



## Harmony week 2011

Harmony week reminds us of Australia's cultural diversity and is a celebration of the benefits of having a diverse culture.

Did you know:

- WA is the most culturally diverse state in Australia.
- Just over a quarter of our population were born overseas.

## The role of Schools

Schools play a central role in the lives of students and their families. The school experiences of children and families from different backgrounds:

- Shape their encounters with Australian society.
- Affects the child's sense of inclusion or exclusion and subsequent quality of engagement within the wider community.
- By actively promoting the needs and interests of students and families from culturally diverse backgrounds and building relationships of trust and understanding with parents and carers, schools can make a positive difference to students' mental health and wellbeing.



# Why Culture Matters for Children's Development and Wellbeing

## What is cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD)

Cultural and linguistic diversity (CALD) refers to people who identify with particular groups based on their birthplace, ethnicity, language, values, beliefs or world views.

This does not mean that everyone from a particular cultural group will hold exactly the same values or do things in the same way.

Showing support for cultural diversity involves talking with people to find out how best to include them and respect their cultural needs.

## Language and communication

Language can be a major barrier for newly arrived families. Lacking English language skills or being unfamiliar with Australian English can undermine confidence, make finding a job or learning at school more difficult, and contribute to social isolation. Concern about language skills can make communication with schools and other services more difficult for parents and carers.

Communication issues can arise in other ways as well. When the experiences, customs and beliefs of children and families from different cultural backgrounds are not recognised or valued, it can lead to miscommunication. For example, making eye contact when speaking to someone else is considered a sign of respect in mainstream Anglo-Australian culture; however, in some other cultures respect is shown by lowering eyes or looking away.

## Particular challenges that may affect children and families from CALD backgrounds

Children and families from CALD backgrounds may face a range of challenges as they find their way in the broader Australian society. The following challenges are common.

### Migration and resettlement

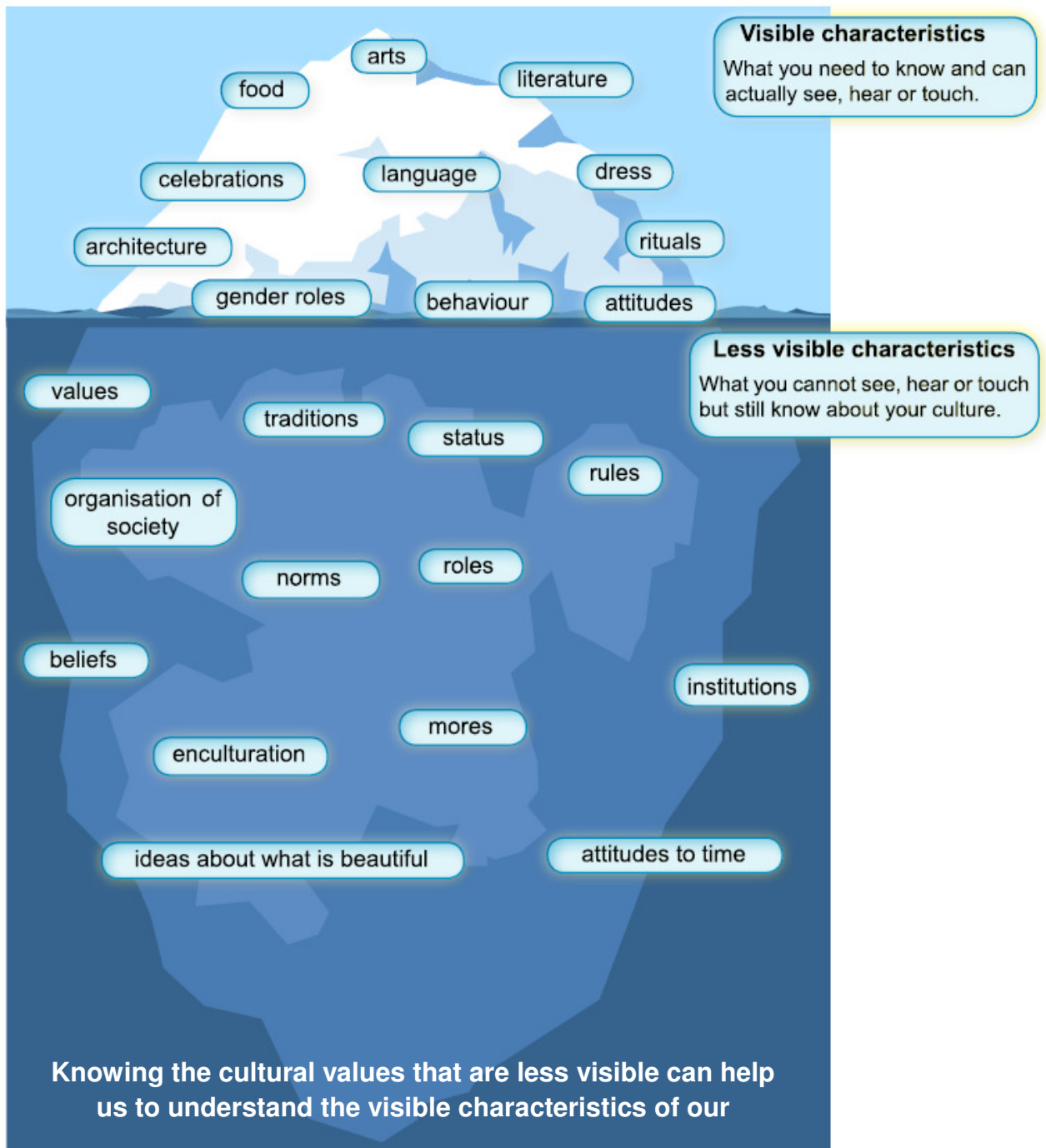
Resettling in a new country or into a new place involves finding housing, employment, schools, social connections and services. Lack of knowledge about how things work in the new environment and communication difficulties can make the challenge of resettlement all the more stressful. Family, friends and others who would normally provide support may have been left behind in the move. Feelings of loneliness, isolation or concern for those left behind can occur. These difficulties affect both children and adults.

## Culture and belonging

Research in many different cultures confirms the importance for all children of developing secure emotional connections with the adults who care for them. However, the ways that parents and carers go about developing these connections vary based on cultural beliefs about parenting and child development, as well as individual preferences and capacities. For example, in some cultures children are expected to always listen and respect their elders, while in other cultures children are taught from an early age to speak up for themselves.

# Student Worksheet – Diagrams to Describe Culture

Only 1/10 of an iceberg can be seen above the water, the other 9/10 is below the water and cannot be seen.



Think about your own culture and use the labels in the diagram to list examples from your own culture. Write your information in the table.

| Ideas from the diagram | Your own culture |
|------------------------|------------------|
|                        |                  |
|                        |                  |
|                        |                  |



| Course                         | Organiser   | Date   | Contact   | Other  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|--|
| Family Law Information Session | Sussex Street Community Law Service<br><br>Victoria Park Library<br>27 Sussex Street<br>VICTORIA PARK                 | Information session for Matters Involving Children runs from 5.30pm - 6.30pm and for Property Matters runs from 6.30pm - 7.30pm on the last Thursday of every month.<br>Information session for Matters Involving Children runs from 10.00am - 11.00am on the second Wednesday of every month. | 6253 9500   | Free<br><br>For couples / parents in the process of separating or divorcing  |
| Computer Classes               | Willagee Community Centre<br>City of Melville   | Classes on various topics run for 3-6 weeks. Open Access help sessions run on Mondays and Fridays from 10.00am - 12noon. Telephone to register interest.   | 9364 0848<br>Kris or Fiona  | Small cost for some courses; gold coin donation for help sessions  |
| On Target                      | Communicare   | Runs for 6 weeks at schools by request. Parents can telephone for information on the program and how to arrange a course at their school. Assessment interview prior to group entry. Free<br>Next course scheduled for March /April  | 0457 773 970<br>Zenovia   | Young people aged 10 to 17 years who are experiencing difficulties with school, familial issues, interpersonal issues, peer relationships and emotional regulation |
| St John First Aid Workshop     | St John First Aid Training Room<br>Target Store<br>Westfield Carousel Shopping Centre<br>Albany Highway<br>CANNINGTON | Date: Tuesday, 12 April<br>Time: 10.00am - 2.00pm  | 1300 106 499 St Johns Ambulance<br>Bookings Required - Limited Places | Parents and carers of children up to 12 years; no children allowed at workshop<br><br>Free; lunch included.  |

For more courses see:

<http://www.communities.wa.gov.au/resources/CommunityEducation/Pages/default.aspx>

[http://psych.curtin.edu.au/clinical\\_services/psychology\\_clinic\\_child.cfm](http://psych.curtin.edu.au/clinical_services/psychology_clinic_child.cfm)

## Websites

[http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/emotional\\_foundations\\_for\\_learning/communicating/friendships.html/](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/emotional_foundations_for_learning/communicating/friendships.html/) Fact sheets on many topics – go to “Supporting Best Practice”

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/> New updated KM website with Early Childhood information soon to be available.

<http://www.cyh.com/HealthTopics/HealthTopicDetailsKids.aspx?p=335&np=287&id=1465> This article is for children but search their website for a variety of topics written for children and parents.

<http://au.reachout.com/find> website for older children, discusses many topics.

<http://www.oh-pin.org/articles/pex-10-ways-to-nurture-childrens.pdf> Online parenting newsletter

Websites listed on previous newsletters remain good resources.