

Talk's In Families of refugee background and schools in dialogue



Foundation
House

The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture

© Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc. 2009

All rights reserved. Material in this resource may be reproduced, translated or adapted to meet local needs without prior permission, subject to acknowledgement of this resource. No commercial use or sale permitted.

Talk's In – Families of refugee background and schools in dialogue

ISBN 978-0-9804358-0-1 (spiral bound)

ISBN 978-0-9804358-1-8 (PDF)

Whilst best efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of the information presented in this publication, readers are reminded that it is a guide only. It is understood that those implementing a program for their school community will remain vigilant to their professional responsibilities and exercise their professional skill and judgement at all times. The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture Inc. cannot be held responsible for errors or for any consequences arising from the use of information contained in this publication and disclaims all responsibility for any loss or damage which may be suffered or caused by any person relying on the information contained herein.

Published by the Victorian Foundation Survivors of Torture Inc.

6 Gardiner Street, Brunswick Victoria 3056 Australia

Email: info@foundationhouse.org.au

Web: www.foundationhouse.org.au

Copies of this resource can be downloaded from the publications section of the website www.foundationhouse.org.au/publications.php

Layout: markmaking

Contents

Preface	3
Acknowledgements	5
VFST school resources	6
<hr/>	
Section 1 — Introduction	7
Contents of this resource	7
Background	7
Terminology	7
Rationale	8
Objectives	9
Guiding principles	9
Successful outcomes	10
Useful resources	10
Useful websites	11
Other strategies	11
<hr/>	
Section 2 – Preparation and planning	14
Program overview	14
Using this resource	14
Issues to consider	15
Take-home resources	16
Checklist of tasks	17
PowerPoint slides for staff presentation	19

Section 3 – Implementation of weekly workshops	22
Workshop outlines	22
Workshop 1 – The Australian education system	23
Workshop 2 – Rights and responsibilities	27
Workshop 3 – Teaching and learning	32
Workshop 4 – Supporting your child	35
Conclusion	38
PowerPoint slides for weekly workshops (optional)	39

Preface

Parent involvement in their children's learning has long been considered an important factor that can contribute to successful educational outcomes for students. However, it is not always easy for parents and families to participate effectively in their children's school education. Schools with a culturally and linguistically diverse population face particular challenges in this regard, trying to ensure that all families have an equal opportunity to participate in school activities. There are a range of factors which make it especially difficult for newly-arrived families of refugee background to be involved and actively participate in their children's schooling. This resource hopes to provide some useful information and suggestions as to how schools might provide support and encouragement to these families. It outlines a program of four workshops for schools to deliver on-site at the school to families of students from refugee backgrounds. It has been successfully used in a number of primary and secondary schools across Melbourne.

The refugee experience is a fundamental disruption to people's lives typically as the result of protracted long term conflict and displacement. In this context, there are a range of factors which can make it especially difficult for newly-arrived families of refugee background to actively participate in their children's schooling. Subsequently, a school environment may be particularly challenging for refugee background families who may have had limited access to education as a result of conditions in their countries of origin. This can add to the more obvious cultural and linguistic impediments. How a school chooses to engage and communicate with these families has the capacity to reinforce the ideal that family participation is a vital component of a child's education, or, alternatively compound a sense of disconnection that many families feel in relation to their children's education in Australia.

When considering what we actually mean by family engagement/involvement in schools, it is worth looking at the following framework in which Joyce Epstein outlines six types of family and community involvement in schools. It indicates that perhaps we need to broaden our perspective and review our definitions, and ensure that we recognize the valuable contribution all families can make to supporting their children's learning in Australia.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Family and Community Involvement in Schools

TYPES	REDEFINITIONS
1. PARENTING Help all families establish home environments to support children as students	“Workshop” to mean more than a meeting about a topic held at the school building at a particular time. “Workshop” may also mean making information available in a variety of forms that can be viewed, heard, or read anywhere, anytime, in varied forms.
2. COMMUNICATING Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress	“Communications about school programs and student progress” to mean two-way, three-way and many-way channels of communication that connect schools, families, students and the community.
3. VOLUNTEERING Recruit and organise parent help and support	“Volunteer” to mean anyone who supports school goals and children's learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time – not just during the school day and at the school building.
4. LEARNING AT HOME Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum related activities, decisions and planning	“Homework” to mean not only work done alone, but also interactive activities shared with others at home or in the community, linking schoolwork to real life. “Help” at home to mean encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussion – not “teaching” school subjects.
5. DECISION MAKING Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives	“Decision-making” to mean a process of partnership, of shared values and actions toward shared goals, not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas. Parent leader to mean a real representative, with opportunities and support to hear from and communicate with other families.
6. COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development	“Community” to mean not only the neighbourhoods where students' homes and schools are located but also any neighbourhoods that influence their learning and development. “Community” rated not only by low or high social or economic qualities, but by strengths and talents to support students, families and school. “Community” means all who are interested in and affected by the quality of education, not just those with children in schools.

Source: Epstein, J. L. et al. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action, third edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
See the website of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University at <http://www.partnershipschools.org>

Acknowledgements

Many individuals, schools and organisations have given their valuable time and advice, and shared their experiences in the development of *Talks' In*. Special thanks to the following:

- Cleeland Secondary College, Dandenong
- Holy Eucharist Primary School, St Albans
- Lalor Primary School
- Maroondah Secondary College
- St Albans Primary School
- St Anthony's Primary School, Noble Park
- South Sudanese community members
- Springvale English Language Centre
- Springvale Primary School
- Thomastown Primary School
- Western English Language School (WELS)

This resource has been developed by the Service Innovation Team at Foundation House and documented by Sharrin Murphy.

Many thanks to the following for their funding contribution to the development, trialling, and documentation of *Talk's In*:

- Department for Victorian Communities
- Refugee Education Partnership Project
- Helen McPherson Smith Trust

VFST school resources

This resource adds to those school resources previously developed in the context of VFST's work with schools. Other resources produced include:

- *A Guide to Working with Young People who are Refugees* (2000) includes the Kaleidoscope Program
- *The Rainbow Program for Children in Refugee Families* (2002)
- *HealthWise – Health Literacy Teaching Resource for Refugee and Other ESL Students* (2004)
- *Taking Action – Human Rights and Refugee Issues Teaching Resource* (2004)
- *School's In for Refugees – Whole-School Guide to Refugee Readiness* (2004)
- *Education and Refugee Students from Southern Sudan* (2005)
- *Klassroom Kaleidoscope – A program to facilitate connectedness and well-being in the culturally diverse classroom* (2007)

The resources are targeted at English as a Second Language Schools and Centres, primary and secondary mainstream schools and other educational settings. Copies can be downloaded from the website.

SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Contents of this resource

Talk's In is divided into 3 sections.

Section 1 provides general background information on the development of the resource.

Section 2 describes the program in more detail and outlines a number of issues that schools need to consider when implementing the workshops. It includes a checklist of tasks that will assist with planning and preparation. A short PowerPoint presentation for school staff is also provided.

Section 3 provides detailed plans for each of the four workshops. It outlines the suggested topics to be covered and includes some activities to encourage interaction and discussion amongst the participants. It includes an optional set of PowerPoint slides to use at the workshops.

Background

In 2005 Foundation House participated in a community development project with the South Sudanese community of Brimbank in the western metropolitan region of Melbourne. The project involved an extensive consultation process with community representatives and leaders to identify areas of concern for them in the resettlement process. It is described in the report *Coming together: Two cultures, one life*.

Education emerged as one of the priorities, and Foundation House worked in partnership with the South Sudanese community and St Albans Primary School to develop a strategy for engaging families of refugee background in their children's education. A series of four workshops for families of refugee background was developed by the school community and delivered at the school. The workshop topics covered a range of education-related issues identified by the school together with the Sudanese community. The resulting model was subsequently trialled in several schools, and the workshops have been adapted to suit both primary and secondary school settings. The program described in this resource incorporates the collective experiences of those schools who have delivered the workshops, many of which added activities and ideas to the original model. It has been further developed to include an optional PowerPoint slide presentation.

Terminology

This resource uses the term 'family' rather than 'parents/carers' in recognition of the diversity of family composition amongst refugee-background students. Many have lost or are separated from their biological parents, or are living in extended family arrangements.

Rationale

In Australian schools, a general understanding of family involvement in a child's education usually includes activities such as communication with teachers and other school personnel, attending school events, assisting with learning at home, or volunteering at school.

Consequently, many teachers and schools are confused and concerned about the perceived lack of involvement in education by families with a refugee background. In Australia we often emphasise a family's presence at school, alongside anything done at home, to gauge their level of support for their child's education. Because many refugee-background families do not visit their children's schools, it is assumed that they "just don't care". Yet this is rarely the case. Evidence consistently demonstrates that refugee-background families do care about their children's education a great deal. However, there are often a number of issues at play. These include:

- The process of resettlement in a new country with a different culture is extremely challenging for families of refugee background. Adults have many pressing needs to deal with such as housing, health, employment, etc. They may have little emotional energy available to directly support their child's learning.
- Some refugee background families have limited experiences of formal schooling prior to arrival in Australia, and can find the unfamiliar school environment confusing, intimidating and confronting. Children may have had limited access to formal education either in their country of origin, a refugee camp or in a transit country prior to their arrival in Australia. Thus some children and their parents may be illiterate in their own language.
- Many refugee-background families may be unaware that the school expectation of involvement in children's education includes visiting the school for various meetings and events.
- In many cultures teachers are highly respected and considered to be experts in their field. It is seen as disrespectful to question a teacher or interfere in their work in any way. Thus, in these societies, families rarely visit schools or talk to teachers. It is one of the reasons why refugee-background families find their new role as the school's "partner" confusing.
- Some refugee-background families do not distinguish between education as schooling, and education as upbringing, and are involved in their child's education through their teaching of social skills (for example — how to be respectful). Lack of understanding of the new culture as well as other personal commitments can prevent them from providing additional forms of support.
- Many cultures are relationship-oriented and it is important to develop trust before doing business or discussing problems. The development of informal and positive relationships between families and the school is therefore vital in order to encourage positive communication.
- It can be challenging for refugee-background families to learn how to discipline their children in their new context. Misinformation about acceptable parenting practices and discipline may carry over to education issues.
- In many countries individuals do not have the power to change the infrastructure of established systems. The idea that families can participate in decision-making, or potentially create change in their children's schooling, may be totally unfamiliar.

Objectives

The purpose of this resource is to strengthen the capacity of school communities at both the primary and secondary levels to provide a supportive and inclusive school environment for students from refugee backgrounds and their families. The process of engaging families in the workshops at the school is designed to promote social connectedness between the families and the school community. The objectives of the workshops are to:

- Develop a positive relationship between families and the school
 - Share families pre-arrival experiences of education
 - Increase understanding of the Australian (Victorian) education system
 - Empower families to have an effective role in their children's learning
-

Guiding principles

There are some significant factors to keep in mind when considering facilitating workshops for refugee background families at the school.

- Mutual respect for cultural differences is paramount.
- Understanding the refugee experience, including resettlement issues, and the consequent impact on the ability of families to support their children's learning, is fundamental.
- Acknowledgement that refugee-background families often have enormous strength and capacities to assist their children is crucial.
- Awareness of the variety of family composition is important. Disruption and separation of families through the refugee experience may mean that adults caring for children may not be blood relatives, and extended family living arrangements are common. Schools need understanding and sensitivity when dealing with a variety of family structures and living arrangements.
- Creation of an environment which allows for two-way communication encourages confidence and trust. Parents have a strong sense of responsibility towards their children, and may feel the need to advocate very strongly on behalf of their child, if they perceive that their child's needs are not being addressed by the school.
- Recognition that trust needs to be developed and that successful parent participation in schooling can be a slow process is essential.
- Understanding the ongoing nature of the relationship between families and the school needs to be emphasised. i.e. facilitating the program does not necessarily mean that refugee families will have a good understanding of everything in relation to their children's schooling. It is one approach towards the promotion of an inclusive and supportive environment, and needs to be complemented by other activities and strategies.
- Flexibility and creativity in your approaches to the needs of families at your school will help a great deal in terms of positive relationships and communication.

Successful outcomes

Schools which have facilitated the program sometimes had unexpected outcomes which emerged after the completion of the program. Some examples are listed below.

- One community leader who participated in the program subsequently became a school council member.
 - Traditional children's stories were shared by a group of mothers each week at school. They were translated, printed and illustrated by students and put into the school library.
 - Employment assistance was organised by the school through the Brotherhood of St Laurence for a group of fathers who participated in the program.
 - A community tour of the local area in a minibus was conducted for participant families to acquaint them with free/low cost community facilities such as the library, parks, playgrounds etc.
 - A regular family forum with interpreters was organised at a secondary school each term by the student welfare coordinator for families to raise issues of concern with the school.
-

Useful resources

Family-School and Community Partnerships Bureau — Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (2008)

The Bureau has been set up to help Australian schools, families and communities build sustainable, collaborative, productive relationships. Much of this website and the Bureau itself draws on a document called Family-School Partnerships Framework — A guide for schools and families which can be downloaded from the website. www.familyschool.org.au

Opening the School Gate — Centre for Multicultural Youth (2006)

This resource is to assist schools to engage families from Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds within the school community. It is available to download on the CMY website. www.cmy.net.au

Raising Children in Australia — Foundation House (2007)

This resource was developed to assist service providers to cater for the needs of African parents of children in the 0-5 year age group. It includes a DVD for families which is available in 11 African languages. It is available to download from the website. www.foundationhouse.org.au

Welcome to Primary School — Queensland (2007)

This resource was developed as an orientation pack for primary schools to welcome families from refugee and migrant backgrounds. It includes a multilingual CD with PowerPoint templates and two multilingual DVDs. It is available to order from — St Brendan's Catholic Primary School, Hawtree St, Moorooka, QLD 4105
Tel: 07 3275 2081 Fax: 07 3216 7873

Talking in Tune — Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria (2006)

This guide consists of a 30-minute video or DVD, and a written guide to working with interpreters in schools. It is also available as a CD for personal use on a computer. The resource consists of seven scenarios designed to highlight common pitfalls and effective strategies when working with interpreters. It is available to order from:

Languages and Multicultural Education Resource Centre (LMERC), 150 Palmerston Street, Carlton, VIC 3053

Tel: 03 9349 1418 Fax: 03 9349 1295

Useful websites

Families Matter — www.familiesmatter.org.au

Student Wellbeing Action Partnership — www.edfac.unimelb.edu.au/swap

Australian Council of State School Organisations — www.acsso.org.au

Australian Parents Council (APC) — www.austparents.edu.au

Victorian Parents Council — www.vicparentscouncil.vic.edu.au

Other strategies

Saturday workshop — a combined workshop for parents of refugee background students was organized by a number of secondary schools together, to share information between the families and the schools, as well as provide an opportunity for families to raise any issues of concern in relation to their children's learning. The day was organized and facilitated by the Multicultural Education Aide (MEA), with direct participation from the ESL teachers and the school support services officers.

Community conversations — a series of twilight workshops after school for families of refugee background were held by the principal of a primary school. The principal was interested to find out what were the main issues for parents, and encouraged them to raise any issues of concern. Each cultural group had a separate workshop with appropriate interpreters provided. The school intends to develop a whole school response to address the concerns raised.

Sewing workshops — regular sewing workshops were organized at one primary school for the mothers of refugee background students to come together at the school. At these sessions much useful information between the families and the school was informally shared. As a result, the school had an increased understanding of the issues for these families, and was better able to plan positive strategies to support them.

Student/teacher/parent meetings — a secondary school organised 3-way discussions with their students of refugee background involving the teacher, the student, and their carer (with an interpreter), to establish learning goals for the student.

Computer classes — a primary school welfare officer organised a series of practical lessons during the afternoon at school in the computer room for families of refugee background. The lessons involved hands-on sessions working on the practice driving instruction tests online and other online activities.

SECTION 1 — INTRODUCTION

English speaking classes — a primary school organised for teachers from Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) to come to the school and deliver English speaking classes to the families of refugee background in one of the classrooms.

Citizenship preparation — one secondary school supported some parents of refugee background who were applying for citizenship to practise the test online using computers at the school.

Playspot — one primary school organised for the local library to come to the school once a week with toys and books suitable for mums and pre-schoolers to borrow.

Family activity nights — many primary schools conduct family nights with an educational focus, such as Family Maths, Family Science. These are wonderful opportunities for families of refugee background to interact with other families at the school in a fun and informal environment. One school provides a BBQ at each of these community evenings.

Cultural storytelling — one primary school incorporates stories from other cultures into the curriculum. The Multicultural Education Aide tells stories from their culture, and the children contribute stories from their own cultures. One school organised a story telling evening where they shared stories from different cultures.

“Creating Conversations” — this DEECD program is designed for secondary school students and their families. It involves students facilitating discussions with families about drug related issues. The manual is intended to support school communities plan these events and can be downloaded from the DEECD website.

Multicultural women’s group — the primary welfare officer at one school organised a series of speakers to come to the school and present information on a range of topics suggested by the group. The topics included parenting, consumer affairs, women’s health, child development, immigration advice, skill-sharing, nutrition etc.

Mother / daughter afternoon tea — the year 8 level coordinator organised an afternoon tea for mothers and daughters at the school.

Father / son nights — a primary school worked with a community health service to facilitate an activity/discussion night for fathers and sons. The community health agency also organised a weekend adventure camp for a small group of fathers and sons.

Parent gatherings — one school has set up a regular time each fortnight when parents are invited to come to the school and raise any issues of concern, get any information about the school programs, and receive copies and explanations of all the documents that have been distributed to the students and families in the previous fortnight.

School canteen — some mothers at the school have encouraged the mothers of refugee background to come to training sessions in the school canteen. The new arrival mothers are then mentored, and when they are confident with the canteen procedures, they are put onto the school canteen roster.

Community gardens — parents from different cultures are rostered to care for a community vegetable garden located within the primary school grounds. They participate in a roster system for weekends and holidays.

Harvest festival — one school organised a festival to celebrate the harvesting of the produce from the community garden, and invited other schools with community gardens to participate in the harvest activities.

African drumming workshop — one primary school organised a large-scale musical celebration of cultural diversity by having a drumming workshop at the school. Each of the 300 students had an individual drum and actively participated in learning some drumming skills. The session culminated in everyone contributing to a large group performance.

Toy library — one primary school set up a borrowing system in the school library of toys, DVD's, books, games etc for families from refugee backgrounds to take home and use with their children.

Multicultural day/night — many schools celebrate the diversity of cultures represented at their school by organising a multicultural event. This may involve cultural groups sharing their culture and traditions through performing a concert item for the school community. The concert is then followed by food from a range of different cultures being shared by the whole school community.

English speaking, reading and writing sessions — a primary school has established sessions during school-time for adults to develop their speaking, reading and writing skills in English. Their oldest student in the English speaking class is a 93 year old gentleman!

Breakfast club — a primary school has established a breakfast club that invites families to come to school and share breakfast together once a week. Breakfast is provided.

Workshop follow-up— It is a good idea to ask participants at the completion of the final workshop what they would like as a follow-up to the program. You may like to refer to the earlier section on successful outcomes for some ideas on how the school can respond.

SECTION 2

PREPARATION & PLANNING

Program overview

The topics for each week are suggestions only and schools may wish to add other issues that are specific to their school situation and local community.

WORKSHOPS

- 1 — The Australian education system
- 2 — Rights and responsibilities
- 3 — Teaching and learning
- 4 — Supporting your child

TOPICS

- Our school profile, school council, staff roles, school times, education pathway
- Values, behaviour, school uniform, homework, student reports, food at school
- Activity-based learning, subjects, camps & excursions, careers & choices
- Helping at home, helping at school

Using this resource

Talk's In has been used effectively in both primary and secondary schools to support students of refugee background, by providing an opportunity for their families to become more engaged in the formal learning process. Schools may wish to use the workshop strategy as it is outlined here, adapting it to their own specific situation, or use the resource as a reference/guide when discussing how to include families of refugee background more effectively within their school community. Schools need to be responsive to the practical needs and circumstances of their own local community. Some schools have set up a regular activity group for families, for example a weekly women's sewing group, or English language classes, and used it as an opportunity to introduce some of the suggested topics and activities in the workshop plans. Most schools have delivered the workshops to a number of different cultural groups at the same time, using an interpreter for each language group.

Workshop plans — the material in each of the workshops is designed to take no longer than two hours. Your school may well opt for shorter workshops, and if so, should adjust the content accordingly. It is important for individual schools to tailor the workshops to suit their own circumstances in relation to content, resources, staff, and participants. The workshops are designed to be delivered in consecutive weeks at the school.

PowerPoint for weekly workshops (optional) — the workshop plans are linked to a set of PowerPoint slides which accompany this resource for those schools who wish to use this type of presentation. It is recommended that schools adapt the content of the slides to suit their school characteristics, and their objectives. The slides are designed primarily to be used as a prompt for the presenters and interpreters, rather than for the participants. Some schools have chosen not to use a PowerPoint presentation in the delivery of the workshops.

PowerPoint for school staff — these slides have been designed to provide information to the staff at the school about the content of the workshops. Consider showing this to the whole staff to encourage those interested to assist with the planning and implementation of the workshops.

Issues to consider

There are a number of issues to consider when planning to implement *Talk's In* at your school. These include:

Number of workshops — your school needs to decide on the number of workshops you will facilitate. This will depend on your school circumstances and community. Four x 2 hour workshops (consecutive weeks) may be beyond the commitment of some families at the school.

Time and duration of workshops — workshops should be no longer than 2 hours. If possible, consult with the community/families as to what time is most suitable. Morning sessions seem to be easier for most families.

School team — it helps to have a team of people to share the tasks. If you have a Multicultural Education Aide, ensure they have a pivotal role throughout the program. Involve as many other staff as possible. Having the school principal and school council president welcome families at the first workshop demonstrates the value of the program.

Workshop activities — staff can assist with the delivery of the workshops in a range of ways. They can lead small group discussions, conduct school tours, accept classroom visitors, prepare take-home resources, demonstrate classroom activities, organise any equipment needed, model subject activities, set up workshops room, organise refreshments, or contribute video/photos of school camps or excursions.

Workshop material — the presentation needs to be appropriate for the audience. Include visual material to illustrate verbal explanations, for example — photos, videos, pictures, relevant objects. Avoid using extensive written material in handouts, and use the PowerPoint slides as cues for presenters and interpreters.

Interpreters — always provide professional interpreters, even if families don't request them. It is useful to give the interpreters a written handout of what you intend to cover in each workshop. (The PowerPoint slide handouts are useful for this). You might like to refer to the *Talking in Tune* video resource (see **Useful resources** in Section 1 of this document).

Promotion — promote the workshops through the students, and in school newsletters, as well as giving personal invitations to each of the families.

Follow-up — once information or invitations have been sent home, ask the Multicultural Education Aide to follow-up with regular telephone calls and home visits to every family, to encourage them to participate. It is also important to contact all families personally, immediately prior to EACH workshop as a reminder.

Attendance — encourage families to bring friends and extended family members, and consider inviting community leaders and representatives. Encourage other parents from the school to attend the workshops as hosts and friends.

Venue — the library, staffroom, hall, spare classroom, multi-purpose room are all possibilities for a suitable location for the workshops.

Seating arrangements — having the same language groups sharing a table with an interpreter works well; tables in a semi-circle facing the front of the room encourages group sharing and discussion.

Child care — it may be necessary to provide child care at the school to enable parents with young children to attend. Experience has shown that this needs to be in fairly close proximity to wherever the workshops are being held.

Refreshments — tea, coffee, and biscuits are sufficient and appropriate.

Take-home resources — it is a good idea to give families something to take home, either in a show bag at the completion of the program, or after each workshop. A resource that will be useful in supporting their child's learning at home is appropriate (see suggestions below).

Take-home resources

As part of the program, many schools gave families resources to take home to support their child's learning, either as a show bag at the end of the program, or each week at the conclusion of the workshop.

Some examples of take-home resources are listed below —

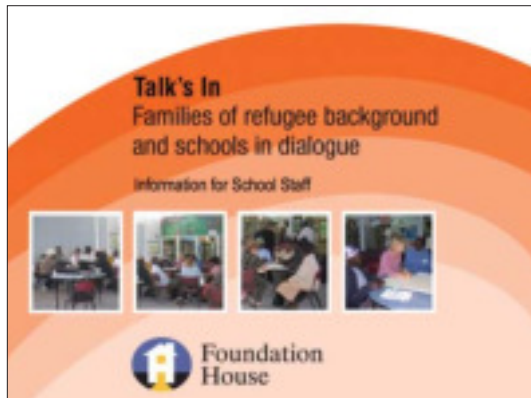
- Bingo cards
- 100 most used words (laminated)
- Charts/Posters e.g. times tables
- Labelled photos of key school personnel
- Fridge magnet of school term dates
- Alphabet handwriting strips (cursive script)
- Healthy lunch box ideas
- Laminated school timetable
- School calendar of term events
- Canteen pricelist
- Contact list of key school personnel
- Pack of playing cards
- Illustrated uniform information

Checklist of tasks

TASKS	WHO?	DONE?
Identify school team (include MEA)	
Put proposal to school council (with dates & times if possible)	
Finalise dates and present <i>Talk's In</i> program to school staff (using PowerPoint provided)	
Seek input from community representatives (MEA?)	
Request input from interested school staff	
Finalise program content for each of the workshops	
Adapt/tailor the PowerPoint content to your school	
Decide on what resources will be needed (data projector, computer, take home resources, school bag, games, video)	
Decide on workshops location (library? staffroom? community room)	
Publicise program details in school newsletter (dates, times)	
Print flier/family invitations and organise translations	
Distribute translated written invitations to families	
Follow-up invitations for all families — personal contact by home visit or phone call (MEA)	
Compile written participant list (MEA)	
Book interpreters ahead for all workshops (preferably same ones each time)	
Arrange for refreshments (by parents group?)	
Organise child care arrangements (supervision, activities)	
Organise any staff to participate in workshops	
Set up room each week for presentations & refreshments	

TASKS	WHO?	DONE?
Have “welcomer” (students?) in foyer for families who arrive late
Invite principal and school council president to Workshop 1 (to welcome families)
Take photos at workshops for school newsletter
Organise take-home resources/show-bag to give families
Organise school tour leaders (Week 1)
Organise students for uniform parade (Week 2)
Organise packed lunch boxes (Week 2)
Organise complete school bag (Week 2)
Discuss (with teachers) and timetable classroom visits (Week 3)
Organise teachers to model games, classroom activities, sharing book (Weeks 3 and 4)

PowerPoint slides for presentation to staff



Weekly workshop topics



SLIDE PRESENTATION (STAFF)

Slide 7 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Small group discussion



Language groups sitting together at tables with interpreters encourages discussion

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalvalues.gov.au



Slide 8 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Schooling experiences



Participants share their own experiences of schooling, prior to arrival in Australia

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalvalues.gov.au



Slide 9 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

- Values
- Behaviour
- School uniform
- Homework
- Student reports
- Food at school

ACTIVITIES

- What's in a school bag?
- Uniform parade
- Sample lunches

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalvalues.gov.au



Slide 10 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Right to education

- Families of refugee background are usually on a low income and may be living in poverty particularly on arrival in Australia
- Costs such as text books, uniforms, school fees, excursions and camps can be prohibitive for families of a refugee background

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalvalues.gov.au



Slide 11 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Who can families talk to at your school about:

- Uniform costs?
- Book costs?
- Camp costs?
- If they are worried about something to do with their child and school?
- And how do they know who to talk to?

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalvalues.gov.au



Slide 12 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Some examples of inclusive practices around costs

- As many generic uniform items as possible (e.g. blue pants that can be bought anywhere, not just the uniform shop)
- Book swap day or second hand bookshop
- Class sets of text books
- Loan system for text books
- Help families access information in relation to EMA, State Schools Relief, etc
- Help families to know which booklet items are compulsory, and which can be purchased at a lower cost (i.e. folders, stationery etc)
- Try and keep camp and excursion costs low, provide flexible payment options

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalvalues.gov.au



Slide 13 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

ACTIVITY:
What's in a school bag?

- Fill a school bag with typical school items
- Explain each item as it is taken out of the school bag



WEEK 2

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalprinciples.gov.au 

Slide 14 WORKSHOP 3: Teaching & learning

- Activity-based learning
- Subjects taught
- Camps & excursions
- Careers & choices

ACTIVITIES

- Classroom visits
- Hands-on experiences
 - maths games
 - language activity
 - science activity

WEEK 3

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalprinciples.gov.au 

Slide 15 WORKSHOP 3: Teaching & learning

Classroom visits



Participants visit different classrooms in small groups to observe teaching and learning in action

WEEK 4

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalprinciples.gov.au 

Slide 16 WORKSHOP 4: Supporting your child

- At home
- At school

ACTIVITIES

- Demonstrate how to share a book at home with a child
- Show photos of parents/carers helping at school

WEEK 4

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalprinciples.gov.au 

Slide 17 Successful workshop outcomes

- Community member joined school council
- Traditional stories translated for school library
- Employment assistance arranged for fathers
- Community tour with minibus to local facilities e.g. library, parks, playgrounds, community health centre
- Forum at school each term for families to raise issues


WEEK 4

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalprinciples.gov.au 

Slide 18 Guiding principles

- Respect for cultural diversity and the refugee experience
- Creation of an environment that encourages two-way communication and information sharing
- Recognition of the need to be creative/innovative in your approach to parent involvement
- Celebrate achievements and stay positive

WEEK 4

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalprinciples.gov.au 

SECTION 3

IMPLEMENTATION OF WEEKLY WORKSHOPS

Workshop outlines

WORKSHOPS	TOPICS CONTENT	ACTIVITIES
Week 1 SLIDES 1–17	The Australian Education System Our school School council School staff School times Education pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group sharing — schooling experiences • School Tour
Week 2 SLIDES 18–24	Rights & responsibilities Our school values Behaviour at school School uniform Homework Student reports Food at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What's in a school bag? • Uniform parade • Sample lunches
Week 3 SLIDES 25–29	Teaching & learning Activity based-learning Subjects taught Camps & excursions Careers & choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom visits • Hands-on experiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — maths games — language activities — science activity
Week 4 SLIDES 30–32	Supporting your child Helping at home Helping at school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Model reading activity • Photos of helpers at school

Workshop Plans

WEEK

1

The Australian Education System

Aims

- To familiarise families with our school
- To assist families to understand the education system in Australia
- To enable families to share their experiences of schooling from their own culture

Topics

- Our school
- School council
- School staff
- School times
- Education pathway

Resources

- Butchers' paper
- Textas
- Data projector
- PowerPoint
- Take home resource
- Refreshments
- Tour guides

Consideration

This workshop provides a great deal of information for participants to absorb. It is important for facilitators to gauge the progress of the workshop and adjust the pace and content accordingly. Interpreting a wide range of information can be demanding on both the interpreter and the participants. Facilitators may choose to move some topics to the following weeks and ensure there is time for a break from delivery of information. Also always ensure there are opportunities for questions from participants.

Preparation

- Ensure room is set up with chairs, computer, data projector.
- Have large sheets of butchers' paper and pens available.
- Make sure refreshments are available for early arrivals.
- Organise for guides to take groups on the school tour.

WEEK 1

Introduction

Welcome

SLIDE 1

Welcome participants (by principal & school council president)

[SLIDE 1 – *Talk's In*]

Introduce facilitators and have participants & interpreters introduce themselves.

Suggested format

Explain that the format of the workshop will involve facilitators addressing the content topics and using slides as prompts.

Explain that the workshops will be flexible to allow time for sharing information, asking questions and engaging in discussions.

Objectives

SLIDE 2

Present the objectives of the workshops

[SLIDE 2 — Program objectives]

Weekly content

SLIDE 3

Present the content for the 4 workshops.

[SLIDE 3 — Weekly workshops]

Ask if there are any questions from participants or interpreters. Are there any other issues that do not seem to be included in the program?

Main Content

SLIDE 4

Present the topics for Workshop 1

[SLIDE 4 — Week 1: The Australian education system]

School profile

SLIDE 5

Present a brief profile of your school numbers of students, number of staff, structure of class groups, curriculum content, special programs offered, (e.g. ESL provision, bike education, camps, music, traffic safety, etc).

[SLIDE 5 — Our school]

School council

SLIDE 6

Explain how each school is managed by its own school council, with reference to its structure and the role of families.

[SLIDE 6 — School council]

School staff & roles

SLIDE 7

(Primary)

Give an outline of how the school operates by explaining the school staff and their roles. Put photos on slides if possible.

[SLIDE 7 (Primary) — School staff]

SLIDE 8

[SLIDE 8, 9 (Secondary) — School staff]

SLIDE 9

(Secondary)

ACTIVITY

GROUP SHARING

Schooling experiences

Ask each language group to discuss together and reflect on their own experiences of schooling.

SLIDE 10

Use the slide (or a handout) to assist facilitators and interpreters with discussion topics which could include size of classes, uniforms, lunch arrangements, school reports, discipline procedures, classroom activities, length of school day, parent involvement etc. Ask facilitators to make notes on butchers' paper. Each small group shares their discussion with the whole group through their interpreter.

[SLIDE 10 — Schooling in other cultures]

ACTIVITY

SCHOOL TOUR

Have staff (or student) volunteers take participants (in small groups if possible) on a brief outside tour to show them the different areas of the school environment e.g. office, classrooms, playground, gymnasium, home economics, art-room, library, computer room, canteen.

Structure of school day

SLIDE 11

(Primary)

Describe a day at your school including start time; morning session times; recess time (outside, teachers on yard duty); lunchtime (eat lunch inside?); afternoon session times; home time. Primary schools may wish to mention that families are welcome to attend the weekly school assembly.

[SLIDE 11 (Primary) — Our school times]

SLIDE 12

(Secondary)

[SLIDE 12 (Secondary) — Our school times]

Education pathway

SLIDE 13

Describe the Victorian education system, and outline the usual path most Australian-born children will follow i.e. kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, career pathway.

SLIDE 14

[SLIDE 13 — Education pathway]

SLIDE 15

[SLIDE 14 — Age 4 — Kindergarten]

SLIDE 16

[SLIDE 15 — Age 5 to 12 — Primary school]

SLIDE 17

[SLIDE 16 — Age 12 to 17 — Secondary school]

[SLIDE 17 — Age 17+ — Career pathway]

Acknowledge that it may be a very different experience for their children, particularly if they have suffered trauma, or are older and have had major disruptions to their schooling. This can lead to significant challenges and difficulties in their learning . Let's talk about it.

Conclusion

Explain that a great deal of content was covered in this workshop and encourage participants to stay behind and talk, or approach the staff at a later time if they would like to discuss any of the issues further.

Take-home

Give families something to take home that relates to the topics covered.

Workshop Plans

WEEK 2

Rights and responsibilities

Aims

- To provide information for families on the daily responsibilities of students
- To assist families to understand what is expected from students at school

Topics

- Our school values
- Behaviour at school
- School uniform
- Homework
- Student reports
- Food at school

Resources

- Data projector
- Sample lunchboxes
- Students in uniform
- School bag with contents
- Samples of reports
- Take-home resource

Consideration

It is important for facilitators to acknowledge that schools are aware that many new cultural groups struggle with the less formal style of education in Australia where children are given more freedom at school than in some other cultures. Make the link back to the discussions the previous week in relation to different experiences of schooling. It is important that school communities work together to support new families and consider strategies for these transitions.

Preparation

- Ensure room is set up with chairs, computer, data projector.
- Have whiteboard and markers available.
- Make sure refreshments are available for early arrivals.
- Have sample lunch boxes ready (one for each table).
- Have students wearing uniform ready to parade.
- Have sample student reports available (copy for each table).
- Prepare school bag activity.

Introduction

- Welcome participants.
- Introduce any new participants to the group.
- Review the topics already covered.
- Ask for any comments/reflections from the previous workshop.

Main content

Present the topics for Week 2

SLIDE 18

[SLIDE 18 — Week 2: Rights & responsibilities]

Values

SLIDE 19

Discuss the values promoted at your school. Explain why the school has them, how they were developed, and how they are regularly acknowledged and encouraged at school.

[SLIDE 19 — Our school values]

Behaviour

SLIDE 20

Explain the behaviour policy at your school. Explain the code of conduct your school has established for student behaviour. Describe the discipline procedures and how they operate at your school, and how they relate to the school rules. Include reference to the anti-bullying policy of your school — explain what it is, and the children's rights in relation to school being a safe place for all students. Ask participants to discuss in their language groups how the school's values and behaviours compare to past experiences and expectations of participants and their families.

[SLIDE 20 — Behaviour at school]

ACTIVITY

STUDENT UNIFORM PARADE

School uniform

SLIDE 21

Explain the school's uniform policy in relation to summer, winter and sports uniforms. Organise for some students to come in wearing different combinations of the boys and girls uniforms, both correctly and incorrectly. Encourage participant discussion, and ensure the school expectations and policies in relation to jewellery, accessories, make-up and hairstyles are understood.

[SLIDE 21 — Our school uniform]

Homework & projects

SLIDE 22

Discuss the school's homework policy and explain the reason for homework and the expectations of the classroom teachers.

[SLIDE 22 — Homework]

ACTIVITY

WHAT'S IN A SCHOOL BAG?

Show the participants a school bag full of typical school things (see pages 30 and 31 'What's in a school bag?'). Ask one participant at a time to take an item out of the bag and show it to the whole group. Facilitator then explains what the item is and, if appropriate, what needs to happen with it, e.g. excursion form that needs to be signed and returned to the school. Pass the bag to the next participant and they take another item from the bag and show it to the whole group. Repeat until all items have been displayed and explained.

Student reports

SLIDE 23

Clarify the process that is used to help parents understand how their child is learning at school i.e. written reports and face-to-face interviews. Point out the value and importance of parent-teacher interviews, where interpreters will be available to assist families. Show an example of a student's written report, and describe what is included. Give a copy to each table for the interpreter to use when explaining.

[SLIDE 23 — Student reports]

ACTIVITY

SAMPLE LUNCH BOXES**Food at school**

SLIDE 24

Explain the procedures for bringing food to school — what is needed for healthy snack time, recess and lunchtime. Have some packed lunch boxes available for participants to see some suggestions for what might be appropriate. Give one to each table to encourage discussion amongst the group. Include healthy options such as dried fruit, sandwiches, rolls, pita, wraps, yoghurt, fresh fruit, salad vegetables, cheese and crackers, meal left-overs, water bottle etc.

[SLIDE 24 — Food at school]

Conclusion

Participants can often share their frustration about the transition to schooling in Australia in this workshop. It is important that at the end of the workshop participants have the opportunity to speak to facilitators informally, and for facilitators to follow up any issues of concern from members of the group.

Take-home

Give families something to take home that relates to the topics covered.

ACTIVITY

WHAT'S IN A SCHOOL BAG?

Primary School

SUGGESTIONS

School newsletter — distributed weekly? fortnightly?

Receipt for school fees — or other letters from office — fliers, notices etc

Permission form for a camp/excursion — to be signed and returned.

Lunch box — healthy morning tea, lunch, fruit, water bottle. No lollies please.

Lunch order bag — explain process of ordering lunch from canteen.

Reader folder/bag — show place to sign each night. Keep in bag and return to school each day.

Library bag — keep book in bag and change on library day.

Homework sample — explain the process and expectations.

Project/assignment — explain difference between this & homework.

Sample of child's work — discuss ways to value this at home (display on wall/fridge; clip to skirt hanger). Ask child about the work and praise effort.

School uniform sample — show clothing labelled with child's name.

Bathers (girls/boys) for swimming — in plastic bag, with towel & goggles. Discuss what swimwear families feel is appropriate.

Toy from home — explain problems with keeping possessions safe at school.

Art smock — labelled.

Sports uniform — runners, shorts etc.

Pencil case

Book Club information

ACTIVITY

WHAT'S IN A SCHOOL BAG?

Secondary School

SUGGESTIONS

School newsletter — distributed weekly?

Receipt for school fees — or other letters from office — fliers, notices etc.

Permission form for an excursion — to be signed and returned

Locker key — explain importance of quality padlock.

Lunch box — healthy morning tea, lunch, fruit, water bottle. No lollies please.

Lunch order bag — explain process of ordering lunch from canteen.

Student diary — show place to sign each night if appropriate. Keep in bag and return each day.

Homework sample — explain the homework expectations.

Project/assignment — explain difference between this & homework.

Library card — explain use at school.

Sample of child's work — ways to value this at home. Ask child about the work and praise effort.

School uniform sample — show clothing labelled with child's name.

Bathers for swimming — in plastic bag, with towel.

Art smock — labelled.

Sports uniform — runners, shorts etc.

Pencil case

Workshop Plans

WEEK 3

Teaching and learning

Aims

- To assist families to understand the variety of approaches to teaching and learning used at school

Topics

- Activity-based learning
- Subjects taught
- Camps and excursions
- Careers and choices

Resources

- Data projector
- Class activity materials
- Classroom guides
- Classroom games
- Camp/excursion photos
- Take-home resource

Consideration

Most schooling that families and children would have experienced in their country of origin, transit countries or refugee camps would have been teacher-centred, in large groups, with limited resources, and a strong emphasis on written work and rote learning. Many of the approaches to teaching and learning in Australia will be unfamiliar to participants.

Preparation

- Ensure room is set up with chairs, computer, data projector.
- Make sure refreshments are available for early arrivals.
- Make sure tour guides are available.
- Ensure teachers have agreed to classroom visits.
- Prepare hands-on activities.

Introduction

- Welcome participants.
- Introduce any new participants to the group.
- Review the topics already covered.
- Ask for any comments or thoughts from the previous workshop.

Main content

SLIDE 25

Present the topics for Week 3
[SLIDE 25 — Week 3: Teaching & learning]

ACTIVITY

CLASSROOM VISITS

Explain that the workshop will begin with a visit to some classrooms in action. Break into small groups of 3- 4 participants with a guide. Take the participants to observe classes in progress e.g. art, computers, science, maths, languages, drama, sport, English, music, health. Allow participants to spend about 10 minutes in the classroom, observing the class and talking to the students and/or the teacher about what they are doing.

Sharing observations

After the visits ask participants to share what they saw and heard in the classrooms. Each group can report their observations to the large group through their interpreter.

Activity-based learning

SLIDE 26

Explain the approaches to teaching and learning used at your school. Describe how actively engaging students in meaningful and interactive exercises is common in Australian classrooms. Information technology has enabled knowledge to be available to everyone — learning how to apply and use that knowledge (to solve problems) is a key learning outcome. You may wish to include references to the integrated curriculum, thinking tools, multi-skills, discovery approach, language experience, negotiated curriculum, classroom themes. You might also make reference to individual work, pair work, small group work and the role of discussion and oral language in learning and understanding (sharing views, expressing opinions, asking questions, clarifying information, etc).

[SLIDE 26 — Activity-based learning]

Learning can be fun

Explain how the use of fun activities and games, especially in primary schools, can help develop competence in understanding difficult concepts. It provides opportunities for children to solve problems, make decisions, cooperate with others, work as a team, and communicate successfully with their peers.

Subjects taught

SLIDE 27

Explain the range of subjects taught at your school.
[SLIDE 27 — Subjects taught]

Camps and excursions

SLIDE 28

Discuss the value of camps and excursions in relation to the learning program (shared experiences, specific language activities, follow-up work in classroom, social skills, self-confidence, independence, positive relationships, responsibility, subject field work etc). If possible show a photo of one of your school camps. Encourage questions from participants in relation to any issues or uncertainties regarding these school activities. [SLIDE 28 — Camps and excursions]

ACTIVITY

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

PRIMARY

Play some simple maths or language games with the group to demonstrate how games can assist with learning and understanding in the classroom e.g. bingo, scrabble. Explicitly describe the learning objectives of the game, and explain the value of games as a learning tool, especially for young children.

SECONDARY

Secondary schools can adapt this activity as appropriate to demonstrate the use of a variety of materials (other than books) in classroom activities e.g. magazine pictures, newspaper articles, role-plays, videos, science equipment,

Careers and choices

SLIDE 29

For secondary schools, it is important for families to understand the role of subject choice at certain levels, and its impact on future education/career options. Describe the likely options available for senior students. Perhaps include the careers teacher in this workshop to answer questions from participants in relation to subjects and future pathways. [SLIDE 29 — Careers & choices]

Conclusion

Ask participants to share their thoughts on the teaching and learning approaches at the school. Encourage participants to stay behind and talk, or approach the staff at a later time if they would like to discuss any of the issues further.

Take-home

Give families something to take home which relates to the topics covered.

Workshop Plans

WEEK
4

Supporting your child

Aims

- Provide families with practical examples of how they can support their children's learning at home
- Dispel the myth that families cannot support their children if they don't speak English

Topics

- Helping at home
- Helping at school

Resources

- Data projector
- Children's book
- Photos
- Take-home resource

Consideration

Many families may lack confidence to support their children's learning, particularly when a new language is involved. This workshop highlights the many ways families can help their children, not only with specific skills but by showing a general interest in what happens at school. There are many ways families can assist their children, even if they do not speak English.

Be aware that some languages, e.g. Dinka, may not have been known in a written form by many families, and some family members may not be literate in any language.

Preparation

- Ensure room is set up with chairs, computer, data projector.
- Make sure refreshments are available for early arrivals.
- Make sure the teacher is available to do the Big Book reading activity.
- Make sure a teacher is available to model sharing a book at home.

WEEK 4

Introduction

- Welcome participants.
- Introduce any new participants to the group.
- Review the topics already covered.
- Ask for any comments or thoughts from the previous workshop.

Main Content

SLIDE 30

Present the topics for Week 4.
[SLIDE 30 — Week 4: Supporting your child]

Communication

SLIDE 31

Explain to families the ways in which they can support their children's learning at home. Emphasise that they can still support their child's learning if they don't know English. Describe the value of showing interest in their children's school work. Encourage them to talk in their own language to their children about what they have been doing in the classroom. Describe other ways of showing interest and supporting children's learning such as displaying children's work in the house (e.g. on the fridge), listening to children read in English, allowing time and space for homework, encouraging discussion and debate.
[SLIDE 31 — Helping at home]

Homework

Ask participants to share their own experiences of homework at school e.g. Did they get homework? Did anyone at home help them? What do they think about homework?

Explain how they can help their children by discussing with their child what homework needs to be done, providing a quiet space and time, and having a pencil case with basic supplies at home.

ACTIVITY

SHARING A BOOK AT HOME

The teacher can also model how families can interact with their children around books and reading, using their own language. They can share a book by discussing in their own language the storyline, the main characters, a favourite page, whether they liked the story or not, the illustrations etc.

School routine

Explain to families that it is important for children to have a good breakfast and arrive at school on time. It is also important that they are supplied with a healthy lunch and snacks for school. Families should check the children's school bag daily for school notices and encourage good homework practices.

Helping at school

SLIDE 32

Describe how families can help at your school — canteen, library, administrative assistance, excursions, camps, sports days, classroom helpers, school banking.
[SLIDE 32 — Helping at school]

Show photos if possible.

Conclusion



Thank all the families for coming to the workshops and congratulate them on their commitment to helping their children's learning. Give the families an opportunity to ask questions regarding any issues of schooling on which they would like more information. Encourage participants to stay behind and talk, or approach the staff at a later time if they would like to discuss any of the issues further. Ask participants to reflect on the workshops and give feedback.

Take-home

Give families something to take home which relates to the topics covered.

PowerPoint slides for use in weekly workshops with families

Talk's In
Families of refugee background
and schools in dialogue
(Insert name of School)

Foundation House

Slide 2 Program objectives

- Develop a positive relationship between families and school
- Share families' pre-arrival experiences of education
- Increase families' understanding of the Australian education system
- Empower families to have an effective role in their children's learning

TALK'S IN © VFST www.foundationhouse.org.au

Slide 3 Weekly workshops

- **Week 1** The Australian education system
- **Week 2** Rights and responsibilities
- **Week 3** Teaching & learning
- **Week 4** Supporting your child

TALK'S IN © VFST www.foundationhouse.org.au

Slide 4 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

- Our school
- School council
- School staff
- School times
- Education pathway

ACTIVITIES

- Group activity — schooling experiences
- School tour

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.foundationhouse.org.au

Slide 5 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Our school

- Number of students =
- Number of staff =
- Number of classes =
- Special programs

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.foundationhouse.org.au

Slide 6 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

School council

- Role: manage school
- Structure: parents/carers & teachers
- Meetings: monthly at school

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.foundationhouse.org.au

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS (WORKSHOPS)

Slide 7 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

School staff (primary)

- Principal & assistant principal
- Teachers (classroom & specialist)
- Aides (multicultural/ integration/ literacy)
- Office staff

WEEK 1
TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfsta.gov.au
Foundation School

Slide 8 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

School staff (secondary)

- Principal & assistant principal
- Year level coordinators
- Subject teachers

WEEK 1
TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfsta.gov.au
Foundation School

Slide 9 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

School staff (Secondary)

- Student Welfare Coordinator (SWC)
- Aides (MEA/ integration/ literacy)
- School nurse/chaplain
- Office staff

WEEK 1
TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfsta.gov.au
Foundation School

Slide 10 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Schooling experiences

Discussion points:

- Class sizes?
- Uniforms? compulsory?
- Lunch arrangements?
- Frequency of school reports?
- Discipline procedures?
- Classroom activities? Homework?
- Length of school day?
- Level of parent involvement?

WEEK 1
TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfsta.gov.au
Foundation School

Slide 11 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Our school times (primary)

9.00am	Lessons
11.00am	PLAY TIME/RECESS (outside)
11.30am	Lessons
1.00pm	LUNCH TIME (outside)
2.00pm	Lessons
3.30pm	HOME TIME

WEEK 1
TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfsta.gov.au
Foundation School

Slide 12 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Our school times (secondary)

9.00am	Lesson (period)
9.50am	Lesson
10.40am	MORNING RECESS (outside)
11.00am	Lesson
11.50am	Lesson
12.40pm	LUNCH TIME (outside)
1.40pm	Lesson
2.30pm	Lesson
3.20pm	HOME TIME

WEEK 1
TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfsta.gov.au
Foundation School

Slide 13 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Education pathway

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfst.edu.au

Precedent Education Services

Slide 14 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Age 4 — Kindergarten

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfst.edu.au

Precedent Education Services

Slide 15 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Age 5 to 12 — Primary school

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfst.edu.au

Precedent Education Services

Slide 16 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Age 13 to 17 — Secondary college/ High school

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfst.edu.au

Precedent Education Services

Slide 17 WORKSHOP 1: The Australian education system

Age 17+ — Career pathway

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfst.edu.au

Precedent Education Services

Slide 18 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

- Our school values
- Behaviour at school
- School uniform
- Homework
- Student reports
- Food at school

ACTIVITIES

- What's in a school bag?
- Uniform parade
- Sample lunches

WEEK 2

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentals.vfst.edu.au

Precedent Education Services

SLIDE PRESENTATIONS (WORKSHOPS)

Slide 19 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Our school values

- Understanding
- Respect
- Compassion
- Excellence – always doing your best
- Equality – giving everyone a “fair go”

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalschools.gov.au



Slide 20 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Behaviour at school

- Code of conduct
- Discipline procedures
- School rules

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalschools.gov.au



Slide 21 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Our school uniform

- Summer – Terms 1 & 4
- Winter – Terms 2 & 3

... UNIFORM PARADE

- What to do if you need help

WEEK 1

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalschools.gov.au



Slide 22 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Homework

- How much?
- How often?
- How to help
- Local homework clubs

WEEK 2

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalschools.gov.au



Slide 23 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Student reports

- Written reports home x 2 per year
- Parent-teacher interviews at school

WEEK 2

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalschools.gov.au



Slide 24 WORKSHOP 2: Rights & responsibilities

Food at school

- Breakfast program
- Healthy snacks
- Recess and lunch
- Drinks
- Lunch boxes

... SAMPLE LUNCHES

WEEK 2

TALK'S IN © VFST www.fundamentalschools.gov.au



Slide 25 WORKSHOP 3: Teaching & learning

- Activity-based learning
- Subjects taught
- Camps/excursions
- Careers & choices

ACTIVITIES

- Classroom visits
- Hands-on experiences
 - maths games
 - language activities
 - science activity

WEEK 1 TALK'S IN © VFST www.vfst.edu.au

Slide 26 WORKSHOP 3: Teaching & learning

- Activity-based learning
- Learning through play
- Hands-on learning
- Individual/pair/small group work
- Discovery learning
- Taking risks & making mistakes

WEEK 1 TALK'S IN © VFST www.vfst.edu.au

Slide 27 WORKSHOP 3: Teaching & learning

Subjects taught

- English
- Maths
- Science
- Studies Of Society and the Environment (SOSE)
- Art
- Sport/Physical Education (P.E.)
- Languages Other Than English (LOTE)
- Music
- Computers – Information Technology (I.T.)

WEEK 1 TALK'S IN © VFST www.vfst.edu.au

Slide 28 WORKSHOP 3: Teaching & learning

Camps and excursions

- Shared experiences
- Language activities
- Follow-up in classroom
- Social skills
- Self-confidence
- Independence
- Positive relationships
- Responsibility

WEEK 1 TALK'S IN © VFST www.vfst.edu.au

Slide 29 WORKSHOP 3: Teaching & learning

Careers & choices

- Subject choices – Year 10
- Tertiary entrance requirements
- Identify individual strengths & interests

WEEK 1 TALK'S IN © VFST www.vfst.edu.au

Slide 30 WORKSHOP 4: Supporting your child

- Helping at home
- Helping at school

ACTIVITIES

- Sharing a book at home
- Show photos of how families/carers can help at school

WEEK 4 TALK'S IN © VFST www.vfst.edu.au

Slide 31 WORKSHOP 4: Supporting your child

Helping at home

- Talk about what happens at school
- Show interest in school activities
- Listen regularly to your child read
- Talk to your child about their reading book
- Help your child get to school on time
- Check school bags for school notices
- Encourage good homework patterns
- Provide healthy snacks & lunch

WEEK 4

TALK'S IN © VFST www.foundation-schools.gov.au



Slide 32 WORKSHOP 4: Supporting your child

Helping at school

- Canteen – preparing food
- Library – covering books, etc
- Administrative assistance – laminating, photocopying, book-binding, etc
- Classrooms – e.g. bilingual storytime
- School fete/fair

WEEK 4

TALK'S IN © VFST www.foundation-schools.gov.au





