



**COMPLIANT**  
LEARNING RESOURCES



**CHCECE054**

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**Encourage understanding  
of Aboriginal Torres  
Strait Islander  
Peoples cultures**

**LEARNER  
GUIDE**

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## This Learner Guide

### **CHCECE054 - Encourage understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures (Release 1)**

This unit describes the performance outcomes, skills and knowledge required to identify different perspectives on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures, develop an understanding of the local and broader cultural contexts, and use the identified information to embed culturally appropriate experiences, interactions, behaviours and physical environments into daily practice with children.

This unit applies to educators who work in regulated children's education and care services or schools in Australia, including those who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander and educators from other cultural backgrounds.

The skills in this unit must be applied in accordance with Commonwealth and State/Territory legislation, Australian standards and industry codes of practice.

No occupational licensing, certification or specific legislative requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication.

**A complete copy of the above unit of competency can be downloaded from the TGA website:**

<https://training.gov.au/Training/Details/CHCECE054>

## About this Unit of Study Introduction

As a worker, a trainee, or a future worker, you want to enjoy your work and become known as a valuable team member. This unit of competency will help you acquire the knowledge and skills to work effectively as an individual and in groups. It will give you the basis to contribute to the goals of the organisation which employs you.

It is essential that you begin your training by becoming familiar with the industry standards to which organisations must conform.

## This Learner Guide Covers

Encourage understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures

- I. Identify perspectives on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures
- II. Investigate the local context for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures.
- III. Contribute Ideas for Embedding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' culture in daily practice.
- IV. Support children's understanding and respect.

## Learning Program

As you progress through this unit of study, you will develop skills in locating and understanding an organisation's policies and procedures. You will build up a sound knowledge of the industry standards within which organisations must operate. You will become more aware of the effect that your own skills in dealing with people have on your success or otherwise in the workplace. Knowledge of your skills and capabilities will help you make informed choices about your further study and career options.



## Additional Learning Support

To obtain additional support you may:

- Search for other resources. You may find books, journals, videos and other materials which provide additional information about topics in this unit.
- Search for other resources in your local library. Most libraries keep information about government departments and other organisations, services and programs. The librarian should be able to help you locate such resources.
- Contact information services such as Infolink, Equal Opportunity Commission, Commissioner of Workplace Agreements, Union organisations, and public relations and information services provided by various government departments. Many of these services are listed in the telephone directory.
- Contact your facilitator.

## Facilitation

Your training organisation will provide you with a facilitator. Your facilitator will play an active role in supporting your learning. Your facilitator will help you at any time during working hours to assist with:

- How and when to make contact,
- what you need to do to complete this unit of study, and
- what support will be provided.

Here are some of the things your facilitator may do to make your study easier:

- Give you a clear visual timetable of events for the semester or term in which you are enrolled, including any deadlines for assessments.
- Provide you with online webinar times and availability.
- Use 'action sheets' to remind you about tasks you need to complete, and updates on websites.
- Make themselves available by telephone for support discussion and provide you with industry updates by email where applicable.
- Keep in touch with you during your studies.

## Flexible Learning

Studying to become a competent worker is an interesting and exciting thing to do. You will learn about current issues in this area. You will establish relationships with other students, fellow workers, and clients. You will learn about your own ideas, attitudes, and values. You will also have fun. (Most of the time!)

At other times, studying can seem overwhelming and impossibly demanding, particularly when you have an assignment to do and you are not sure how to tackle it, your family and friends want you to spend time with them, or a movie you want to see is on television.

Sometimes being a student can be hard.

Here are some ideas to help you through the hard times. To study effectively, you need space, resources, and time.

### Space

Try to set up a place at home or at work where:

1. You can keep your study materials,
2. you can be reasonably quiet and free from interruptions, and
3. you can be reasonably comfortable, with good lighting, seating, and a flat surface for writing.

If it is impossible for you to set up a study space, perhaps you could use your local library. You will not be able to store your study materials there, but you will have quiet, a desk and chair, and easy access to the other facilities.



## **Study Resources**

The most basic resources you will need are:

1. A chair
2. A desk or table
3. A computer with Internet access
4. A reading lamp or good light
5. A folder or file to keep your notes and study materials together
6. Materials to record information (pen and paper or notebooks, or a computer and printer)
7. Reference materials, including a dictionary

Do not forget that other people can be valuable study resources. Your fellow workers, work supervisor, other students, your facilitator, your local librarian, and workers in this area can also help you.

## **Time**

It is important to plan your study time. Work out a time that suits you and plan around it. Most people find that studying, in short, concentrated blocks of time (an hour or two) at regular intervals (daily, every second day, once a week) is more effective than trying to cram a lot of learning into a whole day. You need time to 'digest' the information in one section before you move on to the next, and everyone needs regular breaks from study to avoid overload. Be realistic in allocating time for study. Look at what is required for the unit and look at your other commitments.

Make up a study timetable and stick to it. Build in 'deadlines' and set yourself goals for completing study tasks. Allow time for reading and completing activities. Remember that it is the quality of the time you spend studying rather than the quantity that is important.



## Using this Learner Guide

A Learner Guide is just that, a guide to help you learn. A Learner Guide is not a textbook. Your Learner Guide will:

1. Describe the skills you need to demonstrate to achieve competency for this unit.
2. Provide information and knowledge to help you develop your skills.
3. Provide you with structured learning activities to help you absorb knowledge and information and practice your skills.
4. Direct you to other sources of additional knowledge and information about topics for this unit.

## How to Get the Most Out of Your Learner Guide

Some sections are quite long and cover complex ideas and information. If you come across anything you do not understand:

1. Talk to your facilitator.
2. Research the area using the books and materials listed under Resources.
3. Discuss the issue with other people (your workplace supervisor, fellow workers, fellow students).
4. Try to relate the information presented in this Learner Guide to your own experience and to what you already know.
5. Ask yourself questions as you go. For example, 'Have I seen this happening anywhere?' 'Could this apply to me?' 'What if...?' This will help you to 'make sense' of new material, and to build on your existing knowledge.
6. Talk to people about your study. Talking is a great way to reinforce what you are learning.
7. Make notes.
8. Work through the activities. Even if you are tempted to skip some activities, do them anyway. They are there for a reason, and even if you already have the knowledge or skills relating to a particular activity, doing them will help to reinforce what you already know. If you do not understand an activity, think carefully about the way the questions or instructions are phrased. Read the section again to see if you can make sense of it. If you are still confused, contact your facilitator or discuss the activity with other students, fellow workers or with your workplace supervisor.

## **Additional Research, Reading, and Note-Taking**

If you are using the additional references and resources suggested in the Learner Guide to take your knowledge a step further, there are a few simple things to keep in mind to make this kind of research easier.

Always make a note of the author's name, the title of the book or article, the edition, when it was published, where it was published, and the name of the publisher. This includes online articles. If you are taking notes about specific ideas or information, you will need to put the page number as well. This is called the reference information. You will need this for some assessment tasks, and it will help you to find the book again if you need to.

Keep your notes short and to the point. Relate your notes to the material in your Learner Guide. Put things into your own words. This will give you a better understanding of the material.

Start off with a question you want answered when you are exploring additional resource materials. This will structure your reading and save you time.

## Introduction



*“From before birth, children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning take place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children’s first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.”*

*Sourced from [Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under CC BY 4.0, Commonwealth of Australia*

This Learner Guide emphasises the importance of the cultures of the First Peoples of Australia - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In the journey of creating a harmonious Australian community, it is necessary to establish deeper connections with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

To acknowledge and respect the impact of events in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, means accepting diversity of culture, skin and language groups, family structures, art and religion in Indigenous cultures within Australia. This entails self-reflection to what may be influencing current values, beliefs and attitudes; and defining aspects of your environment which influences one’s cultural identity and development of cultural competency.

In the context of Early Childhood Education and Care service, educators need to ensure that they foster cultural competence. Cultural competence is the ability to celebrate and honour diversity. As an educator, you are responsible for teaching children to be aware of cultural differences and appreciate them.

Encouraging children's understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures can be done by following the principles, practices and learning outcomes of the National Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care, including the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

In this learner guide, you will learn to:

- identify perspectives on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures
- investigate the local context for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures
- contribute ideas for embedding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples culture in daily practice
- support children's understanding and respect
- improve your cultural awareness and competency



## I. Identify Perspectives on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures



“Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives are inclusive of non-Indigenous peoples’ perspectives”, and in the same way, educators must ensure that non-indigenous perspectives are inclusive of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. Rather than viewing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives as something that exists separately and on the margins of mainstream society, you must grow your awareness of, acknowledge and bring these perspectives into the centre of teaching so that both are together and alongside.

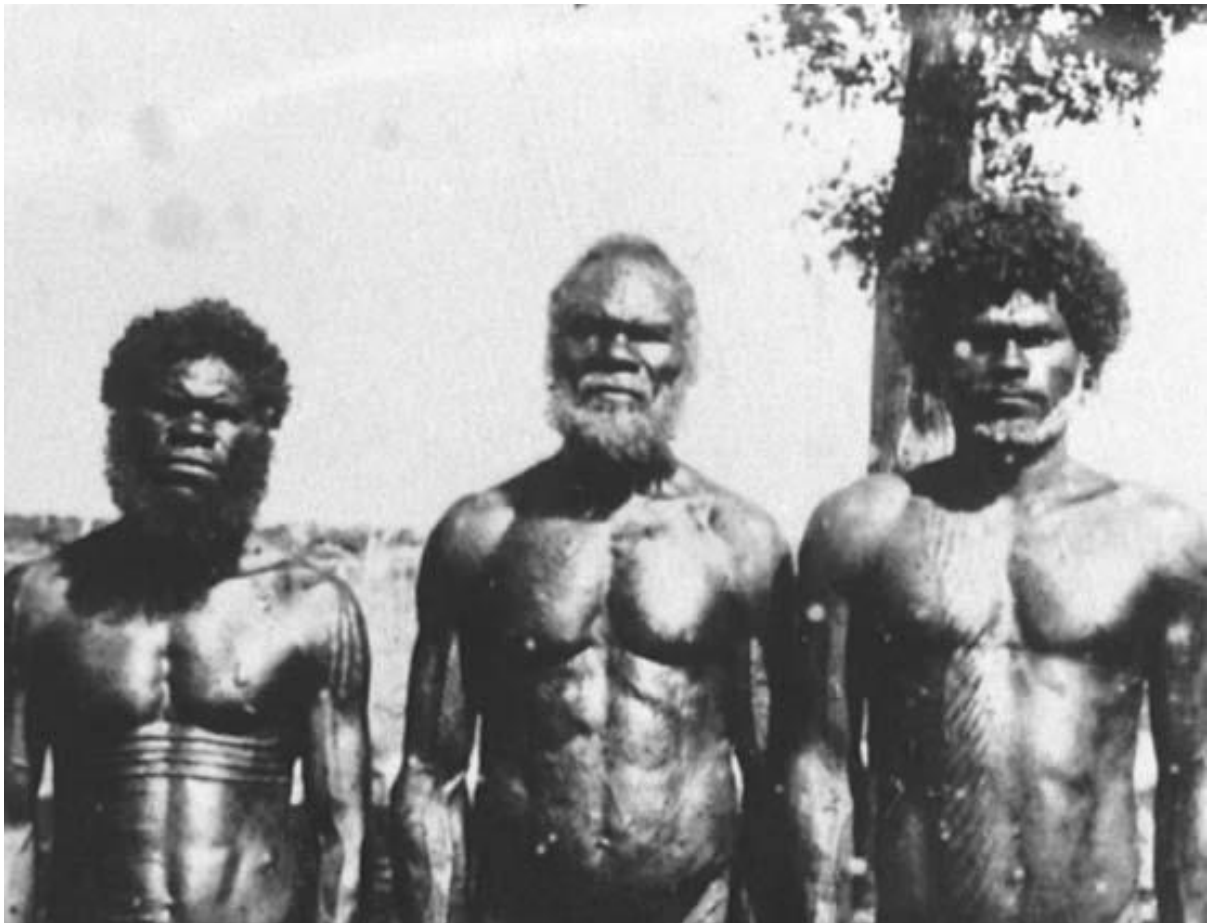
*Sourced from [Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives in schools: A guide for school learning communities](#), used under CC BY 4.0, © State of Queensland (Department of Education)*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives were completely misunderstood by the early European colonists, and many of these misunderstandings have been perpetuated. In this chapter, you will learn about identifying perspectives on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures, including:

- Identifying and reflecting on perspectives about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures and the experiences that have informed them
- Identifying and implementing ways to improve awareness of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures



## 1.1 Identify and Reflect on Perspectives About Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures and the Experiences that Have Informed Them



As an educator, it is your responsibility to ensure that the children under your care are properly informed and are aware of the diverse culture across Australia. This is essential in the development of young people who will become active citizens of Australia later in life.

It is also important that you embody the same lessons that you will teach the children under your care. You will need to reflect on factors that may hinder your teachings, such as stereotypes, myths and unconscious biases.

A 'Perspective' is how you see the world around you. Perspectives shape how you interact with the world, as well as how you see yourself and others. They are made up of (but not limited to) the experiences you have with other people, with your family, by what you see on media, and the beliefs you hold.

Identifying your perspectives is very important because being able to see and understand different perspectives will reduce your biases. This applies for several activities you will perform during your career such as teaching children or conversing with their parents.

This will also greatly benefit the children under your care, because with you as a model teacher showing unbiased caring and teaching, the children may eventually become more accepting of diversity as well.

### 1.1.1 Identifying Perspectives about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures and the Experiences that Have Informed Them

Identifying your perspectives about other cultures can be a difficult or even painful process, but this process starts by asking yourself certain questions.

Some of these questions you can ask yourself are:

Where did you get the information, you currently have about Aboriginals and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples?

What do you know for sure about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples?

How certain are you about the truth of the beliefs that you hold about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples?

What previous experience(s) have you had with any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people?

- Where did you get the information, you currently have about Aboriginals and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples?
- What do you know for sure about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples?
- How certain are you about the truth of the beliefs that you hold about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples?
- What previous experience(s) have you had with any Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people?

It is likely that you have at least encountered some of the stereotypes, myths, or unconscious biases people have about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island peoples. Your perspectives on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island peoples may not be necessarily something you have gained through interacting with them. Therefore, it is important to also identify the previous experiences you have had with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island people.

To assist you in identifying your perspectives, here are a few common misconceptions people have about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples:

Myth	Truth
The Aboriginal people in Australia all belong to the same culture	There are over two hundred and fifty different cultures in Australia.
You can mostly find aboriginals in the wild outback	Most aboriginals reside in either the major cities of Australia, or regional Australia. Only a minority of them live in very remote areas.
All Aboriginals have dark skin	Many aboriginal children are of mixed heritage. Whether or not they identify as Aboriginals or not depends entirely up to them, and you should respect their decision.
Aboriginal people only excel at arts and sports	This is incorrect, as many aboriginals have succeeded in various fields.
You need to inspire Aboriginal children to aspire to higher callings	Aboriginal children have high aspirations. This misconception is brought about by lack of opportunities. As an educator, you should nurture their aspirations.

Note that the list of misconceptions provided above is not exhaustive. There are many misconceptions regarding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island peoples' cultures. These are only here to give you an idea of what perspectives you might have and must be educated about.

### **Indigenous, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?**

You must understand that "Indigenous", "Aboriginal" or "Torres Strait Islander" are names that are the legacy of British colonisation. The first peoples of Australia identified themselves by the country in which they lived, such as Dharug, Gandangarra, Tharawal, Eora, Kamilaroi, Wiradjuri, Bundjalung, and so on.

“Indigenous”, “Aboriginal” or “Torres Strait Islander” are colonial labels imposed on a range of people with extremely diverse cultures and languages. “Indigenous” is a term that is generally used when referring to both First Nations' People – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The term “Aboriginal” refers specifically to the Aboriginal people of mainland Australia and does not necessarily include Torres Strait Islanders.

When writing or discussing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it is considered disrespectful to use acronyms such as “ATSI”. Throughout this Learner Guide, the full name of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders is used.

### **Who is Aboriginal?**

An Aboriginal person is usually regarded as someone who can demonstrate lineage to Aboriginal heritage, self-identifies as being Aboriginal, and has been recognised by the Aboriginal community as being Aboriginal.

Terms such as Koori, Kurri, Moori are terms reserved for use by those who can identify a specific relationship with the person’s history and should never be used in generalisation, unless the people of that area have explicitly requested to be referred to by that term.

### **1.1.2 Reflection on Perspectives About Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Cultures and the Experiences that Have Informed Them**

Reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives. Engaging in reflection is expected of you in Early Childhood Education and Care. Educators often frame their reflective practice with a set of overarching questions, developing more specific questions for areas of enquiry.

For educators, the intention of reflective practice is to gather information and insight support, inform and enrich decision-making about children’s learning. Early years educators use reflection to identify areas for improvement in their current implementation and think of ways to further improve facilitation of child development. It helps you learn, grow, change and become a better educator.

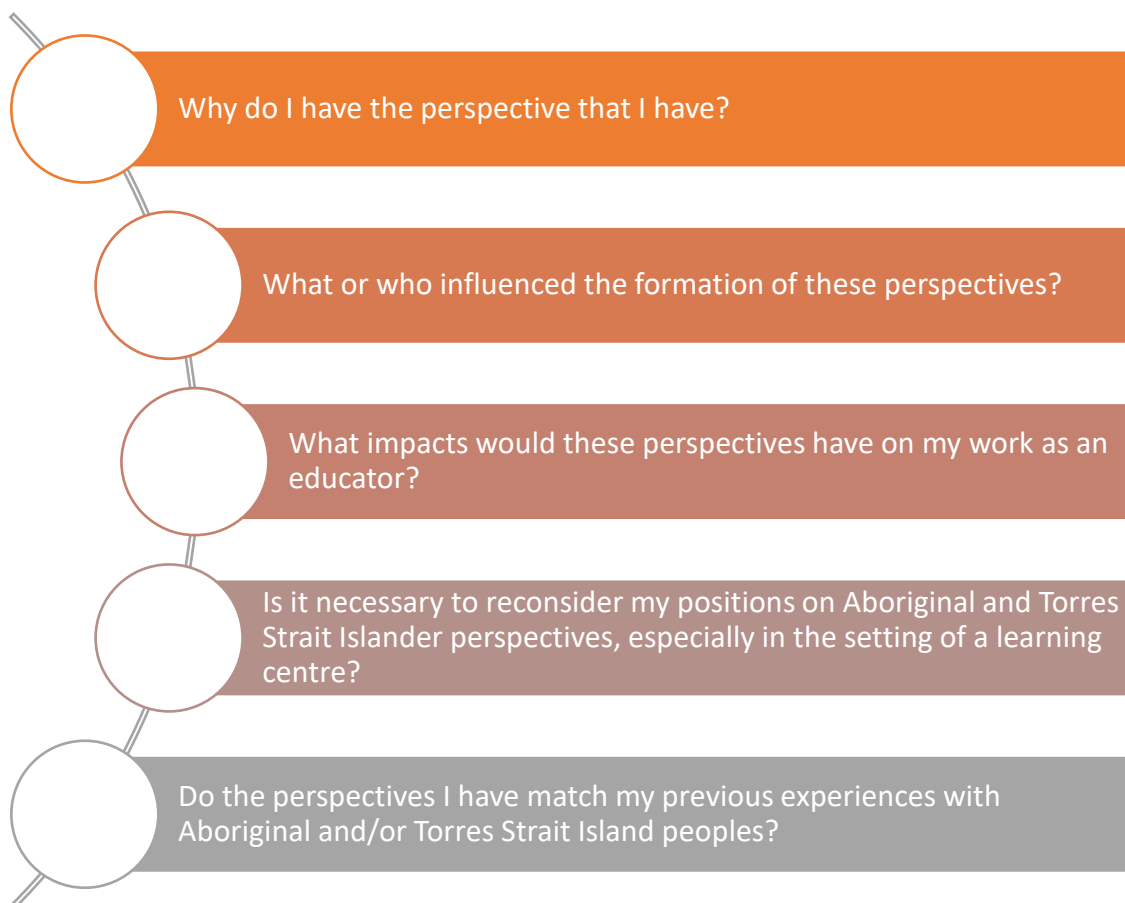
You should reflect on your own actions – what you did well and what needs improving – as well as examining the progress of children in your care. This informs your planning for the next cycle. Reflection happens both during the day, “on the go”, and deeper analysis after the events of the day. The whole point is to improve outcomes in continuously.

## Using Reflection in the Context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures

Just as reflection in an educational setting, reflection on your beliefs and ideas about Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders can be framed by a question. In this case, you can try 'Why do I have this belief?' It is not enough to examine something from just your perspective, but also from the perspective of others. Think of the perspective of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples on a particular subject, then contrast them against your own to figure out why you have different beliefs.

Reflection requires some self-evaluation. As part of the reflection process, step back and examine your feelings. Ask yourself questions that will help you understand why you believe the things that you believe.

Below are some questions to ask yourself when trying to reflect upon your perspectives:



A process of reflection is necessary to examine your own cultural biases, values and beliefs. Remember that these are shaped by your personal experiences, how you were brought up and the things you were told. Asking yourself whether your previous experience with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island peoples is important in understanding whether you hold perspectives that do not match the facts. An essential part of reflection is being able to let go of preconceptions and being open to new and different ways of thinking.

## Meaningful reflection

Meaning reflection means that you are aware of your own thought processes, you understand how these affect the world around you and you are share these thoughts with those who matter.

Reflection is meaningful when the educator is aware of their own thought process, can come up with potential applications for their reflection, and when the conclusions or outcomes are shared with relevant individuals within the centre.



### Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. It is essential for you to reflect on factors that may hinder your teachings, such as stereotypes, myths and unconscious biases. You can identify these by asking yourself certain questions about how you came to believe these things in the first place.
2. Reflection is a vital tool for educators which involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives to find areas for improvement. It can also be applied in analysing your perspectives and biases towards the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

## 1.2 Identify and Implement Ways to Improve Awareness of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures



Now that you have gotten a better look at your own ideas towards Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Peoples through self-reflection, you must now learn how to improve your awareness of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' different cultures.

### 1.2.1 Identify Ways to Improve Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness recognises that everyone is shaped by their cultural background. This influences how you interpret the world and how you perceive yourself in relationships with other people.

You are not expected to be an expert in Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures or to have all the answers. Being culturally aware, however, helps you to explore cultural issues in your centre more sensitively and respectfully.

Having information and an overview of specific cultural characteristics, practices, and issues helps to increase cultural knowledge. On the other hand, it is important also to remember that people are individuals, and their preferences and needs are unique to them – they are more than just the sum of their cultural background.

Peoples' values, behaviour and beliefs can vary enormously within a culture too. The following are ways you can improve your cultural awareness of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures.



## Research

To knowledgeably identify and discuss the connection of Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander people's connection with and use of the natural environment, you need to be well-read and aware of their historical significance as well as their role in current society.

You can:

- Watch videos about Aboriginal peoples
- Read research papers about them
- Take online courses to learn more
- Participate in online discussions
- Ask questions from people in their communities

## Involving the Community

To get a perspective about Aboriginal culture, you may also involve your community. You can ask the families in your centre to see who identifies as Aboriginal people and invite them over to chat about their culture and know which topics they feel are important and should be shared.

You may also introduce Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultural information to children using language that is simple and engaging. You may tell a story that reflects their beliefs about the land. (E.g., The Lost Boy)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples also have a rich cultural background. You can reference these in your activities to help children understand how they connected and used their lands.

While these methods will help you identify ways to improve your cultural awareness, below are a few suggestions that will help you along:

- Include important dates and anniversaries relevant to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples in the centre's calendar of events.
- Arrange for educators in the centre to participate in seminars related to learning about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Peoples' culture and practices.

## 1.2.2 Implement Ways to Improve Cultural Awareness

Now that you have identified how to improve your cultural awareness, it is time to ensure that you act on the identified ways on your own outside of the workplace. However, you must also consider how you can put these into practice in your workplace. Since you will be only one educator in a centre that will likely have multiple, you do not get to dictate the policies that the centre will implement, so cooperation and proper communication will be key.

The following are steps that you can take to implement all these new ideas you have for improving cultural awareness:

- Seek permission from relevant supervisors or management.
- Identify resources needed for implementation.
- Coordinate with other educators for implementation.
- Execute the implementation of ways to improve cultural awareness.



### Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Cultural awareness recognises that everyone is shaped by their cultural background. This influences how you interpret the world and how you perceive yourself in relationships with other people.
2. After identifying ways to improve cultural awareness, you will need to come up with ways to implement these at your centre. Since you will be only one of a group of educators, you will need to cooperate and coordinate both with your supervisors and fellow educators.



### Learning Activity for Chapter 1

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

## II. Investigate the Local Context for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures

In the previous chapter, you learned about how to identify and reflect on your perspectives on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures. You also learned how to identify and implement ways to improve cultural awareness. This chapter now aims to expand your understanding towards Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures by providing information on how you can investigate and gather credible information.

The historical events and issues that have greatly affected both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are somewhat similar due to the shared experience of colonisation. However, each local area is unique in its traditional cultures, historical experiences and contemporary situation and perspectives. It is therefore essential to gain awareness of both the broader history and cultural perspectives and the local context.

In the investigation of the local context, you must gain a deep understanding of the contemporary impacts of the historical events that shaped the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

In this chapter, you will learn to investigate the local context for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island cultures, including:

- Sourcing and accessing credible sources of information about local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures and history
- Reflecting on the contemporary impacts of historical issues in the local context
- Handling information in a culturally sensitive way, taking account of how and with whom information can be shared

## 2.1 Source and Access Credible Sources of Information About Local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures and History



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been, and continue to be, misrepresented. Myths and stereotypes continue to be perpetuated. Much of the information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and history widely available are from non-indigenous sources.

To gain an information, both by and about, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures require an awareness of both pre-colonial and post-colonial history. However, to be able to encourage others in understanding the cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples effectively, you must first know the misconceptions or myths and understand the facts regarding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Awareness and access to unbiased information will help children form views and opinions that are respectful and considerate of all cultures at a young age. It is essential to ensure that your sources of information are credible.

### 2.1.1 What is a Credible Source?

A “credible source” of information is unbiased and true and can be backed up by evidence. When deciding if a source of information is credible or not, consider the following methods:

**1. Identify the author of the information.**

Who is the author or who is speaking? Look for information that comes directly from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to gain a true perspective that has not been filtered through a non-indigenous lens. If this is not possible, look for information from someone who has some authority (i.e., a government department, a university, a professional in the field or someone who has close ties to an indigenous community and has the support of that community).

**2. Determine what the information was taken from.**

What is the information based on? Is it just an opinion, or can it be proven? Look for an explanation of how they got the information. There are primary sources of information (accounts from people who experienced or witnessed the events) and secondary sources (those that discuss and analyse the events based on information from the primary sources).

**3. Find where the information was sourced from.**

Where is the information from? In this age of misinformation and “alternative facts”, many things that are written online (e.g., videos) are not true. Check the “About Us” link on websites or the publication details in written materials.

**4. Determine why this source is presenting this information.**

Why are they sharing this information? Do they have a personal or political agenda? There are two things to look out for here:

- Actual lies – the information may not even be true; or
- The facts might be essentially true, but they have been twisted in a way that is biased so that you draw the wrong conclusions. This might be done deliberately or accidentally.

**5. Check the timeliness of the information.**

How old or recent is the information? Is it still current or have things changed? If the information is still true and has not been superseded, it is still current.

In the context of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, you should use reflection to evaluate whether the source fits the following criteria:

Criteria	How to Check the Source
Authenticity	Note when the information was published and by whom. Newer sources are better at respecting the diversity and perspectives of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Balanced Nature of Presentation	Review the content of what you are reading to check for the presence of biases.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participation	Check if Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples were involved in the research. Prefer information where these groups had active participation.
Accuracy and Support	Compare the information against other sources that have been established to be credible. You can also check if this information is endorsed by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
Exclusion of content that is considered secret or sacred	Check if the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island People gave the author permission to publish or share the information specified in the source.



### Further Reading

Click the link below to read and further understand the five key criteria to consider in evaluating sources of information.

[Selecting and evaluating resources](#)

### 2.1.2 Credible Sources of Information

The best way to find out about local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultures and history is to meet with the local people. If you do not have any local contacts, start by researching organisations and councils that may help you. You can find a list of relevant organizations later in this subsection.

Another way to meet local Indigenous people is to look for local events (including celebration or sorry days, plays, performances and galleries), and tours or cultural training provided by the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander community. You can also ask a local elder from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Community.

Find out who are the traditional owners of the lands where you live, work and travel and the languages that are, or were, spoken. If there are indigenous children in your service, invite their families to share their stories and culture.

Read Aboriginal books and newspapers, listen to Aboriginal radio shows and watch Aboriginal programs on TV. Local museums and historical societies may also have information regarding events in local history.

## **Relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples Led Organisations and Peak Agencies**

Reliable sources of accurate information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Peoples can include organisations and peak agencies relevant to these indigenous peoples. Some of these organisations are detailed in this section.



### **Indigenous representative bodies**

Indigenous peoples possess the right to be involved in decision-making with regards to matters that affect their rights. They have the right to pick their chosen representatives in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own Indigenous decision-making institutions.

Over the past 50 years, there have been four main national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's representative bodies in Australia. These are:

- National Aboriginal Consultative Committee (1972 - 1977)
- National Aboriginal Conference (1977–1985)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (1989–2005)
- National Congress of Australia's First Peoples.

*Sourced from [Structures and organisations. Working with Indigenous Australians](#)*

### **National Congress of Australia's First Peoples**

Established in May 2010, the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples is an independent and representative body composed of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals and organisations. The congress aims to defend the rights and the unique heritage of the First Peoples of Australia and strives to fight for equality, freedom and opportunity.

*Sourced from [Structures and organisations. Working with Indigenous Australians](#)*



## Land Councils

Land councils serve as representative bodies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in state or territory level. Refer to the list below.

State or Territory	Representative Body
Australian Capital Territory	United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC)
New South Wales	NSW Aboriginal Land Council Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council
Queensland	North Queensland Aboriginal Land Council Central QALC: represented by North Queensland Land Council Cape York Land Council
Northern Territory	Central Land Council Northern Land Council Tiwi Land Council Anindilyakawa Land Council
South Australia	Anangu Pitjantjatjara Land Council
Tasmania	Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre Inc.
Victoria	Barengi Gadjin Land Council
Western Australia	South-West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council Yamatji Bana Baaba Marlpa Land and Sea Council Goldfields Land and Sea Council Ngaanyatjarra Council

Sourced from *Structures and organisations: Land Councils. Working with Indigenous Australians.*

## Other organisations

Other relevant organisations working for the wellbeing of Indigenous people are the following:

- *Reconciliation Australia*

Established in 2001, Reconciliation Australia is a non-profit organisation aiming to promote reconciliation between Australian indigenous and non-indigenous people.

- *Australia for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR)*

Since 1997, ANTaR, an independent non-government organisation, has been working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, advocating for justice, rights, and respect for the First Peoples of Australia.

- Link-Up (NSW)

Founded in 1980, Link-Up (NSW) provides professional services to accommodate and support Aboriginal people who had been victims of unfavourable past government policies and those who had suffered separation from family and culture.

*Sourced from [Structures and organisations: Other organisations. Working with Indigenous Australians.](#)*



### Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. A “credible source” of information is unbiased and true and can be backed up by evidence. In the context of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, this means current information that has been willingly shared by them or comes from a source that has their approval.
2. It is essential to check credibility to make sure that the information you are disseminating are accurate and factual.

## **2.2 Reflect on the Contemporary Impacts of Historical Issues in the Local Context**

In Chapter 1, you learned the importance of Reflection as an Early Childhood Educator and gained a peek into using Reflection to understand situations from the perspective of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. In this subchapter, you will develop a deeper proficiency for using Reflection to balance your views of the Indigenous Peoples against their perspective of things. For this reason, this subchapter will be divided into two parts. The first will provide you information on how historical issues have affected the Indigenous Peoples of Australia while the second will help you reflect on this information.

### **2.2.1 Contemporary Impacts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples**

The contemporary impacts of historical issues on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are many and complex. Statistically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a lower income, poorer health, education, life expectancy and employment options. Along with these issues, many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples still deal with negative social attitudes.

The national “Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage” reports continue to show that Indigenous people are the most disadvantaged group in Australia. Here is some proof:

- The life expectancy of Indigenous people is around 9.7 to 11.5 years lower than that of other Australians.
- The average Indigenous income is lower.
- A much lower proportion of Indigenous people own their homes.
- The rate of child protection notifications is rising faster than for others.
- Indigenous people are twelve times more likely to be hospitalised for assault than other people.
- Both men and women experience more than double the victimisation rates of others.
- Indigenous women’s imprisonment rates have increased.
- Juveniles are 20 times more likely to be detained.
- Hospital admission rates for children are twice that of others.

*Source: based on [Productivity Commission data](#), [Overcoming Indigenous disadvantage report: Key indicators 2016](#).*



Of course, the actual situation of Indigenous groups varies enormously across the country. There is a big difference in the lives of people who live in country towns, for example, and people who are in cities or remote communities. Other factors also influence the impacts on local communities, such as ownership and connection to traditional lands, the strength of community leadership, local access to healthcare and employment and so on. While this learner guide provides an overview, it is important to recognise that your local community and the families and individuals who belong to it is unique.

### **Inter-Generational Effects of Forced Separation**

From 1788 to the mid-1800s, church-run missions regularly removed children from Aboriginal families. Early reports also state that European settlers kidnapped Aboriginal women and children to use as cheap domestic labour. Records exist of Dutch fisherman on Flinders Island having up to four or five women each (some captured as young girls), which they kept and used as sex slaves.

From 1869 until 1935, all states and territories had laws that gave Chief Protectors or Protection Boards the power to “manage” the interests of Indigenous people. This included wide-ranging powers to remove Indigenous children from their families and place them in state care, based on the grounds of race alone. Although early legislation in some states required proof of neglect, it later became a practice that simply being Indigenous was often proof enough to remove children from their families.

## The Stolen Generations

“The term ‘Stolen Generations’ refers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians who were forcibly removed from their families and communities by government, welfare or church authorities as children and placed into institutional care or with non-Indigenous foster families.”

*Sourced from [Apology to stolen generations: questions and answers](#), used under [CC BY 4.0](#), © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2019*

The table below shows some of the impacts of forced separation on different generations:

Generations	Trauma	Disadvantage
Families of children who were removed	Many families experienced grief and guilt when their children were taken away from them.	They developed a reliance on substances such as alcohol and drugs because of their trauma, and this has led to unhealthy lifestyles.
Children who were removed (the Stolen Generation)	They lost their cultural affiliation and find it difficult to take a role in the cultural and spiritual life of their communities.	Members of the Stolen Generation are more likely to have been jailed compared to the general population.
Children of the Stolen Generation	Some of them were reported to have behavioural problems as an effect of their parents' inability to provide proper parental care.	When compared to other Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, the children of the Stolen Generation have poorer health.

The children that were separated from their families as part of the Stolen Generations have been exposed to long-term disadvantages. They are more vulnerable to abuse and psychological distress. They lost their cultural affiliation and find it difficult to take a role in the cultural and spiritual life of their communities. As a result of the poor treatment and abuses they suffered, members of the Stolen Generation are more likely to be jailed compared to the general population.

The families of these children also experienced grief and guilt when their children were taken away from them. Moreover, the trauma from forced separation has made them develop a reliance on substances such as alcohol and drugs, which leads to unhealthy lifestyles.

Both the historical context and current practices for Aboriginal families of having their children removed is a real and substantiated fear. Aboriginal children are still six to seven times more likely to be removed from their families as non-Aboriginal children.

This can make it difficult for Aboriginal families to feel safe, particularly in the Early Childhood Education and Care context, where they are afraid of losing their children.

### **Loss of Indigenous languages**

The many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who were taken from their homes were forced to learn English as their main language. Additionally, most schools, missions and churches forced Indigenous people to use only English and outlawed and punished the use of indigenous languages.

This has created generations that have lost their language and the cultural knowledge and identity that is part of it. Consequently, many indigenous languages and the knowledge contained in them have disappeared through lack of use.

### **Education**

There have been improvements to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education since the 1967 Referendum. Still, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have the lowest rates of attendance, retention and continuing their education. Bad interactions in the past have given older members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people a soured perspective on European education.

Despite providing some financial aid, Australia still has a long road to travel when it comes to getting its indigenous people engaged in education. The number of non-indigenous people that have finished their education exceeds the number of indigenous people who have done the same.

### **Employment**

As an unfortunate consequence of these negative interactions in the past, the rate of unemployment among the indigenous people of Australia is remarkably high.

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have moved to towns and cities in search of work, but there are many who are still living in remote areas where there are few positions available. Funding has been allocated by the government for employment programs specific to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but this only scratches the surface of what Australia needs to do if it wants to stop unemployment from being a problem that persists through generations. Not only is there a need to pass on capabilities, but the views of the community on education as a whole needs to be changed.

## **Loss of Land and Sea**

Ancestral land is a vital element in maintaining Indigenous culture. It is also used by Indigenous people to determine their economic worth in their community.

Since the Mabo case, the issue of land rights has been significant to Indigenous people as it meant they finally had a chance to reclaim their ancestral land and re-establish their culture. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups that want to make a land claim face great challenge. Not only are the court cases expensive and require a lot of time, but they also require a great deal of proof and information which is difficult to obtain.

Land right laws differ in every state, but in each land ownership case, the Indigenous people must prove many things. They must be able to prove that ancestral customs and traditions are still being maintained that a link to the land has been retained over the years, and that the land has cultural significance to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group making a claim. These are very difficult things to prove because Indigenous people do not have written records. These struggles potentially face every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander group that wish to make a land claim. As people of the sea, Torres Strait Islanders also consider access and control over the water and the various resources within it as critical to their continued survival.

Social factors also have a direct impact on health and wellbeing. This includes income, education, employment, stress, social networks and support, social exclusion, living conditions and so on. Poverty, social exclusion, and poor housing are among the main contributors to ill health amongst the indigenous population. As these are all impacted by historical experiences, they too contribute to poor health.

In December 1972, Gough Whitlam came into office with a transformative agenda towards self-determination. In the local context, the impact of the Whitlam Government's policy of self-determination was that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples were empowered to reclaim their lands.

In the broader Australian context, the impact of the Whitlam Government's policy of self-determination was that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples were given the opportunity to participate in making policy decisions that would affect them. Practices that discriminated against them were also abolished and more opportunities were introduced to them.

## **Mental Health**

Australia's mental health system has failed Aboriginal communities; many of them have been high suicide rates and poor mental health. These often stem from historic dispossession, racism and a poor sense of connection to self and community. As a result, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities experience suicide rates higher than the rest of the population of Australia.



## **Social Attitudes**

Unfortunately, negative social attitudes are still common regarding indigenous peoples, although much has been done to create an understanding of their past and how it still affects them today. Reconciliation has become important in creating a better understanding of indigenous cultures and in building bridges between indigenous and mainstream cultures.

## **Racism**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples continue to experience racism, discrimination, and negative stereotyping. Aboriginal people may be reluctant to participate in the public sphere out of a desire to protect themselves and their families from racism.

Research found that a significant number of non-Indigenous children had either no knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people or their cultures, or saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as primitive and belonging to the past. It was also found that only a very small percentage of non-Indigenous early childhood workers challenged colonial understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.

Some of this reluctance can be a fear that their parenting will be perceived as “not good enough” and could lead to a range of consequences, including the removal of their children.

## **Grief, Loss and Trauma**

It is not unusual for a person or even an entire family to experience grief or loss. Trauma is also not as uncommon as you would think. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities, unfortunately, these feelings are amplified and difficult to break free from, as they lost so much when Australia was invaded by the Europeans.

Aboriginal people have suffered differing degrees of disconnection from:

- their land,
- their language,
- their culture,
- their family and
- their community.

Aboriginal communities that were historically forbidden to use their language or practise traditional culture have experienced intense grief rising from the condemnation of their cultural identity. These losses have been widespread impacting on the social, emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Invasion, colonisation and past government policies and practices that have ignored the needs of the First Peoples have created unresolved trauma within the community, leading to what is known as “Inter-generational Trauma”. This means that some adults’ unresolved traumas have been passed on to their children. For a minority of Aboriginal adults, this has led to them being unable to fulfil their role as a parent. It is impossible to fulfil the role of parent adequately if you feel powerless and deprived of dignity and culture.

The Children of the Stolen Generation also experienced a particular brand of trauma, in the sense that their adoptive parents could not provide proper care, leading to behavioural problems and even poorer health than the average Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples child.

## **Identity**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must deal with the issue of who they are. On the one hand, they are people from multiple cultures with a rich history. On the other, they must adjust to living in modern Australia. They need to decide what portion of their traditions should be continued. This is especially true for indigenous peoples who grew up in major settlements.

In 2009, the Australian Government endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which recognised that Indigenous peoples have the legitimate entitlement to all human rights based on principles of equality and non-discrimination.

The contemporary impacts of historical issues on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are many and complex. Statistically, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a lower income, poorer health, education, life expectancy and employment options. Along with these issues, many still deals with negative social attitudes.

The national “Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage” reports continue to show that Indigenous people are the most disadvantaged group in Australia. All these consequences of history, however, do not end there.

All these effects have long-lasting impacts on both the history and culture of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

Issue	Histories	Culture
European Colonisation	The Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander population was exposed to epidemic diseases brought by European colonisers.	Drinking alcohol was introduced which massively affected the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' lifestyle and behaviour.
Loss of Land and Culture	Many Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples died from malnourishment as they were not able to maintain their traditional lifestyle.	Children of the Stolen Generations were forced to adapt to the white culture, leading them to forget their identity and cultural heritage.
Institutional Discrimination	Experiences of discrimination and racism is likely tied to increased rates of psychological illnesses for the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.	Formal structures and institutions setup by the Europeans failed to acknowledge the existing systems of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.
Social Exclusion	Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples were denied access to healthcare, education, and employment offered by the mainstream system.	They have higher rates of poverty, incarceration, unemployment, homelessness, poor health and education outcomes.

Below are further examples of disadvantage experienced by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples as brought about by their past historical and cultural experiences:

Mental health	Physical health	Education	Economic status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders experience higher rates of suicide compared to the rest of the population.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples experience higher levels of malnutrition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples have lower levels of education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples have a higher unemployment rate.</li> </ul>

As a response to the contemporary impacts of historical issues to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, there was a call for reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-indigenous peoples.

Reconciliation is an ongoing practice of learning, reflection and understanding of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' history in order to champion their rights and allow equality and equity for all Australians.

### **Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs)**

A RAP is a framework that the early years learning centre can use to integrate reconciliation into the centre's operations. RAPs can be used to integrate relevant topics into a centre's curriculum and identify areas of professional development that educators can focus on.

RAPS enables organisations to contribute to the national push for reconciliation with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander People. Having a RAP will help an early years learning centre establish new or strengthen existing relationships with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities in their area.

### **2.2.2 Reflecting on Contemporary Impacts of Historical Issues**

Now that you have been made aware of how history has treated the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and learned how to find credible sources of even more information, it is time for you to reflect upon all your newfound knowledge.

When dealing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and their children, you need to consider just how much the European settlement has taken from them. As discussed in the previous section, there is a likelihood for these families to have misgivings towards the system of education, considering how the victims of the Stolen Generations had their culture eroded through education. You must make these families feel safe leaving their children at the centre. Let them know that times have changed, and that Australia is now on a path to Reconciliation.

For the children, specifically, remember that systematic oppression has put their families, and consequently, the children themselves, at a disadvantage in terms of land, wealth, and health, both mental and physical. The children under your care do not all start at the same level, and as an educator, you should be mindful to try and bridge these gaps.

Cultural background and the differing experiences that accompany that affect the way families view children's learning and development. In order to support children's understanding and respect, you also need to reflect the different perspectives that Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples have on early childhood learning and development.

Below are some of the perspectives of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples on early childhood learning and development.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' views	
Early childhood learning	Families are children's most influential educators and they must be involved in the creation of the centre's program. Centres must encourage positive relationships with families and communities.
Early childhood development	Culture is an important part of children's lives and should be integrated into early childhood education. This will help Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children become two-way strong; with a foundation in both traditional and contemporary culture.

Reflecting on these common perspectives and the contemporary impacts of historical issues will help you understand Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and support children.



### Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. When finding sources of information about the Aboriginal and Torres Island Strait Peoples, a rule of thumb for credibility is to check how recent it is, who published it, and whether or not the Indigenous peoples either participated in the research or at least endorse it.
2. The Aboriginal and Torres Island Strait Peoples, particularly those victimized by the Stolen Generations, have suffered much from history. Their disadvantages and trauma have not yet fully healed, and traces of it can be found generations after.
3. It is important to acknowledge the suffering of the Aboriginal and Torres Island Strait Peoples when considering your interactions with them.

## 2.3 Handle Information in a Culturally Sensitive Way Taking Account of How and With Whom Information can be Shared



In addition to the usual policies and procedures regarding the handling of information, particular cultural protocols must be taken into consideration to ensure that information on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are handled in a culturally sensitive way. Every community is unique and cultural protocols will vary, so it is very important to find out what the specific protocols are for your local community. Do not just assume that what happens in one community will be the same everywhere.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Guardians and Custodians of Their Culture**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People are the main custodians and presenters of their heritage. They are the ones who rightfully own not only their heritage but also the intellectual property to it. The privilege to determine what is or is not appropriate representation of their culture lies with them.

As such, when doing research on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples with the goal of presenting the information, permission should be sought beforehand.

Before sharing information about the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, the following protocols should be followed:

- Ask the group that provided the information if you can share this information through the research findings.
- Discuss with the group about what the research will be used for.
- Discuss thoroughly with them if there are any concerns or issues before publishing the research.
- Discuss the issue of intellectual property rights with the group. The group must have the intellectual property rights of the information, or at least have a share of it.

### **Cultural Appropriation**

You may have heard the term 'Cultural Appropriation' used before, but in this discussion, you will learn what it is and why it is considered disrespectful not just by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People, but also by many Indigenous peoples across the world.

As mentioned above, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are the prime guardians and presenters of their culture. As such, it is their prerogative whether to share aspects of their culture or not.

Cultural Appropriation is when someone not belonging to these groups tries to reproduce parts of their culture such as art, clothing, or other items. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples create art for reasons which can be significant or even sacred to them. They are full of meaning. When someone not belonging to their groups reproduces their art, not only is it counterfeit, but it also devalues the significance of the original.

In addition, the circulation of these fakes harms Indigenous artists and ethical businesses who purchase them directly from the artists. It also harms the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples by taking away their prerogative to choose what can be shared with those outside their groups.

One of the safest ways to avoid this is by involving the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community in your research or activity. But how can you do this?

Make sure you involve Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples in the research process by explaining to them what the research is for and the specific topic that is going to be studied. You may also discuss with them what data gathering methods would be most appropriate and how they can benefit from the research. You can also talk to them about what data gathering methods they would consider appropriate.



## Considerations for Researching Information About Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples

When speaking with members of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to gather information, there can be certain topics to avoid or other hindrances to communication. These range from logistic difficulties to language barriers. Below are a few potential hindrances so you can prepare for them to minimise their impacts:

- There are historical issues that may be sensitive to discuss with the people in the community.
  - Stolen Generations
  - Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander deaths in custody
  - Reconciliation
  - Native Title
  - Land Rights
  - Social dislocation
- Permission needs to be taken from the appropriate authorities.
  - Elders or the local council
  - Traditional custodians
  - Individuals who identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- Some protocols should be observed when speaking with the community.
  - Negotiate the date and place of the interview with the person involved.
  - Clearly state the intent of the interview, including where the information will be used.
  - The interviewee should be briefed on the questions they will be asked prior to the interview.
- There are language considerations to account for when speaking with the community.
  - Avoid using complex words or jargon.
  - Check your own understanding of the meaning of the words used in the conversation.
  - When possible, use visual aids to explain unfamiliar concepts.
  - Avoid using traditional language or creole unless you are truly fluent.
  - Seek assistance from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander staff when needed.

Below are a few tips for handling Information with cultural sensitivity:

- *Be humble and open*

Acknowledge that, unless you are a local Aboriginal person with community knowledge, you are not the expert. Be open to learning from Aboriginal children, families and communities.

- *Network and ask for guidance*

Get advice and assistance from Aboriginal colleagues and local organisations to inform your ongoing work with Aboriginal families. Ask what the protocol is and how things should be done to be culturally appropriate.

- *Who are family?*

Decisions about parenting may be made by members of the extended family or community rather than the parents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may have a different view of “who is family” based on their kinship system. It is important to ask who should be involved in any discussions.

- *Respect and acknowledge feelings*

An awareness of the historical context and contemporary issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can help you to behave with empathy and respect. Acknowledge that past events and ongoing trauma can create mistrust and anger.

- *Ask genuine questions*

Ask genuine and appropriate questions about family and culture to help build relationships but be careful to be non-intrusive.

- *Use culturally appropriate resources*

When sharing information, use culturally appropriate resources (e.g., leaflets, brochures, etc.) particularly local ones wherever possible.

- *Listen and be patient*

In many Aboriginal cultures, it is customary to take time for chit-chat as part of communication. Be led by the people you are communicating with and do not rush them. Understand that past experience has made many Indigenous people distrustful of authorities. It takes time to earn trust.

- *Respect silences*

Try not to fill silences with unnecessary talk or to push for a response. The other person may need time to process and answer. Do not rush them.

- *Give something back*

When someone shares information with you, reciprocate by giving something back whether it is your time or a gift, such as a worksheet or a book for the children.

- *Do not make promises you cannot keep*

Be very clear and honest about what your purpose is and what the next steps and outcomes will be.

- *People skills are important*

Work hard at building relationships based on trust. Remember the names and relationships between people to demonstrate respect and commitment.

- *Direct eye contact*

Generally, Aboriginal people easily and commonly read body language, and direct eye contact may be inappropriate. Of course, this will vary, and this may not be the case in your local culture. In fact, it may even be the opposite.

- *Initial contact*

Some Aboriginal families may feel intimidated about a face-to-face meeting and may prefer the first contact to be by phone. Understandably, some families may not be comfortable with a visit to their home and might feel that you are “checking up on them.” Try to set up meetings in a neutral place until relationships are established.

- *Support person*

Ask if family members would like a support person with them for any discussions or meetings, especially if personal issues will be discussed.

*Sourced from [Engaging with Aboriginal children and families](#), used under [CC BY 4.0](#),  
© State of New South Wales (Department of Communities and Justice)*

- *Sorry Business*

When there has been a bereavement in the extended family, be mindful of local customs which might include: additional responsibilities for community members; prohibitions against holding or participating in events or meetings; not using the name of the deceased person; not leaving the house for a set period of time.

- *Publication protocol*

There are various protocols to be observed when publishing information about, and representation of, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This also applies to things like centre newsletters and education resources.

- *Confidentiality and traditional knowledge*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples may have secret knowledge that they are not allowed to share with anyone. Respect this. If a community member chooses to share knowledge with you about traditional customs, stories and sacred information, understand that this is an act of trust. You must respect their confidentiality and not share this with others without their express permission.

- *Intellectual property*

You must gain permission to use Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork, stories and words. These are all the intellectual property of the people who own them.

- *Avoid cultural appropriation*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and cultural knowledge belong to them. Cultural appropriation is when a dominant (or mainstream) culture takes an identifying characteristic without permission, respect, or understanding of its importance or significance to that culture and uses it for their own benefit — for example, the use of dot paintings, symbols, traditional medicines.

- *Women's and Men's Business*

In most Indigenous Australian communities, there are clear divisions between Women's and Men's Business. Knowledge and information that belongs to one gender cannot be shared with the other.

As an educator you must ensure that when recording information about your decisions and actions you use clear and sensitive language. Make sure that you have permission from community members when using their information. Remember to comply with your organisational policies and procedures relevant to sharing information.

Make sure to consider codes of ethics relevant to researching and sharing information about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. These include the following:

- Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities: Guidelines for researchers and stakeholders
- AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research

*Based on material provided by the [National Health and Medical Research Council](#)*



### Checkpoint! Let's Review

1. Every community is unique and cultural protocols will vary, so it is very important to find out what the specific protocols are for your local community. What should one keep in mind when recording information about decisions and actions?
2. Different cultures have different preferences to how they want personal information to be shared. Make sure to follow the organisation's policies and procedures.
3. The safest way to avoid cultural appropriation is to ensure appropriate members of the community are involved in the research or activity you are about to undertake.



### Learning Activity for Chapter 2

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

### III. Contribute Ideas for Embedding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures in Daily Practice



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures have a special place as the culture of the land and as the First Peoples of Australia. Thus, you must come up with ideas for embedding Indigenous peoples' cultures.

Embedding Indigenous cultures in the curriculum include planning opportunities for all children to learn about Indigenous culture and histories. Content should have a local focus wherever possible and appropriate.

In this chapter, you will learn how to contribute ideas for embedding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander culture in daily practice, including:

- Identifying opportunities for the embedding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures in routines and learning experiences consistent with the approved learning framework, curriculum or community cultural protocols.
- Evaluating and applying opportunities to promote children's understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures and languages
- Developing and communicating ideas to promote children's understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures and languages through collaboration with others in culturally safe and sensitive ways



### 3.1 Identify Opportunities for the Embedding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures in Routines and Learning Experiences Consistent with the Community's Cultural Protocols, the Approved Learning Framework and the Curriculum



In the previous chapters, you enhanced your understanding, conducted research about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and ensured that the information you have collected is from credible sources and critically reflected on what you have found. Now, you are ready to identify opportunities and put what you have learned into practice. Opportunities are circumstances and situations wherein you can incorporate a topic, in this case Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, in your lessons, routines and activities.

Below are some points to consider in identifying opportunities and developing your ideas for the embedding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island Peoples' cultures in routines and learning experiences:

- Is the information age-appropriate?
- Is it culturally appropriate?
- Is it yours to share, or is it cultural knowledge that belongs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- Does it portray Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in positive ways?
- Is it relevant?
- Will it contribute to children's learning outcomes?



- Will it provide children with a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- How can the information be used as the basis for an activity or learning experience?
- Will you need resources?
- Have you discussed your ideas with your colleagues?
- Have you consulted with the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander families or community?

It is important to note that routines and learning experiences differ from one another. A routine is defined as a sequence of actions regularly followed.

The following are examples of routines and ways you can embed Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures to them.

Routines	Ways to incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures
<p>Acknowledgement of Country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ a way to show respect to the First Peoples and Traditional Custodians of the land</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consult with the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community first then if allowed, recite the Acknowledgement of Country before events, gatherings and even at the start of each day.</li> </ul>
<p>Organising centre calendar and events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Include events that are important and significant to the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait community.</li> <li>▪ Commemorate and plan activities for NAIDOC week and Reconciliation week.</li> </ul>

Learning experiences, on the other hand, refer to any program, activity or interactions in which opportunities for learning are present. Some learning experiences where you can incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures are:

Learning experiences	Ways to incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures
Excursions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for children to go on excursions and bush walks with an Elder or community leader.</li> <li>▪ Visit museums that feature stories, cultures and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> </ul>
Arts and crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use natural materials such as bark, shells and paperbark for art activities.</li> <li>▪ Try different forms of painting, finger painting, spray paint, stencils, hand and footprints, dots/hatchet lines, painting on the face and hands.</li> <li>▪ Create a cave and paint it with rock art.</li> <li>▪ Make your own paint using ochres and sandstone.</li> <li>▪ Display reproductions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artwork (with permission from the local community and artists).</li> <li>▪ Encourage children to work together on murals.</li> <li>▪ Encourage local artists to visit and demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art techniques.</li> <li>▪ Provide children with the opportunity to learn about dot painting and to hear the stories portrayed in the paintings.</li> <li>▪ Provide opportunities for children to paint on bark or make prints or stencils on calico with their hands.</li> <li>▪ Invite local community people to share information (where culturally appropriate) about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander symbols and meanings, for example, spirals, circles, wavy lines, bird tracks.</li> </ul>

Learning experiences	Ways to incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples' cultures
Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite local community members and Elders to share music with the children.</li> <li>▪ Adapt popular songs and children's games to be more relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, for example, "Duck, duck, goose" becomes "Kangaroo, snake."</li> <li>▪ Invite a local Aboriginal person to play a local instrument, for example, the didgeridoo. Note that gender roles are usually important in this case; for example, in most cultures, only males are allowed to play the didgeridoo.</li> <li>▪ Include contemporary music from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander well-known artists.</li> <li>▪ Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander instruments, such as clapsticks.</li> <li>▪ Make a wide variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music available in different situations and settings.</li> </ul>
Books and stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Carefully select books to represent positive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues and lifestyles.</li> <li>▪ Put criteria in place for selecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander books to ensure they are accurate, non-racist or stereotypical, and portray families in positive roles.</li> <li>▪ Include books that are written and illustrated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.</li> <li>▪ Encourage local Indigenous storytellers to share stories with all children.</li> <li>▪ Remove books or resources that portray negative stereotypes or racist illustrations from the centre.</li> <li>▪ Actively involve families and community members in reading and telling stories.</li> <li>▪ Make books in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages available.</li> <li>▪ Expand stories using drama, puppets and painting.</li> <li>▪ Make a wide variety of books available - fiction, non-fiction, picture books and books about the Creation and the Dreaming.</li> </ul>

Below are other examples of activities and experiences, both in indoor and outdoor spaces that you can also embed with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Some ideas for appropriately embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in indoor spaces are as follows:

- Make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dolls (both genders) always available, for example, in the home corner or dolls' house.
- Make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander toys and props available, for example, Australian animals and figures with a diversity of skin tones.
- Include puzzles that display images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in contemporary and everyday activities.
- Make available locally appropriate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artefacts and props, for example, woven baskets and coolamons.
- Make available Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fabrics, cloth and material for display and use as table coverings and in the home corner.
- Use bright, happy colours and the Aboriginal colours of black, yellow and red.
- Create a special interest table where natural materials, artefacts and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources are displayed.
- Display mobiles of Australian native animals. Find out their names in the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander languages.
- Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags with an explanation of their meaning. Ensure that all children understand the meanings.

Some ideas for appropriately embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in outdoor areas, activities and experiences are as follows:

- Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander activities in the sandpit, for example, making footprints.
- Create an Aboriginal trail.
- Set up an area with rocks as a bush camp.
- Provide all children with the chance to experience a campfire or role-play at fishing.
- Provide opportunities for all children to learn about bush-tracking, bush-tucker, flora and fauna, and the use of natural materials.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn about the use of sandstone and grinding.

Before doing any of the activities, you need to make sure they are appropriate and respectful to Indigenous Australian peoples, their history and cultures. For example, dot paintings are sacred stories of people’s Dreaming, and in some situations, it is not appropriate to allow children to “play” with dot paintings. Additionally, Creation and Dreaming stories need to be treated in the same respectful manner as any other religion would be treated. The embedding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in the program must be also consistent with the approved curriculum, learning framework and the requirements of the National Quality Standard(s) and related regulations and laws.



It is important that non-Indigenous people do not make value judgments about what is “right or wrong.” The local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents and community must be consulted to find out whether it is appropriate for children to use some materials or resources.

### **3.1.1 Related Regulations and Laws**

Though disobeying and resisting both laws and regulations may result in consequences, the two are different from each other. Laws equally applies and governs everyone, and were bills written by legislators that are approved by the House of Representatives and Senate through hearings and debates. Regulations, sometimes also called rules, are written by government agencies and organisations and usually only covers individuals who are directly under them.

As an educator who will incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in routines and learning experiences, and possibly work with Indigenous Children, it is important to understand and observe laws, regulations and legal and ethical framework.

*International Agreements*

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

*Legislation*

- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Act 2005

*Education Strategy*

- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Strategy

*Code of Ethics*

- Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2016)

The [Education and Care Services National Law](#) is used to set a national standard that applies to all children’s education and care services throughout Australia. Variations may apply based on the needs of the state or territory.

Below are the legislations that apply to different states and territories:

State/Territory	Legislation
Australian Capital Territory	<a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010</a>
New South Wales	
Northern Territory	
Queensland	
South Australia	
Tasmania	
Victoria	
Western Australia	<a href="#">Education and Care Services National Law (WA) Act 2012</a>

The [Education and Care Services National Regulations \(2011 SI 653\)](#) act as a support for the National law. Under National regulations, centre-based services are required to adhere to various requirements for:

- Educational programs and practices
- Application processes for approval of services
- Service pricing and fees
- Service assessments
- Operation and services
- Premises, spaces
- Equipment, furniture, materials

### **3.1.2 Community Cultural Protocols**

Cultural protocols are ethical practices, principles and values that should be observed when interacting and working with people from various cultures. It was created to protect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their rights.

To be observant to cultural protocols, research information about the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the cultural background of any other Indigenous families in your service. Respectfully test out this information for accuracy, with Indigenous families and your contacts in the local community. Check that any ideas you have for embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, cultures and perspectives in your program are culturally sensitive and appropriate. Make sure that these ideas meet the local community cultural protocols.

Ensure your service is culturally inclusive and provides a welcoming physical environment in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families feel safe and welcome.

You can do this by:

- Displaying posters and decorations that depict Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, e.g., Aboriginal paintings, pictures of children engaged in activities and participating in everyday and community life
- Including equipment, toys and activities in play areas that reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures (e.g., dolls, puzzles and picture books)
- Providing and/or participating in regular staff training in cross-cultural practice, cultural competence and cultural sensitivity
- Consulting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, key people in the local community and relevant organisations to ensure the service you are delivering is culturally appropriate and in line with community cultural protocols.



- Employing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff to provide bilingual/bicultural services, facilitate community connections and improve knowledge of cross-cultural practice
- Removing any signage or wall decorations which might be considered offensive
- Creating an open and transparent environment where staff and families are fully informed of their rights to lodge a grievance or raise a concern with the service provider and are provided with support if and when that occurs

### **Settling Children in**

- Are you aware of the specific local cultural needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children?
- Do you encourage parents to stay longer at the centre during the first few days?
- Do you ensure you provide a welcoming and open environment for families?
- Do you reassure families by telling them that their children will be safe and secure?
- Do you ensure families understand that they are welcome there at any time?

### **The Entrance**

Think about the first impression that children and their families will have when they arrive at the centre. Is it somewhere that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families will feel welcome and safe to enter?

- Does the foyer/entrance of the centre reflect an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural perspective?
- Are there visual displays that portray positive images of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
- Is information displayed about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and support agencies?
- Are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags displayed at all times?
- Do Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have easy access to the centre?
- Is the environment welcoming? Is a welcome sign displayed?
- Is an acknowledgement of the traditional owners of the land displayed?

### 3.1.3 Approved Learning Framework and National Quality Standards

The Australian Curriculum serves as a guide on what knowledge and skills young Australians are expected to learn and acquire at various levels. It provides the content needed, ways to measure achievement and opportunities for educators to respond to diverse student needs and backgrounds.

Having Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures as one of its cross-curriculum priorities, the Australian Curriculum can be considered when identifying opportunities for embedding Indigenous Australian peoples and cultures in routines and learning experiences as experts have already determined relevant topics and learning areas for this. Furthermore, because the Australian curriculum is flexible, educators can customise learning opportunities and embed information on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures when appropriate.

#### National Quality Standards

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) assists governments in overseeing the National Quality Framework (NQF) for Early Childhood Education and Care. The NQF is used to regulate education services by setting up standards and learning frameworks.

National Quality Standards:

- 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
- Quality Area 5 – Relationships with children
- Quality Area 6 – Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Quality Area 7 – Governance and leadership

*Based on content from the New South Wales Legislation website on April 15, 2021. For the latest information on New South Wales Government legislation please go to <https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/>*

The national law and regulations require services to base their programs on approved learning frameworks. Below is the nationally approved learning framework for early childhood education:

- Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) (applicable for 0-5 years old)

Victoria has a specific learning framework:

- Victoria: Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Different states and territories also have specific laws and regulations in place to supervise the quality of education provided to children. Be sure to review the assessment requirements of your corresponding regulatory authorities.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) of Australia provides guidelines to ensure that education services adhere to national quality standards. Some of the quality areas that emphasise the need to encourage understanding of Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures are the following:

Quality Area 1 of the national quality standard outlines the standards for educational program and practice. This outlines the following considerations:

- Program – The educational program enhances each child's learning and development.
  - Element 1.1.1 Approved learning framework – When making decisions on curriculum, services should consider diverse cultures and backgrounds of students, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. Respect and inclusion should be present at all times.
  - Element 1.1.2 Child-centred – Centres should nurture each child's abilities, growth and identities through various activities. They should utilise the children's diversity in their programs to strengthen self-identity and build respectful relationships amongst the students.
  - Element 1.1.3 Program learning opportunities – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures should be embedded on the curriculum and program, when applicable and appropriate.
- Practice – Educators facilitate and extend each child's learning and development.
  - Element 1.2.2 Responsive teaching and scaffolding – Services and educators should value children's individual opinions, thoughts and experiences and be responsive to different cultures and ideas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and other students.
- Assessment and Planning – Educators and co-ordinators take a planned and reflective approach to implementing the program for each child.

Quality Area 5 outlines the standards for relationships with children:

- Relationships between educators and children – Respectful and equitable relationships are maintained with each child.
  - Element 5.1.1 Positive educator to child interactions – For a child to feel included and valued, meaningful interactions between educators and children should occur. These interactions may also result to relationships built in trust between the adult and the child, regardless of background and cultures.
  - Element 5.1.2 Dignity and rights of the child – Centres and educators are required to value and maintain the dignity and rights of all children. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and other students from other cultures should be allowed to express and practice their beliefs without being discriminated.
- Relationships between children – Each child is supported to build and maintain sensitive and responsive relationships
  - Element 5.2.1 Collaborative learning – Children can learn from each other, thus activities that allow this to happen should be organised. Centres could incorporate activities like show & tell so students can share about their cultures, beliefs and practices.

Quality Area 6 – covers the standards for collaborative partnerships with families and communities:

- Supportive relationships with families – Respectful relationships with families are developed and maintained and families are supported in their parenting role.
  - Element 6.1.1 Engagement with the service – This element encourages families to be involved on children’s learning and development. This includes participating in activities, contributing to decisions and sharing cultures.
  - Element 6.1.2 Parent views are respected – Educators and centres are expected and required to respect family beliefs and practices, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Moreover, family decisions and requests regarding student well-being and learning should be considered and checked if it adheres to approved standards and regulations.

- Collaborative partnerships – Collaborative partnerships enhance children’s inclusion, learning and wellbeing.
  - Element 6.2.1 Transitions – Educators should communicate with parents with regards to transitions from home to centre and vice versa, including cultural practices and routines. Both should be consistent to make learning and development easier for children.
  - Element 6.2.3 Community engagement – It is the service’s responsibility to reach out and build meaningful relationships with the community. If there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the area, the centres are expected to engage with them and offer support.

*Based on the [National Quality Standards](#) on March 18, 2021. [Commonwealth of Australia](#).*



### Further Reading

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) has a National Quality Standard with a comprehensive guide on quality areas. You can access them through the link below:

[National Quality Standard](#)



### Checkpoint! Let’s Review

1. Before incorporating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in your programs, routines and learning experiences, it is important that you are knowledgeable and have fully understood Indigenous cultures and beliefs.
2. The nationally approved learning framework for early childhood education is *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF)* (applicable for 0-5 years old)
3. Victoria has a specific learning framework, *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*
4. The National Quality Framework (NQF) for Early Childhood Education and Care provides guidelines on how to effectively support young children from different cultures and backgrounds.

### 3.2 Evaluate and Use Opportunities to Promote Children’s Understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Cultures and Languages

Opportunities to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in practical routines and learning experiences are limited only by your cultural competence, the availability of appropriate resources, access to accurate information and the constraints of legal and ethical requirements and community protocols.

This must always be actioned with the best intentions, respect, empathy and in collaboration or consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and/or community.

In the application of opportunities for embedding cultures into routines and early childhood learning and development experiences, you must keep in mind to incorporate Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ perspectives. In addition to that, you should also evaluate whether an activity is appropriate for a given setting or aim.

There are five key criteria when evaluating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources:

Criteria	Description
Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Do not use resources that invalidate the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia</li> <li>▪ Check when the resources was produced. The general rule is do not use resources published and produced before 1980.</li> <li>▪ Ensure the accuracy of the resources, both text and photographs, by asking Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers of consultants.</li> <li>▪ Resources should highlight the diversity and different cultures amongst Indigenous Peoples of Australia.</li> </ul>
Balanced nature of presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure resources do not present any forms of racism, gender discrimination and stereotyping.</li> <li>▪ Do not use materials that exclude Torres Strait Islander peoples.</li> </ul>
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Check if the resources are written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors. If not, research if members of the community participated and are acknowledged for their contributions to the material.</li> </ul>

Accuracy and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure the resources are specific to your local area and are acceptable to your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.</li> </ul>
Exclusion of content of a secret or sacred nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask local members of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community if ceremonies, rites and practices presented in resources are appropriate for the public to see.</li> </ul>

Evaluating and using opportunities to promote children’s understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and languages are continuous processes that involve the service, educators, children, families and members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in your area. As an educator, it is also important that you consistently be reflective to gain understanding and continuously improve. Though it is required that the National Quality Framework be used throughout the process, it is important that you adjust the framework based on your local area and community.



### Further Reading

To learn more about evaluating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resources, read:

[Selecting and Evaluating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Resources](#)



### Sparkling Stars Early Years Learning Centre

Sparkling Stars is the simulated early years learning centre environment referenced in our learning resources.

Their policies and procedures are published on their site. You can access them through the link below:

[Sparkling Stars Policies and Procedures](#)

*(username: newusername password: new password)*



### **3.3 Develop and Communicate Ideas to Promote Children’s Understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples’ Cultures and Languages Through Collaboration with Others in Culturally Safe and Sensitive Ways**

Collaboration is when a group of people equally contribute and work together to finish a task or reach a common goal. It is important for educators to collaborate with each other, families, and the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities as this contributes to the learning, identity, wellbeing and development of children.

When working with others, especially with Indigenous Australian peoples, cultural safety and sensitivity must always be practised. Parents and family members are also an integral part of the centre's program. It is essential always to ask families what they would like for their children to see incorporated into the program. For example, families who come from parts of Australia outside of the local area may have different cultural practices that should be respected.

#### **Cultural safety**

Cultural safety is a responsibility of all individuals, companies and services. Cultural safety is defined by the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) as ensuring that a child is provided with an environment that is safe, nurturing and positive where children can be comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture, spiritual and beliefs system, and are supported by their family and carers.

Cultural safety is a responsibility of all individuals, companies and services. This is achieved by establishing environments that are safe from discrimination, harm and denial of their identities.

Cultural safety entails:

- Understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their cultures
- Practising appropriate and respectful protocols when interacting with Indigenous People of Australia
- Demolishing racism, discrimination and barriers
- Having cultural values and regulations that do not negatively impact Indigenous People
- Giving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples “sharing power” in making decision with regards to their communities, services and resources

## Cultural sensitivity

Cultural sensitivity is the ability to understand that others have different backgrounds and cultures other than yours, and your actions are reflected by understanding and respect.

It is particularly important on this topic, specifically on language, as some resources may contain information that may be considered unfitting at present time. Additionally, some words of Indigenous languages may be offensive if used by someone who is not an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individual.

In being culturally sensitive, it is also important to note that seeing photographs, hearing voices and reading names of deceased persons may be distressful and offensive for some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. As an educator, it is then your responsibility to be careful when using resources and working with members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.



### Further Reading

The State Government of Victoria formulated an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural safety framework. You can access both part 1 and 2 through the link below:

[Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Safety Framework](#)

### 3.3.1 Collaborate With Colleagues

Education and teaching are continuous learning and improvement processes therefore, educators need to keep themselves updated with the best practices and new developments, especially with regards to teaching children about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories and cultures. One way to effectively do this is by collaborating with colleagues.

Working collaboratively with co-workers is a requirement of the National Quality Standards (NQS). Collaborations between colleagues from different backgrounds and who have their own expertise are beneficial as it can serve as professional development, especially for beginning teachers. Moreover, if a staff member is an Indigenous Australian person, or someone has worked with the Indigenous community in the area, they can be asked for advice, suggestions and proper protocols. Collaborations amongst colleagues is also important particularly for children with disabilities, individual needs and different cultures as consistency will be a great factor for their development.

To practice continuous improvement and collaboration in Early Childhood Education and Care services, the educational leader, nominated supervisor, coordinators and educators must:

- Work collaboratively to affirm and challenge their practice through supportive relationships with their colleagues
- Discuss and adopt inclusive practices and strategies that best support each child
- Demonstrate a commitment to learning more, regardless of their experience and current knowledge and skills
- Show on-going commitment to developing their cultural competence in a multi-way process with each other, families and communities
- Participate in relevant training
- Research and consult about the history and practices of the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities
- Have a wider perspective and knowledge on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people by immersing yourself with television shows, radio programs, books, articles and other resources that pass the criteria for evaluating resources
- Interact with the local Indigenous Australian communities outside of the service The above practices are advantageous in developing and communicating ideas to promote children's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and languages. These ideas include but are not limited to:
  - Strategise approaches that can help improve current education practices
  - Practice adapting to contribute to promoting children's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and languages
  - Regularly find ways to promote children's understanding of Indigenous Australian peoples.

The mentioned ideas can be developed and communicated through meetings, training, informal and planned consultations and conversations, planning sessions and presentations.

It is important to develop and communicate ideas to promote children's understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and languages because it is a way for educators to streamline routines and expectations and plan individual strategies for children. Moreover, the possibility of children developing as respectful individuals who value Indigenous Australian peoples is high since best practices are shared and applied by educators.

### 3.3.2 Working in Partnership With Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Families



The “National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children” recommends the practice of establishing genuine active partnerships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and mainstream agencies which together present opportunities to increase quality service delivery while promoting community-led and managed programs.

Too often in the past, governments and their representative agencies have engaged with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with preconceived “western” notions of what is best for them. Thinking like this led to the protectorates, reserves, “Stolen Generations”, enforced language and behaviour management.

Mutual understanding, collaboration and partnership building between centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander services and communities are essential to building cultural competence in the centre and the services it provides.

One of the key reasons for creating collaborative partnerships is:

“Developing relationships and partnerships with all families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, is integral to ongoing, open and honest communication.”

*Sourced from [Belonging, Being, Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia](#), used under [CC BY 4.0](#), Commonwealth of Australia*

Building partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities is a process parallel with developing your own and your service's cultural competence. Be sensitive and aware of past events and understand that it will take time to overcome centuries of mistrust and cultural miscommunication. Early Childhood Education and Care services also need to be aware of the resource constraints that local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities may face when meeting around the partnership table.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are adept at recognising genuine attempts to form partnerships.

Here are effective ways to establish effective and meaningful partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities:

- Show interest in getting to know the members of the community and learning about their culture by participating in community celebrations, functions, meetings and events that recognise the struggles, rights and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- If possible, introduce yourself and your centre to Traditional Owners and Corporations/Cooperatives and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison workers
- Research more about your local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community
- If they are willing and comfortable, involve members of the community by inviting them to participate in activities and host events that show their cultures

It is not unusual for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to be more involved in family events than children from a non-Indigenous background. These events may include funerals, functions at night and weekends and even events away from home or in the country. At funerals, there is an extended family member who will care for the children.

Children may witness a family crisis or stay up late at night. Early Childhood Education and Care staff need to be aware and understand the effect that this may have on the children. Sometimes attendance at these events may lead to absences by the child at the centre.

The most common reasons for absence from an Early Childhood Education and Care centre are:

- Personal illness or illness of a family member
- Death in the extended family and attending funerals. An Aboriginal family will not hesitate to travel to attend a funeral and may stay with the remaining family for as long as they are needed, sometimes weeks or even months.
- NAIDOC and other community activities
- A sense of shame. Some families may feel their children do not have adequate resources (e.g., shoes, clothing, lunch)
- Conflict with teacher

### Some helpful tips for communicating with families:

- Get to know each other on a first-name basis.
- Learn the names of all the family, including immediate and extended family members.
- Explain to parents why they need to contact the centre if one of their family members (not listed on the enrolment form) is picking their child up.
- Do not feel intimidated by a parent or community member and be sure not to intimidate them in any way.
- Adapt your language to suit the individual or group of people you are speaking to.
- Develop appropriate communication with parents and community members.
- Provide a comfortable environment when liaising with parents and staff.



### Learning Activity for Chapter 3

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

## IV. Support Children's Understanding and Respect



As the First Peoples of Australia, Aboriginal culture is the bedrock on which everything else is built. Early Childhood Education and Care Services must promote understanding and respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and peoples on an ongoing and daily basis as an intrinsic part of everyday service delivery. Whether or not there are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children and families attending the service is irrelevant. All children, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, need to learn about and appreciate the cultures and cultural perspectives of the original Australians.

In this chapter, you will learn how to support children's understanding and respect, including:

- Facilitating children's experiences that value and positively engage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultures and languages
- Modelling language and interactions that show respect for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples cultural knowledge
- Developing an understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Peoples ways of learning
- Using opportunities to encourage children to reflect on and engage with different Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples ways of learning



#### **4.1 Facilitate Children’s Experiences in Meaningful and Culturally Appropriate Ways that Model Respect, Values, and Positively Portray Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultures and Languages.**



As an educator, it is your responsibility to effectively and appropriately facilitate children’s experiences in meaningful and culturally appropriate ways that model respect, values, and positively portray Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and languages. Culturally appropriate ways refer to practices that consider other people’s culture by respecting their preferences, understanding and accepting the historical context of their ways. Experiences are opportunities for children to gain knowledge and develop skills in different ways.

In facilitating learning, centres must be in consultation with their local community and should develop a philosophy for their culturally inclusive program. The local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Support Centre can help you make contact and support the development of a philosophy and policy.



Establishing a culturally inclusive program is essential and important because:

It allows children to have a strong connection with their culture and identity.

It teaches non-indigenous individuals about the experiences and contributions of the members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

It protects Indigenous peoples, especially children's rights and dignity.

It contributes to establishing a safe and engaging environment for Indigenous Peoples of Australia.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures may differ from one another.

It is also important during the facilitation of experiences that you, as an educator, act in culturally appropriate ways that would help the children see you as a role model that they can copy and look up to. Some examples of ways to effectively facilitate children's experiences related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their cultures and languages are:

- Setting up an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander resource area which can be used and explored by children, their families, educators, staff and visitors. This can include books, photographs and flags.
- Labelling areas and things inside the service in English and local Indigenous language/s.
- Displaying and using language maps in activities.
- Using the colours green, blue and white and red, black and yellow in displays and other learning materials.
- Using cultural artefacts in activities, when appropriate.
- Inviting members of the local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community to deliver or participate in activities.

Facilitation of children's experiences related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples should always reflect the cultural inclusivity of your program and must be geared towards portraying their culture in a positive light.

When teaching children about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, start from the present day, use current photos and information about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 21st Century. Avoid stereotypes, and as much as possible, appropriately embed the content, rather than presenting it as a different topic. Additionally, as discussed in previous chapters, it is important that you immerse yourself first and gain more knowledge and understanding to adequately support children's understanding and respect.

You can promote children's respect of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and languages by doing the following:

- Organising activities (such as field trips to museums) for children and explaining historical concepts in a very simplified way to help them understand. Also, you must be open to answering any questions that the children may have.
- Encouraging activities that centre around Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultures in the curriculum and making sure that these activities are carried out properly while complying with the traditions behind them.

You can promote children's understanding of the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures and languages by doing the following:

- Help children create a calendar of events celebrating Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' histories such as NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Week, and National Aboriginal and Islander Children's Day.
- Encourage Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children to share information about their cultures (such as food, songs, dances, games, etc.) with the other children during show-and-tell or other similar activities.

## 4.2 Model Language and Interactions That Show Respect for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Cultural Knowledge

It is natural for humans, especially children, to engage in observational learning. Observational learning is when individuals learn by what they see and hear from other people and their behaviours are influenced by it. Since children tend to imitate their parents and educators, and their behaviours are greatly shaped by the people around them, it is essential that you be a role model to them, and you are careful with your words and actions.

Specifically, to this context, it is important that you consistently model respect and importance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures. Additionally, the information you impart on the children and the Indigenous terminologies you use should be accurate, appropriate and respectful. Your approach, actions and words will have an impact on the development of children's values and how they perceive and interact with Indigenous Australian people.

Besides modelling appropriate words and actions, giving positive reinforcement to children who display commendable behaviour will strengthen appropriate and respectful interactions and views on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. This is because toddlers are most likely to repeat and imitate behaviour that receive positive responses such as praises and simple rewards.



### The importance of language and interactions

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People value their languages as those are strongly connected with their cultures, land, values, histories, and communities. Moreover, languages strengthen their identities, with some communities named after the languages they use. For Indigenous people, it also contributes to building one's wellbeing and establishes diversity with other people and solidarity amongst each other. When teaching Aboriginal languages, as an educator, it is important that you first consult with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Throughout this process, Indigenous people should be empowered and included. More than just seeking approval, consultation is an ongoing partnership that gives opportunities to educators to build relationships and interact with the Indigenous community and be knowledgeable on views, cultures, and practices.

When consulting members of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, make sure you follow proper protocols:

- Introductory protocols are valuable, so be ready to open-up and share about yourself and why you are visiting.
- Be patient as some members of the community might need to take time before engaging.
- Ask about how the community perceives direct eye contact as some communities accept it, while others find it offensive.
- Be careful with your body language and non-verbal communication used as it can be offensive to some.
- Remember that silence during conversations is important and practised. It represents respect and understanding.

You might encounter some challenges due to language barriers. The following are strategies that can help you handle issues on language:

- Use visual representations such as photographs and diagrams
- Do not use complicated words and jargons
- Be careful when using words from their languages
- Ask for advice or help from any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, if needed

When consulting with members of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, remember that there are some historical issues that need caution when being discussed. These include (but are not limited to) racism, social dislocation, Stolen Generations, Native Title, Land Rights, and Reconciliation.

### **Indigenous Terminology**

Language, which is essential and beneficial when communicating with others, can also be problematic since it can be used to express discrimination and inequality. As an educator, it is important to ensure that all terminologies used are appropriate and respectful when communicating with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and teaching about their communities, their cultures and languages. Refer to the table on the following page.

<b>Less appropriate terms</b>	<b>More appropriate terms</b>	<b>Why it is important to use more appropriate terms</b>
<p>Aborigines</p> <p>The Aborigines</p> <p>Blacks</p> <p>Whites</p> <p>Coloured</p>	<p>Indigenous Australian people/s</p> <p>Aboriginal person/people/peoples</p> <p>Torres Strait Islander person/people/peoples</p>	<p>The appropriate terms highlight the humanity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people while the less appropriate terms disregard the differences between cultures.</p>
<p>Ayers Rock</p>	<p>Uluru</p>	<p>Uluru should be the recognised name of the sacred site as it was the name given by the local Indigenous community before colonisation.</p>
<p>Primitive</p> <p>Native</p> <p>Stone Age</p>	<p>Indigenous nations</p> <p>Complex and diverse societies</p>	<p>The less appropriate terms are derogatory as it suggests that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are less progressive than western societies.</p>
<p>Tribe</p> <p>Horde</p>	<p>Language groups</p> <p>Culture groups</p>	<p>Tribe and horde are terms that are associated with stereotypes and negative connotations.</p>
<p>Dreamtime</p>	<p>The Dreaming or The Dreamings</p>	<p>The Dreaming or Dreaming implies Indigenous beliefs are ongoing while Dreamtime means it has finished.</p>
<p>Folklore</p> <p>Myths</p>	<p>Creation/Dreaming Stories</p> <p>Legends (Torres Strait Islander people only)</p>	<p>The less appropriate terms implies that the shared knowledge and information from Dreaming stories are unreal and imaginary.</p>



## Further Reading

The University of New South Wales (UNSW) collated a list of appropriate and inappropriate Indigenous Terminology. You can access the website through the link below:

[Indigenous Terminology](#)

To know more about consulting with Aboriginal communities, read *Working with Aboriginal Communities: A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols*. You can access the PDF file through the link below:

[Working with Aboriginal Communities: A Guide to Community Consultation and Protocols](#)

### 4.3 Develop an Understanding of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Peoples' Ways of Learning

Besides instilling respect for diversity, appreciation for culture and community engagement, understanding the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples learn are also beneficial for Indigenous children. By incorporating their cultures, beliefs and practices in their experiences in services, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children develop their identities, pride and self-esteem. Moreover, it is more likely that they are engaged because their cultures and way of living are given importance.

There are 8 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Ways of Learning:

Ways of Learning	Description
Story sharing	Personal narratives/stories
Learning map	Photographs, images and other visuals are used
Non-verbal	Kinaesthetic skills
Symbols and images	Using metaphors
Land links	Ecological and place-based
Non-linear	Thinking laterally
Deconstruct/Reconstruct	Scaffolded learning
Community links	Learning for others

Yarning circles, which has been practised by various Indigenous Communities in different countries, is also a way for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples to learn. It provides opportunities for sharing, learning, understanding and reflection. Yarning circles have been an integral part of their culture as it builds their knowledge, passes on and conserves traditions and stories, and strengthens relationships.

#### 4.3.1 Science

For science, the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander way of learning that is applicable is non-verbal. In this way of learning, a more hands-on approach is emphasised, and critically examining knowledge is encouraged. This can be applied to science by having the children perform simple exercises or experiments about the current topic and having them think about the results.

### 4.3.2 Mathematics

For mathematics, the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander way of learning that is applicable is deconstruct/reconstruct. In this way of learning, the lesson is scaffolded for the child and the educator builds on the child's existing skills to help them learn new things. This can be applied to mathematics by first working on simple problems before building up to working on more complex problems.



### 4.3.3 Music

For music, the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander way of learning that is applicable is community links. Music is an important aspect of community life for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and they use it to share their beliefs. This can be applied to music by helping children understand that music can be used as a way of expressing themselves.

### 4.3.4 Art

For art, the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander way of learning that is applicable is symbols and images. In this way of learning, symbols and images are used as metaphors for different concepts. This can be applied to art by showing children that art can be used as a way of expressing different ideas or feelings through metaphors.

Just like with music, art is learned through family and community members who pass on traditions and practices, sometimes during special events and ceremonies, to preserve connections with culture and Country.



### Further Reading

To know more about the 8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning, you can visit the official website through the link below:

[8 Aboriginal Ways of Learning](#)



#### 4.4 Use Opportunities to Encourage Children to Reflect on and Engage with Different Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Ways of Learning



Opportunities for children to engage with and reflect on aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures can arise from both planned and unplanned activities. Opportunities are circumstances that enables children to learn and develop skills and knowledge on specific topics.

For children to authentically engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, they need opportunities to have personal connections and build relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people themselves.

Where there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and/or staff in your service; cross-cultural connections, interactions, and friendships should be encouraged. In services where there are no indigenous people, it becomes even more critical to invite members of the community into the service.

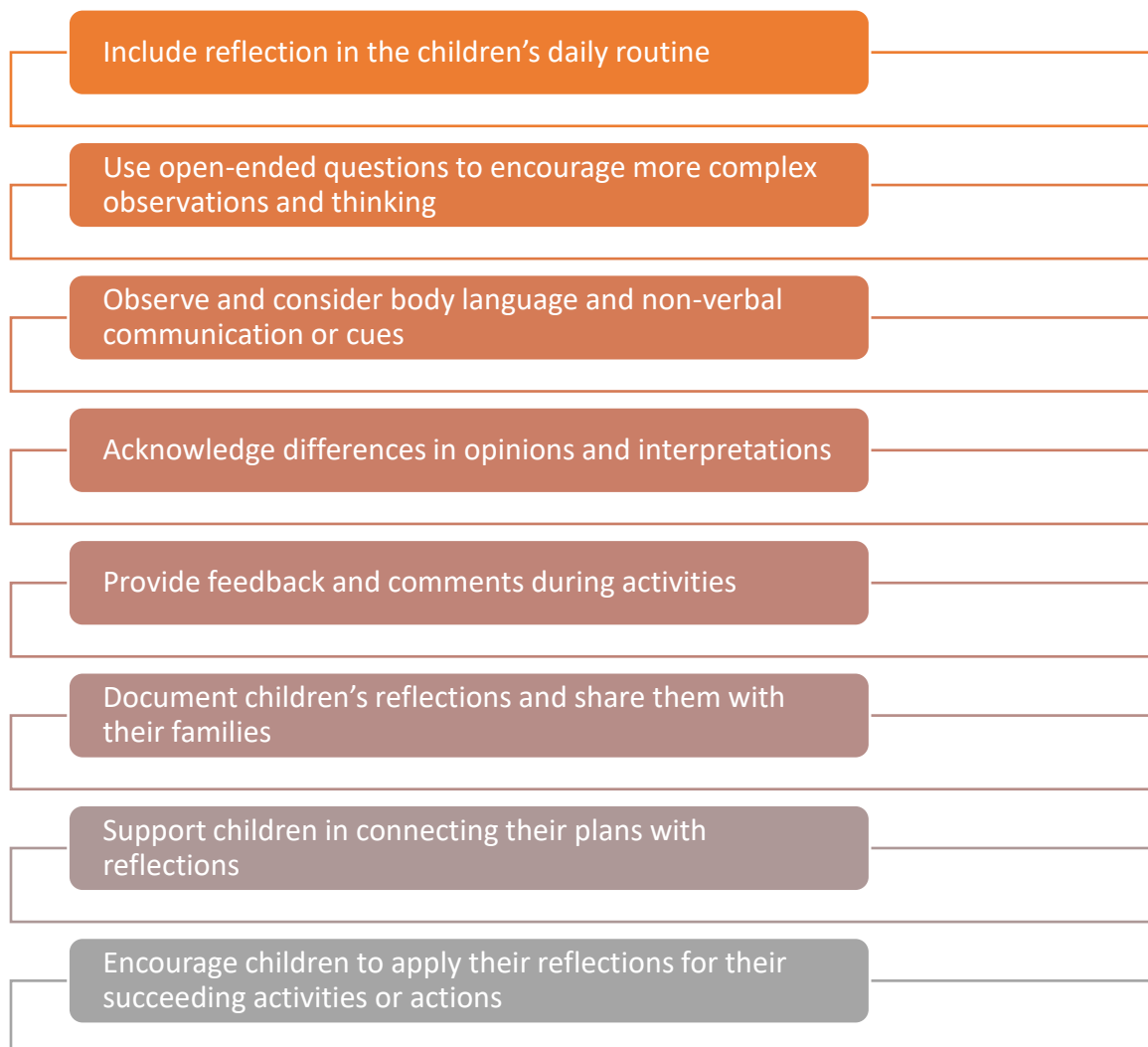
Having opportunities to engage with and reflect on different ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' ways of learning allows children to continuously understand Indigenous Peoples and their cultures and develop appreciation and respect for diversity. Moreover, it can contribute to closing the gap between Indigenous and non-indigenous students.

#### 4.4.1 Opportunities to Encourage Children to Reflect

Reflection plays a huge part in supporting children in understanding themselves and developing various skills such as learning habits, problem solving, decision making and controlling their behaviour and actions. In addition, it encourages children to be sensible of what they have learned or done thus contributing to the improvement of their thinking, literacy, and social skills. Reflection is also beneficial for educators as they have opportunities to get to know the children's interests and dislikes, and they can effectively predict, support and evaluate children, their decisions and actions.

Reflection in children will need to be initiated by you. Young children can only reflect on the lessons you teach them. As previously discussed, as an educator, you are responsible for embedding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples' cultures in routines and learning experiences.

The following are steps to effectively teach children reflection:



## 4.4.2 Opportunities to Encourage Children to Engage with Different Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples Ways of Learning

### Encourage Respectful Behaviour Through Incentives

When you incentivise or reward positive behaviour, children are more likely to repeat the act. They can understand that the reward system is for behaviours that adults want to see again. By giving rewards, children are conditioned to know what behaviours are right and wrong.

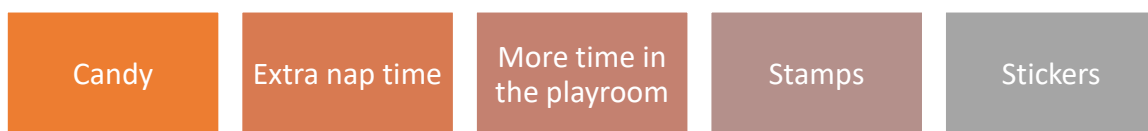
#### *During practical routines*

Practical routines are the routine activities that you have daily. You may implement incentives during practical routines by observing learned behaviour. Make sure to collaborate with your colleagues and let them know what your plans are and which behaviours you want to reinforce so that you are all consistently supporting respectful behaviours.

#### *During play and learning experiences*

Play and learning experiences may be planned specifically to encourage respect for the natural environment. You may plan an activity that would allow children to showcase how much they respect their environment and provide awards and prizes for all positive ideas and opinions.

Incentives may be in the form of the following:



### Learning Activity for Chapter 4

Well done completing this chapter. You may now proceed to your **Learning Activity Booklet** (provided along with this Learner Guide) and complete the classroom learning activities associated with this chapter.

Please coordinate with your trainer/training organisation for additional instructions and guidance in completing these practical activities.

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