

Case study | Newly Arrived Families

Muslim Women Parenting Forum

This case study is about how Dandenong South Primary School (DSPS) Hub supported newly arrived Muslim women in their community to improve their understanding of parenting in Australia.

What was the challenge?

We have noticed within our community that there are differences in the ways newly arrived families parent and the expectations of parenting in Australia. Everything from sleeping, feeding, diet and discipline can carry different beliefs and expectations. In response to this, a partnership was developed between the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights (AMWCFHR), DSPS Hub and four other key organisations (Foundation House, Australian Childhood Foundation, South Eastern Women's Health and Dandenong Maternal Child Health Nurse) to deliver a half day forum to support newly arrived Muslim women navigate parenting in Australia.

What worked? What didn't?

The forum was advertised for all newly arrived Muslim women and attracted over 65 participants, predominantly from Dari speaking Afghans, as well as others from Albanian and Iranian backgrounds.

Our day began with a morning plenary, where women listened to a presentation on *'Infant Growth and Development'* and then were able to choose which workshop they would like to attend next. The topics covered included infant development, dental hygiene, merging two cultures to raise a happy family and healthy lifestyles and habits for children. The women liked being able to choose a workshop to attend and this gave them power over what topic they wanted more information on.

Communication is key! The AMWCFHR worked very closely with DSPS Hub to ensure that the venue could be arranged with allocations for the four break-out workshops to be conducted. We were all aware of the format of the day and what we wanted to achieve. They also worked closely with the agencies we used to deliver the workshops to ensure that the information being delivered was culturally appropriate and sensitive.

We provided onsite childcare service for mothers and this enabled them to relax and concentrate on the content being delivered and access their children if they felt the need to.

Feedback from the day was that the women enjoyed the opportunity to come together, share and celebrate being mothers in a supported and nurtured environment. They appreciated not having to worry about their children during the sessions while they learnt new things.

Your advice?

Identify an area of need in the community that you want to address. Consult with other key organisation who assist in your area and discuss the possibility of running a day to address these needs, there are many organisations with a wealth of knowledge eager to assist you!

"We liked coming together to share and learn"



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