CHCDIV001
Work with diverse people

Learner Guide

One World for Children Pty Ltd

Updated to include National Quality Framework changes

ASPIRE
Learning Resources

Work with diverse people

Release 1

Learner Guide

Aspire Version 3.1

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

Contents

Before you begin

This Learner Guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCDIV001 Work with diverse people*, Release 1.

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

How to work through this Learner Guide

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

Feature of the Learner Guide	How you can use each feature
Learning content	➤ Read each topic in this Learner Guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
Examples	➤ These highlight learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
Practice Tasks	➤ Practice Tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which Practice Tasks to complete.
Summaries	➤ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
Learning Checkpoints	➤ There are Learning Checkpoints at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which activities to complete. These activities give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

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

T = Topic

Topics	National Quality Standard (NQS)
	Quality Area 1: Educational program and practice
	Quality Area 2: Children's health and safety
	Quality Area 3: Physical environment
	Quality Area 4: Staffing arrangements
T1–T3	Quality Area 5: Relationships with children
T1–T4	Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
T1–T4	Quality Area 7: Governance and leadership
	Early Years Learning Framework
	Principles
T1–T4	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
T1–T4	Partnerships
T3–T4	Respect for diversity
T1–T4	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives
T1–T4	Equity, inclusion and high expectations
	Sustainability
T1–T4	Critical reflection and ongoing professional learning
	Collaborative leadership and teamwork
	Practice
	Holistic, integrated and interconnected approaches
T1–T3	Responsiveness to children
	Play-based learning and intentionality
	Learning environments
T1–T4	Cultural responsiveness
	Continuity of learning and transitions
	Assessment and evaluation for learning, development and wellbeing
	Learning Outcomes
T3	1. Children have a strong sense of identity
	2. Children are connected to and contribute to their world
	3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
	4. Children are confident and involved learners
T3	5. Children are effective communicators

Reflect on your perspectives

To successfully reflect on your own perspectives regarding culture, you will need to look further than your race or ethnic origin.

Culture is about the values, beliefs, life experiences and family background that contribute to who you are. Your awareness of your own values, beliefs and cultural practices influences your ability to be culturally sensitive.

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

1A Cultural understanding

Culture is very complicated. Not only are there many different types of cultures, but each person has a different culture based on their background and life experiences.

To understand culture you need to reflect on some definitions and concepts. By doing so you will start to think about your own culture and perspectives.

A person's culture depends on their background and life experiences.

Cultural identity

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 sense of 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 their own beliefs and customs that are based on their values.

Values may be influenced by a range of cultural factors.

Race, culture and ethnicity

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

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

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

Language

Many languages are spoken in Australia – both verbal and nonverbal. Some people are able to speak more than one language, some can communicate using sign language, while others may demonstrate particular communication styles and nonverbal social customs.

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 a god or gods. Religion is usually practised by a community or 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 and how they interact with others. In some cases, experiences are visible, such as a scar from a wound. Other experiences may not be as obvious, such as the traumatic experiences of war, the death of a loved one, or a serious illness or accident.

People granted political asylum

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.

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

Children who have been granted asylum may have difficulties developmentally or emotionally due to the trauma they have experienced.

Family structure

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

Gender identity, relationships and sexual orientation
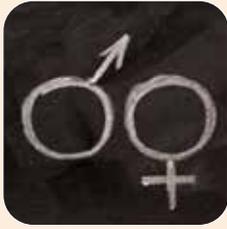
Families might include people with various gender characteristics or sexual orientation, including those identifying as:

➤ heterosexual (people attracted to those of the opposite sex)

➤ homosexual (people attracted to those of the same sex)

➤ bisexual (people attracted to both males and females)

➤ transgender (people whose personality does not correspond with their birth sex)

➤ gender neutral (people who do not connect to being either male or female).

Terms commonly used to describe a person's sexual orientation include gay, lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, pansexual, straight and heterosexual.

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

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

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. These generations include:

➤ the silent generation (born approx. 1925–1945)

➤ baby boomers (born approx. 1946–1964)

➤ generation X (born approx. 1965–1983)

➤ generation Y or millennials (born approx. 1984–1999)

➤ generation Z (born from 2000 onwards).

Older people have adapted to many changes throughout their lives.

Some children may be raised or cared for by grandparents or other older adults on a regular basis.

Ability and disability

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

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

Categories of disability include the following:

- Physical: an impairment that affects a person's mobility or dexterity
- Intellectual: an impairment that affects a person's ability to learn
- Psychiatric: a mental impairment that limits life activities
- Sensory: an impairment that affects a person's ability to hear or see
- Neurological: an impairment that is caused by damage to the nervous system and results in the loss of some bodily, intellectual or mental functions.

Included are disabilities resulting from physical disfigurement or from the presence of organisms that may cause disease in the body.

Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status combines a person's social situation and their economic or financial situation together to describe the position or circumstances of their life.

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

Someone living in a high socioeconomic situation might 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.

Diversity terms

There are many different terms you may hear when talking about culture and cultural diversity.

When you understand these terms clearly, you will find it easier to understand the concepts they represent. Here is a list of terms and definitions relating to diversity.

Term	Definition
Anti-bias approach	An anti-bias approach puts into place actions that discourage prejudice or bias and encourages children to explore their similarities and differences. An example of this is to include images of people with disabilities, and then discuss these. You can do this even if there are no people with disabilities in your service.
Bias	Bias refers to a feeling of liking or disliking a person or group of people due to characteristics that are beyond their control.
Belief	Belief refers to what you feel is true or false; for example, you may believe that children need a secure environment.
CALD	CALD stands for 'culturally and linguistically diverse' and is the preferred term for describing different ethnic communities.
Culture	The way of life for a group of people. It may be influenced by race, religion, economic status, family life, health, educational system, government or way of viewing the world.
Custom	A long-term habit or behaviour often commenced during upbringing; for example, it may be a custom to eat rice with each meal.
Discrimination	Action taken or withheld in regard to an individual or group based on characteristics that are not relevant to the situation. For example, choosing not to accept a child into the service due to their parents not speaking English.
Diversity	Diversity refers to a wide range of different characteristics, including culture, gender, sexual orientation and ethnic background.
EAL	EAL stands for 'English as an additional language'.
Ethnicity	This is determined by a person's background, relating to their particular racial, national or cultural group, and that group's customs, beliefs and language.
Equitable	Fair and equal to all.
Inclusion	Making all people feel welcome and that they belong.
Multicultural education	Multicultural education refers to specific programs that support the diversity of race, culture, language and religion, and helps create an understanding of the similarities and differences between people. An example is providing adequate education to all children regardless of their culture.
NESB	NESB stands for 'non-English-speaking background'.

Norm	A norm is something that is considered typical; for example, it may be a norm for you to work with families who speak English as an additional language.
	It may also refer to a cultural expectations, such as to bow to a person or say grace before a meal.
Non-bias	Non-bias refers to not expressing or acting on any bias.
Prejudice	An opinion about a group of people or individual that is based on expectations rather than knowledge of that person, and may be based on bias. For example, you may hear someone say, 'Don't let them come to our country!' This demonstrates a negative bias and shows prejudice.
Racism	Racism is discrimination based on race, especially the belief that one race is better than another. For example, if someone says that Asians should eat the same food as us, they are expressing a racist view.
Society	A group of people living together as a community.
Socioeconomic	Socioeconomic refers to both social and economic impacts on individuals. For example, someone who lives in a low socioeconomic area will most likely have a low income and limited access to services and support.
Stereotype	When a group or individual is judged based on particular characteristics, and then this judgement is given to all members of that group, it is a stereotype. For example, if someone says that all Americans are loud, this is a stereotype that is based on a limited experience, as the person has not met all Americans.
Value	A value is a belief that you feel strongly about which is important to you; for example, you may value honesty.

Diverse communities

Even if all of the people living in your street are of the same religion or race as you, they will have different values and beliefs.

They will likely have various attitudes relating to issues and styles of living. These differences occur due to the fact that people have been raised by different parents, in different families and have different life experiences. Each family has their own ideas about what is important to them. Their life experiences determine their family activities, and how their children should behave, be cared for and educated. These ideas form the basis of a diverse community.

Get to know the diverse families in your community.

✏ Practice Task 1

1. Think about the families that live in your street and answer the following questions:

   a. What do you know about their cultural differences?

   .

   .

   b. What do you know about their cultural similarities?

   .

   .

2. Draw a line to match the terms with their correct definitions.

   * Diversity

   * The way of life for a group of people. It may include race, religion, economic status, family life, health, educational system, government or way of viewing the world.

   * Culture

   * The integration of a person with additional or special needs into a mainstream program where other children do not have additional or special needs. It also refers to making all people feel welcome and that they belong.

   * Belief

   * Action taken or withheld in regard to an individual or group based on characteristics that are not relevant to the situation. For example, choosing not to accept a child into the service due to their parents not speaking English.

   * Discrimination

   * What you feel is true or false; for example, you may believe that children need a secure environment.

   * Inclusion

   * Refers to a wide range of cultural characteristics and the state of being different.

1B Your perspective

Your culture is determined by community attitudes, language, policies and family structures you have experienced.

These experiences inform your perspectives, which is your point of view, what you believe and how you see things.

You can reflect on your perspectives by using a process of self-evaluation where you look at yourself and think about your attitudes, knowledge and skill. Self-evaluation helps you identify your strengths and weaknesses and where you might improve.

Use a self-evaluation process to reflect on your perspective.

Each day you are faced with new cultural information. To manage this information and show respect for others, ask yourself questions that open your mind. Self-evaluation is an activity that needs to be done continually if you are to challenge your own perspectives and biases.

Some tools you may use to self-evaluate include the following.

Approved learning frameworks

Belonging, being and becoming: The early years learning framework for Australia (EYLF) and *My time, our place: Framework for school age care in Australia* (MTOP) both outline principles and practices determine guidelines for quality practice across the education and care industry.

Reflecting on your bias

Educators can consider their 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.

Approved learning frameworks

One of the five principles outlined in the approved learning frameworks is 'ongoing learning and reflective practice'. This principle encourages educators to continually ask questions, reflect and improve on their practice.

This principle asks every educator to take responsibility for learning about others and being critical of themselves in order to expand and develop to meet program and curriculum needs, to show acceptance for others and build services where diversity is welcomed and celebrated.

The learning frameworks guide educators to be willing to succeed, to meet their goals, and be able to take responsibility for their own and others' needs.

There are six overarching questions linked to the learning framework Principle: Ongoing learning and reflective practice.

Questions to guide reflection
1 What do I understand about each child?
2 What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?
3 Who is advantaged when I work the way I do? Who is disadvantaged?
4 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?
5 What parts of my work are not helped by the information that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?
6 Is there other information that could help me to understand what I have observed or experienced? What is it? How might that information affect my practice?

Reflecting on bias

Your attitudes are influenced by your personal experiences from childhood until now and the different people you have met.

Many values and beliefs are formed from past experiences. Child rearing and parental expectations play a major role in the values and beliefs you hold. Culture also changes over time due to factors such as laws, society's values, new practices, life experiences and locations.

Identify your biases and work towards having a more positive attitude.

By thinking about your beliefs using reflective processes, you can identify biased behaviours and work towards having 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.

Reflect on your own perspectives by answering these questions:

- Am I able to work together with all families?
- Do I have positive relationships with my co-workers?
- Are the expectations I have for children, staff, families and others based on my or their cultural background?
- 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 unfamiliar to me?
- Am I able to interact with a variety of individuals, regardless of their cultural or social background?
- Do I have any biases that I need to work on?
- How do I feel about my own cultural perspectives?
- Do I have a realistic set of goals and objectives to strive towards when it comes to cultural understanding?

Cultural competence

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

Cultural competence involves:

- being aware of your own views and beliefs
- developing positive attitudes towards others
- finding out about the world and other people
- using skills that enable you to communicate positively with all people.

In an attempt to increase your cultural competence, you may do one or more of the following:

Having an open attitude will help you to develop cultural competence.

- Use a diary and record conversations, then analyse your responses and work towards being more effective.
- Have regular staff meetings and reflect on how the curriculum is 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.
- Set yourself goals based on areas you feel you need greater knowledge of.

Recognising limitations

Cultural competence is a cycle, not an end point. Reflection must occur for you to respond to new cultural information.

You must join with others to share expectations, attitudes and knowledge while drawing on your community resources. This shows that you value them as individuals and helps them to feel a sense of belonging.

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

Recognising your own limitations in terms of cultural understanding and acceptance will help you to overcome them.

You are unable to understand and accept others if you have not identified and understood yourself and your own limitations. Your limitations might be based around 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.

As you learn, think about your limitations, including:

> what you knew already
> what you learnt
> how your life experiences or understanding have either limited or improved your understanding of others.

The reflective cycle

The reflective cycle can be used to help you analyse and overcome any cultural bias you may have.

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

Description
Feelings
Evaluation
Analysis
Conclusion
Action

The reflective cycle has six stages. By looking at each stage in turn, you can ask yourself a series of questions.

1. Description

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

2. Feelings

Reflect on your feelings:

> How did you feel and what were you thinking before the experience?
> How did you feel during the experience?
> How did you react after the experience?
> How did you feel after the experience?

3. Evaluation

Ask yourself the following questions:

> What went well during this experience?
> What went badly?
> How did the experience end?

4. Analysis

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

5. Conclusion

What conclusion can you draw from your analysis?

6. Action

Consider the following:

> What could you do to be better prepared next time?
> What steps do you need to take to avoid this happening again?
> What training do you need to do as a result of this experience?

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 competence enables you to face new experiences, then decide whether to close off to the opportunities these provide, or open up and become willing and able to encourage learning and help others to learn.

Cultural competence is an ongoing learning journey.

Example
Reflecting on skills

Christine, an educator, is feeling anxious. She finds it a challenge 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.

Christine wants to improve her skills and realises that self-reflection can be a powerful tool to do this. She decides to reflect on her skills of meeting new people so she can build her confidence. During her reflection she realises that she holds bias against people with particular cultural characteristics and this is what makes her feel anxious.

Christine is willing to work towards the goal of improving her approach towards new families. She will take on the responsibility of learning and being responsive to the needs of others.

✎ Practice Task 2

1. How do you feel when you are preparing to meet new people? What biases make you feel anxious and why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Choose one reflection strategy and explain how it might help you deal with your anxiety when preparing to meet new people.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

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

Case study

Nina, an educator, meets a new Sudanese family today who have only been settled in Australia for a few weeks and speak little English. They wish to enrol their two children in the service. Nina feels anxious, but wishes to make the family feel welcome.

She notes the following things that happened:

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

3. If Nina wants to reflect on this event using the learning framework practices, what are three overarching questions could she ask herself?

4. If Nina uses the reflective cycle to consider her cultural competence what might she notice in relation to the following?

    a. Description

    b. Feelings

    c. Evaluation

1C Working inclusively

Your attitude towards cultural differences and diversity influences how you feel about others and how you approach new information.

It impacts on your ability to understand the social, economic, cultural and political work and life challenges people experience, and also presents itself in your personality when meeting new people and interacting with people you know. This can make others feel comfortable in your company, or avoidant of you for fear of judgment.

To work inclusively you must allow the impact of these experiences to change your personal behaviour, interpersonal relationships, your perceptions and social expectations of others.

Having an open attitude and cultural competence enables you to work inclusively with others.

Cultural awareness

There are four levels of cultural awareness that will become apparent in your attitude towards different people.

Each of these levels is explained below.

Level 1 – Unconsciously incompetent

Initially, you may not realise that you have biases and judgmental attitudes. You might make mistakes and misinterpret the words and actions 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 understand these differences. You are unaware of how important the recognition of difference is to others, and you may feel overwhelmed by the task of how you might find out about everyone else.

Level 3 – Consciously competent

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

Level 4 – Unconsciously competent

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

Becoming culturally aware

By reflecting on and improving your understanding of a particular person, you are expanding your ability to be culturally aware of all people.

Cultural awareness is not about knowing everything; it is about being open and willing to accept others and find out about how you can respect their values and beliefs.

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

Cultural awareness is about being open to differences and willing to accept others for who they are.

When sharing information about different cultures with children, you will be learning yourself and 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 can reflect on your practices, consider the people around you and prepare for the people you may encounter in the future. The scenarios you share and research with children can prepare you to work inclusively, and in turn provide children with the opportunity to widen their understanding of others.

This learning will lead to:
➤ cultural knowledge, as you find out about a person's background and cultural values and beliefs
➤ cultural awareness, as you feel an understanding and acknowledgment of their background
➤ cultural sensitivity, as you accept similarities and differences between all people.

Modelling positivity

Educators with positive attitudes that reflect equality and moral values will help to influence children, other educators and parents to develop understanding and acceptance of diversity.

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

By focusing positively and openly on similarities and differences, diversity becomes an interesting and exciting experience. This behaviour helps to create a friendly, safe, respectful and effective learning environment.

As children can recognise differences between each other, they should learn to show respect to others and why this is important.

Modelling is an effective way to teach children how to:

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

Cultural sensitivity

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

When you are culturally sensitive you accept and value each person's diversity by being aware of the expectations of various cultures, accepting alternative ways of life and being receptive to different needs and cultural values.

Things some people are sensitive about are explained here.

Background information

It may or may not be a sign of disrespect to discuss or request information about personal lives and differences. This may include discussion about or even reference to deceased people.

Personal information

It may or may not be acceptable to ask about things such as politics, religion, income and health status when you first meet someone.

Personal space

Individuals will have standards for providing personal space when interacting socially. People may believe you should create an arm's length of space, while some people believe in physical contact while communicating. /COVID-19 may alter people's use or expectations of how personal space is used.

Eye contact

People have different views about eye contact. For example, for some eye contact is a sign of honesty and respect, while for others it shows a lack of respect.

Tone of voice

Some people use loud and direct language for communication. Others find this rude or may interpret that the person is angry.

Non-verbal communication

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

Decision-making

For some people only certain members of the family can make decisions. For example, in some families the male head of the family may be the authority figure, in others all members of the extended families need to be consulted.

Cultural safety

Culturally safe environments are created by people who respect others, and who acknowledge that their own 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.

Aim to promote a culturally safe environment so that everyone feels accepted.

Here are some ways you can encourage a culturally safe environment.

To create a culturally safe environment you can:

> nurture people and help them feel that they are valued
> praise and acknowledge people to improve 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 for what behaviour is expected
> implement cultural expectations that show respect to each individual.

Belonging and trauma

Experiences – positive and negative – can have both a short- and long-term impact on behaviour.

Traumatic events can have a serious lasting effect on a person's ability to form trusting relationships. When people do not feel a sense of belonging or feel ashamed of their identity, this can be traumatic in itself.

Anti-bias approach

An anti-bias approach incorporates strategies that explore differences and similarities between people while developing a strong sense of self.

For a successful anti-bias approach, you need to find out about and share the diversity of your service community and your local community. This includes developing activities that allow children to learn about differences they may not usually see.

To provide an anti-bias approach, try to avoid themed cultural activities. Instead, include a variety of materials in normal activities. Be aware of your own biases and build your abilities so that you develop a strong sense of awareness.

Include different cultural items in dramatic play to foster an anti-bias approach.

How to create an anti-bias approach
➤ Use photos of cultural and/or community events.
➤ Include books, magazines, music and brochures in various languages.
➤ Provide many different cultural items in dramatic play.
➤ Provide mirrors for children to look at themselves.
➤ Include multicultural resources as part of the normal play materials.
➤ Read stories that reflect non-stereotypical attitudes.
➤ Invite visitors from various cultural backgrounds.
➤ Provide activities that encourage boys and girls to play and cooperate with each other.
➤ Have a parent committee that involves people from various cultures.
➤ Use interpreters to encourage parent and educator interactions.

Example
Work inclusively

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

Avi tells Jack that he wears the hat called a yarmulke as part of his Jewish faith. Then Jonah starts a conversation to talk about each of their cultural differences and similarities.

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

🖉 Practice Task 3

1. Give two examples of how you could find out more about cultural differences by communicating in a respectful way. For each example, explain how this could improve your social awareness of others.

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

    a. Being unconsciously competent means using your learnt skills and knowledge instinctively, responding to others respectfully in a consistent manner and having ease in how you find out information and use this to show you value others.   * Yes   * No

    b. As you become culturally aware you will develop cultural knowledge and cultural sensitivity. This will mean that you will more easily accept the differences between people and the impacts of different areas on their work and life.   * Yes   * No

    c. Modelling is a good way to teach children to be culturally sensitive. This includes respecting others, helping others and showing that you care.   * Yes   * No

    d. To be culturally sensitive you must stand away from people and not look them in the eye. This way you will not make a mistake.   * Yes   * No

    e. When you nurture people and respect their needs you will be providing a culturally safe environment.   * Yes   * No

    f. If you are angry at people that held bias against others, you would be providing an anti-bias approach.   * Yes   * No

Summary

- To understand and challenge your own cultural perspectives and biases you must first evaluate your attitudes, biases and perspectives.

- Diversity is about recognising that each of us is unique and that we have individual differences in traditions, living circumstances, leisure pursuits, jobs and family celebrations.

- Cultural bias occurs when you look at others and feel their values and beliefs are not in line with yours, and that their life choices may not be acceptable or clear to you.

- The reflective cycle is a model often used to review your practices.

- Your cultural awareness will strengthen over time if you continue to reflect on your actions and make attempts to learn about others.

- In order to understand and accept others, you must identify and understand yourself and your own limitations.

- By reflecting on the impact of practices and experiences and recognising the sensitive nature of some issues, you can develop responsive relationships and experience empathy with others.

- Cultural sensitivity requires you to be aware of the expectations of various cultures, to accept alternative ways of life and to be receptive to different needs and cultural values.

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

- Regardless of the strategy used to reflect, success is only gained if you are willing to look beyond your current knowledge and skills and be ready to learn and develop.

- Self-reflection involves sometimes making mistakes and wrong decisions; however, ultimately it will enable you to continuously explore and gain confidence in your abilities.

Learning Checkpoint 1
Reflecting on your perspectives

1. Being culturally aware means being able to recognise your own cultural biases. With this in mind, answer the following questions.

   a. Explain one social, economic and/or cultural perspective or bias you hold.

   b. Explain why you believe you hold this perspective or bias. Give some examples of how your personal life experiences and social awareness have influenced you to form this perspective or bias.

2. Discuss whether you believe your perspectives and/or biases reduce your cultural awareness, cultural competence and ability to work inclusively and provide a culturally safe environment. Explain how your expectations influence your work.

3. What is one way you could act to improve your self-awareness and social awareness?

4. Draw a line to match each term about diversity and cultural identity to the correct definition.

    *   Race and ethnicity

    *   Sexual orientation

    *   Beliefs and customs

    *   Religion

    *   These are based on values. Values may be influenced by a race or religion, or another cultural aspect.

    *   This relates to people with similar physical characteristics (such as skin colour), linguistic characteristics (such as language or dialect), behavioural or cultural characteristics (such as religion or customs) and/or environmental characteristics (such as living in the same area).

    *   This is a set of organised beliefs and practices shared by a community or group, usually focused on the worship of one or more gods.

    *   This may relate to those identifying as heterosexual (attracted to those of the opposite sex), homosexual (attracted to those of the same sex) or bisexual (attracted to both males and females).

5. Draw a line to match each term about individual circumstances to the correct definition.

    *   Political asylum

    *   Family structures

    *   Socioeconomic status

    *   Life experiences

    *   Whether traumatic or positive, experiences affect the way people live their lives and interact with others.

    *   This may be granted to people who have been in danger in their home country due to their race, nationality, religion, political opinion or social group.

    *   This may include different numbers of children and adults, such as single-parent families, extended families and blended families.

    *   This combines the social situation and the economic or financial situation together to describe the position or circumstances of a person's life.

Topic 2

In this topic you will learn how to:

2A   Appreciate diversity

2B   Work respectfully

2C   Apply safe practices

Appreciate diversity and its benefits

Wherever there are people, there is diversity.

As you work with others and learn more about their values and beliefs, you gain a greater understanding of difference and of how each person has their own goals and needs.

Being inclusive is about being open to this information and taking the next step to embrace the views of others, which will benefit your own learning about diversity.

2A Appreciate diversity

Australia is one of the most diverse countries, influenced by people with origins from all over the world.

People in Australia have the opportunity to make life choices based on their own values and beliefs.

To understand another person's values and beliefs, you must explore the factors that make up their culture, and think about their individual needs and how their life experiences have impacted to add to and alter their perceptions, work and life.

Australia is a multicultural country.

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

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

Australian migration

Immigration can be seen as building human capital for the future, and often results in economic growth within a country.

Australia has become culturally diverse through immigration due to its past as well as through the events of other countries. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) identified in 2016 that:

> every country in the world was represented in Australia (2019)
> the majority of people in Australia have migrated from the United Kingdom (2019)
> while Indigenous Australians settled here over 60,000 years ago they now make up only three per cent of our total population (2016)
> 49 per cent of Australians were born overseas or had at least one parent who was born overseas and just over half the population were born in Australia with Australian parents (2016).

Migration to Australia by people other than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders has occurred in distinct patterns. These patterns relate to historic events, and often stem from negative events in a homeland. A brief overview of some of these events is shown here.

Migration to Australia	
Convict transportation	From 1788 to 1868, convicts from Britain arrived in an effort to ease overcrowded prisons.
Free immigrants	From 1793 to 1850, free settlers and assisted migrants chose to start their lives in Australia, mostly coming with agricultural and domestic servant skills.
Labourers	From 1850, gold rushes brought Chinese labourers, sugar plantations brought South Sea Islanders, exploration of the outback encouraged Afghan cameleers and pearl divers arrived from Japan.
White Australia	From 1901 to 1958 the *Immigration Restrictions Act 1901* (Cth), also known as the 'White Australia policy', aimed to reduce the numbers of incoming Chinese and South Sea Islanders and increase British migrants.
Populate or perish	From the end of World War II to the 1970s, displaced British citizens were offered passage to Australia for 10 pounds. These people were labelled the 'ten-pound poms'.
Refugees and asylum seekers	From the late 1970s many people have arrived by boat, plane and ship as refugees. A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their home due to an event that endangers their life, such as war, persecution or a natural disaster.
Skilled migrants	In recent years Australia has welcomed those with skills that are in short supply. Temporary arrivals have also increased with international students and work visas.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Australia's Indigenous people are one of the oldest in the world.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people traditionally lived off the land, with a strong spiritual connection to it. Before the white colonisation of Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families lived together in communal environments with roles and responsibilities being shared amongst the group. Typically, men took responsibility for hunting, women cooked and cared for children, and Elders taught knowledge.

Many different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures make up the cultural landscape of Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people inhabited all areas of Australia. There are more than one hundred separate languages identified, and each language group has a distinct lifestyle and religious and cultural traditions.

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

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people once lived on the land of your service and home. Generally, Aboriginal people believe they have a custodial role to this land, rather than ownership of it. This connection to the land is based on traditional knowledge and practices that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Impact of western culture

Many of the issues that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face can be attributed to western systems and structures.

The attitudes of non-Indigenous Australians are just one hurdle to overcome. Non-Indigenous people tend to use stereotyping and bias to describe the beliefs and values of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This causes fear, confusion and negative outlooks, and promotes a general consideration that all Indigenous people suffer the same or similar social, political and economic issues.

Western culture has had a noticeable impact on Indigenous people.

For those Indigenous Australians who are experiencing disadvantage, western culture has created the following social, political and economic challenges.

Proving land ownership

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

Remoteness

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

Health

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

Education and employment

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

Understanding experiences

Your own life experiences might have provided you with an understanding of the damage that bias and prejudice can cause.

Some of the negative attitudes many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people face are common to a range of cultures and individuals, particularly those who are indigenous to a country other than Australia.

You might have experienced disadvantage linked to your cultural background or heritage, so understand how people's beliefs and values can disadvantage others from all walks of life and create hurdles for them to overcome.

Reflecting on your own experiences could help you to empathise with Indigenous Australians.

By reflecting on the impact of practices and experiences, and recognising the sensitive nature of some issues, you can develop responsive relationships and have empathy for others. In addition, you can view each person, whether an Indigenous Australian or otherwise, with a non-stereotypical approach that respects them for who they are.

Example
Understanding experiences

Trent is an Aboriginal Australian. He works as a teacher in a Melbourne suburb and is interested in art, literature and music. His son is three years old and attends a local education and care service where Trent is the committee chairperson. Outside of his family and work life, Trent supports disadvantaged children who are on the spectrum.

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

He has seen the disadvantage of Indigenous Australians, and also the opportunities they might have. He understands how difficult it is to leave your home, and feels sad that to achieve his goals he had lost some of his culture and beliefs.

✐ Practice Task 4

1. Order the following events from 1 to 7 that influenced migration to Australia.

☐ People arrive by boat, plane and ship as refugees due to war, persecution or a natural disaster.

☐ Gold rushes brought Chinese labourers, sugar plantations brought South Sea Islanders, exploration of the outback encouraged Afghan cameleers, and pearl divers arrived from Japan.

☐ Those with skills that are needed in Australia and temporary arrivals have increased due to international students and work visas.

☐ The *Immigration Restrictions Act 1901* (Cth), also known as the 'White Australia policy', reduced Chinese and South Sea Islander migration and increased British migration.

☐ Displaced British citizens following World War II were offered passage to Australia for 10 pounds. These people were labelled the 'ten-pound poms'.

☐ Free settlers and assisted migrants arrived with agricultural and domestic servant skills.

☐ Convicts from Britain arrived in an effort to ease overcrowded prisons.

2. Which of the following statements reflect the impact that western culture has had on many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people? Select all that apply.

☐ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people lost the land they owned when westerners invaded. They lost all their money and now they feel they should be paid back for this.

☐ While Indigenous people are located throughout Australia, many reside in remote areas where services and opportunities are limited. This occurred as their normal locations were taken over by westerners.

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

☐ With low attendance, retention and continuation of education, many Indigenous Australians ultimately have difficulty gaining and maintaining employment. Western education systems provide methods of teaching that are often unfamiliar to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

☐ The impact of western culture has had no long-lasting effects on Indigenous Australians. Their issues all arise from the current government.

3. List two current issues facing Indigenous Australians.

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4. Describe how your own life experiences help you empathise with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

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Marginalisation

Marginalisation is when groups of people or individuals are ignored or cannot participate due to a policy or process that doesn't recognise their differences.

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.

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

Ensure that no one feels marginalised or socially excluded in your service.

When thinking about social inclusion, view the situation from the point of view of the person being excluded. If they view themselves as being excluded, you need to take this perception seriously, rather than telling them their view of the situation is wrong.

When people feel their rights and needs are continually refused or ignored, they may lose confidence in others, in a system, in procedures or in services. Most importantly, they may lose confidence in themselves and their abilities.

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

Needs of marginalised groups

Some marginalised groups or individuals present with physical, mental or emotional needs.

The following provides further explanation of these needs.

Physical needs

Physical needs might apply to people who have physical disabilities. This might occur due to them having difficulty in accessing services that are safe for them to use or about catering for their individual physical needs, such as accessing entry to a service.

Mental health needs

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

Emotional needs/trauma

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

Example
Marginalisation

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

Jana's workstation is located on the ground floor because it provides wheelchair access. However, the administrative workers are located on the first floor where access is via stairs. Participating in normal workplace discussions with her colleagues is difficult for Jana and she has found it difficult to establish effective workplace relationships due to physical isolation.

✎ Practice Task 5

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

Case study

Olivia is a parent who approaches Kylie, an educator, and abruptly tells her that she is angry about how the incursions in the service are organised. Olivia has experienced a time of financial struggle and the decision by the service to have parents pay for incursions means Olivia's children will have to miss out. Olivia gets upset and begins to cry.

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

☐ Olivia and her children have not been marginalised. They just can't afford the excursion.

☐ Olivia is being marginalised due to her mental needs and trauma.

☐ Olivia is being marginalised due to service policy changes that mean she is excluded from accessing the full benefits of the learning curriculum.

☐ Olivia is being marginalised through discrimination and negative attitudes towards her.

2B Work respectfully

You have the right to work in a safe and respectful environment. You also have the responsibility to create an environment where everyone else feels safe, respected and valued.

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

Ensure all staff, families and children are treated equally.

> creating workplaces where all employees and employers can strive to be their best and be rewarded for doing so

> treating all employees and employers fairly and respectfully

> identifying and improving diversity and inclusion levels.

The following are frameworks, approaches and instruments that you should use in your workplace.

Guides for appropriate practice:

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

Human rights and human needs

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

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

Basic needs relate to our physical requirements and the things we must have: food, water, air, clothing and sleep. This might also link to our basic emotional needs of safety and security.

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

Some rights you must apply include:

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

Discrimination

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

This might be on the grounds of race, age or sex, or any other key area of diversity. Discrimination can relate to harassment, victimisation and bullying.

Discrimination on the grounds of age, sex, race or religion is illegal.

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

The most common employment-related legal issues are:

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

Equal employment opportunity

Equal employment opportunity gives every person the right to be considered for a job or work conditions, despite personal characteristics outside their control.

Equal employment opportunity laws in Australia are covered by national and state/territory legislation.

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

The factsheets are available at: aspirelr.link/discrimination-laws-guide.

The Fair Work Ombudsman also provides education and support for both employers and employees in an effort to reduce discrimination.

Results of discrimination

Discrimination and the prejudice or judgment that it displays can make people feel anxious, sad, depressed, guilty, withdrawn, excluded or rejected.

People experiencing discrimination may end up being financially disadvantaged, as they may lose or quit their job, or feel unable to attend work. Discrimination can sometimes make people angry; in extreme cases they might confront the situation by seeking retribution and vengeance.

In a situation where discrimination is common, people might experience:

> anger
> loss of productivity
> lack of confidence
> low morale
> lack of trust.

Causes of discrimination

If children are supported to understand differences and to enjoy the fact that all people are different, they will be less likely to discriminate.

Children do not have all the information or skills they need to make choices or find out about others. In early 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. This is why it is important to teach children to understand and accept differences.

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

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

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises that freedom, justice, peace, life, liberty, free speech and privacy are rights all people should enjoy.

Australia was a founding member of the United Nations (UN) and participated in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted in 1948. Although the declaration is not legally binding, it is an international expression of values that has a significant influence on international human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds the rights to equality, justice and peace.

In relation to discrimination, Article 7 reads: 'All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination'. Article 23 reads in point 2: 'Everyone, without discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work'.

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

Commonwealth discrimination law

People in Australia must comply with a variety of Commonwealth laws and standards, including anti-discrimination laws.

There are a number of anti-discrimination laws, as shown here.

Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Cth)	The Age Discrimination Act protects people who are discriminated against because of their age and states that, regardless of age, everyone has the same right to equality before the law.
	The Act allows appropriate benefits to be given to people of a certain age, particularly younger and older people, according to their circumstances. In addition, the Act removes barriers to older people participating in society and challenges negative stereotypes about older people.
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)	The Disability Discrimination Act gives a broad definition of disability and prohibits direct or indirect discrimination based on disability.
	It prohibits discrimination against those associated with people who have disabilities, including friends, relatives, carers and co-workers.
	The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate in relation to certain areas, including employment, education and access to public premises.

Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)	This Act prohibits racial discrimination and offensive behaviour based on racial hatred. It covers discrimination based on race, colour, descent, and national or ethnic origin. It also protects those who may be discriminated against based on their association with people of a particular ethnicity. The Act applies to all people and organisations in Australia.
	The *Racial Hatred Act 1995* (Cth) is included in the Racial Discrimination Act and provides an avenue for people to make complaints about racist behaviour that offends, insults, humiliates or intimidates others in public.
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)	The Sex Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against someone based on their sex, marital status, pregnancy or potential pregnancy. It sets out laws against sexual harassment, as well as dismissal from work based on family duties, including pregnancy.
	According to the Act, it is unlawful to refuse to provide goods, services, education or employment based on a person's sex.
	Sexual harassment is included in the Act because it is a form of discrimination that relates to treating a person unfairly because of their sex.
	An exception to the Act is when goods or services can only be applied to one sex, e.g. female- or male-specific healthcare, or when employing someone to look after a child in the child's home.
Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)	This Act deems personal information about individuals to be sensitive, including in relation to:
	➤ criminal records
	➤ health
	➤ membership of a professional or trade association
	➤ membership of a trade union
	➤ political affiliations or opinions
	➤ racial or ethnic origin
	➤ religious affiliations or beliefs
	➤ sexual orientation or practices.
	This information about a person could be used by others to identify or discriminate against them.
	Your organisation should inform you of your responsibilities regarding privacy, both your own and that of families, children and other staff. You should always consider any information provided to you about an individual to be confidential.
	People generally have a right to see and correct, if necessary, files of personal information kept about them by organisations. Individuals are usually only denied access to files about them if their own or another person's safety is at risk, or if there are other legalities involved.

***Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth)**	The Australian Human Rights Commission was established in 1986 to deal with breaches of anti-discrimination laws and promote human rights education. The Act promotes human rights for all people, and covers most forms of discrimination not already covered in the other Acts, including discrimination aspion on the basis of: ➤ criminal records ➤ marital status ➤ medical records ➤ political opinion ➤ religion ➤ sexual preference ➤ social origin ➤ trade union activity.

State/territory discrimination law

Each state and territory has its own anti-discrimination laws that work in conjunction with national legislation.

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

This table lists the agencies that deal with discrimination legislation in your state or territory and the laws that they administer.

State/territory	Agency	Legislation
ACT	ACT Human Rights Commission	*Discrimination Act 1991* (ACT)
NSW	Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
NT	Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Commission	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1996* (NT)
Qld	Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991* (QLD)
SA	South Australian Equal Opportunity Commission	*Equal Opportunity Act 1984* (SA)
Tas.	Office of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner	*Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (TAS)
Vic.	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission	*Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (VIC)

The legal process

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

Usually this will commence through the procedures in an organisational policy. These guidelines may include an initial internal process; however, it is acceptable to jump straight to an external process if the workplace is not suitable or supportive, or if the leaders in the organisation are responsible for the discrimination.

Unions can provide a representative to support members through an internal or external process.

There are a number of legal steps that can be taken in relation to a complaint of discrimination.

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

Internal processes

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

External processes

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

Example
Racial discrimination

Isla and Quinn work together and usually enjoy each other's company.

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

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

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

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

✎ Practice Task 6

1. Describe a situation where you have been discriminated against or a situation that you read about or saw on the news.

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

Case study

Leon had been working with Sally for over a year. They enjoyed each other's company, joked and chatted happily during their breaks.

Leon had broken up with his girlfriend recently. Since then, Sally had been arranging all her breaks and shifts to be the same time as Leon's. She had made some jokes about his sexual activity and had asked private questions about what he was doing over the weekend.

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

Leon told Sally he felt uncomfortable about what was happening and that he really wasn't interested in calling her.

Sally accessed Leon's phone number from his staff records and she decided to call him after work every day until he agreed to go out with her.

2. Which of the following statements about rights are correct? Select all that apply.

☐ Leon's right to privacy was not respected.

☐ Leon was being sexually harassed.

☐ Leon should be happy that he was gaining attention from Sally.

☐ Sally has the right to contact Leon without his consent if it is outside of work hours.

☐ Leon was the victim of racial discrimination.

3. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order Leon should follow if Sally continues to make him feel uncomfortable.

☐ Go to an external body such as the Australian Human Rights Commission or Anti-Discrimination Board.

☐ Attend a court hearing within the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

☐ Contact his supervisor and explain his concerns, then put into place or participate in any actions suggested by his supervisor.

☐ Attend a conciliation meeting to come to an agreement.

☐ Check service policies and procedures for the right information.

2C Apply safe practices

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

It takes time to build secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships (Principle 1 in EYLF and MTOP). It requires that you build trust and get to know your co-workers, children and families.

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

Government initiatives

The Australian Government encourages all Australians to take on board the richness of culture, language and religion that this country provides.

Education and support is provided in communities to help develop a greater acceptance of people with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles. This is called cultural policy.

Some government initiatives that are in place include:
➤ the Australian Multicultural Council, which advises the government on multicultural affairs policy and programs
➤ Harmony Day (21 March), where we celebrate inclusion and diversity within Australia
➤ grants for multicultural projects
➤ specific policy on the Australian response to world events, such as the Syrian and Iraqi refugee crises.

Social cohesion

Social cohesion is about people in a community working together in order to create a positive environment.

An understanding of diversity and willingness to be inclusive is required to create social cohesion.

The following information demonstrates positive examples of social cohesion.

	Community events Local groups run diverse activities for all members of the community to join in. Events such as Diwali and Eid al-Adha are celebrated by Hindu and Muslim people, respectively, and often invite the general community in an effort to expand understanding and acceptance.
	Film and television Many documentaries show the lives and challenges people from diverse backgrounds face, and encourage people to consider their own prejudices. Increasingly, TV and films show people from diverse backgrounds or abilities participating productively together.
	Workplace family day An event organised by an employer in which employees bring their family for a day of activities. Employees may be encouraged to bring a plate of food to share.
	Multicultural music festival An event organised by a local council that celebrates different cultures through live music performances.

Learning about the local community

The local community is full of people and places that can be safely and appropriately explored.

Some of this exploration can occur through:

➢ excursions – visits to other organisations or sites in the community

➢ incursions – where people come to your service to share their knowledge or skills

➢ affiliations – where members from the community work closely with your service's operations.

By reflecting on and exploring each person's culture, heritage, background and traditions you are encouraging all people involved in your service to learn more about these factors, each other and the community.

Providing instruments from different cultures can help children to become more culturally aware.

Ways to explore each person's culture, heritage, background and traditions include:

➢ neighbourhood walks and using maps and photos of familiar places for discussion and activities

➢ asking families and staff about their community interests and including this information in your program of activities

➢ inviting community members to visit and share something about themselves and their role; for example, a police officer, grocery store manager or artist

➢ providing props that link with community interests and activities, such as grocery items and puppets

➢ visiting libraries, museums, markets and parks to look at statues, gardens, buildings and signs

➢ participating in festivals and recreation activities such as swimming lessons and music classes

➢ being involved in community initiatives such as sponsoring a child, raising money and donating goods

➢ including child-focused events such as children's week picnics, library story time and children's art shows

➢ writing letters or sending pictures

➢ participating in environmental care projects.

Using your knowledge

When you make the effort to learn about a person's background, you gain information that allows you to make the environment a more welcoming and enjoyable place to be.

By focusing on specific attributes such as knowledge, skills and values that reflect the uniqueness of each individual, you can share in other cultures and learn from each other.

For example, to develop a trusting and positive relationship with parents, you could collect background information through verbal discussion or forms. You can use this information to help you provide appropriate activities in the curriculum, such as cultural celebrations.

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

Develop a positive relationship with families to learn more about different cultures.

Appreciating difference

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 experiences that demonstrate that everyone is welcome. These experiences support both children and adults to understand diversity.

You might include some of the following experiences that encourage consideration of similarities and celebration of differences.

Props in the home area

Avoid big themes; instead, create an inclusive view. Just add one item that challenges bias into a play home area or dramatic play space; for example, crutches, a sling, chopsticks, a wheelchair, a walking stick, a sari or a bamboo steamer.

Treasure hunt

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

Polls

Ask children to identify which things they like most and which they like least, then discuss the similarities and differences in these choices. You could poll children about experiences, activities, celebrations, events, foods and indoor or outdoor play.

Discussion and group times

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

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

Grouping

When grouping children, encourage children to look at others based on their characteristics; for example, 'Casey, you have curly hair, find someone else who has curly hair and you can work together on this activity'. Encourage a mix of genders and cultural backgrounds.

Human bingo

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

Using mirrors

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

Disability activities

Choose a disability or impairment and discuss what it means with the children; for example, being vision-impaired means that you cannot see well or perhaps at all.

Invite children to complete tasks or activities simulating this impairment. Ensure you support the children to identify the challenges faced, but also spend time working out alternative ways to complete tasks successfully. Point out the skills that are not affected by the impairment and how they might be used instead.

Treating everyone equally

People will feel valued if you take time to treat them equally and as individuals.

This will help them fit in and help you develop a positive relationship where you can find out more about the person's home life, beliefs and values. In this way you will develop a bond of trust and confidence.

Key elements that can guide you towards equal treatment:

➤ Welcome all co-workers, children and families each day.

➤ Approach all parents, show them around, and chat about their day and the child's day.

➤ Acknowledge differences and incorporate any relevant information to make your environment more inclusive.

➤ Include information of interest on your noticeboard or to send home.

➤ Become an active listener.

➤ Be especially mindful of people from CALD backgrounds and allow them to complete their communication. Avoid interrupting or assuming you know what somebody wants to say.

➤ Research cultural beliefs and values by using community contacts, books, specialists and the internet, and by asking questions, both formally and informally.

You should implement strategies to eliminate bias and discrimination, and to assist others to feel comfortable in the workplace. You can do this by:

➤ ensuring there is a diverse range of people on work committees

➤ developing diverse work teams

➤ ensuring all posters, literature and signs are culturally sensitive

➤ being inclusive when making decisions

➤ ensuring interpreters and specialised care contacts are accessible.

Solving problems

Problems that threaten relationships in the workplace should be dealt with fairly and promptly.

Your actions will often involve contacting a supervisor or employer; however, you may be the first person involved, and may need to act on the issue immediately, prior to a more senior person taking over.

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

Write down the issue or problem and take steps to solve it.

When you are faced with a complaint

Consider taking the following action:

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

Solving a problem yourself

Considerations to include:

➤ What are reasonable timeframes for resolutions?
➤ Will the issue be recorded in notes or on a form, such as an incident record?
➤ Can the issue be resolved verbally?
➤ Is the issue yours to resolve, or should someone else be involved?
➤ How can you include others?
➤ What advice and support is available or needed?
➤ How can you ensure the information is kept confidential?

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

To do this effectively, use the following concepts:

➤ Accountability – Give people responsibility and allow them to voice their opinions.

➤ Consultation – Approach others that are involved. Find out what they think, and ask for their opinion to gain ideas.

➤ Cultural sensitivity – Consider who is involved and what their needs, values and beliefs are. Consider how the decision will affect them.

➤ Critical reflection – Take a step back and reflect on the decision.

Protective factors

Protective factors are skills that help people cope more effectively with stress and anxiety.

They can reduce the impact of discrimination and marginalisation and enable socially excluded people to gain a sense of power and equality. If you help build these skills in children and encourage them in families as well as educators, they will be able to cope better with negative situations and disappointment.

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

A strong social connection of family and friends can help to build resilience.

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 to them.

Social connections

> Social connections include a network of friends, educators, neighbours and others in the community that can provide emotional support and assistance.
> These connections can be developed when educators give support, help solve problems, and listen to and respect others' opinions and values.
> People who are less isolated due to their social connections are less 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 people cope with issues more confidently and effectively.
> When children are understood and responded to as individuals, they develop more effectively and have stronger protective factors as a result.
> This understanding can be increased when educators regularly share information with each other.

Concrete support

> People need support in times of need. Concrete support might include basic needs like food, clothing and healthcare. More specialised needs include counselling, support services and treatments.
> Ensure people are aware of the concrete supports that are available to them as someone in crisis may feel unable to ask for help.

Self-esteem

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

Counselling and support

Many organisations provide counselling and support services following a traumatic incident.

The incident may involve physical trauma or abuse. Emotional trauma may also occur for a number of reasons, including someone being the victim of harassment or discrimination.

Organisations must take responsibility for the trauma any person experiences in the workplace or within the service operation. Without this, an emotionally safe environment cannot exist.

Counselling support can be helpful for people who have experienced trauma or abuse.

Example
Encouraging understanding of disability

Gertrude overhears staff talking about a member of the community who has a disability. The discussion demonstrates that they have little understanding of the effects of disability and of how the person might manage and become more confident.

She decides to implement the following strategies in her curriculum:

- Each week she will support the children and educators to discuss a different disability. She will provide support resources relevant to the disability and answer any questions they may have. She will encourage both adults and children to use the resources by having them available each day.
- She will provide activities where senses or abilities are reduced. For example, she decides to create a blindfold obstacle course on the grass where children use a cane and support each other to walk through.
- She will invite parents and community members with disabilities to visit. Rather than making this about their disability, she will encourage them to participate as helpers and work with the children. She hopes this will help educators and children alike to understand and accept them as individuals and to treat them equally.
- When parents arrive to pick up their children, Gertrude will talk to them about what the children have been doing and will make a point of discussing information about the disabilities explored and the people involved.

✏ Practice Task 7

1. Draw a line to match each term in relation to resolving problems with the correct definition.

   * Accountability

   * Consultation

   * Cultural sensitivity

   * Critical reflection

   * Approach others that are involved. Find out what they think, and ask for their opinions to gain ideas.

   * Step back and reflect on the decision you have made.

   * Give people responsibility and allow them to voice their opinions.

   * Consider who is involved and what their needs, values and beliefs are. Consider how the decision will affect them.

2. Draw a line to match each protective factor with their correct definition.

   * Resilience

   * Social connections

   * Concrete support

   * Child development and understanding

   * Self-esteem

   * These might be friends, educators, neighbours and others in the community that can provide emotional support and assistance with issues.

   * Knowing expectations and having clear strategies for managing challenges positively helps people manage issues more confidently.

   * The ability to manage stress and negative life experiences.

   * When people feel empowered and have self-worth they interact more positively with others and communicate their feelings positively.

   * People need support in times of need. This might include basic needs like food, clothing and healthcare.

3. List three work practices or issues that might reduce cultural safety or demonstrate discrimination against members of the community.

   . ...

   . ...

   . ...

4. Briefly explain one type of discrimination and provide two ideas to address it that could be implemented into a program.

Summary

> Your attitude towards cultural diversity is reflected in your day-to-day work practices as you interact with children, families and staff.

> In order to build respectful and positive relationships with co-workers, children and families, you need to maintain a non-biased attitude in all your interactions.

> An understanding of diversity and a willingness to be inclusive is required to create social cohesion.

> When you make an effort to become aware of a person's background, you gain information that allows you to make the environment a more welcoming and enjoyable place to be.

> Discrimination is the unjust or negative treatment of a person based on a personal characteristic. It is caused by prejudice, which is an opinion a person has about someone based on a stereotype.

> Laws are in place to ensure everyone's rights are protected – this should be a high priority.

> Problems that threaten safety in the workplace should be dealt with fairly and promptly.

> Social exclusion may be deemed as marginalisation. Marginalisation is about groups of people or individuals who are sometimes ignored in policy or normal processes due to their differences.

Learning Checkpoint 2
Appreciating diversity and its benefits

Part A

1. Which of the following statements relate to Australia's economic policy and the systems in place to support those who are economically challenged? Select all that apply.

☐ Medicare helps with the cost of medical expenses.

☐ Benefits and supplements provide income and/or income support for those with little or no income.

☐ There are no systems in place to support those who are economically challenged.

☐ Government loans assist those who are in short-term financial hardship.

☐ Government systems provide support for all people no matter what their circumstances are.

2. Choose one of the initiatives of the Australian Government's diversity policy and give an example of how this initiative helps to share knowledge about culture, welcome diversity and reduce the needs of marginalised groups.

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3. Which of the following statements are indicators that a workplace is culturally competent and successful in its relationships? Select all that apply.

☐ The service has a shared vision, it values all opinions and all people participate with openness using a team approach.

☐ The service has a family-focused approach where there are many opportunities to learn about child development, and to create links with the community and other families.

☐ The service welcomes families from cultures they are familiar with, but does not attempt to learn more about families from other cultures.

☐ The service provides opportunities for children, educators and families to learn about differences.

4. List two pieces of legislation that relates to discrimination. Include at least one Commonwealth law and one state/territory law.

    ....

    ....

5. Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about discrimination to the correct ending.

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

    * race, age, sex, or any other key area of diversity.

    * Someone may be discriminated against on the grounds of

    * harassment or bullying.

    * Discrimination can also include

    * their personal characteristics.

6. Draw a line to match the beginning of each sentence about key aspects of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures to the correct ending.

    * While Indigenous peoples are located throughout Australia,

    * a lack of trust in the medical industry often results in poor health.

    * While most Indigenous people have access to healthcare,

    * many Indigenous Australians ultimately have difficulty gaining and maintaining employment.

    * With low attendance, retention and continuation of education,

    * many reside in remote areas where services and opportunities are limited.

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

a. The seven rights identified in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are freedom, justice, peace, life, liberty, free speech and privacy.
    * Yes * No

b. Human needs relate to having basic physical and emotional needs met.
    * Yes * No

c. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not provide a clear definition of our actual rights.
    * Yes * No

d. Human rights and human needs are the same thing. They are about people deciding what they want and making sure these needs are met.
    * Yes * No

e. Human rights relate to respect, dignity and fairness.
    * Yes * No

8. List the frameworks, approaches and instruments used in your organisation to help create a safe and respectful environment.

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Part B

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

Case study

Skye is an educator. She suffers from severe anxiety and is afraid that if she tells her director, Karly, she will stop receiving shifts at work.

All of the educators and children are taking a bus trip to the supermarket and it is part of Skye's role to attend excursions. Skye is becoming more and more anxious as the date approaches and does not think she can attend as she is likely to have a panic attack. She has a phobia or travelling on a bus following an accident she was involved in years earlier.

1. Which of the following statements describe the type of marginalisation Skye is facing due to her anxiety? Select all that apply.

   ☐ Skye has a physical disability and this is causing her to feel marginalised.

   ☐ Skye has mental health needs and these are causing her to feel marginalised.

   ☐ Skye has emotional needs and these are causing her to feel marginalised.

   ☐ Skye is experiencing trauma and this is causing her to feel marginalised.

2. Which of the following statements describe appropriate ways you could support Skye? Select all that apply.

   ☐ I could go with Skye to a local community activity, like a local bus tour, and this might help her develop her confidence.

   ☐ I could find out more about Skye's background and needs, then help her to use this information to develop her skills so she can overcome her anxiety.

   ☐ I should treat Skye equally and not expect any more than I would other staff members.

   ☐ I should avoid discriminating against Skye and if I hear others discriminating against her, I should remind them that this is not professional.

   ☐ I should suggest that Skye seek some counselling or support, and that she could start by talking to her supervisor.

3. Based on legislation, should Skye's emotional situation be a reason for her to lose her job? Why or why not?

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   .   .. .

4. Give two examples of how this situation could cause Skye to become isolated or lose confidence.

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   .   .. .

   .   .. .

   .   .. .

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

a. Skye should not tell others about her anxiety. This would be applying protective factors as she would be protecting herself.
    * Yes   * No

b. If Skye confided to her supervisor about her anxiety, they could put a plan in place to develop Skye's protective factors and to roster her appropriately.
    * Yes   * No

c. If Skye confided to her supervisor about her anxiety, the supervisor would be legally able to fire her.
    * Yes   * No

d. If Skye got help to manage her anxiety she would be developing her protective factors by increasing her resilience, social support and connectedness, sense of control and self-esteem.
    * Yes   * No

Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

3A Communicate with respect

3B Establish relationships

3C Manage communication barriers

Communicating with all people

Respectful communication involves exchanging information between educators and families, and developing healthy working relationships with staff members.

Trust and confidence should never be assumed. They must be built over time as you learn to meet the needs of people from various cultural backgrounds.

3A Communicate with respect

Communication is essential in any workplace.

Without effective communication, it is not possible to know people's wants or needs, or how best to respond to the children, families and staff you are working with.

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

Learning some words in another person's language can help you to communicate effectively.

Forms of communication

Communication is a two-way process that involves sending and receiving information.

It is a natural human ability, learnt in infancy and early childhood and developed throughout life. Negotiation, conflict resolution, teamwork and the completion of work practices all rely on good communication skills.

It is often difficult to establish and maintain communication with others. You need to develop a high level of skill to ensure effective communication with both adults and children.

Here are explanations of different communication methods.

Verbal communication

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

Gestures

Gestures are forms of body language that convey specific messages understood by a particular culture or group. Gestures can relay messages; for example, standing in front of someone with your arms crossed may indicate you are not happy with their behaviour.

Some gestures have different meanings in different cultures; for example, in Australia, if you give someone a thumbs-up sign, it usually means everything is okay. However, in some cultures, this gesture is considered rude.

Body language

Body language is a way of communicating by using body movements, gestures and facial expressions to give more meaning to verbal communication. It adds to your communication and helps express how you feel, often without having to say anything at all.

For example, if you are uncomfortable talking to a parent regarding their child's behaviour, you may look at the ground. If you are worried, you may wring your hands.

Facial expressions

The way your face moves or changes as you deliver information provides many messages about your internal state. For example, facial expressions may indicate illness, tension or stress. A smile or frown may indicate pleasure or concern.

Written communication

Letters, emails, memos, text messages and newsletters are all forms of written communication. Effective written communication is clear, concise and can be easily understood by others.

Signs

Signs are pictures or words that are used to convey a clear message. Pictorial signs are often used to ensure those who are unable to read still understand the message; for example, toilet doors may have either a male or a female image on them.

Sign language

Sign language (or signing) may be used by those with a hearing impairment or learning difficulty as an aid when language is a barrier. In Australia, people sign using Auslan (Australian sign language), one of several languages that use signs, body movements and facial expressions.

Communication influences

Apart from 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 affect 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 prevent effective communication. For example, if an educator asks personal questions of a parent without explaining why, the parent may not provide a detailed answer and leave out information.

Stereotyping

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

Values

Values describe the beliefs and morals of an individual, culture or organisation. As values relate to priorities, they 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. Instead you should try 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 it or trying to reach an agreement.

Assumptions

Making assumptions about people has the same effect as stereotyping them: if the assumption is wrong it can reduce how well you can communicate with them.

Environment

A friendly, trusting and quiet environment is important for people to communicate effectively. Noise is an obvious barrier to effective communication. For example, if you try to talk while there are roadworks going on, your communication would be difficult due to the distractions in the surrounding environment.

Non-verbal communication

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 showing meaningful messages that reflect the point or 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, or that you don't care about what is being said. Smiling, facing the other person and looking at them can show you are interested and welcoming.

Touching is appropriate in some cultures, but inappropriate in others.

Sometimes there is a mismatch between the verbal and non-verbal messages a person communicates; for example, what the person is saying may be positive but their body language may be 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 they want to be spoken to.

Here are some actions that communicate non-verbal messages when interacting with someone face to face.

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

Watch and listen

By watching and listening to the other person, you can find out more about the way that person or group feels and the best way to interact with them.

When observing a person, see how they interact with others and how they present themselves. Listen to the words they use and pay attention to their body language.

Be aware that these are just clues. If you judge a person by watching and listening alone, this may lead to stereotyping or developing biased views. Remember, every person is individual with different personalities, likes, dislikes, customs, cultures, backgrounds and expressions. Try not to make assumptions based on a previous experience, and aim to treat everyone with respect.

Watch and listen to others to learn how best to communicate with them.

Example
Observing body language

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

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

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

Using clear communication

Whether communicating 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.

Each person you communicate with will require you to act differently. For example, if you are speaking to a colleague you might use language relating to learning frameworks or child development.

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.

To use clear communication:
➤ Make sure you have the person's attention.
➤ Provide a suitable, quiet environment, and a private one if needed.
➤ Use words that the person can understand, considering their age, language, abilities or 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 tones of voice that match, and avoid communicating mixed messages.

Improving communication skills

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

Learn and practise different ways to communicate with different people. Select communication types or events you are less familiar with and then develop your skills. Ask others if there are any ways they think you could improve your communication skills.

Some communication skills you may wish to improve on may relate to:
➤ dealing with conflict or difficult situations
➤ making initial contact with an unfamiliar person
➤ giving instructions
➤ listening to others
➤ reading body language
➤ talking to people who have difficulty communicating.

Example
Improving communication skills

Bensa was anxious about speaking to parents. To improve this skill she asked her co-workers to give her responsibility for speaking to parents at the start and end of each day. She spoke to her co-workers about the things she should talk about during each discussion, and this helped her feel more confident.

In the first week Bensa made some mistakes when communicating with parents, but her co-workers supported her and shared the role. By the second week Bensa was chatting to families easily and automatically knew what she should talk about. She had developed some strong relationships through effective communication.

✏ Practice Task 8

1. Provide an example of when you have noticed communication cues that tell you how a person wants to be communicated with.

    _____

    _____

    _____

2. Choose one of the following communication situations you would like to improve, then make a plan for how you might do this. If you are not sure, ask for some feedback from your supervisor or colleagues.

    > Dealing with conflict or difficult situations

    > Making initial contact with an unfamiliar person

    > Giving instructions

    > Listening to others

    > Reading body language

    > Talking to people who have difficulty communicating

    _____

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

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

Case study

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

4. List three non-verbal messages that Lara is communicating.

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5. Is Lara's non-verbal and verbal language saying the same thing? What are they saying?

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3B Establish relationships

To provide a positive environment you developed effective relationships, listen to the views of others and accept that each individual has a right to their own opinion.

You may not agree with everyone's opinions, but you should still listen to and respect them to gain a better understanding of their needs. This does not mean you have to change what you believe, but it should encourage you to broaden your perspectives and accommodate the needs of others.

Understand how people are different

Keep an open mind and respect others' thoughts, cultural heritage, preferences and personal attributes.

To fully understand differences you need to put personal biases and prejudices aside to enable non-judgmental attitudes.

Each person has their own characteristics, personality, ideas, beliefs, rituals and cultural identity. Acknowledge this and build relationships based on individual needs, strengths and understanding. As a result, you will show an attitude that is respectful, open, responsive and approachable. Asking questions and showing interest can help you to further understand differences.

Keep an open mind and accept differences without judgment or bias.

Be courteous and polite

As an educator you need to be able to deal with all kinds of people, including those with different personalities.

If you can get along well with others, you are usually more successful. This often requires you to be polite and respectful.

Being polite is about being considerate of another person's feelings, culture and values. This means that even if someone annoys or insults you, you will avoid getting into an argument. It may not sound difficult, but it can be a challenge for many people.

When you are courteous and polite it is easier to develop an effective, positive and friendly communication that creates strong relationships.

To avoid conflict and remain courteous and polite you could:

➤ work through the situation using problem-solving or discussion
➤ agree to disagree
➤ change the subject
➤ debate the issue calmly
➤ excuse yourself from the discussion.

Promoting a supportive environment

One of your professional responsibilities is to create a calm and supportive work environment.

This is achieved when you and your co-workers are cooperative and listen to each other's opinions.

Becoming aware of someone's background allows you to make the relationship and your environment more 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 them.

Aim to create a calm and supportive environment.

If you experience conflict between co-workers, feelings should be discussed in a professional manner. Acknowledge the perspective and experience of each co-worker and work effectively with other educators to model appropriate interactions and language. Providing positive feedback to co-workers enhances belonging, and tells them that their role is important. Staff meetings are a good setting for sharing ideas and brainstorming. A service can also conduct staff surveys to learn more about training needs and gather ideas for quality improvement.

When cross-cultural teams work together to understand each other, they have a higher rate of work satisfaction.

Show empathy

Empathy is about showing understanding and sharing the feelings of another person.

When people feel you show empathy, they will feel accepted and gain a sense of comfort. Showing empathy lets the other person know that you care and want to listen to or discuss their situation. Seeing things from their point of view can help you better understand what they are trying to communicate.

There are many different ways you can show empathy; a few of these are outlined below.

Listen

Listening is one of the most effective ways you can demonstrate empathy. This means allowing the other person time to talk, waiting for them to finish talking and using what they have told you to continue the conversation.

Share your feelings

When an educator shares their feelings they show that they care by letting the other person know how they have been influenced by what they have heard. Avoid telling your own story or experience. This can lead to difficult professional situations and it usually makes the other person feel their situation is not as important.

Focus your attention outwards

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

Withhold judgment

When showing empathy, stop yourself from making negative judgments or deciding whether their situation or actions are good or bad. Instead, try to gain a deeper understanding their situation.

This does not mean that you must 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 understand what the person is going through and that you want to make life easier for them. Offering help is a great act of empathy because it shows that you're willing to take time to do something for someone else without asking anything of them in return.

Be honest

Being honest 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 complicated 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.

Honesty helps to build trust and respect.

Telling people what they want to hear instead of being honest with them 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.

Build mutual trust

Mutual trust is built over time when people communicate effectively and unite with a common purpose.

Mutual trust is commonly 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.

Strategies that can be used for building mutual trust and confidence
➤ Welcome and acknowledge everyone each day.
➤ Approach and help people to participate or meet their goals.
➤ Discuss the day and provide useful information.
➤ Acknowledge differences between staff, families and the community and incorporate information into your service.
➤ Include information of interest in displays and resources.
➤ Become a good listener.
➤ Give people from CALD backgrounds a chance to communicate their ideas.
➤ Research cultural beliefs and values by asking questions and using books, specialists and the internet.

Maintain confidentiality

Personal information is usually shared in confidence, so be respectful of others by keeping this to yourself.

Never discuss children and families with other parents or people outside the workplace.

Sharing personal information inappropriately can cause hurt and create negative relationships. If someone shares information that you feel you should not be told, let the person know you feel uncomfortable knowing this. If you are unable to tell them, just don't respond to it. If you are concerned or if someone is continuing to share confidential details with you, mention this to a supervisor.

Maintain confidentiality of personal information at all times.

Example
Maintaining confidentiality

During a break, educators Mason and Jordan chatted together. Today Jordan mentioned to Mason that she wanted to tell him something, but he couldn't tell anyone else. She started to explain a situation where an educator had been involved in domestic violence.

Mason was shocked and didn't know what to do. He didn't want to know this information. He stopped Jordan and told her he would rather not know the details and didn't feel it was right to hear this from someone other than the educator involved.

Later in the day he heard Jordan sharing the information with another educator. They were both discussing the details of the event and making judgments about what should happen next.

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

✏ Practice Task 9

1. If a parent asks you for the phone number of another parent so they could set up a play date, what would you say?

_____

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

Case study

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

2. Which of the following options would be an appropriate way for Alina to show empathy? Select all that apply.

   ☐ Alina could tell Sophie that this happened to her friend as well and that she felt devastated.

   ☐ Alina could tell Sophie that she was very sorry and could only imagine how upsetting that was.

   ☐ Alina could ask if there is anything she could do or help with.

   ☐ Alina could avoid talking to Sophie as she doesn't like talking about death and she doesn't know what to say.

   ☐ Alina could listen to Sophie, and offer her a private space and a glass of water.

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

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

   a. Alina could build mutual trust and respect with Sophie by being a good listener.   * Yes   * No

   b. Alina needs to clean the tables and start setting up the room. She cannot spend time speaking to Sophie. They can talk later if Sophie needs her.   * Yes   * No

   c. Alina lets other educators know she is taking Sophie to the staffroom for water. They all pitch in to get the room set up.   * Yes   * No

   d. Alina could research the traditional funeral later in the day to understand what Alina and her child will be doing. There may be something she can do to help or show support. She could check on the details with Sophie later when she is less upset.   * Yes   * No

3C Manage 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. Barriers might also occur due to a disability or a misunderstanding.

Some people may have poor reading or writing skills. In this case, verbal communication could be used to make sure the message has been received and understood.

By being aware of possible communication barriers, you can prepare and reflect on your ability to use strategies that help to establish relationships by being polite, showing empathy, being honest and maintaining confidence.

Be aware of any communication barriers that may exist.

Communication challenges

There may be problems with communication if the sender and the receiver can't see each other.

If the communication takes place on the phone there may be distractions, interruptions or body language that cannot be seen.

Email and text messages is also missing visual information. In addition, incorrect spelling and grammar might lead to the information being misunderstood or confused. The person sending the message and the person receiving the message may have a very different understanding of the communication.

Information in first languages

People from non–English speaking backgrounds should be provided with information in their main language as much as possible.

For example, a parent handbook might be translated into a home language so the family can understand the program.

Educators should support children to see and use a range of languages. Children with language difficulties and children from CALD backgrounds may need to be provided with more or different opportunities to learn language.

Provide important information in the languages spoken by the people at your service.

People who do not speak fluent English will need more time, resources and encouragement when communicating.

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, missions and statements can be found at: aspirelr.link/fka-childrens-services.

Multilingual staff members

Multilingual staff members are an excellent resource.

They can:

➤ work with others using the same language to make sure information is shared clearly and accurately

➤ assist communication and the development of relationships

➤ support all children to explore different cultures and language

➤ help to foster friendships, relationships and a sense of belonging.

Staff who speak multiple languages may able to help to translate information.

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

Using images

There are many ways you can use images to show inclusive attitudes and offer a culturally rich and stimulating environment.

Images to help demonstrate diversity include photos and pictures displayed on posters, maps and signs.

Examples of images that represent diversity include:

➤ photos of children and their families, and cultural celebrations and events

➤ photos of children undertaking activities

➤ posters of diverse and multicultural customs, cultures, needs and preferences

➤ maps of countries and regions around the world

➤ words and symbols used by other cultures and their English translation

➤ art samples associated with diverse cultures

➤ art experiences linked with cultures, such as dot painting (Aboriginal paintings) and making Chinese lanterns.

Music, games and activities

Music, games and activities in both planned and spontaneous play provide fun and help children and adults learn, create and develop a sense of belonging.

Music and songs can relate to a race or ethnicity and may be played in different languages. Games and activities 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, games and activities can be used to promote diversity.

	Music Music might be used for dance, in games or played in the background. Children will respond to different sounds and music depending on how they are feeling. For example, upbeat tones can lift a child's spirits, while loud and boisterous children might be calmed down by soft music. Monitor the needs and emotions of the group when you are playing different types of music and ensure it serves its purpose. Ask parents and other educators for their ideas, including music that they enjoy.
	Musical instruments Find out about traditional instruments used around the world, talk about these and try to borrow or purchase them. You might have access to people that are able to play these instruments who 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 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 or another music platform to play the songs.
	Games Games can be either planned or spontaneous, organised or open-ended. They can be flexible to 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 particular culture or country. You may be able to ask educators or parents to share games that are familiar to their background.

Activities

Activities can vary considerably and should cater for individual needs, the size of the group and the setting. The use of pictures, props, images and resources can add more inclusive learning opportunities.

You could provide a range of dress-ups, dolls with different physical characteristics and images from different cities of the world to promote a diverse and accepting environment.

Translator and interpreter services

All families need to have equal access to relevant information, regardless of the language they speak.

A translator can be used to convert text from one language to another. Translated information might include enrolment documents, newsletters, forms or records. An interpreter translates speech from one language to another, this includes oral speech into sign language.

When translators and interpreters are needed, your local community will have services you can contact. You might also use online translation programs for immediate or general communication. Some programs will also translate text to speech, allowing you to hear the pronunciation. These programs are great for translating single words or basic phrases, but are not usually suited for a face-to-face conversation or large chunks of complex information.

Using an interpreter

When a language barrier exists, an interpreter may prove useful.

Different types of interpreters are available, including community members, family members, other educators or staff in the service and those provided by government bodies. The time, limitations, availability and skills of interpreters will vary.

When using an interpreter, ensure you understand their role and what you will be using them for. By planning and setting goals you will spend the time efficiently. For simple day-to-day communications, a parent may request another family member or community

There are a number of considerations to make when deciding on an interpreter.

member to help with translation and interpretation. If this is the case, be mindful of confidentiality and ensure any personal information remains private. Also attempt to gain the parents' views and thoughts rather than the message the interpreter or translator decides to convey.

Circumstances when an interpreter would be useful include:

> To identify and discuss family values, needs and expectations before and during a child's orientation and commencement in the service

> To relay information to the family regarding the child, particularly during the child's first few weeks at the service, to help develop understanding and create a relationship

> To begin to understand specific signs or body language that a child is using to convey their needs

> To understand how a child is feeling, including any concerns or worries they may have

> To enable understanding of routines and transition times throughout the day

Children who have limited English skills benefit from repetition, labels and pictures to understand.

If a child can speak their first language well, an interpreter may be useful, particularly when they are first settling in.

Often government funding is available to assist with child and family inclusion. Relatives, family friends or educators in the service can also play an important role in the transition process if they can relay information or support conversation.

Other interpreters

Interpreters may be required for a child with a hearing impairment or a speech impediment.

While an interpreter is often thought of as an individual who can relay information between two languages, they may also be someone who uses sign language to translate spoken English for a person with a hearing impairment. A speech therapist may be required to assist a child who is unable to speak clearly.

Parents of young children (under three years) may also act as interpreters, even if the family speaks fluent English. If a child hasn't yet developed full speech skills, their parents will be more familiar with the specific meaning of the sounds and gestures a child makes.
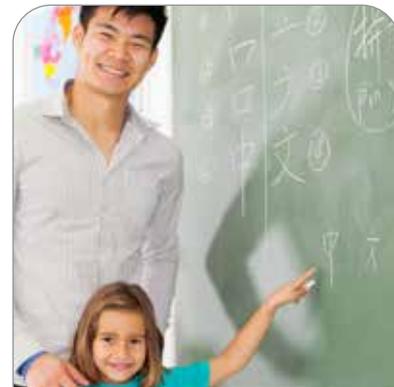
Other types of interpreters may be needed if someone has a speech or hearing impairment.

Example
Resources for interpreting and translating

Orna is a new child in the service whose family has arrived from Ukraine. In the initial meeting with the family it became obvious that none of them could speak very much English. In preparation for the next meeting the educators communicate with a government support service and build up a bank of information and resources for interpreting and translating for Orna and her family. An interpreter was used at the orientation and the family expressed their appreciation for the steps that the service had taken to ensure their needs were met.

✎ Practice Task 10

1. Make a list of the resources available in your service or class group that could support the management of communication barriers. Think about the resources of people and their skills and knowledge, as well as the materials you find.

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

Case study 1

Sarita has recently migrated from Spain, where she has education and care qualifications. However, they are not recognised in Australia. Sarita is training to complete her Certificate IV in School Age Education and Care. She speaks and understands English clearly and is a very competent worker, but struggles to read her assessment questions.

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

    a. Sarita would be permitted to use a Spanish/English dictionary to help her translate.   * Yes   * No

    b. Sarita would benefit from an interpreter.   * Yes   * No

    c. If you read Sarita's assessment questions to her this would be helpful.   * Yes   * No

    d. Reading Sarita's assessment questions to her would be a form of cheating.   * Yes   * No

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

Case study 2

Chen, a staff member, speaks Mandarin as her home language and does not always understand spoken English clearly.

Chen has not carried out a task according to policy and is having a disagreement with you based on a misunderstanding. A committee member, Nuan, speaks Mandarin and could assist you to communicate better with Chen.

3. Which of the following statements are actions you could take to resolve the misunderstanding? Select all that apply.

☐ Tell Nuan what the problem is and then ask Nuan to speak to Chen and sort out the misunderstanding. If Chen is not following policy and both people are part of the service then confidentiality is not an issue.

☐ Ask Chen if Nuan might help with the misunderstanding. If Chen gives permission, check that Nuan is comfortable helping. If both Chen and Nuan agree you can all work together to solve the issue knowing you are respecting confidentiality.

☐ If Chen felt Nuan should not become involved, you could involve a translator or interpreter service with Chen's agreement.

☐ If Chen felt Nuan should not become involved, you would need to continue to argue with Chen until she understood what you were saying.

Summary

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

Learning Checkpoint 3
Communicating with all people

1. Draw a line to match the sign to the appropriate meaning.

    * No smoking

    * No food or drink

    * Wash hands

    * First Aid

    * Bus stop

2. Choose one language other than English and write the word for 'welcome'. You may need to use Google Translate or similar for the translation.

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

4. If you met someone who did not speak English, what simple English verbal and non-verbal greeting could you use?

In this topic you will learn how to:

4A   Identify issues

4B   Resolve differences

Promote understanding

When you work with a diverse group of people you are likely to face some conflict.

Conflict may occur because of a simple disagreement, for example, over basic routines and practices, or may stem from a clash in values and expectations.

When resolving cross-cultural differences, understanding and commitment to resolving the conflict leads to change. Conflict itself is not always negative, even though you may find conflict hard to deal with or resolve. Conflict and its resolution often leads to stronger relationships, as people work together to resolve their differences.

4A Identify issues

To develop strong relationships with others you need to respect the diversity of culture and background of the people you interact with.

You also need to understand that the impact of upbringing, education and values encourage people to see the world in different ways that influence their relationships, behaviours and social expectations.

Consider diverse views

Part of being culturally competent means finding out about and accepting different world views.

Here are some strategies to help you value different needs and beliefs in order to provide appropriate education and care to children.

Some ways to learn about alternative world views include:

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

Issues that cause problems

When communication breaks down, people may become frustrated; conflict may arise if they don't understand something or feel they are not being understood.

Cultural and language differences may lead to conflict, so try to communicate clearly with all people and learn about what offends them and how they best communicate information.

Effective communication helps to minimise conflict and misunderstanding.

To avoid issues that may cause conflict, do the following:

➤ Learn about others, find out how they communicate best, what they like and dislike, value and believe in.

➤ Use interpreters and translators where useful.

➤ Accept cultural differences in communication.

➤ If you notice someone from a CALD background using a gesture or words that are inappropriate, let them know. There may be a misunderstanding.

➤ Exclude gestures or words that offend people from CALD backgrounds.

➤ Let others know what is expected in your service or when they communicate with you, particularly if they don't seem clear.

Routines

Many routine choices parents make can and should be accommodated in your service; however, at times practices may be difficult or inappropriate to follow.

For example, if a parent asks you to give a child a comforter that is inappropriate for their age, prefers the child to have no rest even when they are tired, or wants the child to be physically punished for their behaviour, these would be inappropriate.

Respect the preferences parents have for their children and try to accommodate them where possible.

When routine choices are difficult or confusing to resolve, work through the issue using clear communication. Refer to policies and procedures where necessary. If a conflict arises, refer to your complaints and conflict strategies.

Food choices

Attitudes toward meals and snacks vary.

For example, some people prefer a late breakfast, some prefer to graze throughout the day, while some may think children should always have a sandwich for lunch. Some children have dietary restrictions or requirements because of their culture, medical issues and/or religious beliefs. These food needs must be met at all times.

If a conflict around food choices arises you should do the following:

➤ Listen carefully and identify exactly what part of the food choice is an issue.

➤ Find out how you could improve the food choices of all children and families.

➤ Talk about policies and procedures for food choice with families and colleagues.

➤ Encourage people to participate in policy review to either support the service to adapt to meet their needs, or to understand why your service has chosen the policy and practices they have.

Learning

Parents may not have extensive knowledge of child development milestones or age-appropriate learning and play.

If a conflict arises relating to play and learning, explain the value of play in the program. Use evidence of the child's learning to demonstrate how you are responding to their interests while taking into consideration holistic learning opportunities that are linked to the National Quality Standard (NQS) and led by the learning frameworks. The service's philosophy regarding learning should back this up and provide information about the activities that are provided that link to learning.

Behaviour

Behavioural limits may differ, so be clear and consistent about expectations.

Policies and procedures should remind you that behaviour is another area of learning and development, and that mistakes should be considered learning opportunities.

Those unsure of appropriate expectations may need help to understand that children are learning in all areas, including appropriate behaviour. To do this you might provide positive information about how children are learning and progressing.

Ensure families understand age-appropriate behaviours.

Your knowledge of child development should help you to have reasonable expectations of children at various ages; however, some families may implement practices or have expectations that concern you. For example, you may see a parent smack their child if they accidently wet their pants.

If you do speak to others about children's behaviour, be sure you speak away from the child's hearing. Maintain respect for the family and their practices.

✏️ Practice Task 11

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

Case study 1

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

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

1. Why do you think Cindy is angry with Helena? Do you think this is reasonable?

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2. Do you have a food preference that you would like to have respected by others? Explain this and identify how you would feel if it was not respected.

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

Case study 2

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

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

Xanthi is unhappy. She tells Molly that she thought they were doing a healthy cooking activity and that she is not impressed with sugary foods being included when they know Ada will have a reaction to the sugar.

3. Which of the following options relate to the type of issue that is causing a problem? Select all that apply.

☐ Xanthi's issue is in relation to Ada's behaviour.

☐ This issue is about learning.

☐ A food choice is causing this issue.

☐ The issue is that Molly has not considered the dietary restrictions of Ada.

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

    a. Conflict can be positive. Molly has now learnt how important it is for Ada to follow her dietary restrictions.   * Yes   * No

    b. Conflict is scary and Xanthi should have avoided conflict and just reminded Molly about Ada's dietary restrictions next time there was a cooking activity.   * Yes   * No

    c. If Molly and Xanthi work this issue through, they will develop a stronger relationship.   * Yes   * No

5. List three strategies Molly could use to learn about the diverse views of all parents so she can understand their perceptions and social expectations.

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4B Resolve differences

Conflict is usually a struggle between two or more people over their different opinions, values, behaviours, ideas and goals.

Conflict may begin over small issues that seem unimportant to some people, or over very big and important issues.

Many people see conflict as negative and fear they may be left feeling hurt or frustrated, yet conflict can actually be positive, as it shows that people are thinking about what is happening and are willing to express their needs and ideas to bring about change.

Conflict resolution may be viewed as a process of problem-solving where creative solutions meet both parties' needs. This outcome is the best result, but this is not always possible to achieve. Always choose a solution where a child involved gains the best result.

When resolving conflict, aim for a win–win outcome.

Conflict resolution may result in the following outcomes:
➤ Win–win outcome: All people get what they want or need.
➤ Lose–lose outcome: No one gets what they want or need.
➤ Win–lose outcome: Only some people get what they want or need, while others do not.

Following policies and procedures

The philosophy, policies and handbook of your service must be provided to parents on enrolment and staff during the employment induction period.

These policies are developed and implemented to embrace diversity and inclusion, and ensure consistency in the approach of educators. They are also used to educate people about the beliefs and values of the service and its staff.

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

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

Grievance procedure

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

Complaints procedure

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

Considering risk

There may be times when you believe a practice is causing harm to a child.

Decisions about practice must always put the child first, so think about their needs and how you act. Before you take any action, consider the following questions. If your answers tell you the child is being harmed, speak to a supervisor and/or follow the policies of your service for supporting children at risk.

Questions to consider before taking action:

➤ Does the family insist on having these needs or expectations met by your service?

➤ Do the needs or expectations of the family fit with the policies and procedures of the service?

➤ What happens when the child is not in your service?

➤ Would the child be healthy and well if this practice continues?

➤ Do the needs or expectations of the family harm the child in any way? When children are being harmed, cultural practice is not a reason to delay reporting abuse.

➤ What are the reasons for the family's needs or expectations?

➤ Who else in the family is supporting the child's needs or expectations, e.g. grandparents or other extended family members?

Example
The impact of social diversity

Maryanne, an educator, has noticed that when Jiang's parents drop her off, she is dressed in many layers of clothes. Jiang often complains that she is hot, so the educators remove some layers during the day, but when her parents pick her up, they are often concerned and upset that she is cold.

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

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

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

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

Code of ethics

An ethical dilemma is a situation in which there is more than one way for you to react, and it is not clear which action will be best.

Your service's policies and procedures explain how to react to or report particular ethical dilemmas if they occur.

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

Early Childhood Australia (ECA) is a peak early childhood advocacy organisation acting in the interests of young children, their families and those in early childhood. ECA has developed a code of ethics, which provides a basis for reflection, a guide for professional behaviour and principles to inform decision-making.

You can use the ECA Code of Ethics as a set of guidelines to:

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

Here is an extract from ECA's Code of Ethics.

Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics

Core principles:

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

Source: The Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics extract is reprinted with permission. For more information, go to: aspirelr.link/eca-code-of-ethics

Handling conflict

When you experience a difficulty, you need to approach the situation in a professional and non-biased manner, and acknowledge the perspective and experience of each person.

When conflict is handled appropriately, the result can lead to positive changes and greater understanding of the other person's priorities and opinions. You may also gain a greater understanding of the different roles in your service.

Always approach conflict in a professional and non-biased manner.

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

If you have trouble resolving a conflict yourself, it should be reported to a more senior person. Your workplace should have strategies in place for reporting a conflict; for example, telling your supervisor or completing a form.

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

The six-step framework

Manage conflict by remaining calm and thinking through the issues. Take your time and listen to the other person.

By developing and practicing a process for managing conflict, you will find it easier to make positive choices that reduce frustration and unresolved or escalating conflict.

To increase your skills, try using these strategies in minor or frustrating situations so that if you do face conflict, you are able to naturally guide the resolution process. This will reduce your stress and help you to remain calm.

Destructive conflict can often be avoided by using good communication skills on a day-to-day basis to create and maintain goodwill and respect.

To work through conflict in a planned way, you can use a six-step framework, as outlined here.

Six-step framework for managing conflict	
1	**Confront the conflict** If you ignore a conflict it will not go away, it will just get worse. Recognise there is a problem and do something about it. You must try to resolve conflict if you want to maintain positive relationships.
2	**Understand each other's position** Try to understand your own and the other person's point of view. Think about what you believe and why it is important to you, then take the time to find out why the other person feels the way they do. Be open to differences and don't assume you're right.
3	**Involve those affected** The cause of the conflict and the possible effects of any change should be assessed, then all people involved should be identified and included. For example, if a conflict relates to one child's use of a piece of equipment, it will also relate to the family and the educators. If a conflict relates to the menu or disciplinary procedures, the entire service will need to be involved. By involving others, you should gain support and become aware of some different ideas.
4	**Define the problem** Once you have discussed each person's ideas and thoughts, identify and define the actual cause of the conflict. Often it may not be what you originally thought the issue was. Sometimes conflict raises other issues that need to be dealt with as well. You may find it easier to write down exactly what the problems are. You may also need to translate information or explain words or concepts.

Six-step framework for managing conflict	
5	**Search for and evaluate alternative solutions** List the positives and negatives for each possible solution. Refer to policies, procedures and philosophies. Identify exactly who the issue affects, then evaluate solutions relevant to the people involved. Attempt to create a win–win outcome.
6	**Agree on and act on the best solution** Together you should try to agree on what action to take. The decision should focus on what is best for the child or children. A new policy or procedure may be needed to prevent confusion in the future. Make sure everyone is aware of any changes that result from the decision. Also ensure that the solution is reviewed to determine whether the conflict has been completely resolved.

How to implement the six-step framework

To implement the six-step framework effectively, there are a number of questions to consider.

You may find it useful to ask yourself these questions next time you need to resolve a conflict.

Step 1

➤ What is the conflict?

Step 2

➤ Am I clear about my own beliefs on this topic?
➤ Do I know what the other person's beliefs are?
➤ Am I flexible?
➤ Have I considered the child?
➤ Is this causing an impact on the service/children/educators/families/ community?
➤ Have I thought about why I am against this?
➤ Have I looked at resources/information to find out as much as possible about the situation?
➤ Am I handling the conflict with respect and maturity?

Step 3

➤ Who needs to be involved?
➤ Who does this affect?

Step 4

➤ What are the problems from the other person's point of view?
➤ Have we all expressed ourselves clearly and completely?
➤ Do we understand why we each have our beliefs?
➤ Did I really listen to the other person's point of view?

Step 5

➤ What are the possible solutions?

➤ Have we considered the pros of each possible solution?

➤ Have we considered the cons of each possible solution?

➤ Are we aware of the policies, procedures and philosophies involved?

➤ Which options create a win–win outcome?

Step 6

➤ Are we able to reach agreement?

➤ Are we able to make a plan of action?

➤ Are we ready to do what needs to be done to make this happen?

Using a mediator

Mediation occurs when a conflict or concern exists between two parties.

A mediator is someone who is not involved in the situation, so they can see things without bias, work towards a win–win solution, and have no preference for the outcome. It is possible for a mediator to have bias if the issue relates to guidelines, legislation or an ethical dilemma.

A mediator might be someone who leads the organisation, a supervisor or an outside person you don't know. You may also be the mediator if you are not involved in the conflict and have strong communication skills.

Professional associations

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

Here is a list of professional associations and the sorts of assistance they can provide.

Professional organisations

➤ Australian Community Children's Services (ACCS)

➤ Community Child Care (CCC)

➤ Early Childhood Australia (ECA)

➤ United Voice (the education and care services union)

➤ Australian Services Union (ASU)

➤ Education and Care Services regulatory authorities – listed through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

Assistance provided

➤ Providing opportunities for people to meet and discuss issues

➤ Providing up-to-date information

➤ Providing advice and guidance

➤ Acting as a lobby group or public voice

➤ Promoting standards of acceptable practice

✏ Practice Task 12

1. Identify a cultural practice that may cause conflict. List the things you would consider in relation to this, then come to a resolution about what you should do.

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

Case study 1

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

Lei explains the timetable for computer use and notes that Felix arrives during Will's turn on the computer and that Will is not on the computer all afternoon. She asks Felix about his concerns and if he would prefer Will to have reduced or no computer time.

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

Lei shows understanding of Felix's concerns by nodding and thanking him for explaining. She says she will involve Will in other activities. Lei explains the situation to the other educators and they come up with some alternative activities that Will might enjoy.

The next day Lei suggests that Will participate in some activities other than using the computer, so that children who have no computer at home can use it for longer. Lei finds Will some puzzles and a riddle book, and he works with a small group of children on these together.

When Felix arrives to pick him up that day, Will is excited to see him. He tells his father about one of the riddles and asks him to try and solve it.

2. Number each step from 1 to 6 in the order Lei used the six-step approach to resolve this conflict.

☐ They thought of some activities Will might enjoy.

☐ Lei talked to the other educators to come up with a plan they could all implement.

☐ Lei implemented the idea.

☐ Lei asked questions and shared some information so she understood Felix's point of view.

☐ They all agreed on what the issues were and that they were relevant.

☐ Lei confronted the conflict.

3. Which of the following statements relate to the situation between Lei and Felix? Select all that apply.

☐ The situation demonstrated that there were social and cultural differences between the program and the family's needs. If this was not resolved the family may have become unhappy with the program.

☐ The situation shows that there were no social and cultural differences between the program and the family's needs. There was not really anything to resolve and Will would have been fine using the computer as much as he did.

☐ The situation resulted in a lose–lose outcome.

☐ The situation resulted a win–win outcome.

☐ The situation resulted a win–lose outcome.

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

Case study 2

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

➤ 'Oh, isn't it great to see men in this industry.'

➤ 'He really changes nappies, I watch him do it.'

➤ 'He is so gentle with the babies; you would swear he was gay.'

Aaron has mentioned to Sable that her comments make him feel uncomfortable and that he should be treated like every other educator; however, Sable continues to make the comments. Aaron feels there is a conflict, but he doesn't think Sable realises this. He speaks to his supervisor to get help.

4. Which procedure do you think Aaron should follow when trying to resolve this situation? Find an example and explore the process it suggests.

5. Briefly explain mediation. Do you think a mediator would be able to help Aaron resolve the conflict with Sable? Justify your answer.

Summary

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

Learning Checkpoint 4
Promote understanding

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

Case study

Ken usually plays with a group of boys in a construction or puzzle game. Today he noticed some girls dancing and he saw that their skirts twirl around when they spin. He decides to experiment with the skirts to see how they spin.

Janet, his mother, arrives and is unhappy about seeing Ken in a skirt. Janet grumpily tells Ken to take off the skirt and sit at the door. Janet approaches Kyrelee, the educator responsible for the children and their activities. Janet asks her, 'What's he doing in a skirt, are you nuts?'

Kyrelee responds, 'Hi Janet, Ken's just seeing how the fabric spins when he dances, but I can see you're upset about this.'

Janet says, 'You bet I am! Shouldn't he be playing with the blocks and cars instead?

1. Which of the following statements are social and cultural values you notice Janet expressing? Select all that apply.

   ☐ Boys like to explore different play.

   ☐ Boys and girls should play with different things.

   ☐ Educators should discipline children if they are not concentrating.

   ☐ Only girls should wear skirts.

   ☐ Girls should be playing with the cars.

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

   a. Janet should follow the complaints policy. * Yes * No

   b. If Kyrelee was rude to Janet and called her homophobic and biased, this would be inappropriate behaviour. * Yes * No

   c. Kyrelee should handle this complaint. She is responsible for the children and their activities. * Yes * No

   d. Janet is being silly and Kyrelee should involve her supervisor straight away. * Yes * No

   e. Janet should speak to Kyrelee's supervisor. Kyrelee has been ignorant and irresponsible and should be disciplined. * Yes * No

f. Kyrelee should try to resolve the conflict with Janet. If her efforts are not effective, she should ask a supervisor for support. When social and cultural diversity is involved, a mediator or supervisor can be useful.

* Yes   * No

3. If Kyrelee was disciplined by her supervisor and her social and cultural views were not respected, which of the following professional organisations could she contact? Select all that apply.

☐ United Voice

☐ Early Childhood Australia (ECA)

☐ Education and Care Services regulatory authorities – listed through the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA)

☐ Her local church group

☐ Gay and lesbian support group