

ENROLMENT

Collecting Information on VISA Entrance Categories

When enrolling a child from a culturally and linguistically diverse background who has recently migrated to Australia considerations relating to the VISA entrance category are often overlooked and the information is not collected.

Information relating to a family's visa entrance category can have significant impact on:

- access to support services.
- transition planning into the care and education environment.
- inclusion into the care and education environment.

Some examples of this are:

- Access to additional support services:
 - Individuals and families entering on Visa entry categories relating to refugee and humanitarian entrance into Australia may be eligible for Inclusion Support Subsidy (ISS) for children who 'demonstrate behaviours symptomatic with having experienced or having been subject to torture or trauma in their country of origin or during their refugee experience' (point C4.3 ISS). Early childhood professionals have a role in identifying children who have experienced torture and or trauma and who may need additional support to feel secure, confident and included. If a need for additional support is established the evidence collected during enrolment will suffice as documented evidence to apply for ISS.
- Non-eligibility for supports and services:
 - Professionals, business owners and their dependents entering Australia under some Visa categories may not be eligible for Australian Government funded supports and services.
- Expectations on you as an educator and carer:
- These may vary greatly based on the family's background and life experiences. Visa categories can give you some initial information that will enhance your relationship building and information sharing with the family. A family having entered Australia with a refugee or humanitarian entrance may be mostly concerned for the safety of the child. A family entering Australia under a business or professional visa may have decided to migrate to Australia for the sole purpose of enhancing their child's opportunity for education.

A visa category can be established by viewing and copying the visa stamp in a passport or through a letter provided by Centrelink.

Information on visa sub-classes can be viewed on the Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship website on the following pages:

- Humanitarian and Refugee Visa Categories
<http://www.immi.gov.au/visas/humanitarian/>
- Workers
<http://www.immi.gov.au/skilled/>

Having information on a family's VISA entrance category enhances your ability as an early childhood practitioner to create an environment that is responsive to diverse circumstances.

REFERENCES

1. Australian Government Department of Immigration and Citizenship
<http://www.immi.gov.au/immigration/>
2. New South Wales Department of Education and Training
<http://www.racismnoway.com.au/>
3. *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* 2009. Department of Education, Employment and Workplace (DEEWR), Australian Government