

KALGOORLIE-BOULDER ABORIGINAL KNOWLEDGE CIRCLE

Connected Beginnings – improving educational
outcomes for Aboriginal children



Growing Stronger
Together





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We respect and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and future. We acknowledge the stories, traditions and living cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples on this land and commit to building a brighter future together. The term Aboriginal in this document also includes Torres Strait Islander people.

Warning: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this document may contain images and names of deceased persons.

Connected Beginnings operates with financial support from the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.





WHAT IS CONNECTED BEGINNINGS?

Connected Beginnings Kalgoorlie is funded to improve the educational outcomes for Aboriginal children aged 0-5 years.

We facilitate the coordination and collaboration of services that support families and children. We aim to provide families with greater access to cohesive and coordinated service delivery tailored to their individual needs, so their children are healthy, safe and ready to thrive at school.

The Kalgoorlie team currently collaborates with East Kalgoorlie, South Kalgoorlie and Boulder Primary schools, WACHS, Bega Garnbirringu and local family support services.

Connected Beginnings wanted to build a shared understanding of the challenges facing the families and children in Kalgoorlie-Boulder. So we talked to families about raising children in Kalgoorlie and we listened to what they said.

We heard families say that it was important to feel that their culture and language was valued, respected and acknowledged in our community.

We also heard families say they felt some organisations were not culturally safe to access.

The Connected Beginnings team knew that without addressing this, the program in our community would not thrive long term.

Connected Beginnings uses a coordinated and community led approach, which subsequently, will strengthen and deepen the connections to the community ensuring that family and community voices and lived experiences are heard.

We held several family and community conversations to explore how we can work together to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal children aged 0-5 years.

This document is a summary of all the experiences, ideas, conversations and data collected across the community, including the Knowledge Circle, NAIDOC Events, workshops and reference groups.

Please support the Knowledge Circle by sharing this document and keeping the conversations alive.



THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED

To ensure diverse thinking and contributions, we identified and invited Aboriginal people as both community members and service workers to be part of a collective voice.

Discussions were held in multiple locations, with participants from across all sectors. Thank you to the following organisations for allowing their Aboriginal staff to attend.

East Kalgoorlie Primary School

South Kalgoorlie Primary School

Boulder Primary School

WACHS: Ware Street & Hospital

Central Regional TAFE

Bega Garnbirringu Health Service

Community Mental Health

Department of Justice

SMYL

Hope Community Services

Goldfields Rehabilitation Service Inc.

Red Cross

Centrecare

WA Police

Aboriginal Family Law Services

HIPPY/ Anglicare

NIAA

Wanslea



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS



We held several family and community conversations to explore how we can work together to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal children aged 0-5 years.

We asked participants why they attended our sessions.

- To network and find out what services are doing
- We want things to change
- We need to work together
- We're all here for the same reason
- Getting to know what each of us does
- To support families
- To be on the same page to support the community
- Our kids are the future
- Need to support our kids to become strong adults
- Family is at the core of everything

We wanted to identify the practices, strategies and behaviours that support families. We asked participants what is working well in Kalgoorlie.

- Community Events e.g. NAIDOC
- Networking and partnerships between agencies e.g. Pina Karnbi Ear Health Project
- Sporting opportunities
- Culturally appropriate Early Childhood programs e.g. Spring into Learning, Kindilinks
- After school programs e.g. PCYC, YMCA
- Collaboration of Aboriginal staff between agencies (formal and informal)
- Integrated services models e.g. East Kalgoorlie Primary School
- Clontarf Aboriginal Academy/ Kalgoorlie Girls Academy

We also asked participants about their experiences of what worked well for families in other places they had visited.

- Bush Camping and Back to Country programs
- Cultural spaces
- Aboriginal Elders Groups
- Youth programs e.g. Bike program
- Aboriginal Child Care centre
- Aboriginal Community Resource Centre e.g. Wadjuk
- Identity related programs, allowing people to explore their family identity
- Culturally specific services e.g. Wungening Alcohol and Drug services



THINKING BIG - OUR DREAM

To build a shared understanding, we wanted to explore what is important for families. We asked families “what matters most when raising children in Kalgoorlie?”

Families told us, to raise strong confident children we need to have:

- Respect and acknowledgement of Aboriginal Culture
- A safe and inclusive community
- Strong community relationships
- Family support
- Access to culturally appropriate early education
- Safe, secure housing
- Strong role models in the community
- Freedom to manage own finances (Indue Card)
- Equitable access to health services
- Access to services for drugs and alcohol





“Equity is hard to imagine, we’ve never had it.”

Group Participant

GETTING FOCUSED

We asked families, children and community members to imagine a town where there was equality for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children.

This was a hard question for some people to answer. Many participants expressed difficulty in imagining a town like this.

- Living side by side, everyone respecting each other
- Acknowledgement of culture and language
- Everyone’s voice is heard
- Unity
- Safe to walk around town
- Children not labelled
- No harassment
- Healthier lifestyle
- More choices and opportunities
- Safe places
- Culture taught in schools
- Children healthy, safe and ready to thrive at school
- Equal opportunities

“Racism is a feeling, it’s hard to describe what it looks like but you feel it deep inside.”

Group Participant

“ We come together with many voices, but we unite as one to strengthen our community for our children. ”

Community Member

A COMMON VISION

After thinking about what Kalgoorlie looks like for children, families and the community, we summarised the overarching ideas and came up with the key themes that brought everyone together to support children aged 0-5 years.

1

We want people to know the impact racism has on the children, on their health, development and their well-being.

2

We want to build support for action, doing something and trying new things now.

3

This knowledge circle has the potential to create change. Everyone needs to contribute to make a difference for our children.



With our key themes in mind, we started to explore what needed to be done to achieve our vision.

GOAL ONE

We want people to know the impact that racism has on the children, on their health, development and their well-being.

How can we build respect and acknowledgement of culture? Ideas we have:

- Building cultural safety in all services and agencies in Kalgoorlie for staff and clients
- Aboriginal language taught in schools and early childhood programs
- More Aboriginal art in public places
- Acknowledgement to country at all meetings
- Aboriginal street names
- More Aboriginal specific services e.g. Aboriginal ante-natal group
- More opportunities for networking and building healthy relationships
- Build and support the great work already happening, e.g. Unity in Community Group

GOAL TWO

We want to build support for action, doing something now and trying new things.

How can we ensure our children thrive? Ideas we have:

- Pass on Aboriginal history
- Commit to Unity
- Love our children
- Services need to work together
- Embed culture within services
- Everyone commit to make changes
- Support families to raise our children our way
- Do it with us, not for us

GOAL THREE

This Knowledge Circle has the potential to create change. Everyone needs to contribute to make a difference for our children.

How can we work together to build a stronger community? Ideas we have:

- Having respect for others
- Acknowledge the good work already happening
- Acknowledge the strong community role models
- Supporting services and agencies to consult with the Aboriginal community
- Support each other, we all want the same outcomes for our families
- Advocate and raise awareness of needs in the community





KEEP THE CONVERSATIONS ALIVE – THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING OUR SHARED VOICE

We are only at the beginning of our change journey. We will continue to have many community conversations. This is what we still need to find out.

- Who else needs to be involved?
- How can we continue to raise awareness?
- How can we continue to grow and strengthen the Knowledge Circle?
Our group on our terms.
- Who else needs to hear from us?
- Who shares our vision, who sees what we see? Who are our allies?
- Where are examples of good practice? How can we all build on these?





TAKE ACTION

- *Invite others to listen*
 - *Develop an action plan to help achieve our goals*
 - *Formalise information sharing pathways*
 - *Cultural audit to identify examples of good practice*
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