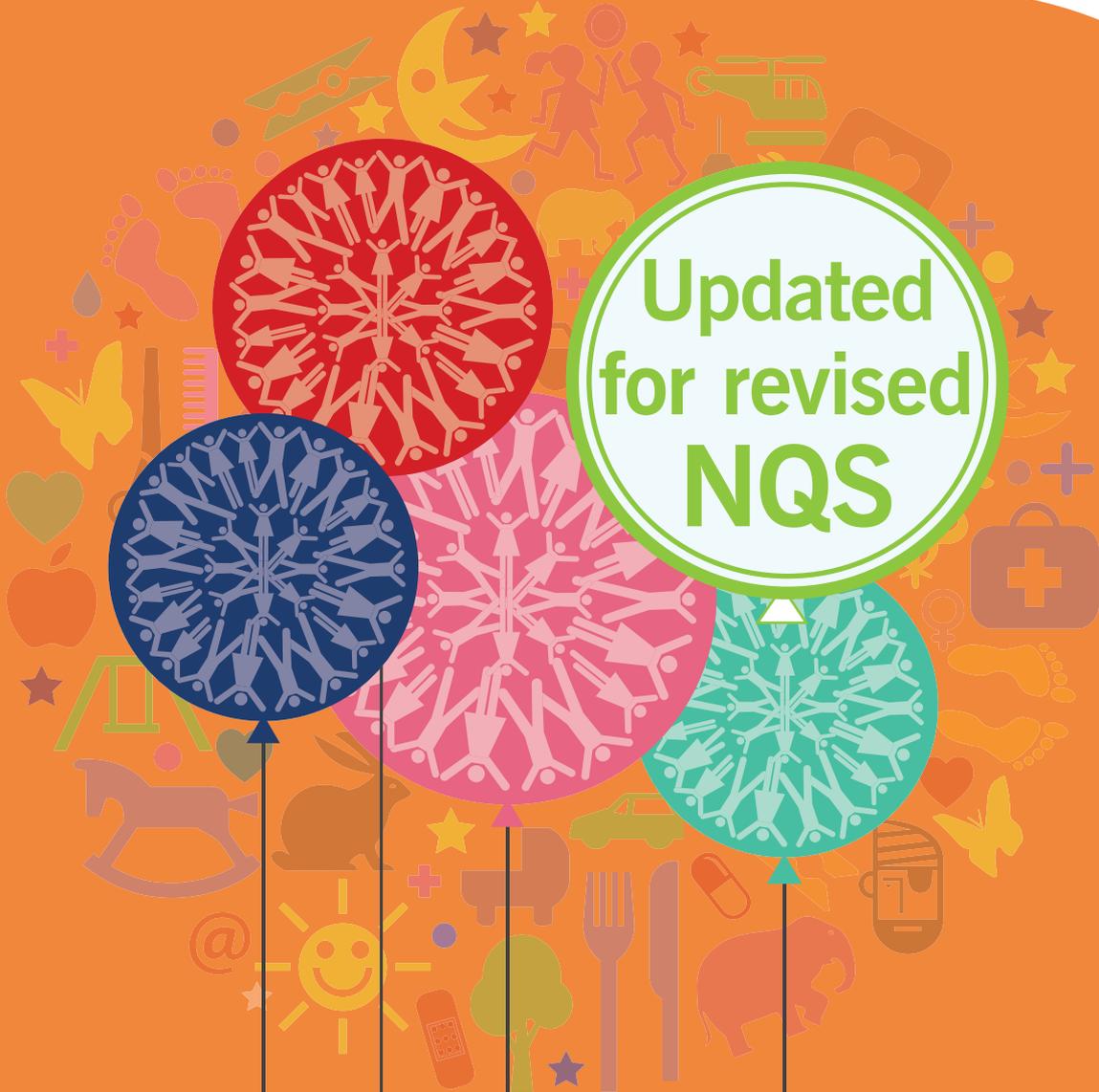


CHCDIV001

Work with diverse people



Updated
for revised
NQS

Learner guide



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CHCDIV001

Work with diverse people

Release 1

Learner guide

Aspire Version 2.1



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CHCDIV001 Work with diverse people, Release 1



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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCDIV001 Work with diverse people*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au

How to work through this learner guide

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

Feature of the learner guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into practice. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
Video clips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where QR codes appear, you can use smartphones and other devices to access video clips relating to the content. For information about how to download a QR reader app or accessing video on your device, please visit our website: www.aspirelr.com.au/help 
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There are learning checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 1A Reflect on perspectives and biases**

- 1B Recognise limitations**

- 1C Work inclusively with others**

- 1D Improve self and social awareness**

Reflect on own perspectives

To successfully reflect on your own perspectives regarding culture, you will need to extend well beyond your race or ethnic origin. Culture is also about the values, beliefs, life experiences and family background that contribute to who you are. Your awareness of your own values, beliefs and cultural practices influences your ability to remain culturally sensitive.

Reflecting on your own cultural identity will allow you to have a greater understanding of others in your workplace and your community.

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

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

1A Reflect on perspectives and biases

Self-evaluation is a process in which you look at yourself and rate the quality of your own work. This helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses, and where you might improve or extend your knowledge, skills and experience.



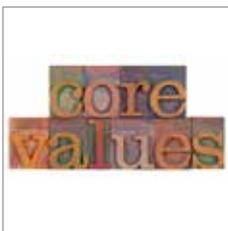
Self-evaluation is a vital activity you must engage in continually if you are to challenge your own cultural perspectives and biases. In the national framework documents – *Belonging, being & becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF) and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTO) – the principle of ongoing learning and reflective practice encourages you to use self-evaluation. The practice of cultural competence expresses the actions you should take to show respect for cultural diversity.

Each day you are faced with new cultural information. To manage this information and show respect for others, you need to constantly ask yourself questions that open your mind to new information.

Definition of culture

Culture refers to the way of life for a group of people; it may include their race, religion, economic status, family life, health, educational system, government or way of viewing the world.

Here are examples of factors that may vary in different cultures.



Beliefs and customs

Every family has their own beliefs and customs that are based on their values. Some values may be associated with a race, religion or another cultural aspect that they are influenced by.



Race and ethnicity

Race and ethnicity refer to a person’s country of origin, or a particular group of people having similar physical characteristics. Australia is home to people of many races and ethnicities, who may follow different beliefs, have different styles of living, and come from different racial and ethnic backgrounds.



Language

Many languages are spoken in Australia – both verbal and nonverbal. Each language should be respected as a valid form of communication. Some people are able to speak more than one language. Some people may communicate using sign language. People may also demonstrate particular communication styles and nonverbal social customs.



Religion

Religion is often a dominating aspect of family life that has a strong influence on the norms, beliefs, values and customs that determine family culture. Many individuals and communities frame their desires and imaginings in religious or spiritual terms. Your respect for their beliefs is essential for you to provide quality outcomes for children and families.



Life experiences, personal history and experiences of trauma

All people you make contact with are affected by their life experiences. Traumatic experiences can affect the outlook of an individual and the way they interact with others. In some cases, trauma can be easily noticed, such as scars. There are other forms of trauma that may not be as obvious, such as an experience of war, the death of a loved one or a serious illness or accident.



Families granted political asylum

People who have been granted political asylum in Australia have been recognised by the Australian government as being in danger in their home country due to their race, nationality, religion, political opinions or social group. When establishing background information, questions about their cultural background or family history may be confronting.

Children who have been granted asylum may have difficulties developmentally or emotionally. In many situations you may require specialist assistance to support a family or child.



Family structure, gender, relationships and sexuality

Families are structured in many different ways. The structure may include different numbers of children or adults, as seen in single-parent families, extended families and blended families.

The structure might also include people with various gender characteristics, including those identifying as:

- ▶ 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 (people whose personality does not correspond with their birth sex)
- ▶ gender neutral (people who do not connect to being either male or female)
- ▶ intersex (people born with sexual anatomy that cannot be defined as male or female).

By acknowledging family structure you can be sensitive to needs, respect the family and encourage children to feel valued. By talking openly about the different ways families are made up, children can feel included and learn about the way others live.



Age

Older people have adapted to many changes throughout their lives and may hold different values to younger generations. Some children may have contact with grandparents or older adults. These interactions can help build on children’s experiences and knowledge of the world. Grandparents or older people may also guide and care for children in different ways to their parents and educators.



Ability

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, and may demonstrate development in areas different from others. For example, someone with a vision impairment may have excellent hearing.

Diversity concepts

There are many words that you may encounter when reflecting on culture and cultural diversity. When you understand these words clearly, you will find it easier to understand the concepts they represent. Here is a list of terms relating to diversity and their definitions.

Word	Definition
Anti-bias programming (curriculum)	An anti-bias approach actively rejects prejudice or bias in any form, and encourages children to explore similarities and differences between each other. An example is to include images of people with disabilities, and then discussing this, even though there are no people with disabilities in your service.
Bias	An inclination or prejudice for or against one person or a group of people, especially in an unfair way.
Belief	What you feel is true or false; for example, you may believe that children need a secure environment.
CALD	CALD stands for ‘culturally and linguistically diverse’.
Culture	The way of life for a group of people. It may include race, religion, economic status, family life, health, educational system, government or way of viewing the world.
Customs	A long-term habit or behaviour often commenced during upbringing; for example, it may be a custom to eat rice with each meal.
Discrimination	Action taken or withheld in regard to an individual or group based on characteristics that are not relevant to the situation. For example, choosing not to accept a child into the service due to their parents not speaking English.
Diversity	Diversity refers to a wide range of cultural characteristics and the state of being different.

Word	Definition
Ethnicity	A person's background, relating to their particular racial, national or cultural group, and that group's customs, beliefs and language.
Inclusion	The integration of a person with additional or special needs into a mainstream program where other children do not have additional or special needs. It also refers to making all people feel welcome and that they belong.
Multicultural education	Multicultural education refers to specific programming that supports the diversity of race, culture, language and religion, and helps create an understanding of the similarities and differences between people. An example is providing adequate education to all children regardless of their culture.
Norm	A norm is something that is considered typical; for example, it may be a norm for you to work with Muslim families.
Non-bias	Non-bias refers to not expressing or acting on any bias.
Prejudice	An opinion about a group of people or individuals that is based on assumptions rather than knowledge of that person, and may be based on a bias. For example, you may hear someone say, 'Don't let them come here!' This demonstrates a negative bias, and the discrimination shows prejudice.
Racism	Racism is discrimination based on race, especially the belief that one race is superior to another. For example, if someone says that Asians should eat the same food as us, they are expressing a racist view.
Social	Relating to a society or an organisation.
Society	A group of people living together as a community; for example, Australians.
Socioeconomic	Socioeconomic refers to both social and economic impacts on individuals. For example, someone who lives in a low socioeconomic area may have a low income and limited access to services and support.
Stereotype	A stereotype is an image of a group or individual that is based on particular characteristics and applied to all members of that group. It is an assumption that someone fits a certain convention or standard. For example, if someone says that all Americans are loud, this is based on a limited experience, as the person has not met all Americans.
Values	A value is a belief that you feel strongly about and that is emotionally important to you; for example, you may value honesty.

Australian cultures

The cultures of Australia are diverse, reflecting this country's past and also the events of other countries. While Indigenous Australians settled here over 60,000 years ago, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identifies that in 2016 they made up only three per cent of our total population.

Today, the majority of people have migrated to Australia from the United Kingdom or New Zealand. Based on ABS figures from 2016, 49 per cent of Australians were born overseas or had at least one parent who was born overseas. Just over half the population were born in Australia with Australian parents.

Migration to Australia by non-Indigenous people has occurred in distinct patterns, each related to historical events. Further explanation of these events is shown here.

Migration to Australia by non-Indigenous people

- 1 Convict transportation**

From 1788 to 1868, convicts from Britain arrived in an effort to ease overcrowded European prisons.
- 2 Free immigrants**

From 1793 to 1850, free settlers and assisted migrants chose to start their lives in Australia, mostly offering agricultural and domestic servant skills.
- 3 Labourers**

From 1850, gold rushes brought Chinese labourers, sugar plantations brought South Sea Islanders, exploration of the outback encouraged Afghan cameleers, and pearl divers arrived from Japan.
- 4 White Australia**

From 1901 to 1958 the *Immigration Restrictions Act 1901* (Cth), also known as the 'White Australia policy', aimed to reduce the numbers of incoming Chinese and South Sea Islanders and increase British migrants.
- 5 Populate or perish**

From the end of World War II to the 1970s, displaced Europeans were offered passage to Australia for 10 pounds. These people were labelled the 'ten pound poms'.
- 6 Refugees**

From the late 1970s until the late 1990s, many people arrived by plane and ship as refugees. A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their home due to an event that endangers their life. This might be a war, persecution or a natural disaster.
- 7 Asylum seekers**

Since the late 1990s, people have been arriving from the Middle East and Sri Lanka by boats organised by people smugglers. An asylum seeker is a person who has left their home as they feel their life is in danger. If an asylum seeker is identified as having their life in danger at home, they are classified as a refugee.

Cultural identity

Diversity is about recognising that each person is unique. Individual differences can relate to traditions, living circumstances, leisure pursuits, jobs and family structures.

Each individual person has a lifestyle and culture that is unique to them. Your own experiences influence your thoughts and beliefs, and although you may have a similar racial or religious background to another person, you may have different values and beliefs about what is important.

People with a strong sense of cultural identity are more likely to show confidence in themselves, to feel a sense of belonging and to be able to understand and work positively with others. These concepts of identity and belonging are important aspects of the national frameworks that educators work within.

Watch this video about the importance of reflecting on your own cultural identity.



Social and cultural perspective and bias

You will come across many cultures in your work. By knowing about the various factors that make up a culture, you will be able to develop trusting relationships that are non-discriminatory and may also help you to meet the needs of children, families and co-workers.

Children copy your actions and behaviour, so positive attitudes that reflect equality and value others should be displayed at all times. This will help to influence children, other educators and parents to develop understanding and acceptance of diversity.



Causes of social and cultural bias

Cultural bias usually relates to fear or misunderstanding. It occurs when someone feels their values and beliefs are not in line with a person of a different culture, especially when the life choices of another are not acceptable or clear to the person.

For example, you may feel discomfort when you are confronted with someone or something that demonstrates cultural values different to your own. These feelings relate to your need to be accepted or to understand others, and are often linked to biases, stereotypes or other negative information you have received.

Belonging and trauma

You must understand that children's experiences can have both a short- and long-term impact on their behaviour. Traumatic events can have a serious lasting effect on a child's ability to form trusting relationships. When children do not feel a sense of belonging or feel ashamed of their identity, this can be traumatic.

To effectively develop relationships with children and adults, always show respect and acceptance for others. You should also adapt your actions and interactions to suit any value changes in society and in your community.

Supporting others to feel included

Within a culture, particular behaviours are taken for granted as being usual or common, yet in a different culture they may in fact be inappropriate or unrealistic. Many families and children experience difficulty adapting to new cultures, so respect and appreciate these difficulties and offer support.

To help children and others to feel included you can:

- ▶ nurture them and help them feel that they are valued
- ▶ praise and acknowledge them to help them build self-esteem
- ▶ encourage them to care for others
- ▶ appreciate their efforts and teach them to appreciate others
- ▶ use respectful and positive communication
- ▶ teach social skills such as saying 'good morning', 'goodbye' and 'thank you'
- ▶ set clear guidelines for expected behaviour.

Reflect on your own bias

The values and beliefs of a culture are formed from past experiences. Child rearing and parental expectations of children's behaviour play a major role in developing an individual's culture. Culture also changes over time, due to factors such as laws, society's values, new practices and relocation.

Your attitudes are influenced by your personal experiences from childhood until now, such as your understanding of life events and the people you have met.

As with many of your educator roles, reflecting on your bias is an expected action. By using a reflective process, you can identify biased behaviours and work towards positive outcomes. To do this you must first be open and willing to find out about yourself and other people.

Reflect on your own perspectives by answering these questions:

- ▶ Am I able to work collaboratively with the families in the service/workplace?
- ▶ Do I have positive relationships with my work colleagues?
- ▶ Are the expectations I have (for children, staff, families or stakeholders) based on my cultural background or theirs?
- ▶ Do I treat all people I socialise with in an equitable and friendly manner?
- ▶ Do I integrate various cultures into my teaching and learning practices?
- ▶ Do I take the time to research cultures or backgrounds unfamiliar to me?
- ▶ Do I have the ability to socialise with a variety of individuals, regardless of their cultural or social background?
- ▶ Do I have any identifiable biases that I need to work on?
- ▶ In relation to my own cultural perspective, I feel I am ...
- ▶ Do I have a realistic set of goals and objectives to strive towards?

The right attitude

Your attitude towards cultural difference influences how you feel about others and how you approach new information. It also presents itself in your personality when meeting new people. This can make others feel comfortable in your company, or avoidant of you for fear of misunderstandings or being typecast.

There are four common levels of cultural awareness that will show in your attitude.

Level 1: Unconsciously incompetent

Initially, you may be unconsciously incompetent, meaning you are unaware of your biases and stereotypical behaviour and, in being so, make mistakes and misinterpret others.

Level 2: Consciously incompetent

As you progress, you may be consciously incompetent. At this point, you agree to acknowledge difference, but don't understand these differences; you are unaware of how important the recognition of difference is to others, and you may feel overwhelmed by the task of how you might find out about everyone else.

Level 3: Consciously competent

With practice you will become consciously competent. This means that you know that people are different, you know some strategies for finding out about the culture of others, and you have changed many of your biases and stereotypical behaviours based on what you have learnt from exploring the identity of others.

Level 4: Unconsciously competent

When you are unconsciously competent you use your learnt skills and knowledge instinctively, responding to others respectfully in a consistent manner and being able to find out information and use this to show you value others.

Cultural safety

Culturally safe environments are created by people who respect others and themselves, and who make an effort to consider their own needs, but acknowledge that these needs do not overshadow the needs of others.

You might have taken steps to understand your own personal culture and identify how this impacts on others. However, to create cultural safety you must use this information and act in a way that enables others to feel respected and included.

When people are welcomed in this way, they feel:

▶ empowered	▶ understood
▶ willing to participate	▶ supported
▶ valued	▶ open to the feelings and ideas of others.

Become culturally aware

By reflecting on and improving your understanding of one person, you are expanding your ability to be culturally aware of all people. Cultural awareness is not about knowing everything; it is about being open and willing to accept others and find out about how you can respect their values and beliefs.

Your cultural awareness will strengthen over time if you continue to reflect on your actions and make attempts to learn about others. Cultural awareness is not something you do in your work role alone. Cultural awareness becomes part of how you treat all people in any aspect of your life.

This learning will lead to:

- ▶ cultural knowledge, as you find out about a person's background, and cultural values and beliefs
- ▶ cultural awareness, as you develop an understanding and acknowledgment of their background
- ▶ cultural sensitivity, as you see similarities and differences between all people.

Increasing cultural awareness

By reflecting on yourself and finding out about others, you can move towards the goal of becoming culturally aware. The result will be that you are able to provide cultural safety, which is a desirable work practice for all educators.

To work towards becoming culturally aware, you should:

- ▶ reflect on your practices using a variety of methods, including a structured process
- ▶ consider your attitude and whether you are fully aware of your understanding and actions
- ▶ view cultural awareness as an ongoing cycle of learning; there is always something new to learn, and always someone who has different ideas and values to you.

Cultural competence

You will learn new information from having an open attitude and reflecting on your own biases. This process may demonstrate that you are not yet taking into account the individual needs of some people. It may also help you to identify where you need to expand your knowledge. By considering all differences, you will be working towards cultural competence. In an attempt to increase your cultural competence, you may do the following :

- ▶ Use a diary and record conversations, then analyse your responses and work towards being more effective.



- ▶ Have regular team meetings and reflect on how the program is catering to all needs, interests and backgrounds.
- ▶ Undertake regular in-service and professional development training to ensure you are kept up to date.
- ▶ Ask others for feedback on your current communication methods and interactions.
- ▶ Work with a mentor to evaluate strengths and weaknesses.
- ▶ Do research to gain a deeper understanding of difference, culture and attitudes.
- ▶ Set yourself goals based on areas where you feel you need greater knowledge.

Example

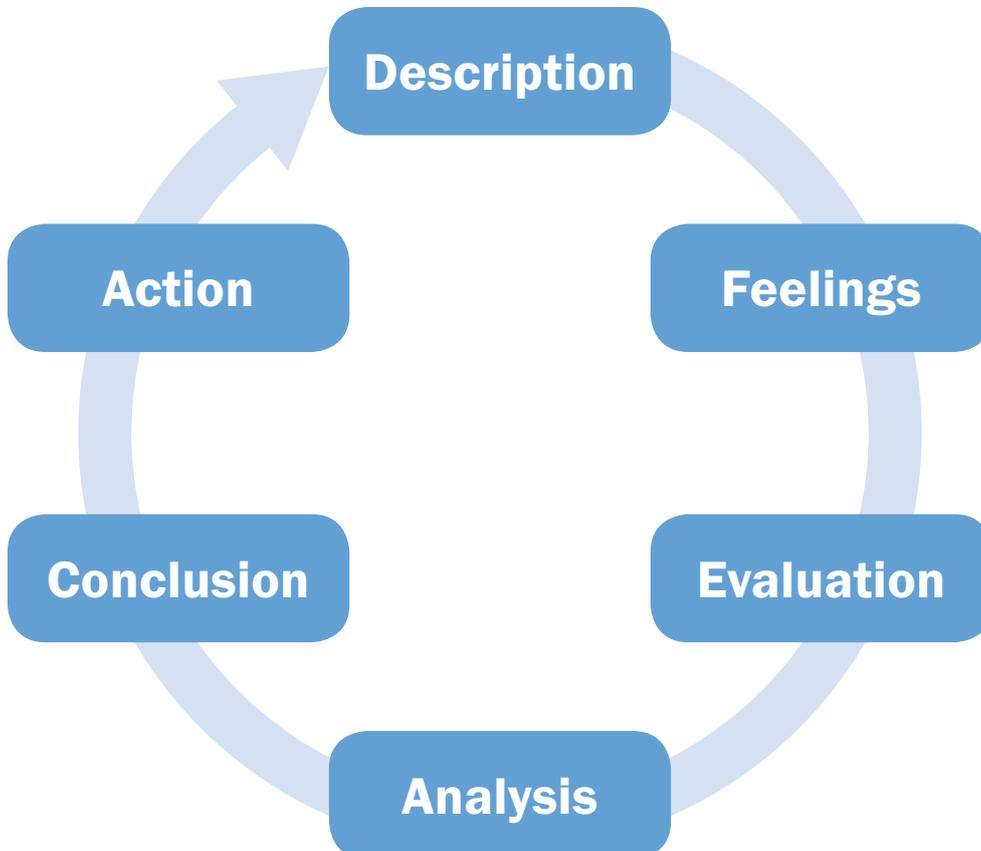
People who live in your street

Even if all of the people who live in your street are Australian-born, they are likely to have different values, beliefs and backgrounds. They may also have various attitudes relating to issues and styles of living. These differences occur due to the fact that people have been raised by different parents or families. Each family has their own ideas about what is important to them, how they discipline their children, their family values or how their children should be raised. These ideas form the basis of differing family cultures, resulting in a diverse community.



The reflective cycle

Here is a reflective cycle that is commonly used to help people think about and make sense of their personal experiences.



The reflective cycle has six stages. By looking at each of the stages in turn, you can ask yourself a series of questions. The reflective cycle can be used to help you analyse and overcome any cultural biases.

Description

Reflect on a specific event you experienced where you felt bias, used a stereotype or were unsure if your actions were appropriate. It might be an event where you felt uncomfortable about someone's values or expectations.

Feelings

Reflect on your feelings:

- ▶ How did you feel, and what were you thinking prior to the experience?
- ▶ How did you feel during the experience?
- ▶ How did you react after the experience?
- ▶ How did you feel after the experience?

Evaluation

Ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ What went well during this experience?
- ▶ What went badly?
- ▶ How did the experience end; was it left incomplete or was it finalised?

Analysis

Think about what you could have done differently. Did other people react in a similar way to you?

Conclusion

What conclusion can you draw from your analysis?

Action

Consider the following:

- ▶ What can I do to be better prepared next time?
- ▶ What steps do I need to take to avoid this happening again?
- ▶ What training do I need to do as a result of this experience?

Practice task 1

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

Case study

Nina, an educator, meets a new Sudanese family who will be commencing at her service in the next week. The family speak little English and have only been in Australia for a few weeks. Nina is feeling anxious, but wishes to make the family feel welcome. She has started to reflect on the day using a reflective cycle.

She thinks about the day and notes the following things:

- ▶ When she tried to communicate with the family, she used a very loud clear voice. The mother wouldn't look at her and wouldn't give any information about the children.
- ▶ She tried to get the two children involved in painting, but they clung to their mother tightly.
- ▶ The children showed interest in the vegetable garden, so Nina helped them to pick some ripe strawberries, which the children ate.

1. Nina wants to review her cultural competence in order to provide a culturally safe environment. Complete the first stages of the reflective cycle for Nina.

a. Description: What happened?

.....

.....

b. Feelings: How did Nina feel?

.....

.....

c. Evaluation: What went well? What went badly?

.....

.....

2. Help Nina analyse the meeting and gain cultural competence by giving her some advice. What is one suggestion she could try next time she meets the family?

.....

.....

3. What are **three** actions that you can take to eliminate social and cultural bias in children?

.....

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4. Review the patterns of non-Indigenous migration to Australia. List **two** of these migration patterns.

.....

.....

.....

.....

1B Recognise limitations

Cultural competence is a cycle, not an end point. Reflection must occur so you can respond to new cultural information. You should also join together to share expectations, attitudes and knowledge while drawing on community resources to show others that you value their identity and allow them to feel belonging. Cultural competence is a concept that includes being aware of your own views and beliefs, developing positive attitudes towards others, finding out about the world and other people, and using skills that enable you to communicate positively with all people.



You are unable to understand and accept others if you have not identified and understood yourself and your limitations. Your limitations might be based around the level of knowledge you have in regard to community attitudes, language, policies and structures of a culture, or about how these things impact on different people and groups.

As you read about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, think about your limitations, including:

- ▶ what you knew already
- ▶ what you learnt
- ▶ how your life experience or understanding had limited your understanding of others.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Australia's Indigenous people are one of the oldest in the world. Indigenous Australians were traditionally hunter-gatherers living off the land, with a strong spiritual connection to it. Before the white invasion of Australia, Indigenous families lived together in a communal environment with roles and responsibilities being shared amongst the group. Responsibilities included hunting undertaken by men, cooking and child rearing by women, and teaching of knowledge by the Elders.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples inhabited most areas of Australia. There are more than one hundred separate languages identified, and each Indigenous group has distinct lifestyles, and religious and cultural traditions.

Kinships make up a complex network of extended family ties. Grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, as well as parents, brothers and sisters are all included in the extended family, each having a role in supporting and raising families.

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

Current issues and realities

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face a range of challenges, such as poorer health, lower life expectancy and fewer educational and employment opportunities. These issues are linked to the remote areas where many Indigenous Australians live, although social status and negative social attitudes contribute to these issues as well.



Impact of western culture

Many of the issues that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples face can be attributed to western systems and structures. The attitudes of non-Indigenous Australians are just one hurdle to overcome.

Non-Indigenous people tend to use stereotyping and bias to describe the beliefs and values of Indigenous Australians, which causes fear, confusion and negative outlooks, and a general consideration that all Indigenous peoples suffer the same or similar social, political and economic issues.

For those Indigenous Australians who are in situations of disadvantage, western culture has bestowed the following social, political and economic challenges on them.

Proving land ownership

Ancestral land is linked to economic worth and community for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Land rights are currently settled based on western rules of ownership and, as Indigenous land ownership was not documented in written records, claims of Indigenous ownership are not easily resolved.

Remoteness

While Indigenous peoples are located throughout Australia, many reside in remote areas where services and opportunities are limited.

Health

While most Indigenous people have access to healthcare, remoteness and a lack of trust in the medical industry results in poor health.

Education and employment

With low attendance, retention and continuation of education, many Indigenous Australians ultimately have difficulty gaining and maintaining employment. Education systems provide methods of teaching that are often unfamiliar or are felt to have little value.

Understanding diverse experiences

Your own life experiences might have provided you with an understanding of some of the disadvantages many Indigenous Australians face. Many of these issues are common to a range of cultures and individuals, particularly those who are indigenous to a country other than Australia.

You might also have experienced disadvantages linked to your particular cultural background or heritage. This may help you to understand how people's beliefs and values can disadvantage people from all walks of life and create hurdles for them to overcome.

By reflecting on the impact of practices and experiences, and recognising the sensitive nature of some issues, you can develop responsive relationships and provide empathy. In addition, you can view each person, whether an Indigenous Australian or otherwise, with a non-stereotypical approach that provides a level playing field where they are respected for who they are as individuals.

Example

A new cultural setting

Susan, an educator in a large urban service, decides to join a multifunctional Aboriginal children's service in a town in the north of Western Australia. Susan is excited about this position, since it allows her to apply her years of experience in a different cultural setting.

Susan's first couple of weeks in the town are an awakening experience for her. As expected, many of her clients are Aboriginal, but what she finds difficult is that a lot of clients are reluctant to talk to her or look her in the eye. It's very hard to get information from them. She expected the women to be more open with her than they are. Susan notices that her limitations are larger than she thought.

Susan finds this hard to reconcile with the happy, laughing people she sees outside the service, and she begins to question her competence as an educator.



Practice task 2

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Trent reflects on many cultures and their practices, including his own background. His personal behaviour and relationships allow him to recognise that each person is different.

Trent is an Indigenous Australian. He works as a teacher in the suburbs of Melbourne and is interested in art, literature and music. His son is three years old and attends a local education and care service where Trent is the chairperson on the management committee. Outside of his family and work life, Trent supports disadvantaged autistic children, working with their parents and providing outside-of-home activities.

Trent's grandparents live in a remote Australian town in the Northern Territory. Trent was raised by his grandparents until he went to high school, when he moved to a city where his mother and father worked. Trent gained a scholarship to study as a teacher and spent a number of years teaching in the remote town of his childhood.

He has seen the disadvantage of Indigenous Australians, and also the opportunities they might have. He understands how difficult it is to leave home, and feels sad that to move forward he left behind some of his culture and beliefs.

Trent's dream is to help people see that everyone is important, and that whatever your cultural heritage or disability, your background and history are core to your understanding of others.

1. Consider Trent’s reflection about his own cultural competence. Outline some features of Trent’s level of cultural competence.

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2. What are **two** current issues and realities familiar to Indigenous Australians?

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3. List one impact of western systems that affects Indigenous Australians today.

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4. Consider your current level of awareness when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. If you went to work in Trent’s home town, what three things would you like to know to reduce the limitations you have as an educator? Think about culture, spiritual beliefs and generational aspects.

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1C Work inclusively with others

Considering your attitudes and limitations, and reflecting on your ability to understand yourself and others helps you build cultural knowledge and work towards inclusive practice. This will create an inclusive attitude for you and an inclusive overall work environment.



Needs of diverse clients

Cultural sensitivity requires you to be aware of the expectations of various cultures, to accept alternative ways of life and to be receptive to different needs and cultural values. You must accept and value each child's culture, including their language, values, abilities, background and experiences.

A culturally sensitive approach incorporates a non-biased attitude and acceptance of other people's values, opinions and cultural customs, which includes their specific needs.

Things you may need to be sensitive about and aware of are explained here.

Background information

In some cultures it may be a sign of disrespect to discuss or request information about personal lives and differences. This may include discussion about or even reference to deceased people.

Personal information

In some cultures it is acceptable to ask about things such as politics, religion, income and health status when you first meet someone, and in others it is not.

Personal space

Different cultures have standards for providing personal space when interacting socially. People of some cultures believe you should create an arm's length of space, while some people believe in physical contact while communicating.

Eye contact

Cultures have differing views about eye contact. For example, in some cultures it is a sign of honesty and respect to look a person in the eye when talking to them; in others it shows a lack of respect to maintain eye contact.

Tone of voice

Some cultures use loud and direct language for communication. Other cultures may find this rude or obnoxious, or may be left with the impression that the person is angry.

Nonverbal communication

Communication using hand gestures is common in many cultures; for example, shaking hands, giving a thumbs-up sign or gesticulating when speaking. This may be polite in one culture and offensive in another. The same goes for smiling or bowing your head.

Decision-making

In Australia, people are allowed free speech and are required to vote. In other countries there may be no choice of government, and free speech may be limited or even dangerous.

Work inclusively

Being culturally sensitive can assist in your interactions with families. Asking parents and educators for information about their beliefs and views demonstrates respect for family values, shows interest in their life and may also encourage them to participate more in the service environment.

Children use observation to learn desirable behaviour. Therefore, it is essential that educators model appropriate, culturally sensitive behaviour to help create a friendly, safe, respectful and effective learning environment.

You can also model appropriate ways to deal with conflict by using assertive language, rather than physical aggression or embarrassing the other person.

By focusing positively and openly on similarities and differences, diversity becomes an interesting and even exciting experience. As children can recognise differences between each other, they should also learn to show respect to others, and why this is important.

Modelling is an effective way to teach children how to:

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

Reflect on your ability

Teaching children about different cultures provides you with an opportunity to increase your own cultural knowledge. By working inclusively and providing learning experiences about familiar and unfamiliar cultures, you are required to reflect on your practices, consider the people around you and consider the people you may encounter in the future. The scenarios you share and research with children can prepare you to work inclusively, and in can turn provide children with the opportunity to widen their understanding of others.



Example

Work inclusively

Jack, eight years, says, ‘Look at that funny hat Avi wears’. Jonah, an educator, 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 as part of his Jewish faith. Then Jonah, Jack and Avi talk about their differences and similarities.

Avi has some questions about some of the things Jack wears and wonders why he often says, ‘Cool!’ They discover that their favourite food, game and sporting team are the same.



Practice task 3

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

Case study

Rita is a parent who picks up her child at the same time each day, coming into the service without speaking to the educators as they prepare the children for afternoon tea. Rita waits patiently while her child comes from the group, packs their belongings and prepares to leave. Rita keeps her head low, looking to the ground, and when educators ask her questions she replies in the same quiet tone, saying, ‘It is fine thank you, you should ask my husband’.

Usually at afternoon tea time, the educators incorporate a playful but loud activity as the children pack their activities away. They dance with the children until the afternoon tea trolley comes into the room; then they shout, ‘Stop!’, playing a statue game that the children love.

It is during these times that Rita usually arrives.

1. If Rita arrives at the time of the loud pack-up and watches as the educators call ‘Stop!’, what might be her impression of the activities in the service?

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2. Consider the following seven points you may need to be sensitive about:

- ▶ Background information
- ▶ Personal information
- ▶ Personal space
- ▶ Eye contact
- ▶ Tone of voice
- ▶ Nonverbal communication
- ▶ Decision-making

Which of these points might link to Rita’s behaviour?

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3. List **five** things that children learn from modelling.

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1D Improve self and social awareness

An anti-bias approach incorporates strategies you can use to investigate differences and similarities while developing a strong sense of self. For a successful anti-bias curriculum, you need to be committed to developing an understanding of diversity, both in your service community and outside your immediate community. An anti-bias approach incorporates diversity as a high priority.

Develop activities in the curriculum that allow children to learn about differences they may not usually encounter. When incorporating cultural diversity, try to avoid themed cultural activities. Instead, include a variety of materials in the program.

To incorporate an effective anti-bias approach, you must be aware of your own biases and then build your abilities so that you develop a strong sense of social awareness.

Things to include in an anti-bias curriculum:

- ▶ photos of cultural events
- ▶ books, magazines, music and brochures in other languages
- ▶ cultural items in the home corner
- ▶ mirrors for children to look at themselves
- ▶ multicultural resources that are part of the normal play equipment
- ▶ stories that reflect non-stereotypical attitudes
- ▶ visitors from various cultural backgrounds
- ▶ activities that encourage boys and girls to play and cooperate with each other
- ▶ a parent committee that involves people from various cultures
- ▶ interpreters to encourage parent and educator interactions.

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is about being open to new information and thinking about how you can learn from your experiences.

As outlined in the *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia*, the learning journey of cultural competence enables you to face new experiences, then decide whether to close off to the opportunities these provide, or open up and become a willing and able advocate for learning and enabling others.

The *Educators' guide to the early years learning framework for Australia* can be found at: <http://aspirelr.link/educators-guide-eylf>



Everyone is responsible

One of the five principles outlined in the EYLF and MTOP is 'ongoing learning and reflective practice', which encourages educators to continually ask questions, reflect and improve. This principle puts in place a requirement for an effective educator to take responsibility for learning about others and be critical of themselves in order to expand and develop in meeting program and curriculum needs, showing acceptance of others, and building services where diversity is welcomed and celebrated.

Always attempt the following:

- ▶ Be willing: Aspire to succeed and meet your goals.
- ▶ Be able: Take on the responsibility of learning and being responsive to others' needs.

Reflective practice

There are six overarching questions related to the principle of 'ongoing learning and reflective practice' that you should ask yourself.

Questions to guide reflection

- 1 What are my understandings of each child?
- 2 What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?
- 3 Who is advantaged and disadvantaged when I work in this way?
- 4 What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?
- 5 What aspects of my work are not helped by the theories and guidance that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?
- 6 Are there other theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced? What are they? How might these affect my practice?

Reflect on self and social awareness

A range of strategies can help you gain better understanding and acceptance of others. Reflection is important, but success is only gained if you are willing to look beyond your current knowledge and skills, and be ready to learn and develop. This will include making mistakes and wrong decisions; however, ultimately it will enable you to continuously explore and gain confidence in your abilities.

The tools used may include the following.

EYLF or MTOP

The EYLF or MTOP is where principles and practices determine guidelines for quality practice across the education and care industry.

The learning journey of cultural competence

Consider your point of view in relation to cultural competence and work towards learning about others.

Reflective cycles

Clear methods can be used to look back at your actions and strive for improved actions and reactions.

Example

Improve responsiveness to others' needs

Christine, an educator, often feels anxious when she meets a new family, particularly when the family is having their first orientation and she has no information about them, meaning she must act based on her intuition. She knows that she wants to improve her skills and realises that reflection can be a powerful tool if she uses it properly.

She is waiting to meet a new family and decides to reflect on her skills of meeting new people so she can build her confidence. She thinks about how if she takes responsibility and is reflective, she is more likely to create a positive impression.

Christine is showing that she is willing to work towards the goal of improving her approach towards new families, and that she is able and willing to take on the responsibility of learning and being responsive to the needs of others.



Practice task 4

1. List the **six** overarching questions in the EYLF/MTOP principle of 'Ongoing learning and reflective practice'.

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2. Reflect on each of the **six** questions you listed and record one way you could improve in relation to each one.

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3. What are **four** things you could include to create an anti-bias curriculum?

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Summary

- ▶ Self-evaluation is a vital and continuing activity you must engage in if you are to challenge your own cultural perspectives and biases.
- ▶ Diversity is about recognising that each person is unique and has individual differences in traditions, living circumstances, leisure pursuits, jobs and family celebrations.
- ▶ Cultural bias occurs when you look at others and feel their values and beliefs are not in line with yours, or that their life choices may not be acceptable or clear to you.
- ▶ The reflective cycle is a model often used to review your practices.
- ▶ Your cultural awareness will strengthen over time if you continue to reflect on your actions and attempt to learn about others.
- ▶ In order to understand and accept others, you must identify and understand yourself and your limitations.
- ▶ By reflecting on the impact of practices and experiences, and recognising the sensitive nature of some issues, you can develop responsive relationships and develop empathy.
- ▶ Cultural sensitivity requires you to be aware of the expectations of various cultures, to accept alternative ways of life, and to be receptive to different needs and cultural values.
- ▶ Lifelong learning is about being open to new information and thinking about how you can learn from your experiences.
- ▶ Regardless of the strategy used to reflect, success is only gained if you are willing to look beyond your current knowledge and skills and be ready to learn and develop.
- ▶ Self-reflection includes acknowledging your mistakes and wrong decisions; however, ultimately it enables you to continuously explore and gain confidence in your abilities.

Learning checkpoint 1

Reflect on own perspectives

Part A

1. Describe your own culture in a paragraph. Include your social and cultural perspectives and biases.

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2. What does diversity mean?

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3. Briefly explain what cultural awareness, cultural safety and cultural competence mean.

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4. How do your personal practices and experiences impact on the behaviours, relationships, perceptions and expectations of others? Include the terms 'cultural awareness', 'cultural safety' and 'cultural competence' in your answer.

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5. Why is it important to reflect on your own limitations and perceptions of diversity using a structured process?

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Part B

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

Case study

An Aboriginal family is commencing at your service next week. The family includes two children, aged five and seven years. The children have never been left with an educator before and the mother, Harriet, seems quite reluctant. When participating in an orientation, Harriet doesn't look at you. She keeps her head down and will only respond with very simple answers.

1. Why might Harriet respond to you in this way?

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2. Describe a social, political or economic impact of western culture that Harriet may be influenced or affected by.

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3. List **three** ways you could increase your cultural competence so you could provide a greater level of cultural safety for Harriet and her children.

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4. Choose one of the actions you identified to work towards providing a culturally safe environment for Harriet and her children. Explain how you might organise for this to occur.

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Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 2A Value and respect diversity**
- 2B Contribute to professional relationships**
- 2C Keep the workplace safe**

Appreciate diversity and inclusiveness

Wherever there are people, there is diversity. As you work with people and learn more about their values and beliefs, you gain a greater understanding of difference and of how each person has their own needs and goals.

Being inclusive is about being open to this information and taking the next step to embrace the views of others and see these as a benefit to your own learning about diversity.

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

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

2A Value and respect diversity

Your attitude towards cultural diversity is reflected in your daily work practice as you interact with children, families and staff. Part of your role is to support the links made between your service and each child's home. When involved in multicultural activities that stem from a child's cultural background, be aware that they should be current and realistic. Activities help children to understand the differences between cultures, and to be aware of the common attributes shared by all people.



Workplace expectations

Working with culturally diverse people involves cooperation, positive communication and teamwork. Within your service, all staff should be made aware of the service policy regarding inclusion and should be encouraged to contribute to its development.

To show respect towards others, you must learn about maintaining positive attitudes towards others, developing effective relationships and appreciating difference.

Influencing perspectives

To understand another person you must explore the factors that make up their culture, and think about their individual needs and how their life experiences add to and alter their perspectives.

Some factors that might influence a person's perspectives include:

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|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| ▶ family values | ▶ significant events |
| ▶ negative experiences | ▶ passions and interests |
| ▶ positive experiences | ▶ strengths and weaknesses |
| ▶ historical values | ▶ the actions of others. |
| ▶ emotional connections | |

A positive way forward

To build respectful and positive relationships with children and families, you need to maintain a non-biased attitude in all your interactions. Remember that non-biased means not expressing or acting on any bias or showing favouritism. Children may develop a non-biased attitude when you lead by example and create opportunities for them to learn.



Key areas of diversity

There are numerous elements that contribute to a person's diverse nature. The key areas allow you to gain some perspective into a person's identity, and all areas contribute in different degrees to the 'self'.

Here are the key areas of diversity and what they mean.

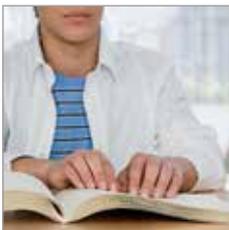


Culture/race/ethnicity

Culture is the shared system of values, beliefs and rules of conduct that make people behave in a certain way. It is the standard for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting.

Race is a term applied to people purely because of the way they look. It is often difficult to say a person belongs to a specific race because there are so many individual variations (such as skin colour).

An ethnic group is a distinct group with specific characteristics. People of the same ethnicity might share the same physical characteristics (skin colour or bloodline), linguistic characteristics (language or dialect), behavioural or cultural characteristics (religion or customs) and/or environmental characteristics (living in the same area).



Disability

The 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 thinking processes
- ▶ Sensory: affects a person's ability to hear or see
- ▶ Neurological: results in the loss of some bodily or mental functions

Also included are disabilities resulting from physical disfigurement or from the presence of organisms causing, or capable of causing, disease in the body.



Religious and spiritual beliefs

Religion is a specific set of organised beliefs and practices, focused on the belief in and worship of a god or 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.



Gender identity

Gender refers to the gender-related identity, appearance, mannerisms or characteristics of a person. This includes the way people express or present their gender. A person's gender identity may be an identity other than male or female.

Terms commonly used to describe a person's gender identity include transgender, gender diverse, queer and neutral. It does not matter what sex a person was assigned at birth or whether the person has undergone any medical intervention.



Intersex status

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.



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. These include:

- ▶ The Silent Generation (born approx. 1925–1945)
- ▶ Baby Boomers (born approx. 1946–1964)
- ▶ Generation X (born approx. 1965–1983)
- ▶ Generation Y or Millennials (born approx. 1984–1999)
- ▶ Generation Z (born after 2000).



Sexual orientation

Sexual orientation describes whether a person is sexually attracted to:

- ▶ people of the same sex
- ▶ people of a different sex
- ▶ people of either sex.

Terms commonly used to describe a person's sexual orientation include gay, lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, straight and heterosexual. All of these groups are represented in Australian society.

Diversity in Australia

Australia is one of the most diverse countries in the world, influenced by people with origins from all over the world. People in Australia are provided the opportunity to make life choices based on their own values and beliefs.

There are, however, political, social, economic and cultural features of diversity that impact on different areas of our work and life. Depending on your attitude and values, these can cause limitations or benefits.

The diverse communities within Australia have the opportunity to learn from each other. There are economic, cultural and social advantages, such as increased trade benefits and linguistic diversity.



Government policy

The Australian Government takes multicultural affairs seriously and encourages all Australians to take on board the richness of culture, language and religion that this country provides. The Department of Social Services promotes a range of programs and support services that allow people to benefit from and take responsibility for sharing culture and welcoming diversity.

Some of the government initiatives that are in place include:

- ▶ the Australian Multicultural Council, which advises the government on multicultural affairs policy and programs
- ▶ Harmony Day (21 March), which celebrates inclusion and diversity within Australia
- ▶ grants for multicultural projects
- ▶ specific policy on the Australian response to world events, such as the Syrian and Iraqi refugee crisis.

Social cohesion

Social cohesion is about how people in a community work together to create a positive environment. An understanding of diversity and willingness to be inclusive is required to create social cohesion.

Australia experiences some blocks to social cohesion, as discrimination occurs towards some groups of people. Some examples are provided here.

Bias

Gay, lesbian, transgender and intersex people are not accepted by all Australians due to their religion or a general bias.

Stereotyping

Bias and stereotyping can affect acceptance of some races/ethnicities, particularly non-English-speaking people.

Stigma

People with disabilities fight stigma in many situations; however, there are common social ideas that have been accepted, such as accessible parking, ramps to buildings and workplace aids.

Examples of social cohesion

The following demonstrates positive examples of social cohesion.



Community events

Local groups run diverse activities for all members of the community to join in. Events such as Diwali and Eid al-Adha are celebrated by Hindu and Muslim people, respectively, and often invite the general community in an effort to expand understanding and acceptance.



Television

Many documentaries show the lives and challenges people from diverse backgrounds face, and encourage people to consider their own prejudices. Increasingly, TV series show people from diverse backgrounds or abilities participating productively.

Diversity and economics

Immigration is seen as the building of human capital for the future and results in economic growth within this country. Immigrants are acknowledged as often being hard workers who make the most of the opportunities available in Australia.

Australia has a system of support for those who are unemployed and/or sick, including benefits, supplements, loans, Medicare and support for small business development. These supports enable those with economic challenges to feel supported or potentially change their circumstances.

Diversity in a professional context has been found to increase the productivity of a city. When people come together to share roles and tasks, the community benefits greatly.

Diversity and culture

Australia has a commitment towards diversity and culture. Education and support is provided within communities to enable a greater acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles.

Funding programs are available for a range of reasons to a variety of Australians, as outlined in the following examples.

Diversity and social cohesion grants

Diversity and social cohesion grants provide funding for not-for-profit organisations to promote respect, fairness and a sense of belonging, and aim to support families, improve children's wellbeing and increase participation of vulnerable people in community life.

Multicultural arts and festivals funding

These grants allow for community groups and organisations to provide arts or festival projects that provide Australians with opportunities to experience cultural heritage and traditions, encouraging social cohesion and mutual understanding.

Appreciate differences

To effectively work with children, you must value their individual identities, their families and their links with the community. To do this, you can incorporate many actions in your program – simple activities that demonstrate to children that everyone is welcome. You might include some of the following activities that encourage consideration of similarities and celebration of differences.

Props in the home area

Avoid big themes; instead, create an inclusive view. Just add one item to a regular home corner; for example, crutches, a sling, chopsticks, a wheelchair, a walking stick, a sari, a bamboo steamer or a flag.

Treasure hunt

Have children hunt for natural items; for example, stones, bark pieces and leaves. Talk about how these natural items have similarities and differences, just like people.

Polls

Ask children to identify which things they like most and which they did not, and then discuss the similarities and differences in these choices. You might poll children about experiences, activities, celebrations, events, foods, and indoor or outdoor play.

Discussion and group times

Spontaneous or planned discussion can be used to share information and learn about each other.

Talk about family structures, what children do on the weekend, how they celebrate Christmas (or another celebration) at their house or what it might be like to live in another country.

Transition activities

Disperse children based on their characteristics; for example, 'Casey, you have curly hair, find someone who has curly hair and you can work together on this activity.'

Human bingo

Play bingo based on children's characteristics; for example, who has the same colour hair; who has the same colour eyes; who has a baby at their house; who knows someone who lives in another country; or who celebrates Easter?

Using mirrors

Encourage children to look at themselves and others, and highlight similarities and differences. Talk about bodies in a positive way and present positive body images.

Disability activities

Choose a disability or impairment and discuss what it means with the children; for example, being vision-impaired means that you cannot see well or perhaps at all. Have children complete tasks or activities simulating this impairment. Ensure you support the children to identify the difficulties, but also spend time working out alternative ways to complete tasks. Point out the skills that are not affected by the impairment.

Work appropriately

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

Regardless of the age range of children you work with, the service environment must reflect and explore each child’s culture, heritage, background and traditions. There are many simple ways you can encourage children to explore these factors and learn about each other from their community.

Ways to explore each child’s culture, heritage, background and traditions:

- ▶ Neighbourhood walks and using maps and photographs of familiar places for discussion and activities
- ▶ Asking families about their community interests and including this information in your program plan
- ▶ Inviting community members to visit and share something about themselves and their role; for example, a police officer, grocery store manager or artist
- ▶ Providing props that link with community interests and activities, such as grocery items and puppets
- ▶ Visiting libraries, museums, markets and parks, and looking at statues, gardens, buildings and signs
- ▶ Participating in festivals and recreation activities, such as swimming lessons and music tuition
- ▶ Being involved in community initiatives, such as sponsoring a child, raising money and donating goods
- ▶ Including child-focused events, such as children’s week picnics, library story time and children’s art shows
- ▶ Writing letters or sending pictures
- ▶ Participating in environmental care projects

Practice task 5

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

Case study

Liam is 21 years old. He has just qualified as an educator. He is bisexual and is a Buddhist. He was born in England, and came to Australia at age five. Liam only has one hand following a car accident when he was a teenager.

1. Consider Liam’s disability. Describe one activity you could implement with children to introduce Liam’s disability.

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2. List the key areas of diversity, and identify Liam’s link to each based on the information provided.

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3. What are **four** factors that might influence a person’s perspective about others?

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2B Contribute to professional relationships

A culturally competent environment will include and demonstrate the following in its workplace and professional relationships:

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



Be aware of diversity

Building secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships (Principle 1 in EYLF and MTOP) is a process that develops over time. It requires you to build trust and get to know your co-workers, children and families on a holistic level.

When educators are culturally sensitive and represent a range of cultural backgrounds, parents are better able to access information, settle children into the program and be provided with the information they require. Be sure to encourage all educators to communicate with all families, regardless of their culture.

Use knowledge of diversity

When you make the effort to learn about a person's background, you gain information that allows you to make the environment a more welcoming and enjoyable place to be. By focusing on specific attributes, such as knowledge, skills and values that reflect the uniqueness of each individual, you can share in other cultures and learn from each other. This applies to children, families and co-workers.



For example, to develop a trusting and positive relationship with parents, create a setting where individuals can be accepted for who they are, and be sensitive to the needs of others. Collect background information through verbal discussion or forms so that you can provide for appropriate activities in the program; for example, cultural celebrations.

You need to understand the experiences of others and the effects these experiences have. You can find out more about your co-workers by informally discussing the person's home life or interests. You may find similarities you didn't know about.

Treat everyone equally

People will feel valued if you take time to treat them equally as individuals. This will help them fit into your service, and help you develop a positive relationship where you can find out more about the person's home life, beliefs and values. In this way you will develop a bond of trust and confidence.

Key elements that can guide you towards equal treatment

- ▶ Welcome all co-workers, children and their families to the service each day.
- ▶ Approach all parents, show them around, and chat about their day and the child's day.
- ▶ Acknowledge the differences between all families and incorporate any relevant information into your service, making your environment inclusive.
- ▶ Include information of interest in your literature display or to send home.
- ▶ Become an active listener.
- ▶ Be especially mindful of people from CALD backgrounds, as you may assume that you understand what they are saying before allowing them to complete their communication.
- ▶ Research cultural beliefs and values by using books, specialists and the internet, and by asking questions, both informally and formally.

Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust or negative treatment of a person based on a personal characteristic. This might be on the grounds of race, age or sex, or any other key area of diversity. It can include harassment or bullying.

Different kinds of discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when people are treated unfairly due to their characteristics.

Indirect discrimination occurs when laws or policies treat someone unfairly or disadvantage someone due to their characteristics.

Harassment occurs when offensive, humiliating or intimidating actions are aimed at someone because of their personal characteristics. This may be sexual in nature.

Victimisation occurs when someone is treated badly or made to feel left out.

Results of discrimination

Discrimination can occur in any workplace or social situation; it can relate to employment, rights, opportunities or benefits. Results of discrimination and prejudice include feeling anxious, sad, depressed, guilty, withdrawn, excluded or rejected.

People experiencing discrimination may end up financially disadvantaged, as they may lose or quit their job, or feel unable to attend work. Sometimes discrimination makes people attempt retribution and vengeance, and conflict can occur.

In a situation where discrimination is common, people will feel:

- ▶ angry
- ▶ less productive
- ▶ demoralised
- ▶ less trusting
- ▶ lacking in confidence.

Causes of discrimination

Discrimination can occur early in a child's life as they identify differences between themselves and others. Children do not have all the information or skills they need to make choices or find out about others. Most children stereotype because it is natural for them to match new information with what they already know. They need to be taught how to find out about similarities and differences between people.



Adults who have not learnt these skills in childhood often hold strong attitudes against others. These adverse reactions can hurt others, cause inappropriate decision-making and isolate others.

People often don't know that they are discriminating; however, many people decide to discriminate as they feel their choices are more important than the opportunities or feelings of others. They might also discriminate as they don't have the courage or ability to find out more about others.

Discrimination and the law

Organisations within Australia must comply with a variety of federal Acts and standards. National anti-discrimination legislation has a number of aspects, as is shown here.

Age discrimination**Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)**

The *Age Discrimination Act 2004* responds to Australia's ageing population. It protects people who are discriminated against because of their age and 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 of the Act also include removing barriers to older people participating in society and challenging negative stereotypes about older people.

Exemptions include stipulations regarding youth wages, healthcare and voluntary work.

Disability discrimination	<p><i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)</i></p> <p>The <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> gives a broad definition of disability and prohibits direct or indirect discrimination based on disability. It also prohibits discrimination against people associated with someone who has disabilities; these may be friends, relatives, carers and co-workers. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in the areas of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ employment ▶ education ▶ access to public premises ▶ purchase of house and land ▶ provision of goods, services and facilities ▶ administration of Commonwealth Government laws and programs. <p>Exemptions to the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> include when a potential employer would be placed under unjustifiable hardship in order to employ a person with a disability, although the employer is expected to make reasonable adjustments. An example of an unjustifiable hardship might be the cost of extensive renovations to allow for wheelchair access to and throughout a small, second-floor studio owned by a small business.</p>
Racial discrimination	<p><i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i></p> <p>The <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975</i> prohibits racial discrimination and offensive behaviour based on racial hatred. It covers discrimination based on race, colour, descent, and national or ethnic origin. It also protects those who may be discriminated against based on their association with people of a particular ethnicity. The Act applies to all people and organisations in Australia.</p> <p>The <i>Racial Hatred Act 1995 (Cth)</i> provides an avenue for people to make complaints about racist behaviour that offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates others in public. Exceptions to the law include when the behaviour is a matter of public interest (such as a newspaper report on racially-based violence), or is part of an academic discussion that is not malicious or spiteful. These exceptions often involve rights to free speech.</p>
Sex discrimination	<p><i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)</i></p> <p>The <i>Sex Discrimination Act 1984</i> explains that it is 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.</p> <p>According to the Act, it is unlawful to refuse to provide goods, 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.</p> <p>Sexual harassment is included in the Act because it is a form of discrimination that relates to treating a person unfairly because of their sex.</p> <p>An exception to the Act includes when goods or services can only be applied to one sex, for example female- or male-specific healthcare. Another exception covers employing a person to look after a child in the child's home. Sexual discrimination in the training and ordination of religious ministers is also not covered under the Act.</p>

<p>Human rights</p>	<p>Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth)</p> <p>The Australian Human Rights Commission (initially called the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission) was established in 1986 to deal with breaches of anti-discrimination laws and promote human rights education.</p> <p>This Act only covers actions or policies of the Commonwealth Government.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ criminal records ▶ marital status ▶ medical records ▶ political opinions ▶ religion ▶ sexual preference ▶ social origin ▶ trade union activity.
<p>Privacy</p>	<p>Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)</p> <p>If your organisation is in the habit of collecting information about customers or people with support needs, its operations will be covered by this Act. This Act deems personal information about individuals to be sensitive, such as information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ criminal records ▶ health ▶ 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. <p>This information about a person could be used by others to discriminate against them or identify them, although they may wish to remain anonymous. Your organisation should inform you of your responsibilities regarding the privacy of children and families. It should also inform you of its responsibilities with regards to your privacy. It is always advisable to take any information provided to you about any individual as confidential.</p> <p>People generally have a right to see and correct, if necessary, files of personal information kept about them by organisations. Individuals are usually only denied access to files about them if their own or another person's safety is at risk, or if there are other legalities involved.</p>

Legal and ethical considerations

It is illegal to discriminate against others, particularly when it occurs within a workplace or during employment processes. Discrimination is an ethical issue that can result in legal prosecution.

The most common employment-related legal issues link with:

- ▶ having your employment terminated due to unjust reasons (unfair dismissal)
- ▶ not being granted entitlements you are meant to receive
- ▶ having your job role changed to your disadvantage
- ▶ being treated differently to others in your workplace
- ▶ not being offered a place of employment due to characteristics that have no bearing on the role
- ▶ working in the same role as others, but receiving different terms or conditions.

State and territory legislation

Each state and territory has its own anti-discrimination laws; these laws sometimes overlap with national legislation.

You can find a fact sheet outlining Commonwealth, state and territory Acts at: <http://aspirelr.link/discrimination-laws-guide-pdf>

This table lists the agencies that deal with discrimination legislation in each state and territory.

State/Territory	Agency
Australian Capital Territory	Human Rights Commission: <i>Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT)</i>
New South Wales	Anti-Discrimination Board of New South Wales <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)</i>
The Northern Territory	Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 (NT)</i>
Queensland	Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)</i>
South Australia	Equal Opportunity Commission <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)</i>
Tasmania	Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (TAS)</i>
Victoria	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)</i>
Western Australia	Equal Opportunity Commission <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)</i>

Equal employment opportunity

Equal employment opportunity laws in Australia are covered by national and state/territory legislation. Equal employment opportunity is about every person being given the right to be considered for a job or work conditions, despite personal characteristics outside their control.

The Australian Human Rights Commission works to promote diversity and prevent discrimination in workplaces, and provides many useful fact sheets on various discrimination topics.

The fact sheets are available at: <http://aspirelr.link/discrimination-laws-guide>

The Fair Work Ombudsman aids in providing education and support for employers and employees in an effort to reduce discrimination.



When discrimination occurs

Some educators believe that challenging the comments or actions of children and others may create conflict. However, by being open, honest and succinct in your responses, you will successfully manage these situations and develop confidence in your ability to promote the value of diversity.

Here are some ways to address prejudice.

Lay ground rules

Let children know it is unacceptable to use words or actions that hurt or exclude others. Encourage the children to identify how they make others feel 'good' or 'bad', then use these ideas to set limits.

Allow mistakes

An environment that allows mistakes is one where children will feel more capable of learning. If they make a mistake they will be more willing to apologise. It is important for them to understand the consequences of their actions.

Address non-inclusive actions

Be prepared for prejudiced behaviour or communication. Identify topics that may arise and keep some books, puppets or other materials ready to help explain situations.

Share real experiences

Talk to children about the times when you felt that you weren't included. Discuss how it made you feel.

Encourage empowerment

It is not enough to support a child who has not been included or has been made to feel uncomfortable about an aspect of themselves. Provide the child with the opportunity to verbally share information about themselves, to feel confident in speaking about themselves and to be proud of their differences.

Strategies to avoid discrimination

Here are strategies you can use to eliminate bias and discrimination, and to assist others to feel comfortable in the workplace.

Help to eliminate bias and discrimination in the workplace by:

- ▶ ensuring there is a diverse range of people on work committees
- ▶ developing diverse work teams
- ▶ ensuring all posters, literature and signage are culturally sensitive
- ▶ using inclusion when making decisions
- ▶ ensuring interpreters and specialised care contacts are accessible.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Australia was a founding member of the United Nations (UN) and participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted in 1948. This Declaration recognises that freedom, justice, peace, life, liberty, free speech and privacy are rights all people should enjoy. Although the Declaration is not legally binding, it is an international expression of values that has a huge influence on international human rights.



In relation to discrimination, Article 7 reads: 'All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination'. Article 23 reads: 'Everyone, without discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work'.

You can read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at: <http://aspirelr.link/universal-declaration-human-rights-pdf>

Human needs and human rights

The terms 'human rights' and 'human needs' are perceived very differently when it comes to ethical and legal issues.

'Human rights' translates to aspects of respect, dignity and fairness, whereas 'human needs' is more about having basic physical and emotional needs met.

Basic needs are mentioned in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and are obviously vital to those working with children. Basic needs relate to physical requirements: food, water, air, clothing and sleep. This might also link to basic emotional needs of safety and security.

Human rights in the workplace

Your responsibility regarding rights in the workplace includes a duty of care to others. You have obligations that must be upheld.

Some rights you must apply include:

▶ privacy	▶ ability to voice concerns
▶ confidentiality	▶ openness in sharing ideas and opinions
▶ dignity	▶ agreed standards
▶ freedom of association	▶ access to services.
▶ informed choice	

Workplace frameworks

The following are frameworks, approaches and instruments that you must use in your workplace as guides to appropriate practice.

Guides for appropriate practice:

- ▶ National Quality Framework, including laws, regulations and standards
- ▶ EYLF and/or MTOP
- ▶ Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics
- ▶ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- ▶ national and state/territory legislation
- ▶ organisational policies and procedures.

The legal process

When a complaint relating to discrimination or rights arises, clear legal steps must be taken.

Usually this will involve following the service policies and procedures. These guidelines may include an initial internal process; however, you are able to jump straight to an external process if you feel uncomfortable about raising the issue in your service, or if the leaders in the organisation are responsible for the discrimination.

If you are a member of a union, a representative can support you through an internal or external process.

Here is more information about internal and external processes for dealing with discrimination.

Common internal processes

Common internal processes include:

- ▶ Contact your supervisor and/or service leader. Explain your concerns, what has happened and how it is affecting you.
- ▶ Identify who needs to take action. Is there something you need to do, such as documenting the issues, or does the supervisor need to do something, like removing a notice or speaking with a staff member?
- ▶ If these actions are not effective, you may try to speak to a supervisor at a higher level, or take the issue to an external body.

External process

Lodge your written complaint with the Anti-Discrimination Board or Australian Human Rights Commission. An officer will investigate the issue. They will contact you and the person your complaint is about. If the complaint moves forward it will go to a conciliation meeting. The meeting will allow both parties to express their account of the situation and to come to an agreement if possible. When conciliation is not successful, the complaint can move to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal (for anti-discrimination) or the Federal Court or Federal Magistrates Court (for disability discrimination). A court hearing will occur and a decision will be made.

Example

Racial discrimination

Isla and Quinn work together in outside school hours care. They usually enjoy each other's company.

Quinn was born in Australia. She has the attitude, shared by her family, that refugees are not welcome in Australia, particularly if they arrived by boat.

During an activity where the educators and children shared information about themselves, Isla disclosed that she had come to Australia by boat as a refugee 15 years ago. The children asked questions and then talked about other ways they had each come to Australia.

Following this discussion, Quinn changed her attitude towards Isla. She started to talk over her and make comments about 'true Australians'. In front of Isla, she mentioned that her cousin was looking for work, and that people like Isla were here taking jobs she could have.

When the director of the program became aware of Quinn's changed behaviour, she called Quinn to the office. Quinn was discriminating against Isla, making the workplace an unhappy place and demonstrating negative attitudes and behaviours in front of the children and families.



Practice task 6

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

Case study

Leon had been working with Sally for over a year. They really enjoyed each other's company, joked and chatted happily during their breaks. Leon had broken up with his girlfriend recently. Since that occasion, Sally seemed to have been taking all her breaks at the same time as Leon. She made some jokes about his sexual activity and asked private questions about what he was doing over the weekend.

At first Leon thought Sally was just being supportive, but some of Sally's questions made him feel uncomfortable. At lunch she asked if he makes late night phone calls to women he works with. Following this, he found a note in his locker with Sally's name and phone number.

Leon felt uncomfortable about this, as he liked to keep his personal and work life separate. He was not sure what to do, but felt the situation might end badly.

1. Describe the problem with Sally's actions.

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2. What initial action might Leon take to start to deal with this situation?

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3. List **two** key elements that can guide you towards treating people in your service equally.

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4. Describe **four** different kinds of discrimination.

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2C Keep the workplace safe

Workplace safety is often considered from the angle of work health and safety, where injury, illness prevention, safety hazards and risks are highlighted.

Safe workplaces must also consider cultural safety. By appreciating diversity and creating inclusive environments, you will be providing work environments that are culturally safe and respectful.

Some actions that enable culturally safe environments include:

- ▶ increasing the diversity within the workplace
- ▶ committing to empowerment of people
- ▶ celebrating diversity and inclusion.

Your rights and responsibilities

You have the right to work in a safe and respectful environment. You also have the responsibility to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and valued. All staff need to work together for the good of everyone: staff, children and families. There are a number of ideals that your team can work towards.

These ideals include:

- ▶ creating workplaces where all employees and employers can strive to be their best and be rewarded for doing so
- ▶ treating all employees and employers fairly and with respect
- ▶ everyone taking responsibility for workplace diversity and inclusion
- ▶ all participants being responsible for identifying and improving diversity and inclusion levels.

Infringed rights

If rights are being infringed in the workplace, the work environment will not feel safe. People other than those involved in the infringement will usually feel or hear what is happening, which can cause disruption within the team.

Laws are in place to ensure your rights are protected. However, prevention of rights infringement is a high priority. It depends on the severity of the infringement and the people involved as to the action that you might take to resolve the situation.



To respond effectively when you notice someone's rights are or may be being infringed, approach an appropriate person. This may be a colleague, member of senior management, health professional, or an external agency or advocate such as the police.

Safe and secure clients

To ensure that all clients and staff feel safe and supported, you can create a safe and secure environment through a number of mechanisms.

Mechanisms to create a safe and secure environment:

- ▶ Create a people-focused culture.
- ▶ Take a non-discrimination approach to all people.
- ▶ Respect all individual differences.
- ▶ Assist people to access services they need.
- ▶ Support people to express their concerns openly and without prejudice.
- ▶ Work towards resolving issues respectfully.
- ▶ Follow complaints policies when needed.
- ▶ Report signs of abuse or neglect.
- ▶ Support cultural, linguistic and/or religious diversity.
- ▶ Provide interpreters and/or translators as needed.

Solve problems

Problems that threaten the safety of the workplace should be dealt with fairly and promptly. Your actions will often involve contacting a supervisor or employer; however, you may be the first person involved, and may need to act on the issue immediately prior to another more senior person taking over.

Here are some considerations for dealing with a complaint or solving problems.

When you are faced with a complaint

When you are faced with a complaint, consider taking the following action:

- ▶ Follow the policies and procedures of the service.
- ▶ Think about the feelings and views of the other person.
- ▶ Write down what the issue is and what you have done so far.

Solving a problem yourself

Considerations when solving a problem yourself include:

- ▶ time frames for resolution
- ▶ whether the issue will be recorded in notes or on a form, such as an incident record
- ▶ whether the issue can be resolved verbally
- ▶ whether the issue is yours to resolve, or if someone else is responsible or should be involved
- ▶ how you can include others
- ▶ what advice and support is available or needed
- ▶ how to treat information confidentially.

Make decisions inclusively

The problems that you resolve will have stronger outcomes if you involve relevant people. To do this effectively, it is useful to incorporate the following concepts.

<p>Accountability</p>	<p>Consultation</p>
<p>Give people responsibility and allow them to voice their opinions.</p>	<p>Approach others that are involved. Find out what they think, and ask their opinion to gain ideas.</p>
<p>Cultural sensitivity</p>	<p>Critical reflection</p>
<p>Consider who is involved and what their needs, values and beliefs are. Consider how the decision will affect them.</p>	<p>Step back and reflect on the decision.</p>

Counselling and support

Many employers provide counselling and support services to their clients and staff following a traumatic incident. This incident may involve physical trauma; however, emotional trauma may occur for many reasons, including someone being affected by harassment or discrimination.

Organisations must take responsibility for the trauma any person experiences on the premises or within the service. Without this, an emotionally safe environment cannot occur.

Understand inequality

Marginalisation is related to social exclusion. Marginalisation is when groups of people or individuals are ignored within policy or normal processes due to their differences. It can mean that someone is socially excluded or misses out on something based on their personal characteristics. Marginalisation is about inequality, power and social norms, and lack of suitable support and services.

Marginalisation often places people in situations that are very hard to overcome. Even if their reason for being excluded is reduced or eliminated, the stigma or outcome of being marginalised creates a barrier that is extremely difficult to overcome.

When considering social inclusion, view the situation from the point of view of the person in focus. If they view themselves as being excluded, take their perception seriously, rather than telling them their view of the situation is wrong.



Needs of marginalised groups

Some marginalised groups or individuals present with physical, mental, emotional needs or trauma. The following provides further explanation of these needs.

Physical needs

Physical needs might include people who have physical disabilities. This might occur due to them having difficulty accessing services that are safe for them to use or that cater for their individual physical needs.

Mental health needs

People with mental health issues may be marginalised due to the stigma attached to mental health issues, but they also may become isolated, lack education or have other issues linking with medication or confidence. In severe cases, the person with mental health issues may present with behaviours or reactions that are safe, yet not understood by others, and this can create fear and a lack of acceptance.

Emotional needs/trauma

Marginalisation related to a cultural or health issue can cause an increase in emotional needs. A person in this situation may not feel that they are given equal rights. Trauma and/or traumatic outcomes, such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), can influence a person's abilities. Their anxieties around a particular issue may make them feel marginalised.

Impacts on marginalised groups

Some groups or individuals are marginalised due to having been discriminated against, excluded or faced with strong negative attitudes. When people feel their rights and needs are continually refused or ignored, they may lose confidence in others, the system, procedures or services. Most importantly, they may lose confidence in themselves and their own abilities.

When parents are socially excluded, their children are also affected.

Protective factors

There are protective factors that can reduce the impact of marginalisation and enable socially excluded people to gain power and equality. It is important to help build these skills in children and provide them to families as much as possible. Here are some examples of what protective factors aim to provide or support.

Resilience

The ability to manage stress and negative life experiences.

Social support and connectedness

Having people to rely on and to feel a sense of belonging.

Sense of control

Being able to make good decisions for yourself.

Self-esteem

Feeling empowered and having self-worth.

Positive coping strategies

Knowing what to do if things get tough.

Practice task 7

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

Case study

Olivia, a parent, approaches Kylie, the educator, and abruptly tells her that she is angry about how the incursions are chosen and paid for. Olivia has experienced a time of financial struggle and the decision by the service to have parents pay for incursions means Olivia's children will have to miss out, as she cannot afford the additional costs. Olivia gets upset and begins to cry.

1. Do you think Olivia and her children have been marginalised? Explain your answer.

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2. What problem-solving strategies could Kylie use to assist Olivia? Could Kylie solve this problem herself? If she cannot solve this herself, who would she need to involve?

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3. What protective factor could Kylie implement to assist Olivia to feel empowered and supported?

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4. List **three** common needs that someone who is marginalised may present with.

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5. List **four** ways that you can help clients feel culturally safe and secure.

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Summary

- ▶ Your attitude towards cultural diversity is reflected in your daily work practices as you interact with children, families and staff.
- ▶ To build respectful and positive relationships with co-workers, children and families, you need to maintain a non-biased attitude in all your interactions.
- ▶ An understanding of diversity and willingness to be inclusive is required to create social cohesion.
- ▶ When you make the effort to become aware of a person's background, you gain information that allows you to make the environment a more welcoming and enjoyable place to be.
- ▶ Discrimination is the unjust or negative treatment of a person based on a personal characteristic. It is caused by prejudice, which is an opinion a person has that makes them think they know someone based on a stereotype.
- ▶ Laws are in place to ensure your rights are protected; however, prevention of rights infringement should be a high priority.
- ▶ Problems that threaten the safety of the workplace should be dealt with fairly and promptly.
- ▶ Social exclusion may be deemed as marginalisation. Marginalisation is about groups of people or individuals who are sometimes ignored within policy or normal processes due to their differences.

Learning checkpoint 2

Appreciate diversity and inclusiveness

Part A

1. List the key areas of diversity.

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2. Australia’s economic policy has a number of systems in place that support those faced with economic challenges. Identify at least **two** of these systems and explain how they could support an economically challenged person.

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3. Choose one of the initiatives of the Australian Government’s diversity policy and explain how this initiative helps to share culture and welcome diversity.

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4. A culturally competent environment will demonstrate successful professional relationships. What are **four** indicators that a workplace is culturally competent and successful in its relationships?

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5. What legislative requirements relate to discrimination? Include Commonwealth legislation as well as your state or territory legislation.

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6. Complete the following sentences:

a. Discrimination is the unjust or negative treatment of a person based on a ...

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b. Discrimination might be on the grounds of ...

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c. Discrimination might include ...

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7. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is an international document that states basic rights and fundamental freedoms that all humans are entitled to. What are the **seven** rights that this document states all people should enjoy?

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1. Skye might be marginalised due to her anxiety. Which type of marginalisation would this be?

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2. What should Skye do to seek assistance and guidance?

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3. Based on legislation, should Skye's emotional state be a reason for her to lose her job? Why?

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4. Why might this situation cause Skye to become isolated or lose confidence?

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5. Imagine Skye confided in you about her anxiety. Write down at least **two** of the protective factors that relate to this situation and explain what you would say to Skye about these factors to encourage her to gain power and equality.

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Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Communicate with respect**

- 3B Use communication to establish relationships**

- 3C Use strategies when language barriers exist**

- 3D Meet communication needs**

Communicate with all people

Many skills are required for positive two-way communication. There are also many barriers to communication that may be caused by differences in language, culture, values and attitudes. These barriers can lead to assumptions and stereotyping. The environment and the medium of communication itself can also present barriers that are not always obvious to those involved.

In education and care services, respectful communication involves exchanging information between educators and families, as well developing healthy working relationships with other staff members. When you communicate with culturally diverse people, remember that trust and confidence should never be assumed; they often must be built over time as you learn to meet the needs of people from various cultural backgrounds. In this topic you will learn about using thoughtful communication, eliminating communication barriers, communicating effectively and building trust.

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

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

3A Communicate with respect

Communication is essential in any workplace. Without communication, it is not possible to know people's wants or needs, or how best to respond to the children, families and educators you are working with. However, communicating effectively with people you don't share a language with can be very challenging.

Language is obviously a very important component of the communication process, but not speaking the same language as another person does not mean that you cannot communicate with them.



Many factors other than language play a part in communication, and can be even more powerful than the words you use. The way you communicate with another person, even when you do not speak the same language, can have an enormous impact on the way you make that person feel and the way they will respond.

Forms of communication

Communication is a two-way process involving sending and receiving messages. It is a natural human ability, displayed in early infancy and developed throughout life. Negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork and adaptation of work practices all rely heavily on communication skills.

It is often difficult to establish and maintain communication with parents, as they may come and go at different times and are often in a hurry. You need to develop a high level of skill to ensure effective communication with both adults and children.

Listening and observing carefully can assist you to show respect. By observing children at play and when they are communicating with their parents, you can gain valuable information to help you communicate more appropriately and constructively with them.

Here are explanations of different methods of communication.

Verbal communication

Verbal communication occurs when a person communicates a message by speaking or making verbal sounds. The message can be sent to an individual, team or group. The message can be sent in person or over the phone. For example, verbal messages may be used in meetings, when exchanging information informally or formally, or when telling others what you think.

<p>Gestures</p>	<p>Gestures are forms of body language that convey specific messages in a particular culture or group. Gestures can relay many messages; for example, waving your hand in front of your face may indicate you are hot; standing in front of someone with your arms crossed may indicate you are defensive.</p> <p>Some gestures have different meanings in different cultures; for example, in Australia, if you give someone a thumbs-up sign, it usually means everything is okay. However, in some cultures, this gesture is rude.</p>
<p>Body language</p>	<p>Body language is a way of communicating by using body movements, gestures or facial expressions to give more meaning to verbal communication. It adds to your communication and helps express how you feel, often without having to say anything at all.</p> <p>For example, if you are uncomfortable talking to a parent regarding their child's behaviour, you may look at the ground. If you are worried, you may wring your hands.</p>
<p>Facial expressions</p>	<p>The way your face moves or changes as you deliver information provides many messages about your internal state. For example, facial expressions may indicate illness, tension or stress. A smile or frown may indicate pleasure or concern.</p>
<p>Written communication</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Signs</p>	<p>Signs are pictorial or written messages that are used to convey a clear message. Pictorial signs are often used to ensure those who are unable to read still understand the message; for example, toilets may have a male and a female image on the doors to denote which is which.</p>
<p>Sign language</p>	<p>Sign language (or signing) may be used by those with a hearing impairment, or by those with learning difficulties as an aid when language is a barrier. In Australia, people sign using Auslan (Australian sign language), one of several languages that use signs, body movements and facial expressions to convey meaning.</p>

Show empathy

People will feel accepted and a sense of comfort if you demonstrate empathy and understanding when they are speaking to you. Showing empathy also shows that you care, and want to hear or discuss what they are talking about.

Clarifying what someone is telling you, or repeating back the key ideas or pieces of information they have relayed shows that you are listening and understand what they are telling you.

Seeing things from the point of view of someone else can enable a better understanding of what they are trying to communicate. This isn't always possible or realistic, but trying to consider how the other person feels can often enable a greater understanding of where they are coming from.

Being able to practise empathy is one of the most important skills you can learn. It can help you and the people you interact with lead a more fulfilling and healthier life.

There are many different ways you can show empathy to those you are working with. Here are five actions that will help you show empathy.

Listen

Listening is one of the most effective ways you can demonstrate empathy to other people. When you listen with empathy you will allow the person time to talk, wait for them to finish talking and use what they have told you to continue the conversation.

Open up

Opening up is not about breaching professional boundaries. Opening up as an educator means that you might show your vulnerability and that you care by letting the other person know how you have been influenced by what they have shared with you. It doesn't mean you should tell them your own stories; when you share your own issues, you are telling the person their information is not as important.

Focus your attention outwards

Pay attention to your surroundings and to the feelings, expressions and actions of the people around you. Be mindful about how others you interact with might be feeling.

Withhold judgment

When showing empathy, it can often be hard to withhold immediate judgment, especially when first meeting or interacting with someone. Try to gain a deeper understanding of someone else's perspective without immediately saying that it is good or bad. This does not necessarily mean that the other person is right, but you can develop and demonstrate empathy by gaining an understanding of them or the issue they are discussing.

Offer help

An offer of help shows that you see what someone is going through and you want to make life easier for them. Offering help is a great act of empathy, because it shows that you're willing to take time to do something for someone else without asking anything of them in return.

Be courteous and polite

Politeness helps you to communicate better. Everybody needs to be able to deal with all kinds of people, including those with different temperaments.

Being polite is a matter of etiquette; it's about respect, and being considerate of others' feelings, cultures, and values. It may not sound difficult, but it can provide a challenge for many people.

Being courteous in all of your interactions is also essential. If someone annoys or insults you, avoid getting into an argument. Agree to disagree and change the subject, politely debate, or simply excuse yourself from the conversation.

Being courteous and polite enables effective, positive and friendly communication that creates foundations for relationships in the workplace.



Outcomes of politeness

Politeness can be rewarding and can assist you to develop more harmonious relationships. You might become more popular, personable, likable or approachable. Others might be friendlier towards you, be impressed by the manner in which you conduct yourself, or reach out to you for help, guidance or support. These factors can all lead to better communication.

Include everyone

Becoming aware of a child's background allows you to make the service environment more home-like and an enjoyable place to be. By focusing on the specific attributes – such as knowledge, skills and values – that reflect the uniqueness of each child, you can share in other cultures and learn from each other. This also applies to families and co-workers.

Promote a supportive environment

One of your professional responsibilities is to create a calm and supportive work environment. This is achieved when your team is cooperative and listens to each other's opinions.

If you experience conflict between co-workers, feelings should be discussed in a professional and non-biased manner. Acknowledge the perspective and experience of each co-worker and work effectively with other educators to model appropriate interactions and language to children.

Team or staff meetings are a good setting for sharing ideas and brainstorming. A service can also conduct staff surveys to find out ideas for quality improvement and training needs. Providing positive feedback to co-workers enhances belonging, and makes them aware that their role in the service is important.

When cross-cultural teams work together to understand each other, they have a higher rate of work satisfaction. Look at cross-cultural teams as a positive influence for the service.

Use clear language

When interacting and using language to communicate with others, use words that everyone can understand regardless of age, race, abilities or culture. This can often pose quite a challenge, particularly when you are working with people of varied backgrounds.

Speaking clearly and using age-appropriate wording with all children, educators and families is vital to enable everyone to understand. Use correct wording rather than slang or abbreviations.



When using words to communicate, ensure you are speaking to the individual directly and have their attention. Use clear, specific and relevant words to hold a conversation, get your point across, give a direction or set a limit. When language barriers exist, your words may need to be quite simple and be accompanied by the use of specific gestures and body language. This also applies when talking to younger infants and toddlers.

Thinking about someone's level of understanding will help you determine how much verbal communication or body language to implement. Read a person's cues and the ways in which they speak to you. This will help you use the right level of language to respond and communicate with them effectively.

Watch and listen

Observing and reflecting on others' actions is the most effective way of foreseeing potential issues or situations that may arise. Being able to determine how or why someone's reactions or behaviours may be present is also important.

By watching and listening to groups of children playing or people you are speaking to, you can gain insight into the way that person or group of people may be feeling. You can use this to understand all people; however, it may be particularly useful with those who are from a different background or have additional needs.

Simply listening and observing someone's body language, words to others, and general stance can paint a clear picture of the best possible way to interact with that individual.

When observing a new family entering the service, you should listen and watch to see how they interact with one another, the words they are using, and the body language and demeanour they are presenting. By doing this, you can improve your first interactions with them; you may have gauged some insight into the best possible way to welcome them, noticed an apparent interest, or heard their comments about the environment.

Remember that every child, family member, educator and community member who attends or visits your workplace is an individual with different personalities, likes, dislikes, customs, cultures and backgrounds. You shouldn't make assumptions based on your previous experience, and should treat everyone with respect, regardless of what impression or communication method you may have observed or heard.

Be honest

Honesty is vital when communicating with others. Bending the truth or telling families or others what they want to hear instead of being honest often results in a negative outcome. This negative outcome may not present itself immediately, but over time dishonesty can lead to many complications, including needing to tell further lies to prevent the truth from surfacing.

Being honest with families, children and co-workers will help to generate trust and respect. This will create a foundation on which strong and purposeful relationships can form.

Be honest when explaining situations or giving advice to parents or other educators. In such situations, you should ensure that you do find out accurate information, whether it is from another educator, an internet resource or reading policies, procedures, learning outcomes or standards.

Practice task 8

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

Case study

Sophie is dropping off her son. She usually chats briefly to Alina, the educator, but today she is quiet. Alina asks Sophie how she is. When Sophie looks up she has tears in her eyes and a red face. She tells Alina that her father passed away overnight. He lived in India and she had hoped to see him in two weeks. There will be a traditional funeral.

1. List **three** ways Alina could show empathy and understanding in her communication towards Sophie.

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2. Would it be courteous and polite for Alina to ask Sophie what a traditional funeral is like at this point?

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3. List the methods of communication you could use to interact with people.

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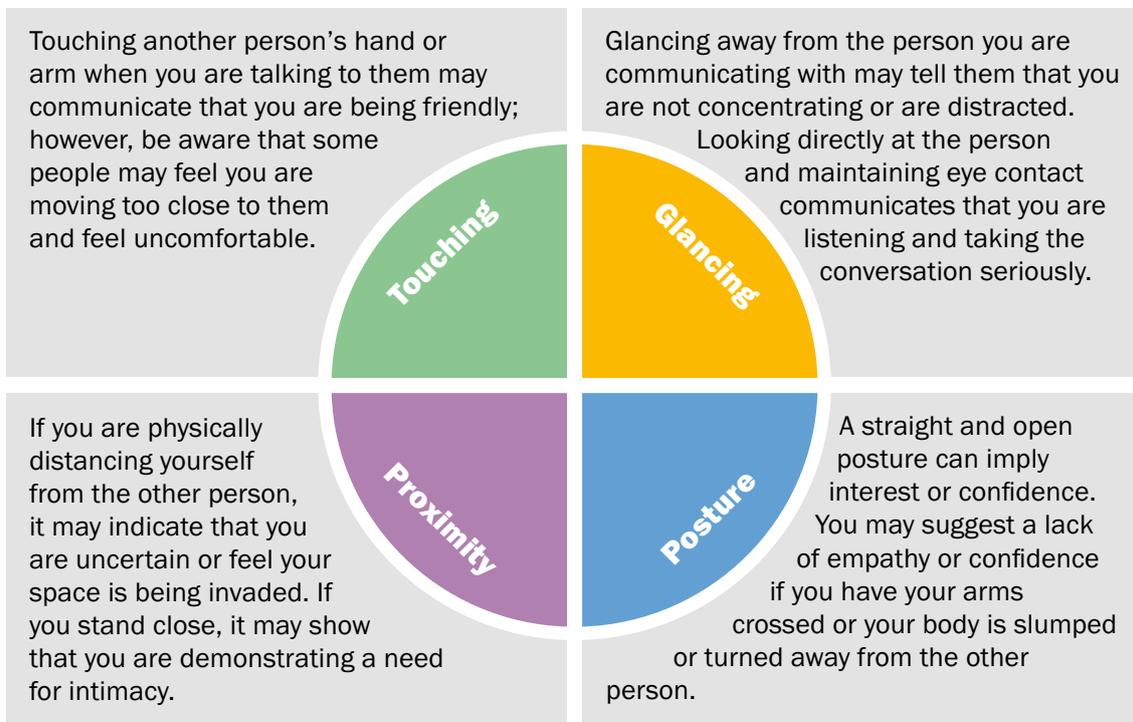
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3B Use communication to establish relationships

Sometimes there is a mismatch between the verbal and nonverbal messages a person communicates; for example, what the person is saying is at odds with their body language. There may also be a mismatch between what is said and how it is said; for example, the tone of voice used.

There may be a communication problem if the sender and the receiver can't see each other; for example, if the communication takes place via phone or email. In these situations, one primary source of communication is denied: visual information. The common use of SMS or email as forms of communication may lead to misunderstandings, as it is easy to misinterpret the intended tone of the information.

Here are some actions that communicate nonverbal messages when interacting in person.



Factors influencing communication

Apart from language differences, nonverbal communication differs markedly between cultures. Here are some common factors that may impact on communication, including those related to cultural differences.

Attitudes

Your attitude towards the message and the person you are communicating with may inhibit effective communication. Approval or disapproval of the other person may determine what you tell that person and how you communicate with them.

Prejudices or biases about the content or context of the message also inhibit effective communication. For example, if there is a new child to the service and an educator starts asking personal questions about the family's background without explaining why, the parent may answer briefly and omit vital information, as they feel unsure about divulging such information and why it is necessary.

Stereotyping

Stereotyping occurs when you presume that someone or something fits a certain convention or standard; for example, assuming that all Indonesian people are of Muslim faith because Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world. You should never assume people will think or behave in a certain way. When you stereotype, you are in danger of not receiving and understanding other messages that are being communicated. You may dismiss people without hearing what they really have to say, because you have stereotyped them as having particular beliefs and attitudes.

Values

Values describe the beliefs and morals of an individual, culture or organisation. As values relate to a person's priorities in life, they often have an emotional element and therefore exercise a considerable influence over communication with others.

It is unreasonable to attempt to be completely value-free in your judgments. What is important is that you 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.

Assumptions

An assumption is when you take for granted that something is true without thinking about it. Making assumptions about people has the same effect as stereotyping people: if the assumption is wrong it can significantly hinder communication.

Environment

A warm, trusting and quiet environment is important if people are to communicate effectively.

Environmental noise is an obvious barrier to effective communication. For example, if you try to address a group while there are roadworks going on outside, or if you sit down with a small group of children to discuss a topic while the rest of the group plays basketball right next to you, your communication would be ineffective due to the distractions in the surrounding environment.

Build effective relationships

To provide a positive learning and working environment, you must work on developing effective relationships. It is crucial that you listen to the views of parents and educators about different issues, and accept that each individual has a right to their own opinion. You may not agree with their opinion, but you should listen and respect it in order to understand their needs. This does not mean you have to change what you believe, but it should encourage you to broaden your perspectives and accommodate the needs of others.

Understand how people are different

To understand that everybody is different, you need to keep an open mind and respect others' thoughts, cultural heritage, preferences and personal attributes. To fully understand the concept of difference you need to put personal biases and ideas aside to enable non-judgmental attitudes.



Each child, parent, family and educator you work with has their own characteristics, personalities, ideas, beliefs, rituals and cultural identities. You should acknowledge this and build relationships based on the individual's needs, strengths and understanding. As a result, you will show a persona and attitude that is respectful, open, responsive and approachable. Asking questions of others and showing interest in what they are saying can help you to further understand their differences.

Build mutual trust

Mutual trust is built when parties communicate effectively and unite with a common purpose. This is achieved over time and only with the input of all parties involved.

Mutual trust is most commonly built when you assist a new child to settle into your service, as you must work with the parents to find out more about the child's home life, beliefs and values, and with the child to create a comfortable setting that meets their needs. In this way you develop a bond of trust and confidence with the parents and child.

Strategies that can be used for building mutual trust and confidence:

- ▶ Welcome all children and their families to the service each day.
- ▶ Approach the children and help them participate in activities.
- ▶ Show parents around the service, chat about their day and provide information about the child's day.
- ▶ Acknowledge differences between families and incorporate the relevant information into your service.
- ▶ Include information of interest in your literature display or in what you send home.
- ▶ Become an active listener.
- ▶ Be mindful of people from CALD backgrounds by giving them a chance to communicate.
- ▶ Research cultural beliefs and values by asking questions and using books, specialists and the internet.

Build people's confidence in you

Be sensitive to the needs of others and create a setting where individuals can be accepted for who they are. You need to understand the experiences of families and the effects these experiences have on the child's behaviour. You can find out more by informally discussing a child's interests and home life, and encouraging the use of background information sheets so you can provide appropriate activities in the program; for example, cultural celebrations.

Improve your communication skills

There are many ways to improve your communication skills. When communicating with individuals and groups of people, it is essential to watch, listen and gain insight into what they understand. When verbally communicating, it is vital to do so in line with ways they communicate with you. Use a range of words they will understand and sentences that are easy to follow and interpret.

Focus on improving your current communication skills, whatever they are, and research ways to effectively communicate with everyone, including children and families from diverse backgrounds.

Regardless of how long someone has been working at your service, everyone can improve their communication skills by learning and practising ways to communicate in different and effective ways. This is something you need to continuously work towards and consider a long-term goal.

Example

Using body language

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

Hannah, one of the parents, has touched Elke on the arm before, so Elke knows that touching is acceptable for her.

Lina, another parent, steps back a little if Elke moves too close. She also doesn't make eye contact; however, they have great conversations and Lina is happy to share lots of information about their family. Elke knows to keep a little proximity between herself and Lina and not to expect eye contact.



Practice task 9

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

Case study

Lara is a parent speaking to Damien, an educator. She has her arms crossed and she is not making eye contact. Her body is facing away from Damien and she is standing a metre away. She glances around the room while Damien speaks. Each time she speaks, her sentences start with, 'I love it here'.

1. List **four** actions that communicate nonverbal messages.

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2. Is Lara's nonverbal and verbal language saying the same thing?

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3. If you were Damien, what is one way you could build mutual trust with Lara?

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4. What are **five** factors that might be impacting on the communication between Damien and Lara?

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3C Use strategies when language barriers exist

A person's experiences and perceptions influence the way they communicate and interpret communications. A communication barrier is something that hinders effective communication. For example, if two people don't speak the same language, the language difference will be a barrier to their communication. Common communication barriers are language differences, cultural differences and variances in communication delivery.



By incorporating the techniques of thoughtful communication and being aware of possible communication barriers, you can communicate more effectively. You must also remember to respect diversity and understand that there are many aspects that influence people's beliefs, values and decisions. By communicating effectively, you can explore these aspects using culturally sensitive techniques.

Good communication is essential, whether interacting one-to-one, with a small or large group, with a committee or with internal or external professionals.

Information in first languages

Ensure that families from non-English-speaking backgrounds are provided with relevant information in their first language. For example, if possible, have the newsletter translated into a family's first language so they can keep up to date with important information. Using appropriate language and communication mediums will encourage families to get involved, and ensures the child is able to participate in activities.

Be aware that some parents may have poor reading skills, whatever language they speak, so notices and newsletters may not catch their attention or be an appropriate medium for providing information. In this case, direct verbal communication should be used to ensure the message has been received and understood.

Use images

There are endless ways you can use images to be inclusive, and offer a culturally rich and stimulating environment and program for the children and families you are working with.

Examples of images to represent diversity within your service:

- ▶ photos of children and their families, extended families, holidays or interests
- ▶ photos of the children undertaking activities in your program
- ▶ posters of diverse and multicultural customs, cultures, needs and preferences
- ▶ maps of countries and regions around the world
- ▶ words and symbols used by other cultures and their English translations
- ▶ art samples and works associated with diverse cultures
- ▶ multicultural dolls and props in imaginative play areas, dolls houses and dramatic play scenarios
- ▶ books associated with different customs and cultures, family types, disabilities and other individuals or groups within the community
- ▶ art experiences in line with specific cultures, such as dot pointing (Aboriginal paintings), and making Chinese lanterns.

Music, games and activities

Music, games and activities should be widely used within the program, in both a planned and spontaneous way. Being involved in these activities will be fun and help children learn, create and develop a sense of belonging.

Background music or songs sung in group times can relate to specific cultures and be played in different languages. Games and activities that highlight diversity can also be provided, so that children can explore, reflect and discuss.

Here is some more information on the different ways in which music, games and activities can be used to promote diversity.



Music

Music might be used for dance in games or played in the background. Children will respond to different sounds and music depending on how they are feeling. For example, upbeat tones can lift a child's spirits, while loud and boisterous children might be calmed down by soft music. Monitor the needs and emotions of the group when you are playing different types of music and ensure it serves its purpose.



Musical instruments

Musical instruments are a great way for children to learn about beats, timing, tones and rhythm. Allow children to explore with instruments and make their own tunes and sounds – they will have many of their own ideas from previous exposure to music.



Songs

Songs are a great way to settle children, explain upcoming transitions or routine changes, describe an action that is taking place, or reflect on stories and activities children are participating in. Singing to children in other languages is also a fantastic learning opportunity, and lots of fun.



Games

Games can be either planned or spontaneous, and can be open-ended and flexible to the skill levels of children participating. Examples of introducing cultural diversity into games are counting in another language, or playing guess the object, a game where children need to identify objects relating to another culture or country.



Activities

Activities can vary considerably and should cater for individual needs, the size of the group and the setting. The use of pictures, props and resources can add more inclusiveness and learning opportunities to the children in your program. Provide dress-ups from different cultures, dolls with different physical characteristics and images from different cities of the world to promote a diverse and accepting environment.

Body language

Body language tells as much about how you feel as the words you use. With this in mind, you need to ensure the body language you are displaying to children, families, other educators and the community is meaningful and reflects the point you are trying to communicate.

Crossing your arms, keeping your head down or frowning may show others that you are not interested in what they are telling you, or that you don't care about what is being said. Identifying your own and others' body language can give insight into what type of mood or emotions a person may be experiencing.



People might purposefully use particular body language to gain attention, let others know what type of mood they are in, or show whether they want to be spoken to. You should read body language to identify the needs of others, and consider how your own body language may be interpreted.

Multilingual staff members

Multilingual staff members are desirable, particularly those who represent the same culture or speak the same language as families in the service. They can also work with other children in the program to assist communication between them and a child who doesn't speak English, helping to foster friendships, relationships and a sense of belonging that otherwise may be very difficult.

Staff within the service who speak the same language as a family can assist with relaying information or discussing specific concerns you or the family may have. They can ring the family when needed to relay details of an illness, accident or requirement a child is currently experiencing.

Staff members who have the same background as families attending the service can be useful, even if they don't speak the same language. Not only may they be seen as a familiar face, but they may have a deeper cultural understanding of the family's needs.

Translator and interpreter services for families

Your service may need to translate important information into languages other than English or provide an interpreter, possibly for a family who has recently migrated to Australia whose first language is not English.

A translator converts text from one language to another. This might include enrolment documents, newsletters, forms or records. An interpreter translates speech from one language to another, which includes oral speech into sign language.

When these situations arise, your local community will have both translator references and interpreter services you can contact to assist with this transition. All families need to have equal access to relevant information, no matter what language they speak.

You can also use online translation programs. Some programs will translate text to speech, allowing you to hear pronunciation. These programs are great for translation of single words or basic phrases, but are not to be used as a tool for a face-to-face conversation.

Translator and interpreter services for children

Children who have limited English skills require lots of labelling, repetition and pictures to understand what is being asked of them. If a child can speak their first language well, an interpreter may be useful in the service – this is particularly useful when a child is initially settling in. Often government funding is available to assist with child and family integration. Relatives, family friends or educators within the service can also play an important role in the transition process if they can relay information or are able to speak the same language as the family and child.

Language resources

Children who do not speak fluent English will also need more time, resources and encouragement in using both languages.

FKA Children's Services Inc. is an Australia-wide support service that provides materials, resources, interpreters, translators and other types of support. Their main objective is to assist educators, organisations, children and their families by embracing and responding to diversity with a range of services.

More information regarding FKA's support services, mission and statements can be found at: <http://aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services>

Support the child's use of language

Your role as an educator is to support the child's use of language and to provide experiences that expose children to different language forms.

Children with language impairments or disabilities and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may need to be provided with more or different opportunities to learn language.

Watch this video for information on supporting a child's use of language.



Practice task 10

1. What are **three** common communication barriers?

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2. What is the difference between a translator and an interpreter?

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3D Meet communication needs

There may be occasions when you need to communicate with a person, but you have no common language. At times like this, try using body language and gestures to help communicate your message.

To ensure information is clearly communicated, find out what language the family speaks so you can organise an interpreter. You may also arrange to have written information translated into the family's language, or provide the family with written information so they can have it translated themselves.



For simple day-to-day communications, the parent may request another family member or community member to help with translation and interpretation. If this is the case, be mindful of confidentiality and ensure personal information remains private. You should also ensure that the child's and family's needs are being met regardless of any language differences.

Use an interpreter

When working with a language barrier between you and a family or child with limited English skills, an interpreter will prove vital to your service. Circumstances in which an interpreter would be useful are outlined here.

You can use an interpreter to:

- ▶ identify and discuss family values, needs and expectations before and during a child's orientation and commencement in the service
- ▶ relay information to the family regarding the child, particularly during the child's first few weeks at the service, to enable an understanding and relationship to be formed
- ▶ begin to interpret and understand specific signs or use of body language that a child is using to convey their needs
- ▶ understand how a child is feeling, and concerns or worries they are currently experiencing
- ▶ enable understanding of routines and transition times throughout the day.

Different types of interpreters

Different types of interpreters are available, including community members, parents or family members, other educators or staff within the service and those provided by government bodies.

The time, limitations, availability and skills of interpreters will vary considerably. When using an interpreter, understand their role and what it is you will be using them for. Planning and goal-setting ensures that the time they spend with you is used adequately and efficiently.

Using staff and educators within the service provides comfort and reassurance to the child and family. If you have a staff member who can speak some of the language of a diverse family, use them to interpret, settle, and be present during pick up and drop off times to enable better communication between the service and the family.

Other interpreters

While an interpreter is often thought of as an individual who can relay information between two languages, they may also be someone who uses sign language to translate spoken English for a child with a hearing impairment. A speech therapist may be required to assist a child who cannot speak clearly.

Parents of very young children (two to three years) also act as interpreters, even if they speak fluent English. If a child hasn't yet developed full speech skills, their parents will be more familiar with the specific sounds a child makes and their meaning.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is vital in your interactions with families. Unless there is a legal obligation to report or release private information, you must respect people's wishes regarding what information you share with others.

If a translator is required, consider using a professional translator who is bound by a code of ethics that prohibits them from sharing private or confidential information.

Not only do you have a duty of care when working with children and families, you also have a responsibility to follow service policies and procedures set out as part of your job description.

Maintain confidence

Personal information relayed to you by other staff or families may be told in confidence, particularly when you have formed positive relationships with them. It is essential that you don't gossip with other workers – this is not only disrespectful to others, but can cause upset, hurt and negative relationships within the service.



If you receive information that reflects how or why an individual child may be behaving in a certain way, using inappropriate words, displaying unusual emotions of anger, sadness or withdrawal, you will need to mention this to other staff, as well as the child, so they can understand the changes in their behaviour.

Do not discuss children and families with other parents or people outside the workplace.

Work with an interpreter

Working with interpreters can be beneficial to you when integrating a child and their family into the service. However, it is your role as an educator to ensure you understand the ways the interpreter can assist all parties. This includes using the interpreter to help you better understand the child's language and culture.

When working with an interpreter and a child, try to gain a basic understanding of a child’s home language, customs or cultural practices relevant to the family’s heritage and background. This enables you to understand how the child may use language, body language and certain communication methods, as well as what certain sounds or words may represent.

Example

Resources for interpreting and translating

Orna is a new child in the service, whose family has arrived from Ukraine. The educators have communicated with a government support service, and during the orientation process built up a bank of information and resources for interpreting and translating for Orna and her family.



Practice task 11

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

Case study

Sarita has recently migrated from Spain, where she has educational qualifications; however, they are not recognised in Australia. Sarita is training to complete her Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care. Sarita speaks and understands English clearly, but struggles to read her assessments.

Camila, another staff member, is also from Spain. Camila does not always understand spoken English clearly. Camila has breached some regulations and is having a disagreement with you based on what you feel is a misunderstanding.

1. How do you think an interpreter would be useful for Sarita?

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2. If you read the information to Sarita, do you think this would be helpful to her?

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3. Sarita could assist you to communicate better with Camila. Is it appropriate for you to speak about the situation with Sarita to assist in resolving the disagreement?

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4. If you thought Sarita could provide interpreter support to resolve the issues you are having with Camila, what would you need do to involve her?

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5. List **two** reasons why it would be necessary to use an interpreter for a child or family at your service.

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Summary

- ▶ Communication is a two-way process; it involves sending and receiving messages.
- ▶ There are many skills involved in positive two-way communication that can be learnt and adopted; for example, positive listening and observing techniques.
- ▶ Differences in language, culture, values and attitudes can create communication barriers based on assumptions and stereotyping of others.
- ▶ Any environment may create barriers to communication that are not always obvious to those involved.
- ▶ Respectful communication involves exchanging information between all parties involved.
- ▶ Effective communication is an integral part of a healthy working relationship. This may mean that translator or interpreter assistance is required to support it.
- ▶ Trust and confidence is built over time as you continue to be welcoming and respectful of children and their families.

Learning checkpoint 3

Communicate with all people

Part A

1. If a parent of western heritage frowns at you, what might they be conveying in their facial expression?

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2. Identify **two** signs that could appear in a service that don't contain written words and could be understood by most people, regardless of their culture.

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Part B

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

Case study

Ahn is looking for childcare for her son, Duc. Ahn has recently arrived from Vietnam. She speaks little English and cannot read English. The educator, Justine, would like to make Ahn and her son feel welcome in the service.

1. Research and list the written word for 'welcome' in Vietnamese.

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2. Research and list the contact details for an interpreter you could access that speaks Vietnamese.

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3. What simple English words could Justine say to Ahn when they meet?

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4. What body language or gesture could Justine use to show that Ahn is welcome?

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Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A Overcome communication misunderstandings**
- 4B Overcome cultural misunderstandings**
- 4C Resolve differences**
- 4D Address difficulties**

Promote understanding across diverse groups

Whenever you work with a diverse group of people, you are likely to face some conflict. Conflict may occur as a result of a simple disagreement – for example, over basic routines and practices – or stem from a clash in values and expectations. People tend to manage conflict in habitual ways learnt in their childhood; for example, by dealing with the conflict as it arises or by avoiding a situation and leaving it unresolved.

When resolving cross-cultural differences, understanding and commitment to resolving the conflict leads to change. Conflict is in itself not always negative, even though you may find conflict hard to deal with or resolve. In reality, conflict and its resolution often lead to stronger relationships, as people work together to resolve their differences. This topic presents a simple six-step model for conflict resolution, which can be applied to common conflict situations.

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

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

4A Overcome communication misunderstandings

As your community becomes more diverse, so does the potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings or conflict. Therefore, you must continually work on building trust and team spirit. If you make assumptions that everyone sees things in the same way, you risk running into conflict. You must take time to discover, appreciate and learn from differences, to enable you to understand other people's perspectives. This will in turn help you to provide a broader and more enriched environment for all.



Managing conflict involves communication skills in both sending and receiving messages. For example, if you possess good skills at clearly expressing your needs and wishes, listening well, responding helpfully and managing your anger, there is less risk of you participating in or unnecessarily escalating conflict.

Issues that cause problems

People communicate in many different ways, often determined by their cultural upbringing. When communication breaks down, people may become very frustrated; conflict may arise if they don't understand something or feel they are not being understood. Language differences should not ever lead to conflict, as there are interpreters and translators available to assist with communication. Ensure that your communication is culturally appropriate; you do not want to offend anyone by how you communicate.

Cultural upbringing also influences the way children communicate with adults, so make a point of explaining the communication expectations that your service has relating to the children. How do you expect children to speak to you? For example, do you expect them to maintain eye contact? Parents who expect some other action will be able to discuss this with you. Once a parent understands they can assist their child to understand. If you discuss expectations and cultural differences in advance, conflict situations can be avoided.

Food choice

Parental attitudes to what your service provides for meals and snacks, and when they are served may vary. For example, some families may prefer a later breakfast, others may prefer a vegetarian meal, and others may think children should always have a sandwich for lunch. If a conflict around food choices arises, listen to the family and identify whether part or all of their concern is viable. Talk to the parent about your service's policies and procedures for food choice. Welcome them to participate in policy review to either support the service to adapt to meet their needs, or to understand why your service has chosen the policy and practices they have.

Remember, some children may have dietary restrictions or requirements as a result of their culture, medical issues and/or religious beliefs. These food needs must be met at all times.

Learning

Parents may not have extensive knowledge of childhood development milestones and may therefore believe that reciting numbers and the alphabet are a high priority. However, educators and service philosophies understand that play is more important to holistic childhood development at most ages. If a conflict arises, explain the value of play. Use evidence of the child's learning to demonstrate how you are responding to the interests of the child and how you are taking into consideration the holistic learning opportunities that are linked to the National Quality Standard (NQS) and led by the EYLF/MTOP. The service's philosophy regarding learning should back this up and provide information about the activities that are undertaken that link to learning about symbols and patterns (EYLF/MTOP Outcome 5).

Discipline

Parents' behavioural expectations of their children may differ from the preferences of your service. Taking this into account, you must be able to identify the difference between a child who has knowingly done the wrong thing and a child demonstrating behaviour that is acceptable at home. You should react to these two situations differently.



Your service's policies and procedures should state that behaviour is another area of learning and development, and mistakes are considered to be learning opportunities. However, some parents and guardians may not share this understanding of child development. Support parents to understand that children are learning in all areas, including behaviour, and that it is your role to educate them in this area, just as in any other. Provide positive information about children to demonstrate how they are learning and progressing, particularly when issues are occurring. Parents need to understand the service's policies and procedures regarding discipline and the service's expectations about what is appropriate behaviour in this environment.

Interactions

Ensure that your interactions with children, their parents and co-workers are culturally appropriate and are not the cause of conflict. Interact with the children frequently and openly, use appropriate language and maintain realistic expectations of the communication you receive in return. If a conflict arises due to your interactions, discuss the problem and take steps to rectify the situation. If, at any time, you have difficulty resolving a conflict situation, ask your supervisor or manager for assistance.

Expectations of behaviour

Your knowledge of child development should assist you to have reasonable expectations of children at various ages; however, some families may implement practices or have expectations that concern you. For example, you may see a parent smack their child if they accidentally wet their pants. This situation may be difficult to deal with and may even cause distress; however, intervening in parent-child interactions is sensitive. Be sure you speak to the parent away from the child's hearing. You should maintain your respect for the family and their practices, especially when cultural considerations are involved.

There may be times that you believe that a practice is causing harm to a child. Before you take any action, consider the following questions.

Questions to consider before taking action:

- ▶ Does the family insist on having these needs or expectations met by your service?
- ▶ Do the needs or expectations of the family fit with the policies and procedures of the service?
- ▶ What would happen if the child was not in your care?
- ▶ Would the child be healthy and well if this practice continues?
- ▶ Do the needs or expectations of the family harm the child in any way? When children are being harmed, cultural practice is not a reason to delay reporting abuse.
- ▶ What are the reasons for the family's needs or expectations?
- ▶ Who else in the family is supporting the needs or expectations (for example, grandparents or other extended family)?

Watch this video for information on how different cultures may have different expectations about behaviour.



Practice task 12

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

Case study

Today at afternoon tea, Paul, who shouldn't eat pig products, ate a ham sandwich. Helena, the educator, did not realise until he had almost finished eating. When Helena asked Paul if the sandwich contained ham, Paul realised and became upset as he knew his mum had said that he shouldn't eat ham.

When Paul's mum, Cindy, arrives, Paul is crying and he tells her what happened. Cindy is angry with Helena.

1. What type of cultural issue is this incident?

2. How might this issue be avoided in the future?

3. Aside from food choice, list **two** issues that may cause cultural conflict.

4. What are **three** questions to consider before taking action relating to any concerning cultural practice?

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4B Overcome cultural misunderstandings

To develop a trusting and positive relationship with all children and families, create a setting where individuals can be accepted for who they are. It is crucial that you listen to the views of parents and educators on different issues. You also need to accept and respect the fact that each individual will have their own world view.

Each of the families you make contact with will have their own ideas and experiences. Some of these are based on views you know about and agree with, while others may be based on information that is unclear or foreign to you.



Diversity in conflict situations

To truly develop strong and constructive relationships with others, you need to respect the different cultures and backgrounds of the people you interact with. You also need to understand that people with different upbringings, education and values may see the world in different ways to you.

Being honest in conflict situations means giving feedback that is true to your beliefs. Honesty in conflict situations enables you to build a greater sense of understanding of each other. In return, you will also gain self-esteem by being able to say what you think and feel with integrity. A best-case scenario for dealing with a problem is to identify and solve it in an open, honest environment, rather than allowing the problem to fester or escalate.

When problems occur

Conflict is not always solely negative; rather, it is often an opportunity to build trust with others. People who can work through differences together may feel that their relationship is much less fragile than those who have not had such experiences. They can communicate effectively and know that problems they raise will be dealt with.

The process of resolving conflict and misunderstanding allows you to learn about other people and to identify the things that are important to them.



Consider world views

Part of being culturally competent means finding out about different world views. Here are some strategies to enable those you work with to see that you value their needs and beliefs, and can provide appropriate education and care to children.

Some ways to learn about alternative world views include:

- ▶ asking parents about what is important to them
- ▶ not assuming everyone will want the same things
- ▶ doing research to follow up on topics important to families
- ▶ networking with different people and groups so you can find out more about them
- ▶ asking questions to gain a greater understanding of new concepts
- ▶ participating in or reading reputable forums or journals
- ▶ not taking conflict personally, but looking on it as an opportunity to learn
- ▶ sharing details of the program so others can contribute their opinions and ideas.

Example

Consider the impact of social diversity

Maryanne, an educator, has noticed that when Chen's parents drop him off he is dressed in many layers of clothes. The educators remove some layers during the day, but when his parents pick him up they are concerned and upset.

Maryanne talks with Chen's parents, explaining that he is hot inside when he is playing, especially because the heater is sometimes on as well. She shows them that his skin is not cold and points out what the other children in the room are wearing. Despite her discussions and provision of some written material about dressing children appropriately for the weather, the parents tell her they want Chen to wear the layers of clothing so he will not get sick.

Maryanne feels her relationship with the family may be jeopardised if she continues to push the issue further, but she wants to ensure Chen is happy and healthy. She considers the following:

- ▶ The family insists on having these needs or expectations met by the service.
- ▶ The needs of the family do not really challenge the policies and procedures of the service.
- ▶ If Chen was not in care he would be dressed in many layers of clothing.
- ▶ These needs or expectations of the family do not harm Chen in any way.
- ▶ Chen lives with his extended family, and his grandparents and aunt also support this practice strongly.

Maryanne decides that Chen is not at risk of harm and that she will continue to support this practice, although she will talk to the parents about it again soon. If the practice begins to interfere with Chen's development or health, she may call in a support agency (a cultural interpreter) to discuss the situation.



Practice task 13

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

Case study

Xanthi has come to pick up her daughter, Ada. She knows that today was a cooking day, as she had provided some fruit for the cooking experience. Xanthi was pleased that healthy foods were included in the cooking, as Ada gets severe eczema from eating sugary foods.

Molly, the educator, greets Xanthi and calls her over to a table. Molly explains that the cooking day went really well and that the children all made fruit sticks to eat. Molly then shows Xanthi how the children made little cars out of chocolate bars and jelly beans.

Xanthi is unhappy. She tells Molly that she thought they were doing a healthy cooking activity and that she is not impressed with the need for sugary foods to be included.

1. Should Molly take Xanthi's complaint personally?

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2. What are some ways Molly could have found out about Xanthi's views prior to this situation occurring?

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3. What could be a positive outcome of the conflict between Molly and Xanthi?

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4. List **three** strategies Molly could use to learn about the alternative world views of all parents.

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4C Resolve differences

Productive conflict resolution may be viewed as a process of mutual problem-solving. Creative solutions that meet both parties' needs, sometimes called a win-win solution, may be the outcome of this process. The opposite of a win-win solution is a lose-lose solution, where neither party has their needs met. In the case of a win-lose solution, only one party has their needs met. The best solution is obviously a win-win solution, but it is not always possible to achieve this. In this situation, choose the solution that is in the child's best interest.

A stepped approach

The way you manage conflict involves making either good or bad choices. Good choices increase the chance of your own and others' happiness and wellbeing, while bad choices may lead to unresolved or escalating conflict.

Making good choices regarding conflict can be particularly difficult. For example, you may be under considerable pressure to make poor choices due to differences of opinion or someone being extremely angry.

Conflicts are more likely to be destructive when people come into them harbouring past resentments. Destructive conflict can often be avoided by using good communication skills on a day-to-day basis to create and maintain goodwill and respect.

Six-step framework for managing conflict

- 1 Confront the conflict**
If you ignore a conflict, it will not resolve itself and may escalate. Therefore, you should acknowledge there is a problem and address it. This may begin a difficult process, but it is necessary to resolve the conflict and maintain positive relationships.
- 2 Understand each other's position**
The second step to resolving conflict is to understand your own and the other person's point of view. Consider what you believe and why it is important to you. Then take the time to find out why the other person feels the way they do. Be open to differences and don't assume you're in the right.
- 3 Involve those affected**
The cause of the conflict and the possible effects of any change or outcome should be assessed fairly. All stakeholders should be identified and included. For example, if a conflict relates to one child's use of a piece of equipment, it would also relate to the family and the educators. If a conflict relates to the menu or the service's disciplinary procedures, the entire care community would be involved. By involving others, you should aim to gain a support base of diverse ideas, rather than causing the conflict to escalate.
- 4 Define the problem**
After you have discussed each person's position regarding the conflict, identify and define the actual source of the conflict. Often it may not be what you originally thought was the issue. Sometimes, conflict raises other issues that then need to be dealt with. You may find it easier to write down exactly what the problems are. In doing this, you may need to translate information, or define words or concepts.

5

Search for and evaluate alternative solutions

List the positives and negatives for each possible solution that is raised. You should also refer to the service’s policies or procedures that relate to the conflict to ensure that it is being dealt with appropriately, and in line with the philosophy and expectations of your organisation. Determine exactly who the issue affects, then evaluate solutions relevant to the people involved.

6

Agree upon and implement the best solution

Together you should try to agree on what action should be taken. The decision can be guided by ensuring the solution is in the child’s best interests. A new policy or procedure may be required to prevent confusion in the future. Make sure everyone is aware of any changes that result from the resolution. Also ensure that the solution is reviewed to determine whether the conflict has been completely resolved.

The six-step framework

Here is a list of questions relating to each step of the six-step framework. You may find it useful to ask yourself these questions next time you need to resolve a conflict.

Step 1

- ▶ What is the conflict?

Step 2

- ▶ Have I acknowledged my own beliefs on this topic?
- ▶ Do I know what the other person’s beliefs are?
- ▶ Am I flexible?
- ▶ Have I considered the child?
- ▶ Will there be an impact on the service/children/educators/families/community?
- ▶ Have I considered why I am opposed?
- ▶ Have I sought outside resources/information?
- ▶ Am I handling the conflict with respect and maturity?

Step 3

- ▶ Who needs to be involved?

Step 4

- ▶ What are the problems from the other person’s point of view?
- ▶ Have we all expressed ourselves clearly and completely?
- ▶ Do we understand what motivates each other’s point of view?
- ▶ Did I really listen to the other person’s point of view?

Step 5

- ▶ What are the possible outcomes?
- ▶ Have we considered the pros (positives) of each possible outcome?
- ▶ Have we considered the cons (negatives) of each possible outcome?
- ▶ Are we aware of what policies and procedures are applicable?

Step 6

- ▶ Are we able to make a plan of action?
- ▶ Are we ready to do what needs to be done to make this happen?

Code of ethics

Your service's policies and procedures explain how to report particular ethical dilemmas if they occur. You can also use the code of ethics as a set of guidelines to:

- ▶ help you make the right decisions in difficult situations
- ▶ know which behaviours by adults must not be supported
- ▶ maintain standards of practice
- ▶ assist you to protect others who are powerless
- ▶ solve problems when exposed to competing value systems.

Example

Code of ethics

A code of ethics does not provide the answers to dilemmas; rather, it provides useful guidelines for what is appropriate behaviour.

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is a peak early childhood advocacy organisation acting in the interests of young children, their families and those in the early childhood field. ECA has developed a code of ethics, which provides a basis for critical reflection, a guide for professional behaviour, and principles to inform individual and collective decision-making. Here is an extract from ECA's Code of Ethics.



Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics

Core principles:

- ▶ Each child has unique interests and strengths, and the capacity to contribute to their communities.
- ▶ Children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- ▶ Effective learning and teaching is characterised by professional decisions that draw on specialised knowledge and multiple perspectives.
- ▶ Partnerships with families and communities support shared responsibility for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- ▶ Democratic, fair and inclusive practices promote equity and a strong sense of belonging.
- ▶ Respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships are central to children's education and care.
- ▶ Play and leisure are essential for children's learning, development and wellbeing.
- ▶ Research, inquiry and practice-based evidence inform quality education and care.

Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics

In relation to children, I will:

- ▶ act in the best interests of all children
- ▶ create and maintain safe, healthy, inclusive environments that support children's agency and enhance their learning
- ▶ provide a meaningful curriculum to enrich children's learning, balancing child and educator initiated experiences
- ▶ understand and be able to explain to others how play and leisure enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing
- ▶ ensure childhood is a time for being in the here and now and not solely about preparation for the future
- ▶ collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity
- ▶ value the relationship between children and their families and enhance these relationships through my practice
- ▶ ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, sexuality, age, ability, economic status, family structure, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion, language, culture or national origin
- ▶ negotiate children's participation in research, by taking into account their safety, privacy, levels of fatigue and interest
- ▶ respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment
- ▶ safeguard the security of information and documentation about children, particularly when shared on digital platforms.

In relation to families, I will:

- ▶ support families as children's first and most important teacher and respect their right to make decisions about their children
- ▶ listen to and learn with families and engage in shared decision-making, planning and assessment practices in relation to children's learning, development and wellbeing
- ▶ develop respectful relationships based on open communication with the aim of encouraging families' engagement and to build a strong sense of belonging
- ▶ learn about, respect and respond to the uniqueness of each family, their circumstances, culture, family structure, customs, language, beliefs and kinship systems
- ▶ respect families' right to privacy and maintain confidentiality.

Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics

In relation to colleagues, I will:

- ▶ encourage others to adopt and act in accordance with this Code, and take action in the presence of unethical behaviours
- ▶ build a spirit of collegiality and professionalism through collaborative relationships based on trust, respect and honesty
- ▶ acknowledge and support the diverse strengths and experiences of colleagues to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills
- ▶ use constructive processes to address differences of opinion in order to negotiate shared perspectives and actions
- ▶ participate in a 'lively culture of professional inquiry' to support continuous improvement
- ▶ implement strategies that support and mentor colleagues to make positive contributions to the profession
- ▶ maintain ethical relationships in my online interactions.

In relation to the profession, I will:

- ▶ base my work on research, theories, content knowledge, practice evidence and my understanding of the children and families with whom I work
- ▶ take responsibility for articulating my professional values, knowledge and practice and the positive contribution our profession makes to society
- ▶ engage in critical reflection, ongoing professional learning and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession
- ▶ work within the scope of my professional role and avoid misrepresentation of my professional competence and qualifications
- ▶ encourage qualities and practices of ethical leadership within the profession
- ▶ model quality practice and provide constructive feedback and assessment for students as aspiring professionals
- ▶ mentor new graduates by supporting their induction into the profession
- ▶ advocate for my profession and the provision of quality education and care.

In relation to the community and society, I will:

- ▶ learn about local community contexts and aspirations to create responsive programs to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing
- ▶ collaborate with people, services and agencies to develop shared understandings and actions that support children and families
- ▶ use research and practice-based evidence to advocate for a society where all children have access to quality education and care
- ▶ promote the value of children's contribution as citizens to the development of strong communities
- ▶ work to promote increased appreciation of the importance of childhood including how children learn and develop to inform programs and systems of assessment that benefit children
- ▶ advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics extract is reprinted with permission.
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Practice task 14

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

Case study

Felix is concerned that his son Will is playing too many computer games at after school care. Felix approaches Lei, the program coordinator, and tells her about his concern.

Lei explains the timetable for computer use and notes that Felix arrives for Will during his turn on the computer and that Will is not on the computer all afternoon. She asks Felix about his concerns and if he would prefer for Will not to use the computer or to reduce the time on the computer.

Felix explains that he feels that Will should not use the computer at all during the program because when he comes home he wants to play on his own computer again until dinner is cooked. This suits the family because afterwards they spend time together, and it means that there are no interruptions while dinner is being organised. In addition, when Felix arrives to pick Will up he doesn't want to come home, and it means that Felix has to wait for Will and pester him to finish playing.

Lei shows understanding of Felix's concerns by nodding and thanking him for explaining. She says she will involve Will in other activities.

Lei explains the situation to the other educators and they come up with a plan. They agree that Felix's problem is around Will having too much time on the computer, and note that their home routine is working well, so the program should try to meet the needs of the family so this continues. They come up with some alternative activities that Will might enjoy.

The next night Lei talks to Will. She suggests that he participate in some activities other than using the computer, so that children who have no computer at home can use it for longer. Will is not concerned about this and thinks it's a good idea because he has a friend who doesn't have a computer at home. Lei finds Will some puzzles and a conundrum book, and he works with a small group of children working these out together.

When Felix arrives to pick him up that day, Will is excited to see him. He tells his father about one of the conundrums and asks him to try to solve it. They leave the program happily, with Felix still trying hard to work out the conundrum.

1. Did Lei follow a six-step approach when resolving this situation? Explain your response.

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2. Was the outcome of this situation a win-win solution, a win-lose solution or a lose-lose solution?

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3. The first point of the ECA Code of Ethics is to 'act in the best interests of all children'. How does this point help you when resolving differences with parents?

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4D Address difficulties

In some circumstances, a difficult situation may escalate into conflict. Conflict occurs in most settings and may begin over small and insignificant events or very big and important issues. Conflict is usually a struggle between two or more people over their different opinions, values, behaviours, ideas and goals. Most people see conflict as negative, as it is often unresolved and may leave those involved feeling hurt or frustrated. As discussed earlier, conflict can actually be positive, as it indicates that people are thinking about what is happening and are willing to express their needs and ideas to bring about change.



Handling conflict

When you experience a difficulty, you need to approach the situation in a professional and non-biased manner, and acknowledge the perspective and experience of each person. When conflict is handled appropriately, the resolution can lead to positive changes and greater understanding of the other person's priorities and opinions. You may also gain a greater understanding of the different roles within your service.

To avoid conflict escalating, it needs to be dealt with as soon as it comes to the attention of the right person. In some conflict situations, you can easily employ problem-solving and negotiation strategies. However, your efforts may not be successful, or the situation may be out of your area of responsibility.

Involve the appropriate person

If a conflict can't be resolved, it should be reported to a more senior person. Your workplace should have strategies in place for reporting a conflict; for example, telling your supervisor or completing a form.

Always stay calm and speak slowly and clearly when there is a conflict, so there is minimal opportunity for misinterpretation. Think about who the right person is for dealing with the issue and, if this isn't you, attempt to involve them as soon as possible.

Use a mediator

Mediation occurs when a conflict or concern exists between two parties. The mediator is someone who is not involved in the situation, so they can see things without bias. Mediation may not be possible if you are involved in, or have a preference for, the outcome. It is possible to mediate if your bias is related to guidelines, legislation or other static information.

A mediator might be someone who leads the organisation, or someone who has the role of mediator. You may also be the mediator if you are capable and are not involved in the conflict. In some situations a mediator from outside the service may be required to resolve differences and to demonstrate a totally open and unbiased view.

Follow policies and procedures

The service philosophy, policies and handbooks must be provided to parents on enrolment and to staff during the induction period. These policies are developed and implemented to embrace diversity and inclusion, and ensure consistency in the approach of educators. These documents may also be used to educate parents about the beliefs and values of the service, or to encourage the formation of a parent committee.

The policies and procedures you will most likely refer to for conflict resolution are provided here.

Discipline procedure

This procedure is in place to deal with situations where the actions of a staff member are inappropriate. The process outlines the steps that should be taken to resolve the issue and who should be included in the resolution. The discipline procedure may include guidelines related to termination of employment, stating particular circumstances when this might occur.

Grievance procedure

This procedure can be used if issues arise between staff members. The procedure should help the staff member understand what to do and who to speak with to resolve the issue.

Complaints procedure

This procedure is used when a parent, guardian, volunteer, student or member of the community has a problem. It should outline the process of what should occur to resolve the issue, who should be responsible for dealing with the issue and how it should be reported. In some circumstances complaints must be notified to government departments, particularly any complaint relating to the service allegedly breaching a regulation or Act.

Other sources of help

Professional associations, including unions and regulatory bodies, are there to help those who need support when difficulties arise.



Assistance provided

- ▶ Providing opportunities for people to meet and discuss issues
- ▶ Providing up-to-date information
- ▶ Providing advice and guidance
- ▶ Acting as a lobby group or public voice
- ▶ Promoting standards of acceptable practice



Professional organisations

- ▶ Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS)
- ▶ Community Child Care (CCC)
- ▶ Early Childhood Australia (ECA)
- ▶ United Voice (the education and care services union)
- ▶ Australian Services Union (ASU)
- ▶ Education and Care Services regulatory authorities – listed through ACECQA

Example

Consult appropriate people

Abbey, a parent, approaches Gabriella, a new staff member. Abbey asks Gabriella if she can help her with a problem. Abbey explains that she is unhappy about the new menu at the service, as it doesn't provide a good variety of food for her dairy-intolerant son. Gabriella says that she thinks it best to speak to the right person, and she takes Abbey through to the kitchen to speak to the cook.



Practice task 15

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

Case study

Aaron is unhappy. Sable, his co-educator, consistently makes comments to parents about him being a male in the education and care industry. She says things like:

- ▶ 'Oh, isn't it great to see men in this industry.'
- ▶ 'He really changes nappies, I watch him do it.'
- ▶ 'He is so gentle with the babies; you would swear he was gay.'

Aaron has mentioned to Sable that her comments make him feel uncomfortable and that he should be treated like every other educator; however, Sable continues to make the comments.

1. Should Aaron involve another person in this issue, or should he keep telling Sable to stop?

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2. Which procedure do you think Aaron should follow when trying to resolve this issue?

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3. If Aaron wanted to involve a mediator, who might be some suitable people to fill the role?

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4. What is mediation and what does the mediator do?

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Summary

- ▶ Conflict may arise from disagreement over regular routines and practices due to differing values and expectations.
- ▶ People often manage conflict in habitual ways, generally learnt in childhood.
- ▶ Not all conflict is negative; it can lead to mutual problem-solving and strengthened relationships.
- ▶ Creative solutions involve finding points of agreement and seeking to satisfy both parties.
- ▶ Conflict resolution can be structured around a simple six-step framework.
- ▶ Issues that cause concern or conflict must be identified early and reported to the appropriate people.
- ▶ To avoid conflict escalating, it needs to be dealt with as soon as it is noticed by the right person.
- ▶ Mediation occurs when a conflict or concern exists between two parties/people. The mediator is someone who is not involved in the situation, so they can see things without bias.

Learning checkpoint 4

Promote understanding across diverse groups

Part A

A child does not make eye contact with their educator. Is it reasonable to assume this is a cultural norm, or should more be found out to see if it relates to the child's confidence or communication skill development?

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Part B

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

Case study

Ken usually plays with a group of boys in a construction or puzzle game. Today he is playing dress-ups and has been experimenting with the skirts and dresses, as some of the children have been dancing and he noticed that the skirts twirl around when they spin.

Janet, his mother, arrives and is unhappy about seeing Ken in a skirt. Janet abruptly tells Ken to take off the dress and sit at the door. Janet strides off toward Kyrelee, the educator responsible for the children and their program of activities.

Janet: 'What's he doing in a dress, are you nuts?'

Kyrelee: 'Hi Janet, Ken's just playing, but I can see you're upset about this.'

Janet: 'You bet I am! Don't you think it's wrong, him doing that? Shouldn't you be getting him into block-building and sandpit stuff?'

1. Janet is sharing some of her social and cultural world views. List **two** values you notice she expresses within this case study.

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2. Should Kyrelee handle this complaint or should she pass this to another person? Explain your answer.

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3. If Kyrelee and Janet were unable to resolve the situation, who should become involved and why?

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4. Which procedure should Kyrelee refer Janet to if the problem isn't resolved quickly?

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5. If Kyrelee was rude to Janet and told her she was homophobic and biased, what procedure would the service manager use?

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6. If Kyrelee felt she was being treated unfairly by her manager, which professional organisation should she contact? Explain why she should contact them, who they are, and how to contact them.

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