

Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework – FAQ

Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework: Providing culturally safe services in ECEC - continuing the journey frequently asked questions.

Question	Answer
<p>What is the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>This Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework has been co-designed to support and guide Services, Providers, and Systems, at all levels, in Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW to create Culturally safe environments for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal children accessing Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW Families of Aboriginal children accessing Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW Aboriginal Community members (including visitors, contractors, and businesses) and; Aboriginal staff who work in Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW <p>Aboriginal Cultural safety is not a ‘bolt on’ to existing policies and procedures, it is the starting point. The Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework is a living document subject to periodic review and variation.</p> <p>Aboriginal Cultural safety, including creating Culturally safe environments and policies, is the collective responsibility of the entire Early Childhood Education and Care sector, including mainstream Services, Providers, and Systems.</p>
<p>What are the objectives of the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>The Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework (the Framework) aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> support uplift within the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector by providing clear expectations, standards, and guidance to support services to develop, maintain and improve cultural safety. encourage best provision and maintenance of culturally safe and responsive environments for Aboriginal children, their families in every type of ECEC service. increase participation of Aboriginal children in ECEC services; and enhance understanding and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture benefitting all children and supporting reconciliation efforts.

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<p>Who will benefit from the framework?</p>	<p>The key audiences of the Framework are: providers of ECEC services in NSW and their staff, and systems influencing NSW ECEC.</p> <p>The primary beneficiaries of the Framework are Aboriginal children, families, and community.</p> <p>Other beneficiaries are all children, families and community who will gain an enhanced knowledge of Australian history, through a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples, their cultures, and histories.</p>
<p>What is Cultural Safety?</p>	<p>Cultural safety in ECEC focuses on creating, nurturing, and recognising the importance of learning environments where Aboriginal children, their families, carers, and communities feel welcomed, supported, and respected, and their cultures and identities are valued and embraced.</p> <p>It's important to remember that the recipient determines whether, or not, they feel culturally safe i.e. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.</p>
<p>Why do we need an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>The Department's data and previous reports show that Aboriginal children and family's access ECEC services at a much lower rate than all Australian children and families. A report published in 2020, looked deeper into this issue and:</p> <p>identified barriers that impacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families and prevented them from accessing ECEC services.</p> <p>identified characteristics that Aboriginal families look for in ECEC services; and</p> <p>identified potential solutions for ECEC services to effectively engage with, and empower Aboriginal children and families to work together, to achieve better outcomes.</p> <p>One thing that glaringly stood out in this report was that Aboriginal children and families do not feel a sense of belonging in mainstream ECEC services, and they feel that their culture/s are not reflected or valued in these services.</p>
<p>Why is the Department developing an Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>In October 2020, the Department commissioned Source Nation to facilitate Early Childhood Education Round Table discussions.</p> <p>The New South Wales (NSW) Department of Education (DoE) was seeking to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal children by co-designing an Aboriginal Early Childhood Education (ECE) Strategy. The approach looked to address gaps in educational outcomes for Aboriginal children and align with the Closing the Gap targets:</p>

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	<p>One of the most significant statements, to come out of the ECE Aboriginal Roundtable report was that: “Aboriginal children and families want to feel a sense of belonging at their ECE service.”</p> <p>On page 18 of the report, we get the origin of the framework in the following suggestion from a participant.</p> <p>“The development of a Cultural Safety Framework for services to use”.</p> <p>The sector was challenged in the report to: “to champion meaningful and impactful leadership in Early Childhood Education by creating opportunities for Aboriginal people to participate in policy and advisory forums.”</p> <p>The Department acted and initiated the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework which:</p> <p>is a part of the DoE’s response to the National Agreement on Closing the Gap,</p> <p>is in accordance with the guiding principle of the national legislation; that “Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are valued,”</p> <p>complements the updated Approved Learning Frameworks by strengthening cultural responsiveness, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, and increasing all children’s knowledge and understanding of First Nations peoples; and</p> <p>supports the National Quality Standards.</p> <p>A cultural safety framework in ECEC in NSW supports the Department’s First Steps strategy, and the recently updated Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The Department is strongly committed to improving early years learning outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families.</p> <p>The Cultural Safety Framework will contribute towards making ECEC services across NSW more culturally safe and increase the participation of Aboriginal children and families in early childhood services and programs across NSW.</p> <p>The Department believes that enhancing an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures in the early years sector, will benefit future generations of Australians.</p>
<p>What is the First Steps Strategy 2020-2025?</p>	<p>First Steps is the Department’s Aboriginal Children’s Early Childhood Education Strategy 2021-2025. The Department is committed to achieving the vision of the First Steps strategy, which is, “All Aboriginal children in NSW can access quality early childhood education (ECE) and are supported to embrace their culture and identity for a strong start to lifelong learning.”</p>

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	<p>First Steps is a five-year plan that solidifies the Department’s commitment to ensuring the best educational outcomes for Aboriginal children, ensuring every Aboriginal child and family feels welcomed and that their culture is valued and embraced at their ECE service.</p> <p>Implementing a cultural safety framework across ECEC services will support the achievement of First Steps strategy outcomes by:</p> <p>Improving the sector’s understanding and recognition of Aboriginal cultures.</p> <p>Enhancing the relationships in the ECE sector, between service providers, all children, Aboriginal families and communities, and Australian families.</p> <p>Respecting and valuing Aboriginal cultures and creating a sense of belonging in all early childhood services for Aboriginal children and families.</p> <p>First Steps was launched by the Department in 2021. For more information about the Department’s Aboriginal Children’s Early Childhood Education Strategy 2021-2025, please click-on and follow the link below:</p> <p>https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education- service/current-service-providers/making-services-accessible-for-all-children/aboriginal-access/strategy</p>
<p>How to stay up to date with the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework’s progress?</p>	<p>The Department will be informed about the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework progress through periodic updates published on the Cultural Safety Framework webpage.</p> <p>The Framework is expected to take at least 18 months to develop, to pilot amongst a sample of early childhood services and providers, and to implement across all providers and services in the early childhood education and care sector.</p> <p>To access the webpage link where you will find project updates, please use the link, below:</p> <p>https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education- service/current-service-providers/making-services-accessible-for-all-children/aboriginal-access/cultural- safety-framework-consultation?mc_cid=ecb87efbdb&mc_eid=UNIQID</p>
<p>Will I have an opportunity to provide feedback on the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>Yes, the sector will have further opportunity to comment on, and provide feedback regarding the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework.</p> <p>The framework is a live working document which will undergo annual reviews with the Co-Design working group, providing an opportunity for the framework to be regularly reviewed and updated as required.</p>

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	<p>The Cultural Safety Team plan to organise information sessions, to be held in the future.</p> <p>Once planning is finalised, the Department will promote the dates and locations of these events.</p> <p>The sector will be notified about any upcoming events about the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework and the Cultural Safety Team will use all communication modes available to disseminate any updates in the future.</p>
<p>What are the deliverables of the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>Phase 1: Consultations and Final Outcomes Report – Completed</p> <p>Phase 2: Co-Design and Draft Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework – Completed</p> <p>Phase 3: Consists of four deliverables – On Track</p> <p>Develop evaluation logic model for the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework</p> <p>Identify and develop required tools, resources and related products that will support providers of ECEC services and their staff to implement the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework.</p> <p>A dynamic promotion and awareness strategy for phase 3 across the NSW ECEC sector with a focus on the ACSF - Learning Journey Reflective Tool; and</p> <p>Develop an Implementation Plan for the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework</p> <p>Phase 4: Implementation of the Cultural Safety Framework</p>
<p>How have the consultation outcomes been applied to the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>The Department funded the Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Childcare (SNAICC) to develop a consultation plan, and to undertake consultations for the project.</p> <p>The consultation plan included different modes of consultation including face-to-face with Aboriginal communities, tailored surveys for various sector stakeholders, and consultations with Aboriginal children.</p> <p>SNAICC conducted four face-to-face consultations with Aboriginal communities in Lightning Ridge, Brewarrina, Nowra, and Minto/Campbelltown.</p> <p>Online surveys were tailored for different sector stakeholders including mainstream ECEC providers, Aboriginal community-controlled providers, Aboriginal families, and participants in ECEC services, and NSW Department of Education early childhood employees. SNAICC also conducted discussions and play sessions with Aboriginal children to get an insight into what makes them feel happy and safe.</p>

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	<p>SNAICC delivered the consultations outcomes report to the Department in October 2022. Click on the links provided to explore the consultations and access the full report.</p> <p>https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/current-service-providers/making-services-accessible-for-all-children/aboriginal-access/cultural-safety-framework-consultation</p> <p>https://education.nsw.gov.au/content/dam/main-education/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/current-service-providers/Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework for Early Childhood Education Phase 1 Final Report.pdf</p>
<p>Access the first Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework sector webinar.</p>	<p>The first webinar was held in July 2022, the reasons behind the first webinar, were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce the sector to the concept of cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. To inform the ECEC sector about the Department’s Cultural Safety Framework project; and To invite sector participants and stakeholders to take part in the consultations. <p>It was recorded, and it is available to view on the Department’s Cultural Safety Framework webpage. To access the webpage, click on the link provided.</p> <p>https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/current-service-providers/making-services-accessible-for-all-children/aboriginal-access/cultural-safety-framework-consultation</p>
<p>What were the key findings from the SNAICC Consultations?</p>	<p>Western Ways – There are ongoing concerns about the Western confinements, culturally unsafe frameworks, and lack of understanding of the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. This impacts access, support, and service delivery on the ground.</p> <p>Quote from a grandmother from page 13, outcomes report "mainstream services operate predominantly from a white western structure, which creates barriers and in turn does not create a place of cultural safety.</p> <p>Racism and discrimination – Racism and discrimination evident and occurring at the service and system level. This can compound the ongoing burden of trauma that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities experience.</p> <p>This is difficult to hear however the this is still happening in ECE services today.</p> <p>One participant said on page 17 of the report " the principal is racist and biased against alternate family structures."</p>

Question	Answer
	<p>Relationships and trust – Building the relationship and trust between ECEC services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities is of critical importance.</p> <p>Page 14 of the report highlights "the overwhelming majority of parents and carers thought ACCO's were leading with cultural safety because of " cultural reciprocity and humility, and positive meaningful relationships and regard to their child or children."</p> <p>Culturally safe – A number of culturally responsive and safe practices are being implemented across the ECEC sector.</p> <p>Quote directly from the report states “cultural blindness in many settings across the state, underpinned by perceived and actual ‘white privilege,’ resulting in an inability to remove these biases and blindness and preventing the delivery of culturally safe services.”</p> <p>In the outcomes report and consultation, the ECEC sector demonstrated a true desire to contribute to cultural safety and a willingness to learn. These responses excited the Cultural Safety Team.</p> <p>Awareness and acknowledgement were the final key finding, and the sector wants to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander children, families, and communities. include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content and perspectives into teaching and learning programs. Build the cultural capabilities of staff. <p>The Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework will deliver the essentials to make this a reality across the Sector.</p>
<p>Access Phase 2 - Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework sector webinar</p>	<p>In June 2023 the Cultural Safety Team provided the sector with the progress update on the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework to the sector.</p> <p>During Phase 2 the Cultural Safety Team and valuable stakeholders delivered the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> forming a co-design working group, made up of sector and department representatives with lived experiences in the NSW ECEC sector, who are recognised experts in their occupations. engaging Kowa Collaboration to facilitate and implement the co-design process, and to summarise and collate the input and contributions of all co-design working group members into a framework document. conducting a 3-day face-to-face workshop for the co-design working group to follow a co-design methodology and create the first iteration of

Question	Answer
	<p>the cultural safety framework, under the guidance and facilitation of Kowa Collaboration</p> <p>conducting online workshops, following the face-to-face workshop, for co-design working group members to review and workshop the first iteration of the cultural safety framework and to provide further feedback and comments to the department.</p> <p>conducting further opportunities for members of the co-design working group to provide more input and refine the document.</p> <p>The Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework co-design process proved to be both rigorous and enlightening. The co-design working group elevated the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, families, and communities, and ensured they remained at the centre of all discussions and perspectives.</p> <p>This Phase 2 webinar explores the co-design of the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework. To access the second webinar please use the link provided.</p> <p>https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/current-service-providers/making-services-accessible-for-all-children/aboriginal-access/cultural-safety-framework-consultation</p>
<p>What is Co-Design and the methodology applied to the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>Between March and June 2023, the Cultural Safety Team organised and enabled a co-design process to be facilitated by Kowa Collaboration.</p> <p>The Auckland Co-Design Lab methodology was used during the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework’s co- design process. It focused on working with families and Communities to elevate their voices to build capacity, share power and influence, learn from each other, and remove barriers to participation.</p> <p>This approach uses lived experience alongside other forms of data and evidence to solve problems (Auckland Co-Design Lab, 2018).</p> <p>We would like to recognise the Co-Design Working Group which consisted of Aboriginal and non- Aboriginal people, for sharing their knowledge, wisdom, and lived experiences throughout the co-design process and trusting us with their stories.</p> <p>It has been a privilege to share this journey with the Co-Design Working Group, who are deeply passionate about and committed to ensuring, Aboriginal children access Culturally safe Early Childhood Education and Care settings.</p> <p>Without their participation and contributions, the co-designed Framework would not exist.</p>

Question	Answer
	<p>More information about co-design methodology can be found on “Auckland Co-design Lab” website. Please access by using the link provided. https://www.aucklandco-lab.nz/</p>
<p>What are the ECEC RA goals for the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework?</p>	<p>The NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Regulatory Authority’s goals for the Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework can be found in the 2023 – 2024 Strategic Plan. The framework is an initiative highlighted under the goal:</p> <p>Services are regulated to continuously improve – statewide programs to drive improvements in the child and family experience in ECEC services.</p> <p>Please access using the link provided.</p> <p>NSW ECEC Regulatory Authority Strategic Plan 2023-24 (PDF 176 KB)</p>
<p>When will the Framework be available to the sector?</p>	<p>The Aboriginal Cultural Safety Framework is expected to be available in Term 1 2024.</p> <p>The framework will be free and accessible to the ECEC sector.</p> <p>It will be accompanied by an introductory tool kit containing resources to commence, continue or grow your service’s cultural safety.</p>
<p>Where can I get more information?</p>	<p>Information is available on the NSW Department of Education’s website at: https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/operating-an-early-childhood-education-service/current-service-providers/making-services-accessible-for-all-children/aboriginal-access/cultural-safety-framework-consultation</p> <p>For further assistance please call or email: Phone: 1800 619 113</p> <p>Email: ECECD@det.nsw.edu.au</p>

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