

**CHCECE030**

**Support inclusion and diversity**

I am going to  
and I know  
ride my  
bike. I  
have my  
the  
doll



**Learner Guide**



**Updated to include  
National Quality  
Framework changes**



CHCECE030

# Support inclusion and diversity

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 2.1



## CHCECE030 Support inclusion and diversity, Release 1

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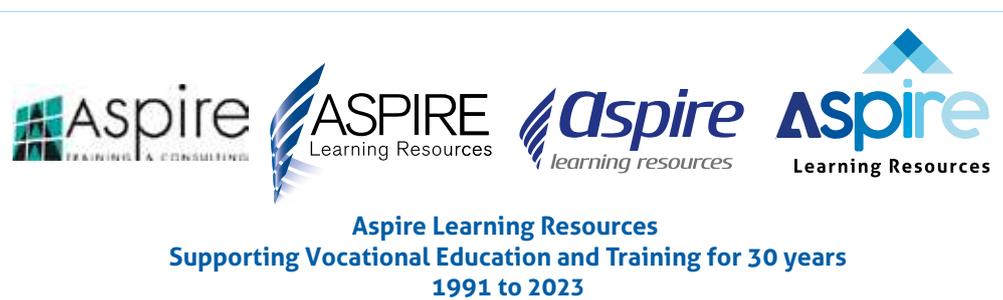
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# Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCECE030 Support inclusion and diversity*, Release 1.

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

## How to work through this Learner Guide

This Learner Guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the Learner Guide you need to read, and which Practice Tasks and Learning Checkpoints you need to complete.

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 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.</li> </ul>
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.</li> </ul>
Practice Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.</li> </ul>
Summaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.</li> </ul>
Learning Checkpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.</li> </ul>

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

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
T2	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
T1-T3	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
T1, T2	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	<b>Early Years Learning Framework</b>
	<b>Principles</b>
T3	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T1-T3	Partnerships
T1-T3	Respect for diversity
T1-T3	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
T1-T3	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
T1-T3	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	<b>Practice</b>
T3	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
T3	Responsiveness to children
T3	Play-based learning and intentionality
T3	Learning environments
T1-T3	Cultural responsiveness
T3	Continuity of learning and transitions
T3	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
T3	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
T3	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
T3	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
T3	4. Children are confident and involved learners
T3	5. Children are effective communicators





## Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

- 1A** Developing cultural responsiveness
- 1B** Reflecting on values and biases

# Understanding and reflecting on cultural responsiveness

*Cultural diversity includes the wide variety of ways we live and learn in society.*

When you recognise the uniqueness of all people, you are acknowledging and accepting cultural diversity.

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

# 1A Developing cultural responsiveness

*You have the responsibility to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.*

All staff need to work together for the good of others: co-workers, children, families and the community. There are a number of ideals that you can work towards:

- treating all people fairly and respectfully
- taking responsibility for creating an inclusive environment
- being responsible for identifying and improving diversity and inclusion.

## Diversity

*Diversity refers to a wide range of cultural characteristics and the state of being unique.*

Diversity is reflected in:

- the type of food someone eats
- the clothes they wear
- the music they listen to
- the language they speak
- their political and religious beliefs
- things that are important to them
- attitudes about people's rights
- expectations of others
- how they identify themselves.

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

Here are examples of factors that may influence cultural identity.



### Beliefs and customs

Every family has its own beliefs and customs which reflect the family's values. These values are associated with a race, religion or other cultural aspect.

Some families believe leisure time is the most important thing in their life; some value education; whereas others place a high value on money, wealth and material possessions.



### Race, culture and ethnicity

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

An ethnic group is a distinct group with specific characteristics. People of the same ethnicity might share the same:

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

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



### Language

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

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



### Religion and spiritual beliefs

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

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

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



### Life experiences, personal history and experiences of trauma

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



### Family history

Ancestry or family history may influence traits or behaviours that are evident in your family's behaviours. For example, you may discover that your ancestors have lived through tragedies or triumphed against the odds. You may discover that your own attitudes and beliefs are linked with this history.

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



### **Families granted political asylum or refugee status**

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

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

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

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



### **Family structure**

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

- Nuclear families: Two parents raising children. These may be male/female parents or same-sex parents.
- Single-parent families: One parent raising children.
- Extended families: Two or more adults raising children in one home.
- Step or blended families: Two separate families merged into one.
- Grandparent families: A grandparent or grandparents raising children.



### Gender, gender identification, relationships and sexual orientation

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

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

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

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

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

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



### Age and generation

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

The different generations include:

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

Older people have adapted to many changes throughout their lives.

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



### Ability, disability and intergenerational disadvantage

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

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

Categories of disability include:

- Physical: Affects a person's mobility or dexterity.
- Intellectual: Affects a person's ability to learn.
- Psychiatric: Affects a person's mental health.
- Sensory: Affects a person's ability to use senses such as sight, hearing, touch.
- Neurological: Results in the loss of some bodily or mental functions.

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

Intergenerational disadvantage refers to those who have lacked adequate support and education in early childhood. This disadvantage may have reduced their educational attainment and/or mental or physical health. In turn this can create ongoing challenges that contribute to economic, social and learning problems.



### Socioeconomic circumstances

Socioeconomic status combines a person's social and financial situation together to describe their circumstances.

Someone living in a low socioeconomic area might have poor services and a low income.

Someone living in a high socioeconomic area is more likely to have excellent services and a high income.

Often people with a low socioeconomic status have low education levels and/or physical or mental health problems.

## Example

### Family history

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

#### Example 1

Phoebe was raised in a family that ran its own business. Phoebe and her siblings all worked in the business, where they learnt about having a strong work ethic.

Phoebe was always on time for her shifts and concentrated on her tasks, completing each one before beginning another.

Now, as a mother, she promotes the same values and work ethics with her children, ensuring they are punctual and always focused on the job at hand.

**Example 2**

Sabine has always been surrounded by a large extended family. She spent a lot of her childhood with her aunts, cousins and grandparents. Sabine views family as being all of these people and seeks advice from many of her extended family members when she is unsure what to do in a situation.

Sabine always prioritises time with her family and never misses a gathering. She has taken on board many of the beliefs and values she has been exposed to throughout her life from close contact with her extended family. She feels enriched by the variety of viewpoints and ways of operating that have been modelled by them.

**Example 3**

Cole was raised in a family where education was highly valued and encouraged, as it was expected that it would lead to constructive thought and personal growth. Cole sees providing a good education for his own children as a huge priority for his family.

## Inclusion and cultural responsiveness

*Being aware of your own world view allows you to develop positive attitudes towards others, gain knowledge of different cultural practices and develop cross-cultural communication techniques.*

When you have this ability you are being inclusive and showing cultural responsiveness. People interacting with inclusive environments will feel a sense of belonging, as well as feeling valued and respected.

Cultural responsiveness is the ability to effectively communicate and interact with people of different cultures. . It is also a practice identified in the approved learning framework, *Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia* (EYLF).

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

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

Children need to be taught respect and how to interact positively with adults and peers, including those who are different from themselves. Educators who are culturally responsive are able to develop a culturally relevant and enriching curriculum. This also teaches children to reject bias and stand up for themselves and others who may be experiencing discrimination. When you demonstrate cultural responsiveness in your work role, children can learn and experience acceptance for who they are. They will be encouraged to question behaviours that do not show respect or acceptance of others.

# Cultural sensitivity

*When you are culturally sensitive, you accept and value diversity.*

Cultural sensitivity involves:

- being aware of the expectations of various cultures
- accepting alternative ways of life
- being receptive to different needs and values.

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

Some things to be sensitive about are explained here.

## Background information

Politics, religion, income and health status are topics that often cause tension. Many people feel uncomfortable when you bring these up, particularly when you first meet them.

## Personal information

It may be a sign of disrespect to discuss or request information about someone's personal life. This may include discussion about or even reference to deceased people.

## Personal space

People have different 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.

Personal contact expectations have been altered worldwide as we adapt to the dangers of COVID-19 and are required to meet personal distancing expectations.

## Eye contact

Individuals and their families have different eye contact protocols. For example, in some cultures eye contact is a sign of honesty and respect; in others it shows a lack of respect.

## Tone of voice

The use of loud and direct language for communication can be a norm for some while others may find this rude.

## Non-verbal communication

Communication using hand gestures is common in many cultures; for example, shaking hands, giving a thumbs up or gesticulating when speaking. This may be polite in one culture and offensive to another.

## Decision-making

In Australia, we 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.

## Agreement

Some may see it as rude to disagree with someone who is considered to be in a superior position, such as an elder, a manager, a father or grandparent.

## Cultural safety

*Culturally safe environments are created by people who respect others and themselves.*

Consider your own needs, but acknowledge that these needs do not overshadow the needs of others.

You might have already taken steps to understand your own personal culture and identify how this impacts on others. To create cultural safety, you must act in a way that shows others you care about their needs and are interested in their choices. This helps others to feel respected and included. When people feel welcomed in this way, they feel empowered, valued, understood, supported, willing to participate, and open to the feelings and ideas of others.

### To create a culturally safe environment you can:

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

## Discrimination

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

This might be on the grounds of race, age or gender, or any other key area of diversity. It can include harassment, victimisation or bullying.

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

Children do not have all the information or skills they need to make choices or find out about others. Early in life they begin to identify differences between themselves and others and start to question these. Most children begin to stereotype, make judgments and discriminate against others because it is natural for them to match new information with what they already know. If they are supported to understand differences and to appreciate the fact that all people are different, they will be less likely to discriminate.

Adults who have not learnt these skills in childhood often hold strong attitudes that are inflexible. These lead to negative reactions that can hurt, cause inappropriate decision-making and isolate people.

## Strategies to eliminate bias and discrimination in the workplace

- Encourage a diverse range of people to participate in the service.
- Develop diverse work teams.
- Ensure all posters, literature, signs and displays are culturally sensitive.
- Be inclusive when making decisions.
- Use interpreters and specialised care contacts when needed.

## Practice Task 1

1. Draw a line to match each concept about cultural responsiveness to the correct definition.

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| * Inclusion                   | * Built through understanding your own culture and the cultures of others.                      |
| * Culturally sensitive        | * Refers to the wide range of cultural characteristics and the state of being different.        |
| * Diversity                   | * This helps others to feel a sense of belonging, and to feel valued and respected.             |
| * Cultural responsiveness     | * A non-biased attitude and acceptance of other people's values, opinions, customs and beliefs. |
| * Culturally safe environment | * This is created when people respect others and themselves.                                    |
| * Discrimination              | * The unjust or negative treatment of a person based on a key area of diversity.                |

2. Which of the following statements about cultural awareness are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
| a. When young children lack quality care and education, this may influence their later social, economical and learning abilities.  | * Yes | * No |
| b. Culturally responsiveness educators are able to effectively communicate and interact with people of different cultures.   | * Yes | * No |
| c. Bias and discrimination are normal feelings and these are hard to change. Educators can support each other by discussing their feelings and letting each other know which situations they would rather not deal with. | * Yes | * No |

**3. Which one of the following are correct examples of cultural characteristics?**

- Gender identification relates to whether you are attracted to male or female partners
- All adults that have lacked quality early childhood support will experience intergenerational disadvantage.
- A person's socioeconomic circumstances may be influenced by intergenerational disadvantage.
- If a family member is not able to explain their child's needs clearly, they will most likely be suffering a disability.

# 1B Reflecting on values and biases

*Culture involves rituals, practices, stories, customs, beliefs and values.*

For many, culture is about the country they are from, the language they speak and their physical features, such as the colour of their skin. However, culture includes much more than this. It is influenced by the set of beliefs, values and traditions that have been instilled since birth through socialisation, and is influenced by family and the wider society.

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



Culture is about sharing rituals, practices and customs.

## National Quality Standard

*The National Quality Standard (NQS) guides inclusive practice and forms the basis for policy development.*

Ultimately, each child's and family's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program – this links to NQS Element 1.1.2. Additionally, Element 4.2.2 states that professional standards must guide the practice, interactions and relationships of all educators and other staff in a service.

The NQS provides specific expectations through Quality area 5: Relationships with children and Quality area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.

The following elements link to cultural responsiveness and inclusion.

Element	Descriptor
Element 5.1.1: Positive educator to child interactions	Responsive and meaningful interactions build trusting relationships which engage and support each child to feel secure, confident and included.
Element 5.1.2: Dignity and rights of the child	The dignity and rights of every child are maintained.
Element 5.2.1: Collaborative learning	Children are supported to collaborate, learn from and help each other.
Element 6.1.2: Parent views are respected	The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
Element 6.2.2: Access and participation	Effective partnerships support children's access, inclusion and participation in the program.

The Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations support these elements in the following ways.

<b>National Law Section 157 – Access for parents</b>	A parent of a child may enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for by the service.
<b>Regulation 155 – Interactions with children</b>	Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the following occurs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children are encouraged to express themselves and their opinions.</li> <li>➤ Children undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.</li> <li>➤ The dignity and rights of each child are maintained at all times.</li> <li>➤ Each child is provided positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour.</li> <li>➤ Family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for are considered and catered for.</li> </ul>
<b>Regulation 156 – Relationships in groups</b>	Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that children are provided with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members and volunteers.

## Approved learning frameworks

*The learning frameworks describe professional educators as people who are willing to succeed, meet their goals and take responsibility for their own and others' needs.*

To do this, you must engage in lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is about being open to new information and thinking about how you can learn from your experiences. The learning journey of cultural responsiveness enables you to face new experiences to be able to encourage learning and development.

One of the five principles outlined in the approved learning framework (EYLF) is 'Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning', which encourages you to continually ask questions, reflect and improve on your practice. This principle asks every educator to take responsibility for learning about others and being critical of themselves in order to:

- develop to meet program and curriculum needs
- show acceptance for others
- build services where diversity is welcomed and celebrated.

### Questions to guide reflection

- > What do I understand about each child?

---

- > What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?

---

- > Who is advantaged when I work in the way I do?

---

- > Who is disadvantaged?

---

- > What questions do I have about my work?

---

- > What am I challenged by?

---

- > What am I curious about?

---

- > What am I confronted by or anxious about?

---

- > What parts of my work are not helped by the information that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?

---

- > Is there other information that could help me to understand what I have observed or experienced? How might that information affect my practice?

---

## Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics

*The Early Childhood Australia (ECA) Code of Ethics sets out core principles and responsibilities for inclusion.*

It states that an educator's responsibility is to follow the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Core principles for educators are stated to include the following:

- > 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.

The Code of Ethics sets out responsibilities for inclusion as shown below.

### **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
- collaborate with children as global citizens in learning about our shared responsibilities to the environment and humanity
- 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
- respect children as capable learners by including their perspectives in teaching, learning and assessment.

### **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 in order to build shared professional knowledge, understanding and skills
- use constructive processes to address differences of opinion in order to negotiate shared perspectives and actions.

### **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.

### **In relation to community and society, I will:**

- learn about local community contexts and aspirations in order 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
- advocate for the development and implementation of laws and policies that promote the rights and best interests of children and families.

### 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
- engage in a process of reflection, ongoing professional learning and support research that builds my knowledge and that of the profession as well as 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.

Source: Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

## Your culture

*Your culture is created by the community attitudes, languages, policies and structures that you have experienced.*

These life experiences inform your perspectives, which refers to your beliefs or how you see things.

You may not realise your culture until you are removed from it. This may occur when you are exposed to new experiences or new people who live in different ways to you or look differently to yourself. Examining your own culture and how it has developed will help you to understand how the culture of others has evolved, and how important beliefs and values change to form new ways of viewing the world.

You can reflect on your perspectives by using a process of reflection where you look at yourself and think about your attitudes, knowledge and skills. A process of reflection helps you to identify your strengths and weaknesses and pinpoint where you might improve. It is an activity you must do continually if you are to challenge your own perspectives and biases.

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

Some tools you may use to reflect include the following.

### Learning frameworks

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

### Reflecting on your bias

Consider your point of view in relation to others and work towards opening up to learning and gaining feedback.

### Reflective cycles

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

## Reflective cycle

*Reflection and regular review of the learning environment enables you to maintain a responsive and respectful program for all children and families.*

Here is a reflective cycle that is commonly used to help people think about and make sense of their personal life experiences, including developing self-awareness and an understanding of how your own behaviours may contribute to inclusive practice.



This reflective cycle has six stages. By looking at each stage in turn, you can ask yourself a series of questions. The reflective cycle can be used to help you analyse interactions, relationships, cultural responsiveness and the impact of discrimination. The cycle can also support you to reflect on the potential impact of your own background on interactions and relationships with others as outlined in the following.

### Description

- Reflect on and describe your background and upbringing. Include your feelings and the values and expectations you have learnt.
- You might reflect on biases and stereotypes you have, positive life experiences you have had with other cultures or when you were exposed to cultures or people that you felt uncomfortable around.

## Feelings

- What feelings have you had about your upbringing as a child, teenager and adult?
- How do you feel about others, particularly those different from you?
- What feelings (both positive and negative) do you experience that are related to diversity?
- Do your feelings affect the way you interact with, relate to or accept others?

## Evaluation and analysis

- How well do you accept others?
- What would you like to change about yourself or your actions?
- What skills and weaknesses have you noticed?
- How do your feelings and reactions affect your interactions and relationships with others?

## Analysis

- What can you do next?
- What can you do differently?
- What skills do you need to develop?
- What abilities could you increase?
- What do you need to understand better?

## Conclusion

- What conclusion can you draw from your analysis?
- At this stage, you can:
  - set some goals
  - break your goals into steps
  - plan learning, education or discussion
  - plan further or more specific reflection
  - ask for support or help.

## Action

- Act to improve by carrying out your plans.

In addition to completing a reflective cycle, you might attempt to increase your cultural responsiveness and intensify your reflection by doing one or more of the following:

- Use a diary and record conversations or events, then analyse your responses and work towards being a more effective communicator.
- Have regular team, room or network meetings and reflect on how the curriculum is influencing you and catering to all needs, interests and backgrounds.
- Participate in 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 your strengths and weaknesses.
- Research to gain a deeper understanding of difference, culture and attitudes.

## 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 about being open and willing to accept others and find out how you can respect their values and beliefs.

Your cultural awareness will strengthen over time if you continue to reflect on how your background and history influences your actions and beliefs. To work inclusively you must allow the impact of these life experiences to change your personal behaviour, interpersonal relationships, your perceptions and your social expectations of others.

You will learn new information from having an open attitude and reflecting on your own biases. In doing this, you will expand your knowledge and be working towards cultural competence.

You will learn new information from having an open attitude and reflecting on your own biases. In doing this, you will expand your knowledge and be working towards cultural responsiveness.

A process of reflection:

- allows you to examine your own beliefs and values
- helps you to develop an awareness of others
- enables you to think about why you behave in a certain way, and what is important to you as an educator
- assists you to identify any bias you may have, and develop a more inclusive view
- enhances your cultural responsiveness.

Keep in mind that cultural awareness is about how you treat all people in every part of your life, not just at work.

There are four common levels of cultural awareness, as outlined below.

### **Level 1 – Unconsciously incompetent**

Initially you may not realise that you have biases and judgmental attitudes. You might make mistakes and misinterpret the meaning of others.

### **Level 2 – Consciously incompetent**

As you develop, you may be consciously biased. At this point, you agree to acknowledge that people are different, but don't fully understand these differences. You are unaware of how important the recognition of difference is to others, and you may feel overwhelmed by trying to 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 valuing others.

## Reflecting on your bias

*Values and beliefs that form a person's culture are created from past life experiences.*

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 them, cultural bias occurs. Cultural bias usually comes from fear or misunderstanding.

Your attitudes are influenced by your personal life experiences from childhood until now, including life events and the different people you have met and interacted with. Child rearing and family expectations play a major role in this development of attitudes. Culture also changes over time due to factors such as laws, society's values, new practices and relocation.

By thinking about your beliefs using reflective processes, you can identify biased behaviours and work towards having more positive attitudes. To do this, you must first be open and willing to find out about yourself and other people and to consider how diversity impacts on the different social, economic, cultural and political aspects of work and life.

### Questions to reflect on your perspectives

- Am I able to work together with all families?

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- Do I have positive relationships with my co-workers?

---

- Are the expectations I have for children, staff, families and stakeholders based on my cultural background or theirs?

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- Do I treat all people I socialise with in an equitable and friendly manner?

---

- Do I include various cultural needs in my practices?

---

- Do I take the time to research cultures or backgrounds that are unfamiliar to me?

---

- Do I have the ability to interact with a variety of individuals, regardless of their cultural background?

---

- Do I have any biases that I need to work on?

---

- How do I feel about my cultural perspectives?

---

- Do I have a realistic set of goals and objectives to strive towards when it comes to cultural understanding?

---

## Recognising limitations

*You will be unable to understand and accept others if you have not identified and understood yourself and your own limitations.*

Your limitations might be based on the level of knowledge you have about community attitudes, language, policies and structures of a culture, or about how these things impact on different people and groups.

When teaching children about different cultures, this presents you with an opportunity to increase your own cultural knowledge. By working inclusively and

providing learning experiences about familiar and unfamiliar cultures, you will be able to reflect on your practices, consider the people around you and will be better able to understand and accept those you meet in the future.

### This learning will lead to:

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

Cultural responsiveness is a cycle, not an end point. Reflection must be continuous as you learn and are faced with new challenges. You should also join with others to share expectations, attitudes and knowledge while drawing on your community resources. This shows that you value their identity and helps them to feel a sense of belonging.

### Example

#### Reflecting on skills

Lorna, an educator, is feeling anxious. She finds it challenging to introduce a new family to her service. Today she has no information about the family she is meeting and is not sure how to manage a situation where a family's cultural background is different to hers. Lorna wants to improve her skills and realises that a process of reflection can be a powerful tool. She decides to reflect on her skills of meeting new people so she can build her confidence. During her reflection she realises that she is biased towards some particular cultural characteristics and this is what makes her anxious. Lorna sets out some goals to help her get past this anxiety.



Lorna is showing that she is willing to improve her approach towards new families and being responsive to the needs of others.

## Gaining knowledge of other cultures

*Many local groups support people who have similar interests, backgrounds and cultural beliefs.*

You may like to approach these local community groups to gain new insights and information. Some community groups may invite you to share their culture. This is an excellent opportunity to learn, and you may be able to share this life experience with the children as part of an excursion or incursion. This type of connection gives you a broader picture of cultural beliefs and practices.

To gain deeper insight into other cultures, engage in meaningful discussions with families so you are aware of their expectations and goals. These conversations allow you to understand what they consider to be important so you can support this in your curriculum.

Educational opportunities arise when families are included in decisions about the curriculum and actively encouraged to participate. Families can provide suggestions for culturally responsive activities for children and can contribute relevant materials that may provide a richer learning environment for everyone.

You may contact services that provide professional development opportunities in relation to cultural responsiveness to further extend your knowledge and skills.

## Practising respectful behaviour

*Your attitude toward others is reflected in your day-to-day interactions with families, children and colleagues. These behaviours may be imitated by children.*

Provide an inclusive environment for children and develop respectful ways of supporting their involvement in the program. Model respectful communication by listening and responding to children's questions and ideas. This will be observed by children and incorporated in the way they respond to each other. Look for teachable moments where concepts of respect, fairness and equity can be shared with children in a developmentally appropriate way.

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

Each person has the right to their own cultural identity, and they should be supported to develop this. This is a starting point for developing cultural competency.

## Practice Task 2

### 1. Which five of the following guidelines relation to inclusion and diversity?

Select all that apply.

- NQS Element 6.1.2 – Parent views are respected: The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected, and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.
- Regulation 156 – Relationships in groups: Reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that children are provided with opportunities to interact and develop respectful and positive relationships with each other and with staff members and volunteers.
- The ECA Code of Ethics states that an educator's responsibility is to follow the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
- NQS Element 2.1.2 – Health practices and procedures: Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
- The ECA Code of Ethics core principles state that children are citizens from birth with civil, cultural, linguistic, social and economic rights.
- Each child's and family's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests must be the foundation of the program. Educators may identify if they are responding to these aspects as part of their critical reflection and ongoing professional learning.

## 2. Which of the following statements about cultural awareness are correct?

Select yes or no for each one.

- |  |       |      |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Cultural awareness can be achieved if you reflect on your own background and think about how this influences your values, beliefs and attitudes.                                  | * Yes | * No |
| b. As you become culturally aware, you will develop cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity.   | * Yes | * No |
| c. A process of reflection is a useful way for others to look at themselves and take your views into account. It allows you to share your background and help others understand you. | * Yes | * No |
| d. If you were angry at people that held bias against others, you would be showing that you will not tolerate discrimination in an appropriate way.                                  | * Yes | * No |

## Summary

- You have the right to work in a safe and respectful environment.
- You have the responsibility to create an environment where everyone feels safe, respected and valued.
- Diversity refers to a wide range of cultural characteristics and the state of being different.
- Being aware of your own world view allows you to:
  - develop positive attitudes towards others
  - gain knowledge of different cultural practices
  - develop cross-cultural communication skills.
- When you are culturally sensitive, you accept and value diversity by being aware of the expectations of various cultures, accepting alternative ways of life and being receptive to different needs and values.
- Culturally safe environments are created by people who respect others and themselves.
- Consider your own needs, but acknowledge that these needs do not overshadow the needs of others.
- Discrimination is the unjust or negative treatment of someone based on a personal characteristic.
- Culture is influenced by the set of beliefs, values and traditions that have been instilled since birth through socialisation, and is influenced by family and the wider society.
- A process of reflection and regular review of the learning environment enables you to maintain a responsive and respectful program for all children and families.
- Cultural awareness is about being open and willing to accept others and find out how you can respect their values and beliefs.

# Learning Checkpoint 1

## Understanding and reflecting on cultural responsiveness

### Part A

1. Draw a line to match each of the following inclusive practices to the correct NQS quality area.

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| * The information gathered about families should help develop responsive programs.  | * Quality area 5 |
| * When information about children's interest and strengths are gathered, educators can use this to develop responsive and enjoyable routines. | * Quality area 5 |
| * All children should be greeted using their names on arrival.  | * Quality area 1 |
| * Children's opinions and ideas are listened to and addressed.  | * Quality area 6 |
| * Families are encouraged to participate in the service and share any knowledge or skills they may have.                                      | * Quality area 1 |
| * Orientation allows families to share information about their individual beliefs and expectations.   | * Quality area 6 |

2. Draw a line to match each ECA Code of Ethics responsibility to the appropriate example of diversity and inclusion that Tony, an educator, implements.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| * Responsibilities in relation to colleagues     | * Tony sets up a variety of quiet, solitary and active experiences outdoors so all children have their needs met.  |
| * Responsibilities in relation to the community  | * At the next staff meeting Tony suggests that everyone write down one thing they are passionate about and discuss how their interests can be used most effectively in the curriculum. |
| * Responsibilities in relation to children       | * Tony speaks to all families on arrival and departure. He asks about their culture and shares information about the child's interests and daily activities.                           |
| * Responsibilities in relation to the profession | * Tony displays information from local community groups and services in the foyer.   |
| * Responsibilities in relation to families       | * Tony signs up to weekly newsletters from credible sources and attends professional development at least every six months.  |

## Part B

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

### Case study

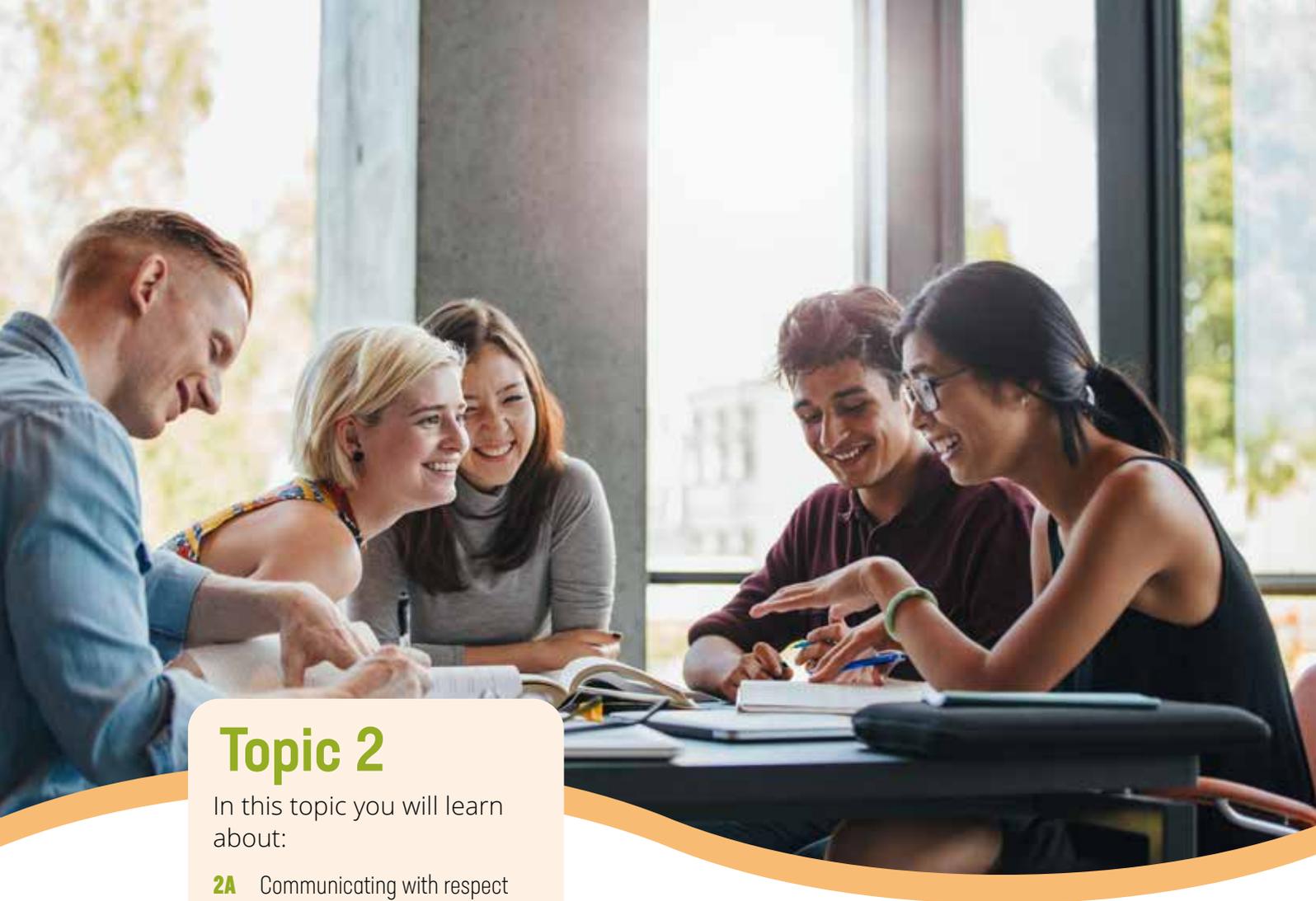
Janine grew up in an extended family where she lived with two older foster cousins and three older brothers. She was the youngest child by 14 years. Janine's parents were positive in their parenting style and Janine was never physically punished as a child.

As an adult, Janine is an early childhood educator and is close with her family. Her brothers and cousins now have children of their own. One of her cousins is married to his same-sex partner and they also have a child together. The whole family get together at birthdays and on public holidays to celebrate events such as Easter and Christmas. Each year Janine travels to Bali for a short holiday. During her holidays she has made friends with some locals living in Canggu and Gili Air.

1. Which of the following statements might Janine conclude if she was to reflect on her background and history and how these affect her values, beliefs and attitudes as part of her critical reflection and ongoing professional learning (EYLF)? Select yes or no for each one.
  - a. Janine's family background means that she relates all people who are older than her. \* Yes   \* No
  - b. Janine recognises that birthdays and public holidays are important family times for her, so she should incorporate them into her curriculum. \* Yes   \* No
  - c. From her travel and the people she has met, Janine has gained insight into how others live and what is important to them. She should try to include discussion about how others live in her curriculum. \* Yes   \* No
  - d. Janine believes that physical punishment is necessary for children to learn discipline. Her life experience is that smacking may help her resolve difficult behaviour challenges. \* Yes   \* No
  - e. All same-sex families would find Janine easy to work with. \* Yes   \* No

2. Which four of the following are appropriate actions for Janine to take to improve herself and her social awareness based on her process of reflection? Select all that apply.

- Check with a family on the terms for referring to their child's disability so she is showing respect.
- Gather some cultural items and photos of lifestyles on her next trip to Bali and bring them back to share with the children.
- Ask families to give permission for her to celebrate occasions she feels are important to her and her own family.
- Talk with her supervisor and gain some feedback on her practices.
- Check her understanding of inclusion, diversity and cultural safety, and refresh her knowledge of how she can role-model cultural awareness.
- Recognise that an educator who has experienced intergenerational disadvantage will not be able to complete effective reflection activities.



## Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

- 2A** Communicating with respect
- 2B** Establishing relationships
- 2C** Promoting participation

# Inclusive interactions and relationships

*Effective 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 staff you work with.

To provide a positive environment you must work on developing effective relationships, listening to the views of others about different issues and accepting that each individual has a right to their own opinion. You may not agree with their opinion, but you should still listen and respect it in order to understand others' 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.

## 2A Communicating with respect

*The way you communicate with another person can have an enormous impact on how you make that person feel, and the way they will respond.*

When you communicate you are role-modelling to children, families, colleagues and others. You have a wide range of influence and must consider how open, inclusive and ethical your interactions are.



Always show respect to people of different cultures and backgrounds.

### 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 the completion of work practices all rely on communication techniques.

You need to develop effective communication skills to ensure you communicate appropriately with both adults and children.

Here are explanations of different methods of communication.

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

<b>Written communication</b>	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.
<b>Signs</b>	Signs are pictorial or written messages that are usually displayed in a prominent location. Signs with pictographs are often used so those who are unable to read are still able to understand the message; for example, toilets may have a male and a female image on doors.
<b>Sign language</b>	Sign language may be used by those with a hearing impairment or learning difficulty as an aid when language is a barrier. In Australia, people use Auslan (Australian sign language). Other sign languages include Compic, where pictographs are used to communicate and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, where a computerised sign interface produces verbal language.

## Clear communication

*Whether your purpose is to hold a conversation, share information or ideas, give or receive a direction, set a limit or resolve a conflict or issue, your communication must be clear.*

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

When a language barrier exists or if you are working with a baby or toddler, you may use simple words and accompany these with gestures or body language.

### Tips for using clear communication

- Gain the person's attention.
- Provide a suitable environment, such as a quiet and private area for discussion.
- Use words that the person can understand, considering their age, race, abilities and culture.
- Use clear, specific and relevant words and avoid slang or abbreviated terms.
- Speak to the person directly.
- Use sentences that are easy to follow and interpret.
- Ask if the person needs more information and explain yourself in different ways.
- Use body language, words and a tone of voice that matches and try to avoid giving mixed messages.

## Communication influences

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

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

### Attitudes

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

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

### Stereotyping

Stereotyping occurs when you judge that someone or something fits a certain convention or standard; for example, assuming that all Japanese people are quiet and reserved.

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 have to say because you have stereotyped them as having particular beliefs and attitudes.

### Assumptions

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

### Values

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

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

### Environment

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

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

## Body language

*Body language tells as much about how you feel as the words you use.*

With this in mind, you need to think about the body language you display and be sure you are communicating meaningful and consistent messages that reflect the tone of voice you are using.

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

By noticing body language, you can gain more information about a person's mood or emotions. There are times when people choose to use body language to gain attention, let others know what type of mood they are in, or show whether or not they want to be spoken to.

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

<b>Touching</b>	Touching another person may communicate that you are being friendly; however, be aware that this may make some people feel uncomfortable and that you are moving too close.
<b>Glancing</b>	Glancing away may tell a person that you are not concentrating on what they are saying or that you are distracted.  Looking directly at the person and maintaining eye contact communicates that you are listening and taking the conversation seriously. However, be aware that some people find constant eye contact intimidating.
<b>Proximity</b>	If you physically distance yourself from the other person, it may indicate that you are uncertain or feel your space is being invaded. If you stand too close, it may make the other person feel uncomfortable.
<b>Posture</b>	A straight and open posture can imply interest or confidence. In contrast, it may suggest a lack of empathy or confidence if you have your arms crossed or your body is slumped or turned away from the other person.

**Example****Observing body language**

Elise 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 family member. One of her strategies is to watch their body language and then copy it.

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

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



## Communication barriers

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

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

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

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

By being aware of possible communication barriers, you can use strategies that help to establish relationships, such as being polite, showing empathy, being honest and maintaining confidence.

## Language barriers

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

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

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

You can also find 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.

Multilingual staff members can work with others using the same language to make sure information is shared fairly and clearly. They can:

- assist communication and the development of relationships
- support all children to explore different cultures and languages
- help to foster friendships, relationships and a sense of belonging.

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 by embracing and responding to diversity. More information regarding FKA's support services and mission statements can be found at: [aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services](https://aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services).

### You can use the support of an interpreter to:

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

## Inclusive language

*The way you use language conveys a message to others about yourself and your attitudes.*

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

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

- racist
- sexist
- discriminatory
- stereotypical
- derogatory.

To be sure your language is unbiased, consider whether the words you use may exclude someone or make them feel less valued than others. Try not to make generalisations. The words you choose should relate to the topic being discussed and should not be used to label individuals. For example, there is no need to include information like gender, skin colour or physical characteristics unless it is relevant to the discussion.

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

### Example

#### Avoiding biased communication

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

#### Example 1

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

#### Example 2

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

## Improving your communication skills

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

Learn and practise different ways to communicate with different people to develop your skills. Ask others if there are any ways you could improve your communication skills. This can be part of your critical reflection process.

### You may wish to improve your communication in relation to:

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

**Example**

**Improving communication skills**

Aisha was anxious about speaking to family members. To improve this skill, she asked her co-workers to give her responsibility for speaking to all family members at the start and end of each day. She talked to her co-workers about the things she should include at each discussion and this helped her feel more confident.



For the first week Aisha made some mistakes in what she chose to communicate, but her co-workers supported her and shared the role. By the second week Aisha was chatting to families easily and automatically knew what she should talk about. She had developed some strong relationships.

 **Practice Task 3**

Which of the following statements about communication demonstrate inclusive work practices that support cultural safety? Select yes or no for each one.

- a. Apart from language differences, non-verbal communication differs between individuals. \* Yes      \* No
- b. Your communication must be clear in order to effectively share information or ideas, give or receive a direction, set limits, or resolve a conflict or issue. \* Yes      \* No
- c. People who do not speak fluent English usually read English well, so they will be able to gain the information they need to understand the service expectations. \* Yes      \* No
- d. Body language doesn't tell as much about how you feel as the words you use. \* Yes      \* No
- e. By watching and listening, you can find out more about the way a person or group of people feel and the best way to interact with them. \* Yes      \* No

## 2B Establishing relationships

*You need to work consistently to create secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.*

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

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 person has their own characteristics, personalities, ideas, beliefs, rituals and cultural identities. If

you acknowledge this and build relationships based on the individual's needs, strengths and understanding, you will show an attitude that is respectful, open, responsive and approachable. Asking questions and showing interest can help you to further understand differences.

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



Set aside time to develop relationships with other educators and family members.

### Actions to build relationships

- Provide time to get to know each other.
- Offer multiple ways of communicating.
- Use interpreter services and bilingual support when required.
- Follow up requests and give feedback.
- Include ideas in curriculum planning and implementation.
- Interact with others in their first language, if possible.
- Incorporate links from home environments into the setting.

### Actions to develop the cultural responsiveness of others

- Encourage others to be actively involved in the curriculum.
- Provide opportunities for social meetings.
- Encourage discussion about cultural diversity with children.
- Display family and staff photos to help highlight diversity in the service and the community.
- Acknowledge countries of origin and share this in a meaningful way.
- Intervene when incidents relating to discrimination arise and use these as learning opportunities.
- Incorporate different cultural backgrounds into the curriculum.
- Share self-assessment tools such as the service quality improvement plan (QIP) with others.
- Gain feedback to guide the QIP and ongoing development of cultural responsiveness.

Becoming aware of someone's background allows you to make both the relationship and your environment enjoyable. By focusing on specific points such as knowledge, skills and values that reflect the uniqueness of each person, you can share in other cultures and learn from each other.

## Showing empathy

*Empathy is about showing understanding of another person's feelings.*

When you show empathy to others, they are more likely to feel accepted and supported. Showing empathy also lets the other person know that you care about them or their situation. Seeing things from someone else's point of view can help you better understand what they are trying to communicate.

There are many different ways you can show empathy, as outlined here.

### Listen

Listening is one of the most effective ways you can demonstrate empathy. To do this you should allow the other person time to talk, wait for them to finish talking and use what they have told you to continue the conversation.

### Share your feelings about what you have heard

When you share your feelings, you show the other person that you care. Avoid telling your own story or experience. This can lead to difficult professional situations and it usually makes the other person feel that you are not really listening to them.

### 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 are feeling.

### Withhold judgment

When showing empathy, stop yourself from making judgments or deciding whether the other person's situation or direction is good or bad. Instead, try to gain a deeper understanding. This does not necessarily mean that you agree with the other person, but it will allow you to find out more and to show that you care.

### Offer help

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

This might include:

- offering to listen more
- finding someone who can provide advice
- offering a referral or information on a service
- setting a goal or adapting the curriculum to meet the person's needs
- following through
- making improvements.

## Honesty

*Telling people what they want to hear instead of being honest often results in a negative outcome.*

This may not happen immediately, but over time dishonesty can lead to complications, including needing to tell further lies to protect yourself.

Being honest with everyone 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, and gather your facts through discussion or research before approaching confusing or difficult topics. It is better that you tell someone you don't know the answer yet, than to be dishonest or make something up that you later need to change.

Consider how you present honest feedback or comments. Honesty does not mean tactless communication. Information should still be relayed in a way that is caring, courteous and polite.

## Maintaining confidentiality

*Shared personal information can cause people to become upset and create negative relationships.*

Personal information is usually shared in confidence, so share what you have been told with those you must tell or are legally required to tell. Never discuss details shared with other people outside the workplace.

If someone shares information that you feel you should not be told, tell the other person you feel uncomfortable knowing this, or simply do not respond. If you feel concerned or find that someone continues to share confidential details, mention this to a supervisor.

### Example

#### Supporting confidentiality

During a break, educators Mason and Justine chat together. Justine mentions to Mason that she wants to tell him something, but that he can't tell anyone else. She starts to explain a situation where an educator had been involved in domestic violence.

Mason is shocked and doesn't know what to do. He didn't want to know this information. He stops Justine and tells her he would rather not know the details and doesn't feel that it's right to hear this from someone other than the person involved.

Later in the day, he hears Justine sharing the information with another educator. They both start discussing the details of the event and making judgments about what should happen next.

Mason decides to tell the director about this sharing of confidential information. He knows he would hate to have his own private details shared.



# Mutual trust

*Mutual trust can be built when you work with others to find out more about their life, beliefs and values, and create a comfortable setting that meets their needs.*

You can start to build mutual trust by doing the following:

- Welcome everyone to the service each day.
- Engage with others and help them to participate.
- Approach family members and welcome them, show them around and chat about their child’s day.
- Acknowledge the uniqueness of each person and incorporate any relevant information into your curriculum.
- Actively listen to all people.
- Engage in regular communication.
- Follow through with any promises made.

## Practice Task 4

1. Identify five work practices you could use to support cultural safety.

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2. Which of the following statements are correct about the communication techniques you would use to role-model open, inclusive and ethical interactions with children, families and colleagues? Select yes or no for each one.

- a. Being polite is about respecting and being considerate of other people’s feelings, culture and values.      \* Yes      \* No
- b. Listening, sharing your feelings, offering help, focusing your attention outwards and withholding judgment are actions you can take to maintain confidentiality.      \* Yes      \* No
- c. Approaching family members and welcoming them, showing them around and chatting about their child’s day are actions you can take to help build mutual trust.      \* Yes      \* No

## 2C Promoting participation

*It is important to promote participation and ensure inclusive practices are followed, particularly in relation to marginalised groups.*

Marginalisation is when groups of people or individuals are ignored or cannot participate due to a policy or process that doesn't recognise their difference. It can mean that someone is socially excluded or misses out on something based on their personal characteristics. Marginalisation is about inequality and rights, power, social norms and lack of suitable support and services.



People with a disability often experience marginalisation.

Marginalisation often places people in situations that are very hard to get out of.

Even if their reason for being excluded may be reduced or eliminated, the stigma of being marginalised creates a barrier that is extremely difficult to overcome.

If someone views themselves as being excluded, you need to take their perception seriously, rather than telling them their view is wrong. When people feel their rights and needs are continually refused or ignored, they may lose confidence in others or in the service. They may also lose confidence in themselves and their abilities.

When families are socially excluded, their children are affected.

### Needs of marginalised groups

*Some marginalised groups or individuals present with physical, mental, emotional and trauma-induced needs.*

The following provides further explanation of these needs.

#### Physical needs

People who have physical disabilities may have additional physical needs. They might be marginalised due to having difficulty in finding services that are accessible, 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 linked with medication, anxiety 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.

While mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression are on the rise in the community, many suffering the affliction keep their illness secret as they fear feeling vulnerable or judged.

## Emotional needs and 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 anxiety around a particular issue may make them feel marginalised.

## Diversity characteristics

A person's diversity characteristics might cause them to feel marginalised as they could feel isolated or discriminated against. They may feel that they are judged or that an aspect of their identity has been portrayed incorrectly or in a biased or stereotyped way.

The person may feel they are marginalised due to their:

- beliefs
- customs
- race
- ethnicity
- language
- religion
- family history
- political asylum
- refugee status
- family structure
- gender identity
- relationships
- sexual orientation
- age
- ability
- socioeconomic status.

Life experiences, personal history, trauma and personality traits can also lead to marginalisation.

### Example

#### Marginalisation

Paige uses an electric wheelchair. She lost the use of her legs through multiple sclerosis. Paige is a very reliable worker and uses her administrative skills in a bookkeeping role.

Paige's workstation is located on the ground floor because it provides for wheelchair access. However, most of the administrative employees work on the first floor which is accessed via the stairs. Participating in normal workplace discussions with her colleagues is difficult for Paige and she has found it difficult to establish effective workplace relationships. Paige has been socially marginalised due to her physical needs.



## Protective factors

*Protective factors are skills people can develop so they can cope more effectively with stress and anxiety.*

Protective factors can reduce the impact of discrimination and marginalisation, and enable socially excluded people to gain power and equality.

If you help to build these skills in children and encourage them in families as well as other educators, they will be able to deal more effectively with negative situations and disappointment.

Here are some protective factors and ways they can be supported in children.

### Resilience

- Resilience is the ability to manage stress and negative life experiences.
- It can be developed by becoming better at solving problems, building trusting relationships and maintaining a positive attitude.
- Resilience is higher when people have help and support networks or systems available.

### Social connection

- Social connections include friends, family, co-workers, neighbours and others in the community that can provide emotional support and assistance with issues.
- These connections can be developed when you offer support, help to solve problems and listen to and respect others' opinions and values.
- People who are socially isolated are more likely to be involved in domestic violence and abuse.

### Child development and understanding

- Knowing the expectations of development and having clear strategies for positively managing challenges helps to reduce anxiety and stress.
- When individual children are understood and responded to, they develop more effectively and have stronger protective factors.
- This understanding can be increased when educators share information regularly and develop relationships where information-sharing is two-way and respectful.

### Personal support

- Personal support includes making sure that basic needs such as food, clothing and healthcare are provided. More specialised needs include counselling and other specialised support services and treatments.

### Self-esteem

- When people feel empowered and have self-worth, they interact more positively with others and communicate their feelings positively.
- Their behaviours are more controlled and their anxieties and stress levels are generally lower due to the confidence they feel in themselves.
- By showing respect, listening, supporting people to be involved and creating strong relationships, you are helping to develop a person's self-esteem.

## Inclusive decisions

*The problems that you resolve will have stronger outcomes if you involve relevant people.*

To do this effectively, use the following concepts.

<b>Accountability</b>	Give people responsibility and allow them to voice their opinions.
<b>Consultation</b>	Approach others that are involved. Find out what they think, and ask their opinion to gain their ideas.

<b>Cultural sensitivity</b>	Consider who is involved and what their needs, values and beliefs are. Consider how the decision will affect them.
<b>Critical reflection</b>	Step back and reflect on the decision. Take action to improve or change it.

## Solving problems

*Problems that threaten relationships should be dealt with fairly and promptly.*

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

### Steps for dealing with a complaint

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

## Analysing the environment

*As you develop skills in analysis, you will see how it enables you to continually improve and refine the program and its relevance to children and families.*

When analysing the environment, experiences and materials for cultural relevance, you may consider the following questions.

### Policies and procedures

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

<b>Experiences</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do the experiences relate to the cultural diversity of families found in the service?</li> <li>➤ What books do you have that relate to their culture? Are some available in their native language?</li> <li>➤ What written languages do you have on display? Are they relevant to families and the community?</li> <li>➤ What pictures do you have that relate to their culture? Are they modern, stereotypical or historic?</li> <li>➤ How do singing and dancing activities relate to children's cultures?</li> <li>➤ How do excursions/incursions relate to children's cultures? Are they planned to allow children and their families to learn about their own cultures and ethnic history as well as those of others?</li> <li>➤ Are the props that are selected for dramatic play areas culturally diverse?</li> <li>➤ Are the celebrations at the organisation relevant to culturally diverse children and families?</li> <li>➤ Do educators learn key words in other languages that the families speak?</li> <li>➤ Are visual aids, gestures and physical prompts provided?</li> </ul>
<b>Families</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Are families happy with the cultural activities provided to children?</li> <li>➤ How do your displays relate to family cultures?</li> <li>➤ Do meals include foods that are unique to the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of families?</li> <li>➤ Are notices, signs and other forms of written communication translated into relevant languages used at the service?</li> </ul>

## Example

### Taking cultural diversity into account

The following examples outline different ways that cultural diversity can be taken into account in the service.

#### Example 1

Zheng is three years old. She can already use a fork, but her mother asks if the educators can help her to eat with chopsticks at mealtimes as these are commonly used at home. The educators agree that one of them will sit with Zheng at mealtimes. They continue to engage in discussions with Zheng's mother about this routine.

#### Example 2

Rhonda has decided to put a full-length mirror into the home area to encourage children to explore their differences, such as differences in their height, eye colour and hair colour.

#### Example 3

Melissa has encouraged some of the families from non-English-speaking backgrounds to contribute recipes to enhance the menu. This will broaden the children's experiences with food and provide familiarity for others.

## Inclusion Support Programme

*The Inclusion Support Programme (ISP) provides each state and territory with an Inclusion Agency (IA) that each employ a number of inclusion professionals.*

IAs assist eligible services to build their capacity and capability to provide and embed inclusive practices in their delivery of education and care programs. They provide services with the opportunity to employ additional educators. They also offer educators resources and professional development to increase their inclusive practices and support children:

- with a disability
- from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- from refugee and Indigenous backgrounds.

For further information about the program, go to: [aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme](http://aspirelr.link/inclusion-support-programme).

## Counselling and support

*Many workplaces provide counselling and support services to their clients and staff following a traumatic incident.*

The incident may involve physical trauma; however, emotional trauma may also occur for many reasons, including someone being marginalised or affected by discrimination.

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

### Example

#### Recognising and responding to marginalisation

Nella has overheard staff talking about a community member and the discussion demonstrated that they had little understanding of the effects of culturally marginalised groups and of how the person might manage and become confident.

She put into place the following plans:

- Each day she will support the children and educators to discuss a different marginalised group. She will provide support resources relevant to the group and answer questions. She will encourage both adults and children to use the resources by having them available during the day.
- Activities are chosen where children and adults are introduced to the challenges of marginalised groups. For example, she created a blindfold obstacle course on the grass where children use a cane and support each other to complete the course. On other occasions children use crutches and wheelchairs to navigate the course.



- She invites parents and community members of marginalised groups to join in. She encourages them to participate as helpers and work with the children. This supports educators and children alike to understand and accept individuals, and to include them equally.
- When family members arrive to pick up their children, Nella talks to them about what the children have been doing and discusses the marginalised groups they have been learning about.

## Practice Task 5

1. Draw a line to match each term about inclusive decision-making to its definition.

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| * Critical reflection  | * Giving people responsibility and allowing them to voice their opinions.                           |
| * Cultural sensitivity | * Approaching others that are involved and asking them about their opinions to gain ideas.          |
| * Accountability       | * Considering who is involved and what their needs, values and beliefs are.                         |
| * Consultation         | * Stepping back and reflecting on the decision, and taking action to make changes and improvements. |

2. Draw a line to match each term about protective factors to its definition.

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| * Social connection                   | * The ability to manage stress and negative life experiences.  |
| * Personal support                    | * This includes friends, family, co-workers, neighbours and others in the community that can provide emotional support and assistance with issues. |
| * Self-esteem                         | * Knowing expectations and having clear strategies for managing challenges positively.   |
| * Resilience                          | * This includes providing basic needs like food, clothing and healthcare.  |
| * Child development and understanding | * When people feel empowered and have self-worth.  |

3. Which of the following are ways you might support diversity and inclusion relating to the needs of a marginalised group? Select all that apply.

- Helping them to connect with a play group or parent group.
- Advising them in a professional way that you are not skilled in the area and that they must find a service outside of your own.
- Listening and asking if there are ways you can help.
- Involving them in decisions, particularly in relation to their own child.
- Providing some information about counselling or support services.

## Summary

- Communication is a two-way process involving sending and receiving messages.
- The way you communicate with another person can have an enormous impact on the way you make that person feel, and the way they will respond.
- Non-verbal communication differs between cultures.
- A communication barrier is something that stops communication from being effective.
- People who do not speak English fluently may need more time, resources and encouragement.
- You need to work consistently to create secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
- Shared personal information can cause people to become upset and create negative relationships.
- Mutual trust can be built when you work with others to find out more about their life, beliefs and values, and create a comfortable setting that meets their needs.
- It is important to promote participation and ensure inclusive practices are followed, particularly in relation to marginalised groups.
- Protective factors are skills people can develop so they can cope more effectively with stress and anxiety.

## Learning Checkpoint 2

# Inclusive interactions and relationships

1. Pearl, a parent, has her arms crossed, is not making eye contact and stands a metre away as she speaks to Troy, an educator. Pearl glances around the room as she describes how much she loves the service and Troy's curriculum.

Which of the following are correct about this type of communication? Select all that apply.

- Pearl is using negative body language.
- Troy may be confused about the information Pearl is discussing.
- Pearl's body language and verbal messages do not match.
- Troy is sending mixed messages to Pearl.
- Pearl is using clear communication to voice her cultural opinions.

2. Chantelle is a single parent who has been experiencing financial struggle. The decision to have families pay extra for excursions means her children will have to miss out. She tells Gabbi that she feels she is being discriminated against.

Which of the following are actions Gabbi could take to support the inclusion of Chantelle's children? Select all that apply.

- Chantelle and her children have been marginalised. Gabbi should speak to the management team and let them know of the issue.
- Gabbi can't really do anything as she is not in control of the financial actions of the service.
- Chantelle's needs should be considered. Discussion and negotiation might help to resolve the issue.
- When families are marginalised, Gabbi should report them to the police and record any issues.
- Chantelle is being marginalised through Gabbi's discrimination and negative attitude.

3. Eleanor is an educator who is aware that Boli, mother of five-year-old Zoya, speaks English as a second language. Boli attempts to communicate with Eleanor, but sometimes they have difficulty understanding each other. Today Boli is upset and tries to tell Eleanor the problem, but gets frustrated. She begins to cry and tells Eleanor she will take Zoya away.

Which of the following describe what Eleanor should do to demonstrate respect and inclusion? Select all that apply.

- Eleanor should contact an interpreter or translator to find out what Boli is upset about.
- Eleanor should tell Boli to find someone else she knows to write down the problem in English.
- Eleanor should use a translation app to communicate what the issue is.
- Eleanor should tell Boli that if she is unable to tell her the problem, it is better for her to take Zoya away.
- Eleanor should ask another staff member to solve the problem as she is too busy and needs to look after the other children.



## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

- 3A** Building children's understanding of diversity
- 3B** Providing environments for learning

# Encouraging children to understand and value diversity

*To effectively work with others, you must value their individual identity, their family and their links with the community.*

To do this, you can incorporate many actions in your curriculum; simple activities that demonstrate that everyone is welcome. These activities support the children and adults in the environment to understand diversity.

## 3A Building children's understanding of diversity

*The environments you provide for children give a clear message about the philosophy of your service, its commitment to inclusion and support for diversity.*

This is reflected in policies and procedures. When children's cultural backgrounds are mirrored in the service, diversity can be celebrated.

Your curriculum and behaviour should reflect inclusive and ethical practices, and assist children to participate in cross-cultural relationships. While you are encouraged to use families as a resource for building children's knowledge of diversity, remember that each family expresses, understands and has their own interpretation of their cultural or religious events.



Encourage children to understand and accept each other.

### Applying frameworks

*Communicating in a culturally sensitive way enables children to develop a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, and helps them form connections with their world.*

These are fundamental outcomes of the approved learning framework (EYLF). Educators who engage with children positively help to build strong reciprocal relationships that enhance children's understandings about how to interact and exchange ideas in a sensitive way.

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

Some key points are set out in the following table.

EYLF outcomes	How you can support this
<p><b>Children feel safe, secure and supported</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Acknowledge and respond sensitively to children.</li> <li>➤ Support attachment relationships.</li> <li>➤ Support change.</li> <li>➤ Bridge the gap between the familiar and the unfamiliar.</li> <li>➤ Build on cultural practices.</li> <li>➤ Support children's thoughts and feelings.</li> <li>➤ Acknowledge uniqueness.</li> <li>➤ Interact and converse with each child.</li> </ul>

EYLF outcomes	How you can support this
<p><b>Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities and a positive sense of self-worth</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Use children’s names.</li> <li>➤ Promote a strong sense of connectedness.</li> <li>➤ Help children to feel pride.</li> <li>➤ Share successes.</li> <li>➤ Show respect for diversity.</li> <li>➤ Demonstrate an understanding of each child and their family.</li> <li>➤ Introduce children to a variety of ways to express their identity and culture.</li> <li>➤ Build on language, knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>➤ Talk about similarities and differences.</li> <li>➤ Provide rich and diverse resources.</li> <li>➤ Support the maintenance of a home language and culture.</li> </ul>

## Gaining knowledge

*When you make the effort to learn about a child’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 alike.

Try to understand, or at least respect, the experiences of others and the effects these experiences have had on them. You can find out more about your co-workers by informally discussing their home life or interests. You may find similarities you didn’t know about.

## Celebrating diversity

*There are many ways to meet the approved learning framework expectations and celebrate diversity.*

These ideas demonstrate respect for all people. Your curriculum should be rich and varied, showing how children are interacting with culturally diverse materials and messages.

There should be evidence that:

- learning resources represent a wide range of people, customs and cultures
- the menu is diverse
- routines cater for individual needs
- experiences focus on:
  - diversity
  - language and bilingualism
  - gender differences and similarities



Foods from different cultures can be used to celebrate diversity.

- family lifestyles
- festivals and celebrations.

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

## Curriculum

*The activities and experiences included in the curriculum provide opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others.*

Many of the expectations of an inclusive curriculum are also basic expectations you should apply in your day-to-day practices and routines. These include the expectation that you will be engaging and that you will model appropriate behaviours.

<b>Curriculum expectations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Have clear goals and objectives.</li> <li>➤ Offer choices.</li> <li>➤ Include child-centred experiences that are suitable for small groups, large groups and individuals.</li> <li>➤ Allow plenty of time for interaction to help children learn social and communication skills.</li> <li>➤ Present realistic life experiences that help children to live in the community</li> <li>➤ Adapt to include the routines of individuals.</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide opportunities for children to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- take calculated risks within safe boundaries</li> <li>- have different experiences in the community</li> <li>- develop friendships</li> <li>- sharing home routines</li> <li>- learn about realistic and accurate views of people</li> <li>- develop positive attitudes toward others who may be different or diverse</li> <li>- help and support each other</li> <li>- learn altruistic behaviours (concern for others), and know when and how to use these behaviours.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Role-modelling inclusion

*Role-modelling is an effective teaching technique that allows children and adults to observe and learn desirable behaviour.*

Through modelling, you can show others how to:

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

Children use modelled behaviours and attitudes in their everyday play, routines and social interactions. Communication skills that role-model open, inclusive and

ethical interactions help children to feel comfortable with diversity and see it as an opportunity for open exploration and discussion. New or different things are usually interesting to children and prompt them to ask questions.

### Steps to role-model appropriate behaviours

- Use open communication where people are treated equally and given the information they need. When open communication is occurring, each person communicating will feel safe to share their views and ideas, and participate in decision-making.
- Provide inclusive communication by using language that everyone understands, presenting information in a simple way and avoiding jargon.
- Engage in ethical interactions that demonstrate your respect for the rights of others and their importance as part of your service and curriculum.

## Addressing prejudice

*Children’s reactions to difference may suggest a need for additional cultural support or further understanding of cross-cultural concepts.*

Fears and concerns about difference may cause children to form stereotypical or biased views against particular people or groups.

To avoid children developing fears and concerns about difference, you can:

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

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

The following table sets out some strategies for addressing prejudice.

<b>Lay ground rules</b>	Let children know it is unacceptable to use words or actions that hurt or exclude others. Encourage children to identify how they make others feel happy or sad, then use these ideas to set limits.
<b>Allow mistakes</b>	An environment that allows mistakes is one where children will learn. If they are able to identify these situations as mistakes, they will be more willing to apologise in a meaningful way. This helps them to understand what the consequences of their actions are.
<b>Address non-inclusive actions</b>	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.

<b>Share real experiences</b>	Talk to children about the times when you personally felt left out or excluded. Use examples that children can relate to and are appropriate for their age and developmental stage.
<b>Encourage empowerment</b>	Support children who have not been included or have been made to feel uncomfortable about an aspect of themselves. Help children to feel confident speaking about these aspects and proud of their differences.

## Solving problems

*To encourage a collaborative process for solving problems, provide suggestions for consideration rather than being directive.*

Giving directions reduces the amount of thinking or exploring that children can do.

The following are examples of ways you can encourage children to solve problems themselves:

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

Collaborative problem-solving can be broken down into four simple steps, as outlined here.

Step	Action	Example: How do you celebrate Father's Day?
<b>1. Share perspectives</b>	Use communication skills to share and understand each other's ideas and needs.	During a group discussion, ask questions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Do you have a father or is there someone else just as special in your family?</li> <li>➤ What sort of things do you do with your father or the other special person?</li> <li>➤ What do you call your father or other special person?</li> <li>➤ Why is Father's Day important to you?</li> </ul>
<b>2. Define the issue</b>	Define and agree on the topic or issue being discussed.	Think about whether or not we should celebrate Father's Day.  If we agree to celebrate Father's Day, think about how we should celebrate and if we should call it Father's Day or something else.

Step	Action	Example: How do you celebrate Father's Day?
3. <b>Generate options</b>	Generate ideas through brainstorming. Try to consider as many ideas as possible.	Ask the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ How can we celebrate fathers or the other special people in our lives?</li> <li>➤ Will we call this day Father's Day or is there another name we should call it so everyone can celebrate someone special?</li> <li>➤ How would other children feel if they don't have a father? What might they do instead?</li> </ul>
4. <b>Evaluate and reach agreement</b>	Evaluate the options and encourage the group to agree.	Ask the children: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Which of the ideas do you think is best?</li> <li>➤ Do you think the idea about ... would work?</li> </ul>

### Example

#### A collaborative approach to problem-solving

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



Vanessa moves the blocks to the bark area outside. She places posters of farm animals on a divider that she uses to define the area of play. She chooses a farm setting because she knows this is one of their interests and that it will engage the children and give her an opportunity to model a problem-solving approach during the course of their play.

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

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

## Collaborative learning

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

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

Collaboration involves people working side by side to solve a problem and find a solution that is acceptable to everyone involved. When children undertake routine and group activities that involve collaboration, this helps them to listen to the ideas of others, take in different perspectives, share their thoughts and have some control over their environment. This means that the solutions meet the needs and interests of the group, but also encourage children to experience compromise, success, failure and sharing.

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

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

A collaborative approach to play and routines can be achieved by:

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

### Practice Task 6

1. Which four of the following must be included in service policies to build children's understanding of diversity? Select all that apply.

- Learning resources should represent a wide range of people, customs and cultures.
- There should be a focus on the uniqueness of each child, such as their knowledge, skills and values.
- Communication skills that role-model open, inclusive and ethical interactions help children to feel comfortable with diversity.
- Children with the most outstanding differences should be used as examples in activities and routines so all children feel safe and that they belong
- When children are involved in collaboration, they learn to listen to the ideas of others and take in different perspectives.



## 3B Providing environments for learning

*Play and routines can assist children to learn to accept and value all people.*

It can also help children to learn positive attitudes of acceptance and respect for a range of different ideas and opinions.

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



Experiences such as art can help children learn about different cultures.

Services will demonstrate their commitment to inclusion through their philosophy, policies and procedures. These foundations also provide guidelines for educators on how they might:

- engage with local communities
- share cultural knowledge
- provide routines, activities and interactions that support diversity
- build on the diverse backgrounds of children.

### Tokenistic expression

*Tokenistic use of cultural materials and equipment does not lead to positive learning and sharing of cultural knowledge.*

#### Tokenistic expression usually occurs when:

- an effort is taken to include someone or something, but this effort is only on a single occasion and is not inclusively represented all the time
- something is included in the curriculum just to say it has been done, not because it is meaningful or of genuine interest.

#### Tokenistic expression in the curriculum can occur if:

- a cultural theme is presented on one day or week and not represented at any other time
- representation of diversity is presented through meaningless activities, such as colouring in flags to show countries of origin
- activities are provided so that a learning outcome can be said to have occurred, rather than the experience being meaningful to the children, families or community
- educators are not engaged or show a lack of interest, disgust, sarcasm or judgment.

Likewise, cultural artefacts may not always be the most appropriate way to promote or represent a cultural group; for example:

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

If you are unsure of the cultural relevance and appropriateness of any experience or activity, check with families or your local contacts before incorporating them. Sometimes this might become clear by doing a simple online search.

## Diverse experiences

*The children attending the service have experiences outside of the service that can expand the curriculum.*

When you discuss the experiences children have while they are away from the service, think about how these might be capitalised on to extend all children's experiences. These are obvious opportunities that should not be missed.

Be aware of family life and, if possible, incorporate resources that are relevant; for example, routines, sports equipment, musical instruments, dance, holiday experiences and pets. Continually ask questions to gather information that is valuable. Remember that culture does not only relate to country of origin or religion, but encompasses all the differences between one family and another.

Here are some examples of how educators have expanded all children's opportunities to explore diversity through building on one child's experiences or interests.

	<p>The children helped set up a bus using chairs and other equipment after seeing one child travel to the service by bus. The children were excited about opportunities they might have to ride on a train or bus as part of their daily routine or as an adventure.</p>
	<p>A family camping trip inspired camp site play. Some materials were borrowed from families. The group ate their lunch in the camp site setting.</p>
	<p>A child who recently returned from a trip to Japan bought some Chawan (bowls) and Yunomi-jawan (tea cups) to the home kitchen. Some children used them during the snack and mealtime routine.</p>

## Similarities and differences

*Being open to families' ideas and checking each child is represented in the environment helps you to build and maintain a responsive and meaningful learning space where diversity is acknowledged and celebrated.*

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

<b>Props in the home area</b>	<p>Avoid big cultural displays or specific themes. Instead, create an inclusive view by adding one or two items that represent each group to the regular home area; for example, crutches, a sling, chopsticks, a wheelchair, dolls with different skin colours/genders/abilities, a walking stick, sari, bamboo steamer or flag.</p> <p>These items might extend into routine times, such as preparing food using the steamer or using chopsticks to eat.</p>
<b>Treasure hunt</b>	<p>Have children hunt for natural items outside, such as stones, bark and leaves. Talk about how these natural items have similarities and differences, just like people.</p>
<b>Polls</b>	<p>Ask children to identify things they like most and things they do not like, then discuss the similarities and differences in their choices. You might poll children about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ experiences</li> <li>➤ activities</li> <li>➤ routines at home</li> <li>➤ celebrations</li> <li>➤ events</li> <li>➤ foods</li> <li>➤ indoor or outdoor play.</li> </ul>
<b>Discussions and group times</b>	<p>Spontaneous or planned discussion can be used to share information and learn about each other.</p> <p>Talk about family structures, what children do on the weekend, how they celebrate Christmas (or another celebration) at their house and what it is like to live in or visit another country.</p>
<b>Human bingo</b>	<p>Ask questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Who has the same colour hair?</li> <li>➤ Who has the same colour eyes?</li> <li>➤ Who has a baby brother or sister?</li> <li>➤ Who knows someone who lives in another country?</li> <li>➤ Who celebrates Easter?</li> <li>➤ Who likes to sleep during the day?</li> </ul>
<b>Use mirrors</b>	<p>Encourage children to look at themselves and others, and highlight their similarities and differences.</p>

<b>Disability activities</b>	<p>Choose a disability or impairment and discuss what it means with the children; for example, vision-impaired means that you cannot see very well.</p> <p>Have children complete tasks or activities so they can understand the effects of this impairment. Support the children to identify the difficulties, but also work out alternative ways to be successful. Point out skills that are not affected by the impairment.</p>
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## Sharing differences

*Embedding respectful and inclusive practices helps address everyone's rights and needs.*

The best opportunities for helping children to develop inclusive attitudes occur during day-to-day interactions, routines and events. Making the most of these opportunities enables you to explore the similarities and differences between the children and families you work with, connect children to their world and develop respect for diversity. By doing these things, you will be meeting the principles of the approved learning frameworks.

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

<b>Human show and tell</b>	<p>Small groups of children talk about special things or routines in their home life, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ celebrations</li> <li>➤ where they live</li> <li>➤ what they do at home</li> <li>➤ who lives at their house</li> <li>➤ their favourite games and activities.</li> </ul> <p>You may extend this by including some of these things in your program.</p>
<b>Display table</b>	<p>Provide a small table where children can bring in special things from home. You may specify a topic (for example, something the child thinks no one else has seen before or something from another country) or leave it open for the children to choose.</p> <p>Provide clear limits so that children take care of and respect other people's property.</p>
<b>Face-matching games</b>	<p>Take photos of the children's faces and develop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ jigsaw puzzles</li> <li>➤ bingo games</li> <li>➤ matching games</li> <li>➤ a family tree</li> <li>➤ a matching game using family photos to link family members.</li> </ul>

<b>Gender differences</b>	<p>Avoid labelling children's activities and experiences as best suited to boys or girls. Provide a range of open-ended, non-gender-specific options and challenge children's perceptions of girls' and boys' play.</p> <p>Be aware that all children play differently.</p> <p>Encourage all genders to participate in all areas of play in the environment you set up; for example, encourage boys to dress up and girls to engage in messy play, and initiate spontaneous interactions with all children in the group.</p>
<b>Additional support needs</b>	<p>Include all children in types of play for all areas of development.</p> <p>Participate in play to model ways to include children and encourage interactions.</p> <p>Provide specific equipment or materials to ensure success.</p> <p>Make sure that children's individual programs are incorporated into the overall play setting to provide an inclusive experience for each child.</p>

**Example****Encouraging and answering questions honestly**

Eden: 'Why does Azara always wear that scarf on her head?'

Educator: 'Azara's head scarf is important to her. In her family, all the girls and women wear a head scarf.'



## Music and games

*Music and games provide fun and help children and adults learn, create and develop a sense of belonging.*

Music or songs can relate to a culture and be played in different languages. Games that highlight diversity can also be provided so that children can explore, hypothesise, reflect and discuss.

Here is some more information on the different ways music and games 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 to be sure it serves its purpose. Ask others for their ideas, including music they enjoy.



### Musical instruments

Musical instruments are a great way for children to learn about beat, timing, tone 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.

Find out about instruments traditional to cultures around the world, talk about these and try to borrow or purchase examples. You might have access to people who are able to play instruments. They may be happy to visit and share their skills and knowledge.



### 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 they are participating in.

Singing to children in other languages is also a fantastic learning opportunity, and lots of fun.

You may have access to people who can teach you multicultural songs, or you might use YouTube, Spotify or CDs.



### Games

Games can be either planned or spontaneous, organised or open-ended. They can be flexible to match the skill levels of children participating.

Cultural diversity can be introduced into games through counting or playing games such as 'Guess the object' – a game where children need to identify objects relating to a culture or country.

You may be able to ask educators or family members to share the games they know or that are familiar to their culture.

## Images and text

*Images and text can be used to show inclusive attitudes and to offer a culturally rich and stimulating environment.*

### Examples of images that might represent diversity

- Photos of children and their families, extended families, holidays or interests
- Photos of the children during experiences
- Posters of diverse and multicultural customs, cultures, needs and preferences
- Maps of countries and regions around the world
- Words and symbols used by those from non-English-speaking backgrounds – this may or may not include a translation
- Art samples and works associated with diverse cultures
- Multicultural dolls and props within imaginative play areas, doll houses and dramatic play scenarios
- Books linked with different customs and cultures, family types, disabilities and other individuals or groups in the community
- Art experiences linked with cultures, such as dot pointing (Aboriginal paintings), and making Chinese lanterns

## Cultural and religious events

*Experiences based on cultural and religious events and celebrations need to be well-planned and appropriate to children's development and learning.*

They should be presented in a way that meets children's needs and is relevant to families and communities. If you work out what the main emphasis of each event is, this will assist you to create sensitive, meaningful experiences and activities for children. There is no need to celebrate every event; consult with families, colleagues and children to determine which ones are most relevant. You might choose to include aspects that link to the community, that follow up children's interests, or use an event to introduce or complement a topic or learning experience.



Holi is a Hindu festival that celebrates good harvest, fertility, peace and harmony.

Religious and cultural calendars alter each year. In Australia, some events always occur on particular dates; for example, Christmas is always on 25 December. However, there are also events that are based on a lunar calendar, such as Easter, which is based around the Gregorian calendar for Christians and other calendars, such as the Julian calendar, for other religions. In addition, there are days that acknowledge particular celebrations or events, such as Anzac Day, Mother's Day, and National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week.

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

The following table provides a sample of events and ideas for incorporating them into the curriculum. It is taken from the cultural and religious events calendar, published on the Australian Government Department of Social Services website.

Date	Event	Ideas for curriculum
<b>12 February</b> (alters each year)	Chinese New Year (Buddhist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss the Chinese Zodiac sign.</li> <li>➤ Pass on happiness to others by giving them good wishes and sharing the strengths of others.</li> <li>➤ Serve traditional foods or have a banquet including fish and dumplings, oranges and dried fruits.</li> </ul>
<b>21 February</b>	International Mother Language Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Celebrate mother languages, diversity and variety worldwide.</li> </ul>
<b>21 March</b>	Harmony Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Celebrate the inclusive nature of Australia and the benefits of cultural diversity.</li> </ul>

Date	Event	Ideas for curriculum
<b>29 March</b> (alters each year)	Holi - A Hindu festival where people smear each other with coloured water and bright powders to celebrate good harvests and fertility of the land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss peace and harmony.</li> <li>➤ Talk about seasons (Holi is traditionally a spring festival).</li> <li>➤ Celebrate ethnicity.</li> <li>➤ Include bright paints, powders or sands.</li> </ul>
<b>13 April</b> (alters each year and lasts for a month)	Ramadan - The most important day of the Islamic calendar. During Ramadan Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Think of things you are grateful for.</li> <li>➤ Help others, such as donating to charities.</li> </ul>
<b>25 April</b>	Anzac Day - Commemoration of the anniversary of the first military action fought by Australia and New Zealand. There is a dawn service and marches.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Talk about how we can care for each other, make sure others are safe and accept each other.</li> </ul>
<b>20 June</b> (alters each year)	Refugee week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss how each of us came to Australia.</li> <li>➤ Celebrate people who have come as refugees and highlight those who have contributed to the community.</li> </ul>
<b>4 July</b> (alters each year)	NAIDOC week – Celebration of the history, culture and achievements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Incorporate language, materials, artefacts, art, music and song.</li> <li>➤ Invite Indigenous people to visit.</li> <li>➤ Discuss the success of Indigenous people in your community, state or territory.</li> <li>➤ Explore the commitment to Indigenous culture or develop a reconciliation plan.</li> <li>➤ Discuss ways the land was cared for 60,000 years ago.</li> </ul>
<b>27 October</b> (alters each year)	Deepavali – Festival of Lights – Hindus celebrate the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Celebrate family.</li> <li>➤ Create a family tree.</li> <li>➤ Decorate tea light holders in bright colours and rhinestones.</li> </ul>
<b>11 November</b>	Remembrance Day - Time to remember those who have fought for Australia's freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Discuss how others have helped us to be happy and safe.</li> <li>➤ Make poppies and discuss what the symbol of the poppy means.</li> <li>➤ Discuss peace and how we can care for others in the world.</li> </ul>
<b>16 November</b>	International Day for Tolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Talk about diversity and acceptance.</li> </ul>
<b>3 December</b>	International Day of People with Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explore disability and learn about how to support others and understand their experiences.</li> </ul>

## Community

*Community events provide children with opportunities to see how they can make a difference to others and how the community values their contribution.*

The type and size of events vary greatly, so consider their relevance to individual children.

Community events may be based on state or national activities, or be focused on local interests. Your local council website should have information on upcoming community events.

They may include occasions for:

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

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 you participate with parts of the community from the service) are also possible options.

By reflecting on each person's culture, heritage, background and traditions, you are encouraging all people involved in your service to explore these factors and learn about others from their community.

### Ways to explore each other's culture, heritage, background and traditions

- Conducting neighbourhood walks and using maps and photographs of familiar places for discussion and activities
- Asking families and staff about their community interests and including this information
- Inviting community members to visit and share something about themselves and their role, such as 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
- Organising weekly, fortnightly or monthly visits to a community service such as an aged care or disability service
- Writing letters or sending pictures
- Participating in environmental care projects

## Community protocols

*Protocols are practices and principles of a culture, ethnic, gender or other group. Each group has a different purpose and its own protocols.*

When you liaise with, visit or invite people from community groups, ask about and identify their cultural expectations and be informed of their practices. Be confident in asking about participation protocols. Community groups accept that you are not aware of all aspects of a culture other than your own. Most groups are pleased to welcome you and teach you about their practices.

Some protocols include:

- A clothing expectation, such as taking your shoes off when inside.
- Certain information is only available to men or to women.
- You must seek special permission to do some things.
- You must follow a process or pattern of participation.
- You are expected to be quiet at times and free to talk at other times.
- Male only or female only participation may be required.

You may also find there may be no conditions at all.

If you are not clear about protocols, watch and ask others. This will help you learn more about protocols and be able to gather and share relevant information respectfully. Most people will be aware that you are learning, so be open to asking about their expectations.

## Protocols in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

*There are a number of protocols that may apply to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.*

These may be common for some Indigenous people and not observed for others.

Some of these protocols include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people may show you are welcome by conducting a 'Welcome to Country'.
- An 'Acknowledgement of Country' is a way you can show appreciation and acknowledgement of respect toward Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- The Dreaming is an ongoing feature of many Aboriginal people's lives. Recognise its significance, not as an ancient myth observed as a religion, but as an integral part of the land, the people, animals, birds and sea life that make up the entire country.
- Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people refrain from using the names, or viewing photographs or images of deceased people during the mourning period. Always give a warning if images or recordings of deceased people may be shown.



Some Indigenous communities perform a 'Welcome to Country' ceremony.

Oxfam has published a guide to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural protocols, which is available at: [aspirelr.link/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-protocols](https://aspirelr.link/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-protocols).

## Family celebrations

*Family celebrations are usually linked to religious beliefs and heritage, and to the family's priorities and interests.*

The best way to find out about each family's celebrations is to ask them directly. Many families celebrate similar events, such as birthdays, but they are likely to celebrate them differently.

### Example

#### Implementing cultural events and celebrations

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



- Ramadan is celebrated by most Muslims.
- Adults who celebrate Ramadan only eat in the night time, but children can eat at any time.
- When the adults eat, they might invite their friends over to share a meal.
- During Ramadan, people do good things for others, such as donating to charities.
- At the end of Ramadan, people dress up and go to their place of prayer, which is called a mosque.
- At the end of Ramadan, there is a celebration at the leisure centre with stalls, face painting and other children's activities. Those attending give presents to each other.

## Practice Task 7

1. Which three of the following are appropriate ways to build on the diverse backgrounds of children? Select all that apply.

- Incorporating tokenistic expression.
- Providing dress-ups related to a range of community roles, including those of family members such as police officers, firefighters and nurses.
- Adding mirrors to the play space and talking about similarities and differences.
- Including only musical instruments that are found in the storeroom.
- Celebrating events that you are already knowledgeable about.
- Catering for individual needs during routines and discussing these with children.

2. Which four of the following are ways you could find out about community protocols? Select all that apply.

- Ask the community you are interested in being involved with.
- Watch others who are part of this community.
- Complete online research about the racial group you think are most likely to be part of this community.
- Ask family members who are part of the community.
- Check service policies for guidelines relating to engagement, sharing and diversity activities.

## Summary

- Communicating in a culturally sensitive way enables children to develop a strong sense of identity and wellbeing, and helps them form connections with their world.
- When you make the effort to learn about a child's background, you gain information that allows you to make the environment a more welcoming and enjoyable place to be.
- Your curriculum should be rich and varied, showing how children are interacting with culturally diverse materials and messages. The activities and experiences should provide opportunities for children to learn about themselves and others.
- Communication skills that role-model open, inclusive and ethical interactions help children to feel comfortable with diversity and see it as an opportunity for open exploration and discussion.
- By being open, honest and succinct in your responses, you can successfully manage situations where prejudice occurs and develop confidence in your ability to promote the value of diversity.
- Engaging and collaborating with children enables them to develop a sense of belonging and ownership in their environment, as well as agency in their own learning.
- Tokenistic use of cultural materials and equipment does not lead to positive learning and sharing of cultural knowledge.
- Children have experiences outside of the service that can expand the curriculum.
- Embedding respectful and inclusive practices helps address everyone's rights and needs. The best opportunities for helping children to develop inclusive attitudes occur during day-to-day interactions and events. Making the most of these opportunities enables you to explore similarities and differences.
- Events provide children with opportunities to see how others celebrate, what they feel is important and to share their own life experiences and values.



2. Draw a line to match each image with the type of learning about diversity and inclusion it might provide.

\* Collaborating with others



\* Cultural symbols, values and beliefs



\* Needs of others



\* Community culture



\* Ethnic and racial backgrounds



\* Diversity of gender roles



3. Which four of the following protocols might be expected if you gained permission to attend an aged care service so children can meet and interact with residents? Select all that apply.

- Permission must be gained prior to taking photographs or videos.
- Children may be required to be quiet and calm.
- Children must be accompanied by their parent or be visiting a relative.
- A plan must be provided of what will happen while the children are in the service.
- Educators must meet with aged care staff to discuss the visit prior to children attending.

4. The service has a policy to include each of the following initiatives throughout the year. Draw a line to match each type of diversity and inclusive learning with an example of how it could be incorporated in the curriculum.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| * Engaging with mentors, peers and others     | * Visiting Bush Kinder where local Elders share their knowledge                                       |
| * Engaging with local communities             | * Inviting families to share their racial heritage in ways they choose on Harmony Day.                |
| * Sharing cultural knowledge                  | * Including at least one experience per month that is led by family activities outside of the service |
| * Building on diverse backgrounds of children | * Meeting weekly to discuss diversity and inclusion challenges and identifying possible solutions     |