

Collaboration in the Indigenous Space


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Welcome to Country

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Communication, collaboration and consultation are
key to establishing, sustaining & maintaining
successful partnerships with your local
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

where collaborating might need to occur

- in the classroom
- cultural competence for staff
- cultural competence for students
- welcome to country
- exploring current issues
- traditional lands
- curriculum review
- RAP Engagement

know exactly
what areas you
need assistance

Narragunnawali
Reconciliation in Education

**NAKRA
GUNNA
WALI**

Narragunnawali

Alanna Raymond
Esma Livermore



Goodstart early learning

Myra Geddes
Melody Ingra

If collaborating

- consultation
- endorsement
- approval
- information
- support
- attendance
- representation

Know what
you want
before
making
contact

Things that you need to do first


- staff to engage in critical self-reflection
- informal cultural experiences
- self-paced online modules
- formal cultural awareness training in person
- cultural immersion experiences

what often doesn't work

- failing to recognise the diversity between nations, countries & language groups
- making a determination on who can speak on behalf of a community before actually speaking to them
- treating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as 'one stakeholder group'
- seeing consultation as just 'giving information'
- 'one-off,' 'tick box' or exclusively 'transactional' approach to relationship-building
- expecting services & supports for free
- tokenistic gestures of collaboration



what early childhood practitioners need to know

- historical acceptance
 - race relations
 - difference between equity & equality
 - who are the traditional owners
 - find out what lands or nations that any families have connections with
 - reflect on your enrolment / orientation process
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Things that you can do

- establish an advisory committee on Aboriginal input
- seek Aboriginal input onto other committees
- include a regular agenda item to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and perspectives are integrated across all year levels and learning areas
- remind staff that maintaining this regular agenda item helps to support a 'no excuse' approach to embedding the above across curricula.

Things that you can do

- develop an:
 - Elders-in-residence program /
 - Engage an external Consultant
- create a:
 - curriculum review schedule
 - cultural training framework for staff
 - cultural training framework for students

Things that can do

- invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander guests
- partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and organisations
- visit local sites and events
- use opportunities such as orientation days, open days, information nights, and parent teacher nights to inform Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and community members about your RAP
- attend community events
- create a stakeholder list

Things to think about

- engaging respectfully actually means actively recognising that there may be certain histories and cultures that many Elders or community may not be comfortable sharing with staff, students or children at your early learning service



Things to think about

- often there may be distinct cultural protocols around what stories and knowledges can be shared by whom and when, & where they can be shared

Things to think about

- personal narratives pertaining to unjust colonial policies and practices can also be very sensitive (particularly given histories of forced separation from Country, culture and community)

Where can I start to engage

- Aboriginal Elders, Traditional Owners & Custodians, and representative bodies
- representatives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education consultative groups
- Aboriginal Land Councils
- Aboriginal Language and Culture Centres
- Art Centres and Media Groups
- reconciliation councils or groups
- other early learning services in your area that have a RAP
- local government council

Where can I start to engage

- Aboriginal consultants and / or businesses
- staff at your early learning service (prior experiences)
- parents and carers of students
- parents and carers of Indigenous students
- student alumni of your early learning service
(including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student alumni)
- Community liaison officers
(KESOs & non-government organisations)
- Local Aboriginal Gathering Places

Engaging with community

- Demonstrate respect
- Be aware of appropriate language
- Take responsibility for learning
- Be self aware
- Demonstrate honesty & integrity
- Provide adequate information
- Follow up and provide feedback

Engaging with community

- patience and resilience if an invitation to your local Elders, or Traditional Owners, respected Community members or Consultants doesn't go according to your time schedule
- the presence of any of the above people in early learning services NEEDS to be seen as a privilege and honour and will only happen if there is a respectful relationship.

Engaging with community

- ensure transport is available or arranged
- remuneration (sitting fees, \$\$\$\$ or vouchers)
- food / feed prior or after
- ensure Elders are offered 'tea' & 'a feed'
- meeting for the first time at the early childhood centre may not necessary be the best place to meet. Choose a neutral location
- determine who is the right person to connect with



final words

- the more welcoming, interested and engaged an early learning service is with the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and cultures, the more comfortable, open, and positive the community is likely to become in their interactions with the service.



final words

- a service that takes effective action to integrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being into their broader pedagogy is more likely to form educationally-focused relationships with their community.