

Be You video transcript

Aboriginal and Islander Education Officers in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions

Josephine Samson

We welcome the children in. We make sure it's a welcoming space so that kids will come in and want to stay in the classroom.

So, when we've created that space, I sit with them, and we have activities happening.

When I'm in the class with the students, they see an Aboriginal person and a non-Aboriginal person in the classroom and they feel "Oh, yes, it's okay for me to come in and stay in the classroom".

When I'm bridging the gap from school to community, one of the things that we do is we go out and we visit, have a home visit with the parents if the kids haven't been turning up for school.

And then we invite community Elders to come and join in our celebrations like NAIDOC and they share their stories, and they tell their stories.

And the kids, yeah, they love it. They love having community people come in. That makes a whole lot of differences because then the kids are seeing, "Oh yeah we've still got Elders, and we can listen to their stories and hear their stories".

At the moment our language is on the endangered list because there's hardly strong speakers like our Elders were. And I reckon it's very important for children to learn both ways.

Learning their first language, and then learning the non-Ngaarda way, how to read and to write.

I think it is very important for the teachers to know and to have this cultural awareness training, because most of the people that haven't had cultural awareness they only think, "Oh yes, that's an Aboriginal person".

They think we are all the same. It helps them to understand. Like during our law ceremonies, some of our high school students will be taken out of the high school and going through law.

The teachers should be made aware of all these things that are happening with the, in the Ngaarda people's history. So, I think it's very important for them to have cultural awareness, right from the beginning, like when they are coming out of teaching college, that's what they should have.