

## **Diversity in Practice** **Preparing for enrolment**

Enrolment is the time when relationships are built between educators, families and the home community of the child. How we share knowledge and acknowledge diversity at this point sets the scene for future collaboration with families and how welcome and respected they feel. Information gathered during the enrolment process increases an educator's ability to reflect practices, values and beliefs of families in the early childhood care and education setting. The transition into care and education settings from the home environment is one of the first major milestones in a child's life.

The enrolment of children from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds can be enhanced by the information you gather before the formal enrolment process begins. Profiling those children on your waiting list including their cultural and linguistic background is a step towards making the process a relevant and welcoming experience for families.

Once a profile has been established you can start preparing for the enrolment process. This may involve:

- Identifying similarities and differences in practices, values, and beliefs that you may want to discuss with the family on enrolment
- Sourcing information and translated materials
- Displaying of bilingual notices, pictures and materials that reflect the cultures and languages of those attending your service and those on the waiting list
- Identifying if anyone in your team speaks a language represented on the profile of the waiting list
- Finding and preparing a variety of versions of the information that you want to share during enrolment (e.g. a scrapbook with photos that represents routines for families and children in your service)

A variety of interrelated issues and personal characteristics influence the development of relationships between professionals and families. Some of the issues that affect the formation of collaborative relationships between families and early childhood professionals are different knowledge, views and/or expectations on:

- Child rearing practices
- Roles in the care and education of the child
- Social norms and traditions
- Use of dominant and home language

Having some basic knowledge of the cultural and linguistic background of families will enable you to identify issues that could impact on your engagement with the family and your ability to make the child feel welcome. Sharing information on experiences, expectations and skills with families and discussing what they mean in your care and education setting are important components of the child's transition into the care and education setting.

Consider the following topics when preparing your enrolment session with the family:

- attitudes to child development, play and education
- Daily Routines Collaboration with families
- Health and Nutrition Sleeping patterns and arrangements
- Toilet Training and Hygiene

BISS continuously sources and develops information sheets and check lists as part of its support services – call us to see if we have other materials relating to this topic.

#### **REFERENCE**

1. Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia 2009 Department of Education, Employment and Workplace (DEEWR) , Australian Government
2. Family Engagement, Diverse Families, and Early Childhood Education Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature Linda C. Halgunseth and Amy Peterson National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Washington DC:USA
3. National Childcare Strategy 2006-2010: Diversity and Equity Guidelines for Childcare Providers Office of the Minister for Children; Ireland
4. Working Cross Culturally: A Guide 2005 Multicultural Communities Council of SA Inc. and Multicultural Aged Care Inc.; Australia
5. Working with Culturally & Linguistically Diverse Families Deborah A. Bruns & Robert M. Corso Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (CEEP) 2001; University of Illinois: USA

### **Check List**

#### **Diversity in Practice: Preparing for enrolment**

- Assess if your current enrolment processes allows for the sharing of information relating to the practices, values and beliefs of families and your service

**Notes:**

- Regularly review and profile the children on your waiting list and identify their linguistic and cultural background

**Notes:**

- Collate translated and information materials that reflect cultural and linguistic backgrounds of children and their families on your waiting list

**Notes:**

- Identify if anyone in your team has a cultural or linguistic background that matches children and families on the waiting list

**Notes:**

- Have information at hand that supports the assessment for the need of an interpreter

**Notes:**

- Collate a list of support services and community resources that are relevant to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds reflected in your profile

**Notes:**

- Prepare questions relating to practices, values and beliefs that you may want to raise during the enrolment process

**Notes:**