

# Keeping up cultural connections

Maintaining connections with family, community, language, religion and culture is essential to the long-term wellbeing of kids who come from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds. Wherever possible, CALD kids are placed with carers of the same cultural background. Carers who do not share a cultural background can do a lot to keep kids connected with their communities and nurture their sense of identity.

## Cultural Plans

Cultural Plans outline how a child's identity, language, spirituality, religion, and connection to family, community, Country and culture will be maintained and supported by carers, caseworkers and others. Cultural Plans are part of case planning and should be developed in partnership with significant people in the child's life and community.

## Support for non-English speakers

Kids who have recently arrived in Australia may have difficulty with English. Your caseworker can arrange free access to professional interpreter services to help you communicate. There are also fantastic translation resources and apps online if you're handy with your smart phone or laptop.



## Developing your cultural awareness

Increasing your own cultural awareness helps you to better understand the cultural needs of the child or young person in your care. You can:

- think about how your background may influence your attitudes, beliefs, feelings and behaviours towards people from different cultural or religious backgrounds
- be aware of stereotypes and preconceptions you may have about people from the child or young person's background and try to challenge these
- show respect for the child or young person's cultural, linguistic and religious heritage
- recognise changes in their environment may cause them to experience cultural confusion and conflict
- understand they are more likely to be exposed to discrimination, prejudice and racism because of their different background.

## Practical ideas for cultural connection

Practical ways to promote connections with culture and strengthen kids' sense of identity include:

- recognising and supporting the role of birth parents and families where possible
- celebrating all cultures and respecting diversity
- asking your caseworker about special cultural or religious needs the child may have, for example, food, clothing and religious worship
- gathering as much information as possible about the community the child or young person comes from and making this information available to them in an age appropriate way
- encouraging them to talk about their family and community
- encouraging them to get involved in their community by, for example, taking them to community activities and cultural events
- networking with carers of the same cultural background as the child, your agency's multicultural workers and multicultural services in your local community
- identifying significant people in the child or young person's life who can help them maintain links with their community
- providing opportunities for them to make friends with children and adults from their cultural background
- maintaining their interest in their culture and language by providing them with age-appropriate books, toys, music and videos in their language
- providing opportunities for the child and your family to learn the child or young person's birth language
- planning major cultural celebrations, events and traditions as part of the things your family does with the child or young person
- seeking services and supports that can provide specialised care in migrant and refugee issues if appropriate
- exposing the child or young person to environments where diversity is valued and they don't feel like they're the only one who is different, for example, going to a school with students and teachers from diverse backgrounds.

## Tackling racism or discrimination

Kids from diverse backgrounds and cultures may face [racism or discrimination](#). As a carer, you can explain that racism is not okay. Speak out against it whenever you see it. Encourage your child's pride and resilience. [Give them strategies](#) for responding to racism, bullying and discrimination, calmly and productively.