



Communicating with families from diverse cultures to nurture children's wellbeing

Webinar summary

Family partnerships are an essential part of supporting positive mental health outcomes for children. High-quality family partnerships rely on open, responsive and culturally sensitive communication that acknowledges and honours family diversity. The webinar shares insights into respectful and meaningful ways of connecting with families from diverse cultural backgrounds to support children's mental health.

Key messages

- Culture frames ways of knowing, being, and doing. It influences our values, beliefs and perspectives.
- Cultural diversity recognises the many cultural identities and experiences that exist within our communities. This includes a variety of languages, nationalities, ethnicities, religions, traditions and family practices, which can influence how people live, connect and interact with each other.
- Families' cultural identities and lived experiences shape how they access and engage with early learning services. Ongoing engagement is supported by how services build relationships, communicate, and respond in a culturally sensitive way.
- Approaching cultural practices and perspectives with genuine curiosity helps build safety, trust, and mutual respect. This, in turn, supports strong partnerships with families to promote children's learning and social and emotional wellbeing.

- Recognising and respecting the valuable knowledge and wisdom families bring from their cultural backgrounds and experiences can inform early learning services of ways to share information and provide support.
- Cultural competence is an ongoing practice, not a one-off activity or training. Educators are not expected to know everything about every culture. Cultural competence involves asking open-ended questions, reflecting on biases and assumptions, and recognising privilege. Being open, respectful and willing to keep learning supports meaningful partnerships and collaboration with families and communities.

For reflection

1. Reflect on the cultural diversity within your service. How might the lived experiences of families shape how they access, engage with, and experience early childhood education and care?
2. What things do you have in place to nurture family partnerships to ensure that educators and families are working together on a common goal? How do you work together to develop a shared understanding of mental health and wellbeing?
3. How do you adopt a strengths-based approach to partnering with families from diverse cultural backgrounds. How do you seek to understand each family's contexts, perspectives, and priorities to work towards a shared outcome?
4. How does your service promote cultural curiosity? How can leaders support practice that goes beyond cultural competence training to embed cultural sensitivity and nurture safe and authentic relationships with families?

Guest speaker

Julie Ngwabi is a Senior Child Mental Health Advisor at Emerging Minds. She is a Person of the Global Majority and is of Southern African heritage. Julie's role at Emerging Minds involves engaging with health organisations and peak bodies to collaborate and explore opportunities to support integrated practices that promote positive mental health outcomes for children and families.

Be You resources

- [Fact Sheet: Cultural diversity and mental health](#)
- [Micro Learning: The cultural iceberg](#)
- [Professional Learning module: Partner](#)
- [Reflect, Respect, Respond: Protocols for culturally respectful engagement with First Nations communities](#)

Emerging Minds resources

- [Understanding children's mental health in culturally diverse communities](#)
- [Culturally responsive practice strategies for children's mental health](#)