

Child Information Sharing Scheme Case Study: Engaging families who do not share your language.

Scenario

Abdul commenced 3-year-old kindergarten in Term 1 having migrated to Australia from Sudan with his mother and grandmother the year prior. For the last 9 months Abdul had been attending long day care in a different service within the local community.

Abdul's mother Aisha speaks some English, however with Aisha's consent, the kindergarten teacher Sarah engaged a free [interpreter](#) to support the induction process and ensure effective two-way communication. As part of the induction, Sarah explained the services policies, including their obligations under the [Child Information Sharing Scheme](#).

During a conversation about their life in Sudan, Aisha mentioned the family had been exposed to war, the destruction of their village and the death of her husband, but she did not wish to say more. Sarah understood that some trauma survivors find it difficult to talk about their experience, so she was compassionate, but did not force her to elaborate.

Observing potential signs of a trauma response

In the first weeks attending the kindergarten program, Sarah noticed that Abdul's separation anxiety was not improving, and he appeared withdrawn. Despite sharing the same language as some of his peers, Abdul mostly kept to himself playing in the sandpit and ignoring other children's attempts at engaging with him.

Concerned for Abdul's wellbeing, Sarah set up a meeting time with an interpreter and Aisha to discuss how they could best support Abdul to develop a sense of belonging in the program. Sarah understood that it may take time for Aisha to develop trust in her and was not surprised when Aisha mentioned that the Maternal and Child Health Nurse (MCH) had connected Aisha with Foundation House, but she did not want to go into detail.

Applying CISS

Sarah immediately thought that sharing information between agencies may assist in planning for consistent strategies to support Abdul's wellbeing and safety. Sarah also determined that it would be safe, reasonable, and appropriate to seek Aisha's view about sharing information, noting her consent is not required.

Sarah explained to Aisha that for the educators to gain a greater understanding of Abdul's needs, it would be helpful for the agencies engaged with the family to share information about the strategies they are using to ensure a consistent approach, drawing on the various expertise of each agency. Sarah re-explained the Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) to Aisha and emphasised they were only allowed to share information that would support Abdul's wellbeing and safety. Sarah provided Aisha with a [Child Information Sharing Factsheet](#)

in Arabic to support her understanding. Aisha understood how sharing information with Abdul's previous LDC service, Foundation House and the MCH for further information would help Abdul.

Sarah remembered from [CISS training](#) that all LDC and MCH services were [authorised organisations under CISS](#), but accessed the [Information Sharing Entity list](#) to ensure that Foundation House was on the list. As a community health agency, they were on the list.

Next Sarah accessed the [guides, templates and tools page](#) on the CISS website to guide her through the information request process. The [template for sharing information under CISS](#) guided Sarah's request to all agencies and the [Record keeping check list](#) ensured she was recording the correct information.

Outcome

After talking to, and receiving information from the LDC, MCH and Foundation House, Sarah met with Aisha to develop shared strategies to help Abdul settle into the kindergarten and develop a sense of belonging.

Sarah felt the approach she took with Aisha – to seek her views on sharing information, has assisted in developing a trusting partnership between them. A further four fortnightly meetings were set up with an interpreter to talk about Abdul's progress and adjust strategies as needed.

fka Children's Services (fkaCS) advocates for children's cultural and linguistic rights and provides support to education and care services in the provision of culturally rich environments that support a civil society.

Contact us to discuss support: Ph: 03 9428 4471 or E: culturalinclusion@fka.org.au
