



## INCLUSION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

### Aim:

To be culturally competent we aim to build understanding between people, to be respectful and open to different perspectives and work towards equality of opportunity. To have positive attitudes towards differences, skills in and commitment to two way open communication

To value Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture as required by a guiding principle of the Education and Care Services National Law.

To ensure children and families are accepted for who they are regardless of gender, culture, ethnicity, beliefs or abilities.

To be aware of the cultural diversity within Australia and around the world and to teach acceptance and respect for this diversity.

To support children from migrant and refugee backgrounds

To be culturally inclusive and appropriate care for all children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

### Explanation:

The commitment to be culturally competent comes from our core belief that God created all mankind and therefore each one is equally valuable. Our philosophy states that as global citizens we have a genuine interest in other cultures and work with our local community and further afield to build relationships to broaden understanding and support for children. We advocate for and embed compassion in all that we do.

Culture is not the same as ethnicity. It is not celebrations. It is not food. In the Rumpus Room Children's Centres, culture means the way your family do things. Children are born belonging to a culture, which is not only influenced by traditional practices, heritage and ancestral knowledge, but also by the experiences, values and beliefs of individual families and communities.

Respecting diversity means, valuing and reflecting the practices, values and beliefs of families.

Educators need to reflect upon their own culture as a preliminary step to understanding and respecting the culture of others.

We build our identity on a sense of our culture and this leads to our sense of "being and belonging".

Building strong and respectful relationships between people (families, educators and children) is foundational to building cultural competence. Understanding another's attitudes, expectations, experiences and dreams etc. allows us to "connect" and can be assisted by "getting to know" each other and also by gaining knowledge from other community members and resources.

The principles of trust, respect for diversity, equity, fairness, and social justice underpin cultural competence.



For example At the Rumpus Room many families share a Christian Church culture with regular corporate worship times and child focussed lessons about Jesus. Many gather with other young families, in small groups in people's homes, for relationship, learning and support. These groups often function similarly to extended family groups which may be familiar to other cultural groups. Many families therefore consider issues of social justice around the world and protecting the environment as ways of representing a Christian world view.

### Implementation:

The Service will create an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP) to guide practice with the assistance of the Inclusion Support Service who provide ongoing support and advice in many forms Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences. They are aware of their own world view, develop positive attitudes towards cultural differences, gain knowledge of different practices and world view and develop skills for communication and interaction. So they are involved in a never ending journey of critical reflection, of learning to understand how people perceive the world and participating in different systems of shared knowledge.

Educators also seek to promote children's cultural competence. While aspects of cultural competency can be multi-layered, interconnected and sometimes complex, it is achieved through daily experiences, the words we use and everyday decisions made by educators.

Cultural competence has 3 elements

1. Attitudes
2. Skills
3. Knowledge

These are important at 3 levels.

1. Individual level - the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours of individuals
2. Service level – management and operational frameworks and practices, expectations, including policies, procedures, vision statements and the voices of children, families and community
3. The broader system level – how services relate to and respect the rest of the community, agencies, Elders, local community protocols.

Culturally competent educators have the following attitudes, skills and knowledge. They:-

- Have an understanding of, and honour, the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices of others
- Value children's different capacities and abilities
- Respect differences in families' home lives
- Recognise that diversity contributes to the richness of our society and provides a valid evidence base about ways of knowing
- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to developing their own cultural competence in a two way process with families and communities
- Promote greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.
- Teach, role-model and encourage cultural competence in children, recognising that this is crucial to ensuring children have a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging.



- Engage in ongoing reflection relating to their cultural competence and how they build children's cultural competence.

In our efforts to be culturally inclusive our service will practice the following

In relation to Educational Programming

- The Service has access to current data about cultural diversity in their local community
- Curriculum development reflects the cultural diversity represented in the service and of the wider community
- Educators utilise a range of strategies to support and promote children's cultural learning
- Resources, materials, and activities reflect cultural diversity
- Educators access opportunities to promote the use of children's home language in the service and at home
- Educators use a variety of alternative communication methods to increase the opportunities for all children to be able to understand all aspects of the program. This includes key word signing, use of photographs and symbol cards as visuals.
- The Service supports the ongoing consistent engagement of families in the program
- The service creates opportunities for family and extended family to participate in activities.

In relation to Communication

- We collect data on the cultural background, practices and languages spoken by families
- Bilingual families are provided with appropriate linguistic support during the enrolment process.
- Bilingual children are able to communicate their needs in a variety of ways
- Augmented communication forms are used (see Educational Programming).
- Access to an interpreter is available to families
- Access to translated information about the service and day-to-day operations is available to families. (see Management and Service)
- Access to translated parenting related resources are available to families e.g. see Government websites and Munch and Move.
- Educators use children's names and pronounce them correctly
- Written material produced in English uses plain language and simple terms, avoiding jargon

In relation to Physical Environment and Practice

- The environment incorporates symbols and resources relevant to the cultural diversity in the community and in Australia. (e.g. maps, images on the walls, picture books, publications)
- Culturally inclusive practice is part of our everyday routine.
- Families can identify with their culture in the service environment
- Educators promote in children a strong sense of identity and sense of awareness of their own and other cultures
- Educators acknowledge and respect cultural practices specific to families
- Educators celebrate culturally diverse special events regularly

In relation to Staff development



- There is an ongoing commitment to professional development & training to promote culturally inclusive practices
- Educators are trained around cultural communication and support for migrant and refugee children and families
- Educators regularly reflect as a team, on work styles and approaches to ensure culturally appropriate and inclusive program delivery
- Educators develop skills for communication and support of bilingual children and families
- Educators are knowledgeable about local services in the area who can provide support for families. See Inclusion Support and list below.

In relation to Policy and Service Management

- Policy is reviewed annually. Family input will be considered.
- The service prevents and challenges discrimination within the team and towards service users
- The service accesses the Bicultural Support Program, Inclusion Support Agency and relevant community support networks
- A budget is available if needed, to access the use of interpreters, translators and multicultural resources. Bilingual families will be provided with appropriate linguistic support during the enrolment process This may include using bilingual friends, interpreters, printed translations, signing, and support from ISS or other support services including <http://www.mncinc.org.au/links.html>, Northern Settlement Services <http://www.nsservices.com.au/> Multicultural NSW <http://multicultural.nsw.gov.au/> or Local Community Services Association <https://www.lcsansw.org.au>
- The service has an external referral process in place.

Cultural competence also includes our efforts to value and build connections with **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) Peoples** and highlight Australia's rich Indigenous culture. This contributes to the work of Reconciliation and supports the rights of all citizen's to be valued.

At The Rumpus Room we are involved in Start Strong program. This program is aimed at increasing participation in early childhood education amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

We aim to be active members of a local "yarnin' circle" to workshop our progress in implementing better practice for the inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our services.

We also aim to be part of the Ngroo Walking Together Project

The children participate daily in an "Acknowledgement of Country"

We seek to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander educators and support them as they learn about their own culture and share that in an authentic way with the children.

We allocate professional development funds to all educators to learn more about Australia's Indigenous culture.

We are growing in our everyday use of the word "jarjums" as a replacement for "children" as it is a commonly recognised word throughout Aboriginal languages.

We have acquired a set of Australia's 3 flags and endeavour to display them.

The local people group are the Awabakal. <http://www.awabakal.org/contact>. They have 2 Early Learning and Education Centres (Wickham and Glendale) a Medical Service at Hamilton and the main administration building in Wickham where community groups are run.



We want to support the work of Miromaa (which in the Awabakal language means "Saved" ...) as it endeavours to save the Aboriginal language. We access resources from the unit. We will use music and dance to expose the children at our centre to both the local and other Aboriginal languages such as Gamilaraay from the Gomeroi people from Northern NSW. (search Buddy Hippi and Simon Mellor) Our educators will speak, when doing everyday tasks about Aboriginal people having life like but different to ours. For example when putting away the beds after sleep and rest times say Aboriginal people have beds some are the same as yours and some made out of bark. When unpacking the groceries say Aboriginal people who lived where there were no shops had shopping baskets (eg different baskets for different products they are collecting) that they wove out of fibres from palms, grasses, bark and roots. We will attempt to add include some aboriginal arts skills to our program including painting and basket making. Aboriginal Christian culture is supported in our area by a radio program called "Miromaa (saved) for life, on radio station Rhema FM which aims to enrich the lives of the Indigenous-Christian Australian community via the radio waves. While we never want to offend we have been encouraged by local Aboriginal speakers to have a go and try ideas rather than doing nothing for fear of offending. The attempt is appreciated.

This policy links to the following NQS:

National Quality Standards 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.2.3, 3.2.1, 4.2.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.2.1, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.3, 6.2.2, 6.2.3.

See Appendix 1-National Law and National Regulations

Resources

Culturally Inclusive Service Assessment Tool for Early Childhood Services. Diversity in Practice, 2011. Tip sheet 1. – Provided by Inclusion Support Service.

What does it mean to be culturally competent? By Rhonda Livingstone, ACECQA's National Education Leader.

<https://wehearyou.acecqa.gov.au/2014/07/10/what-does-it-mean-to-be-culturally-competent/>

Becoming culturally competent - Ideas that support practice. NQSPLP e-Newsletter No 65. 2013

Understanding cultural competence. EYLFPLP e-Newsletter No 7. 2011

Why culture matters for children's development and wellbeing. Kids Matter Australian Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative. Information for families and early childhood educators.

Component 1 – creating a sense of community.

Cultural Connections Booklet. Child Professional Support Coordinator.

