

Growing up our way

Aboriginal and Torres Strait
Islander child rearing Matrix

Supporting document

For Community

With the primary objective of preserving, promoting, protecting and sharing the strengths of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices, Growing Up Our Way is a community resource. Those interested in child rearing, or who would like to find out more about traditional and contemporary child rearing practices that are taking place in a number of communities across Australia, can read and share this knowledge with family and community – sharing, preserving and promoting knowledge that helps children grow up proud in self and strong in culture.

Growing Up Our Way can be used as a foundation for starting a discussion in community about local ways of growing up children - looking at the strengths of community, extended family and culture. In doing so, community can identify what practices help children grow up strong and proud, what practices ensure children are provided with solid cultural and family connections, and what practices support child and family wellbeing.

Given the diversity in our communities, cultural practices that take place in one family/community may not be taking place in another. By reading the entire document, you can reflect on the diversity of practices, values and beliefs. You can also reflect on local practices, values and beliefs - noting whether these are similar or different to the ones noted in the resource.

*Please note:

(1) The Growing Up Our Way Learning Tales Kit will be available in the next year. This kit has specifically been designed to compliment the Growing Up Our Way Matrix. The Learning Tales Kit is a tool for practitioners working in the fields of early childhood, child welfare, and family services; and for communities. Please refer to the SNAICC website for future updates on this new resource.

(2) SNAICC intends to create a Child Rearing Practices Community Matrix. This resource will be a 'living document', and we will review its quality and life span after 12 months. The Child Rearing Practices Community Matrix will be used to upload your own local stories, knowledge, values, beliefs and practices surrounding the growing up of children. You will be able to share your stories with others – helping preserve these stories for future generations. Please check the SNAICC website for future updates on this community resource.

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For Members

This unique resource offers concise information, from a variety of different sources, on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices. With such a rich diversity to draw from, Growing Up Our Way is a collation of some of the literature on child rearing practices, values and beliefs. For our members working in children or family services, child protection or early childhood education, this resource can serve as a foundation to build and grow knowledge about the ways in which children grow up in your local area. It encourages you to think about (and explore) examples of best practice in ensuring child and family wellbeing in your local area.

Growing Up Our Way is a national resource, with an emphasis placed on the diversity of child rearing practices in communities across Australia. We encourage you to discuss, collect and share stories of growing up children in your local area – examining the strengths of culture and community in raising strong and proud children. In doing so, local practices that assist children to grow up strong in self and proud in culture can be locally identified and locally shared. Identifying and sharing cultural and community strengths in growing up children in your local area can assist in ensuring that children are provided with solid cultural and family connections.

While the resource has been thematically organised, it is advised to read the entire resource to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices and values. Given the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and practices that take place in one community may not be taking place in another, reading the entire document allows you to reflect on the diversity of practices, values and beliefs – and assists in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and family diversity.

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For Practitioners

Growing Up Our Way can help practitioners working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families to gain a better understanding of the home care dynamics, child rearing values and beliefs, and the practices taking place in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities. Detailing some of the beliefs and practices on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing and family structures - including details on the roles of fathers, mothers, extended family and community in the growing up of children – this resource provides a snapshot, and highlights the diversity, of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family life.

By incorporating the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents, children, families and communities, workers from a variety of disciplines can better engage with, and embrace, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge and, consequently, gain a greater understanding of the way in which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 'grow up' their children. Practitioners working in the areas of family or child welfare, education, community development, counselling - and other organisations providing services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families - can utilise this resource as a foundation upon which to begin local conversations around child rearing and inviting those you work with, and for, to share in their own practices, values and beliefs.

While the resource has been thematically organised, it is advised to read the resource in its entirety to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices and values. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are diverse, and practices that take place in one community may not be taking place in another. Reading the entire document allows you to reflect on the diversity of practices, values and beliefs – and assists in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander diversity.

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(2) SNAICC intends to create a Child Rearing Practices Community Matrix. If you work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families who would like to share their stories of growing up strong children, please let them know about this community resource. This resource will be a 'living document', and we will review its quality and life span after 12 months. The Child Rearing Practices Community Matrix will be used to upload local stories, knowledge, values, beliefs and practices surrounding the growing up of children. Please check the SNAICC website for future updates on the availability of this community resource.

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For Policy Officers

Those working in areas of public policy that effect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, families and children, need to have an understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives, values, beliefs and practices. As a tool for policy officers, this resource contains details of a number of different Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander beliefs, values and practices. With information from a variety of communities across Australia, this resource details some of the beliefs, values and practices that inform the child rearing process in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and communities.

Detailing some of the practices and beliefs that inform learning, teaching, language, communication, culture, relationships, values, how children are viewed (and more), will help in understanding how policy work can best support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families and communities. It is hoped that this resource can also be utilised to inform future policy and government responses to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by providing information about growing up strong through family, community and culture.

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For Researchers and Academics

As a tool for researchers and academics, this resource contains details on a variety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices, from a diversity of communities across Australia. Whether your research involves understanding elements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, children, communities, culture, values, beliefs or practices, Growing Up Our Way provides a snapshot of these aspects of life within the context of family and child rearing.

From the researched literature on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing values, beliefs and practices, Growing Up Our Way has collated key quotes and categorised them thematically. So, whether you are searching for information on sleeping or eating, learning or playing, relationships or language, cultures or values, this resource provides easy access to information on these and many other areas. Growing Up Our Way provides direct reference to the source from which the information was gained, the key quotes from the source and identifies the geographical region to which the information refers.

While the resource has been thematically organised, it is advised to read the resource in its entirety to gain a better understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander child rearing practices and values. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures are diverse, and practices that take place in one community may not be taking place in another. Reading the entire document allows you to reflect on the diversity of practices, values and beliefs – and assists in understanding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander diversity.

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