

# Supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's learning:

## Community and connectedness

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### Transcript of video

This video is available from <https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/20375.html>

**Facilitator:** Before viewing this audio visual segment, please download the document *Reflecting on community and connectedness* to record your ideas.

**Margaret James:**  
Publisher/Author

A new teacher coming into a community, the very, very first thing they need to do is to try their best to engage with that community, but in a respectful way. They need to genuinely go in and want to understand what the culture is that they're coming into. They're coming into somebody else's country, somebody else's language and they need to get the respect and give respect to the Elders.

In doing the two-way thing it mustn't just be a superficial relationship, it's got to be genuine. That teacher needs to go in and take the knowledge that she has in terms of how children learn literacy and a Western style classroom and she needs to combine that with the Elders and the community's knowledge and where they're coming from and respect that and then work together. That would be the first step.

Secondly I guess to look once again at their types of stories and the types of material, the type of environment and either try and source resources that deal with that, so for example in honey ant country you try and find some books that talk about honey ants and talk about hunting, talk about some of the traditional stories, as well as other material as well. But try and engage the students through what they're familiar with in the first place.

**Joanne Claybourne:**  
Quandamooka  
Noonuccal woman  
Teacher/Director

Just a bit of advice for teachers going into rural communities — they really do need to tap into the local communities. I do believe that schools should already have those set-ups already there but you do need to take the effort, you do need to go and — it's not so much meet formally with the Elders but to attend events, get to be known and let them know that you're open to what they have to offer, that you're prepared to listen to them, and I really do think that once you've made those links, especially in the more remote places, I don't think you'll ever have any trouble with your partnerships because they're only too willing to help, because in every community they really want the children to succeed in their schooling.

And, if that's a way of helping that out, I think the teachers need to do that, they need to take time — you might have to take time to go to the Elders' morning tea, you might have to spend some time on Saturday going to the cultural festival. It might take some time out of your personal, outside-of-hours' time but all those things do benefit you and they'll benefit your time in the centres and it will benefit the children that you teach.

We have some children who don't have English as their first language. Being in Brisbane in an urban setting we don't have a lot of that, but what we do is we encourage them with their language at home – but we find that a lot of the parents want them to develop their Standard Australian English at school and in that preparation for the formal schooling years. But we will utilise what they have. Because we do have words that we use and stories, we will look at helping a child be proud of where they come from and be proud of that first language, but assist them in that awareness of English as a standard language.

It's probably in the everyday conversation and it's the names that we put on things. We might call them the Aboriginal name but in reality we'll also say this is what it is in English and just to prepare them ... But do it in a culturally sensitive and non-invasive way, so that they just see it as gradual in that preparation for school.