Supporting Aboriginal children and young people in care to reach their educational goals

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We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the First Nations Peoples of NSW and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

We acknowledge the ongoing connection Aboriginal people have to this land and recognise Aboriginal people as the original custodians of this land.

Relationships

Home and Community Partnerships

Benefits to students are improvements in -

- Self esteem
- Engagement in learning
- Participation in more challenging subjects
- Literacy and numeracy outcomes
- Attendance
- Completion of homework
- Behaviour at home and school
- Connection to school and learning

Engaging successfully with Aboriginal communities requires:

- An appreciation of - and the cultural competency to respond to - Aboriginal history, cultures and contemporary social dynamics and to the diversity of Aboriginal communities;
- valuing the cultural skills and knowledge of community organisations and Aboriginal and people.

High Expectations Relationships

[1]Chris Sarra - Stronger Smarter Institute

"It has seemingly been easier for education authorities to hold Indigenous communities culpable for failing to engage with schools for the purposes of education. It is easy to describe Indigenous communities in a complex social and cultural context and to attribute student failure as a direct consequence of the context. However the professional challenge for classroom teachers and their support infrastructure is to reflect inwards and evaluate the effectiveness of their own teaching practice and ask what it is that they are doing or not doing as a teacher that contributes to Indigenous student failure" (Sarra. 2011a. P161)

High Expectations Relationships begin my honouring the humanity of others

Trauma Informed Practice

Connect with children and help them to connect with others:
Experiencing trauma can be very isolating. It's often hard to connect at first with children who have experienced trauma. Sometimes consistent attempts to engage them are needed. Helping children to connect and develop relationships with others at school is also really important.

Help children to comply with requests: Children who have experienced trauma don't always necessarily want to please adults, so offering assistance to complete tasks can help to avoid 'battles of will'.

Help children to tell their story: Children who have experienced trauma often don't have a vocabulary to talk about what happened to them. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) can help children develop a language to tell their story to others. Telling their story to others can help children process what they have experienced and find meaning in it.

Establish safety in the classroom: Making school a safe place to come is essential. When children feel safe it's easier for them to learn and to develop safe, trusting relationships with others. Developing safe working relationships with families can make children feel even more secure at school.

Have structure and consistency in the classroom: Children who have experienced trauma often respond well to set boundaries and consequences that are applied with sensitivity to their needs.

Use natural consequences: Consequences that follow naturally from the unwanted behaviour work better than any school punishment. If property or relationships have been damaged, focus on outcomes that aim to fix these

Acknowledge good decisions: Commending positive behaviour as opposed to personality characteristics can be a good strategy, as some children who have experienced trauma may not respond well to praise.

Kids Matter –Australian Primary Schools Mental Health Initiative -https://beyou.edu.au/

What works

- A school culture and leadership that acknowledges and supports Aboriginal students and families, including a shared vision for the school community
- Quality and committed staff members/Aboriginal mentors
- High expectations of success for both staff, students, parents and community
- A drive for continuous improvement
- A learning environment that is responsive to individual needs
- Involvement of the Aboriginal community in planning and providing education
- School-wide strategies that work to maintain student engagement & improve learning outcomes, including broad curriculum provision
- Student-focused strategies that directly meet the needs of students at risk of low achievement or early leaving, including; school engagement programs, intensive case management, provision of transport and mentoring
- School absenteeism & attendance programs
- Quality VET options
- Quality career education
- Targeted skill development

Aboriginal identity in the 21st century
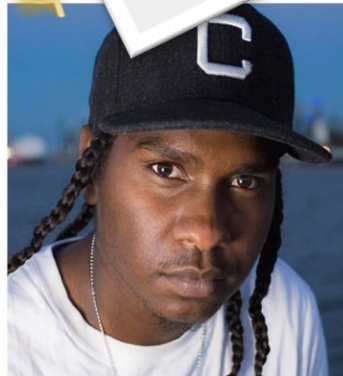
Digital Curriculum

Bangarra Dance Theatre

Patty Mills

Urban art

Digital Inclusion

Baker Boy

Mia Brennan

Lakkari Pitt

Mitch Tambo