refugees.

Returning to work after the meeting, Sue explains what she learned and they decide that the staff would benefit from the information presented as a professional development opportunity.

Feedback from staff after the session indicates that the information was useful, and that they would like another session to discuss ideas for changes to programs. They would like to involve refugee families more in their children's education and feel more of a part of community.

The team develops a range of information on the value of families contribution to their child's learning and have them translated into several community languages.

The director makes a point of congratulating Sue on her contribution and acknowledges this in the staff newsletter.

✏ Practice Task 10

1. Match the beginning of each sentence about consulting about diversity strategies to the correct ending.

* Early learning and education services need to meet the needs of their diverse community and	* require review and updating on a regular basis.
* Policy and procedure documents are a work in progress and	* will be an accurate reflection of the needs and values of a broad base of people.
* Anti-discrimination legislation holds an employer legally responsible for discrimination and	* promote the rights and best interests of staff, children and families.
* Consultation captures the opinions and concerns of key stakeholders and	* a diversity policy can demonstrate consultation and show how diversity strategies have been implemented.

2. Which of the following statements relate to strategies in a diversity policy? Select all that apply.

☐   Policies need to be reviewed or updated when gaps are noted or they are unworkable.

☐   External stakeholders may include staff and community newspaper and families.

☐   A survey of staff is a preferred consultation method because it is cheap and easy to create.

☐   Definitions or terminology of relevant diversity language help define the scope of the policy.

☐   Other documents listed in the policy may include other related policies and procedures.

4B Advocating for diversity strategies

Managers can make valuable contributions in the development and implementation of diversity strategies.

This includes:

> reinforcing the policy's key messages whenever possible and applicable
> knowing the legislation and regulations that direct and underpin the compliance requirements of the early childhood education industry
> being able to offer advice, coach and mentor their staff including referring others to information and resources
> encouraging workplace behaviours that demonstrate diversity practices such as role modelling in their interactions with others
> helping others apply a diversity policy into workplace practices.

Advocating the implementation of the policy

Stakeholders connected with the organisation need to be kept up to date with the status of the diversity policy.

The amount of information and the numbers of people involved will vary. For example, volunteers may only need to be aware of the existence of the organisation's diversity statement and the aims of the policy, whereas staff who are required to apply the policy, require a fuller explanation. This means the information needs to be tailored according to the group requirements.

Here are some examples of different forums that can be used to communicate diversity strategies and to reinforce the organisation's commitment to diversity.

Induction programs

Direct new staff to the diversity policy and clarify the organisation's aims and practices and the responsibilities for diversity as a part of their job role. A copy of the policy should be included in the organisation's policies and procedures manual as part of the induction kit.

Retain records of attendance and completed training to show that the organisation has taken a proactive stance in promoting the policy and eliminating discrimination, anti-bias behaviour etc.

Staff meetings

Use staff meetings to explain aspects of the policy, how it should be implemented, raise issues, and discuss hypothetical incidents with the aim of educating staff about their responsibilities in relation to diversity. For example, you may explain what sexual harassment means, define bullying, instigate a discussion with a team member about how a policy may be implemented in their team, and describe what to do if they have a complaint about an aspect of diversity.

You can invite a guest speaker to talk about the benefits of diversity or provide examples of communication skills for interacting with specific cultural groups.

When running training or information sessions on the diversity strategies of the service, consider the following:

Allow for questions	Provide time during a session for people to ask questions such as:
	➤ How can I get to know about another person's culture?
	➤ What do you mean by the word 'ethnicity'?
	➤ Can people ask about my personal living arrangements?
	Be prepared with answers to questions such as these. A set of frequently asked questions with responses can be provided as a take away and referred to when needed.
Seek feedback	To confirm that people understand diversity and its benefits, and know how to comply with the policy, you may need to seek feedback by:
	➤ asking further questions to clarify any misunderstandings or confusion
	➤ providing a survey or questionnaire to gauge their interest in, understanding of and attitude towards diversity
	➤ observing them as they go about their tasks.
Ask questions	You may ask questions to ensure the information has been understood such as:
	➤ What does 'diversity in the workplace' mean to you?
	➤ Why does our organisation have a diversity policy?
	➤ What do you have to do to ensure you are meeting the organisation's diversity policy?
	➤ Why is it important for an organisation to understand your personal arrangements, such as having children to care for or being a single parent?
	➤ What should you do if you feel you are being bullied?
	➤ What are the consequences of not complying with the diversity policy?

Example
Incorporating diversity practices into recruitment

Robin, a senior educator, is asked to recruit two more staff for the early education service. The business owner wants the service to have staff that reflect the diverse demographic reflecting its local community.

Robin reads the organisation's diversity policy, which has an objective that staff should profile the diversity of its local community. Further research shows that the major languages other than English spoken by the families at the service include Turkish, Arabic and Croatian.

When advertising for new educator positions, a statement is included stating that applications would be welcome from educators who speak one or more of these languages.

✎ Practice Task 11

1. Which of the following are ways to advocate for diversity strategies ? Select all that apply.

☐ Reinforce the policy's key messages whenever the opportunity arises.

☐ Allow for questions and seek feedback on the information in the policy.

☐ Arrange to have the policy translated into several languages.

☐ Reinforce the value the service places on diversity during induction programs to new staff.

☐ Use the number and types of complaints received to measure the success of the diversity policy.

4C Evaluating and reporting on outcomes

To ensure diversity policies are current and effective, they need to be updated regularly.

Part of the strategy to support diversity includes evaluating the diversity policy, procedures and any other actions that have been taken by the organisation.

Staff can provide valuable feedback on the relevance and usability of the policy and procedures used to implement strategies.

A schedule for review should be available with review dates projecting into the coming year at least. For example, the policies are reviewed six-monthly or yearly or when there is a change that means they should be done earlier. The policy document will have its version information in the footer or in the file path where it is saved to ensure only the latest version is used.

The review process should analyse the extent to which the objectives and outcomes have been met. There can be a set of measurable outcomes that may be used to determine success or otherwise of the diversity strategies. For example, has it resulted in positive changes in the workplace?

An evaluation may look at:

> the extent to which the policy has been accessed by staff, such as number of downloads from an intranet
> the number of staff who have been inducted on the policy or attended training on diversity topics and practices
> the currency and relevance of the policy such as:
>> – legislation changes
>> – organisational restructures
>> – if it is found to have gaps or be unworkable
>> – its readability and usability
>> – benchmarking or alignment with other policies

Measures of success can be:

> observations of communications and interactions between staff in their day-to-day work practices
> data gathered from staff or other stakeholders about their level of understanding of diversity concepts from consultations, interviews, meetings or focus groups
> data on the profile of employed staff with respect to age, gender and ethnicity, and comparing this diversity over time
> the frequency of discussions about diversity during team meetings and check-in meetings
> results from a staff job satisfaction survey or survey of families with their satisfaction with the service
> examining records of incidents over time to show reductions or increases in frequency and level of seriousness

- feedback from staff on the diversity policy or related procedures and if they are readable and easy to follow
- the number of staff activities that involve celebrating or recognising cultural diversity
- measuring the level of enthusiasm for implementing diversity strategies compared to when the policy was first released.

Suggestions to improve the policy

The findings from the evaluation and any recommendations can be provided in a report to stakeholders.

Reports can include statistics (quantitative data) or results of interviews and discussions (qualitative data).

A report may include the following discussion items:

- references to current legislation, including anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and human rights
- the changing needs of the service, staff, families and other stakeholders
- key areas in the service where the strategies are directed
- the use of anti-biased and inclusive language
- collaboration with families or external cultural organisations.

Some common recommendations about the policy might be:

- the language needs to be made clearer
- definitions of terms need to be updated
- it was too ambitious and consequently unrealistic
- it needs to closely reflect the capabilities of the service
- it was not ambitious enough, in that targets have been easily met before deadlines
- it needs to incorporate a new initiative
- it should be promoted beyond the service and to the local community
- it requires input from a cultural organisation.

Example
Embracing diversity in the service

A new manager with a strong and passionate commitment to diversity initiates a review of the service's diversity policy.

The following steps are included in the review process:

- Notify staff of a review at a staff meeting.
- Check that the policy reflects current legislation.
- Check when diversity training has been conducted.
- Interview staff using a questionnaire to check their knowledge and understanding of the diversity policy and their responsibilities, including how to access the policy documents.

> ➤ Check supporting documents, such as a code of ethics, are mentioned and that they align with the diversity policy.
> ➤ Run some activities to promote diversity and get the staff re-engaged and enthusiastic about the strategies that can be implemented.
> ➤ Research best practice examples of policies from early childhood peak body websites and through education networks.

After this review, the policy is revised and then endorsed by the director, senior management and staff, and a copy of the updated policy is displayed in the reception area and staffroom. Families are notified about the review and its location for their comments.

✏️ Practice Task 12

Part A

1. List three strategies for evaluating how well staff are complying with the diversity policies and procedures.

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2. Which of the following relate to evaluating a diversity policy are correct? Select all that apply.

☐ Statistics are a useful way for presenting data.

☐ A policy is working if staff begin to complain more about discrimination.

☐ Services must engage an external expert to review and report on their diversity policy.

☐ Staff responses are critical because they have the role of following a policy and its procedures.

☐ If the objectives of a policy are too ambitious it can be adjusted to better reflect the capabilities of the service.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the question that follows.

Case study

Recently, the director of an early childhood education centre resigned, and a new director was appointed. Part of the new director's role is to review the policies and procedures of the service.

It becomes obvious that there has been little or no review of the diversity policy since it was first written and much of the terminology is outdated, and the legislation listed in the document is not current.

1. What information should the director include in the report about the work done to update the policy?

Summary

> A diversity policy represents the objectives and values of the service.
> For a policy to be meaningful, it must reflect the needs of its key stakeholders and indicate the way the organisation wants diversity practices to be embedded in the workplace.
> Policy and procedural documents are a work in progress and require review and updating on a regular basis.
> The development and review of diversity strategies should involve consultation with key stakeholders affected by the policy.
> A diversity policy needs to be reviewed and updated regularly to ensure it is current and effective in meeting the needs of its staff and families.
> Measuring the success of a policy means collecting data and analysing the results to see if the objectives and outcomes have been met.
> Determining the success of diversity strategies includes evaluating information gathered through consultation, such as interviews, meetings and focus groups to determine the level of understanding and acceptance of the policy.
> Staff can provide valuable feedback and suggestions to ensure the policy is implemented effectively and efficiently, and that it maintains currency.
> A summary report can identify suggested amendments and recommendations such as making the language clearer or defining some of the terminology more precisely.

Learning Checkpoint 4
Contribute to workplace diversity policies and procedures

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Felicity has been employed as a senior educator for an early childhood education centre. One of her first jobs is to review the diversity strategies and review the appropriate policies and procedures. Straight away she notices the diversity policy doesn't reflect the current legislation and there are no older versions of the schedule to indicate it has been reviewed on a regular basis.

1. Who should Felicity consult with about the services diversity strategies?

2. Which of the following are examples of diversity objectives? Select all that apply.

☐ Create, maintain and encourage a culture that accepts, respects and promotes our differences and values diversity in the workplace.

☐ Every person that interacts with the service will be treated fairly and equally regardless of their gender, age, sexuality, culture/ethnicity, language, religious beliefs, abilities or disabilities.

☐ The service will recruit staff and educators impartially from a diverse field of suitably qualified candidates.

☐ The service will provide diversity training opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and experience of all staff.

☐ The service will value diversity by only employing refugees and newly arrived immigrants.

3. Felicity will hold a training session to introduce a draft of the policy to staff. Select true or false for each of the following statements.

    a. Felicity will show how the policy relates to current legislation.   * True   * False

    b. Felicity will explain how staff can provide feedback and recommendations for inclusions into the policy.   * True   * False

4. Provide three examples of measures Felicity can use to evaluate the success of the strategies she will put in place.

5. Felicity will summarise the feedback she has received from the stakeholders and collate it into a report for senior management. Which of the following should she consider when developing her report? Select yes or no for each one.

    a. How the needs of the organisation, staff and families were identified and evaluated.   * Yes   * No

    b. The language should not be complex, and easy to read and understand.   * Yes   * No

    c. Legislation should be included including laws relating to anti-discrimination, equal opportunity and human rights.   * Yes   * No

    d. Once the policy has been approved, it will not need to be reviewed for years.   * Yes   * No

    e. The report should be made available to key stakeholders such as staff, families and other users of the service.   * Yes   * No