



Project overview: ECEI – Building Cultural Responsiveness

Increasing CALD communities participation in the NDIS ECEI

Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) is an Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) partner, with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), supporting children 0-6 years with a disability or developmental delay in five areas across metro Melbourne. The NDIA's *Cultural and Linguistic Diversity Strategy 2018* prioritises ensuring the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is responsive to the diversity of our population and takes into account the language and cultural needs of individuals needed to achieve full participation in the NDIS.

ECEI is partnering with the Diversity Unit at BSL to build an evidence-based approach to putting this Strategy into practice. This will involve consulting with four culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities [the Indian, Iranian, Iraqi and Vietnamese communities] in North East Melbourne (NEMA) to identify ways to increase the participation of children and families from CALD backgrounds in ECEI.

Objectives

The Project has 5 key objectives:

1. Build knowledge and understanding about CALD communities in the NEMA region and their
 - a. Understanding of, and attitudes about, children with disabilities and or developmental delays in their cultural context
 - b. Awareness of ECEI services and/or barriers to accessing ECEI services for culturally diverse communities
2. Develop useful culturally appropriate tools and supports to improve access to services, engagement, and retention of CALD communities
3. Develop the capacity of ECEI staff to work in a culturally responsive manner
4. Develop a CALD community engagement plan, drawing on learnings from the project
5. Showcase project learnings for BSL ECEI to build sector knowledge, and position BSL as a leader in the field of cultural responsiveness

Key activities in the Project:

1. **Desktop review:** to understand gaps in ECEI service delivery to children from CALD communities; and gather expert knowledge on service delivery to children with disability / developmental delays from CALD communities.
2. **CALD Community Consultation:** with parents, community leaders and service providers to:
 - Understand potential cultural issues, and levels of awareness of disability / development delays in CALD communities.
 - Understand awareness of supports available for children with disability / development delays from CALD backgrounds, and their previous experiences accessing these services.
 - Understand barriers to accessing and engaging with services and identifying tools and strategies to address these barriers.
 - Develop and test tools and strategies to improve accessibility and processes of ECEI services.
3. **Community Engagement Plan:** Develop and implement a CALD community engagement plan, drawing on learnings from the project
4. **Staff Capacity building:** Develop and deliver cultural responsiveness training to all ECEI teams which will incorporate learnings from the Project; make staff aware of the critical success factors for improving accessibility and engagement for CALD families; and raise awareness on use of tools/strategies/resources developed throughout the Project.