

Hear Our Voices

How do educators connect, listen and respond?

Relationships and partnerships form the foundation for successful inclusion



Childrens Voice

"I like it when my mum comes to visit us and helps us cook." – Evie, 4 years

"My best part of kindy is playing with my cousins." – Jimmy, 5 years



How is my family, culture and voice represented here?

- ▶ Is my home language embraced here?
- ▶ Is my culture truly valued here?
- ▶ When I look around, can I see me, and my mob represented here?
- ▶ If I have mob here, can I connect with them throughout the day?

Families Voice

"When I am at my early childhood service, I like to both feel and see that my family and child are welcomed and represented. I need educators to see me as a parent first, without expectations, and understand that my culture is part of who I am, my identity. I believe that my child's culture will be valued while with you and that our relationship will be warm, open and respectful."

– Les Saunders, parent



Is my family and child welcome here?

- ▶ Do I feel safe, respected, culturally secure and valued?
- ▶ Do you value my child rearing practices and understand they may differ from yours?
- ▶ Do you have expectations of me that you do not have of non-Indigenous parents?
- ▶ Is there an expectation that I will share my culture with you?
- ▶ If I have Sorry Business, how will you support my family?

Elders Voice

"Sharing my culture with your service is important to me but give me time to adjust to your centre as you may be all strangers to me, and I may not participate to your expectations on my first visit."

"I have so much to share but do not expect me to know all the Dreamtime stories around Australia or how to do dot painting as I have my own experiences and connections with the land." – Uncle Barry Watson



What is our relationship?

- ▶ What is your intent behind engaging with me?
- ▶ Do you view me as a welcome guest to your service to share in your day or are you expecting more of a performance?
- ▶ If you have asked me to share my time and knowledge with you, have you offered to reimburse me for my time? Have you checked if I need support with transport? Have you ensured the way in which you invite me into your service is culturally secure for me?
- ▶ Do you listen, truly listen?

Educators Voice

"The display of the flags as soon as I walk into our centre and when I see my Island culture is displayed makes us feel proud. This is through artwork, weaving, special musical instruments on display and included in the program each day, and pictures of old hunting days and family so we can share our stories with the children. We like that we are asked to participate in celebrations, and it is not expected of us."

– Amara Farmer and Doreen Tabo, Educators



Am I ready to do the hard work to move the concept of reconciliation from vision to fruition?

- ▶ If we truly believe that culture is important to children's wellbeing and development, how do we demonstrate this?
- ▶ How do I support my colleagues to share their knowledge about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, perspectives, and histories at our service?
- ▶ Do I recognise my own biases?
- ▶ Am I confident to challenge racism and bias when I see it?

Management Voice

"Be brave. To see where I am now highlights the steps I have taken. Each step was not taken alone, but with friends, educators, sector professionals, children, Aunts and Uncles." – Pollyann Webb, Centre Director



How can we ensure all educators and staff are committed to, and will drive a whole of service change, towards reconciliation in education?

- ▶ Do we have a Reconciliation Action Plan and is it implemented with intent?
- ▶ Do we have a plan to employ and retain Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples and is this plan successful?
- ▶ Do we engage with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to ensure that we provide a culturally secure and welcoming workplace?
- ▶ Do all of our educators understand Australian history and its impacts on the engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities in our service?