

Reggio Emilia Australia

Information Exchange



A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and the Principles of Reggio Emilia

Pope Road Kindergarten - Our story – one interpretation

3 Pillars of Reconciliation - Relationships - Respect – Opportunities

Reggio Emilia principles

1. Children are active protagonists in their growth and development processes
2. The Hundred Languages
3. Participation
4. Listening
5. Learning as a process of individual and group construction
6. Educational research
7. Educational documentation
8. Progettazione (process of planning, designing and organisation – a strategy)
9. Organisation
10. Environment, spaces and relations
11. Professional development
12. Assessment

National and Victorian Early Years Learning Frameworks require evidence of education and experiences that support children to learn about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island history, culture, peoples and communities. Many educators report feeling unprepared, unqualified and uninformed to respond. As a consequence, they might offer very little in programs related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, for fear of not being respectful or accurate or unintentionally, tokenistic and disrespectful in their offerings.

Possible places to start learning about:

Australia's true history
Colonisation
Welcome to Country
Acknowledgement of Land
Elders
Self-determination
Language – history; impacts of colonisation
Yarning
Art, Music, Dance
Stolen Generation
Sorry Apology



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Possible places to start learning about:

White privilege

'Cultural Competence' and 'Cultural Safety'

'Walking between two worlds every day'

Anti-bias, anti-discrimination curriculum

Making connections and building relationships with Aboriginal community members

NAIDOC Week; Sorry Day; Reconciliation Week; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day etc.

Possible actions to support our own learning:

- Discuss reconciliation at staff meetings
- Experiencing the ECA Reconciliation Symposiums with colleagues
- Share our learning experiences, wonderings and learning in Committee reports, family newsletters, with the children and each other
- Engage with another centre's teaching team to learn together and from each other
- Attend public lectures, seminars, local events
- Read widely: encourage team members to do this and discuss with each other
- Change thinking and practice regarding ethical purchases and use of resources
- Always mindful of each person's individual and personal reconciliation journey, respecting this is different for each person.

The 'language' of words is more robust through the relation and encounter with other 'languages'.
(Claudia Giudici, Reggio Emilia)

In Reggio Emilia the term 'languages' is used as a metaphor for many ways to express ourselves.

"Learning happens when we make a relation with something else."

Elena Giacomini, Reggio Emilia, at the Connecting Children to Atelier of Nature Conference, NZ, 2015

Research is a very important part of the nucleus of our work with children. It is a keyword for children and adults. Rather than proposing journeys of learning that are predetermined and predisposed, we are looking for teachers who listen to and respect research, in dialogue with the children – this is how schools and kindergartens become places of research – places of constant research.

Claudia Giudici, Reggio Emilia Pedagogista, at New Zealand Conference, April, 2015



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Embedding Aboriginal perspectives in early childhood settings and experiences

Embedding:

- A practice that suggests a position beyond inclusion
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives embedded deeply and centrally within the program

“Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal early childhood communities may be troubled by this concept. Aboriginal early childhood communities may be concerned about cultural appropriation or cultural theft as expectations of non-Aboriginal early childhood practitioners grow without the understanding of cultural protocols. Non-Aboriginal early childhood educators, aware of their lack of ‘cultural competence’ may be frozen into inaction in not ‘wanting to do the wrong thing’ (Atkinson, 2017).

Possum Skin Pedagogy:

A Guide for Early Childhood Practitioners



“Women Drumming” by Annette Sise, “Wangungung” (left). This image reflects a special ceremony on Wangungung Country. Women are beating on their Walari Walari (possum skin drums).

Sue Atkinson

Atkinson, S. (2017). Possum skin pedagogy; A guide for early childhood educators.

Protocols and Aboriginal perspectives

To inform the construction of embedding Aboriginal perspectives in early childhood programs.

Reconciliation Action Plan

- Education is a vital tool for progressing reconciliation in Australia.
- A Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) is a formal statement of commitment to reconciliation.
- Schools and kindergartens can develop a RAP on the Reconciliation Australia, Narragunnawali platform
- A manageable framework to establish or strengthen relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples and organisations.
- A ‘blueprint’ for the potential of reconciliation teaching and learning experiences and opportunities in the classroom, around the school or early learning service and with the community.
- A declaration to the community that your school or early learning service is forward thinking about reconciliation and committed to making positive and holistic change.



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Types of Reconciliation Action Plans

- Four types of RAPs that an organisation can develop: Reflect, Innovate, Stretch and Elevate.
- Each is designed to suit an organisation at different stages of their reconciliation journey.
- Organisations usually begin with a Reflect RAP and move forward to the others in time. Pope Road Kindergarten's RAPs, to date, are Reflect RAPs.
- Committing to a Reflect RAP allows time to scope and develop relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders, to decide on our vision for reconciliation and explore our sphere of influence, before committing to specific actions or initiatives that are offered in the next RAP options.

From the song, Little Things Big Things Grow, Vincent Lingiari asserts, "We know how to wait." What is the importance of putting time and patience into reconciliation processes?

RAP Community Launch

Celebration
Education
Advocacy
Relationships

Challenges

Knowledge; understandings; time; confidence; connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples; always leading with respect; staff; different points of view; personal journeys; commitment; engaging parents/families; sourcing authentic resources; Narragunnawali platform language orientated to schools.

**These are moments of pause
These are moments of reflection
These are moments of response
So we all become fuller and
more abundant human beings.
(Ann Pelo)**

"Teaching is a profession for
not thinking small"
(Loris Malaguzzi, Reggio Emilia, Italy)

What might be your next steps to consider, explore and progress reconciliation in your personal and professional life?

