Supporting Parents and Families from Multicultural Communities.



Parents and families play an important role in helping young people feel confident, connected and supported in netball.

For families from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and multicultural backgrounds, creating a welcoming and inclusive experience can help build trust, strengthen community connections and support ongoing participation.

This fact sheet provides practical strategies for Associations and Clubs to engage parents and families, understand their needs and create an environment where everyone feels welcome and able to contribute.

WHY FAMILY ENGAGEMENT MATTERS

For many young people, parents and family members influence whether they start and continue participating in sport.

A positive experience for the whole family can help:

- Build trust and confidence in the netball organisation
- Help families understand how netball works and what to expect
- Create opportunities to build friendships and community connections
- Support young people to feel a stronger sense of belonging
- Encourage parents and family members to become volunteers, supporters or participants
- Identify and address barriers that may otherwise prevent ongoing participation

Families may have different experiences of organised sport, including differences in expectations around communication, volunteering, transport, uniforms, costs, gender, food or family responsibilities.

Taking the time to understand these needs can make netball more accessible and welcoming.

CREATING A WELCOMING FIRST EXPERIENCE

First impressions can influence whether a family feels comfortable returning to netball.

Associations and Clubs can:

- Welcome families personally when they first attend
- Introduce new families to coaches, team managers and other parents
- Explain what happens during training, games and events in clear and simple language
- Show families where to find courts, toilets, change rooms, canteen and other facilities
- Provide information about what participants need to bring, wear and expect
- Avoid assuming families understand Australian sporting structures, terminology or expectations
- Offer a buddy or club contact who can help new families navigate their first few weeks
- Encourage coaches and volunteers to check in with new families throughout the season

A simple welcome can make a big difference. A friendly introduction, clear information and someone to ask for help can help a new family feel that they belong.

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COMMUNICATE CLEARLY AND INCLUSIVELY

Clear communication helps families feel informed and confident.

Consider:

- Using plain and easy-to-understand language
- Avoiding unnecessary sporting jargon, acronyms and complex instructions
- Providing important information in different formats where possible
- Allowing additional time for families to ask questions or clarify information
- Checking understanding rather than assuming information has been understood
- Using multiple communication channels, such as email, SMS, social media and face-to-face conversations
- Making sure communications reflect the diversity of the community through inclusive imagery and language

Where a family requires an interpreter, consider using an appropriate professional interpreting service rather than relying on children or young people to interpret important or sensitive information.

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST

Building trust takes time and is strengthened through consistent, respectful interactions.

Associations and Clubs can:

- Take the time to get to know families and their interests
- Ask families what would help them feel comfortable and involved
- Listen to feedback without making assumptions
- Follow through on commitments and information provided
- Create opportunities for families to meet other members
- Connect with local multicultural organisations, schools and community groups
- Invite families to contribute ideas about programs, events and activities
- Recognise that every family is different and avoid making assumptions about people based on their cultural background

Ask, listen and learn. Genuine relationships are built when families feel their experiences and perspectives are valued.

MAKE PARTICIPATION EASIER FOR FAMILIES

Family circumstances can influence how and when people are able to participate.

Consider whether your Association or Club can:

- Offer flexible payment options or payment plans
- Provide information about registration costs and what is included
- Offer uniform swaps, second-hand uniform options or donations
- Consider family commitments when scheduling training, competitions and events
- Provide information about public transport and parking
- Offer social introductory or low commitment participation opportunities
- Provide opportunities for parents and siblings to participate in other netball activities where appropriate
- Consider cultural or religious events when planning important club activities
- Provide culturally appropriate food options at club events where practical
- Clearly explain volunteering expectations and provide flexible ways to contribute

Small adjustments can remove barriers and make it easier for families to remain connected to netball.

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ENCOURAGE FAMILY CONNECTION

Parents and families can become an important part of the club community beyond supporting a player from the sideline.

Create opportunities for families to:

- Attend social events and club activities
- Meet other families through welcome events or informal gatherings
- Participate in family-friendly activities
- Share food, stories and experiences in appropriate and respectful ways
- Volunteer in ways that suit their skills, interests and availability
- Provide feedback about their experience
- Support community events, cultural celebrations or inclusion initiatives

Avoid placing expectations on families to educate the club about their culture. Participation and sharing should always be voluntary and guided by the family or community.

SUPPORTING PARENTS AND FAMILIES OF NEW PARTICIPANTS

For families who are unfamiliar with netball, additional support may be helpful.

Consider providing a simple, "Getting Started in Netball" guide covering:

- What to expect at training and games
- Basic netball terminology and rules
- What participants need to wear and bring
- Where to go when arriving at the venue
- How fixtures and competitions work
- Who to contact with questions
- Registration and payment information
- Uniform requirements
- Opportunities for parents and families to get involved

A short face-to-face conversation can be just as valuable as written information.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FEEDBACK

Families should have accessible ways to share their experiences and suggestions.

You could:

- Include questions about inclusion and belonging in participant or family surveys
- Provide informal opportunities for feedback
- Ask new families about their experience after their first few weeks
- Provide a clear contact person for questions or concerns
- Consider language and accessibility needs when collecting feedback
- Use feedback to make practical changes and communicate what has been improved

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Every family is different. Avoid making assumptions based on culture, language, religion or background
- Parents and families may have different levels of familiarity with organised sport
- Clear communication and a personal welcome can make participation easier
- Inclusion is about removing barriers, not expecting families to adapt to the organisation
- Family engagement should be genuine and ongoing, rather than limited to cultural events or special occasions
- Ask families what they need, listen to their experiences and respond where possible

KEY TAKEAWAY

When parents and families feel welcomed, informed and connected, they can play a powerful role in helping young people join, enjoy and remain involved in netball. Building genuine relationships with multicultural families strengthens belonging and creates a more inclusive netball community for everyone.