



# Annual Report

2021



*fka* Children's Services acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to the land, skies and waterways. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities.

# President's Message

The year started positively with a meeting with the incoming Victorian Government Minister with responsibility for early childhood education and care.

The Board continued the vital work of developing a new Strategic Plan for the organisation while supporting the Executive Director with the unprecedented demands of managing service delivery in a pandemic.

We engaged with our Expert Sub-Committee to further develop the Strategic Plan, especially in recognising the unintended impact of language such as 'race'. The *fkaCS* Strategic Plan 2021 to 2023 was finalised mid-year, articulating our vision for all children to actively participate in quality education and care services that recognise, value and embed difference and diversity.

The planning process threw up a challenge in the Purpose Statement in the *fkaCS* Constitution. We are working on recommendations to the Annual General Meeting of members to update the language to reflect contemporary understandings of diversity and inclusion.

New government contracts were awarded to *fkaCS* enabling us to broaden our impact in supporting children's' right to participate in high quality early childhood education with culturally rich environments.

The Board worked on strengthening its own operations with the establishment of a Risk Sub-Committee and regular reporting on compliance with legal obligations.

I would like to thank the Board and our Executive Director for a productive year under challenging circumstances. The Strategic Plan lays the foundations to identify opportunities for further enhancing our vital work.

**Barbara Romeril**  
**Outgoing President**

# Operational Report

**2021 was another year of mixed service delivery as we once again pivoted from working at home to working in the office and back to working at home.**

The team at *fkaCS* demonstrated incredible resilience and creativity in ensuring the Victorian early childhood education and care sector received the highest quality support both remotely and onsite when circumstances allowed.

Developing and maintaining partnerships is an important part of our work. These partnerships are designed and underpinned by the strength, skills, and expertise each partner brings to the partnership.

Our partnership with Semann and Slattery continued under the Kindergarten Quality Improvement Program. This program, funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training, provides mentoring, support and coaching for Victorian kindergartens who are not yet reaching National Quality Standards. In 2021, Early Childhood Australia joined the consortium adding its extensive experience and resources to the program.

Midway through the year, the partnership with Semann and Slattery, Dr Anne Kennedy and Heather Barnes OAM was successful in tendering for the End-to-End Career and Networking program. This program provides co-facilitation of

70 local networking events 4 times per year across Victoria, individual coaching for new teachers, Communities of Practice, and an online community platform.

The Early Childhood Language Program: Quality Support Program continued to provide support to kindergartens delivering the Early Childhood Language Program. This program offers mentoring, networking, and communities of practice to preschool language teachers and is delivered in partnership with Semann and Slattery with support from The University of Melbourne.

Our Cultural Inclusion Program is offered under the Department of Education and Training Menu of evidence-informed practice. Eligible kindergartens access School Readiness Funding (SRF) to purchase support from *fkaCS*.

2021 was the third year of offering support under the SRF model. As such we saw an increase in kindergartens accessing support from us. Feedback suggests that the bespoke nature of this type of support has a real and lasting impact on kindergartens' cultural inclusion strategies, leading to thoughtful curriculum decision-making based on the needs of multilingual children and families.

*fkaCS* will continue to advocate for the rights of multilingual children and families to actively participate in their education and care. Our new Strategic Plan affords us the opportunity to delve

more deeply into the notion of race and racism in early childhood systems and practice.

*fka*CS congratulates the Victorian Government for their lasting and game-changing commitment to Victoria's young children and those who educate them with the recent announcement of a 9-billion-dollar investment in young children's education. Whether it's known as kindergarten or pre-prep, over the next 10 years all Victorian children will have the opportunity to actively participate in play-based, developmentally appropriate education, prior to school.

The commitment made by the Victorian Government is in recognition of the dedication of early childhood teachers and professionals and the crucial role they play within our community.

*fka*CS extend our heartfelt thank you to all the teachers and early childhood professionals who have continued to provide the highest quality education and care to Victorian children and families during the pandemic. *fka*CS acknowledges the challenges kindergartens have encountered over the last two years and that the success and educational outcomes of young children relies upon the tireless work of teachers and early childhood professionals.

We extend our thanks to our partners for recognising the value of the work that we do, our commitment to maintaining these strong

partnerships and the impact we collectively have to program design to support quality outcomes for children, and those who work with them.

*fka*CS is fortunate to have a team of dedicated Pedagogy and Practice Consultants, Project Leaders and skilled operations team members who once again have demonstrated their commitment to the rights of multilingual and newly arrived children and families.

We thank them all for their commitment to the organisation, young children, and their unwavering dedication to the potential of high quality, inclusive early childhood programs to provide the best outcomes for children.

**Melodie Davies**  
**Executive Director**

# Acknowledgements

## Thank you to...

The **Victorian Department of Education and Training** for their commitment to Victorian Early Years services and children's cultural and linguistic rights.

The **Peter Williams Trust** for their ongoing support maintaining the Multicultural Resource Centre and *fkaCS* Van.

The **Forest Hill Foundation** for supporting the Multicultural Resource Centre refresh project. This project has resulted in additional resources being available for borrowing.

**Barbara Romeril** (outgoing President) for her commitment in leading the organisation over the last three years during a difficult time.

The **Early Childhood Language Program (ECLP) Quality Support Program Steering Committee** supports the delivery of the ECLP Quality Support

Program and provides us with valuable expertise and guidance in the delivery of our support to Kindergarten teaching in a language other than English:

- **Adam Tinker** – Expression Australia
- **Michael Randall** – Department of Education and Training
- **Vaso Elefsiniotis** – Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.
- **Dr Anne Kennedy** – Early Childhood Education Consultant
- **Dr Yvette Slaughter** – University of Melbourne
- **Anthony Semann** – Semann and Slattery
- **Colin Slattery** – Semann and Slattery
- **Kylie Farmer** – Modern Languages Teachers Association of Victoria

## Board of Management

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Barbara Romeril</b><br>President                                   | <b>Diane Kearney</b><br>Board Member                                 |
| <b>Melinda Ackerman</b><br>Vice President to 30/06/21<br>Board Member | <b>Dr Wendy Roberts</b><br>Board Member                              |
| <b>Janis Lateef</b><br>Honourary Treasurer                            | <b>Roslyn Cornish</b><br>Board Member                                |
| <b>Julie Brooks</b><br>Secretary                                      | <b>Vanessa Field</b><br>Board Member<br>Vice President from 30/06/21 |

## Expert Sub-Committee

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Amanda Sparks</b><br>Committee Member    | <b>Helen Walker Cook</b><br>Committee Member     |
| <b>Carolina Cabezas</b><br>Committee Member | <b>Janet Williams-Smith</b><br>Committee Member  |
| <b>Claudine Lam</b><br>Committee Member     | <b>Dr Sue Atkinson Lopez</b><br>Committee Member |

## Sub-Contractors & Consultants

*This year we thank the following subcontractors and consultants who supported *fkaCS* in our work:*

**Fay Muir**  
ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

**Kylie Farmer**  
ECLP Quality Support Program Mentor

**Dr Sue Atkinson Lopez**

**Carolina Cabezas**

**Dr Anne Kennedy**

**Semann & Slattery**

## Staff

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Melodie Davies</b><br>Executive Director                         | <b>Barbara Lew</b><br>Librarian                          | <b>Jacqueline Constantin</b><br>ECLP Quality Support Program<br>Mentor |
| <b>Angela Ditchmen</b><br>Professional Learning &<br>Mentoring Lead | <b>Ellysha Nestler</b><br>Pedagogy & Practice Consultant | <b>Ron Holmes</b><br>Project Lead                                      |
| <b>Angelique Bromley</b><br>Mentor & Coach                          | <b>Emma McGrath</b><br>Special Projects Coordinator      | <b>Samantha Gould</b><br>Pedagogy & Practice Consultant                |
| <b>Ashley Howden</b><br>Pedagogy & Practice Lead                    | <b>Gordana Stojanoska</b><br>Operations Manager          | <b>Dr Siobhan Hannan</b><br>ECLP Quality Support Program<br>Mentor     |
| <b>Barbara Farrington</b><br>Finance Officer                        | <b>Jade Fraser</b><br>Pedagogy & Practice Consultant     | <b>Victoria De Paoli</b><br>Program Support Officer                    |

## Donors & Friends

fkaCS would like to thank donors and friends for their ongoing generosity and support.

## Community Language Support Workers

*The following workers provided language support in the 2021 year...*

|                         |                    |                       |
|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Anna Kim</b>         | <b>Julia Hider</b> | <b>Zahida Baarini</b> |
| <b>Bingshu Ma</b>       | <b>Lay Ooi</b>     | <b>Zahra Ali</b>      |
| <b>Humaira Hussaini</b> | <b>Luisa Chiu</b>  |                       |

*...with the following languages spoken:*

|                  |          |          |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| Arabic           | Farsi    | Mandarin |
| Bahasa Indonesia | Hakka    | Russian  |
| Bahasa Melayu    | Hazaragi | Tetum    |
| Cantonese        | Hokkien  | Urdu     |
| Dari             | Korean   |          |

## Life Members

|                            |                        |                          |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Dr A. Kennedy</b>       | <b>Mr I. Renard</b>    | <b>Dr P. Clarke OAM</b>  |
| <b>Ms B. Pasqua</b>        | <b>Mr J. Emerson</b>   | <b>Mr T. Rush</b>        |
| <b>Ms D. Rundle</b>        | <b>Mrs. K. Coombes</b> | <b>Mrs. G. Johnson</b>   |
| <b>Mr and Mrs G. Kelso</b> | <b>Mr L. Cox</b>       | <b>Mrs P. Montgomery</b> |



Our vision is for all children to actively participate in quality education and care services that recognise, value, and embed difference and diversity.



# 2021 Snapshot

## Multicultural Resource Centre

1 Bartja and Mayila

2 The Very Hungry Caterpillar [Mandarin]

3 The Buskers of Bremen [Cantonese]

MOST POPULAR BOOKS



953  
RESOURCES  
BORROWED



## Community Language Support

92 COMMUNITY LANGUAGE WORKERS EMPLOYED\*

\*At 31 December 2021

95.5 HOURS OF LANGUAGE SUPPORT PROVIDED ACROSS 10 SITES

## Membership & Engagement

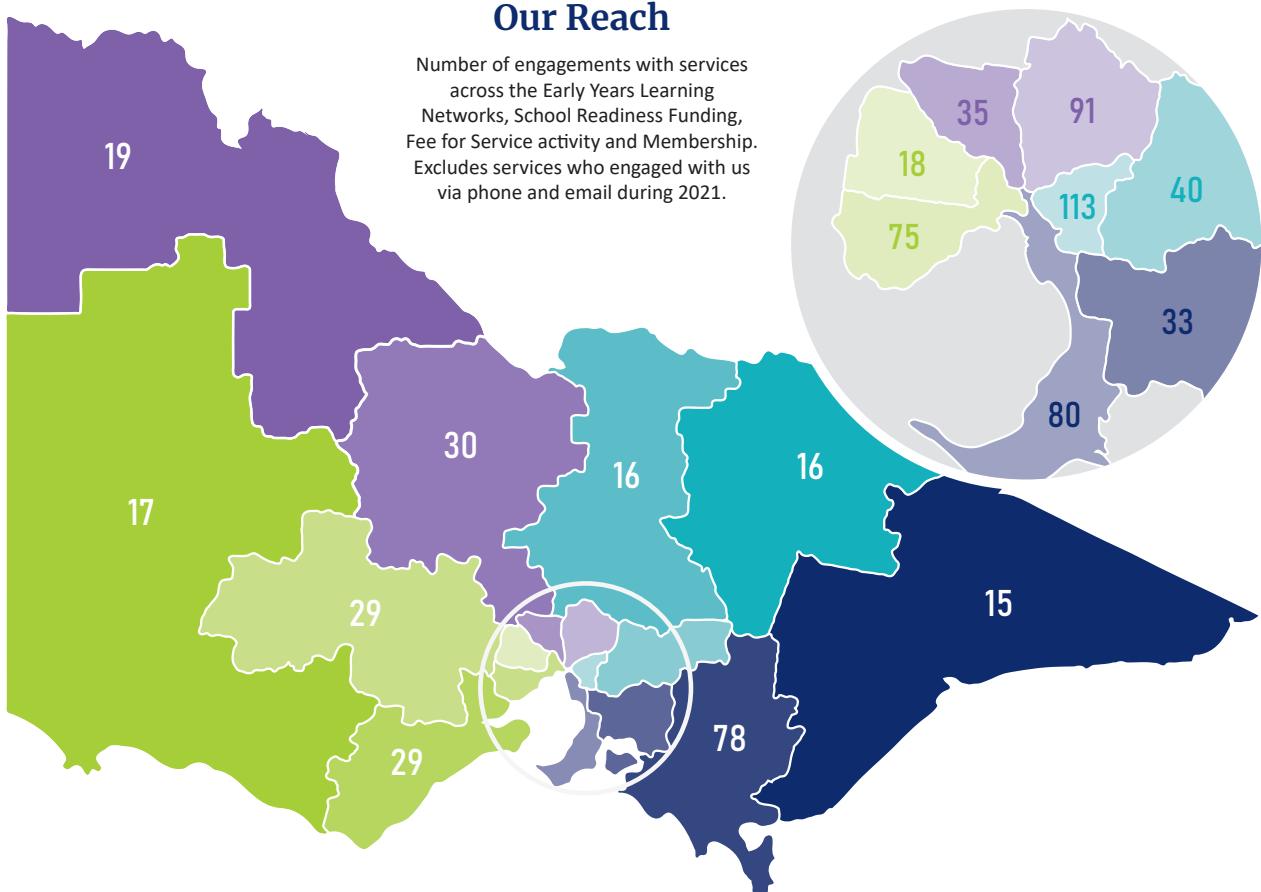


\*Includes 42 Complimentary Memberships for the Early Childhood Language Program that signed on in 2021-22.



## Our Reach

Number of engagements with services across the Early Years Learning Networks, School Readiness Funding, Fee for Service activity and Membership. Excludes services who engaged with us via phone and email during 2021.



### Feedback from Services

The **support and coaching** has led to **ongoing discussions and improvements** in our service.

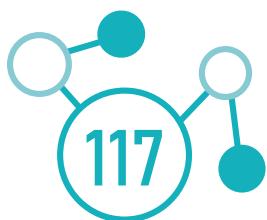
It was **great to have feedback** that we were **heading in the right direction** to achieve our goals.

[Support was] **so good** we have only just scratched the surface in our learning. We are **applying to come back again** in 2022.

**Support provided was designed specifically around our service needs.** Information was relevant and accessible for all staff.

[The consultant] was an **amazing coach** who was able to listen to our ideas, offer suggestions and provided additional resources that were appropriate to our service needs. **We got so much out of the workshops** and came away with a **much richer culturally inclusive plan** we are already adopting within our service.

### Quality Support Program



**NETWORK  
MEETINGS**

+

**481 HRS**

**INTENSIVE  
MENTORING  
SUPPORT**

for language and kindergarten teachers

+

**6**

**WEBINARS**

# Treasurer's Report 2021

**Important notice:** Information used in the following table is highly summarised and extracted from the full detailed financial statements of *fka* Children's Services Inc. ("fkaCS") for the eighteen months ended 31 December 2021. For a complete understanding of the financial performance, position and cash flows of fkaCS, the full financial statements should be referred to. The full statements also include a description of the accounting policies adopted by fkaCS, explanatory notes and the independent auditor's report. The full financial report is available for download at [www.fka.org.au](http://www.fka.org.au) or on request from fkaCS.

**Comparative period:** In the previous period, the association changed its financial year end date from 30 June to 31 December. Accordingly, in the previous year's financial report for the period ended 31 December 2020, the company presented a transitional report comprising the eighteen months from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2020, which was required to align reporting with the new financial year end. This eighteen-month period now forms the comparative information for this financial report for the year ended 31 December 2021.

| Financial Summary                                     | 12 Months to<br>December 2021 | 18 Months to<br>December 2020 |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
|   | \$                            | \$                            |
| <b>Financial performance for the period</b>           |                               |                               |
| Income  | 2,216,658                     | 1,889,461                     |
| Expenditure   | (2,141,365)                   | (1,834,549)                   |
| <b>Net income</b>                                     | <b>75,293</b>                 | <b>54,912</b>                 |
| Other comprehensive income (expense)                  | 5,687                         | (5,989)                       |
| <b>Total comprehensive income</b>                     | <b>80,980</b>                 | <b>48,923</b>                 |
| <b>Financial position at end of period</b>            |                               |                               |
| Assets  | 2,995,383                     | 1,897,669                     |
| Liabilities   | (2,092,543)                   | (1,075,809)                   |
| <b>Net assets</b>                                     | <b>902,840</b>                | <b>821,860</b>                |
| Reserves  | 518,093                       | 512,406                       |
| Retained surplus                                      | 384,747                       | 309,454                       |
| <b>Total equity</b>                                   | <b>902,840</b>                | <b>821,860</b>                |
| <b>Cash flows for the period</b>                      |                               |                               |
| Net cash flow from operations                         | 775,782                       | 901,719                       |
| Net cash flow from investing and financing activities | (86,522)                      | (206,895)                     |
| <b>Net change in cash held</b>                        | <b>689,260</b>                | <b>694,824</b>                |
| <b>Cash available at beginning</b>                    | <b>1,497,619</b>              | <b>802,795</b>                |
| <b>Cash available at end</b>                          | <b>2,186,879</b>              | <b>1,497,619</b>              |

This report summarises *fkaCS*' financial results for the twelve months to 31 December 2021. Prior year figures used as comparatives cover the eighteen-month transitional reporting period from 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2020 (required due to the change in *fkaCS*' financial year end date, see comparative period note above).

The year to 31 December 2021 saw a continuation in *fkaCS*' underlying growth trajectory of recent years. This was mainly due to significant new funded activity, including in relation to early childhood teacher support and early years learning networks, plus ongoing activity for language program support, kindergarten quality improvement programs, school readiness programs and educational resourcing. As was the case in the prior period, growth was again moderated by the impact of COVID-19 on operations, though *fkaCS* continued to stabilise its operations and effectively deliver its services, adjusting its activities and methods of delivery where required.

For the year, *fkaCS* earned income of \$2.22 million and incurred expenditure of \$2.14 million, resulting in a net surplus of \$75k (prior period eighteen-month result: surplus of \$55k). In contrast to the previous period, *fkaCS* managed to achieve a surplus result without any government COVID-19 financial assistance; the previous period included \$270k of government COVID-19 support (as advised in last year's report).

In terms of income for the year, \$1.4 million (63%) was generated from government funding contracts, \$672k (30%) from fee for service activity and the balance of \$148k (7%) from memberships, philanthropic contributions, and other sources. Expenditure for the year was split evenly between staffing costs (49%) and all other cost categories (51%). The increased overall income and expenditure compared to the prior were reflective of the growth in the association's operations and program deliverables.

The operating result for the year further consolidated *fkaCS*' financial position at year-end. Total assets stood at nearly \$3.0 million and liabilities at \$2.1 million, for a net assets / total equity position at 31 December 2021 of \$903k, up \$81k on the prior year (31 December 2020: \$822k). Cash comprised *fkaCS*' biggest asset, remaining relatively high at

\$2.2 million, up by \$0.7 million from a year ago (31 December 2020: \$1.5 million). The increased level of cash continued to reflect the impact of significant prepaid grant funds held (which are restricted for future program use and recorded as liabilities in the balance sheet until they are utilised). The level of net assets held by the association at year end indicates a sound financial position and provides an appropriate financial buffer to support operations.

The next twelve months are expected to see a further increase in overall financial activity, largely driven by additional service delivery requirements associated with existing funding and service agreements. While operational risks remain, including in relation to further COVID-19 implications plus uncertainty around ongoing funding as existing funding agreements expire, *fkaCS*' current financial and operational circumstances indicate that the association is well placed to meet its program objectives and underpin its operations throughout 2022 and the foreseeable period ahead.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to sincerely thank our Executive Director Melodie and the whole *fkaCS* team for their whole-hearted commitment and tireless efforts in supporting the *fkaCS* community. You have achieved increased organisational impact and expanded capacity to flexibly respond to the needs of our sector, while continuing to negotiate the challenges of our operating environment. The Board further extends its gratitude to our partners and members for their unwavering support in working together with us to deliver the best possible outcomes for children and families.

Once again, we would like to acknowledge the work of Robert Pisano who has once again guided us through the financial ups and downs of transitioning to an organisation that relies on short-term contacts and services agreements for its financial sustainability. The complexities of *fkaCS* financial model requires a dedicated and thoughtful approach to financial management and Robert's support has been invaluable in ensuring our financial strategy is fit for purpose.

**Janis Lateef**  
**Treasurer**

# Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023

Approved by the *fka*CS Board 25 August 2021



**Our Vision** is for all children to actively participate in quality education and care services that recognise, value, and embed difference and diversity.

**Our Purpose** as documented in the rules of the association, is to guide, support and champion the provision of high-quality Early Childhood Education and Care with the object of improving the health, welfare and education of young children by (not limited to):

- a) providing practical resources and consultancy services to support the implementation of educational programs grounded on culturally and linguistically sustaining curricula and pedagogies.
- b) delivering flexible, practical, and evidence-based professional learning and support to early childhood, teachers, educators, and those who work with young children and their families.
- c) promoting community recognition of the impact of high-quality standards and educational qualification levels of early childhood teachers and educators on young children's learning and development outcomes.
- d) advocating for children and families' right to actively participate in their education and care.

## Why *fka*CS pursues the Strategic Goals set out below

- Early childhood settings are not culturally neutral spaces.
- Language and cultural identity are critical to the well-being, development and belonging of children.
- All children and families have a right to actively participate in high quality early childhood education that recognises, values, and enacts their language and culture.
- Recognising, valuing, and embedding all forms of diversity are essential principles of high quality equitable early childhood education and care (ECEC).
- Early life experience of diversity within a rights-based, social justice framework contributes to social cohesion.

## What *fka*CS does to pursue these Strategic Goals

*fka*CS leads the provision of high quality support and information services in early childhood education and care that embrace families and children's cultural, linguistic, ethnic, "racial"\*\* and social diversity.

## How *fka*CS pursues these Strategic Goals

- Advocate for systemic changes that address inequity, prejudice, racism and bias in early childhood education and care policy and practice
- Promote the flexible delivery of services and resources that respond to the needs of our diverse community
- Build responsive and productive relationships with government and community
- Build and maintain a strong, sustainable, capable organisation

## Lead



Lead in the provision of high quality support and information services in early childhood education and care that respects, values and celebrates cultural, linguistic, ethnic, “racial”\* and social diversity.

### Priorities

- Explore what is meant by cultural and linguistic, ethnic, “racial”\* and social diversity
- Showcase early childhood education practices that challenge prejudice and bias and promote anti-racist anti-discriminatory practices in early childhood education and care services
- Promote ecologically sustainable practices across early childhood education and care programs and services operation

## Respond & Collaborate



Deliver services and resources flexibly that support educators to value, celebrate and honour all families in the context of their community.

Build responsive and productive relationships with governments and the community services sector.

### Priorities

- Utilise multimodal media to deliver fkaCS resources
- Maintain and grow working arrangements across all tiers of government
- Establish respectful and responsive partnerships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and multicultural organisations
- Develop a respectful and collaborative referral framework to ensure early childhood education and care services are referred appropriately to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and multicultural organisations as required

## Advocate



Advocate for systemic changes that address prejudice and bias and recognises the value of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, “racial”\* and social diversity.

Advocate for acknowledgement and recognition of Australia’s First Nations right to self-determination.

### Priorities

- Develop statements articulating the cultural and linguistic rights of children and families in early childhood education and care
- Listen, support and collaborate with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations as respectful allies when invited to do so
- Engage and collaborate with multicultural and other community organisations as partners to influence early childhood education and care policy and practice

## Build



Build and maintain a strong, sustainable, capable and informed organisation.

### Priorities

- Maintain the organisation’s financial viability whilst ensuring projects and activity aligns with our purpose and strategic direction
- Determine the optimal size, capacity and structure of the organisation in order to maintain viability into the future
- Develop financial and risk policies and processes that ensure the appropriate strategic use of reserves if required
- Ensure the organisation’s skills and knowledge remain current based on contemporary theories of anti-racist pedagogy, bias and prejudice, social justice and the effects of colonisation on young children and their families
- Recruit, retain and develop staff and board with the appropriate expertise

\*fkaCS recognises that the terms “race” and “racial” are socially constructed labels that have been used and continue to be used to oppress and silence people. Whilst these terms should not be used to define individuals and communities, they are terms that are widely used and are familiar to the community.



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Supporting children's cultural and linguistic rights...