

Early Childhood Australia National Conference

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years learning: Foundation for the future

Day 1—Thursday 6 October 2016, 11.45 am–12.30 pm

Geraldine Atkinson

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Early Childhood Australia National Conference 2016
THIS IS CHILDHOOD Pedagogy and practice
in the early years



SNAICC

National Voice for our Children

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years learning: foundations for the future

Geraldine Atkinson

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children

6 October 2016

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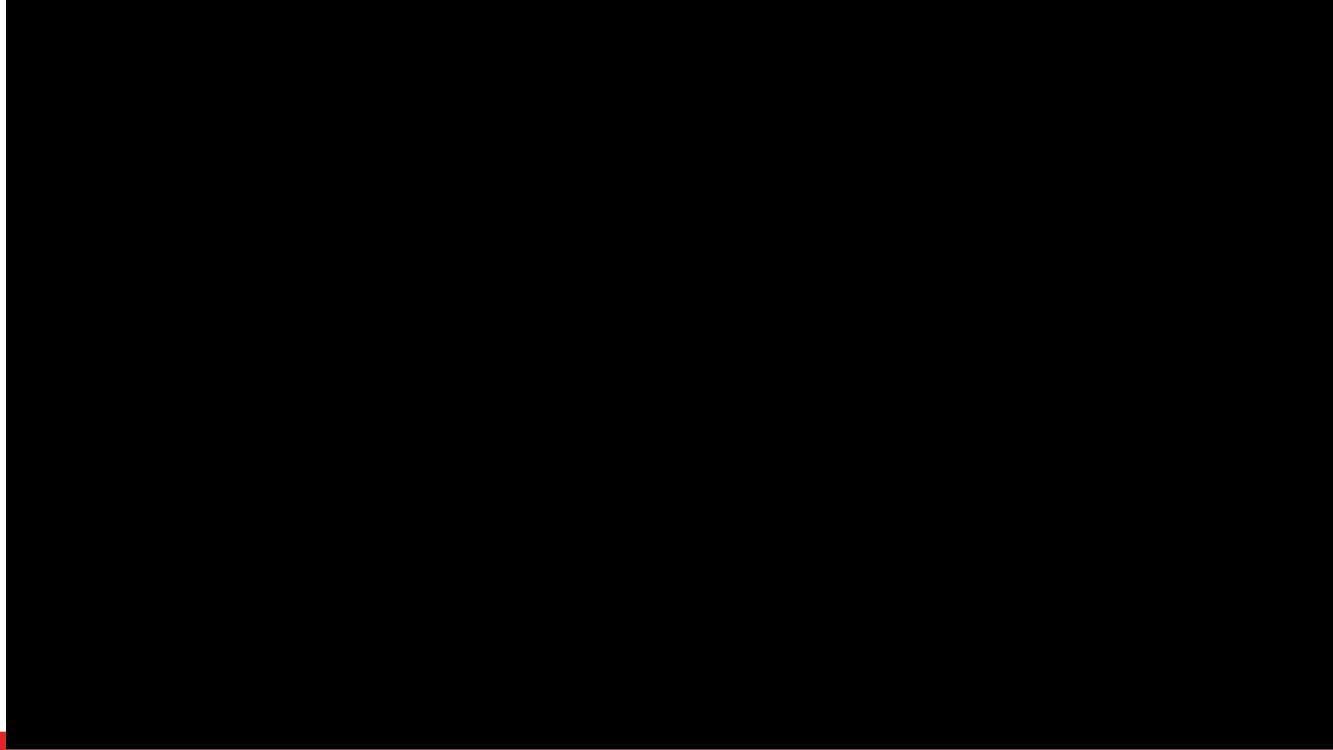
- National non-government peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- We work to ensure their safety, development and well-being
- Our vision is an Australian society in which:
 - the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families are protected
 - our communities are empowered to determine their own futures
 - our cultural identity is valued



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander early years services

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led
- Support the wellbeing of our most vulnerable children and families in the community
- Prioritise access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children not accessing mainstream services and overcome many of the identified service access barriers our families experience.
- They are holistic and responsive to child and family needs

Berrimba Child Care Centre Echuca, Victoria



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The strengths of our services

If we lose these services, communities lose a lot more than child care. Our services:

- Are seen as part of community
- Offer holistic services – for both children and parents
- Access our most vulnerable kids
- Build community strength

Threats to our services: Jobs for Families Child Care Package

15,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children do not have access to an early learning service

Jobs for Families doesn't accommodate for the unique role and operations of our services.

Without reform Jobs for Families will result in:

- A large number of our services facing closure
- The access gap widening



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Our solutions: small amendments will have a big impact

- An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific program within the Child Care Safety Net
- Provision of at least two full days (20 hours) of subsidised quality early learning to all children to support their development, regardless of their parents' activities.
- A commitment to increase places for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by 5,000 over the first three years of the package to redress the current early learning gap.

A Place for Culture

- 2 day cultural competency training package for non-Indigenous early childhood educators
- Aims to ensure educators build a genuine understanding, respect and relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, communities, children and families
- Designed to promote conversations, genuine understanding and ideas on effective approaches and strategies for culturally inclusive service delivery.

A Place for Culture Launch

Lunchtime today



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