



Government of **Western Australia**
Office of **Multicultural Interests**
Department for **Child Protection**
Department for **Communities**

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A Forum on Supporting Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) Communities

Discussion Paper
October 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) will hold a consultation with culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) communities and relevant service providers to discuss parenting and intergenerational issues that some families may experience.

10.00am – 1.00pm, Thursday 28 October 2010
Agonis Centre, 2232 Albany Highway, Gosnells

The consultation aims to:

1. Provide information about parenting-related services and programs provided by relevant government agencies.
2. Listen to concerns of community members and service providers about parenting issues and explore possible solutions.

The issues and comments raised during the consultation will be compiled in a report and provided to relevant State Government departments. OMI will follow up on key issues and report back to community members on the outcomes of the consultation and provide updates on its website.

WHY THIS TOPIC?

Most families face challenges, especially in relation to parent-child relationships. Migrants and refugees may face additional challenges resulting from the experience of settling and adjusting to life in a new country. Parents from refugee backgrounds, in particular, have demonstrated great strengths in caring for their children and looking after their families. However, differences in the social, cultural and family environments between the home country and Australia can make parenting more difficult.

Some families may experience significant differences between the parenting practices in their countries of origin and those more common in Australia such as the shared community responsibility for raising children, the *'it takes a village to raise a child and a village to support a parent'* approach typical in some other countries. There may also be different legal and cultural

rules about parenting in Australia. Rules and practices about discipline, child-minding and nutrition can all be different in different countries.

Additional challenges may arise from:

- children adapting to life in Australia and to the Australian culture and English language more quickly than their parents;
- traumatic experiences before settling in Australia which can disrupt family relationships and interactions; and
- financial strains arising from low incomes, high living costs and additional responsibilities to support family members overseas.

Participants at a youth roundtable organised by OMI on 6 September 2010 for CaLD youth service providers in the Mirrabooka area identified intergenerational conflict as one of the key issues for CaLD youth and as the main cause for young people leaving the family home and in some cases becoming homeless.

Intergenerational conflict is a common experience which occurs in many families – whether new arrivals to WA, established immigrants or Australian-born. For new arrivals, the problem can sometimes be greater as they are negotiating individual, family and community expectations, learning new values, a new language and new systems. This may create divisions between CaLD children and young people and their parents and/or community.

Children and young people often adapt more quickly to their new environment. Parents may place great importance on maintaining values and roles from their home country while the children can feel pressure directly from friends, and indirectly from the general society, to adopt 'Western' or 'Australian' values and roles.

This can result in:

- disagreements between parents and children about their use of money, dress, friendship groups, language or behaviour; and
- disruption of family roles such as when parents rely on their children to translate for them.

At a forum held by the City of Stirling in November 2009 the same points were made.

Participants there also noted that:

- many women who arrive with their children on humanitarian visas are sole parents. Lack of a significant male role model can create challenges especially in raising boys; and
- some parents may be confused about what level and types of discipline are allowed in Australia.

Another area of concern for some parents is the child protection system including:

- understanding the system;
- knowing their rights; and
- knowing who to ask for help.

English language difficulties can lead to concerns that authorities may misinterpret what parents say and make it difficult to mediate and resolve problems.

Research has identified a need for communities and agencies to work together to share information, skills and knowledge to build strong families.¹

At the OMI consultation, the State Government is keen to find out what programs and assistance are useful, what more is needed and what can be done to improve ways of supporting vulnerable families and individuals at risk or in crisis.

CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Most CaLD-specific family relationships and parenting services are delivered in the community by non-government organisations using government funding.² Some of these are:

- *Family Support – Communities for Children* - programs delivered by Communicare Inc. at the Armadale Community Family Centre and the Smith Family in Mirrabooka.
- *Family Relationships Services for Humanitarian Entrants* – delivered by Relationships Australia (WA) in Leederville.
- *Ethno-specific and language specific playgroups* – held at various locations.
- *Family Support Program – Supported Playgroups* - delivered by Playgroup Australia at the Ishar Multicultural Health Centre in Mirrabooka.
- *Parenting from the Heart* and *Visiting Sisters* programs – both delivered by the Ishar Multicultural Health Centre in Mirrabooka.
- *Families in Cultural Transition, Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS) and Good Food for New Arrivals* – delivered by the Association for Services to Torture and Trauma Survivors (ASeTTS) in Perth.

THE PRESENTERS

Information at the consultations will be provided by officers from the WA Department for Communities and WA Department for Child Protection.

Donna Legge is the Manager of the Parenting WA Centre which is run by the WA Department for Communities. Parenting WA incorporates a number of services including:

The Parenting WA Line (free call) which provides a 24/7 service to parents and others seeking information or support with parenting, child care and early years activities in Western Australia.

The Parenting WA Library (free call) which provides a free loan service to parents, families and others seeking parenting information, including people living in rural and remote areas.

Parenting WA Coordinators who assist families throughout the State to strengthen the parent/child relationship and increase their confidence in raising their children from pre-birth to 18 years.

Eduardo Farate is the Principal Policy and Planning Officer – Cultural Diversity at the WA Department for Child Protection. The Department provides parenting programs, in particular, the 'Parent Support' and 'Best Beginnings' programs. Eduardo will explain his Department's role in protecting children and young people.

1. Centre for Refugee Research – Access Services Inc. (2009) *African Women Talking: "We want the best thing for our family"* p.14.
2. Main government funding departments are WA Department for Communities, Commonwealth Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC).

1. What are the most important parenting challenges facing families from CaLD backgrounds in Western Australia?
2. What are the most important intergenerational issues facing CaLD families?
3. What strategies have worked well for your family, or in your community, to support parents dealing with intergenerational conflict and other challenges? Why have they worked?
4. What government services have helped and supported you in the past?
5. What extra information or help do you need to support you and your family?
6. What would be the best way to provide parenting information or assistance – for example, by phone, workshops with other parents, community leaders, friends and family, websites, DVDs?
7. What stops CaLD families using information and services that already exist?
8. How could government and non-government agencies improve the way they deliver information and services to you and your family? How could these be more culturally sensitive or inclusive?

To provide feedback:

1. Attend the consultation at the Agonis Centre 2232 Albany Highway, Gosnells from 10.00am to 1.00pm, Thursday 28 October 2010
(child care and interpreters will be available by request)
2. Email feedback to OMI at harmony@omi.wa.gov.au
3. Visit the community consultation page on the OMI website:
www.omi.wa.gov.au/omi_consultations.asp
4. Suggest a consultation or be involved in future consultations. Visit the OMI website for details.

Office of Multicultural Interests

Level 2, Dumas House, 2 Havelock Street, West Perth, 6005

Tel: 9217 1600, Fax: 9321 5205

Email: harmony@omi.wa.gov.au

The Office of Multicultural Interests
Department for Communities
Department for Child Protection

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

***A FORUM ON SUPPORTING FAMILIES
FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY
DIVERSE (CALD) COMMUNITIES***

**THURSDAY 28 OCTOBER 2010
10:00am-1:00pm**

**AGONIS CENTRE,
2232D ALBANY HIGHWAY, GOSNELLS WA**

