



CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS - SUMMARY FROM PRESENTERS

Session Number	4 Parents in early childhood practice
Your Presentation Title	4 Parents in early childhood practice <i>Families and Educators working together to create safe and supportive environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.</i>
Abstract /Summary of Presentation (1/2 to 1 page) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • objectives • main ideas, topics and findings • evidence? • Outcomes? 	<p><i>A presentation on the findings of research conducted with Aboriginal parents and the implications for the decisions made by non-Aboriginal early childhood educators working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.</i></p> <p>Throughout our presentation we aim to introduce you to our wonderful site, Kalaya Children’s Centre located in Adelaide, South Australia. Kalaya is an integrated early childhood site with an Aboriginal focus. Services provided include: sessional kindergarten and long day care. Kalaya evolved from the Alberton Aboriginal Extended Hours Kindergarten which began in 1975 and continues to be a major early childhood provider to the Aboriginal community in the western suburbs of Adelaide. Kalaya Children’s Centre currently employs 20 staff members, offers a bus service and is governed by a Management Committee. Our centre philosophy is based around providing a warm nurturing and rich learning environment which includes a strong belief in ensuring family and community involvement. We work in collaboration with families and believe that they are the first and most influential teachers of their children. Therefore, we view it as essential to develop relationships communicate freely with families to build on children and family strengths and to share decision making processes. Families are involved through the joint creations of Identity Webs, Individual Learning Plans and Family Based Projects.</p> <p>In 2012 we conducted a research project titled ‘Families and Educators working together to create safe and supportive learning environments for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children’. It can be argued that in recent history ATS families have been denied the opportunity for true involvement and decision making in the education of their children. The project involves a series of interviews conducted with six Aboriginal women of different ages whom have raised or are raising their children in the local community. They sat down and had a yarn with a non-Aboriginal woman and shared their personal thoughts and accounts about their involvement in the education of their children. Outcomes showed that while families want to be informed, involved and work in collaboration with teachers, this unfortunately had not been the case in many of their personal experiences. We found that when it comes to developing relationships with families, there are simply no shortcuts. It was identified that there is an essential requirement for the educator to be truly self-reflective in order to build relationships with families based on mutual respect and trust.</p>
References if applicable	Not applicable
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