## Guidelines for Implementing the Engaging Parents in Career Conversations (EPiCC) Framework with EAL Families

These Guidelines are provided to support teachers, trainers and careers practitioners working with families of young people from English as an Additional Language (EAL) backgrounds. It is expected that the EPiCC Framework will be customised/contextualised to meet the needs of participants.

When using the EPiCC Framework with EAL young people and their families or carers, the role of the family on career choices and decision making needs to be understood and acknowledged.

Young people and families from English as an Additional Language backgrounds fall into three main categories:

* Migrants: Migrants have planned to come to live in Australia, seeking a better life for themselves and their families. They choose where they migrate and they can return home whenever they like. [[1]](#footnote-1) Some may be highly qualified professionals in their home countries and may have transferred to similar professions in Australia. Others may be struggling to have their qualifications recognised in Australia and may be undertaking skill upgrades or be unemployed.
* Refugees/Asylum seekers: Someone who has fled their country due to persecution on the basis of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a social group or political opinion, and is unable to be protected by that country.[[2]](#footnote-2) Young people from refugee backgrounds may have lost or be separated from family members and be living with extended family or community members. Unaccompanied minors may have no family members around them, but should have case workers to support them. They may have had interrupted schooling, which may influence the range of options available to them. Career practitioners need to be sensitive to the trauma that may have been experienced by young people and their families.
* International students: Students from overseas who are paying fees to study in Australia. They may be living with extended family, hosts who have nominated to have a student reside in their home or community members.

Different cultures may have different ways of making decisions within their families. Supporting a young person to develop their own aspirations and make their own career choices may be a challenging concept for some parents. Parents may have strong aspirations of their own for their child, and this needs to be addressed with sensitivity. Additional time may need to be spent encouraging parents to explore their young person’s interests and how these could connect to different careers.

Families may be less familiar with the Australian education system and labour market. When discussing the changing world of work, career practitioners should be aware that the employment context for parents may have been different in their country of origin. Assumptions should not be made about the experiences of parents, or that they will be familiar with the Australian employment context. Encouraging parents to discuss their own career journey will help to build a shared understanding of their experiences and depth of knowledge. Parents may also be unfamiliar with the range of careers available. Allowing time to explore the diversity of occupations available within different industries may support this understanding.

When discussing education, use of the word “learning” is encouraged. Participants and their young people may have had interrupted schooling. Learning encompasses and values all of their experiences.

Additional time may need to be spent explaining the Australian education system, especially the different senior school certificates, VET and Higher Education options, and the pathways between them. The VCAA has publications about senior certificates available in a range of translations available at <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/lote/lotecontentindex.aspx?Redirect=1>

Consideration should be given to the ability of young people and parents from an EAL background to access networks and support. Newly arrived families may not have built strong community connections and supports yet. Workshops may be delivered in conjunction with community groups or agencies to assist families to develop these support networks.

Consideration needs to be given to how the information in the framework is presented. Schools are encouraged to make use of interpreters when appropriate. The use of visual resources to support the text in slides may also be helpful. If possible, practitioners should work with a Multicultural Education Aide to ensure that the language used is accessible and will be understood by the participants. Words that have multiple meanings should be avoided as this will confuse participants. For example, the word “drive” may only be understood in the context of using a car, rather than meaning motivation. The use of the word “ally” should be avoided in presentations because it may have connotations of conflict for refugees.

## Additional Resources

**Translations of careers publications**

The following publications about education and careers are available in a range of translated versions:

* Where to Now?

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/lote/lotecontentindex.aspx?Redirect=1>

* VCAL: The Hands On Option for Year 11 and 12 Students

<http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/vcal/Publications/Publications/vcalinfobooklet.aspx>

* Parents Talking Career Choices

[http://www.myfuture.edu.au/en/The%20Facts/Education%20and%20Training/Year%2012%20What%20Next/Downloads.aspx##TalkingCareerChoices](http://www.myfuture.edu.au/en/The%20Facts/Education%20and%20Training/Year%2012%20What%20Next/Downloads.aspx)

**Interpreting and Translating**

Schools with students and families from language backgrounds other than English need to ensure that information relating to school programs and student progress is made available to parents in their first language.

To facilitate this, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides schools with access to qualified and accredited interpreters. This is in line with Victorian government policy to help Victorians from culturally and linguistically diverse communities deal with government departments and agencies. Schools can access current guidelines and booking information at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/management/Pages/translateservice.aspx>

*Talking in Tune – A guide to working with interpreters in schools* targets teachers and school personnel who communicate with families in their school communities whose first language is not English. It consists of a 30-minute video or DVD, and a guide to working with interpreters in schools. Information about this resource is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/eal/Pages/ealallstudents.aspx>

**Multicultural Education Aides (MEAs)**

Some schools employ MEAs to assist with:

* effective communication between students and teachers in the classroom;
* integrating EAL learners into school activities by helping them to understand school expectations and goals;
* assisting teachers to understand the home cultures and the expectations families have of the school and of education in general; and
* assisting newly arrived families in their settlement into the new educational community.

For further information, please see <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/eal/Pages/ealmea.aspx>

**Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre**

The Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC) is a specialist resource centre for schools across all sectors. This service is available at no cost. They have a number of resources about careers and the world of work. Further information is available at <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/lmerc.aspx>

**Foundation House**

Foundation House provide support and advocacy for refugees and asylum seekers. Their website includes a number of publications and resources that have been developed for use by schools. These programs include School’s In For Refugees and Talk’s In For Refugees. These are free to download and use when working with refugees asylum seekers. They also conduct regular professional development for people working with refugees and asylum seekers

<http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/home/index.htm>

**Centre for Multicultural Youth**

Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) is a community based organisation that provides services to and advocates for the needs of young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. Their website has a range of reports and publications about working with young people and families from diverse backgrounds.

<http://www.cmy.net.au/Home>

**DEECD Career Resources for EAL Young People**

* Career Resource Guidelines for ESL and CALD Young People

http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/resourcekit/Pages/secondlanguage.aspx

* Victorian Careers Curriculum Framework – Additional Support for Targeted Groups

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/careers/carframe/Pages/support.aspx>

**Family – School Partnerships Framework**

This is a publication from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations that provides advice around schools developing an approach to working effectively with families.

<http://www.familyschool.org.au/files/9413/7955/4757/framework.pdf>

**Cultural Competency Checklist**

This checklist provides some indicators of the kinds of values and practices that demonstrate and foster respect for cultural diversity and cultural competence in schools.

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/community/cl3cultcompet.pdf>

1. Centre for Multicultural Youth Opening the School Gate: Engaging CLD families in Schools, 2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Centre for Multicultural Youth (op cit) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)