

Universal Principle Cultural safety

The Universal Principle requires child safe entities to provide an environment that promotes and upholds the right to cultural safety of children who are Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islander persons. The Universal Principle is embedded within all 10 Standards.

Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) and Dr Gregory Phillips of ABSTARR Consulting (ABSTARR). SNAICC defines cultural safety as: ...

“the child being provided with a safe, nurturing and positive environment where they are comfortable with being themselves, expressing their culture... their spiritual and belief systems, and they are supported by the carer... [who] respects their Aboriginality and therefore encourages their sense of self and identity.”

As we continue to develop our approach and consult with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities, and organisations – we know that in a culturally safe environment:

- **Discrimination is called out and addressed properly, respectfully and completely, and there are policies in place to ensure the organisation is accountable for racism and discrimination**
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples define and measure cultural safety**
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – including staff and stakeholders – have a voice and decision-making powers about issues that affect them**
- **Individuals develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to recognise and address biases, stereotypes and tendencies towards racism and discrimination**
- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families feel a sense of belonging, dignity and justice**

- There is clear leadership, governance and culture that ensures cultural safety is a component of child safeguarding
- First Nations communities, Elders and leaders are engaged regularly and meaningfully to ensure policies are culturally appropriate, responsive, and safe
- Organisations have mechanisms in place to ensure accountability and continuous quality improvement

Cultural safety indicators

Cultural safety in Queensland's Child Safe Standards

Ensuring cultural safety in child safe practices is essential for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. The following eight cultural safety indicators provide guidance to organisations on how to apply cultural safety across the 10 Child Safe Standards.

1

Transformational unlearning – Organisations must challenge unconscious bias, racism, and discrimination within their structures and workforce.

2

Negotiating values, motivations, and paradigm – Policies and programs should be co-designed with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to reflect their perspectives on child safety.

3

Prioritising social and emotional wellbeing and health – A holistic, strengths-based approach must be adopted to support the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, staff, and families.

4

Sharing power and decision-making – Decision-making processes should be led or co-led by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure genuine partnerships.

5

Sharing resources – Organisations should dedicate resources to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-led initiatives, research, and governance mechanisms, where appropriate.

6

Creating a strategic enabling environment – Leadership must set clear priorities and accountability structures ensure cultural safety into daily operations.

7

Operating on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander terms of reference – Service delivery to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children should be grounded in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems and self-determination principles.

8

Accountability and continuous quality improvement – Progress should be measured using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-defined success indicators, ensuring sustained improvement.