

CASE STUDY



THE BIKE EVENT

The following case study explores how one early childhood service has used a practice from the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to build children’s road safety knowledge and skills as well as providing opportunity for them to practise safe road safety behaviours.

A newly graduated early childhood educator, given a posting to a Kimberley Pre-primary, noticed that a number of the young Aboriginal children were arriving at school and leaving at the end of the day being 'dinkied' on the back of a bicycle or sitting on the handlebars of an older sibling's bicycle; neither child wearing a bicycle helmet. The educator spoke with her Aboriginal and Islander Education Officer (AIEO) who explained that in the community it is often the older siblings' responsibility to bring the younger ones to school and that many of the children did not have bikes or helmets to wear or use.

After further discussion it was decided to work with the older Aboriginal siblings to increase their road safety knowledge and access to cycle safety gear. During Bike Week an in-school event was organised for both the Pre-primary children and their older siblings.

Invitations were also extended to family members and representative Local Elders from the community.

During the event a nurse from the local hospital spoke to the children and adults about how important it was to 'protect your head'. The local Health and Physical Education teacher from the district high school came and talked to the children about how to fit a bicycle helmet. All of the children were then fitted with a bicycle helmet provided courtesy of the local Lions Club. Finally, the Aboriginal Police Relations Officer explained the law around 'dinking'.

At the 'bike event' afternoon tea was provided and activities organised to promote safe cycling and the wearing of bicycle helmets using activities from the SDERA Challenges and Choices resources. An article and photo of children on bikes with helmets was published in the school newsletter and the local paper.



The afternoon 'bike event' was a success with improvement in cycling behaviours notably observed. The teacher introduced a board in the classroom where children recorded how they came to school. If they had been observing safe practices, such as wearing a helmet, they went into a draw for a weekly prize and were recognised as the Road Safety Champ of the week.

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) Practices highlighted in this case study



CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Educators can support the development of children's cultural competence through recognising that culture and the context of the family are central to a child's sense of being and belonging. Celebrating differences, exploring new cultures and developing skills to communicate and interact across cultures, are all key to respecting diversity.

Being culturally competent is an important requirement for all early childhood educators. When different cultural perspectives are incorporated into road safety programs for children and their

families, a greater sense of understanding and connectedness to different cultures and the wider community, is experienced.

Children's understandings of positive road safety practices are shaped by their parents and carers from an early age. These understandings may vary across families, depending on their own experiences. Therefore, road safety education in early childhood needs to be free from judgement and delivered in a culturally inclusive way to ensure all family members are aware of the risks on Western Australian roads.