



Educators

The service builds relationships and engages with its community.

A service reviewed what the NQF Guide said about element 6.2.3 and understood there were two parts to the element:

1. Building connections to the community
2. Building relationships once connections are made.

Action from critical reflection – identified practice meeting the element description.

In the EYLF, the word community appears 40 times and communities 28 times. Therefore, your curriculum planning should include children's interactions with their families and community.

One service has visits from the local fire brigade, police and a quarterly visit to the nursing home, but doesn't feel this is building or maintaining connections to the community. The service printed a map of their neighbourhood, identified every business within walking distance, made a list and systematically contacted them about visiting them on an excursion.

They also asked what materials and resources the business could provide the service:

- Carpet One was more than happy to donate their disused cardboard roles the service used for loose parts play
- Petbarn is the go-to supplier for the aquarium
- The Coffee shop supplies regular babyccinos
- The lawyer's office is a great resource for computer screens in the children's office setup.



Carpet tubing cut and used for loose parts play.

List all the businesses within walking distance you could make connections with.

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Avoiding cultural tokenism

Critical reflection revealed that there were many educators feeling uneasy about making cultural connections because they didn't know how or they thought it could come across as tokenistic.

Cultural tokenism occurs when aspects of cultures are acknowledged superficially or because we have to. Even when well-intentioned, cultural tokenism oversimplifies cultural differences, and at its worst can exacerbate existing stereotypes and prejudices about certain cultural groups.

Some examples include:

- Placing cultural artefacts on display without knowing or providing children with information about the item's heritage or significance eg displaying an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural artefact that doesn't represent the cultures of the local Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people, or using this item to represent *all* Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures.

Identify what's displayed and see if you can identify the item's heritage or significance. If you can't, should it still be displayed?

- Celebrating a cultural event in a superficial way or using the event as the *only* form of exposure to that culture eg celebrating Chinese New Year for one day and not exploring other aspects of Chinese culture in day-to-day practice.

Identify the cultural events you have conducted and see if it is a part of knowing more about a culture rather than a one-off event. If it's a one-off event, how could you learn more about the culture so you can continue conducting the events?

- Using cultural attire or traditional foods as the only way of teaching cultural diversity. While exploring different types of food is a useful starting point for teaching diversity, respect for cultural differences should extend beyond an appreciation of different foods. It's also important to be cautious when using different forms of cultural dress, as wearing traditional attire as a 'costume' can be offensive to people who wear it as part of their cultural identity.



One way of avoiding cultural tokenism is to adopt a holistic approach to cultural diversity. Culture is all around us and there are many opportunities to incorporate different cultural traditions and perspectives into your day-to-day activities. Being aware of these opportunities is an important first step.

What if I don't know the answers or don't have enough information?

It can often be challenging to respond to questions about racial and cultural differences, but it's not necessary to have all the answers. Simply be open and honest. This can be a great opportunity to share in a learning experience. For example, if a child asks, 'Where is Malawi?', you can reply, 'I don't know the answer to that question. Why don't we look it up on a map together?'

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The EYLF and MTOP says “Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives..” Pick one of the following reflection points to complete the table below:

- How could you improve the sense of belonging for children from minority cultural groups? **(example below and in QIP Improvement example)**
- How could you overcome any resistance by the Nominated Supervisor and/or educators to taking children on excursions?
- What opportunities are there for visits from community organisations/members other than those from emergency and health services?

Critically reflect through the eyes of:	Write your critical reflection below	What changes did you or will you make because of the reflection?
<p>a child</p>	I really like to speak some of the words I speak at home, and learn more about our traditional stories.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with the EL and NS about approaching Ty’s mum to learn more about her culture, and if she’d be willing to help educators implement some activities • Ask EL and NS for guidance in finding local Indigenous organisations we may be able to engage with • Ask EL for support in researching online information and resources about Indigenous culture
<p>an educator</p>	I know Ty’s mum identifies as Indigenous, and I’d really like to improve my understanding of her culture and traditions so I can help Ty feel like he belongs and help all children learn more about our First Nations, but I’m a bit scared to broach the subject.	
<p>your families</p>	I think educators are scared to ask me about Indigenous culture and traditions. Maybe they’re worried about saying the wrong thing or offending me but I’d really like them to show an interest. They just have to ask in a respectful way.	
<p>theorist and current research</p>	<i>“It is naive to assume that there is a unified approach that we can take in order to determine the needs of children and families. Each family and each community has unique traditions specific to their cultural backgrounds. Just as non-Indigenous families are not all alike there is also diversity within Indigenous families.” (Cultural competence- MTOP)</i>	

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 <p>an educator</p>		
 <p>your families</p>		
 <p>theorist and current research</p>		

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Complete your QIP

The information you write below can go directly into your QIP or Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) (NSW ONLY)

Instructions

For a MEETING QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)	For Exceeding the QIP and Self-Assessment Tool (SAT)
<i>Please give an example of an activity you planned and implemented where children engaged with local community members/organisations.</i>	<i>Please explain how the activities connecting children with their community reflects a strong commitment to the principles and practices of the EYLF/MTOP and the use of resources that support community engagement and inclusion.</i>
<i>Please give an example of how you extended the learning following a visit from a local community member or following an excursion.</i>	<i>Please give an example of a time you've identified a need and explored new links/partnerships with community organisations to strengthen outcomes.</i>
<i>Please give an example of resources/images/books in your room/group that reflect the diverse cultures at your service or in your community.</i>	<i>Please give an example of a relationship with a community organisation or member that contributes to a sense of belonging at the service. (Used for QIP Strength example)</i>
If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not meeting. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice	If you cannot answer these questions above the you are not exceeding. This means you need to create an improvement plan and make changes to your practice

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Checklist

Why are you doing the checklist?

The practices identified in the checklist are what the assessor needs to see you do so they can check you're 'meeting the NQS.' If you embed all the things in the checklist, then you are meeting the Element 6.2.3. If there's something on the checklist that you're not doing, then you need to either adjust your practice to do it, or ask for help and training to do what's on the checklist ie work with your educational leader or room leader who should teach/coach you how to do it.

The checklist keys to use.

E = Embedded I do that **ALL** the time

K = I **know** I need to do that, but I don't do it all the time

T = Please **teach** me how to do it or improve my understanding of why I need to do it.

Name Educator 1	
Name Educator 2	
Name Educator 3	
Name Educator 4	
Name Educator 5	

	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4	ED5
Do you plan activities and experiences that connect and engage children with the local community?					
Do the activities you plan broaden children's understanding of different cultures?					
Do the experiences you plan help children understand the various services/organisations, workplaces, jobs, opportunities etc in the community?					
Do you use community resources, including its people, to promote learning outcomes?					
Do you regularly broaden your knowledge and understanding of other cultures eg by talking with families or using community resources?					
Do the resources, including books and images, you provide for children reflect the diversity in your local community and Australia more broadly?					

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