

Information sheet

BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives is a shared responsibility of approved providers, educators, and other professionals working in early childhood educational settings, regardless of whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families are enrolled in that setting.

There is not a 'one size fits all' approach as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are diverse.

This information sheet summarises the inclusion of the *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0, 2022* (EYLF V2.0) [Principle, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives](#). As well, it provides a starting point for reflection on what this principle might look like in practice.



Links to the [National Quality Standard \(NQS\)](#)

The NQS recognises the potential of the educational program and practices to enhance each child's learning and development. The EYLF V2.0 Principle, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives is reflected in several quality areas of the NQS, with a particular focus in:

QA1: Educational program and practice

Element 1.1.1: Approved learning framework – Curriculum decision-making contributes to each child's learning and development outcomes in relation to their identity, connection with community, wellbeing, confidence as learners and effectiveness as communicators.

Element 1.1.2: Child-centred – Each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.

Element 1.2.3: Child directed learning – Each child's agency is promoted, enabling them to make choices and decisions that influence events and their world.

QA3: Physical environment

Element 3.2.3: Environmentally responsible – The service cares for the environment and supports children to become environmentally responsible.

QA5: Relationships with children

Standard 5.1: Relationships between educators and children – Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.

QA6: Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Element 6.1.2: Parent views are respected – The expertise, culture, values and beliefs of families are respected and families share in decision-making about their child's learning and wellbeing.

Element 6.2.3: Community engagement – The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in educators' philosophy and practice is a key tool to advance Reconciliation.

QA7: Governance and Leadership

Element 7.1.1: Service philosophy and purpose – A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.

Element 7.2.3: Development of professionals – Educators, co-ordinators and staff members' performances are regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

What is the change?

The EYLF V2.0 includes three new principles, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives.

Rationale for the change

- Strengthening Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, cultures, and perspectives throughout the EYLF reflects the [Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration](#) and aligns with the [Australian Curriculum V9.0](#).
- The Alice Springs Agreement (Mparntwe) Education Declaration (Education Council, 2019, p.5) describes the importance of learning that builds “on and includes local, regional and national cultural knowledge and experience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and work in partnership with local communities”.
- Furthermore, children become active and informed members of the community who “come to understand, acknowledge and celebrate the diversity and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures” (Education Council, 2019, p.8). This understanding is supported by a guiding principle of the NQF.

What this looks like in practice?

- Educators create culturally safe places, working in intercultural ways through pedagogy and practice. They seek out ways in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and western knowledge systems work side by side respectfully.
- Educators regularly assess themselves, their attitudes, their interactions and the learning environment for cultural responsiveness as defined by Elders and community members.
- Educators critically reflect and seek assistance through engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on how to embed their perspectives in the service's philosophy and curriculum planning and implementation.
- Educators grow their knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kinship systems and the local cultural connections to build engaging reciprocal relationships between services and communities.

- Acknowledging the strengths and capabilities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and local community while supporting wellbeing assists in reinforcing and affirming a positive sense of identity for their children.
- Educators will be responsive to children in ways that are affirming of their cultural identity, contributing to their pride and strength.
- Educators actively research about the wider Australian reconciliation and what is occurring in society and the community.
- Educators are committed to the service's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), actively supporting its progression.

Examples for specific age groups include:

Under 2 years:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language through dance and song is incorporated into the daily life of the service.

2–3 years:

- Dream time stories are incorporated into the daily life of the service.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander books, art, resources and artifacts are reflected in the environment for children to engage with and discuss.

3–6 years:

- Children are active citizens in the service's Reconciliation journey and are provided with opportunities to explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing, being and belonging.

Reflective questions and provocations

- How does your service philosophy guide and reflect quality practices of the EYLF V2.0 Principle, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives?
 - » Be You – [Cultural responsiveness in learning communities: A focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#)
- How do you nurture strong Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family and community partnerships?
 - » Reconciliation Australia – [Build Relationships with Community \(YouTube\)](#)
- How will restful and mutually beneficial partnerships be developed and maintained with Elders, family and community members? How are you creating time and opportunities for them to share culturally valued ways of creating, representing and responding?
 - » SNAICC – [Growing up our way: Practices matrix](#)

- How do you acknowledge the oral traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the curriculum?
 - » First Languages Australia – [Gambay: Australian First Languages Map](#)
- How do you demonstrate high expectations of the learning capabilities for all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children within the program? What does success look like for the individual child?
 - » SNAICC – [Children are confident and involved learners](#)
- If there are no Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in your service, how do you build knowledge and raise awareness of, and build connections in, the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community?
 - » Sue Atkinson - [Possum Skin Pedagogy: A guide for early childhood practitioners](#)

ACECQA references and resources

- ACECQA – Information sheet: Quality Area 4 – [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia V2.0 \(EYLF\)](#)
- ACECQA – [Guide to the National Quality Framework](#)
- ACECQA – [Information sheet – QA1 Be a part of reconciliation](#)
- ACECQA – [We hear you blog – Developing Narragunnawali Reconciliation Action Plans and Exceeding the National Quality Standard](#)

Other references and resources

- Australian Government Department of Education – [The Alice Springs \(Mparntwe\) Education Declaration](#)
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- ABC Kids Listen – [Little Yarns](#)
- CDU International Graduate Centre of Education – [Marcus Mungul Lacey on Both-Ways Learning \(Australia\) \(YouTube\)](#)
- Commonwealth of Australia – [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in early childhood education and care – Case study 1](#)
- Commonwealth of Australia – [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in early childhood education and care – Case study 2](#)
- First Languages Australia – [Gambay: Australian First Languages Map](#)
- Narragunnawali – [A matter of perspective \(Early learning\)](#)
- Narragunnawali – [Curriculum resources](#)
- Reconciliation Australia – [Build Relationships with Community \(YouTube\)](#)
- SNAICC – [Growing up our way: Practices matrix](#)
- SNAICC – [Children are confident and involved learners](#)
- Sue Atkinson – [Possum skin pedagogy: A guide for early childhood practitioners](#)