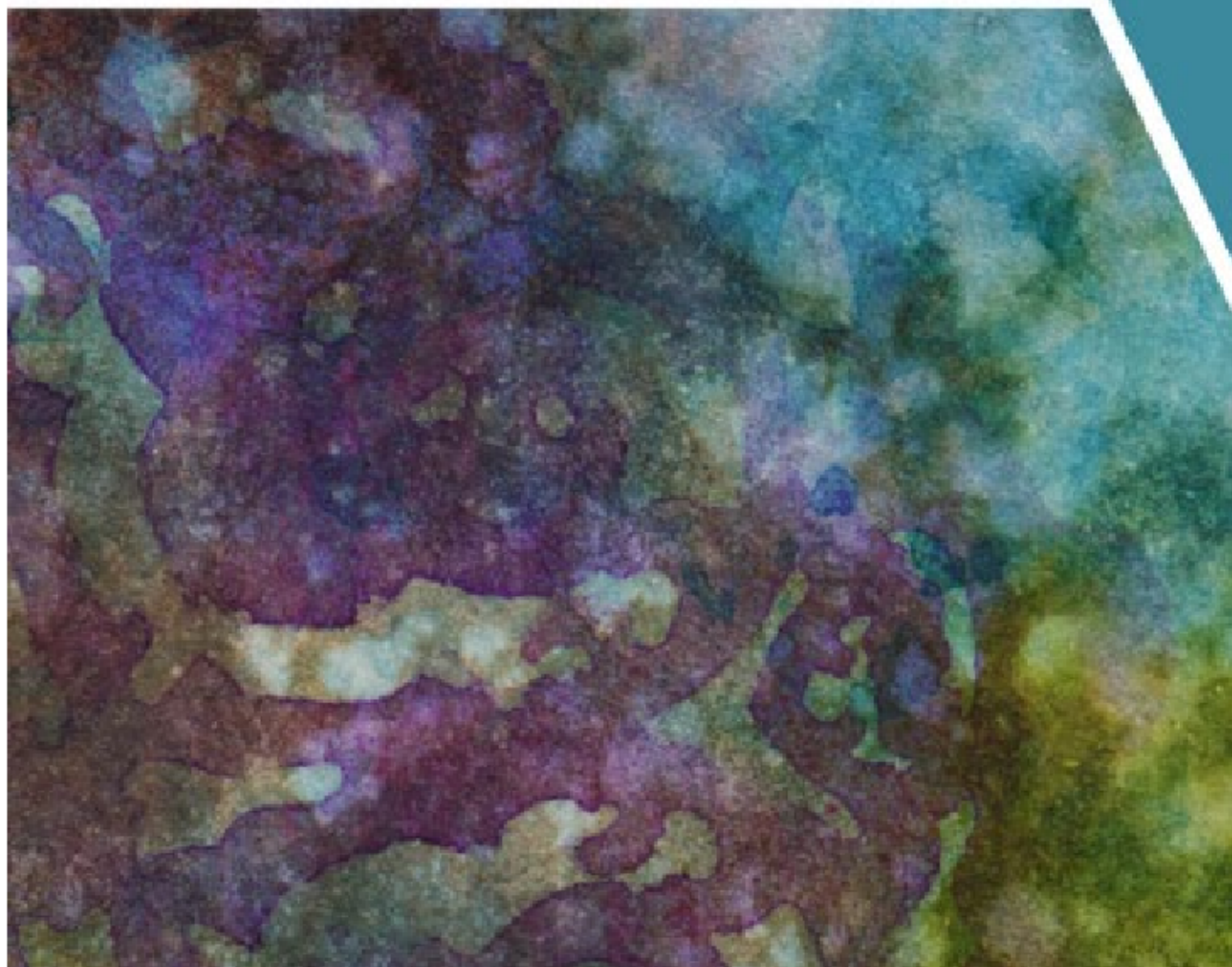




Southern Melbourne Area Invitations to Play!

Exploring Aboriginal culture
in the early years'

About this Guide

What is this guide?

This guide was created by the Southern Melbourne Early Childhood Improvement Branch, in collaboration with Southern Melbourne Area early years' services and in consultation with our Koorie Engagement Support Officer (KESO) team. The aim of the guide is to provide services with ideas & practical examples of different ways to explore, better understand & celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in early years' services. Through this resource we aim to:

- Increase awareness of the importance of embedding Koorie Perspectives in educational settings.
- Support Koorie children's sense of identity and belonging in services.
- Provide practical guidance on creating culturally inclusive learning environments for all young children.
- Encourage all children to deepen their knowledge and understanding of cultural differences and develop respect for identity and diversity.
- Increase Koorie children's participation in early learning services through inclusive practice.
- Showcase the amazing work of the dedicated educators in the Southern Melbourne Area!

Who is this guide for?

This guide is for early years educators & teachers that work with children in an early childhood setting. This is inclusive of Long Day Care Services, Integrated Services and Sessional Kindergartens. Throughout this guide we have included practical resources for educators of all skill levels and experience. We hope this guide empowers educators to:

- Make a start - it's okay to start somewhere!
- Continue implementing already embedded practices.
- Become Champions of Aboriginal inclusion in Early Childhood spaces.

"Harrisfield Kindergarten is a multicultural service and the children and their families come from a range of cultures and diversity. In the spirit of reconciliation, we engage the children in Indigenous culture through displaying our 'invitations to play' with natural materials."



Photo: Harrisfield Kindergarten.

Welcoming families & acknowledging country



Photo: Strathaird Kindergarten

Strathaird Kindergarten have a display acknowledging the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional custodians of the land on which they are learning. This is a fantastic way to help children understand and pay respect to the Traditional Owners of the land and to encourage the children to continue to care for the land on which they learn.

Corrigan Rex Kindergarten use group time as an opportunity to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land and pay their respect. The children gather around a circle of clapping sticks, native plants and symbolic cards. The children are active contributors to the process and physical movement is incorporated to encourage children's participation.



Photos: Corrigan Rex Kindergarten



Displaying the Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander flags



Photo: Dandenong Day Nursery

Educators can display the flag in the service in a number of ways.

Including using paint, rocks and craft materials to create the flag with the children.



Photo: Strathaird Kindergarten



Photo: Bridgewater Kindergarten



Photo: Corrigan Rex Kindergarten

Connection to Land



Photo: Strathaird Kindergarten

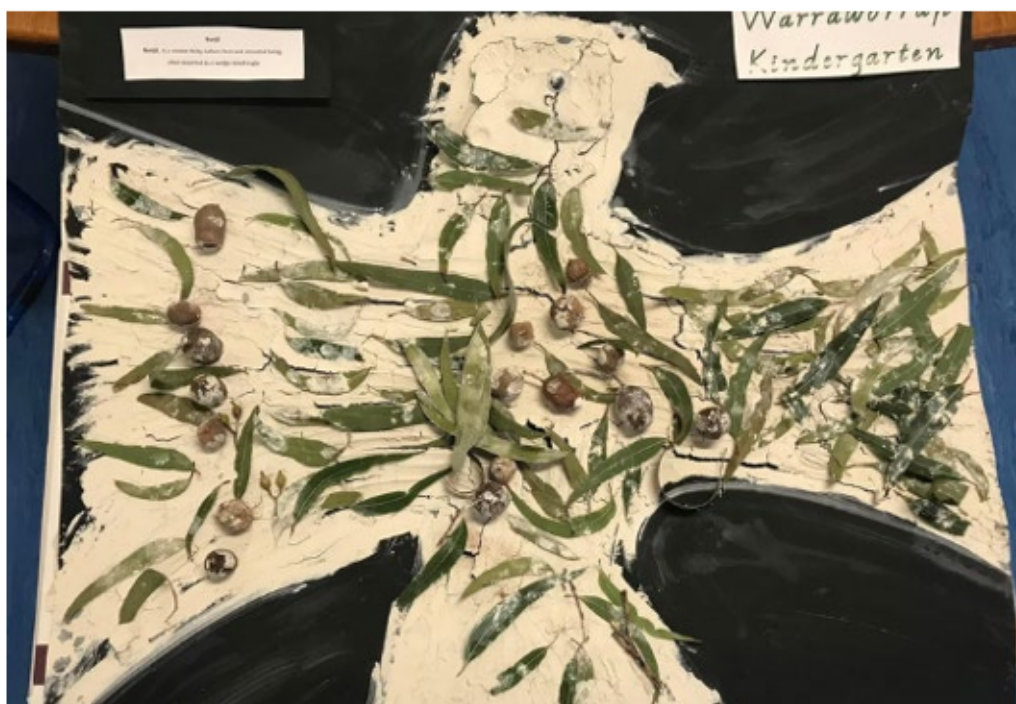


Photo: Dandenong Day Nursery

Native animals



Photos: Dandenong Day Nursery.

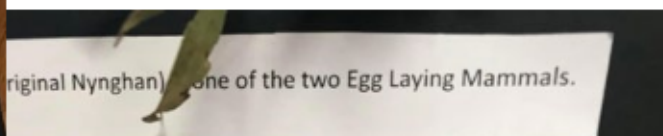
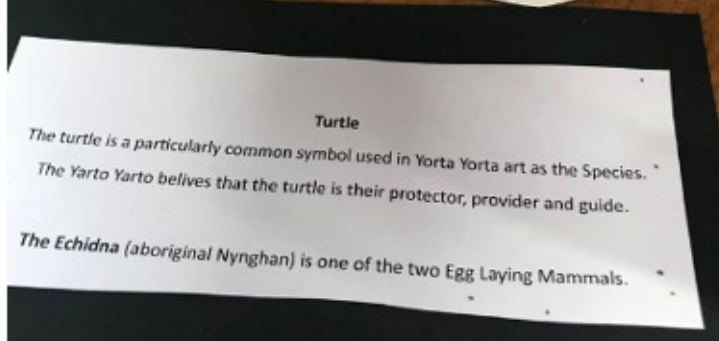


Photo: Springside Kindergarten.



Photos: Bridgewater Kindergarten

Native food & cooking



Photos: Dandenong Day Nursery





"Thank-you flowers we had collected from our native Australian garden to give to our Elders" – Springside Kindergarten.



Photos: Springside Kindergarten

Art & symbols



Photos: Ramlegh Family & Community Centre.

"As a service we have started to create our gumleaf wreath. Each room have taken time in creating their leaves in whatever way they wished to (non-linear). The wreath signifies us all coming from different backgrounds and journeys to acknowledge and recognised that true owner of this land. From the Welcome to Country book our children have chosen to take a leaf in the promise they will take only what they need and always give back (Story sharing)" – Ramlegh Kindergarten



Photo: Bridgewater Kindergarten



Photo: Bridgewater Kindergarten



Photo: Strathaird Kindergarten

Invitations to play!



Photos: Bridgewater Kindergarten



Photos: Springside Kindergarten



Photos: Bridgewater Kindergarten



Photo: Springside Kindergarten

Resources

VAEI Koorie Early Years: Best Practice and Protocols – A Practitioners Guide

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. have recently released a new resource for Early Years, the *VAEI Koorie Early Years: Best Practice and Protocols – A Practitioners Guide*.

Going forward, this should be the primary reference point for early years protocols.

The Guide was developed in response to requests from early childhood educators on appropriate protocols for early years services to follow when seeking to provide a welcoming educational environment for Victoria's Koorie communities.

This document provides guidance on how best to incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in early childhood services and increase inclusion of Koorie families.

You can find a copy of the resource here: [New Koorie Early Years: Best Practice & Protocols Guide – VAEI](#)

Contact your local Koorie Engagement Support Officer

For further advice & support you can contact one of our local KESOs.

 Narelle Walker KEC Coordinator 0457 190 945 narelle.walker@education.vic.gov.au	 Peter Dye KESO Cardinia 0439 957 714 peter.dye@education.vic.gov.au	 Drucilla Morgan KESO Dandenong 0498 377 170 drucilla.morgan@education.vic.gov.au	 Travis Gardner KESO Casey Central 0470 400 873 travis.gardner@education.vic.gov.au	 Graeme Bux KESO Casey North 0407 231 580 graeme.bux@education.vic.gov.au	 Juanita Mulholland KESO Casey South 00455 264 391 juanita.mulholland@education.vic.gov.au
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General enquiries: sevr.koorie.sm@education.vic.gov.au

How can you contribute?

We would love to continue adding to this resource over time. If your service would like to contribute words and/or images, please email your contributions to: Early Childhood Improvement - Southern Melbourne earlychildhood.Improvement.SM@education.vic.gov.au with the subject line: Invitations to Play.

We envisage updating the document on a 6 monthly – annual basis.