



hello & welcome

to the December edition of *fkaCS* Members News. In this edition we reflect on the 2016/17 year and revisit the notion of 'children's cultural and linguistic rights' and what this means for service providers and early childhood professionals.

Following on from the October edition, we continue our series of articles reviewing our member forums, this time focusing on *Forum 1 Troubling place and reconciliation pedagogies in early childhood education* and *Forum 3 The Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan and School Readiness Funding*. We also feature a review of the children's publication *My Two Blankets* written by Irena Kobald and illustrated by Freya Blackwood.

With the end of the year drawing near, our noticeboard includes a few last minute reminders and upcoming opportunities for the New Year.

FKA Children's Services will be closed from Friday 22 December to Sunday 7 January 2018. Our last day of operation for the year will be Thursday 21 December 2017 and we will reopen Monday 8 January 2018.

From all of us at FKA Children's Services we wish you a safe and relaxing holiday season. We look forward to working with you and supporting children's cultural and linguistic rights in 2018.

Happy reading!
The *fkaCS* team

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Term 3 and 4 Members Forums

In the October edition we reviewed the second members forum *Dual language learning in early childhood*. In this edition we reflect on the first and third forums of the series, *Troubling place and reconciliation pedagogies in early childhood education* and *The Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan and School Readiness Funding*.



Troubling place and reconciliation pedagogies in early childhood education

Mat Jakobi, an Aboriginal teacher educator at Victoria University, Catherine Hamm, lecturer at Victoria University and Dr Mindy Blaise, fkaCS board member and professor of early childhood education at Victoria University, presented their findings from a research project they conducted in 2015. The project explored the role and understandings of 'place' in the context of reconciliation pedagogies in early childhood education. The scene of this exploration was a field trip to Werribee Zoo.

Unlike most research presentations the group performed a dialogue of the event which was both unexpected and

engaging for the audience. They used the method of storytelling to communicate the process of their research and the diverse perspectives and personal reflections of the researchers as they moved through both the real, representative and imagined elements of time and space existing on the land where the Werribee Zoo now stands.

The performance raised questions about awareness and consciousness, both learned and felt, of the historical and current Aboriginal, settler and migrant narratives coexisting in this troubling place. Their story asked us to reconsider which narrative was privileged there and why? Where were the true stories? Which voice was speaking for who? Their performance invited the audience to learn and think with, rather than simply about, place.

Continued overleaf...

Term 3 and 4 Members Forums Cont'd:

The research project employed three critical placing practices they labelled 'scratching', 'engaging' and '(re)turning'. These practices were used as a 'strategy to make visible the processes of troubling place and reconciliation pedagogies in early childhood education.' They described the first critical practice 'scratching' as considerations of the 'right to speak, responsibilities to listen and tension between the obtainable and unobtainable.'

The second critical practice was 'engaging with placing Aboriginal stories over settler organisation of time and place. [They] engage with land, with histories, with trauma, and the entangled relations [they] have with the more than human and the relations the more than human have with [them].

In the third critical practice they '(re)turn' to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing, and their place in early childhood education.

The final scene of their story involved a broken down safari bus. The safari bus was used as a metaphor for the ways in which the researchers remained uncomfortable and unsettled and often felt that they were going nowhere. The project acknowledged that working towards reconciliation as 'unsettling and risky work'. It depicted a raw and honest look at current understandings and raised questions about the ethical, political and ecological responsibilities educators hold.

Mat's conclusion provided a starting point for the further exploration and discussion that is required if we are to authentically promote 'greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being' (DEEWR 2009, p. 13) or claim that Victoria's

education system genuinely 'recognises and respects Aboriginal cultures and their unique place in the heritage and future of Victoria' (DET 2016, p. 4).

Mat stated that "Reconciliation...cannot be a neat resolution to absolve white settler guilt, rather reconciliation must acknowledge the tension between reconciliation and decolonising. These tensions open up a possibility for generating ways to reveal and then return to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing. We want to not just raise consciousness about Aboriginal people but to generate pedagogies that return Aboriginal standpoints.

We are aware that storying reconciliation needs to be constructed to respond to the ethical, political and ecological agendas and not just be a token effort. This requires us to work through the uncomfortable, unsettling places, acknowledging that we are all entangled and implicated in our colonial histories."

The second half of the forum was opened up to members in attendance to raise questions with the researchers and engage in a general discussion about the project. The result was a highly engaged and lively informal conversation that provoked further reflection for members to continue with and return to, in their own personal and professional lives.

Many thanks to Mat, Catharine and Mindy for sharing their research, learnings and vulnerabilities with us during this important forum.

Continued overleaf...

Term 3 and 4 Members Forums Cont'd:



The Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan and School Readiness Funding

Over 30 members, teachers, educators and early childhood professionals attended the members forum held on the 1st November, with a presentation on the 'Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan' co-delivered by representatives from the Victorian Government Department of Education and Training.

Bronwen Fitzgerald, Director Early Childhood Development Strategy and Bryn Davies, Manager Kindergarten Reform Implementation, gave an overview of the *Reform Plan* with a particular focus on the new *school readiness funding*.

The Victorian Government's *Education State Early Childhood Reform Plan: Ready for Kinder, Ready for School, Ready for Life* sets out reforms to help every Victorian child and family access high-quality, equitable and inclusive services. The reforms will help to build a progressively universal early childhood system by introducing *school readiness funding*.

The purpose of the funding is to better resource kindergartens to support all children to be developmentally on track by the time they reach school and will give additional support to the children that need it most. The funding is intended to be used for evidence-based interventions to ensure that all children reach school on track.

The forum concluded with a robust discussion and questions from the floor including clarification on the use of the funding, the data collection process and funding administration and accountability.

fkaCS would like to thank Bronwen and Bryn for attending the forum and to our members for their thoughtful consideration of the reform package and their willingness to participate in the conversation.

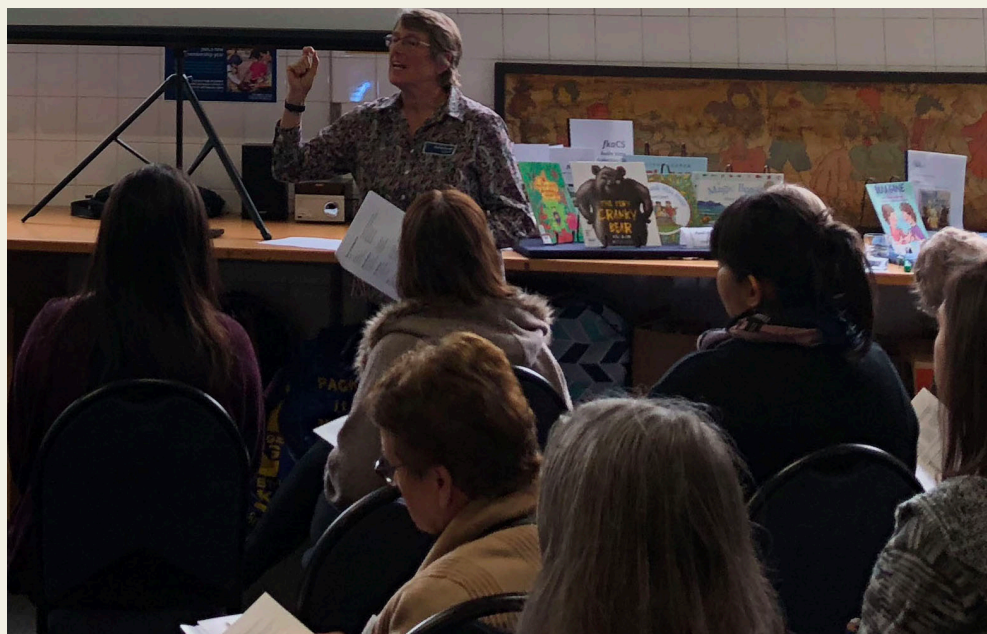
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Department of Education and Training (DET) 2016, *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for all Children from Birth to Eight Years*, Department of Education and Training, East Melbourne.

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fkaCS Annual General Meeting

Reflecting
on the
2016/17
year



fkaCS held its 108th Annual General Meeting on the 1st November 2017. Our 2016/17 Annual Report outlines the successes and learnings of the 2016/17 year and our President Denise Rundle provided the following context for the work that we do.

Since 1908, FKA Children's Services has provided support for Victoria's children under many different guises, for example, managing centres, training kindergarten teachers and providing bilingual and bicultural support to children and families. This is one of the key features of this organisation, our ability to respond to changes in the world of young children and their families. A look through our operational history tells the changing story of how young children's health and education has been viewed by society.

Today is no different. Government policies and funding agreements drive the way services for young children and their families are planned, provided and evaluated. The current political and funding landscape places an emphasis on individual services identifying and designing how to meet quality guidelines and professional development needs.

FKA Children's Services service delivery is built on the understanding that all children and families have the right to actively participate in education and care that; recognises, values and celebrates diversity, supports children to learn English as an additional language and supports the rights of families to maintain and celebrate their home languages.

The focus of our service delivery for the 2016/17 financial year has been on supporting Early Childhood Education and Care services transition to the new Inclusion Support Programme (ISP), with a particular focus on supporting the cultural and linguistic rights of all children and families to actively engage in their education and care.

Further reading

- Continue reading overleaf *Children's cultural and linguistic rights ...what does it mean?*
- Download a copy of the *2016/17 Annual Report* from the [About us](#) page on our website: www.fka.org.au/about-fka/about-us

Children's cultural and linguistic rights...what does it mean?



As part of reflecting on the successes and learning of the 2016/17 year we considered the notion of children's cultural and linguistic rights and what that means in contemporary Australian society, in early childhood education and care settings and for our service delivery.

The Educators' guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia acknowledges that 'culture is the fundamental building block of identity and the development of a strong cultural identity is essential to children's healthy sense of who they are and where they belong' (DEEWR 2010, pp. 21-22).

It asserts that 'children must have access to services that nurture, celebrate and reinforce their culture and support the development of their cultural identity' (DEEWR 2010, p.22).

To genuinely uphold 'the image of the child as a rights holder and a competent learner with capacities to learn from birth' (DET 2016, p2) we need to move from an attitude of 'inclusion' to thinking with a 'rights lens'.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articulates a definition of a child's rights approach as requiring 'a paradigm shift away from... approaches in which children are perceived and treated as 'objects' in need of assistance rather than as rights-holders entitled to non-negotiable rights' (UNICEF 2014, p. 21).

The UNCRC goes on to describe the responsibility of 'duty-bearers' to 'meet their obligations to respect, protect and fulfil those rights' (UNICEF 2014, p. 21).

As early childhood organisations, teachers and educators, we are those 'duty-bearers'.

A recent look at the 2016 Census (ABS 2017) tells us that:

- 49% of the Victorian population were either born overseas or have a parent who was born overseas
- Victorians were born in over 200 different countries
- 26% of Victorians speak languages and dialects other than English at home

Continued overleaf...

Children's cultural and linguistic rights...what does it mean? Cont'd

- Over 260 languages and dialects are spoken in Victorian homes
- 59% of Victorians follow 130 different religious faiths.

Given the diversity of the Victorian Community, it is important to consider the rights of all children to actively participate in their learning and explore what additional supports families and children may require.

This can be especially important during orientation and enrolment processes as we prepare for the 2018 Kindergarten year. FKA Children's services can provide support to you in your role as 'duty-bearers' – to respect, promote and fulfil every child and families' right to actively participate in their learning.

Some of the barriers children and families may experience are explored in the *Info Sheet 2: Barriers to Active Participation in Early Childhood Education and Care* available for download from:

www.fka.org.au/resources/educator-resources

Whilst not an exhaustive list, and recognising that not all children and families will experience all of these barriers to the same degree, it is useful tool to critically reflect on your practice. It can also be used as a starting point in developing a cultural inclusion strategy to help

identify and remove unintended barriers for children and families.

Further information on the Victorian Department of Education and Training Victorian Kindergarten Cultural Inclusion Program and accessing Innovative Solutions Support under the Australian Government Inclusion Support Programme can be found via the links below:

Visit the *Request Bicultural Support* page on our website for an overview of funded support services, including *Info Sheet 1: Accessing Bicultural Support* www.fka.org.au/bicultural-support/request-bicultural-support

Australian Government Inclusion Support Programme (ISP) www.education.gov.au/inclusion-support-programme-isp

Victorian Inclusion Agency
www.viac.com.au

Victorian Kindergarten Cultural Inclusion Program
www.fka.org.au/bicultural-support/cultural-inclusion-support-for-victorian-kindergartens

Visit our website www.fka.org.au, call 03 9428 4471 or email fkacs@fka.org.au us to discuss your support needs

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Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2017, *2016 Census QuickStats*, viewed 3/10/2017 <http://www.censusdata.abs.gov.au/census_services/getproduct/census/2016/quickstat/036>

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UNICEF n.d., *A simplified version of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, viewed 03/08/2017 <<https://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlyccr.pdf>>.

UNICEF 2014, *Child Rights Education Toolkit: Rooting Child Rights in Early Childhood Education*, Primary and Secondary Schools, 1st edn, UNICEF Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division (PFP), Geneva.

United Nations 1989, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, 20 November 1989, United Nations General Assembly, viewed 03/08/2017 <<http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/44/a44r025.htm>>.

Romp & Stomp



Continuing our relationship with the Melbourne Museum and a number of key Victorian education and care organisations, fkaCS was member of the Romp and Stomp organising committee in 2017.

As per previous events, Romp and Stomp was held on the Wednesday (25 October) of Children's Week at the Melbourne Museum, with this year's event drawing a record-breaking crowd. Aimed at children and families, the day offers a range of fun, play-based activities and experiences showcasing the value of learning through play – for both children and adults – and the importance of shared learning experiences in child-adult relationships.

This year, fkaCS Bilingual Storytime saw stories and songs presented in English, Hindi, Tamil, Dari and Pashtu throughout the day. A selection of bilingual books and multicultural resources were on hand for families to enjoy some quiet time in between the storytime sessions and other activities on the day.

Our Culture and Community partners, Yarn Strong Sista, were also present, with gum leaf ochre painting workshops held in the dedicated Aboriginal performance space near the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre. Next year, weather permitting, the organising committee is keen to incorporate some additional culturally appropriate activities in the Museum's beautiful Milarri Garden.



Yarn Strong Sista Partnership

Stemming from our 2017 Culture and Community Partnership, FKA Children's Services hosted a series of professional learning opportunities delivered by Yarn Strong Sista at our Multicultural Resource Centre and Training Room in Collingwood.

Delivered by Yarn Strong Sista's Annette Sax – Taungurung Early Childhood Consultant, Artist and Storyteller – the hands-on workshops ran from the July school holidays until Term 4. We kicked off the series with Bringing Bush Tucker into Early Childhood and Primary Curriculum, followed-up with Building Authentic Relationships with Aboriginal Families and Communities and finished the year with Traditional and Contemporary Aboriginal Games.

Attendance at each workshop was predominantly made up of fkaCS members, taking advantage of the relevant topics, small group dynamic and the 10% fkaCS member discount. Participants enjoy Annette's informative, personable and engaging style and we appreciate she isn't afraid of challenging discussion or debate, guiding the groups' learning with reflections and responses that are, informed by Annette's professional and personal experience, considered and honest.

We would like to thank Annette and the Yarn Strong Sista team for connecting with and supporting our members, and we look forward to continuing the partnership in 2018.



*FKA Children's Services and ECA Victoria Branch visit Yarn Strong Sista.
Photo credit: Annette Sax, Yarn Strong Sista*

Noticeboard

Last minute reminder: Kindergarten knowledge exchange applications closing 15 December

The Department of Education and Training (DET) in Victoria, in collaboration with the Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education in China, are offering early childhood teachers the opportunity to participate in a knowledge exchange program at Nanjing No.1 Kindergarten (NNK) in Jiangsu Province, China.

The program will be fully funded by DET and presents an exciting opportunity for early childhood teachers delivering the state-funded kindergarten program. Get in fast, applications close Friday 15 December 2017.

Visit the News and Events section of our website for further information: www.fka.org.au/news-and-events/news/applications-now-open-for-the-nanjing-no-1-kindergarten-knowledge-exchange-program

fkaCS holiday closure period

FKA Children's Services will be closed from Friday 22 December to Sunday 7 January 2018. Our last day of operation in 2017 will be Thursday 21 December and we will reopen Monday 8 January 2018. We hope you have a happy and safe holiday!

Peter Williams Trust 2018 Grant Applications open now, closing February 2018

Applications are open for the 2018 Peter Williams Trust Grant. The Peter Williams Trust was established with a focus on the early childhood years and an acknowledgement of the critical significance of appropriate developmental experiences to later life outcomes. The Trust Fund supports children and families experiencing financial and social disadvantage.

Applications close February 2018 and funds will be available early May 2018. Do you have a great idea / project / initiative designed to help children and families experiencing financial and social disadvantage? If so, visit the Peter Williams Trust website www.peterwilliamstrust.wordpress.com to find out more, including the complete application criteria.

Application deadline: 16 February 2018

Direct enquiries and applications to: Lesley Oakley

Email: lesley.oakley@optusnet.com.au

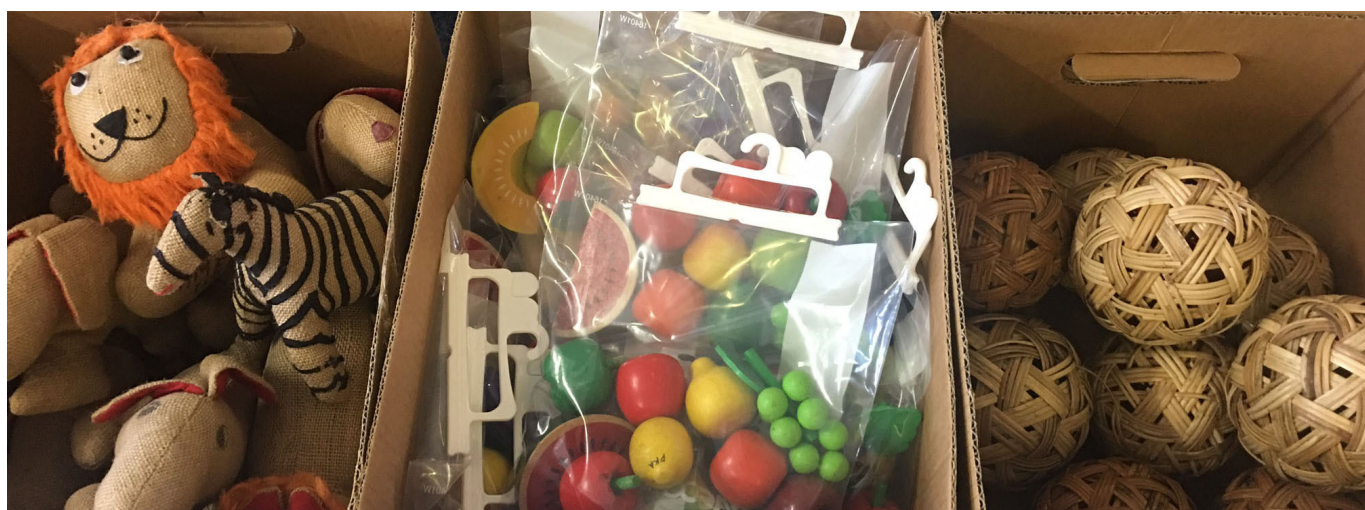
Phone: 5952 5270 / 0432 163 694

Mail: PO Box 9023, COWES VIC 3922 (email applications preferred)

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Noticeboard

fkaCS 2018 membership drive & members only garage sale – Feb-March 2018



This year we closed our Annual General Meeting with another, much-anticipated Multicultural Resource Centre stocktake garage sale. A large range of used resources and excess stock was made available to members only, to purchase at significantly reduced prices or to take for free to a 'good home' (by this we mean *fkaCS* member education and care services).

With the majority of our memberships due to expire 1 March 2018, we'll be holding our annual membership renewal drive in February 2018.

We'll post your renewal letters in early February and we're planning to celebrate our 2018 members (new and renewing) by holding another **members only garage sale** from 15- 30 March (10am to 5pm, Mondays to Fridays, with late night trading until 7pm each Thursday night). Event information will be provided in the New Year.

We hope you can make it!

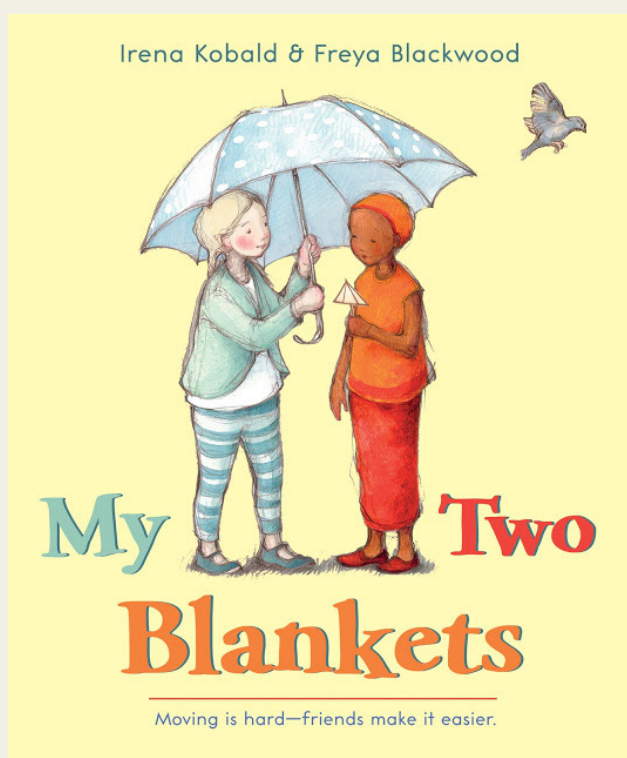
Save the date! Next AAPEC forum: 14 March 2018

The next Action on Aboriginal Perspectives in Early Childhood (AAPEC) forum will be on the evening of 14 March 2018 from 6pm in the Royal Park Nature Playground. The forum will be facilitated by Annette

Sax, Taungurung Early Childhood Consultant, Artist and Storyteller, Yarn Strong Sista and Dr Catherine Hamm, Lecturer, College of Education, Victoria University. More details will be made available in the New Year.

Resource review: My Two Blankets

Written by Irena Kobald and illustrated by Freya Blackwood



Cartwheel has a strong sense of belonging and connectedness to her home country, however, when war breaks out she is forced to flee with her Aunty. Suddenly, she finds herself in a strange new place where everything is unfamiliar and confronting. Cartwheel no longer feels connected and finds herself wondering whether she knows herself at all.

This story delves into the realities that a child may face when their family is forced to leave their home and settle in a foreign country. It tells of new ways of speaking, new ways of living and new ways of being.

Aimed at children three years and older, it can support educators to provoke thought and understanding of the migration experience. My Two Blankets can also be used as a resource for educators who work with newly arrived families to critically reflect on their current practice.

Shortlisted for the 2015 Prime Minister's Literary Awards, My Two Blankets is available to purchase from most good book stores.

Continue reading overleaf for some intentional teaching ideas to complement the story and extend children's learning overleaf.

Continued overleaf...

Resource Review Cont'd: My Two Blankets written by Irena Kobald and illustrated by Freya Blackwood

Questions for pedagogical reflection:

- Do you have children and families who have recently arrived to Australia in your service? How do you begin to build a partnership if you don't share a language?
- How do you help newly arrived children and families feel safe and supported in your environment?
- How do you include each child's unique identity in your program?
- What do you know about the language/s that children bring with them? How do you use this? (EYLF, Educators' Guide, p. 28)
- How might your culture or the way you see and understand the world advantage some children and families and disadvantage others? (EYLF, Educators' Guide p. 22)
- How do you provide familiarity for children and families in your setting?
- Do you expect children who are newly arrived to participate in all aspects of the program as soon as they begin? Why? How can you support children to feel secure so that they can participate?
- Does your setting reflect the children and families who attend your service?
- What are the barriers for families and children to feeling comfortable in your service? How can you reduce these barriers?
- The story tells of a child teaching Cartwheel her language and laughing when she says it wrong. How do you think this will impact a child who is learning a new language? How could you use the

child's home language to support their sense of belonging? In discussions with children you might ask:

- How do you think Cartwheel feels when her friend laughs at her mistakes?
- What could her friend do/learn to help Cartwheel understand what she is saying?

Further questions for discussion with children:

- How did Cartwheel feel when she left her home? What did she miss the most?
- What did she find different and strange that made her feel unsafe and sad? What did she do that helped her feel safe?
- Have you ever been in a new and strange place? How did you feel? What did you do to feel safe?
- What are some ways that Cartwheel's new friend helped her to feel safe and happy?
- What can you do to help someone new at childcare/kinder to feel safe and make friends when they come here?

A large range of bilingual books and multicultural resources are available to be borrowed from the fkaCS Multicultural Resource Centre

Visit: [42 Dight St, Collingwood or
www.fka.org.au/resources](http://42DightSt.Collingwood.or.www.fka.org.au/resources)

Phone: 03 9428 4471

Email: fkacs@fka.org.au

Member benefits

View the full list of member benefits online
www.fka.org.au/membership

With the end of the year fast approaching don't forget to take advantage of your fkaCS member discounts. Whether you're planning for the year ahead or would like a thoughtful gift to say 'thank you' there's plenty to choose from with our partner organisations...

10% discount | Yarn Strong Sista

fkaCS Culture and Community Partner | www.yarnstrongsista.com

Yarn Strong Sista is an Indigenous Education Consultancy providing a range of services including Aboriginal Professional Development, Aboriginal Storytelling and culturally appropriate Indigenous education resources such as children's books, artefacts, games, CDs/DVDs, teachers' resources, posters and more. Discount applies to professional development workshops and resources.

10% discount | Kaleidoscope Books

www.kaleidoscopebooks.com.au

Kaleidoscope Books specialise in bilingual children's story books, multicultural children's books and children's books on family and community diversity. Kaleidoscope Books have an extensive range of bilingual books, including well known titles, in over 40 languages.

15% discount | Global Language Books

www.globallanguage.com.au

Specialising in the CALD and LOTE fields, Global Language Books provide quality resources that share an exchange of ideas, philosophies, knowledge, stories and language. The range includes children's bilingual picture books as well as books/resources in English such as concept books, board books, big books and cultural DVD's to encourage inclusion of children of all abilities. Discount applies to selected items only.

To redeem your fkaCS member discount

Simply quote your 9-digit fkaCS member number when purchasing online or over the phone. This is the same number (username) you use when logging into the Multicultural Resource Centre.

Can't find your fkaCS member number?

Call 03 9428 4471 or email fkacs@fka.org.au, mention your member name/details and we'll let you know your current fkaCS member number.





FKA Children's Services Inc

42 Dight Street, Collingwood VIC 3066

03 9428 4471 | fkacs@fka.org.au | www.fka.org.au