

Useful resources:

- The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia
- Aunty Wendy's Mob "Growin up Strong" CD and Book
- NCAC website
- Napcan
- Indigenous Schooling support unit
- Indigenous Professional Support Unit
- Professional Support Coordinator
- Child Care Regulations
- Child Care Act
- www.thekangarooclub.com.au
- www.snaicc.asn.au

How do we Genuinely Embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Perspectives in our centre?



Written and researched by
Mandy Collins and Angela Keenan (2010-2011)

Introduction

First and foremost it is important to recognise the traditional owners of the play spaces in which the centre is located. Our Centre is located in Springfield QLD which is in the Ipswich city area.

“We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Land owners of our play spaces - the Yuggera, Jagera and Ugarapul people, and pay our respects to the Elders both past and present.”

This is important for the children to understand that we are standing on Aboriginal land as this is the first step in recognition of Traditional owners, their heritage and culture.

The image below is of Australia prior to colonisation. Each coloured area represents different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island groups. You can begin your process



of Embedding Indigenous perspectives by displaying this image in your class room, Google Australian Aboriginal map for the image.

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 5

Children are effective communicators

Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work

- Use symbols in play to represent and make meaning
- Draw on their experiences in constructing meaning using symbols

Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

- Identify the uses of technologies in everyday life and use real or imaginary technologies as props in their play
- Use information and communication technologies to access images and information, explore diverse perspectives and make sense of their world

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 5

Children are effective communicators

Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes

- Engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language
- Convey and construct messages with purpose and confidence, building on home/family and community literacy's
- Use language and representation from play, music and art to share and project meaning
- Attend and give cultural cues that they are listening to and understand what is said to them

Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts

- Listen and respond to sounds and patterns in speech, stories and rhymes in context
 - Sing and chant rhymes, jingles and songs
- Explore texts from a range of different perspectives and begin to analyse the meaning
- Recognise and engage with written and oral culturally constructed texts

Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media

- Share the stories and symbols of their own culture and re-enact well known stories
- Use the creative arts such as drawing, painting, sculpture, drama, dance, movement, music and storytelling to express ideas and make meaning

Issues and Hurdles you may face

Early Childhood Educators face so many issues when trying to be respectful in providing experiences for children in their care that most either give up or don't even try. Although it is not through lack of trying that they face so many hurdles more that it is nearly impossible to source information from local community members, libraries and resource people. It is important to recognise and understand that the reason information is so hard to find, is that from the colonisation of Australia, Aboriginal heritage, language and customs have either been taken away from the Aboriginal people or "lost" in translation. It is only once you look at the history of this country that you can fully become aware and begin in the process of providing culturally appropriate experiences and environments for children, families, staff and the greater community.

A Brief overview of Documented Australian History

- **65,000 BC** Aboriginal people are recorded through archaeological studies and ancestral Creation Stories as inhabitants of this land
- **1770** Lieutenant James Cook lays claim to land in the Cape York Peninsula based on the doctrine of *terra nullius* (*land belonging to no-one*) *All Indigenous rights are extinguished and no British citizenship rights were granted*
- **1788** The British First Fleet landed at Sydney Cove on January 26th, with 9 more ships arriving over 3 days. Issues involving conflict and resistance between Aborigines and Europeans start almost immediately.
- **1789** Smallpox decimated the Koori population of Port Jackson, Botany Bay and Broken Bay
- **1848** NSW Native Police troopers are brought to QLD to kill Aborigines and open the land up for white settlement
- **1951** Canberra formally adopts “Assimilation Policy” regarding Aboriginal people
- **1961** Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies is formed in Canberra
- **1962** Aboriginal people in Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory are given the right to vote in Federal Elections
- **1965** The ALP deletes “White Australia” from its immigration policy (Integration Policy replaces “Assimilation Policy” as governments position regarding Indigenous People)
- **1966** The Gurindji Walk-Off starts a seven year campaign for Aboriginal Land rights in the Northern Territory. Stock workers were the first to walk off protesting intolerable working conditions and wages, but refused to accept any outcome other than the return of their land
- **1967** White Australians vote in a May 27 referendum in whether Aboriginal people should be included in the census and whether the Federal Government should make laws overriding current state jurisdiction over “Aboriginal Affairs”. The vote was a 90% YES, ending constitutional discrimination. All states except QLD abandon laws and policies discriminating against Aboriginal people.

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 4:

Children are confident and involved learners

Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity

- When they can express wonder and interest in their environments

Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching and investigating

- When they can explore their environment
- When they can use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learnt from these experiences

Children transfer and adapt what they learned from one context to another

- Make connections between experiences, concepts and processes
- Develop an ability to mirror, repeat and practice the actions of others, either immediately or later

Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

- Engage in learning relationships
- Use their senses to explore natural and built environments
- Experience the benefits and pleasures of shared learning exploration
- Manipulate resources to investigate, take apart, assemble, invent and construct

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 3:

Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing

- When they can seek out and accept new challenges, make new discoveries, and celebrate their own efforts and achievements and those of others
- When they recognise the contributions they make to shared projects and experiences

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

- When they are happy, healthy safe and connected to others
- When they respond through movement to traditional and contemporary music, dance and storytelling

- 1972 The Tent Embassy\y was set up outside Parliament House in Canberra, demonstrating for land rights
- 1972 The first Aboriginal medical service was set up in Redfern NSW.
- 1985 Uluru was handed back to its traditional owners
- 1990 The Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established
- 1992 High Court Mabo Decision declares *terra nullius* a legal fiction and recognises rights at common law of Indigenous peoples to their land
- 1997 National Sorry Day May 25th (no Government participation)
- 2001 Cathy Freeman wins Gold at the Sydney Olympics and proudly displays the Aboriginal flag on her victory lap of the stadium
- 2008 Prime Minister Kevin Rudd table a motion in Parliament, formally apologising to Indigenous peoples of Australia for past mistreatment by successive governments

This is in no way is a through depiction of Australian History, nor are the facts we have chose to single out more significant than others.

You can easily find more facts by using terms as Australian history or Aboriginal history in your internet search engine.

So, how do we do this?

Embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait perspectives is not just about playing music and dot painting; although these are a starting point they can become tokenistic if they are the only experiences you provide.

There are so many things we do every day in Early Childhood settings that is somewhat an Indigenous experience.

Embedding Indigenous perspectives has to come from a holistic approach to the centre, from how you greet and welcome families into the service to the layout and resources used in the service.

We have strived to find experiences, resources and ways of thinking that will assist in embedding Indigenous Perspectives in your room and the centre as a whole. Each experience, resource, idea and strategy has been linked to the Early Years Learning Framework and we will aim to provide experiences for all children at all levels of development.

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 2:

Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation

- When they begin to recognise that they have a right to belong to many communities
- When they can broaden their understanding of the world in which they live
- When they can build on their own social experience to explore other ways of being

Children are connected with and contribute to their world

- When they can explore the diversity of culture and heritage, background and tradition and that diversity presents opportunities for choice and new understanding
- Children are connected and contribute to their world
- When they can discover and explore some connections amongst people
 - Develop the ability to recognise unfairness and bias and the capacity to act with compassion and kindness
 - When they have opportunities to begin to understand and evaluate ways in which text construct identities and create stereotypes

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework

Outcome 1:

Children have a strong sense of identity

Children feel safe, secure and supported

- when they are able to see images of people from the same background as them
- When interactions with Educators are similar to those within the home

- When environments are welcoming and free from bias

Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency–

- when they develop relationships that are based on negotiation and co-operation
- When their sense of belonging and connectedness is promoted

Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities

- When they are made to feel confident in their “own skin”
- When they can share aspects of their culture with friends
- When they can use their home language in care settings

Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

- When they display awareness of and respect for others perspectives

Environments

- Use natural resources as much as possible (sand, wooden blocks, leaves, tree branches for mobiles and to hang things, shells etc)
 - Play areas should be open and inviting
- Display the Aboriginal, Australian and Torres Strait Island flags in your room (they should be in that order and the same size) these are easily accessible on Google
- Display the map of Aboriginal language groups (again easy to find on Google)
- Have an area for families to sit with the children on arrival or at the end of the day to talk about the child's day
 - Ensure all visual representation is regularly changed and rearranged to ensure they are not seen as tokenistic displays

Art and craft

- Use natural resources for art and craft activities, sticks, sand, leaves, flowers
- Have children “sign” their art with their hand print
 - Use art to re-tell stories
- Have children paint/draw/collage a scene from their weekend/holiday/home life, and you can write what they are representing
- Traditional representation of Aboriginal art can be dot painting or x-ray impressions of Australian animals, such as– kangaroos, emus, birds, goanna’s, snakes, dolphins and dugongs, echidna, crocodile
- Have the children paint the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island flags to be displayed in the room
- Make a basket by weaving wool or palm leaves through a paper plate
- Using a tree branch have the children name all the people in their family, write these names on leaves and “hang from the tree, this is called a “kinship tree”
 - Using seeds, beans feathers and shells, make jewellery
- Using sticks paint them in natural colours to make clap sticks
- Talk about the colours that are traditionally use in Aboriginal art, why those colours (because they are the tones form the earth)

Fine Motor

- Weaving wool/string/palm leaves on a paper plate or stick
 - Use fingertips to make animal tracks in sand
- thread items such as feathers, beads, seeds and shells onto string
- Incorporate Indigenous puzzles into the centre’s collection
- Use sticks, leaves and other natural items in play dough
 - Create with clay

Cognitive

- Use pictures of Australian animals on cards as a memory game
- Use pictures of bush tucker as a memory game
 - Australian Animal bingo
- Listen to animal sounds and identify the animal
 - Use shells, nuts, beads as a sorting game
- Have a group of objects (for example all natural) and put something plastic with it, pose the question “What does not belong”?
- Incorporate Indigenous puzzles into the centre’s collection
- Make your own puzzles from some of the art the children have done

Music and movement

- Use clap sticks that the children have made from sticks to beat rhythms
- Listen to traditional Aboriginal didgeridoo music and music from a corroboree
- Listen to contemporary music form groups such as “Yothu Yindi” and Christina Arnu
- Have animal sounds playing and have the children try to identify what animal it is and where it comes from
- Aunty Wendy's Mob has a wonderful collection of music and simple songs for children
- The Kangaroo Club web site has a great selection of lyrics to songs and rhymes to sing with children (www.thekangarooclub.com.au)
- Invite an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island dance or music group to perform at the centre

Language

- Discuss with the children their family, include extended family (aunts, uncles, cousins)
- Talk about the importance of having family and the things we can learn from each other
- If possible learn some words from the Local Aboriginal group (this may be hard as some languages have been lost in time and translation)
- Read traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island stories
- TELL stories to children (I know this sounds scary, but its not) you can either make up a story or recite ones you know
- Use props, puppets or draw a story with the children
- Make up cards with pictures of Australian animals on them and use it for a pairing game or snap
- Make posters of scenery (outback, desert, ocean, scrub, beach) add pictures of Native Australian animals for children to role play with or make up stories
 - Make puppets of animals (either pictures laminated and stuck on paddle pop sticks, or make fabric puppets) and use in story telling
 - Use Aboriginal symbols in story telling

Family involvement

Family is a very important aspect of Indigenous culture. Typically the family unit is not just mum, dad, children. It may consist of parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins sometime living in the same house. Everyone is involved in raising children and being an active contributor to the family unit.

By being open and welcoming you may be able to have family members participate in the service by suggesting family recipes, songs, music, traditional art or story telling. Remember, not all families will want to participate, have an open mind and an open door (not just the policy , but the practice too) and appreciate any contribution made to the service.

Health and Hygiene

- Encouraging all children to have good health and hygiene will benefit everyone in the centre
- Talk about why we wash our hand, wipe our nose, cover when we cough
- Ask the children how they think Indigenous people bathed, is it similar or different to how they keep clean (is a bath similar to washing in a creek or dam)
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Gross motor

- Play chasing games, have some children pretend to be animals and some to be hunters, and try to “Catch” the child (be sure to supervise this closely and ensure all children are aware that this is just pretend)
 - Set climbing equipment to resemble a river crossing, maybe suggest to the children the mat underneath is a raging river, and they must cross safely or be eaten by CROCODILES!!!
 - Hop, jump, crawl, run like Australian animals
- Throwing balls, bean bags etc at targets (bucket/bin/hoola hoop)
 - Climbing on a ladder rope could resemble climbing a tree (if a tree is not available)
 - Place ping pong balls in the sand pit and “go digging for turtle eggs”
- Put plastic insects, snakes and bugs in the sand pit to go foraging for food
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Social

- Provide children with opportunities to engage in activities such as caring for babies or each other
- Display photos of children's family in and around the rooms so children can have a sense of connection between their family and the centre
- Make meal times more a community event rather than a routine thing, set tables in a circle, or better yet, have a picnic outside

Food and Nutrition

- Incorporate traditional ingredients such as lemon Myrtle, wattle seeds, bunya nut, Quandong and bush tomato (to name a few)
- Google “Bush tucker” and you will get some wonderful recipes to try
 - Make damper
- Have the children draw pictures of what they think is bush tucker, compare this with foods we eat today
- Make an edible garden for the children, include things like– carrots, celery, beans, potato, yams and taro
- Grow a native herb garden and use in cooking/ play dough/ science area for scents