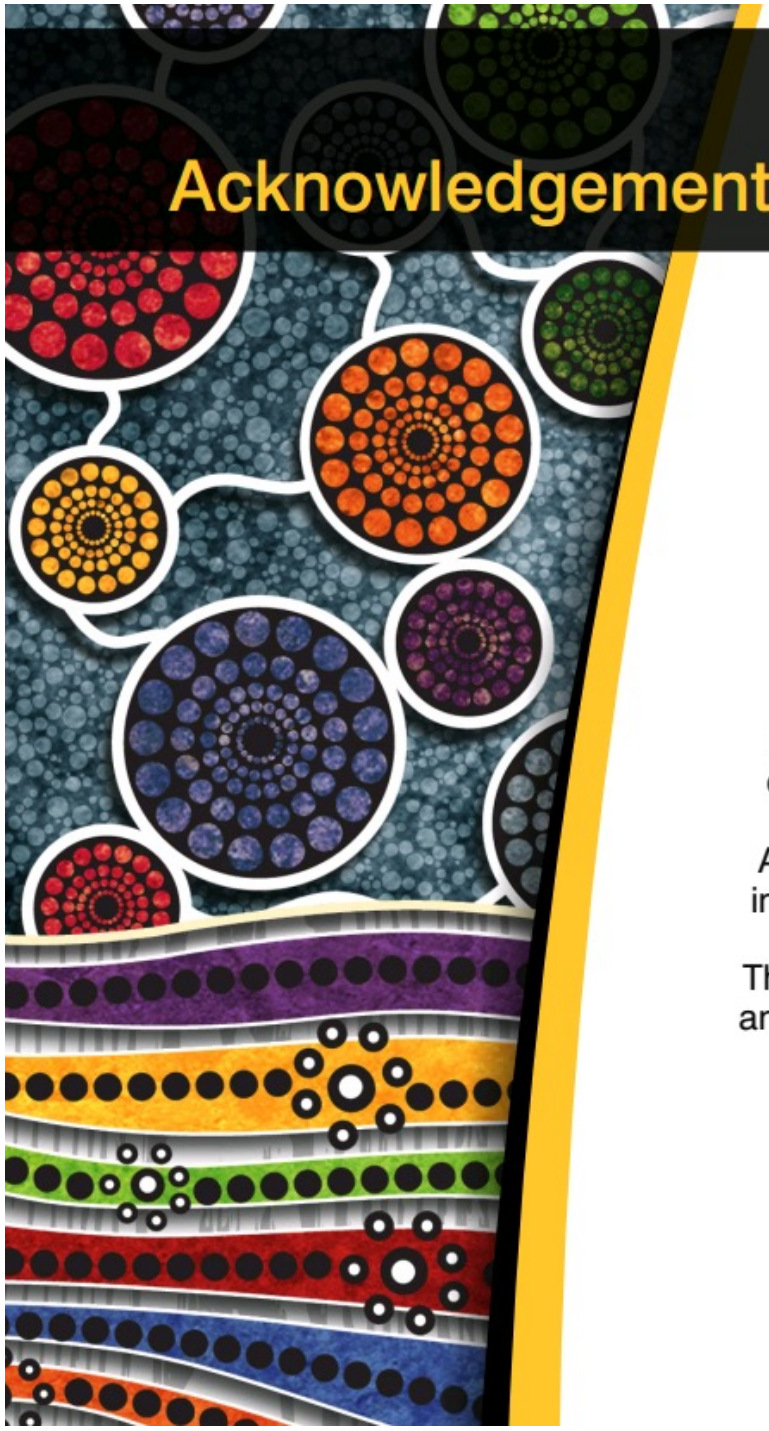
ACWA Forum
Strategy to Action

7 March 2024

Acknowledgement



Settlement Services International and its subsidiaries (SSI Group) acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.

We would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Owners of the Land on which we meet, live, work and learn. We pay respect to the Elders of each Nation – Past, Present and Future – and promote the continuation of the cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Ancestors have walked this country and we acknowledge their special and unique place in our nation's historical, cultural, and linguistic identity.

The SSI Group has a deep commitment to know and understand more about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' wide ranging cultures, beliefs, and kinship systems.

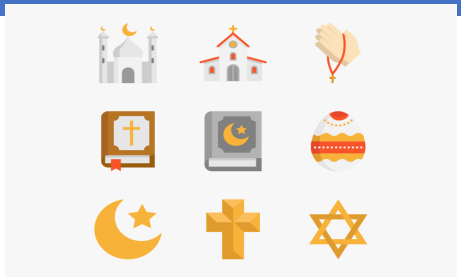
EXPERIENCE IN THE COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

Threat to survival
Unpredictability
Inescapability

Disrupted attachment to family & community
Large scale violation of human rights
Helplessness

Violation of privacy
Invasion of physical boundaries
Forced choices

CORE COMPONENTS OF CULTURE



FAITH

ETHNICITY

LANGUAGE

Traditions, music, food, greetings, clothing, others

Successful Settlement:

Employment

Financial stability

Safety and Security

Hope for the future

Settlement in Australia

Unsuccessful Settlement:

Threat of forced return; Lack of control over future; Detention ; Alienation in new country ; Loss of future; Grief and loss; Trauma

Multicultural Child and Family Program Carers Cultural Elements

Total Unique CYP Ethnicity is 42

Total Unique CYP Language is 28

Total Unique CYP Faith is 18

Multicultural Child and Family Program Children Cultural Elements

Total Unique CYP Ethnicity is 64

Total Unique CYP Language is 32

Total Unique CYP Faith is 28

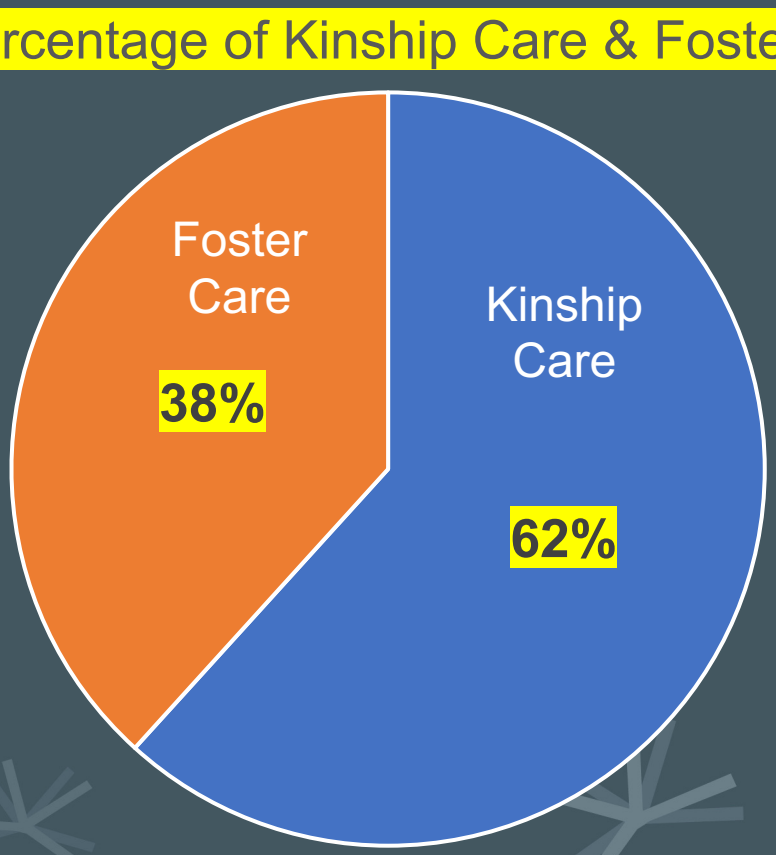
Multicultural Child and Family Program Staff Cultural Elements

Total Unique CYP Ethnicity is 20

Total Unique CYP Language is 13

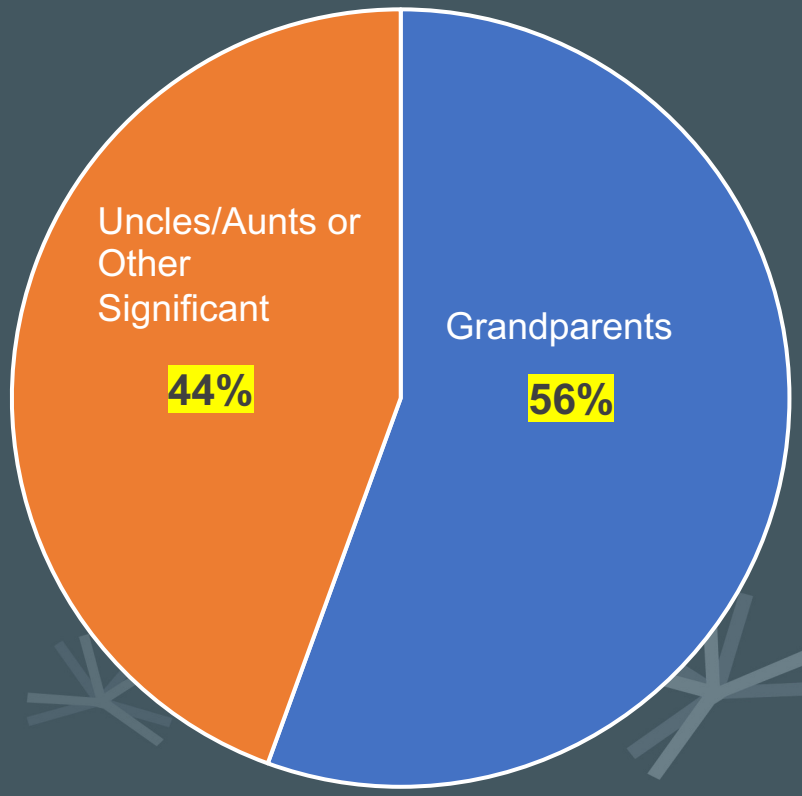
Total Unique CYP Faith is 15

Multicultural Child and Family Program
Overview of Foster care program



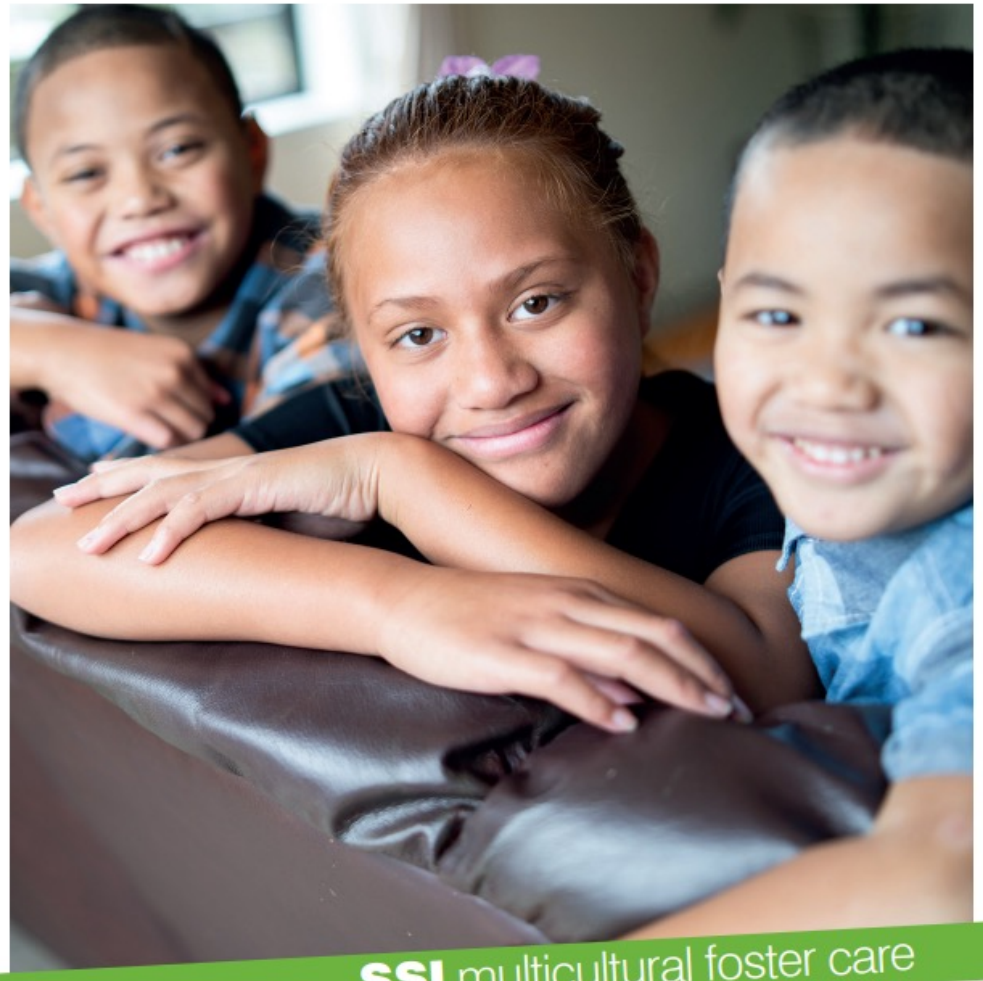
Multicultural Child and Family Program
Overview of Foster care program

Percentage of Grandparents Vs. Uncle/Aunts or Other Significant



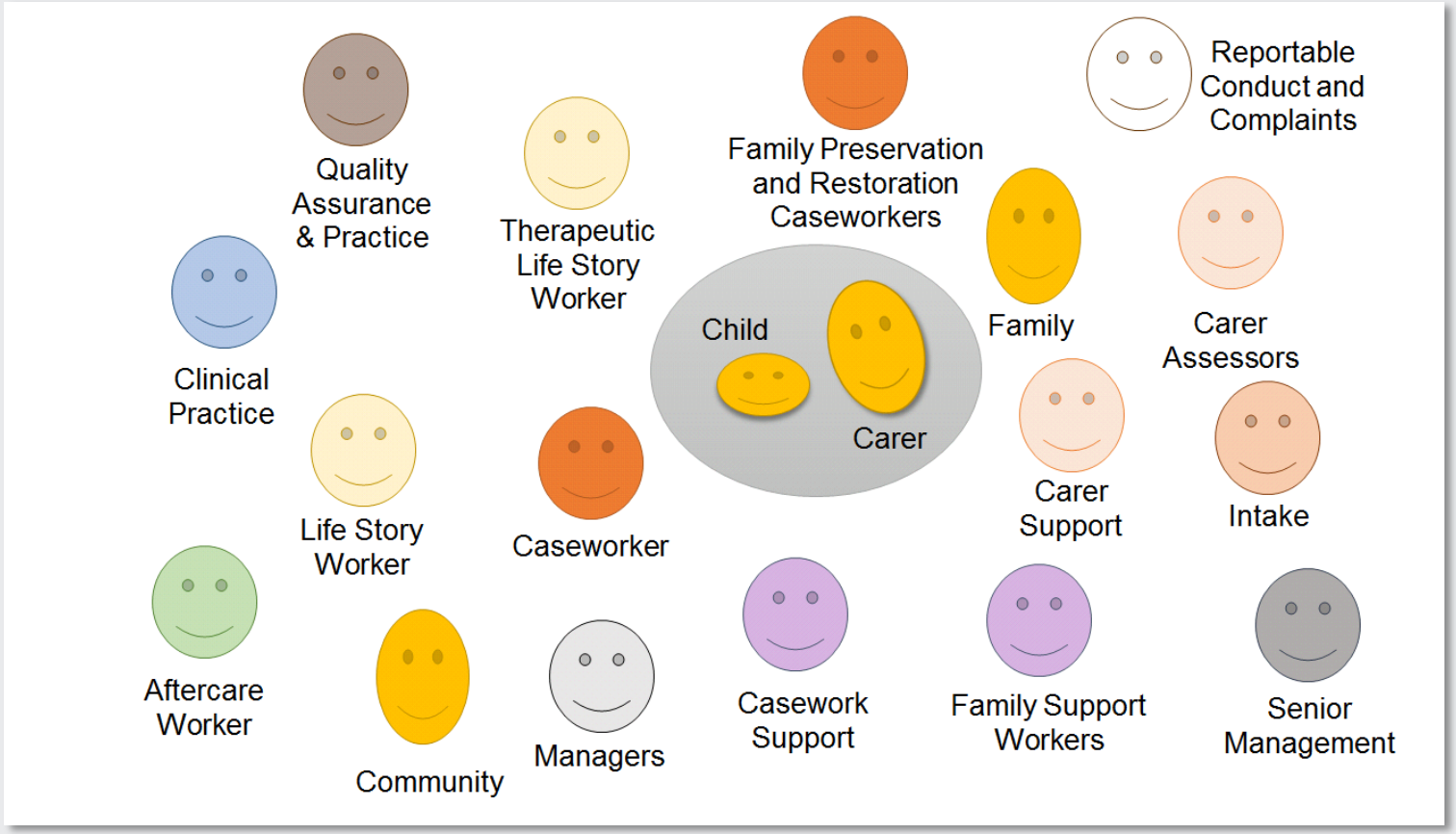
Multicultural Child and Family Program Overview

- Culturally Responsive Practice Framework
- My Life and Me
- Cultural Support Plans
- Cultural Newsletter
- Family Group Conference
- Active genograms
- Data collection and analysis
- Partnership with Community Leaders
- Culturally responsive carer assessment, training and review.
- Culturally responsive placement matching.
- Communities of Practice
- Quality and Safeguarding Committee



OOHC PROGRAM
Overview of Foster care program

It takes a village to raise a child and a multidisciplinary team of dedicated and skilled staff to provide great culturally responsive out of home care services for children and their families.



"The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth" - African proverb

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Immediate Kin

-Grandparents

- Uncles, aunts

Extended/psychological Kin

-Community members with the support of community leaders

- School

Targeted recruitment

- to meet the behavioral, health or other needs
- Carers to be culturally responsive

Siblings

-After Care older young person to care for the youngest siblings

- Older siblings to care for youngest ones

Case studies/case examples

CASE 1

-Johnny lived with his carer and his 2 siblings for over 10 years. Last year, Johnny had left care and moved to independence. He is settled and supported by MCFP CALD Youth Coordinator. The carers circumstances had changed this year and cannot care for Bella (16 years) and Anthony 15 years.

- SSI had assessed Johnny and supported him being a carer for his 2 other siblings. The family is doing well and the siblings remained together.

CASE 2

-Sue (13 years) had made allegations against her carer and refused to go back to her current placement after school. There is no matched carer for Sue within MCFP. The foster care team liaised with the school principal for any potential parents, staff for short term while MCFP will continue engaging Sue's family.

A provisional authorization occurred for the parents of Sue's friend, where she remained there for a short time until the maternal aunt started the assessment process where Sue moved and is settled and happy.

Case studies/case examples

CASE 3

Rebecca 8 years had been removed for chronic neglect and physical discipline and was placed with a short-term carer.

Targeted recruitment occurred and a successful applicant from the community started with the assessment. A risk assessment was undertaken because the mother and the potential carer live in the same suburb and attend the same religious and community events which might jeopardize the longevity/safety of the placement. Meeting occurred with the Community leader who expressed their full support for the carer; they spoke with the mother to attend any event in a different suburb.

The child was settled and embraced by the community: she stayed about 16 months with the carer until she was restored back to mum.

CASE 4

- A family of 12 siblings were assumed into care.

- When referred to MCFP as an emergency, DCJ advised that the family is distressed and fearful of being separated. There were also 2 older sisters 19 and 20 years living with them.

- Extensive meetings occurred on manly levels, including the children. MCFP ended up provisionally authorizing the 2 older siblings and treated them like After Care leavers where they were supported with driving, bank account, budgeting, parenting, etc…

- Extended families and friends were supporting the parents. The children did not want to liaise with community members.

- DCJ and SSI worked on a creative and flexible approaches for the packages, given the intensity of support needed: Additional 2 Family Preservation packages were considered for this family.

- The family moved to 2 adjacent duplexes where each carer is currently living with 6 siblings, and indirectly they are living together.

- Intensive supports in place including in home respite. MCFP is currently recruiting a carer for this family to support them. The siblings had been together for around 2 years and they are doing well, with support.

Things to consider

- Consult with the Child, parents and communities and actively listen to them.
- Cultural consultation, cultural responsiveness and cultural humility.
- Privacy and confidentiality in small communities.
- Being inquisitive and not relying only on the historical information on files.
- Kinship carers might still be going through grief and shame.
- Sometimes language is a barrier between the grandparents with very limited English and their grandchildren who do not understand the language of the country of origin.
- Tension between the paternal and maternal families.
- Set the bottom line and expectations: parents unauthorised access, parenting, cultural parenting practices
- Ongoing work to understand their responsibilities of being carers versus grandparents
- Most of this pool of carers have limited capacity and need additional support with language, driving, appointments.
- We lose this pool of carers once the permanency is achieved

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