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Leveraging Languages for Learning

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VicTESOL

Early Childhood Education Series

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Belonging, Being and Becoming

Being

Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life.

Belonging

Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities...*Belonging* is central to *being* and *becoming* in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

Becoming

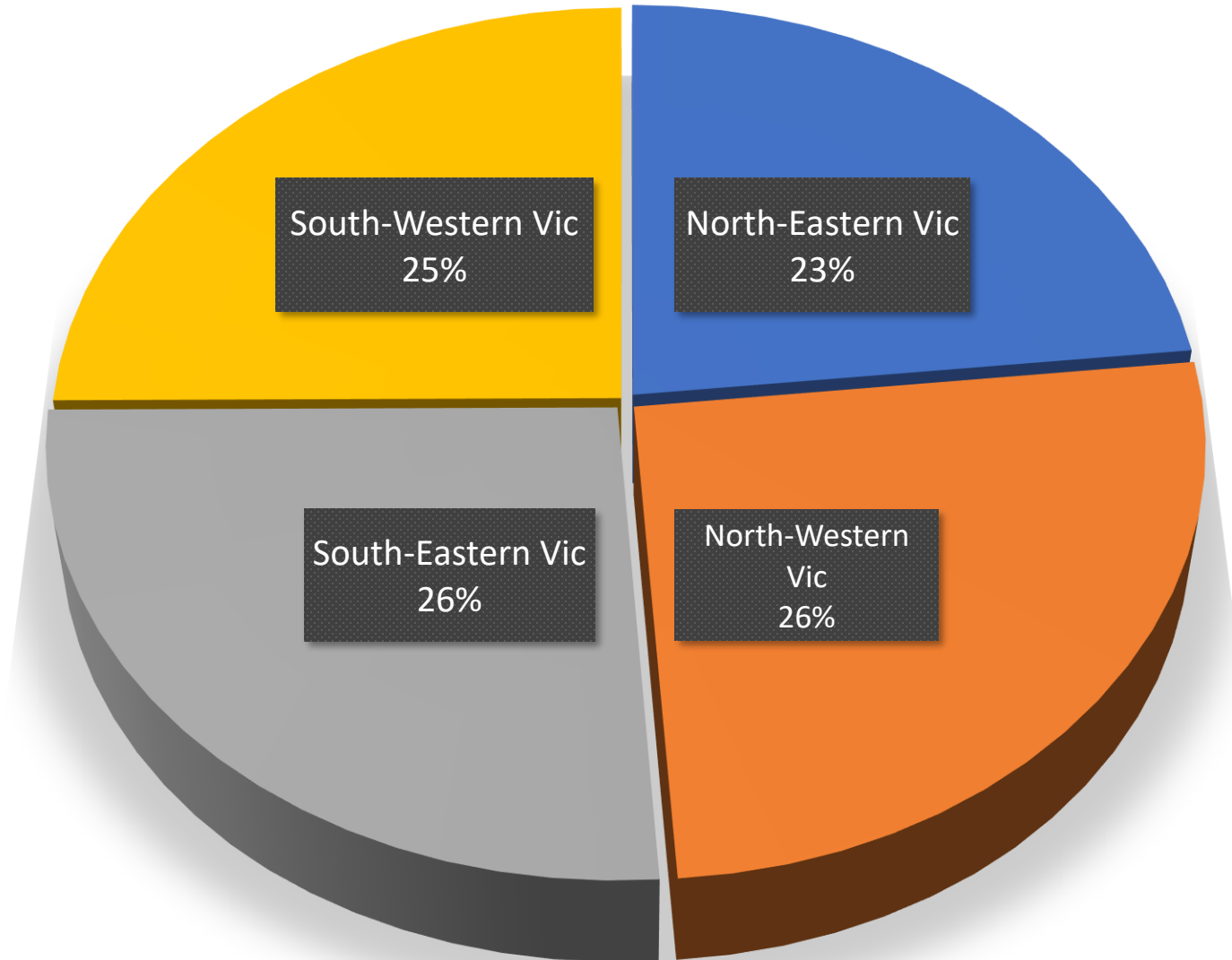
Becoming reflects (the) process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

‘Children’s wellbeing,
identity, sense of agency
and capacity to make
friends is connected to the
development of
communication skills’

(VEYLDF; DET, 2016, p. 22)

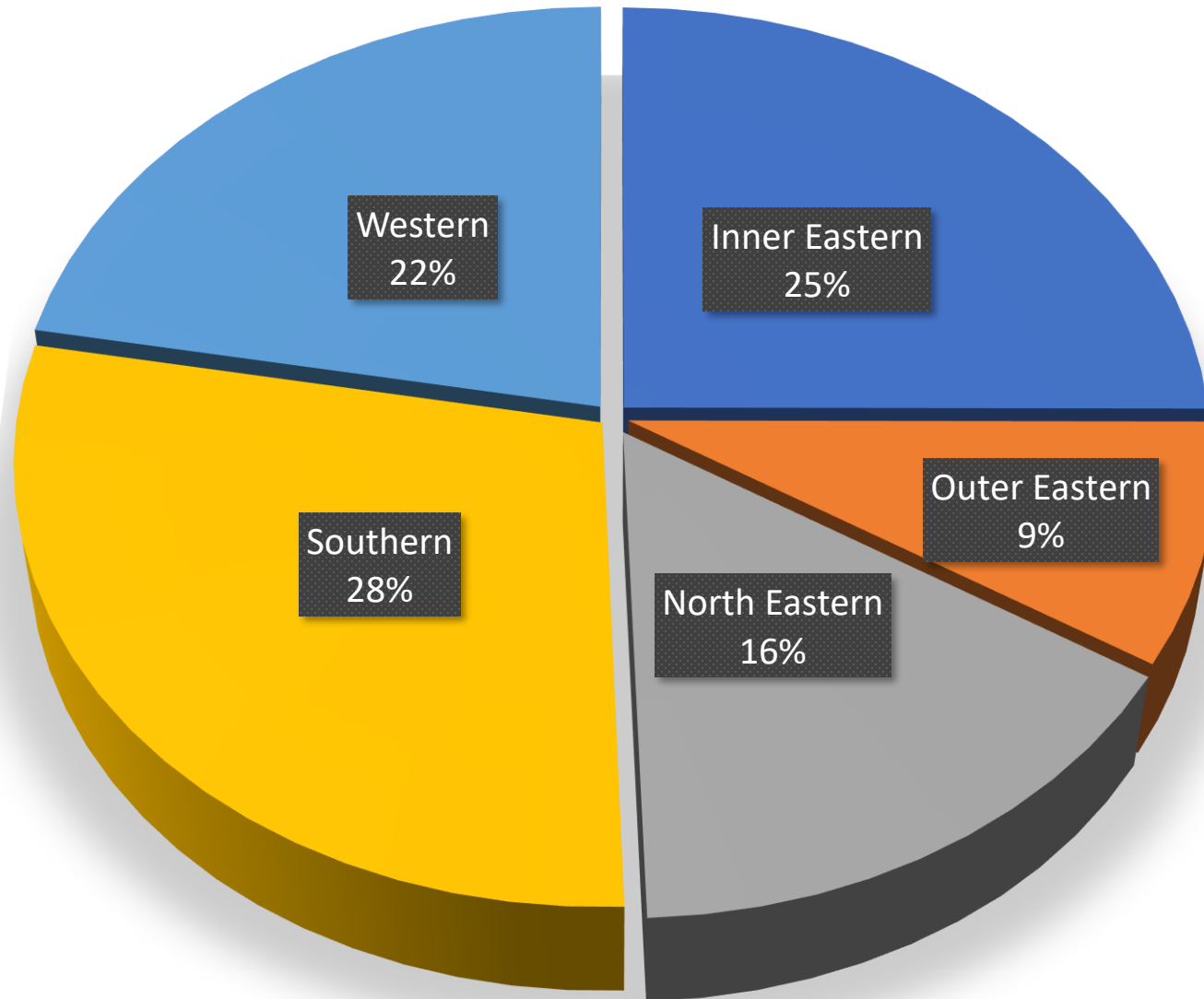


Where are 'LBOTE' children attending kindergarten?



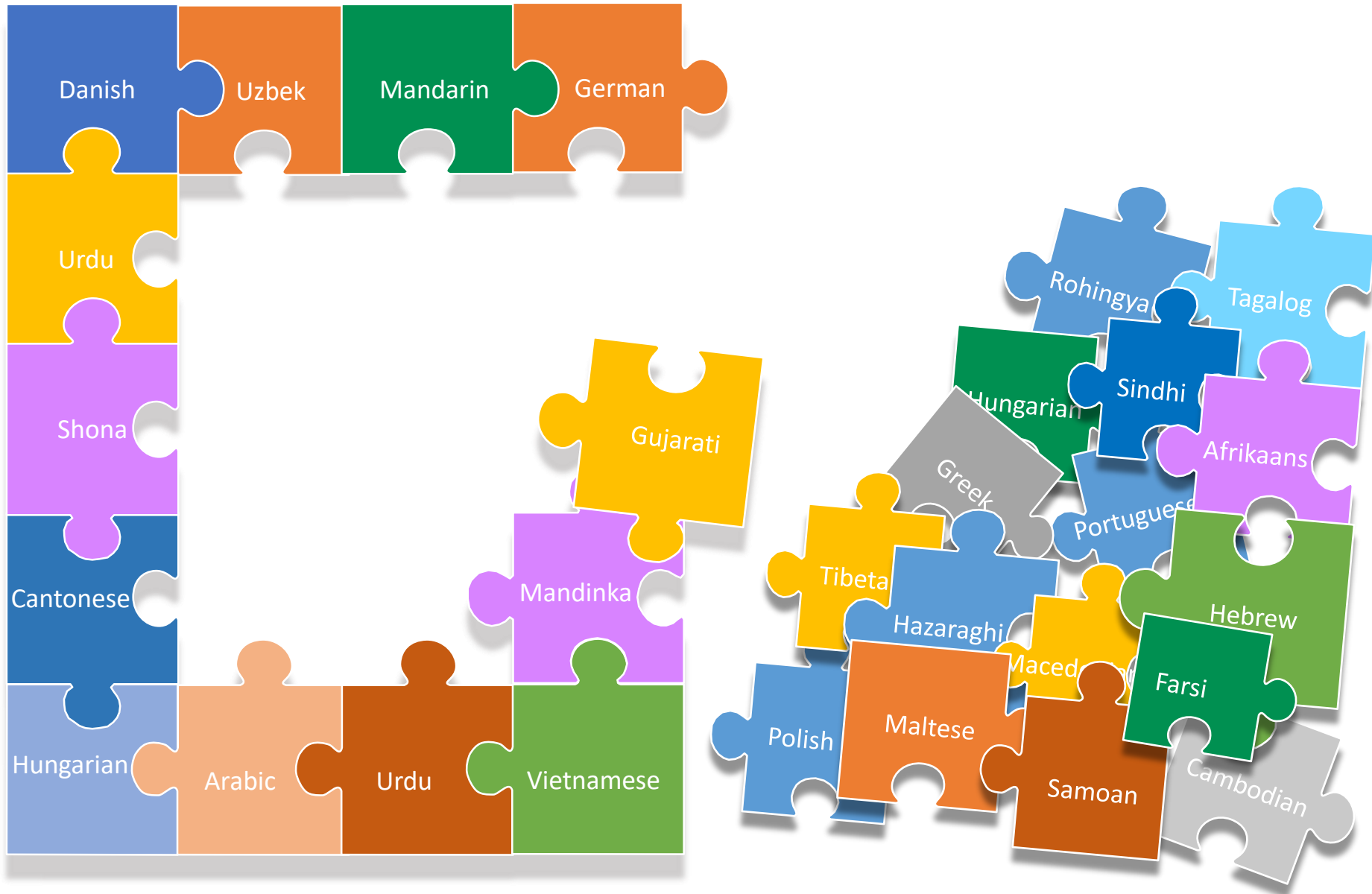
Data source:
DET Kindergarten
Information
Management
System. Kinder Child
Characteristics by
LGA/Non English
speaking
background.
August 2020.

And where, in Melbourne?

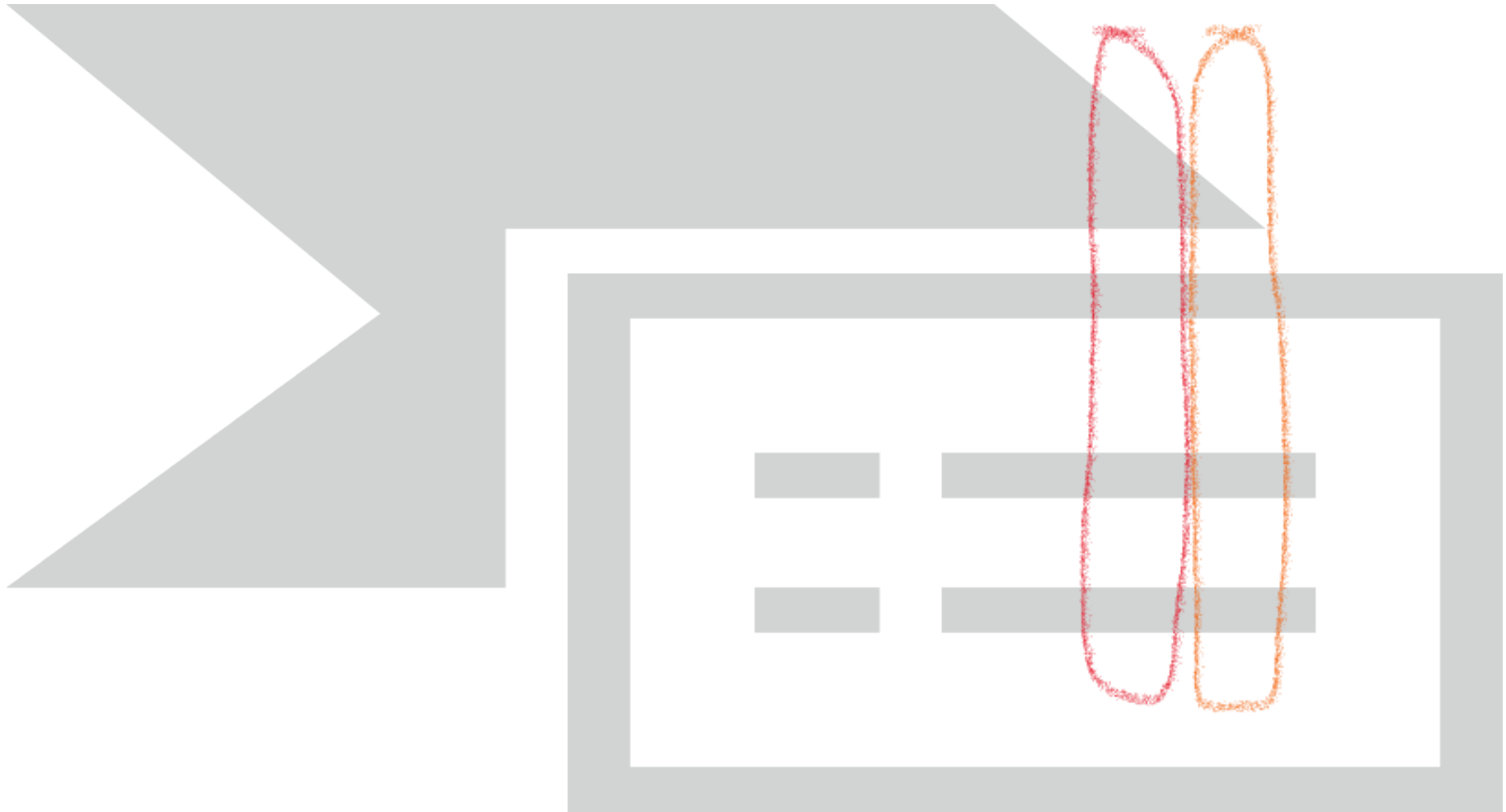


Data source:
DET Kindergarten
Information
Management
System. Kinder Child
Characteristics by
LGA/Non English
speaking
background.
August 2020.

The 100+ home languages of children



Our strong platform: Social inclusion



Proportion of services rated Meeting NQS or above for each standard of the NQS, as at 30 June 2020

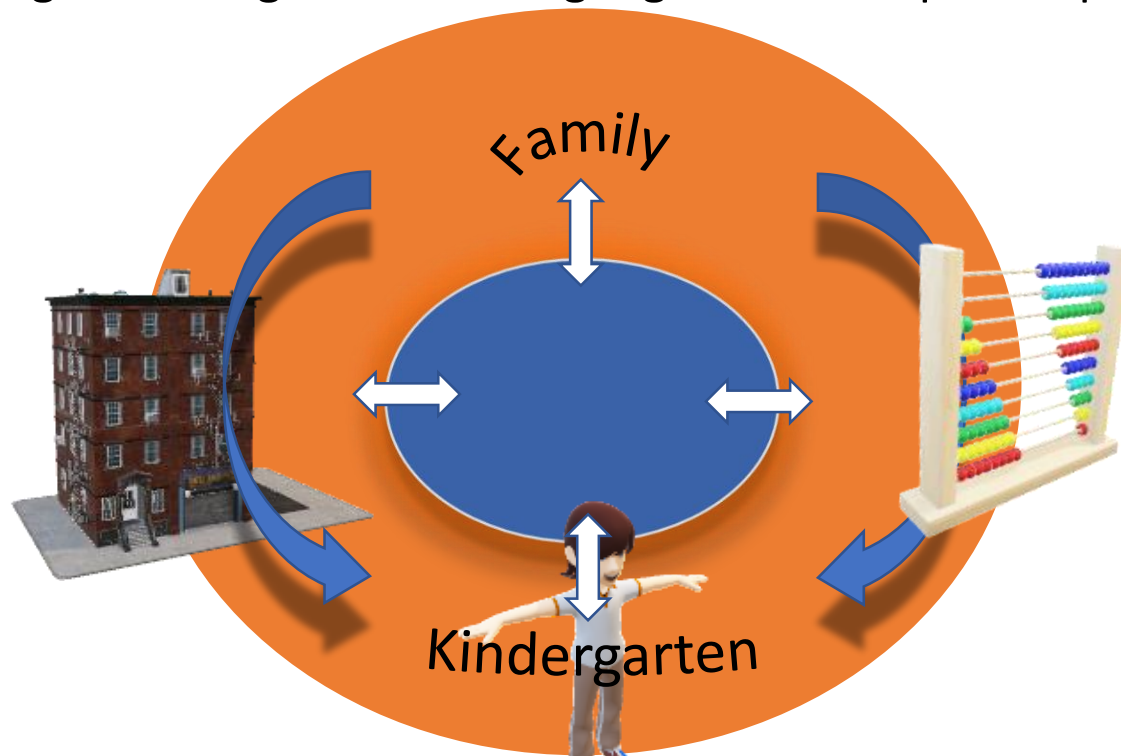
(ACECQA, 2020, p. 38)

Time to adjust our thinking

Historical belief in separation of languages and boundaries of use.

Emphasis was on differences: different vocabulary; different rules.


'Codeswitching' – moving between languages – also implies separate linguistic systems



Translanguaging – acknowledges that (bi)linguals access an integrated linguistic system within a social context. '...one language is used to reinforce the other in order to increase understanding and augment the pupil's activity in both languages' (Slaughter & Cross, 2020, p. 119).

Translanguaging

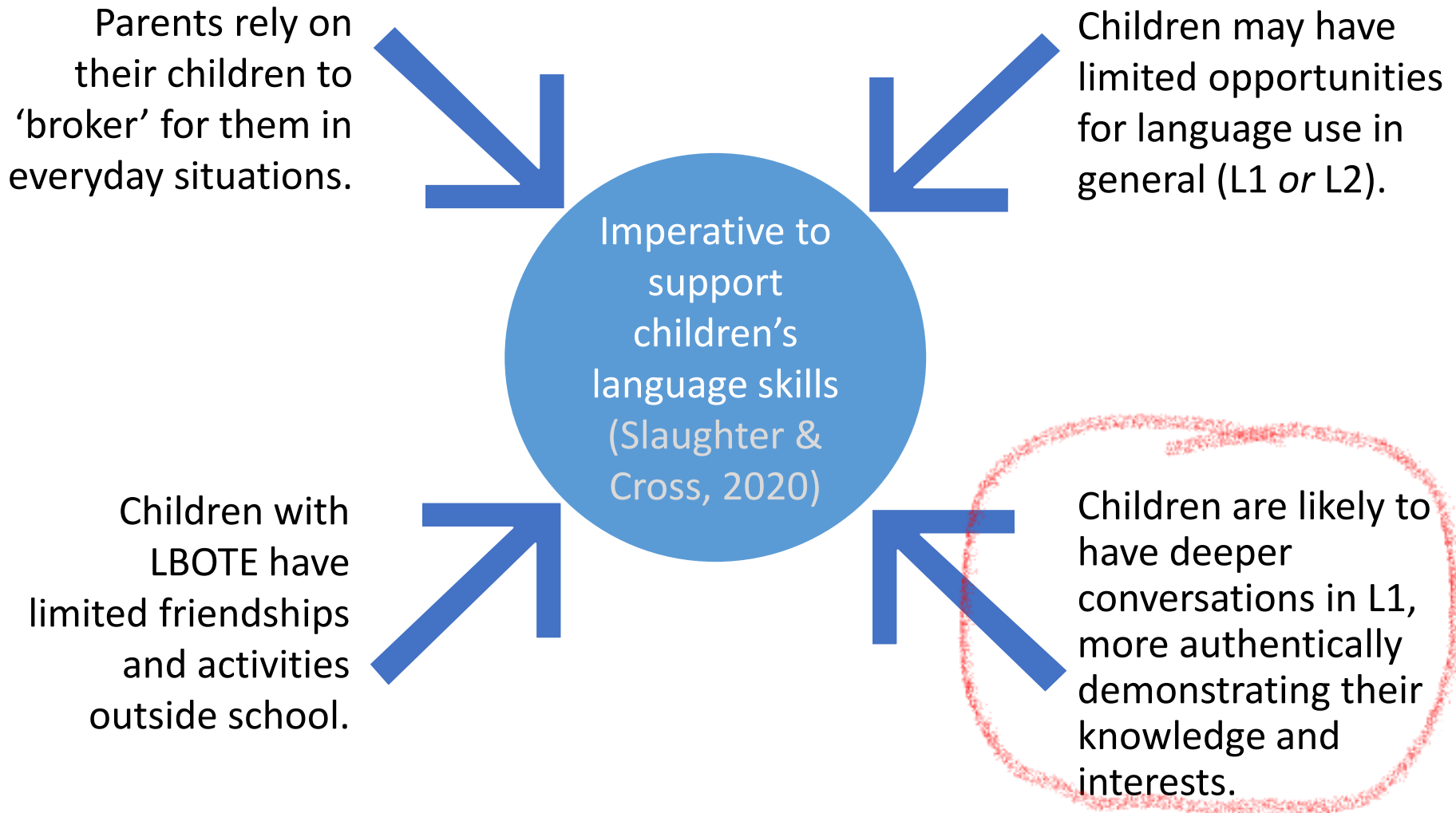
– What is it?



‘...the use of the child’s home language alongside the language of the school effectively [facilitates] communication between the teacher and the child, cognitive processing for the child who is learning through a second language and language production in this new language’

(Mary & Young, 2017, p. 111)

Translanguaging – Why?



Inclusion

‘Educators honour the histories, cultures, languages... of families. They value children’s different capacities and abilities and respect differences in families’ home lives’ (DEEWR, 2009, p. 4).

Microaggression

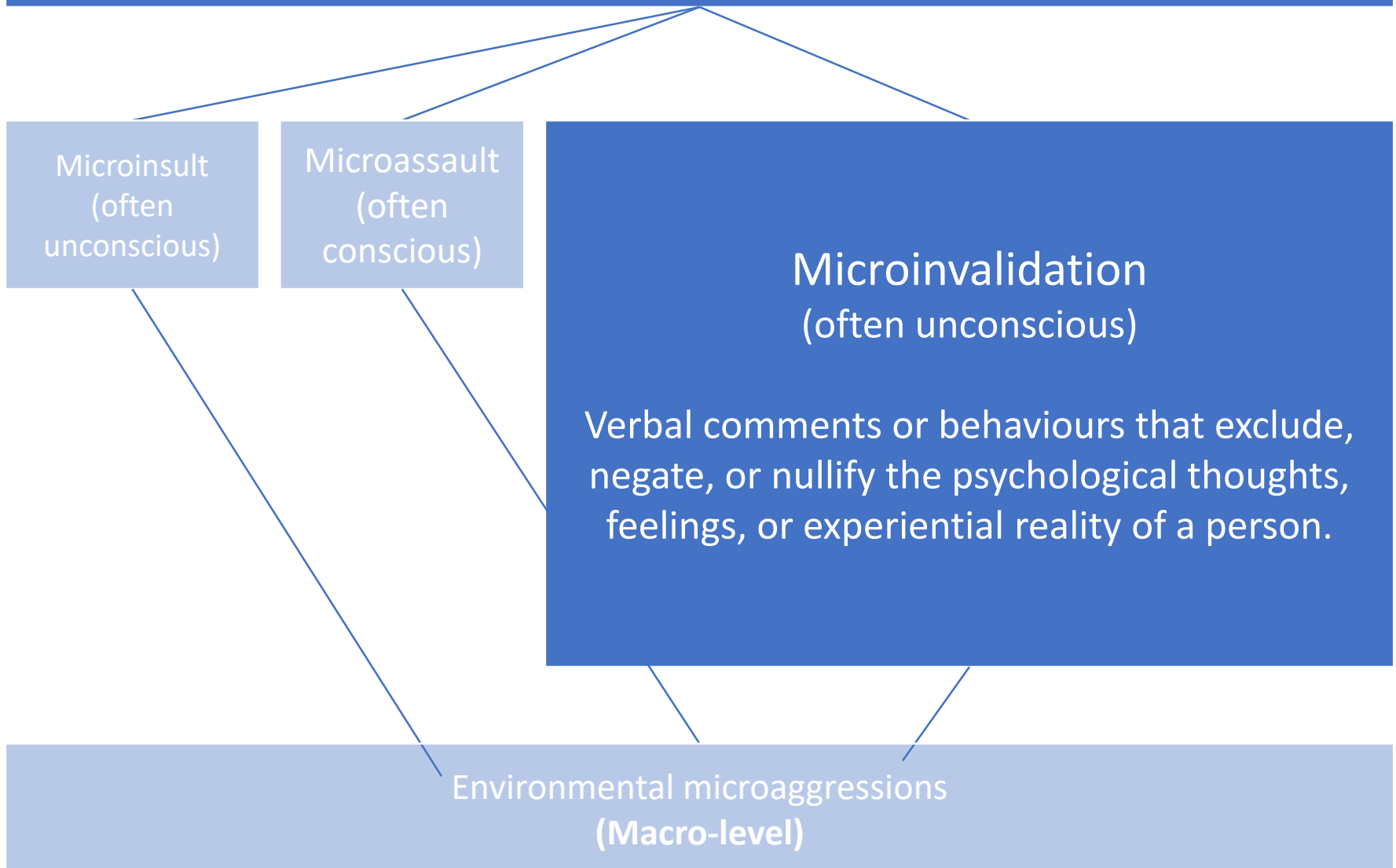
‘...brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative [language]* slights and insults to the target person or group’ (Sue, et al., 2007, p. 273).

**My insert: ‘language’ for ‘racial’*

Language Microaggressions

(adaptation of Sue et al., 2007)

Commonplace verbal or behavioral indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative ... slights and insults.

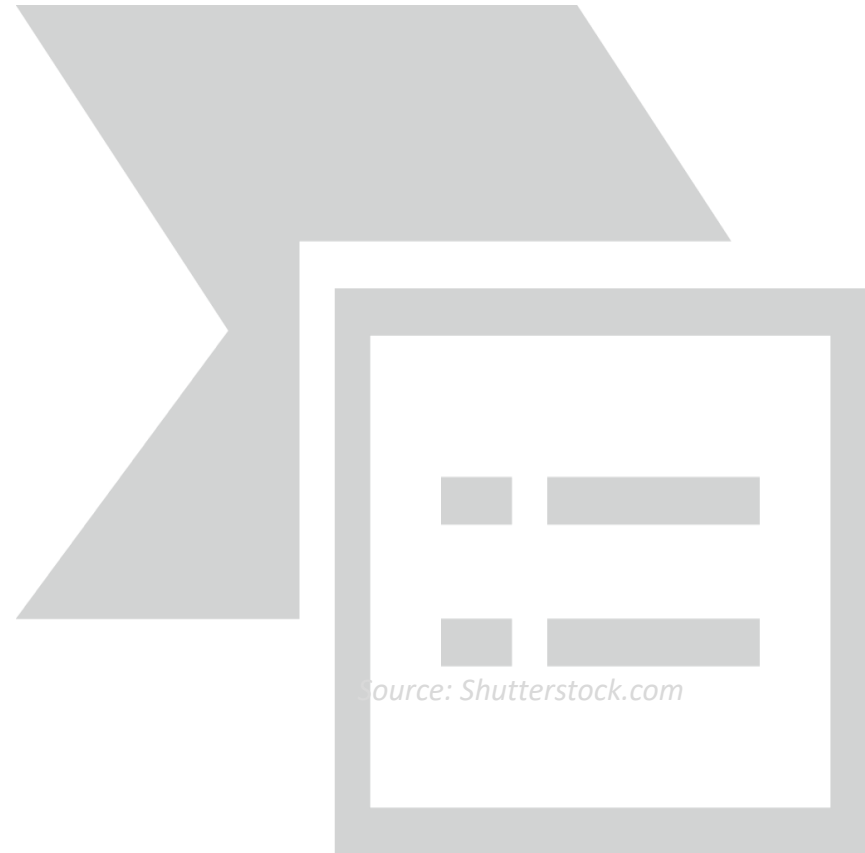


Pause to reflect

A problem with microinvalidations is that they are often unconscious.

Can you think of a time that you may have unintentionally invalidated a child—or their family's—use of a language?

Some people may be willing to share their reflections through the Chat function.



Self-reflection on microinvalidations to transform our practice should be part of our intentional teaching practice.

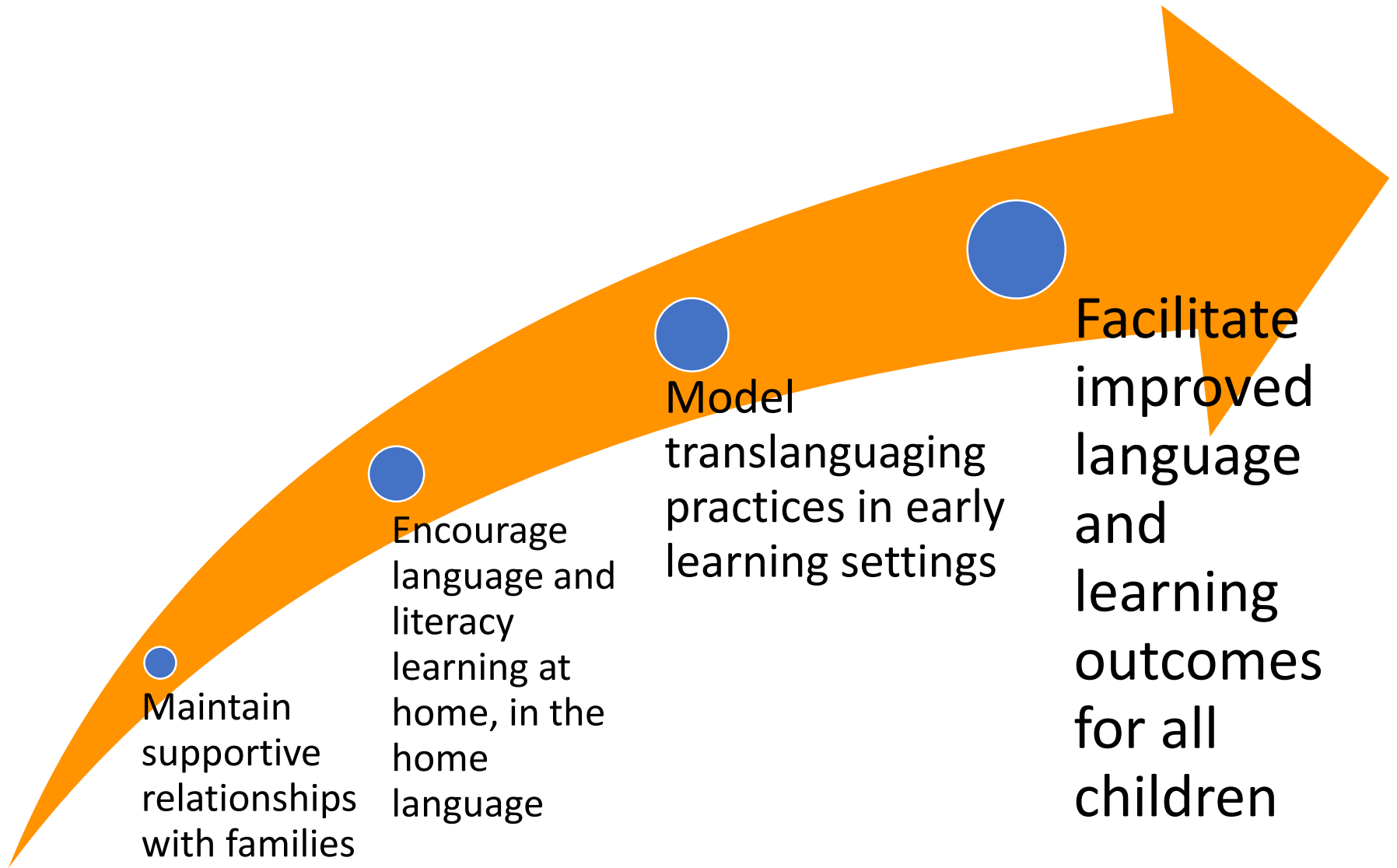
Partner with families

1. Encourage families to value and support their child's first language whilst at the same time facilitating bi- and multilingualism.
2. Value children's first languages at kindergarten. This is crucial for children's being, becoming and belonging and reassures parents.
3. Intentionally incorporate other languages into your program. This supports safe and equitable learning spaces for children and families.
4. Advocate for improved access and quality of early learning for all children.

Questions & Answers

Does the teacher need to be (bi- or) multilingual?	No. Teachers will plan to recognize opportunities to draw on children's (and families') funds of knowledge.
Do the children have to learn other languages?	No. But hearing other languages will support children's understanding of how languages operate.
Will hearing/seeing other languages confuse children?	No. Children will build on what they know.
Does it mean that English is less important?	Not at all. But exposure to other languages encourages interest in languages in general. It also highlights the similarities and differences between language use in form, use, content and conventions. <i>For further information, see the Literacy Teaching Toolkit (DET, n.d.).</i>

An integrated approach is needed



A national Language and Literacy strategy is needed (Renshaw & Goodhue, 2020)

As practitioners, we should:

- Actively promote the importance of language and literacy development.
- Use evidence-based approaches for early language and literacy development – embed these in teacher preparation and EC professional development.
- Ensure that families and support services have access to books in first languages of that community wherever possible.



Take-home messages

Recognize integrated linguistic systems and build on linguistic capabilities

- This is strength-based and aligns with differentiated, early childhood pedagogy.

Continue to intentionally model advanced English language and literacy skills

- This supports smooth transitions to school.

Purposefully expose children to languages other than English

- This may encourage an interest in language learning.
- It aligns with the Australian Government's commitment to revive the teaching of languages in schools.

Leverage languages for learning!

Comments and discussion



Thank you and enjoy the VicTESOL series!

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