

Innovative Solutions Support Story - Bright Horizons Elsternwick

Does your service need support from a bicultural worker to assist in settling a child from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background? Do educators need support to implement culturally appropriate strategies and practices into the care environment?

This is one service's story of utilising the support of a bicultural worker funded through Innovative Solutions Support.

The role was within our community at the centre to support a child where English was his second language. We wanted to maintain and acknowledge his first language and the bicultural support worker introduced us to basic vocabulary and prompts to engage him within the environment. She support us and the child by providing resources such as books, songs and rhymes and interpreted them in both languages to the child and other children within the room.

Our bicultural worker gave us plenty of useful strategies to develop communication.

- She provided us with Korean words that we could use in everyday situations and also encouraged the use of non-verbal gestures as a response to a questions or indicate a need by both child and educators. She stressed the importance to use both languages in order for the child to feel secure with his new community.
- We were encouraged to continue to talk to child in English as well, even when it appeared the child wasn't responding, as it was encouraged to expose him to a new language and to help him feel part of the group.
- She support us and the child by providing resources such as books, songs and rhymes and interpreted them in both languages to the child and other children within the room.
- We were encouraged to have the same structure, routines and transitions in order for him to know what to expect next and to encourage time for him to have interactions with educators and children.

How did the support benefit the family and the relationship with educators?

The family of the child were appreciated of the efforts and the support worker communicated in Korean with the family when she was in. We believe that the support worker strengthened and supported the relationship we have with the family and then we continued to build on a respectful and reciprocal relationship which we believe would have been harder had she not been able to support.

What did educators gain from the experience?

It was defiantly worthwhile. It has given the Educators more confidence and also strategies to implement within the program. The Educators found it a pleasure to work with the bicultural support worker as she affirmed that some of the things they were doing were benefiting the child. We gained more knowledge on cultural awareness and resources and were able to become a part of the FKA library to help continue to support this child and others where English is a second language.

What will the service do next?

We will continue to support the child and his culture through various ways some of which will be through celebrations/traditions, a review of the menu to include elements of Korean food practices. We have included dolls of Asian descent and also through his interest in cars and trains we have engaged in using Korean words within the right context. We have incorporated Korean music into our program.