



Play School

ABC Kids Early Education Notes

Play School National Reconciliation Week Special:

Walking Together

BACKGROUND

Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians, and it can start with small steps. In National Reconciliation Week 2021, Play School share Walking Together- a special episode fostering children's early understandings about our shared histories and the role we all play in building relationships and communities that value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, histories, cultures and futures.

Hunter, Rachael and special guest Emma Donovan walk us through this journey with songs, art and imaginative play. Emma joins Rachael for the story and goes walking on

Country with Kiya, Little Ted and friends. Walking Together will contribute to this very important conversation for our youngest citizens.

This episode was developed in partnership with the following organisations:

- Reconciliation Australia
- The Koori Curriculum
- Australian Institute of Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
- Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR)
- Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC)



ABOUT PLAY SCHOOL'S SPECIAL GUEST



Emma Donovan joins Play School for Walking Together!

Photographer: Michelle Grace Hunder

Emma Donovan is an acclaimed Indigenous Australian singer and songwriter best known for her work with soul band *The Putbacks* and prior to this *The Black Arm Band* project. On her mother's side, Emma is part of the famed Donovan family of singers of the Gumbaynggirr people, of what is now known as Northern New South Wales. On her Father's side, Emma is of the Yamatji people, of what is now known as Western Australia. Play School are delighted Emma could join in presenting *Walking Together*.

FOLLOW UP SUGGESTIONS

After watching *Walking Together*, there are many opportunities for educators to extend on children's early understandings. Implementation of 'EYLF Principle 4: *Respect for diversity*' ([The Early Years Learning Framework](#)) across the early childhood curriculum, requires educators to promote a greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.

This resource includes a range of 'springboards' for educator planning and practice. Reflect upon ways to adapt the ideas to your educational and community settings to ensure an authentic inclusion of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

WALKING TOGETHER EYLF LEARNING OUTCOME LINKS

EYLF Outcome 1.4	Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.
EYLF Outcome 2.1	Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
EYLF Outcome 2.2	Children respond to diversity with respect.
EYLF Outcome 2.3	Children become aware of fairness.
EYLF Outcome 5.1	Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.



MAPS OF INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIA

- We see Hunter and Rachael using the [AIATSIS Map of Indigenous Australia](#) as a 'visual reminder of the richness and diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australia'. Many early learning settings display this map as way to support children's early understandings. Play School acknowledge 'that this map attempts to represent the language, social or nation groups of Aboriginal Australia. It shows only the general locations of larger groupings of people which may include clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. It used published resources from the eighteenth century-1994 and is not intended to be exact, nor the boundaries fixed' (AIATSIS).
- Check out the [Gambay First Languages Map](#). First Languages Australia is working with regional language centres nationally to develop a map of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages that reflects the names and groupings favoured by community.
- Where appropriate, work with your local community to find out how to say a relevant word or phrase from the language of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples of the area on which your early learning setting is located. If you are not sure where to begin, reach out to [First Languages Australia](#). [Engage with ABC Kids Listen Little Yarns and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages RAP Action](#).
- Investigate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seasons around the country and for your area - visit the Bureau of Meteorology: [Indigenous Weather Knowledge](#).
- Learn about the plants that are endemic in your local ecosystem. There are many plant identification apps to help with this (type



'Australian native plants in my area' into your app search for options). Reach out to your local botanic gardens or National Parks in your area.

- Enquire about local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander perspectives for your community. Cultural centres and your Local Aboriginal Lands Council is a good place to start.
- If you read a book by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander author or illustrator, and they share which Country they come from, try finding their Country on a map of Indigenous Australia.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

- To extend children's engagement after watching the Acknowledgement of Country given by Hunter in *Walking Together*, check out [Play School: Acknowledgement of Country](#) on ABC iview or on the the [ABC Kids app](#). Download the [Early Education Notes](#) via ABC Kids Early Education.
- Learn more about giving a daily Acknowledgement of Country at your early education and care setting. Visit [Acknowledgement of Country RAP Action](#).





CARING FOR COUNTRY

Emma, Rachael, Hunter and the toys go for a walk on Country and share what makes them feel a strong sense of place and belonging. Learn more about Connecting with Country/[Caring for Country RAP Action](#).

Work with your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community to learn about significant sites in your region. Create regular opportunities for children to venture outside of the gate and have unhurried time in and with nature.

Try not to plan structured activities but instead encourage children to freely explore. Engage children in listening, touching, smelling and observing the signs, signals and changes of Country. These experiences foster children's love and emerging respect of Country. The Narragunnawali curriculum resource [Caring for Country \(Early Learning\)](#) provides ideas for engaging young children in connecting and caring for Country. Providing these outdoor learning opportunities can help children to be “*connected with and contribute to their world*” (EYLF Learning Outcome 2) by increasing their knowledge of, and respect for natural environments.



VISUAL ARTS

Play School uses a trail of footprints in paint to help children conceptualise the passage of time. The changing space between Rachael and Hunter's footprint trail, represents the journey of reconciliation. History is a challenging concept for young children, however it is worth talking about this segment after watching to determine children's emerging understandings. There

may be opportunities to scaffold their learning a little further based on developmental stage and the level of interest. It is expected that children at various ages will make different meaning from this segment – it is a great one to revisit for that reason.

These resources will help guide your practice [Elders and Traditional Owners Share Histories and Cultures RAP Action](#) and Narragunnawali [History Subject Guide](#).

NATURAL MATERIALS IN ART AND CRAFT PROJECTS

The importance of native flora a key element in *Walking Together*. Research the different uses of native plants in your area and how they are traditionally utilised for art and craft experiences, as well as other uses such as medicine and ceremonial purposes. Involve children in “borrowing, using and returning” natural found materials which can be used as craft materials in your early learning service. Remember to only take what you need and return these materials back to Country once you are finished.

Learn more about [Indigenous bags and baskets](#) via ABC Education.



DANCING- MOVE IT MOB STYLE

When embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in early childhood curriculum it is important for educators to reflect the diversity of and dynamic nature of cultures, and to strike a balance between urban, regional, contemporary, traditional and local perspectives. When it comes to dance there are many protocols regarding the teaching and learning of traditional dances. However, there is a great program available called “Move it Mob Style” which is a contemporary Aboriginal dance demonstration aimed to get little fellas up and moving. Educators can access the videos here: [About | Move it Mob Style](#)

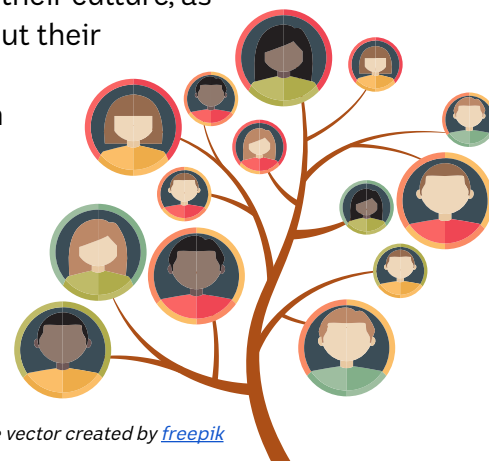
Visit [Bangarra](#) - an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisation and one of Australia’s leading performing arts companies for professional learning opportunities and educational resources. The *Walking Together* script was written by Jasmin Sheppard. Jasmin is also an accomplished dance artist and Bangarra alumni. Read more about Jasmin and [watch clips](#) of her beautiful dance performances.

Engage with the Narragunnawali [Dance Subject Guide](#)

FAMILY TREE

It is important to celebrate multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion in early childhood settings. Everyone has a right to feel proud of who they are and where they are from. [Race Relations](#) and [Unity](#) are key elements of reconciliation, and it is important to highlight the particular place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia’s national story and identity.

Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families have ancestors and a family history. Invite children’s families to send in pictures of their families or come in and have a yarn with children to share their family story. Educators can support children in developing a ‘*strong sense of identity*’ (EYLF Learning Outcome 1) by providing opportunities to share aspects of their culture, as well as learn about their social & cultural heritage through engagement with respected Elders and other community members.



Tree vector created by [freepik](#)

RECOGNISING UNFAIRNESS

The Playschool story ‘Say Yes’ (2017) by Jennifer Castles and illustrated by Paul Seden, is a great resource when teaching children about [reconciliation](#) and Australia’s histories. Additionally, it is also an important narrative for educators who work with and follow the Anti-Bias Goals.

Goals three and four of the Anti-bias approach in early childhood call for children to be able to recognise injustice or unfairness and have the confidence, strategies and skills to stand up and take action against it. Teaching about past injustices, Australia’s history and Aboriginal [current affairs and issues](#) is not just something that educators should do as a one off or only during



National Reconciliation Week. Educators who are passionate about social justice should be regularly sharing provocations that encourage children and colleagues to critically reflect.



We recommend having your centre subscribe to the [Koori Mail](#) which is Australia's fortnightly Aboriginal newspaper to source accurate articles for and by Indigenous Australians.

Exposing children to a range of [fiction and non-fiction texts](#) published, written and illustrated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors and illustrators, and by subscribing to the Koori Mail is just one way that children and educators can remain informed about issues effecting

Indigenous Australians today. It is recommended that educators first take steps to develop their [own cultural capacity](#) and confidence before approaching this work with children. Additionally, it is encouraged that this work is done in consultation with families and your local Aboriginal community.

Engage with [the Narragunnawali Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody "From Little Things Big Things Grow" \(Early Learning\) curriculum resource](#).

THROUGH THE WINDOWS FILM – MUMMAGA LAKE

Arwyn & Anabella visit Mummaga Lake with their grandmother. They talk about the importance of identity and Country while painting each other with ochre and collect stringy bark to use for their dance.

Watch the film again via [ABC Kids Early Education: Family, Community and Culture](#)

SEA OF HANDS

Hunter and Rachael create hand shaped cut-outs to include in a 'Sea of Hands', along with brightly coloured hand shapes provided by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTaR).

ABOUT ANTaR

ANTaR has been advocating for justice, rights, and respect for Australia's First Nations Peoples for almost a quarter of a century. Their organisation evolved out of a people's movement for Native Title and Reconciliation that inspired [the first Sea of Hands](#) at Parliament House in Canberra in 1997.

ANTaR have a variety of resources for from First Nations authors and illustrators covering a wide range of topics including culture and country, language, family, stolen generations and Sorry Day, and the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Check out ANTaR's list of [5 Handy Ways to Take Action for Reconciliation Week 2021](#). This includes how to organise a visit from the Sea of Hands to your school or community or make your own and



join us in creating a Sea of Hands online during National Reconciliation Week.

The Hands have travelled far and wide across Australia as a symbol of solidarity with First Nations Peoples, join the thousands who have put their 'Hands up!' for justice, rights and respect and organise [your own Sea of Hands event](#) in your community.

Also check out the [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Flags RAP Action](#).

The 2021 theme for National Reconciliation Week is [More than a word. Reconciliation takes action](#). Find out more about developing a [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#) for your early education and care setting the Narragunnawali platform.



ABOUT RECONCILIATION AUSTRALIA

Reconciliation Australia is an independent, national, not-for-profit organisation promoting reconciliation by building stronger relationships, respect and trust between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Reconciliation Australia's program [Narragunnawali](#): Reconciliation in Education supports all schools and early learning services in Australia to develop environments that foster a high level of knowledge and pride in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and contributions.

Narragunnawali (pronounced narra-gunna-wally) is a word from the language of the Ngunnawal people, Traditional Owners of

the land on which Reconciliation Australia's Canberra office is located, meaning alive, wellbeing, coming together and peace. We pay our respects and thank the [United Ngunnawal Elders Council](#) for giving us permission to use the word *narragunnawali*.

The Narragunnawali online platform is free to access and provides practical ways to introduce meaningful reconciliation initiatives in early education settings and with the community. Through the Narragunnawali platform, schools and early learning services can develop a [Reconciliation Action Plan \(RAP\)](#), and teachers and educators can access [professional learning](#) and [curriculum resources](#) to support the implementation of reconciliation initiatives.

ABOUT KOORI CURRICULUM

Directed by Jessica Staines, [The Koori Curriculum](#) is an Aboriginal Early Childhood consultancy that supports early childhood educators to grow their cultural confidence and capacity. Koori Curriculum works with educators across all different service types assisting them to embed Aboriginal perspectives in their curriculum and form meaningful relationships with their local Aboriginal community.

Jessica developed the episode outline for *Walking Together* and often contributes her pedagogical expertise as the Aboriginal Early Childhood Education Consultant for Play School.

Resources from Koori Curriculum

- [Reconciliation – More than a word – Koori Curriculum](#)
- [Our Top Three Books to Teach about Social Justice and Anti Bias – Koori Curriculum](#)
- [Educator Yarns Season Two – Koori Curriculum](#) A podcast with Jessica Staines interviewing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators around Australia who share their experience of embedding Aboriginal perspectives in early childhood curriculums, working with the anti-bias approach and so much more.

ABOUT THE SECRETARIAT OF NATIONAL ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHILD CARE (SNAICC)

SNAICC – National Voice for our Children is the national peak body for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. SNAICC works for the fulfilment of the rights of our children and exists to see all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children grow up healthy, happy and safe. Over the past 40 years, SNAICC has worked to influence policy reform at state, territory, and

federal levels and in developing innovative and useful resources for families and practitioners in early years education and care, child safety and child rights.

Visit [SNAICC](#) to learn more about their work and to find resources available in digital and print.



MORE RESOURCES

- Engage with the [Narragunnawali Walking Together Playschool episode \(Early Learning\) curriculum resource](#).
- Learn more about incorporating an Acknowledgement of Country at your early education and care setting. Visit [Acknowledgement of Country RAP Action](#).
- Explore the extensive [Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander picture book list](#) recommended by the National Centre for Australian Children's Literature.

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ABC KIDS EARLY EDUCATION NOTES

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