

# Welcoming conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse families

An Educators Guide





Child Australia is the Professional Support Coordinator in Western Australia and Northern Territory under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP).

### **Acknowledgements**

We acknowledge the assistance and contribution of the staff, children and families from:

Salvation Army Balga Child Care Centre  
Maranatha Early Learning Child Care Centre  
UWA Early Learning Centre  
Child Early Learning Centre Lockridge  
Farrar Early Learning Centre  
Sudbury Community House Child Care Centre  
Howard Springs Early Learning Centre

© Child Australia, 2012

Principal Author: Jackie Goodsmann, Child Australia.

All rights reserved by Child Australia. Material herein may not be reproduced in any other form without permission.

### **Disclaimer**

This resource is based on the most current information available in July 2012.

In developing this resource we have referred to legislation and regulations, sought advice from professional organisations and reviewed contemporary research. This document should be used as a guide to compliment and develop service's existing policies and procedures. Services should always check the currency of information at the time of use and consider the information in this booklet in the context of their particular service.

# Welcoming conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse families



## Contents

Introduction	4
Voices of CaLD Families	5
Walking in CaLD Family Footsteps – <i>Considering another perspective</i>	6
First Impressions Count – <i>Everyone is welcome at our service</i>	7
Enrolment – <i>Beginning to form connections</i>	8
Service staff – <i>Sharing something of ourselves</i>	10
Indoor play – <i>Value, choices and learning</i>	11
Outdoor play – <i>Active, engaging and connecting with nature</i>	13
Clean and Healthy – <i>Sharing the how and why</i>	15
Healthy food and meal times – <i>Social occasions with a respect for culture</i>	16
Sleep and rest – <i>Safe sleeping and respect for sleep rituals</i>	18
Final thought	19
References	19

# Welcoming conversations with culturally and linguistically diverse families

## Introduction

When new families come to your service, it is important for them to develop a sense of *Belonging*. You develop this from your first interaction with them as you share information about your setting. It can sometimes be a little challenging to share important information with families who have English as a second language. As well as the obvious language barrier, there may also be differences between your world view and those of the family. These different viewpoints can sometimes cause confusion or misunderstanding about child care and parent participation.

This Guide has been developed to help you to share information with families using a Visual Orientation Booklet that creates a story of your service and the unique care that you provide. It is accompanied by:

- Sample Visual Orientation Booklet
- Template for your Visual Orientation Booklet

The Educators Guide will assist you to have *Welcoming Conversations with Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families (CaLD)* using your Visual Orientation Booklet. Each section of the Educators Guide is linked to a specific part of the Visual Orientation Booklet.

Reflective questions are provided to prompt your thinking as you orientate new families into your service. There are also suggestions for things you could try in your setting to make it a place that supports *Welcoming Conversations with CaLD Families*. You may also find the reflective questions useful in team meetings to generate discussion.

If you need the support of an interpreter to help you to share the Visual Orientation Booklet and important information about your service, contact the Professional Support Coordinator (PSC) in your State or Territory for more information or check their website.

## Sample Visual Orientation Booklet

The sample Visual Orientation Booklet shows how informative and engaging the booklet can be. Each page tells a little more of the story of your service. When you show the Visual Orientation Booklet to CaLD families, you begin to create connections with the family and develop an understanding of their needs.

## Template for Visual Orientation Booklet

The template allows you to drop in a range of photographs to create a unique and informative booklet for CaLD families and children. You may choose to create a booklet that focuses either on a particular room or the whole environment. Blank pages have been included to allow you to create other pages to share with families and children.



## Voices of CaLD Families

To develop this Guide, we talked with CaLD families to learn about their thoughts, feelings and needs when arriving in Australia and entering a child care service for the first time. We were curious to know what would help these families and their children to feel a sense of **Belonging** in Australia and in the child care community they have joined.

Their responses were varied but the key message was their need to be informed and included through respectful engagement and welcoming environments. We hope that by sharing some of their comments you will feel more confident in developing your orientation booklet and having “**welcoming conversations**”.

‘What helps you to feel welcome and what gives you a sense of belonging?’

- When you acknowledge my presence
- Being treated as an equal
- Not being judged
- Being listened to and given information
- Being able to trust and being trusted
- Seeing educators communicate with my child using some of my child’s first language
- Feeling and seeing respect for other cultures
- Feeling safe and free
- Being able to enjoy my culture, the music, food, celebrations and language
- Access to education for ourselves and our children
- Being asked by educators about my child’s routine, how they sleep, what food and drink they can have
- Being asked about my child rearing practices
- Hearing educators ask my child about play, songs and stories they like

Use the Visual Orientation Booklet and the suggestions in this Guide to help you inform and include CaLD families. The Booklet will also help you to:

- make your enrolment process more inclusive
- build a strong partnership with families
- develop or update your Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) as it links to NQS Quality Area 6 (Collaborative partnerships with families and communities)
- implement key principles and practices of the EYLF and FSAC - respect for diversity and cultural competency.

*Respecting diversity means within the curriculum valuing and reflecting the practices, values and beliefs of families. Educators honour the histories, cultures, languages, traditions, child rearing practices and lifestyle choices of families. (Early Years Learning Framework p. 13)*

## Walking in CaLD Family Footsteps - *Considering another perspective*

When new CaLD families arrive at your door for the first time, they won't know your service structure, philosophy or processes. Your Parent Handbook and other documents will probably be in English and could be overwhelming for some families who have English as a second language.

Imagine yourself in a non-English speaking country where nothing is familiar. You may be afraid of what will happen next or you may be grieving for what you have left behind. Either way, your new situation requires you to gain employment and/or learn the language of your new country. To do so, you need to have your child cared for by someone you have never met before in a place that you know little or nothing about. Perhaps your child has only ever been cared for by you or your extended family members. Now your situation has changed. Your extended family and all that is familiar is back in your country of origin. As you approach the child care building, think about what you would like to know.

*Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences. (Framework for School Aged Care, p 15)*

The cover of your *Visual Orientation Booklet* begins to tell the story of your service. Before you create it, think about:

- Your service structure (private, community based, one of many owned by the same company)
- Your building (entrances, security i.e. is there a bell to ring or a key pad code) and play spaces
- Your location (best bus services/public transport routes/roads to get to your setting)
- Your opening and closing times
- The home countries and languages of the staff, children and families who attend your service
- Your links with any other family support services (child health nurse, local community clinic).

Every service is unique and your cover page should help families build a picture of your setting. Choose photographs and images that will help them learn about your service.



## First Impressions Count - *Everyone is welcome at our service*

The first impression many families have of your service is the entrance and your foyer or reception area. The appearance of these areas can help families feel they belong and are welcome. They should reflect a range of cultures and show that CaLD families are part of your community.

The entrance area is often where you display your service philosophy, policies, information on NQF and other notices for families to read. While it is important that information is shared with families, displaying too much information can be so overwhelming that families overlook important things you wish to share with them. Some cultures may also place less value on sharing written information and be more receptive to verbal communication.

### Creating a Welcoming Space

How does your entrance area help families with English as a second language feel like they belong and are welcome?

*Things you could try:*

- *written information or welcome posters in community languages*
- *pictures or photographs that show the cultural profile of your community and service*
- *music from other cultures quietly playing in the background*
- *soft furnishings that reflect other cultures, for example, a cushion, wall screen, or wall hanging*
- *a chair or two for a parent to sit down while they wait for you*
- *a small table and a basket of resources for children to play while their parents talk with you*

### Giving the same message to build partnerships

How do you embed your service philosophy and underpinning theory in all educators' practice?

*Things you could try at a staff meeting:*

- *check that all team members know where to direct new enquiries or concerns from parents and do so in the same way*
- *discuss how educators document practice for parents and talk about how your philosophy is embedded in everyday practises*
- *find out about the cultures and languages spoken by team members and how you can use this to make CaLD families feel welcome*

*Things you could try with parents and community:*

- *ask families who speak another language and are proficient in English if they are willing to help other CaLD families with communication during orientation*
- *contact a Community Liaison Officer at the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au) [www.dcm.nt.gov.au](http://www.dcm.nt.gov.au) or your local Migrant Resource Centre to find out the most commonly spoken languages or dialects in your local community*

Choose images for your  
visual orientation booklet  
that show that everyone is  
welcome in your service

## **Enrolment- *Beginning to form connections***

When we know a process well it can become a bit mechanical and this can easily happen with your enrolment process. Focus on making enrolment a time for meaningful conversation and connection with a new family. Enrolling a child is a big step for families, particularly families who are new to Australia and/or have limited English language skills. Too much written information can cause them anxiety and concern. Take time to reassure and get to know the family and reduce their stress and anxiety.

Enrolling CaLD children is an opportunity for educators to improve their cultural competence. As you share information about your service with families, you also learn about their culture, values and practices. Find out about their child rearing practices and routines, their child's needs and interests, and any specific concerns they may have about leaving their child in care.

Take time to help families understand how child care works, what type of care their child will receive and your expectations of them. Explain your orientation process, particularly if it involves a few visits. Communicating with families with limited English language skills may be a little challenging at first but it is the beginning of your partnership with the family. You can learn and share a lot using visual images, gesture and demonstration.

### **Where can I go for support?**

Bicultural Support, provided through the PSC, can assist services and families during enrolment and orientation. This support can help you to build cultural competence, aid communication between a service and the family/care giver and the child, settle-in children from CaLD or refugee backgrounds, encourage and maintain the child's home language and to develop culturally appropriate experiences, materials and resources. To learn more about bicultural support, contact your PSC or Inclusion Support Agency. A Bicultural Support Request Form can be downloaded from the Child Australia website ([www.childdaustralia.org.au](http://www.childdaustralia.org.au).) which also houses additional information and resources to assist you in including CaLD children and families.

### **Your enrolment process**

How do you use your enrolment process to share information with families and help them understand their rights and responsibilities?

*Things you could try:*

- *Create a simple flow chart with images and minimal text that shows the steps in your enrolment process*
- *List the health and safety policies you need to share with families and see if you can make them visual by using pictures, diagrams, flow charts, images and other props*
- *Make a picture-based flow chart that shows families what to do and who to talk with if they have a concern or query. If they need to make an appointment, make this clear for them on the flowchart*

### **Keeping things clear**

How do you use visual aids, gesture and demonstration to help you build your relationship with CaLD families?

*Things you could try:*

- *Use pictures or photographs to help you talk about your daily routines*
- *Have a sample child's day bag that contains a spare set of clothes, nappies, and a labelled bottle or cup*
- *Use photographs of families signing in and out*
- *Make a pictorial clock to show your opening and closing times*
- *Print a calendar page and write the child's name on the days they will visit for orientation. If you want a family member to stay during these times, write their name on the calendar too. The family can take the calendar home as their reminder*
- *Show families where to go when they come for their first orientation visit*
- *Show them how to get into the building if there are secured areas*
- *Give families a full tour of the service, including the toilets, the kitchen and all play areas*
- *Use the Centrelink multilingual telephone interpreting service to help families understand their entitlements (centrelink information, fee structure, CCB) local call 13 12 02 [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)*

### **Feeling involved and respected**

Some CaLD families may see the child care educator as the expert and feel uncertain about being asked about their child's needs. They need to know that their views are important and valued.

*The expertise of families is recognised and they share in decision making about their child's learning and wellbeing. (NQF Quality Area 6)*

How do you assist families to "work in partnership" with you to meet their child's needs?

*Things you could try:*

- *Ask families to teach you key words and phrases in their first language and record how they pronounce these words and phrases. You could use a dictaphone, download a translator app on your phone/tablet or visit a translation websites like [www.translate.google.com](http://www.translate.google.com)*
- *Ask families to record one or two songs or stories for you in their home language that you can play for their child during the day*
- *Use a visual routine to talk about times of the day and different parts of your routine to see where there may be family or cultural practices that you need to take into account*

**Choose images for your  
visual orientation booklet  
that will assist your  
enrolment process**

## Service Staff – *Sharing something of ourselves*

As educators you play a key role in how the child settles into care and how relaxed the parents feel about leaving their child with you. You may have a different world view than that of your colleagues or the families using your service. Every educator and family in your setting brings different experiences and perspectives. Your world view may differ from other world views and families have many different beliefs or understanding of children's needs and daily routines such as sleeping, feeding and toileting. One way is not the right way, each way is just different.

The Early Years Learning Framework, Framework for School Aged Care and the National Quality Framework all influence and guide your practice. The curriculum and quality frameworks send a clear message about the importance of respect for diversity and different world views.

*Educators recognise that diversity contributes to the richness of our society and provides a valid evidence base about ways of knowing. (Framework for School Aged Care, p. 11)*

### Personalising the team

Knowing something about the people who will care for their child can make all the difference to the connection that families will feel with your service.

*Things you could try:*

- *Have staff photographs in the entrance and/or on each room door*
- *As you introduce the family to your Visual Orientation Booklet, share some more information about each team member, for example, their hobbies/interests or if they have children of their own*

### Becoming more familiar

Families will be more comfortable leaving their child with you when they understand more about your setting and how it works.

*Things you could try:*

- *Explain how you work i.e. that the qualified educator in each room leads the room and that the coordinator supports all staff*
- *Make a chart that shows the ratio of staff to children in each room*
- *Ask if there is anything you should know about this family's culture to ensure you greet them respectfully. Not all cultures use or feel comfortable with handshakes, or eye contact*
- *Learn the names of family members, how to pronounce them correctly and how they like to be addressed*
- *Encourage families to bring in family photographs and display them in the room.*
- *Take photographs or even a short 10 to 15 minute video to share with families to let them see play and learning in action. You could run it on repeat from a lap top with projector on a wall screen as parents collect their children. **(Always follow your service policy on obtaining parental consent to photograph or record their child)***

**Choose images for your visual orientation booklet that share information about your setting and your staff**

## Indoor Play – *Value, choices and learning*

Share information with families about your play based curriculum and the importance of learning through play. While play is generally valued in western cultures, ideas and practices around messy play, discipline, what we consider ‘good communication’ and ‘showing respect’ vary across cultures.

Some may see playing with a child as a sign of good parenting. Others may find your play experiences and routines unfamiliar and even challenging. They may wonder why girls play with trucks and boys are allowed to dress up in girls clothes. Others may worry that you aren’t teaching their children numbers and letters. Messy play can cause anxiety as having dirty clothes in some cultures is an indication that a child isn’t being properly cared for. Giving choices may be a new concept for some families as some cultures choose play activities for their child.

These are all examples of different world views based on culture, beliefs and value. None are right or wrong - they are just different. Talking about different ways of doing things helps parents know that you are respecting their views, and helps you to find an acceptable compromise. As you talk, you can help families understand the importance of play and the experiences you provide. Quality Area 1 of the National Quality Framework (Educational Program and Practice) gives an insight into your role:

*Educators respond to children’s ideas and play and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning.* (National Quality Framework, p.43)

### Getting started

How do you share your philosophy, beliefs and values with CaLD families?

*Things you could try:*

- *Sum up your philosophy in a few short statements in English and in the first languages of the families using your service. Use pictures, images or photographs to illustrate each key statement*
- *Translate your philosophy into the family’s home language*
- *Ask them about cultural points of difference in beliefs and values*

### Finding the right balance

You need to know and understand the family’s world view, and they need to know and understand yours.

How do you respect the family’s wishes and cultural view point, yet also ensure children are included and learn from the experiences you provide?

*Things you could try:*

- *Ask families about their views on play and what is important in their culture*
- *Include culturally diverse rhymes and songs (in different languages) at nappy change time, at transitions, as you wait for lunch to arrive or just because it’s fun*
- *Use visual cues with routine phrases to support English language development, for example, say “It’s time for lunch” as you point to a photograph of today’s lunch*
- *Point out action in the room to show parents that children have choices in their play, indicate children in the room making choices and explain why it is important for their development, i.e. sense of agency and autonomy.*

- Explain the value of play to parents, i.e., imaginative play stimulates ideas and thinking and helps children understand the world around them; messy play helps them learn about texture, shape, and develops their early fine motor skills which, in turn, support early writing skills.
- Show the family the aprons you provide for messy play
- Ask parents to provide a set of spare clothes or an old shirt to cover the child's clothes and keep them clean if they aren't comfortable with their child getting dirty when they play.
- Use a photograph or point out children building with blocks or playing in the sand to explain how children develop an early understanding of maths and science, movement, and weight
- Show a photograph of a mat session to help you explain "mat sessions" as this term might not make sense to a family who have English as a second language.
- Choose books that teach children about diversity rather than show cultural stereotypes
- Collect small empty boxes with non-English writing on them to use in the home corner or shop area. Families can collect materials for you or you may have a local Asian food store or restaurant that assist.

### Including the families ideas on play

Things you could try:

- Ask families to show you (by gesture) what their child likes to play with at home so you can engage their child with favourite toys or resources
- Ask families to share songs, rhymes or stories for you to include in your curriculum
- Ask the family to tell you about games they played and enjoyed as a child

Choose images for your visual orientation booklet that show indoor learning in action



## Outdoor play - *Active, engaging connecting with nature*

Outdoor gross motor play helps children to stay fit and healthy. It offers endless opportunities for negotiation as games are played, rules are discussed and resources used in different ways. Children test their strength and skills as they climb, try the balance beam, and ride a bike. In western societies we encourage outdoor play as we believe in its physical, emotional and social benefits. Research shows us that childhood obesity is increasing so active outdoor play is an essential aspect of healthy development.

Some cultures have different views about outdoor play. Some may encourage boys and not girls in gross motor physical play. It's important that families understand that you will encourage physical play for all children. You can use photographs and show parents a wide range of toys and resources to help them understand the range of play experiences that their child will experience.

### Shared ideas for play and outdoor experiences

*Things you could try:*

- *Invite parents to share games and play experiences they enjoyed when they were children*
- *Have a staff meeting and share at least one outdoor game or action song from another culture*
- *Share with families the importance of connecting with nature as part of healthy development*

### Increasing cultural reflective play

How do you create opportunities in your outdoor area for children to explore other cultures?

*Things you could try:*

- *Use fences, walls, and grounds to display beautiful art work from around the world*
- *Laminate culturally diverse art work, pictures and images for outside use*
- *Copy images of buildings and different homes from around the world and paste them on cardboard boxes for children to discover. If you put it near a selection of building materials and blocks it may provoke the children's thinking and encourage social interaction and construction play*
- *Make scented organza bags of herbs and spices from around the world. (Please ensure you maintain awareness of safety and possible allergies.) The bags can be hidden in little out of the way areas for children to discover*
- *Make drums and musical instruments from around the world from recycled materials to create sounds and rhythm*
- *Grow plants, fruit or vegetables including some from the home countries of the children and families in your setting*
- *Use small wooden bowls or spoons as digging implements rather than plastic spades*
- *Provide a quiet area for children with cushions covered with culturally diverse images or textured fabrics*
- *Have music from other cultures for children to listen to.*
- *Provide world globes or atlases for children's use to inspire conversation about other places*

- *Have a monthly staff challenge to introduce a game or play experiences from another culture*

*Learning environments are welcoming spaces when they reflect and enrich the lives and identities of children and families participating in the setting and respond to their interests and needs. Early Years Learning Framework p.15*

Choose images for your visual orientation booklet that show outdoor play in action



## Clean and Healthy – *Sharing the how and why*

Many families coming to child care in Australia for the first time won't know that you are guided by regulations as well as policies and procedures to maintain a clean and healthy environment. It can be helpful and reassuring for families to learn about some of your key practices, such as washing toys after they have been mouthed by a child, cleaning tables before and after use and sweeping floors throughout the day. They need to see your bathroom, nappy change and toilet areas so you can learn about personal care practices that are important to them. Some cultures may require more than tissue for a child to stay clean. Some families may find it shameful if a child is seen by others when using the toilet. It's important to talk about these concerns and reach a compromise that accommodates the individual families' needs.

Families may have different attitudes or understanding about children's health and about whether their child is unwell or not. Seemingly minor issues such as cold sores, school sores and conjunctivitis may not be seen by some families as a big problem. They may wonder why their child is not allowed to attend your setting. They may also have questions about the administration of medication such as inhalers for asthma. Explain to families at enrolment and during orientation that an unwell or infectious child will not be allowed to attend, and about your policy for administering medication.

How do you share your health and safety practices with families with limited English language skills?

*Things you could try:*

- *Show families the locked cabinet where medicines are kept and how they are labelled*
- *Find a picture of a thermometer with a normal temperature range as a prop to indicate that any temperature outside this range might indicate that the child is sick*
- *Download images of common childhood illnesses (including rashes and sores) to help your conversation about your exclusion policy*
- *Set up a standard SMS message on the families phone to let you know that their child is unwell and unable to attend*
- *Give families information sheets from the Australian Dental Association (ADA) web site [www.ada.org.au](http://www.ada.org.au) on dental care for babies and young children. (It also has a short video that families can watch which demonstrates correct cleaning of baby's teeth.)*
- *Organise an incursion from a local dentist to talk to children about dental care. Invite families to attend too!*

## Sun safe message

Explain your sun safety policy to families and show them the sun cream you use and the type of hat you recommend for sun protection

*Things you could try:*

- *Make a chart that shows when children are allowed out in the sun in different seasonal conditions, for example, in summer sun, in winter heavy rain, or hail*
- *Make a poster about sun safety using visual images and key statements in different languages*

Choose images for  
your visual orientation  
booklet that show how  
you keep children clean  
and healthy

## Healthy food and meal times – *Social occasions with respect for culture*

Adequate nutrition and healthy food is important for children's development. Meal times are also important social moments in the day. CaLD families need to feel confident that children are fed healthy and appropriate food and that their child will not go hungry. Not all families follow a routine of lunch at a certain time and morning tea at a certain time. Some parents may worry in case their child is hungry when it's not a set meal time. Explain to parents how your service provides food and how you can accommodate individual needs. Ask about cultural and other special food requirements at enrolment and take time to check these details later with the family.

If orientation visits occurs around a meal time, show families how a meal time is set up and your expectations around hand washing, seating and self-help.

Developing cultural competence takes time and asking about the food a child is and is not allowed will build your understanding of different cultures. Sitting together on chairs at a table to have a meal may not be the norm for some children. It may take them some time before they want to sit with the group. In comparison to western world views of early independence, some children from CaLD families don't learn to feed themselves and are spoon fed as a sign of their families love and affection right through their early years. Some cultures see feeding their child rather than promoting independent eating as a sign of good parenting. They may also use different eating implements or eat in a different way, for example eating with chopsticks, their fingers or from a shared bowl. There may be a particular way a parent bottle feeds their infant or they may want to come into the centre to breast feed.

At home, children may be held on their parents lap rather than seated in a high chair. If you are not aware of this you may wonder why the baby screams at meal times and won't eat when in a high chair. Or maybe they resist and won't have a bottle if you are not holding them. It's important for you to understand how mealtimes occur in the child's home.

Accommodating the different needs of all families can be tricky but not impossible.

*Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences.* (Early Years Learning Framework p. 16)

### Gaining a better understanding

*Things you could try:*

- *Use a clock to demonstrate time and provide photographs of meal times to help families understand your meal and snack routine*
- *Show parents the eating implements and cutlery you use and photographs of how you support children of different ages to self-feed using spoons, then knife and fork*
- *introduce the family to the cook to reassure parents about the food their child will be given*
- *Show parents your food preparation area and how you separate products for children with special dietary requirements, for example halal, vegetarian*
- *Create laminated place mats that the children have decorated and put their photograph on it. Having their own special place mat will encourage reluctant children to sit at the table*
- *Ask parents to show you how they feed their baby/child*

### Finding connections through food and cooking

Things you could try:

- Invite families to share recipes with you
- Collect and display cultural recipes used in the service and photographs of the food being prepared by children, educators and/or families
- Invite families to bring in a meal/food for their child to re-heat at the appropriate meal time

Choose images for  
your visual orientation  
booklet that show your  
food preparation and  
meal time routines



## Sleep and Rest – *Safe sleeping and respect for sleep rituals*

Sleep and rest time allows children to recharge and settle after a busy morning. Parents need to know about your rest and sleep routines and understand why quiet times are important for children. It can be helpful for them to watch you prepare for rest periods and see how you set out bedding and rest areas for children.

Sleeping on the floor on a mat may seem strange to some families and children as it may be very different to their experiences and practices. Some children may be used to sleeping in a sling or with others in their family and may be scared to sleep alone. Talk with families about their sleep routines and home practices to see how you can best meet their child's needs.

In your orientation, include a visit to the cot room to show families where babies will sleep and how they will be positioned for sleep. The safe sleeping position to reduce Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is to lightly cover babies and position them on their back with their face uncovered and their feet at the bottom of the cot. It's important to share this with families as they may not have heard of SIDS and may not follow this advice at home. The Sids and Kids web site [www.sidsandkids.org.au](http://www.sidsandkids.org.au) provides information on safe sleeping with pictures and downloadable resources to share with families.

How do you adapt your sleep and rest routines to meet the needs of individual children and families?

*Things you could try:*

- *Take or download photographs to share with families of a baby sleeping in the safe sleeping position*
- *Ask families to bring in their own bedding/light covers for sleeping children as the familiar images or scent can calm and relax a child*
- *When a baby is very unsettled and struggling with separation anxiety, ask the parents to sleep in a T shirt and bring it in to the service. Use the T shirt to wrap around the baby while you hold them and they settle to sleep. If they sleep in a cot, replace the T shirt with the correct cover for safety*
- *Give older children a laminated photograph of their family to have next to them as they sleep*
- *Play soothing music from other cultures as children settle to sleep*
- *Ask families to share or recommend music their children find soothing*

**Choose images for your visual orientation booklet that show your sleep and rest routines**

**Learn a lullaby in the home language that the parent may sing to the child as they go off to sleep**



## Final Thought

Friendships are important for all children. Use your Visual Orientation Booklet to show how you encourage children to make friends and connections that cross all cultural barriers.

Choose images for your visual orientation booklet that shows how children make friends and play and learn together in your setting

## References

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, (2011). *The Guide to the National Quality Standard*, ACECQA, NSW.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, (2009). *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2011). *My Time, Our Place, the Framework for School Age Care*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2010). *The Educators Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, ACT.

## Useful websites

Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority [www.aqacqa.gov.au](http://www.aqacqa.gov.au)

Australian Dental Association [www.ada.org.au](http://www.ada.org.au)

Centrelink [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)

Child Australia [www.childaustralia.org.au](http://www.childaustralia.org.au)

Google Translate [www.translate.google.com](http://www.translate.google.com)

Office of Multicultural Interests [www.omi.wa.gov.au](http://www.omi.wa.gov.au) [www.dcm.nt.gov.au](http://www.dcm.nt.gov.au)

PSC Alliance [www.pscalliance.org.au](http://www.pscalliance.org.au)

Sids and Kids [www.sidsandkids.org](http://www.sidsandkids.org)

## Professional Support Coordinators

Professional Support Coordinators National Alliance [www.pscalliance.org.au](http://www.pscalliance.org.au)

ACT: Communities@Work [www.actpsc.com.au](http://www.actpsc.com.au)

New South Wales: Children's Services Central [www.cscentral.org.au](http://www.cscentral.org.au)

Northern Territory: Child Australia [www.childaustralia.org.au](http://www.childaustralia.org.au)

Queensland: Health and Community Services Workforce Council Inc. [www.pscq.org.au](http://www.pscq.org.au)

South Australia: Lady Gowrie Child Centre [www.pscsa.org.au](http://www.pscsa.org.au)

Victoria: Gowrie Victoria [www.gowrievictoria.org.au](http://www.gowrievictoria.org.au)

Western Australia: Child Australia [www.childaustralia.org.au](http://www.childaustralia.org.au)

Tasmania: Lady Gowrie Tasmania [www.psctas.org.au](http://www.psctas.org.au)



Inclusion & Professional  
Support Program



enriching children's lives

**Western Australia**

PO Box 2562 Malaga WA 6944  
Tel: 1800 783 768 Fax: (08) 9249 4366  
Email: [ipspwa@childaustralia.org.au](mailto:ipspwa@childaustralia.org.au)

**Northern Territory**

PO Box 37645 Winnellie NT0821  
Tel: 1800 138 662 Fax: (08) 8941 6433  
Email: [pscmt@childaustralia.org.au](mailto:pscmt@childaustralia.org.au)

Website: [www.childaustralia.org.au](http://www.childaustralia.org.au)  
ABN 61 986 879 146