Professional learning: Creating a sense of community

Topic 4: Inclusion

Leadership team guide
Acknowledgement:

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While the resources are available freely for these purposes, to realise the full potential of KidsMatter Early Childhood, it is recommended that the resources be used with the appropriate training and support under the KidsMatter Initiative.
What will participants learn from this topic?

When you have completed this topic, participants will:

- understand the importance of inclusion and how it supports good mental health
- consider how educators can promote inclusive practices within their service
- have considered the many different types of diversity that exist within early childhood services.

Preparation for this session

Resources

- Component 1 Topic 4: Professional Learning Participant Workbook
- Whiteboard or butcher’s paper
- Video 4.1: Inclusion
- Video 4.2: Diversity
- Coloured pens or pencils.
Suggestions for how to run this topic

1  Introduce the topic to the group

This topic explores the diversity that exists within an early childhood community and how inclusive practices can support children’s mental health and wellbeing.

Content includes:
- a video that provides information about inclusive practices within an early childhood service
- a discussion about what inclusion looks like in practice
- a video about recognising and respecting diversity with an early childhood community
- an activity for staff to think further about ways in which they are already inclusive and identify some additional inclusive practices.
2 Video 4.1: Inclusion

The video covers:
- a description of inclusive practices in early childhood services
- the relationship between inclusion and children’s mental health and wellbeing
- how reflecting on the policies and practices of the early childhood setting can promote inclusion.

Tips for watching this video
- There is space for participants to make notes about the video on page 2 of the Participant Workbook.

3 What does inclusion look like in practice?

Instructions
1. Facilitate a discussion about what inclusion looks like under each of the below areas, and ask participants to add examples to page 3 of their Participant Workbook.
   - policies and procedures
   - the physical environment
   - relationships
   - day to day experiences
   - communication methods
   - social inclusion.

Tips for this discussion
- It may be helpful to break into smaller groups initially before discussion as a whole group.
- There is space for participants to write notes on page 3 of their Participant Workbook.

The aim of this discussion is for participants to consider the different ways messages about inclusion are demonstrated to all members of their early childhood community.
4  Video 4.2: Diversity

The video covers:
- recognising the different forms of diversity that exist in an early childhood community
- the importance of welcoming and celebrating diversity in an early childhood service
- reflecting on how we are the same and different to others.

Tips for watching this video
- There is space for participants to make notes about the video on page 4 of their Participant Workbook.

5  Activity: The ‘ideal’ inclusive service

The aim of this activity is for participants to think further about ways in which they are already inclusive and identify some practical ways in which they can also improve.

Instructions
Part one
- Divide participants into groups and ask them to think of an imaginary service that does not demonstrate inclusion. Ask participants to think about the physical environment, relationships, communication methods, service and daily activities, and social inclusion opportunities.
- Ask participants to work together and use the materials provided to sketch this service on page 5 of their Participant Workbook and to be creative as possible.
- Encourage participants to share and talk about their drawings.

Part two
- Then, ask participants to now draw the ‘ideal’ inclusive service on page 6 of their Participant Workbook. Remind participants of areas to think about – i.e. the physical environment etc. Encourage participants to be highly imaginative and creative in their drawings. Emphasise that the services they are thinking of are imaginary to help them separate it from their own service initially.
Part three

- Now ask participants to rate both of their drawings between 0–10, with a score of 0 being as non-inclusive as possible and a score of 10 being as inclusive as possible and to write this number on the top of each drawing.

- Then ask participants to think about what rating they would give their own service. Discuss in small groups and then the larger group.

- Ask participants:
  - What are the strengths as individuals, a team, and a service that give you your rating?
  - What is one thing you could do individually, as a team, or as a service to move one point further up the inclusiveness scale?

- Invite participants to share their ideas with the larger group.


**Tips for this activity**

- There is a worksheet for this activity in the *Participant Workbook* on page 5–6.
6 Activity: Moving forward

The aim of this activity is to have participants set some short and long-term goals for promoting inclusion at their early childhood service.

Instructions

- Ask participants to answer the following questions individually:
  - What is one thing that I could do to promote inclusion with children and families at the early childhood service over the next week?
  - What is one thing that I could do to promote inclusion with children and families at the early childhood service over the next 12 months?

- Ask participants to answer the following questions as a large group or in smaller groups if there are a lot of people:
  - What is one thing that you could do as a service to build upon and develop new inclusive practices with children and families over the next week?
  - What is one thing that you could do as a service to build upon and develop new inclusive practices with children and families over the next 12 months?

Tips for this activity

- There is a worksheet for this activity in the Participant Workbook on page 7.
Reflective questions

Reflecting on new content is a good way to wrap up each topic and summarise what has been covered. The following questions can support reflection, although you may wish to add your own questions to suit your team. Reflective questions can be considered during the topic, at the end of the topic or at a separate time. Reflective questions can be completed individually, in pairs or as a group.

- How do you honour and celebrate diversity within your early childhood community?
- How do you actively seek out information about the diversity in children and families at your service? When does this occur?
- Think about a new family who has started at your service. How might you help them to feel included?

Tips for this activity

- Reflective questions can be found on page 8 in the Participant Workbook.