

VAEAI

Early Childhood Activities



Cultural Topic 1: The Aboriginal Flag



Background information

The Aboriginal flag was designed in 1971 by Harold Thomas of the Luritja people in Central Australia. The meaning of the flag is: Black represents the Aboriginal people, red represents the land and yellow represents the sun. It was flown in 1972 at the Tent Embassy in Canberra as a National symbol. It is now used as a symbol of unity for Aboriginal people throughout Australia. In 1992 it was declared an Australian Flag under the Flags Act 1953.

Activities

1. Put a picture of the Aboriginal flag on the wall in the Early Childhood Centre.
2. Teach the children the meaning of the Aboriginal Flag.
3. Get red, black and yellow paper for the activities.
4. Have children make a small Aboriginal flag using the red, yellow and black paper.
5. Have the children draw the word sun on the yellow circle, land on the red area and people on the black area so they can learn what each colour represents.
6. Give the children an ice cream stick and get them to glue their flags on them.
7. Draw an outline of an Aboriginal flag on an A4 piece of paper and give one to each child.
8. Have the children colour in the flag.
9. Have children cut the flag into three pieces-the red, black and yellow (like a jigsaw puzzle).
10. Mix the pieces up and have the children put them back together.

Resources Needed

An Aboriginal flag or drawing of an Aboriginal flag
Red, black and yellow cards to make Aboriginal flags
Ice cream sticks

Early Years Learning Framework

- These activities shows the children that they belong in a diverse culture and helps them build and maintain relationships with other people.
- Through this activity children have a strong sense of identity.
- They are connected and contribute to their world.
- They are confident and involved learners.

OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
- Children respond to diversity with respect.
- Children become aware of fairness.
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Cultural Topic 2: Acknowledgement of Country



This map was adapted from several maps of Victorian Aboriginal Nations and is not suitable for use in Native Title Claims or other land claims.

Background information

Significance of 'Welcome to Country'

Aboriginal people have a very important relationship with the land because the land is regarded as the 'mother'. The term 'country' when used in conjunction with Aboriginal people is the term used for the land of the traditional owners. 'Welcome to Country' is an important ceremony for Aboriginal people because it is recognition of traditional owner status. 'Welcome to Country' is done by traditional owners of the country whereas an 'Acknowledgement of Country' can be done by any Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal person to pay respect to the fact that they are on Aboriginal land. In Victoria specific nations were custodians over their country.

Activities

1. Find out from this map of Victorian Aboriginal Nations, the Aboriginal name for the country your Early Childhood Centre is located on i.e. Bendigo is on the country of the Dja Dja Wurrung people.
2. Place an 'Acknowledgement of Country' on the door of your centre that reads This centre is located on the land of the _____ people.
3. Get the children to learn the name of the land they are on. Teach them to say: We are on the land of the _____ people.
4. Ask parents where children were born and write that on a chart next to the children's names.
5. Compare the name of where children were born with the name of the country the centre is located on. ie if children are from Shepparton, it would be Bangerang country.
6. Write the names of the Victoria Aboriginal groups on different pieces of paper.
7. Get children to put the names on the map where they belong ie Wurundjeri on the Melbourne area.
8. Talk to the children about what land is used for.
9. Take children outside the centre and show them the trees, grass and flowers.
10. Get children to draw a tree, grass and flowers.
11. Give the children some seeds to plant in flower pots to show one use of land is to grow plants.
12. Have children water the seeds as they grow.

Cultural Topic 2: Acknowledgement of Country

Resources needed

Map of Victorian Aboriginal Cultural groups
Paper
Charts
Seeds, flower pots and dirt
Paint

Early Years Learning Framework

- These activities show that the children belong in a diverse culture and it helps them build and maintain relationships with other people.
- Through this activity children are connected to the world around them.
- They are confident and involved learners.

OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
- Children respond to diversity with respect.
- Children become aware of fairness.
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Cultural Topic 3: Kinship

Background information

The Aboriginal kinship system was a classificatory kinship system because everyone in the group was classified as kin. The mother and her sisters were all classified as mother. The father and his brothers were all classified as father. The mother and her sister's children were all classified as brothers and sisters. The father and his brother's children were all classified as brothers and sisters. Everyone was known by their kinship relationship with other people in the nation. Clan groups were smaller family groups within the larger group.

An example of some clans in Victoria are:

Nation	Clans
Bangerang/Yorta Yorta	Kailtheban, Wollithiga, Moira, Ulupna, Kwat Kwat, Yalaba Yalaba and Nguaria-illiam-wurrung clans.
Wurundjeri	Wurundjeri-balluk & Wurundjeri-willam, Balluk-willam, Gunnung-willam-balluk, Kurung-jang-balluk, Marin-balluk (Boi-berrit), Kurnaje-berreing
Boonwurung	Yalukit-willam, Mayone-bulluk, Ngaruk-Willam, Yallock-Bullock, Burinyung-Ballak, Yowenjerre
Gunnai/Kurnai	Bratwoloong, Brayakooloong, Brabawooloong, Tatungooloong, Krowathunkooloong.

Activities

1. Select a nation from above and classify all the children as that Nation of Aboriginal people or select the nation of the area where the centre is located.
2. Show the children where the nation is located on the Victorian map of Aboriginal nations.
3. Place the children into four clan groups from the group you have selected (If it is not one of the above, look up the groups online).
4. Give every child a card with one of the following kinship terms on it: mother, father, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, grandfather, grandmother.
5. Have the children who are classified as fathers, brothers, uncles and grandfathers do an activity hunting kangaroos. Make two children 'kangaroos' and the other children hunters. Get the 'kangaroos' to hide and the hunters to try to find them.
6. Give children a turn at being a kangaroo or a hunter.
7. Have the children who are classified as mothers, sisters, aunts and grandmothers collect yams, berries or cumbungi. Get the children to draw yams, cumbungi and berries and put them into a container.
8. Get all the children to come together in the camp to share all the food they have caught or collected (kangaroos, yams and berries) for a celebration.

Cultural Topic 3: Kinship

Resources Needed

Victorian map of Aboriginal nations

Cards with Aboriginal kinship terms written on them - mother, father, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather, brother and sister.

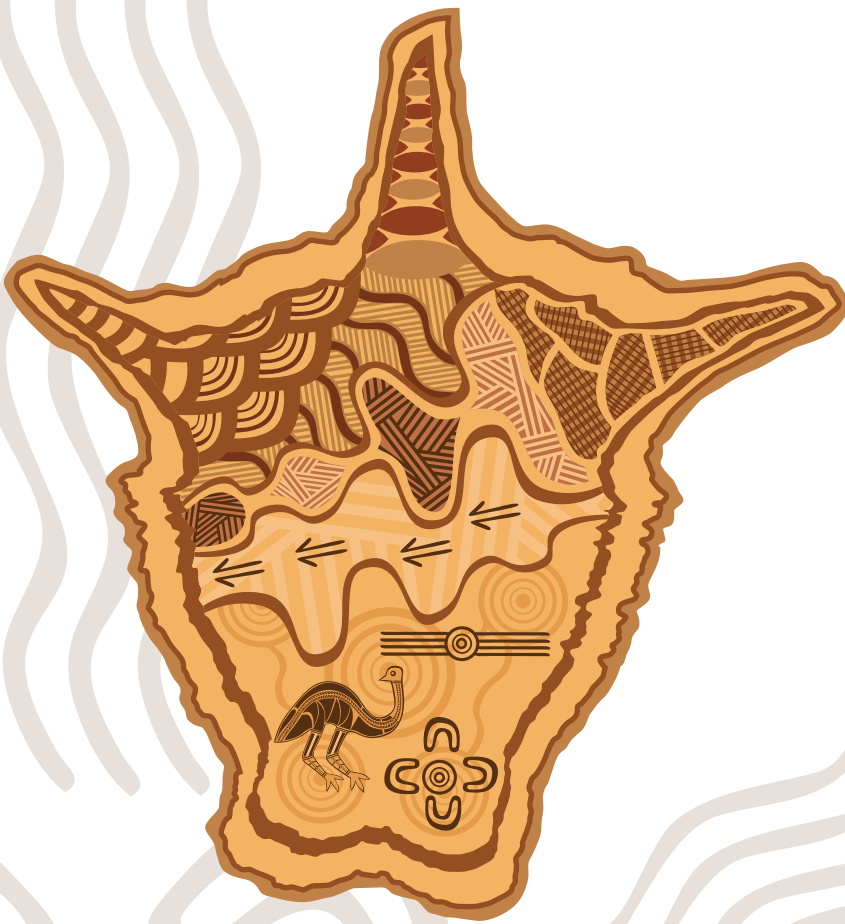
Early Years Learning Framework

- These activities show the children that they belong in a diverse culture and helps them build and maintain relationships with other people.
- They are confident and involved learners.

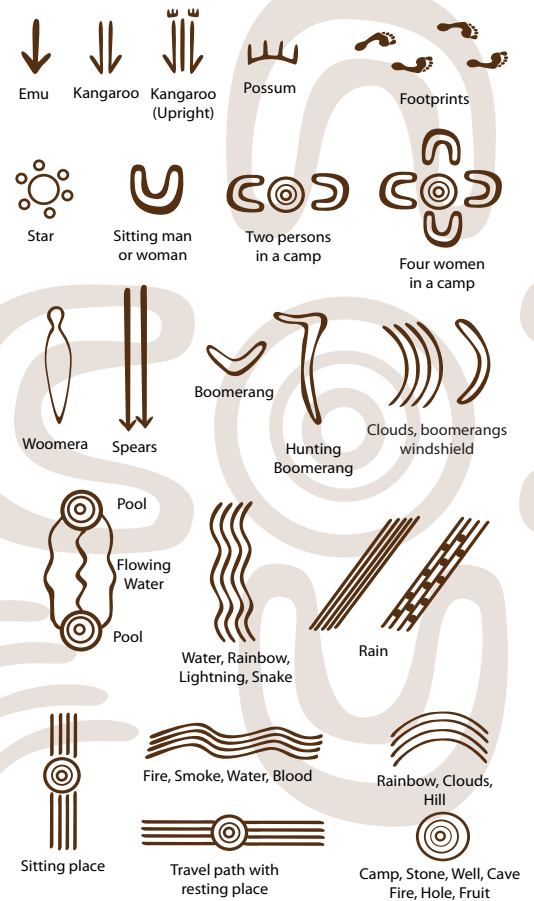
OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
- Children respond to diversity with respect.
- Children become aware of fairness.
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Cultural Topic 4: Possum Skin Cloaks



Possum skin cloak



Aboriginal symbols

Background information

Aboriginal people in Victoria wore possum skin cloaks that were sewn together with sinew from kangaroos. They were decorated with symbols that were significant with clans and totems on them and painted with ochre. Fat was rubbed on them to protect them. They were used in ceremonies and handed down for generations. As well as being significant for ceremonies, they were also useful because they kept the people warm as they were used for blankets and for rugs to wrap around babies. Traditional Owner groups still use the possum skin cloaks today in ceremony.

Activities

1. Photocopy the Aboriginal symbols (animal tracks, camp, people etc.) on an A3 piece of paper and put them on the wall. Put a photocopy of this possum skin cloak on the wall as well.
2. Draw or copy eight totems and put them on a chart- white cockatoo, black cockatoo with red feathers, eagle, crow, kangaroo, emu, long necked turtle and pelican.
3. Give each child an A4 piece of paper and explain to them that it is a part of a possum skin cloak.
4. Give each child a totem animal.
5. Have children draw their totem on their cloak.
6. Have children draw animal tracks and the symbols on their cloak.
7. When they have finished their design, stick all the children's designs together with sticky tape to make one big possum skin cloak.
8. Have each child parade around the room with the group's possum skin cloak draped over their shoulders.

Cultural Topic 4: Possum Skin Cloaks

Resources Needed

1. Chart with Aboriginal totems on it.
2. Chart with animal tracks and Aboriginal symbols, camps, people and animals on it.
3. Paints and Paper.

Early Years Learning Framework

These activities show the children that they belong in a diverse culture and helps them build and maintain relationships with other people.

Through this activity children have a strong sense of identity.

They are connected to the world around them.

They are confident and involved learners.

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self identities.
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

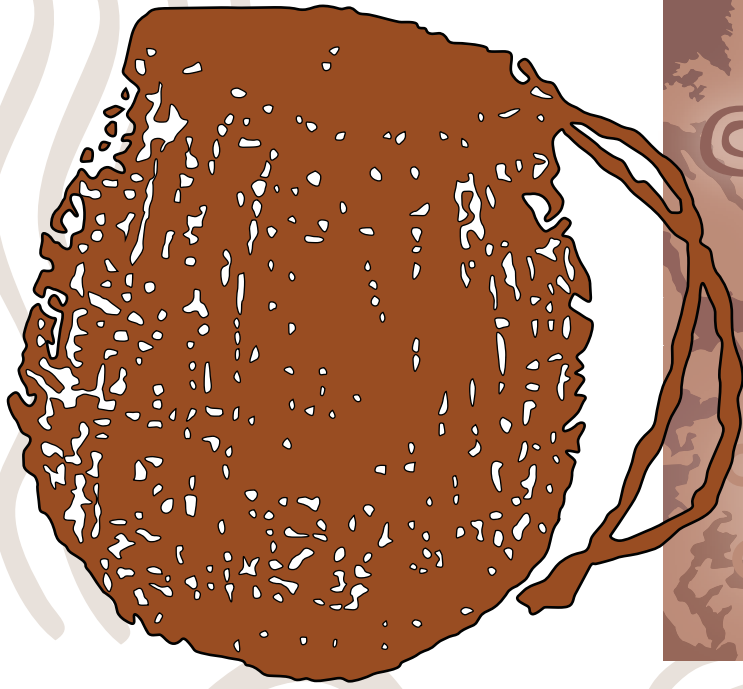
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- Children become aware of fairness.
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OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials.

OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.



Woven basket



Cave painting/rock art

Background information

Aboriginal people expressed their art in many different ways. They painted on the walls of caves, on bark, on rocks, and on wood. They used symbols that represented their world. They also made wood carvings and sculptures, and baskets, woven from grass and animal sinews.

Rock Art images painted on rocks represented Dreaming stories told by Aboriginal people about their culture, ceremony and lore. Many caves in Victoria have Aboriginal rock art on their walls. These rock paintings have symbols and tracks, humans, animals, objects and significant cultural designs. Many of these paintings are sacred to the people who painted them and are stories they handed down to Aboriginal people for many generations.

Basket weaving was also important to many Aboriginal groups in Victoria and were made with pandanus grass, spinifex grass, possum skin strips and kangaroo skin strips. Aboriginal people today continue to weave baskets. The Gunditjmara people had a particular stitch that was recognized to be theirs by people from other areas. The baskets were used to put food and tools in them and were worn over the hips or shoulders using possum or kangaroo skin strips as straps.

Paintings on bark were done in Victoria by many groups to hand down stories to generations of Aboriginal people. The art used for many of these bark paintings in Victoria was Xray art. There are many bark paintings still in existence today.

Some contemporary Aboriginal artists today use traditional symbols, while other artists paint images that show the history of Aboriginal people over the last two hundred years.

Cultural Topic 5: Art

Activities

1. Place a chart of Aboriginal symbols on the wall.
2. Find some strong grass that children can use to make a basket.
3. Have children weave the grass.
4. Give each child some cardboard to do an Aboriginal design on using the symbols displayed on a chart.
5. Explain the meaning of the symbols used in Aboriginal art to the children.
6. Find some large rocks, place children in groups and have them paint the rocks using the Aboriginal symbols.
7. Get some string and have the children make a small string bag.
8. Collect some bark and have children paint on it.
9. Display the art works that the children have produced in the classroom.

Resources needed

Chart of Aboriginal symbols
String
Grass
Rocks
Paint
Picture of Rock Art
Bark

Early Years Learning Framework

- These activities shows the children that they belong in a diverse culture and helps them build and maintain relationships with other people.
- They are connected to the world around them.
- They are confident and involved learners.

OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
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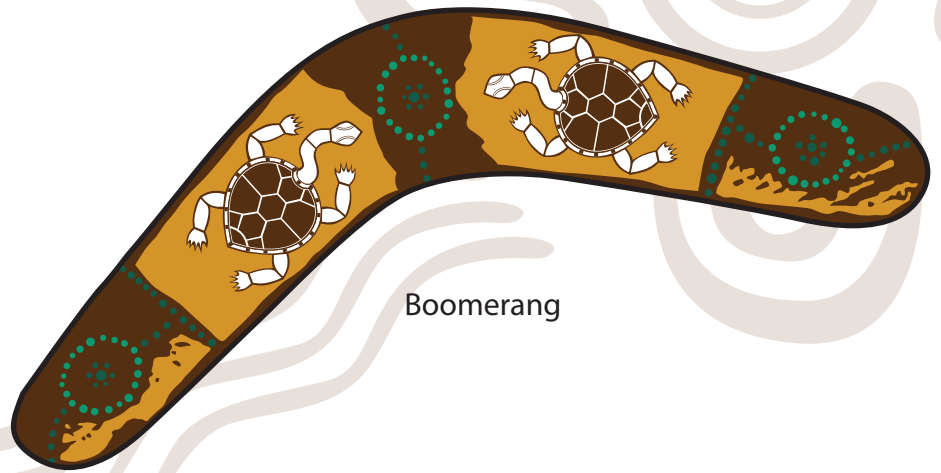
Cultural Topic 6: Victorian Aboriginal Music



Gumleaves



Clapsticks



Boomerang

Background information

There were many ways Aboriginal people in Victoria made music, including playing the gum leaf, using clap sticks in time with dances, chanting and singing. The gum leaf was used originally to mimic birds (magpies, eagles, black cockatoos) but later it was used to create songs. It is played by holding it tightly between your hands and lips and blowing across the surface of the leaf to make it vibrate which in turn makes sounds.

Clap sticks and boomerangs were also used to make music. Clap sticks are similar to drumsticks because rhythm is created when they are struck together. They are used in conjunction with singing and chanting. Kangaroo skin drums were also used in corroborees and ceremonies.

Songs were an important part of ceremony and often accompanied corroboree. The lyrics in the songs often described the reason for the dance. Some songs were stories that told of the travels of Dreaming ancestors or 'songlines' that are lines of energy that run between places, animals and people. Aboriginal people know where the Songlines are and follow them to keep in touch with animal and bird life. They followed the Songlines of the animals to know where they were and to see if they moved on.

Cultural Topic 6: Victorian Aboriginal Music

Activities

1. Collect a variety of gum leaves and have the children learn to play them by humming or whistling over the leaf and then making a noise with them.
2. Draw some gum leaves on an A4 piece of paper that the children can write on and cut out. Then get the children to write all the bird calls that can be played on the gum leaf.
3. Have the children make a boomerang out of cardboard and then draw a Koorie design on their boomerang.
4. Bring in some clap sticks and get the children to make up a song and use the clap sticks as they sing.
5. Have two children play the gum leaf, two play the clap sticks and some sing. Have the children play the gum leaf, hit the clap sticks and boomerangs and sing at the same time to make music.

Resources needed

1. 2 Boomerangs
2. 2 Clapsticks
3. Gum leaves

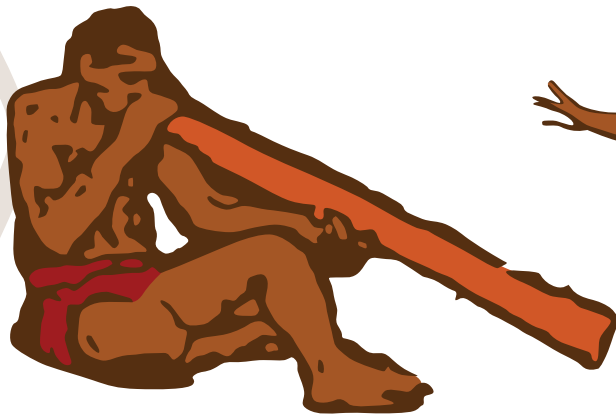
Early Years Learning Framework

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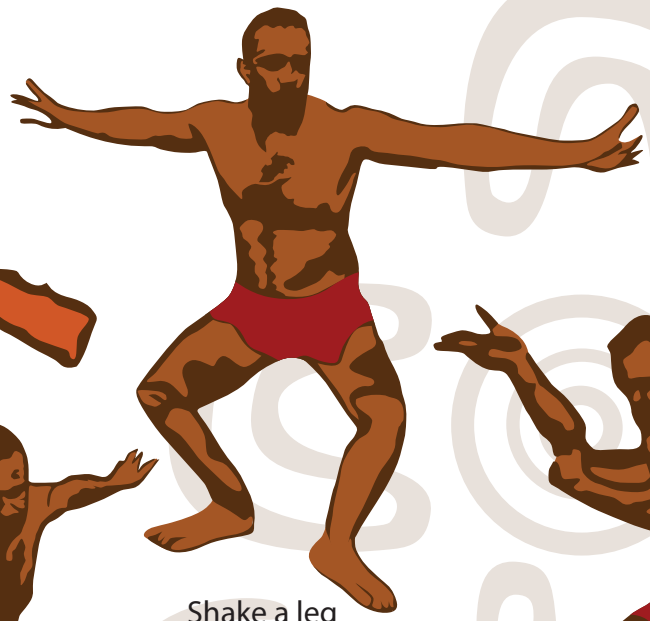
OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.

Cultural Topic 7: Corroboree



Didgeridoo player



Shake a leg



Kangaroo dance



Bird dance



Emu dance

Background information

Corroboree is the dance of Aboriginal people. It tells their stories through dance, music and body painting. It was used for ceremonies, celebrations and also for dancers to have fun. Aboriginal people would paint their bodies and faces with symbols that reflected their totems, clans and culture. Often the dancers would mimic animals and birds as they were hunters and the women would mimic their collecting of yams, berries and other bush foods.

Activities

1. Place children in 5 groups. Give one group clap sticks and then each of the other groups a particular dance to do-emu dance, kangaroo dance, bird dance, shake a leg and nominate one group as didgeridoo players.
2. Teach the different groups how to mimic the animal of the dance they were given to do or do shake a leg.
3. Have each group do their own corroboree and perform it for the other groups.
4. Paint the children's faces with white face paint.
5. Give each group a turn at doing a different animal dance.
6. Put the 5 groups together to perform the dance. Have two children play the clap sticks and boomerangs and other children sing as the dances are being performed.
7. Draw the different animals on a piece of paper with the different dances on it as well (mixed up). Have the children match the dance with the animal. - Kangaroo with Kangaroo dance, Emu with Emu Dance, Bird with Bird Dance.

Cultural Topic 7: Corroboree

Resources needed

1. Body Paint for faces.
2. Pictures of dance moves-bird dance, emu, kangaroo, shake a leg.
3. Pictures of emu, kangaroo and bird.

Early Years Learning Framework

- These activities shows the children that they belong in a diverse culture and helps them build and maintain relationships with other people.
- They are connected to the world around them.
- They are confident and involved learners.

OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
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- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials.

Cultural Topic 8: Traditional Games



Possum skin ball



Emu track



Kangaroo track



Dingo track



Turtle track

Background information

Aboriginal people played many different traditional games including marn grook, string games and tracking animal games.

Marn Grook or marngrook, is a Gunditjmara word for "game ball". The game was played between large groups who were in teams. Each team took the name of their totem. Players who could jump and kick higher than anyone else were considered the best players. A possum skin ball was used that the players kicked and marked.

String games were also popular with Aboriginal children. In string games, figures were made using a long piece of string (with the ends split or knotted). The string was then placed on the fingers of each hand and the fingers were used to make different movements.

Tracking games were important as well as popular because they prepared the young men for hunting as young children studied the different animal and bird tracks. Tracks were drawn on the ground or in sand using fingers, or small sticks and the children were taught which tracks belonged to which animal or bird.

Activities

1. Make a paper mache ball using newspaper. Have the children cover the paper mache ball with fur fabric. (instead of possum skin)
2. Take children outside and play a game of marn grook using the paper mache ball.
3. Give the children some string and knot it together. Have the children make their own games out of the string using their hands and fingers.
4. Draw animal tracks on a chart and place it on the wall in a prominent position in the centre.
5. Have the children draw an emu track on a piece of paper.
7. Have the children draw a kangaroo track on a piece of paper.
8. Have the children draw a dingo track on a piece of paper.
9. Have the children draw a turtle track on a piece of paper.
10. Put all the kangaroo, emu, dingo and turtle tracks in groups together.
11. Place the pieces of paper with kangaroo tracks on them on the floor going in one direction.
12. Place the pieces of paper with emu tracks on the floor going in another direction.
13. Place the pieces of paper with dingo tracks on the floor going in another direction.
14. Place the pieces of paper with the turtle tracks in another direction.
15. At the end of each of the tracks, place the animal that the tracks belong to.
16. Have the children follow each set of tracks to 'hunt' the animal and have them bring back the picture of the animal.
17. Draw the tracks on one column on a piece of A4 paper and the animal on the other side (in a different order).
18. Have the children match the track with the correct animal.

Cultural Topic 8: Traditional Games

Resources needed

Fur fabric, glue and paper
String
Chart with animal tracks on it.

Early Years Learning Framework

- These activities shows the children that they belong in a diverse culture and helps them build and maintain relationships with other people.
- Through this activity children have a strong sense of identity.
- They are connected to the world around them.

OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
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OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.

Bibliography

BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.

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Rock Art: www.visitvictoria.com › Things to do › **Aboriginal Victoria**

YulungaTraditional Indigenous Gamesausport.gov.au/isp

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Culture Victoria website www.cv.vic.gov.au

