

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children: Starting points

QKLG resources

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## First steps

*'I don't know where to start and I am afraid to do the wrong thing and offend people.'*

Kindergarten teacher

Taking the first steps can be daunting for some kindergarten teachers, but they need not be. The purpose of this resource is to provide examples of starting points for welcoming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children into kindergarten.

## Create a welcoming environment

Kindergarten teachers can take steps towards creating a welcoming environment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families by incorporating the following ideas into their learning environment.

1. Invite family members and respected community members to contribute to and participate in learning and community activities
2. Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags
3. Display an Acknowledgment of Country
4. Provide resources that reflect local Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

### 1. Invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community members to participate in the service

Teachers can invite Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and community members to participate in the service by:

- sharing their cultural knowledge with staff and children
- participating in decision-making to improve the service
- sharing their home language and how to use it in the kindergarten
- participating in activities that celebrate their culture.

This demonstrates that Aboriginal cultures and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued in the kindergarten setting.

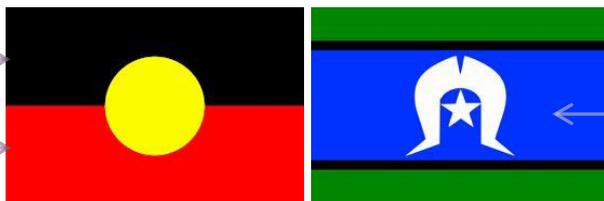
## 2. Display the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags

It is important to ensure that the flags are displayed appropriately.

### Aboriginal flag

Top — Black  
representing  
the people.

Bottom — Red  
representing  
the earth.



### Torres Strait Islander flag

Ensure the  
white Dhari  
(headdress)  
is upright.

When the flags are hung together vertically, it is important that both are rotated in the same direction, that is, so that the bases of the flags face the same way.



Access protocols and guidelines for displaying the flags, as well as information on accessing the flags, are available at:

[http://raphub.reconciliation.org.au/resources/?rap\\_key\\_areas=respect](http://raphub.reconciliation.org.au/resources/?rap_key_areas=respect).

## 3. Display an Acknowledgment of Country

[Acknowledgment of Country] says ... that we accept the fact we are in a place that has a history and story far beyond 220 years. It says to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fellow Australians that we are all in the future journey of our country together.

Richard Wynne, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, 2010

Due to past removals of Aboriginal people from their traditional lands, some areas are 'contested spaces'. This means the boundaries have been blurred and there may be more than one group claiming traditional ownership of the area. In this case it is appropriate to acknowledge the 'traditional custodians' without naming them.

The annotations on the two examples that follow provide information to help kindergarten and childcare services with developing their own Acknowledgment of Country.

Further information on Acknowledgment of Country and Welcome to Country is available from the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Handbook* on the QCAA website:

[www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/about/k-12-policies/aboriginal-torres-strait-islander-perspectives/resources).

## Example 1

Personalise for your kindergarten or childcare service.

Stradbroke Early Learning Centre would like to pay respect to and acknowledge the Minjerribah Moorgumpin people, who are the traditional owners of the land on which we operate.

We acknowledge the deep feeling of attachment and relationship that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples have to their land.

Stradbroke Early Learning Centre is an inclusive centre that appreciates and respects all groups and cultures and incorporates learning and activities for children to grow in their knowledge of diversity.

Consultation with local Elders and community members will ensure the correct people/ groups or 'Country' are acknowledged. In 'contested spaces' it is appropriate to acknowledge the traditional custodians without naming them

How the acknowledgment fits in with the kindergarten or childcare service's philosophy and values.

## Example 2

Personalise for your service.



*Dirranbandi Kindergarten encourages and promotes diversity, fairness and respect for everyone and acknowledges that Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples are Australia's first peoples.*

*We would like to acknowledge the Kamilaroi people as the traditional custodians of the land on which our service sits and pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia.*

Consultation with local Elders and community members will ensure the correct people/groups or 'Country' are acknowledged. In 'contested spaces' it is appropriate to acknowledge the traditional custodians without naming them.

How the acknowledgment fits in with the service's philosophy and values.

## 4. Provide resources to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture

A wide variety of resources can be provided or created to reflect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, including:

- books
- cultural artefacts
- roleplay props, e.g. dolls, fabric
- puzzles
- art works
- craft materials
- music and instruments
- posters

Connecting with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community members can assist with sourcing and selecting culturally appropriate resources.

## Benefits of creating a welcoming environment

Creating welcoming learning environments that reflect identities and cultures can:

- help to build respectful, authentic relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents/carers and community members
- build knowledge and understanding about cultural practices of local Aboriginal peoples and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples
- provide stimulus to promote conversations and interests for learning.

## Professional standards

This resource supports teachers to meet elements of:

- Standards 1, 4 and 6 of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers ([www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers](http://www.aitsl.edu.au/australian-professional-standards-for-teachers)).
- National Quality Standards 1, 3 and 6 for early childhood education and care (<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-quality-standard>).

## More information

If you would like more information, please visit the QCAA website at [www.qcaa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au) and search for 'Kindergarten inclusion and diversity'. Alternatively, email [qklg@qcaa.qld.edu.au](mailto:qklg@qcaa.qld.edu.au).