



Children and Indigenous culture

Early Childhood Australia recognises the importance that recognition and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Culture has for all children and promotes:

- the significance of the home cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children to their developing identity and sense of self-worth
- the need for communities, environments, services and interactions to positively reflect and promote these identities and cultures, and to support their growth in new generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- the importance of all Australians knowing and understanding the histories and current realities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and the need for all Australian children to grow up in a society that acknowledges and addresses this past and present.

The State Library of Queensland's reconciliation strategy outlines the guiding principles as follows:

- Understanding and accepting the history of our shared experience between Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders and the wider community.
- Respecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and Identities.
- Recognising that past injustices continue to give rise to present injustices for Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

'The Corner goes Strait Home' provided State Library of Queensland with the opportunity to positively reflect the Torres Strait Island cultures to children and families by celebrating the unique history, landscape, art and artefacts and give voice to the myths and legends of The Torres Strait.

Connections to the Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia is the first national document that supports early childhood education workers to provide young children with opportunities to develop a foundation for future success in their learning.

The EYLF characterises children's lives as a time of belonging, being, and becoming, recognising the importance of children's connections to family, community, culture and

place. Children first belong to a family, cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. They need opportunities to be, seek, and make meaning of the world, which shapes their identities, knowledge, and relationships as they learn and grow.

The EYLF nominates five learning outcomes which are designed to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of children in their early years.

Visit the [Early Years Learning Framework \(EYLF\)](#) website for more information.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

Through the provision of a safe, secure and supportive learning environment, children explore their emerging sense of autonomy, inter dependence, resilience and agency. In this way, children develop their own identities and learn how to interact with others. By creating a positive learning environment children can develop a positive understanding of themselves and who they are.

The Corner is a child centred play space where children are actively encouraged to pursue their own learning paths. This allows them to develop their sense of identity as they explore its different aspects (physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive) through their play and relationships. The space is curated to provide a variety of access points for learning through play, enabling children to choose their own activities based on their preference and learning style.

The Corner Toolkit activities in The Corner are Artsworker facilitated sessions that scaffold children's learning to the appropriate level, ensuring that they are able to feel successful in their participation. Artsworkers work alongside the children and encourage them to persevere with new tasks, modeling this behaviour to parents and carers. As a dynamic space where themeing, Artsworker programs and clients are always evolving, The Corner provides opportunities for children to learn and adapt to the changing environment.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Children learn within the context of their families and the wider community, shaping their identity by sharing their experiences and relationships with different people and places. Children's connectedness with different cultures, countries, and communities can help them in understanding and respecting the values, traditions and practices of their families and communities.

The Corner is in a unique position, providing children with a broader range of experiences and interactions with different people, forming different relationships and learning about different communities.

Through The Corner Toolkit activities for Strait Home, opportunities are created for children to construct their own identities by interacting with resources and knowledge from different cultures and life experiences. Torres Strait Island stories and The Corner Toolkit activities provide learning experiences that facilitate the exploration of the similarities and differences between themselves and others.

Strait Home will provide learning experiences that build on the social and cultural practices of children, including cooking, craft, and language development to explore elements of Torres Strait Island culture that may be unfamiliar. Parents, carers and educators can scaffold the children's learning in this way, encouraging them to reflect on their experiences and developing a respect for other cultures and identities.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

As children grow and develop, it is vital that both the physical and psychological aspects of their wellbeing also grow and develop. Children need to feel happy and healthy when engaging in their everyday life experiences, as well as confident when attempting any new challenges.

The Corner Toolkit focuses on allowing children the freedom to move and explore, developing their fine and gross motor skills by providing a variety of learning experiences that require children's strength, agility, flexibility, control, balance and coordination. By offering learning experiences at varying degrees of difficulty, The Corner Toolkit also helps children to build up their resilience when facing unfamiliar and challenging learning situations, creating avenues for celebrating their successes and achievements.

Artworkers promote children's social and emotional wellbeing by collaborating with them when planning their sessions and allowing them to document their work to share with their loved ones.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Children are inquisitive by nature, and by providing a rich learning environment where their personal experiences and understandings are recognised and included, they will grow to become confident, active, and involved participants in their own learning. Children enjoy exploring, collaborating, and problem solving and by allowing their creativity to develop, they will flourish in their learning.

The Corner provides a flexible and open-ended learning environment, with children the writers, directors, producers, and stars in their own shows. Artworkers and program assistants facilitate these experiences by listening carefully to children's ideas and helping them to extend their thinking.

Strait Home explores the diversity of cultures and social identities and provides children with pathways to develop their own understandings of the Torres Strait people and culture.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

The ability to successfully communicate is a vital component of children's early development. From the moment they are born, children use gestures, sounds, and language to communicate with others. They construct and interpret meanings and exchange ideas, thoughts questions and feelings as they speak, listen, read, write, view and shape. Children use of a range of platforms, including music, dance, and drama, to express themselves and relate to the world around them.

Children value the right to be continuing users of their home language as well as the ability to become a competent user of English. In this sense, Strait Home offers children experiences in exploring different languages and ways of interacting with them. In addition, The Corner Toolkit provides a multi-textual learning environment through the repetition of objects and themes, allowing children to make meaning through play, song, story, and art.

Facilitated Artsworker sessions and unfacilitated craft activities provide opportunities for children to experiment with mark making, shape making and early writing. During these experiences, Artsworkers and program assistants model language and allow children to express themselves in a range of contexts and for a range of purposes. The Corner Toolkit is a word and text rich environment where the curatorial theme provides many opportunities for words and ideas to be repeated. Through encouraging children to engage in sustained conversations about their ideas, their vocabulary and communication skills are extended.

