



Early Childhood  
Australia  
Victoria



# Case studies

for early childhood  
education and care services  
on the Child Information  
Sharing Scheme (CISS)



# Case study 1

## Supporting Timmy's transition to primary school

### Transitioning to primary school

Timmy is five years old and about to transition to primary school. As part of the transition process, Imani, Timmy's kindergarten teacher, has prepared a Transition Learning and Development Statement (**transition statement**).

The transition statement explains that teachers at the kindergarten focused on Timmy's social skill development, including working with him to manage his interactions with other children. It also specifies that Timmy was encouraged to join Auskick and, after starting the program, his ability to engage positively with other children improved significantly.

### Noticing concerning behaviours

When Timmy starts primary school, Ben, his foundation teacher, notices that he engages in some concerning behaviours such as rough play, emotional dysregulation and having a 'meltdown' when plans change. Information about such behaviours was not included in Timmy's transition statement.

Ben is concerned about Timmy's wellbeing and wants to request further information from the kindergarten about his behaviours, to support his transition to school. As an Information Sharing Entity (**ISE**), Timmy's primary school can request information from his kindergarten (which is also an ISE) under the Child Information Sharing Scheme (**CISS**).

### Seeking parents' views on information-sharing

Foundation teacher Ben phones Ruth, Timmy's mother, and explains the school's request for information. Ben notes that although he is not required to obtain Ruth's consent under CISS, he values her views and wishes about requesting information that will help support Timmy's transition and wellbeing.

Ruth understands how sharing information will give Timmy the best start at school. She also mentions the strategies developed by Timmy's occupational therapist and thinks it might be a good idea to share these with the school. Ben agrees, as it will take a consistent approach to promoting positive behaviours.

## Requesting information from the kindergarten

Foundation teacher Ben contacts kindergarten teacher Imani and requests information about Timmy's behaviours at kindergarten and any strategies used by the kindergarten to support his wellbeing and development. Ben explains that he has already sought the views and wishes of Ruth, Timmy's mother, who understands that sharing information will help in providing the best start for Timmy.

Imani determines that sharing information would meet the requirements of CISS:

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of sharing information is to promote Timmy's emotional wellbeing and development as he transitions to primary school.
2. **Specified activity:** The information will assist the school in developing a plan to support Timmy's behavioural progress and emotional regulation.
3. **Excluded information:** The information being requested is not known to be 'excluded information' under CISS.

Imani does not need to seek the views and wishes of Ruth before sharing the information.

## Sharing information with the school

Kindergarten teacher Imani shares the following information with foundation teacher Ben:

- When Timmy started four-year old kindergarten, he used to engage in rough play with other children and had trouble regulating his emotional responses.
- Timmy's concerning behaviours were often triggered by a change in plans, such as changes to activities or who was picking him up from kinder.
- Timmy saw a range of health professionals but did not have a diagnosis.
- An occupational therapist worked with Timmy and his family to develop strategies for promoting positive behaviours at school and home. Strategies included identifying triggers that lead to concerning behaviours and engaging Timmy in positive team-based activities such as Auskick.



Imani also emails Ben the plans the kindergarten had in place for managing Timmy's behaviours. These plans were informed by the occupational therapist's strategies.

Imani suggests that Timmy's transition to school may have disrupted the positive changes in Timmy's behaviours observed by the teachers at kindergarten before he started school. Imani and Ben agree to stay in touch if needed.

## Collaborating to promote wellbeing

Foundation teacher Ben makes time to meet with Ruth, Timmy's mother, to make a plan to support Timmy's transition to school. Ruth explains that Timmy has been nervous about starting school and reverting to some of his old behaviours. Ben and Ruth discuss the strategies they can use consistently at school and at home to help Timmy thrive at school.

This includes enrolling Timmy in the school's football club to encourage Timmy to develop positive relationships with other children at the school and make new friends.



## Keeping records

As an ISE, the kindergarten is required to keep a record of the school's request. So, kindergarten teacher Imani makes a written record on Timmy's file, including:

- the name of the school and details of the teacher requesting the information
- the type of information that was requested and the date of the request.

Imani also keeps a record of the information shared and the date it was shared with the school, noting that she did not seek Timmy's mother's views and wishes, given that Timmy was no longer with the service and foundation teacher Ben had already sought them.

As part of an ISE, Ben also records in the student database what information he had requested and received from the kindergarten. He also notes that he sought Timmy's mother's views and wishes and that she was supportive of the services working together to support Timmy.



## Case study 2

# Sharing information with a family violence service

### Noticing changes in behaviour

Eden is a teacher at an early childhood service. She notices that one of the children, Carla (three years old), has started keeping to herself a lot lately and becoming very clingy when Sofia, her mum, drops her off in the morning.

As a professional with responsibilities under the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework (**MARAM**), Eden knows that these are observable signs of trauma that may indicate family violence or other health and wellbeing concerns, so she decides to speak to Sofia.

### Seeking the parents' views on information-sharing under CISS

When Carla's mum Sofia comes to collect Carla the next day, teacher Eden speaks to Sofia privately in her office. Eden mentions she has noticed that Carla has become a bit withdrawn and clingy lately and asks Sofia whether something is happening at home. Sofia looks upset and says that 'everything is okay now' and that she is seeing a maternal and child health nurse, Nora, who has helped her a lot with ongoing anxiety since becoming a parent.

As a professional with information-sharing responsibilities, Eden thinks it would be helpful to talk to nurse Nora using the Child Information Sharing Scheme (**CISS**) because she is concerned about Carla's wellbeing.

Sofia's consent is not required to share information under CISS. However, as good practice, Eden seeks Sofia's views and wishes about talking to Nora. Sofia is initially reluctant, but once Eden explains that it is not unusual for professionals to share information with other services about the wellbeing and safety of children, she feels more comfortable.



## Exchanging information with the maternal and child health nurse

As an Information Sharing Entity (ISE), the service can exchange information with nurse Nora, as the requirements of CISS are met.

1. **Purpose:** The purpose is to find out more information about Carla's background, to promote her wellbeing at the early childhood service.
2. **Specified activity:** The information will assist the service in supporting Carla's needs and help her connect with the other children.
3. **Excluded information:** The information is not known to be 'excluded information' under CISS.



Teacher Eden finds out from nurse Nora that Carla's mum Sofia previously experienced family violence and was supported by a specialist family violence service. Nora asks Eden to be mindful of Sofia's anxiety, as she had previously expressed shame and embarrassment when she talked about family violence.

## Identifying family violence

The next day, teacher Eden talks to Carla's mum Sofia again privately and tells her about the conversation she had with nurse Nora. Sofia now feels more comfortable talking to Eden and tells her that she is thinking of leaving her partner Nate, as she is sometimes afraid of him and he is 'a bit controlling'.

Eden is concerned that Sofia and Carla may still be experiencing family violence, so she asks Sofia the questions in the family violence screening tool. Sofia says that sometimes Nate throws her phone or takes it away from her so she cannot speak with her friends here or her family in Chile.

Eden knows that these are risk factors for family violence that may indicate the presence or escalation of family violence. Eden develops a basic safety plan with Sofia and decides to proactively share information with the specialist family violence service so they can undertake a comprehensive risk assessment to assess the current risk to Sofia and Carla.

# Seeking the parent's views on information sharing under FVISS

Teacher Eden plans to use the Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme (**FVISS**) to share information with the specialist family violence service because she is concerned that Carla may be experiencing family violence.

Eden asks Carla's mum Sofia how she feels about information being shared with the specialist family violence service. Sofia says she does not want Eden to call. Eden lets the conversation drop so Sofia does not disengage with the early childhood service but decides to proactively share information anyway, as she is worried Carla may be experiencing family violence. Sharing without consent is allowed under FVISS if a child is at risk.

## Considering whether the requirements for information sharing are met

As an ISE, the early childhood service can proactively share information with the family violence service — also known as a Risk Assessment Entity (**RAE**)—so that they can undertake a comprehensive risk assessment and review and update the basic safety plan if needed.

Teacher Eden determines that sharing information with the service meets the requirements of FVISS.

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of sharing information is for the specialist family violence service to comprehensively assess and manage the current risk of family violence for Carla. Early childhood services are not responsible for assessing family violence risk under MARAM; however, they can contribute to ongoing risk assessment and management.
2. **Consent:** Consent is not required to share information to assess family violence risk to a child. However, it is good practice to seek the parent's views about information sharing if it is safe, reasonable and appropriate to do so, which Eden has done.
3. **Excluded information:** The information is not known to be 'excluded information' under FVISS.



## Sharing information with the family violence service

Using FVISS, teacher Eden calls the specialist family violence service and proactively shares the following information that she believes may indicate family violence is occurring:

- Carla attends the early childhood service. She has recently become more withdrawn from others at the service but clingy with her mum.
- Carla's mum Sofia has said she is sometimes afraid of her partner Nate and is thinking of leaving him. According to Sofia, Nate sometimes throws her phone or takes it away from her so she cannot speak with her friends here or her family in Chile.
- Carla has completed the screening tool for family violence with Sofia and it indicates family violence may be occurring.



Eden also shares the basic safety plan developed for Carla and Sofia with the family violence service.

The family violence service suggests that Eden speak with Sofia to support her re-engagement with them so the current family violence risk can be assessed and managed.

## Making a referral to the family violence service

The next day, teacher Eden tells Carla's mum Sofia about her conversation with the specialist family violence service, reiterating how worried she is about Sofia and Carla. Eden explains that she will not talk to Sofia's partner Nate or let him know what is happening. Eden suggests that Sofia re-engage with the family violence service to assess the current risk to Carla and herself.

Eden facilitates a meeting between Sofia and the specialist family violence service. At the meeting, the family violence service:

- undertakes a comprehensive risk assessment and identifies that there is a risk of family violence present
- informs teacher Eden that a notification will be sent to Child Protection to support Carla's safety
- develops a revised safety plan to support Carla and Sofia and offers to proactively share it with Eden to assist with the management of risk to Carla and Sofia.



As Sofia is from Chile, Eden asks Sofia if she has cultural connections here. Sofia says she feels isolated from her community, so Eden also makes a warm referral to a local Chilean community centre to support the family's cultural connections as a protective factor for Sofia and Carla.

## Keeping records

As an ISE, the early childhood service keeps a record of the information shared with nurse Nora and the family violence service. Teacher Eden notes that Carla's mum Sofia did not want her to share information with the family violence service but that she shared the information anyway because she was concerned Carla may be experiencing family violence. The schemes used to share information were also recorded.

Nurse Nora also keeps a record of the information requested and shared with the early childhood service. The family violence service also keeps a record of the information shared with teacher Eden.



## Following up

When Carla's mum Sofia collects her from the early childhood service a few weeks later, teacher Eden asks Sofia how things are. Sofia tells Eden that:

- Nate has been abiding by the conditions of a Family Violence Intervention Order
- she has made friends at the local Chilean community centre
- Carla has started gaining confidence socialising with other children
- she is glad for the early childhood service's support and thanks Eden.

# Case study 3

## Building trust to support Ava's wellbeing

### Being diagnosed with autism

Ava is two years old and attends an early childhood service. She has recently been diagnosed with autism as result of a referral from her maternal and child health nurse (**MCH nurse**) who works at the service.

Ava has not started talking yet and has trouble holding eye contact with other people. Ava has an aversion to bright light and loud noises. She rocks back and forth if she is exposed to sunlight or loud noises, such as music.

### Parental anxiety about discussing the child's diagnosis

Six months after she's been diagnosed with autism, Ava's parents move her to a new early childhood service. At enrolment, Ava's parents do not disclose her diagnosis because they feel nervous about being judged and are worried about the impact on Ava if the service knew she has autism.

### Considering whether the requirements for information sharing are met

When Ava finishes at her old early childhood service, Petra, the service director, thinks it would be helpful to contact Ava's new early childhood service and proactively share information

to support her transition. This is because Petra is aware of Ava's parents' reluctance to discuss her diagnosis. Petra feels that sharing information will provide the new service with the information they need to effectively support Ava's learning and development.

As an Information Sharing Entity (ISE), Ava's old early childhood service can share information with her new service (which is also an ISE) if the requirements of the Child Information Sharing Scheme (**CISS**) are met.

Director Petra, who has information-sharing responsibilities at the service, determines that proactively sharing information meets the requirements of CISS.

1. **Purpose:** The purpose of sharing information is to ensure that the new service has the information it needs to effectively support Ava's needs.
2. **Specified activity:** The information will assist the new service in developing a plan to support Ava's needs and development.
3. **Excluded information:** The information being shared is not known to be 'excluded information' under CISS.

## Considering whether to seek the parents' views and wishes

Director Petra decides not to seek the views and wishes of Ava's parents before contacting Ava's new early childhood service to share information. Petra is aware that Ava's parents would be resistant to sharing information because they are anxious about discussing Ava's diagnosis. In the circumstances, Petra thinks it is reasonable to initially call the new service director and encourage her to build trust and rapport with Ava's parents.



## Proactively sharing information with the child's new service

Director Petra calls Tina, the director of Ava's new service, and explains that she would like to share information under CISS with her to support Ava's transition to the new service.

Petra explains to Tina that Ava attended the old service for more than a year. During that time, Ava was diagnosed with autism as a result of a referral from an MCH nurse. At the time, Ava's parents were anxious about discussing Ava's diagnosis and were worried they would be judged.

Petra anticipates, based on the parents' anxiety about the diagnosis, that it is unlikely they would disclose Ava's diagnosis. She encourages Tina and her team to build trust and rapport with the family to give them the confidence to disclose Ava's diagnosis and feel comfortable to talk about Ava's needs and wellbeing. Petra also points out how the MCH nurse played a pivotal role in Ava's care and how she worked closely with the family to support them through the process.

Petra shares some of the strategies her team used to help engage Ava, such as using objects with bright colours and sensory jars. She tells Tina that these strategies also encouraged Ava to join other children at the table for learning activities and helped her self-soothe.



## Building a relationship with the family

After talking to Petra, director Tina talks to Berta, the room leader, and educators in the toddler room. She encourages them to prioritise building trust and rapport with Ava's parents to support them in disclosing Ava's diagnosis and discussing her needs.

In the meantime, the new service puts supportive strategies in place to support Ava's transition and assist her engagement with learning and her peers.

After working with Ava's parents to build their trust, room leader Berta sensitively talks to them about some of the things she has noticed about Ava, including her aversion to bright light and loud noises.

Jin, Ava's father, tells Berta that they have been nervous to talk about it but Ava was recently diagnosed with autism. Jin says he has noticed that Ava is responding well to the new service, so they would like to start talking about the diagnosis and how they can best support Ava.

## Working collaboratively on strategies to support the child's wellbeing

Room leader Berta meets with Ava's parents a week later to work collaboratively on developing consistent strategies that will support Ava at the service and at home. Ava's parents agree to attend another appointment with Berta and an occupational therapist to work together on a plan to support Ava's development and wellbeing.

Berta also explains to the family that she will be reaching out to Ava's MCH nurse at the old service to update them on strategies and seek relevant input.

## Keeping records

As an ISE, Ava's old service keeps a record of the information proactively shared with the new service. Director Petra notes that she did not seek the parents' views and wishes about sharing information with the new service because she knew they would be resistant due to their anxiety about discussing Ava's diagnosis.



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