

Working with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families and children toolkit

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples should be aware that this toolkit may contain imagery, audio or names of people who have passed away.

Finding the secret garden

I have a secret garden, but you don't see,
I feel my family circling me with love, is this what you see?
I am the future of how you work and how you interact with me,
I am shaped by this experience.
When you're working with my parents you see our skin, poverty, and violence,
but I see how you look down at me.
I feel sad that you think you know, but you don't know me;
what you see on tv, that's not me.
My culture is beautiful, is that what you see?
I see you not listen, that's what I see,
I hear my family angry because of what you say about my people, they are part of me.
I see fear, you are scared of me,
but I need your help, why are you scared?
I have a secret garden, but you don't see.

– Anonymous

Who is this toolkit for? This toolkit has been developed with support and guidance from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples, to support non-Indigenous practitioners in mainstream organisations to engage with First Nations families.

How has this toolkit been developed? When developing this resource we felt it was essential to include the voice of as many Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples as possible.

We visited numerous communities across Australia to ensure we honoured the richness and diversity of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander experience.

This toolkit is a result of the consistent themes and challenges that communities and practitioners face across the country.

Why was this toolkit developed? This toolkit has been developed as a result of consistent themes that we heard during the consultation process.

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples felt that, regardless of the area of engagement, practitioners required a foundational knowledge of First Nations experience. We hope to honour this voice and provide practitioners with skills that support Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples to feel safe and respected in their engagement with services.

We encourage mainstream practitioners to work with a sense of respect and wonder for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families and communities. We see this toolkit as an opportunity for curiosity and learning, developed from the generous narratives that Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples have shared.

What information does the toolkit include? This toolkit provides mainstream practitioners with a framework that is based on the narratives and lived experience of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples. You'll have access to tips, stories, reflections and guides that will assist you in your understanding and engagement with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families.

We felt it was very important not to recreate the amazing work that has already been done by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander organisations, so we have included links to further information that can support you on your journey.

Taking a curious stance

We invite practitioners to approach this toolkit with curiosity and willingness to reflect on the cultural lens they bring to interactions with families, and consider the impact this has on engagement.

We hope the toolkit will build your knowledge, skills and practice for engaging with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families.

Acknowledgements

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Visit the toolkit at emergingminds.com.au/resources