



Black Lives Matter

A Resource for Educators

Nelson Mandela once said, “People learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

Acknowledgement of Country

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water, and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

For younger children:

Play School: Acknowledgement of Country for Children – ABC Kids
iview.abc.net.au/show/play-school-acknowledgement-of-country

Play School: Acknowledgement of Country – Educator Notes
abc.net.au/cm/lb/11457222/data/acknowledgement-of-country-notes-data.pdf

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Background & Purpose of this Resource

This resource has been developed by the Imagined Futures (IF) Youth Initiative Working Group in response to concerns that the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement is a significant presenting concern for young people who access services throughout the South West Metropolitan Region.

The purpose of this resource is to support people delivering IF programs, and teachers more broadly, to have discussions around BLM, to support students appropriately and refer them to other services as needed.

This resource provides advice, tips, information, and further resources to help parents, educators, and the community. It has adopted many approaches created by the UK-based digital platform, Yoopies. [Yoopies: A Parent's Guide to Black Lives Matter](#)

This resource was created by an intern from the McCusker Centre for Citizenship at UWA, who was on a joint placement with Uniting WA and Imagined Futures in 2020.

What is the BLM movement?

Formed in 2013, the BLM movement was established in response to the fatal shooting of African American teenager, Trayvon Martin. The movement provides a platform to speak out against the marginalisation and oppression of successive generations of African Americans, particularly the thousands of victims of police brutality and the perceived lack of accountability in the aftermath. The deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Michael Brown, and Eric Garner have given the movement significant momentum recently.

The anti-racist movement has since gained international awareness on social media through the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter. The movement seeks to “eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities...counteracting acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation.”¹ The social movement has grown to become one of the largest movements in U.S. history and a modern-day international human rights movement to combat racism, violence, and police brutality.

¹ [Black Lives Matter](#)

What is white supremacy?

White supremacy refers to “the belief that the white race is inherently superior to other races and that white people should have control over people of other races”. In Australia, the government policies such as the White Australia Policy, the removal of Aboriginal children from their homes, and those that deny Aboriginal people the right to self-determination under constitutional law are pointed to as examples of white supremacy.

Eradicating white supremacy is one of the central aims of the Black Lives Matter movement. It is important to note Black Lives Matter as a movement seeks not only to address instances of racism occurring between individuals, but also to critique institutions within which racism and white supremacy occurs. This can include the government, police force, justice system, and more.

The impact of the BLM movement in Australia

The purpose and vision behind the Black Lives Matter movement echoes across many countries, because it addresses issues of discrimination and oppression which are universal. For a lot of people, the protests in The United States drew attention to the many issues Australia's Indigenous people have faced. Comparisons were drawn between deaths in custody, violence, and racism that occur in the United States and in Australia. In Australia, the deaths of Elijah Dougherty, Mrs Dhu, Tanya Day, and David Dungay Jr are among many who were remembered at Black Lives Matters rallies around the country.

During the process of colonisation, many Aboriginal Australians lost their land, their lives and with that their connection to family, country, and culture. Thousands of Aboriginal people were murdered in massacres that went on until the 21st century. Aboriginal children were taken from their parents and these people were denied the same basic rights as white Australians.

The impact of colonisation continues to reverberate through Indigenous communities; many experience intergenerational trauma, which refers to traumas passed onto new generations, as well as ongoing impacts of colonisation such as poverty, insecure housing, family instability and violence.

Even after Indigenous people were given the right to vote and counted as citizens in the census (as recently as 1967), racism still occurs. Whilst there have been some big steps forward, Aboriginal people still experience racism. Therefore, addressing racism in Australia is a complex, ongoing issue.

A study conducted between 2015 and 2016 showed that 54% of complaints to the Commission under the Racial Discrimination Act were from Aboriginal Australians, despite only representing 3% of the population. Experiencing racism, oftentimes daily, directly impacts the lives of Indigenous people. For example, Aboriginal children are less likely to attend school, and many are falling behind in literacy and numeracy. Indigenous people are less likely to be employed and despite only making up three per cent of Australia's population, Aboriginal people make up more than 27% of prisoners in Australia.

Black Lives Matter protests in Australia seek to draw attention to the various forms of racism experienced in Australia, but with a particular attention to the ways in which racism impacts First Nations people. ²

² Adopted from BTN "Australian Black Lives Matter"
abc.net.au/btn/classroom/australian-black-lives-matter/12344388

Facts and Stats³

About Aboriginal people

- The oldest continuing culture in the world, Aboriginal Australian's have been living in Australia for 60,000 years
- There are 250 Indigenous languages including 800 dialects still in use today
- Although many languages and cultures were lost after colonisation, Indigenous people keep traditions and beliefs alive today.

Percentage of population

- Make up 3.3% of Australia's population.
- Make up 3.9% of Western Australia's population

Life expectancy

- Male: 71.5 years (compared to 80.2 years for non-Aboriginal males)
- Female: 75.6 years (compared to 83.4 years for non-Aboriginal females)⁴

Imprisonment

- Make up 43% of WA's prison population
- The national imprisonment rate for Indigenous adults is 15 times higher than that for non-Indigenous adults
- Over 400 Indigenous people have died in custody with no charged being brought against the offender

Education & Sport

- The number of Indigenous students completing secondary education has increased from 47% (2006) to 65% (2016)
- Indigenous players represent 12% of both NRL and AFL listings

³ Information drawn from *Aboriginal Productions (WA)* and *Australian Human Rights Commission*

⁴ <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/australias-health/indigenous-life-expectancy-and-deaths>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

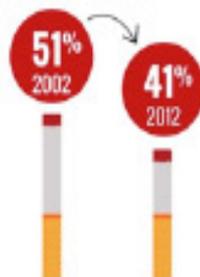
THE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER POPULATION



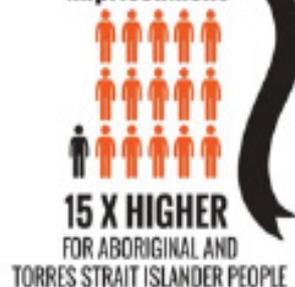
WHERE ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE LIVE



ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SMOKING RATES



National rate of imprisonment

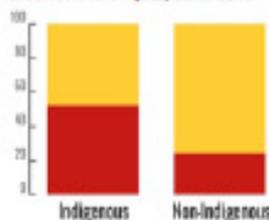


In 2010-12, the average life expectancy of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was

TEN YEARS LESS than that of non-Indigenous Australians.



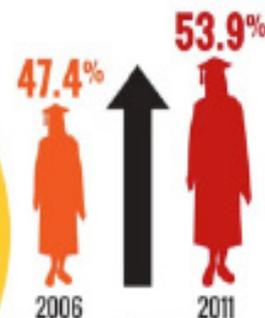
PROPORTION OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE (between 15-64 yrs), 2012-2013



In 2011, health services employed

14.6% of employed Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people

Making them the largest source of employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 yrs that had attained a Year 12 or equivalent qualification

Don't All Lives Matter?

It is important to understand that when we explain Black Lives Matter to children, we are not saying that no other lives matter. However, if we only encourage and champion "All Lives Matter," we risk taking away the difficulty faced by Black communities.

The point is that all lives do matter but because of entrenched racial and oppression some groups have experienced (and continue to experience) more suffering and, therefore, need more immediate attention. Furthermore, highlighting Black Lives Matter seeks to draw attention to the historical neglect of Black lives. A common analogy used to sum up this contrast is 'All lives will not matter, until Black lives matter'

Saying Black Lives Matter does not mean "only Black Lives Matter."

Here are some analogies to help children (and adults!) understand the BLM versus All Lives Matter argument.

Imagine you have a broken leg. You go to the Doctor, and you would want to tell the Doctor that your leg was in pain. Whilst all your other bones matter, it is your leg that needs attention right now!

Saying "All Lives Matter" is like saying "Save All Forests" in response to someone saying, "Save the Amazon".

Saying "All Lives Matter" is like going to a cancer fundraiser and saying, "There are other diseases, too!"

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How to talk about race and racism

“We need to ensure that all Black lives are being valued, heard and uplifted through this time. How, how? One more thing before I go. How can you be a part of the change? Create spaces for Black and First Nation voices to be heard. Support them, take their lead. Very importantly, research, learn, reflect on a history that my Aboriginal and my Torres Strait Islander mob have faced here.” – Majeda Beatty speaking at a Black Lives Matter rally, June 6, 2020

For younger children (primary school age):

Explaining events and the deep complexities of racism are understandably difficult, especially with younger children. A good approach is to frame race and differences through the lens of how children first experience the world – through fairness. Utilise simple language and relatable scenarios that are close to home to highlight their importance.

Relate things to children or people they know with messages like – “We should treat everyone in our class fairly and in the same way, whether they are your friend or not and whether they are like you or not.”.

Discussion prompts include:

- What do we have in common?
- What differs between everyone?

Here’s an example from [Play School: Hand in Hand](#)

Did you know that some people in this world are treated differently because of their differences? “It’s not nice. If you treat someone differently because of where they are from or the colour of their skin, that’s called racism. Racism is bad and we need to put a stop to racism. We can start by treating everyone fairly and equally.”

Children absorb their surroundings and learn through interaction. Active exposure to books, films, visual prompts, and cartoons are a good way to help children in understanding racism.

Useful resource

Building Belonging Toolkit – Australian Human Rights Commission
humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/building-belonging-toolkit-early-childhood-educators-cultural-diversity-and

For older children (upper primary/high school age):

Many older children already have an awareness of what is going on in the world around them. They tend to ask more questions and need a safe and comfortable environment in which they can express themselves.

Parents, teachers, and other adults can take the opportunity to build from the young person's knowledge, clarify information and reinforce their understanding in different ways. This includes challenging misinformation or misunderstandings (e.g.: non-factual information spread on social media).

In these discussions, it is important to emphasise that Indigenous Australians are still affected by past policies and racial injustices; it is not just a thing of the past that they should "simply get over". This can be explained through discussions about real events and children's own experiences of witnessing of racism.

Some useful resources:

1. Kevin Rudd's National Apology "Sorry Speech"
2. Mabo Case
3. Drama study – No Sugar by Jack Davis
4. Stan Grant's speech: Racism and the Australian Dream
5. The Stolen Generation
6. Freedom Rides

You Can't Ask That Series 1 "Indigenous" – ABC iView

<https://iview.abc.net.au/show/you-can-t-ask-that/series/1/video/LE1517H008S00>

Ideas for students who want to get more involved:

- Sign petitions, write to government leaders/politicians
- Stay informed on current events – ask questions and discuss
- Talk about what you have learned with others
- Share on social media with care – think critically – Are the messages truthful? Do they support what you've learned about the BLM movement?
- Consider what you can do become more active – e.g. attend a public rally
- Call-out racism when they see it

Tackling tricky questions about racial identity

Children's natural curiosity about difference provides a great opportunity to discuss cultural diversity and racial identity.

Sometimes this can lead to questions that don't have easy answers. Here are 3 simple things you can do...

Be open

It's important not to avoid or ignore tricky questions or comments. Instead, find out more about why your child is asking.



Be honest

Answer questions simply and factually. You don't have to be an expert, but make sure to give the correct information. If you don't know the answer to a question, then find out more together!



Be a role model

Children learn the most from our words and actions so it's important to lead by example.



Find out more ways to build belonging in your centre here:
www.humanrights.gov.au/education/early-childhood/building-belonging

Encouraging respect for cultural diversity

Early childhood is an ideal time for children to learn about and form friendships with people from different cultures, races and ethnicities.

Here are 3 simple ways you can encourage respect for cultural diversity in your setting...

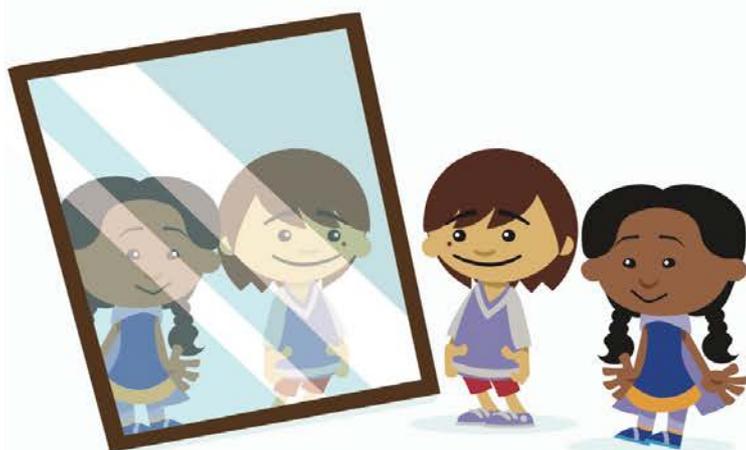


Explore similarities and differences

Emphasise how we are all special and unique in our own way but share many things in common.

Challenge stereotypes

Identifying and challenging harmful stereotypes is an important way of preventing prejudice.



Discover more about different cultures and different families

Discover new things about different cultures, families and communities through art, music, stories, museums, libraries and festivals. Find out more about different families' customs, values and beliefs.

Find out more ways to build belonging in your centre here:
www.humanrights.gov.au/education/early-childhood/building-belonging

Other resources

Australian Films:

Rabbit Proof Fence (2002) PG
In My Blood it Runs (2019) PG
Bran Nue Dae (2009)
The Sapphires (2012) PG
Sweet Country (2017)

International Films:

The Pursuit of Happiness (2006) M
12 Years a Slave (2013) MA15+
Remember the Titans (2000) PG
The Hate U Give (2019) M

Websites

Noongar Boodjar Language Centre noongarboodjar.com.au
South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council noongar.org.au
Creative Spirits creativespirits.info
Bilya Koort Boodja bilyakoortboodja.com
Aboriginal Productions aboriginalproductions.com.au
Reconciliation WA recwa.org.au
NAIDOC naidoc.org.au
NEA Ed Justice neaedjustice.org/black-lives-matter-school-resources/
Racism. It Stops with Me <https://itstopswithme.humanrights.gov.au/>

Books

The Little Red Black Yellow Book by Bruce Pascoe
Dark Emu by Bruce Pascoe
My Place by Sally Morgan
Growing up Aboriginal in Australia by Anita Heiss
Talking to My Country by Stan Grant
Fire Country by Victor Steffensen
No Sugar by Jack Davis

Other

UNICEF: Talking to Your Kids About Racism [unicef.org/parenting/talking-to-your-kids-about-racism](https://www.unicef.org/parenting/talking-to-your-kids-about-racism)

Building Belonging Toolkit

[humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/building-belonging-toolkit-early-childhood-educators-cultural-diversity-and](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/building-belonging-toolkit-early-childhood-educators-cultural-diversity-and)

Racism and the Australian Dream – Stan Grant

Sesame Street Explains BLM [youtube.com/watch?v=xBUFcV0y0yk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBUFcV0y0yk)

Australian Human Rights Commission

[humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/FTFATSI.pdf](https://www.humanrights.gov.au/sites/default/files/FTFATSI.pdf)

What is Privilege? [youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hD5f8GuNuGQ)

Articles

ABC Kids: Teaching Children to Not Hate – Laura Bryant

[abc.net.au/abckids/early-education/teaching-children-to-not-hate/12394180](https://www.abc.net.au/abckids/early-education/teaching-children-to-not-hate/12394180)

ABC News: How to Raise Culturally Aware Kids – Samantha Turnbull

[abc.net.au/life/how-to-raise-culturally-aware-kids/12292300](https://www.abc.net.au/life/how-to-raise-culturally-aware-kids/12292300)

ABC News: Children aren't immune to racism. Here's how you can talk to your children about it

[abc.net.au/news/2020-05-10/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-racism-during-coronavirus/12216354?nw=0](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-05-10/how-to-talk-to-your-children-about-racism-during-coronavirus/12216354?nw=0)

Acknowledgements

Aboriginal Productions (WA)
aboriginalproductions.com.au/

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unitingwa.org.au

Imagined Futures
imaginedfutures.org.au

Kris Straub Illustration
chainsawsuit.com/comic/2016/07/07/all-houses-matter-the-extended-cut/

McCusker Centre for Citizenship
mccuskercentre.uwa.edu.au/

Reconciliation WA
<https://www.recwa.org.au/>