PRACTICE TOOL 1

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Child Safe Organisation National Principle 2: Children and young people are informed about their rights, participate in decisions that affect them and are taken seriously.

Building and nurturing positive relationships are critical to creating an environment where children and young people feel safe to engage with the staff in your organisation. All children and young people need relationships that are healing and nurturing and particularly where they have experienced abuse or trauma. Positive relationships with staff that foster understanding, trust, respect, and maintain appropriate boundaries help children and young people develop a sense of safety and wellbeing, now and in the future.

Everyday interactions with children and young people play a critical role in determining how they will engage with you and the organisation.

The reflective practice questions in this tool are designed to encourage conversations and reflection on your relationship-building skills and strengths and provide some ideas on how you can develop your practice.

To start, focus on two or three questions most relevant to your service. It's a great idea to start with your areas of strength and then move on to those areas where you think your practice would benefit from further development.

This tool can be used to think about your practice as an individual or with colleagues in a team meeting or during one on one supervision.

Consider the questions on the next page and prioritise the ones you think will help children, young people, yourself and other staff the most.

> Consider the following questions and prioritise the ones you think will benefit children, young people, yourself and other staff the most.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

When a new family from a CaLD background enters your service are steps taken to ensure the environment reflects their culture? Do you include children and young people in creating that environment?

For children and young people and their families who speak a first language other than English how do you learn about and support their cultural needs. Are there any good resources that would be helpful for staff to learn about the cultural needs of all families in the service?

How are environments created to help children and young people feel safe and secure in the service? And connect with other children in the service?

Are children and young people regularly informed of what is happening, such as in their case planning or events in the service? What follow up techniques do you use? Messages, in-person meetings, group times? Which techniques are more successful and how do you gauge success?

How is a culture of safety, respect and fairness encouraged and demonstrated in the service?

Do you regularly follow up with children and young people to let them know what is happening, such as their case planning, events happening in the service or plans you have made? What techniques do you use to follow up?

How are decisions about providing support for children and young people made? Are they included in making those decisions. Do you check in with their mothers and carers? Is that information recorded and/or discussed with your team?

How do you adapt your ways of working with children and young people to suit their different needs? e.g. their age or learning needs. Do you think this works or is there something different you would like to try?

Are children and young people involved in choosing experiences/activities that are responsive to their strengths, abilities, and interests?

Do you have regular discussions in your teams or in supervision to recognise unconscious cultural biases? If you identify an unconscious bias, what steps can you take to change your approach?

When thinking about children and young people do you consider using communication tools such as pictures, technology, symbols, or an interpreter? How comfortable are you using alternative communication tools? If you are not comfortable, how can you strengthen this?