



EARLY
LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA

The voice for parents and service providers

PRE SCHOOL MATTERS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PREPARING CHILDREN FOR LIFE
TERM TWO 2015

MINDFULNESS
AT PRESCHOOL

2015 EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION CONFERENCE

TRANSPORTING
CHILDREN SAFELY



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Cover: Joyce Avenue Children's Centre, Greensborough. Photo: Joe Vittorio.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Term 2 always provides some exciting opportunities to come together as a sector and reflect on our professional practice and the important work we do with children.

We are currently finalising arrangements for the 2015 Early Childhood Education Conference at Caulfield Racecourse on 29 and 30 May. This year's program has something for everyone and we are confident that the speakers will inspire, educate and entertain delegates.



This year's theme – *Together we grow – investing in our future* – is all about investing in the early years to support children's life-long learning; investing in partnerships between educators, families, community and services; and investing in ourselves as professionals and educators delivering positive outcomes for individuals and children.

Our keynote speaker on the opening day is Professor Charles Pascal from the University of Toronto. Charles will explore the critical importance of government investment in early childhood and the resulting benefits for individuals and the community. You can read Charles's recent article on this subject and more about the conference on pages 14–18.

I especially want to thank the Creswick Foundation for making it possible to bring Charles to Australia and to our Conference.

In this edition of Preschool Matters, the feature articles look at ways to support us in our roles as educators, parents or service providers. Karen Bonson from Gowrie Victoria shares an interesting story which centres on the rights of children and the introduction of a mindfulness program which has had positive outcomes for children, families and staff, on page 10. We also look at the responsibilities of Victorian early childhood educators under the new legislation which requires registration with the Victorian Institute of Teaching on pages 12–13.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Preschool Matters and I look forward to seeing you at the Conference.

Jo Geurts, President

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NEWS & EVENTS



Congratulations to the our excellent educators

The 2014 ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards were announced last term. They were won by educators for outstanding achievements in leadership, innovation, community engagement and disability inclusion in early childhood settings.

Congratulations to Denise Ansingh, Hawker Park Primary School, WA, Leanne Gardiner, Maryland Care and Early Education Centre, NSW, David Gilkes, Illawarra Primary School, TAS, Lisa Cairns, Possum Early Childhood Centre, NSW and ELAA member service, Ariel Wadick, Annie Dennis Children's Centre, VIC.



They were honoured in front of Senator the Hon. Scott Ryan, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and internationally recognised educationalist, Dr Ken Boston who was part of the recent Gonski review into school funding.

Nominations for the 2015 ASG National Excellence in Teaching Awards will open in April.

Photos: (top) Ariel Wadick, Denise Ansingh, David Gilkes and Leanne Gardiner; (bottom) Lisa Cairns, awarded the Disability Inclusion Grant.

Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten

The Victorian Government launched the Koorie Kids Shine at Kindergarten campaign on *Closing the Gap* day, last term, with a message for Aboriginal families – it's not too late to enrol your child.

Kindergartens, schools and support services across the state are encouraged to talk to Aboriginal families in their community about the benefits of kindergarten and help them to get their children involved.

For Aboriginal children aged three and four, kindergarten is free.

As we well know, two years of kindergarten is proven to make a big difference to how children fare at school. It helps them become confident learners, and assists with their communication skills and social development.

Kindergartens are supported to provide quality, culturally aware programs that nurture Aboriginal children's cultural identity. The DET campaign includes direct engagement with local government and support services in areas with higher numbers of Aboriginal families.

For more information, including the contact details for local Koorie Engagement and Support Officers, see the Department of Education and Training website, www.education.vic.gov.au, and search for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.

The Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc (VAEAI) www.vaeai.org.au also has information on professional support.





Kicking Goals in Geelong

Over 70 educators from early childhood services across Geelong and the Surf Coast joined with ELAA and early childhood expert, Catharine Hydon, on Tuesday 10 March at the Kardinia Park Community Centre to learn about keeping our kids safe around roads.

Thank you to those educators and students who joined us – we had fantastic feedback from everyone who attended. If you would like to book a professional development session for your colleagues or community, please contact us on (03) 9489 3500 or rse@elaa.org.au.



Smoking banned near Victorian preschools, schools and community buildings

From 13 April 2015, smoking is banned on the grounds of, and within four metres of an entrance to childcare centres, kindergartens and preschools, and primary and secondary schools. Smoking is also banned within four metres of an entrance to children's indoor play centres, public hospitals, registered community health centres and certain Victorian Government buildings.

On-line resources, FAQs and posters providing more information are available from the Department of Health and Human Services website.

www.health.vic.gov.au/tobaccoreforms/smoke-free-learning-enviro/index.htm

EDUCATION WEEK – 17–23 MAY 2015

Education Week presents the perfect opportunity to include young children and families in celebrations that showcase the joys of hands-on learning. This year, it is all about making maths fun!

The Department of Education and Training has plenty of activities and experiences to keep little hands busy, enquiring minds enthralled and budding mathematicians entertained and amazed. Go to the website www.education.vic.gov.au for activity ideas for young children.

TRAINING IN 2015

ELAA provides training, workshops and seminars for a range of audiences in the sector.

FOR EDUCATORS, PARENTS AND MANAGERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

Positive Behaviour Support for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia) and ELAA have created an intensive 4 part seminar for educators and early childhood professionals who work with young children that may have autism spectrum disorder.

All workshops will be held at Manningham City Council, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster.

- Day 1** The ASD profile and behaviour response plan
Friday 1 May, 9.30am – 2.30pm
- Day 2** Review and difficult conversations and the parent perspective
Friday 12 June, 9.30am – 2.30pm
- Day 3** Behaviours of concern in children with ASD – the function and teaching new skills
Friday 7 August, 9.30am – 2.30pm
- Day 4** Refresher workshop – review sessions, managing children with ASD within your program; what's worked? Q & A
Friday 16 October, 9.30am – 2.30pm

Registration for each session opens at 9.00am.

This series is also available as a 2 day series when participants can attend Day 1 and Day 4. The two day series will be relevant for those with a basic understanding of Autism Spectrum Disorder but would like to know more about working with specific children in their service.

Total cost for 4 days: ELAA Member \$525 / Non-member \$750

Cost for the 2 part series: ELAA Member \$300 / Non-member \$450

Working with Vulnerable children and families – one day seminar

ELAA, with Childrens Protection Society, will present a one day seminar for educators, early childhood service providers and other early childhood professionals that work with vulnerable young children and their families.

When: Friday 8 May, 9.30am – 2.30pm (registration opens at 9.00am)

Where: Midlands Golf Club, Heinz Lane, Ballarat North

Cost: ELAA Member \$150 / Non-member \$225

Natural Learning Environments – two part series

Presented by Karen Glancy

This two-part series will provide participants with inspiration, practical ideas and resources to create engaging learning environments that promote a connection to, and a respect for, the natural world.

When: Session 1; **Friday 24 April**, 9.30am – 2.30pm

Where: Southern Golf Club, Lower Dandenong Road, Keysborough

When: Session 2; **Friday 22 May**, 9.30am – 2.30pm

Where: Southern Golf Club, Lower Dandenong Road, Keysborough

Registration for each session opens at 9.00am.

Total cost for 2 days: ELAA Member \$300 / Non-member \$450



For more information and to register for a training event



Making sustainability part of everyday learning

Presented by Karen Glancy

This engaging session will explore how to embed sustainable thinking and practice into children's early learning programs. It will provide practice ideas as well as link sustainable practices with the National Quality Standard (NQS) Quality Areas.

When: Friday 5 June, 9.30 – 2.30pm (registration opens at 9.00am)

Where: National Archives of Australia (Victoria Archives Centre)
99 Shiel St, North Melbourne

Cost: ELAA Member \$150 / Non-member \$225

Sustainability – a step further

Presented by Karen Glancy

This session will encourage educators to reflect on their personal and professional practice in regard to sustainability and respect for the environment.

When: Friday 31 July, 9.30am – 2.30pm (registration opens at 9.00am)

Where: National Archives of Australia (Victoria Archives Centre)
99 Shiel St, North Melbourne

Cost: ELAA Member \$150 / Non-member \$225

The practice of educational leadership: a bridge to improved teaching and learning

Presented by Catharine Hydon

This one day session is especially designed for those educators who have been appointed as the Educational Leader for their service.

This one day workshop is offered in three locations

Friday 1 May, 9.30am – 2.30pm (registration opens at 9.00am)
ELAA, Level 3, 145 Smith Street, Fitzroy

Or

Tuesday 4 August, 9.30am – 2.30pm (registration opens at 9.00am), Southern Golf Club, Lower Dandenong Road, Keysborough

Or

Friday 4 September, 9.30am – 2.30pm (registration opens at 9.00am), Manningham City Council, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster

Cost: ELAA Member \$150 / Non-member \$225

Becoming an Educator: strengthening practice building confidence

Presented by Catharine Hydon

This session is especially designed for educators in assistant roles and will explore what it means to be an early childhood educator in the 21st Century and how we can all take an active role in providing quality education to our citizens!

When: Thursday 21 May, 9.30am – 2.30pm (registration opens at 9.00am)

Where: ELAA, Level 3, 145 Smith Street, Fitzroy

Cost: ELAA Member \$150 / Non-member \$225

Taking you to “Excellence” – Leading to Exemplary Practice – three part series

Presented by Catharine Hydon

This 3 part series is designed for directors, educational leaders, committee members, cluster managers and educators and will explore the nature of continuous improvement in early childhood services as a hallmark of quality and excellence. During the series we will be discussing our understanding of 'quality' and its relationship to continuous improvement. We will also examine the markers of exemplary practice and the processes and structures to support leaders to sustain exemplary practice.

This 3 part series will be held at 2 locations
ELAA, Level 3, 145 Smith Street, Fitzroy

Session 1: **Wednesday 22 April, 9.30am – 2.30pm**

Session 2: **Wednesday 20 May, 9.30am – 2.30pm**

Session 3: **Wednesday 17 June, 9.30am – 2.30pm**

Registration for each session opens at 9.00am.

Or

Southern Golf Club, Lower Dandenong Road, Keysborough

Session 1: **Friday 24 July, 9.30am – 2.30pm**

Session 2: **Friday 21 August, 9.30am – 2.30pm**

Session 3: **Friday 11 September, 9.30am – 2.30pm**

Registration for each session opens at 9.00am.

Total cost for 3 days: ELAA Member \$400 / Non-member \$600

KINDERGARTEN CLUSTER MANAGEMENT

Kindergarten Cluster Managers, did you know that ELAA can tailor presentations for your parent site committees?

ELAA has provided training for KCM sites on topics such as roles and responsibilities of parent committees and fundraising. Please contact the Member Services team for information on a variety of topics and training packages elaa@elaa.org.au or 9489 3500.

ADVICE

Our preschool has to employ a new teacher – what do we need to do?

**Laura Mondon,
Member Services Advisor**

When recruiting a new staff member there are a few important steps you should follow:

- Set up a staffing or recruitment sub-committee with appropriate delegation from the whole committee as well as a Terms of Reference.
- Review the position description to ensure that it is current and relevant. ELAA has template position descriptions in the Early Childhood Management Manual (ECMM) which can be purchased through the ELAA website. A position description should reflect the objectives of the role, its responsibilities as well as information on essential skills and competencies.
- Ensure that there are clear key selection criteria.
- Advertise – advertisements should be clear about the minimum requirements of the role, list key selection criteria, whether the position is full or part time, specify timeframes (such as application closing date, start date, etc.) and include a contact phone number (this would normally be a member of the subcommittee) for further information. Services can advertise vacancies through local and major newspapers, community noticeboards and of course through ELAA's job board, sponsored by McArthur.
- Once the application date has closed, the sub-committee should meet as soon as possible to short-list (usually no more than 4 or 5) and set times for interviews.
- Determine the makeup of the interview panel, usually no more than 3.
- Interview questions should be prepared before the interview and applicants should be given equal time and opportunity to answer questions using detailed examples. Services can utilise the set of template interview questions in the ELAA ECMM.
- Nominate a member of the interview panel to contact referees of the selected candidate (this is a critical step in the appointment of a new staff member).
- Contact the successful candidate to make an offer of employment.

Any services seeking support with this process should contact the ELAA Members Services team on (03) 9489 3500 or email elaa@elaa.org.au. The Early Childhood Management Manual, available for purchase from the ELAA website, has templates and tips for staff recruitment and employment.



OUR WORK IN ACTION

ELAA provides intensive support to help services resolve governance and management issues

A small service in metropolitan Melbourne first contacted ELAA to seek help with their recruitment process and staff policies around working from home, consultation time with parents and rules on using software and hardware belonging to the service.

After committee members attended an ELAA training session, they realised that they had breached their constitution by having too many people elected to the committee. There was some confusion on a range of issues including maternity leave entitlements, decision making processes and supervisor certificates. ELAA provided advice on the complex issues faced by the committee, including referring them to a Code of Conduct policy.

Furthermore, the service had been assessed and received a *Working Towards* rating in both Quality areas 1 and 7. The committee member responsible for Quality Improvement sought clarification on the requirements of the QIP and their assessment in general. An ELAA Members Services Advisor met with the committee member to go through their assessment and explain what needed to be done next.

ELAA continues to support the service by providing advice as needed.

CEO REPORT



ELAA's recent 2015–16 Budget submission to the Australian Government was framed in the context of the Government's evolving 'families package' – and its response to the Productivity Commission's final report into childcare and early childhood learning.

Our principal recommendation for the budget and the 'families package' is very clear: keep funding 15 hours of preschool beyond 2015.

The Commonwealth funding contribution to 15 hours of preschool supports children and families *and* enables greater workforce participation by women. As we stated in the Executive Summary of our submission, we believe *maintaining that funding is a 'no-brainer'*.

With childcare and early learning issues at the forefront of the Abbott Government's current thinking, we need to take every opportunity presented to articulate clearly what we think is important: quality, affordable, accessible early childhood education and care.

ELAA's two other key priority areas for investment by the Commonwealth are: continuing funding and support for the National Quality Framework in *all* early learning settings, and ensuring disadvantaged or vulnerable families are no worse off under reforms to the childcare payments system.

We believe it is essential to the outcomes for children that the Commonwealth Government maintains its critical investment in early childhood education and care.

That is why we continue to call on the Government to place the best interests of children and families at the centre of the proposed 'families package', and to maintain funding for 15 hours of preschool beyond 2015.

Here is a summary of our recommendations. The full budget submission can be viewed on the ELAA website.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR INVESTMENT

PRIORITY AREA

1

Continue funding for 15 hours of preschool for 4 year old children beyond 2015

OUR RECOMMENDATION The development of the Government's 'families package' must have a wider focus to include childcare and preschools and embed the Australian Government contribution to 15 hours of preschool funding on an ongoing basis beyond 2015. This funding must be provided through a transparent mechanism such as the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education.

PRIORITY AREA

2

Continue to fund and support the NQF to ensure high quality for children in all early learning settings

OUR RECOMMENDATION The Australian Government must continue to support high quality in all early learning settings through the implementation of the NQF and in particular by:

- Retaining qualification and ratio requirements for teachers of 0–3 year old children
- Maintaining the rigour of the National Quality Standard and the assessment and rating process
- Keeping dedicated kindergarten/preschool programs within the NQF

PRIORITY AREA

3

Ensure no disadvantaged or vulnerable families are worse off under any reforms to the way childcare is funded or delivered

OUR RECOMMENDATION The Australian Government must balance the need for accessible and affordable childcare with the need for high quality adequately funded programs. It is essential that no disadvantaged or vulnerable children and families are worse off under any changes to the system.

DRIVING MISS DAISY... SAFELY

Early Learning Association Australia's new road safety and safe transport policies will assist educators and providers to protect children while travelling and provide helpful tips on best practice when transporting children. While this article focuses on the Safe Transport Policy for Family Day Care (FDC) educators, ELAA has also produced a Road Safety Education Policy for FDC educators and a separate Road Safety and Safe Transport Policy for early childhood centre-based services.

Car crashes are one of the leading causes of child death in Australia. Several thousand children aged birth to six years are hospitalised each year in Australia from injuries sustained in car crashes.

And while studies by road safety researchers show that almost all young children in Australia (98 per cent) use child restraints when they travel in cars, about one quarter of children are using the wrong type of restraint for their age, and about 70 per cent of restraints are incorrectly installed or used.

Wrongly installed or used child car seats have alarming consequences for children in a car crash. It is estimated that 42 per cent of child deaths in car crashes and 55 per cent of injuries could be eliminated if all children aged one to six were travelling in an appropriate child car seat that was correctly installed, according to a recent study by Australian road safety researchers, published in the medical journal *Pediatrics*¹.

ELAA has worked with VicRoads, leading early childhood experts, sector representatives and Family Day Care Australia to develop road safety education and safe transport policies. All three policies are based on the NQF and the National Guidelines for the Safe Restraint of Children Travelling in Motor Vehicles. These guidelines were developed by Neuroscience Research Australia and provide best practice recommendations that have been approved by the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The purpose of the policies is twofold:

- to provide evidence-based, best practice guidelines to ensure children are kept safe while travelling as pedestrians, cyclists or passengers in vehicles and
- to ensure children are able to participate in road safety education to help them to become safe and responsible road users.

The *Safe Transport Policy (Family Day Care)* is based on the *Best Practice Guidelines for the Safe Transportation of Children in Vehicles* published by Neuroscience Research Australia, an independent, not-for-profit research institute. This policy reflects best practice and goes beyond the minimum legal requirements outlined in Australian road laws.

For example, it is legal to use a safety harness, also known as an H harness, for children travelling in cars in Victoria, however the policy recommends against their use. Research shows that safety harnesses provide no safety advantages over lap-sash seat belts and may, in fact, increase the risk of injury.

While the law sets minimum standards for the safe transportation of children, we still need to do the best we can to protect children and keep them safe while travelling, especially when we have the scientific evidence and the knowledge about the type of best practices that should be implemented.

We understand that we're aiming high with these best practices and recognise that it may take some time for family day care educators to take on all aspects of the policy. We will provide support with education and resources to help the sector adopt the policy.

Moonee Valley City Council, a local government authority in Melbourne's inner west, is trialling the best practice policy among its 11 family day care services. The council has held professional development sessions for educators and coordinators about the best practice policies.

Gurpreet Thiara, the council's Children Services Development Officer, said educators' main concerns include how to determine the age and appropriateness of a car seat, especially when parents provide their own car seat.

"Educators appreciated the information they received from the training session and they are now more confident, not only in transporting children in their care, but in answering questions from families about safe transportation," Ms Thiara said.

The three best practice policies, developed in partnership with VicRoads, are an example of how diverse organisations could work together to create practical improvements for educators, children and families in early learning services.

1. Wei Du, Caroline F. Finch, Andrew Hayden, Lynne Bilston, Julie Brown and Julie Hatfield (2010) 'Pediatrics', *Relative benefits of population-level interventions targeting restraint-use in child care passengers*, p304–312

Handy links

- https://elaa.org.au/services_resources/road_safety_education
- www.childcarseats.com.au





GOING THE EXTRA DISTANCE: KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT TRANSPORTING CHILDREN IN CARS SAFELY*

Know the law in your state

Go to your state road authority website for the road laws relating to child restraints.

Use the safest child restraints

Go to childcarseats.com.au for information on the safety ratings of child restraints. They are also rated on ease of use and the dimensions and weight of the restraints is provided. The policy recommends only using child restraints with a four star safety rating.

H Harnesses and accessories

It is recommended that child restraint accessories are not used unless prescribed by a health professional such as an occupational therapist. Child safety harnesses (H-harnesses) are not recommended. Child safety harnesses offer no additional protection over lap-sash seatbelts when used with boosters in frontal crashes, and can encourage submarining which is associated with abdominal and lumbar spine injuries. They should only be considered for use in a seating position with a lap-only belt, used with a booster seat proven to prevent the child from sliding under the lap belt in a crash.

Adult seat belts and front seat travel

Children travelling in cars are best protected in a correctly installed size appropriate child restraint until they are approximately 145–150cm tall or they pass the “5 step test”. The policy recommends that children do not sit in the front seat of a car until they are over 145 cm tall.

P Platers

The policy asks providers to consider their position in relation to who is authorised to drive children. Statistics show that P plate drivers are the most likely to have crashes that involve casualties especially in the first 12 months of holding their license. We ask that you consider whether it is feasible for your service to have a position that only fully licensed drivers are authorised drivers.

Say no to booster cushions

Booster cushions were removed from the 2010 Australian/New Zealand Standards. Family day care services should use booster seats not booster cushions.

* Source: *Safe Transport Policy (Family Day Care)*

When can children use an adult seatbelt? The five step test

For a child to be able to sit in an adult seatbelt, the answers to all these questions should be ‘yes’:

1. Can the child sit with their back against the vehicle seat back?
2. Do the child's knees bend in front of the edge of the seat?
3. Does the sash belt sit across the middle of the shoulder?
4. Is the lap belt sitting low across the hips touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?



MINDFULNESS AT PRESCHOOL: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR EVERYONE

By Karen Bonson, Early Years Leader, Gowrie Victoria Docklands

At Gowrie Victoria Docklands we take children's rights and good health seriously. As early years educators, we acknowledge our role in promoting positive attitudes and habits for good health to families to achieve the best possible outcomes for children. This involves advocating for a holistic approach to health and wellbeing, which addresses physical, social and mental health.

Just as educators provide a wide range of experiences and strategies to support children's physical health, we also provide a range of strategies to support children's mental health, which we view with equal importance. The introduction of a mindfulness program has emerged, as somewhat of a natural progression of our long term work. The program has extended and complemented our earlier efforts to support children's strong sense of identity and empathy. The feedback from families has revealed that the benefits go beyond the service. Rewards have been significant for children and educators alike.

As early year's professionals we wish to create a program for children who participate in their own learning and develop a strong sense of wellbeing. The aim of the project is to support children in building resilience and to develop their roles as critical thinkers and problem solvers. By nurturing children's spirituality we seek to develop their wellbeing; which in turn increases their capacity to learn. We endeavor to provide children with the skills to take time to focus on the present, explore their feelings and their relations with others. Through mindfulness, children gain the capacity to increase attention, balance and compassion. The sessions allow us the time to identify, label and validate our feelings and emotions. It creates opportunities for us to develop a range of strategies to understand negative feelings and celebrate happiness; in short giving children a 'toolbox' for their mental health

and wellbeing. Those of us working or living with young children know, that not everything works all the time. We therefore need different strategies and ways of doing things.

The early years are a critical time for all areas of learning and development which has long been recognised by those working in the sector. Research supports the significance of this period for brain development as it is the time when the most neural pathways are formed and lifelong skills are developed. Therefore, it seemed appropriate that our mindfulness work should evolve within the 2–4 year old rooms, where educators spend a great deal of time supporting children as they

build relationships and deal with the challenges and delights of their increasing independence. Developing a strong sense of self, and an understanding of others, is an important life skill that should be encouraged as young as possible.

One of our kinder rooms runs a successful relaxation program, for the 2–4 year olds. Mindfulness is incorporated at a specific time into the day which ensures that children and educators have the opportunity for deep engagement or 'presence' (Rogers & Raiders-Roth, 2006). This allows children and educators to attend to feelings and communicate them effectively, reduce stress and create a community that is connected.

"State parties recognise the right of the child to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health" (UNCRC cited in Child Rights Information Network, 2002).





"This is my brain, it has a thousand lights in it, look":
incorporating mindfulness into our early years program.

Sharing information about the Mindfulness program with families is important, particularly when discussing mental health. Often there is a fear around this subject and the term has been misused and stigmatised. By involving families we have been able to highlight the positive nature of the program and emphasise how mental health is as important as physical health.

We have been careful not to introduce mindfulness as a form of crowd control or behaviour management. We began with the children and their prior knowledge, thoughts, interests and feelings. Through gaining an understanding of the children's ideas we have been able to create a mindful program that is contextually relevant and therefore more meaningful. Circle time has been a familiar space to facilitate the program. This is somewhere the children spend a lot of time sharing their thoughts and feelings. Most importantly, they are being listened to. Over time we have become more spontaneous in using mindfulness; identifying appropriate times of the day for small group work and even taking it out and about on our excursions; including laying on the grass, looking at the clouds and incorporating mindful feeling, seeing and listening.

Labelling what is occurring in the brain and the role of mindfulness to strengthen neural pathways, has been something which has been of great appeal to the group. Just as they enjoy strengthening their arm muscles, they enjoy strengthening their brain. We have raised the questions: What does your brain look like? What does your brain do? As always, the children have provided their own unique and interesting answers – from my brain looks like

bananas – to my brain is a jungle. A parent shared a very useful concept, from the work of Dan Siegal, which describes the flight or fight function of the brain. It has helped us to identify what is happening in the brain in moments of stress and when we 'flip our lids'. Through the understanding that this is "what brains do", children take a little less blame for "flipping their lids", but a lot more responsibility for "popping their lids" back down. They have used their mindful toolbox to put their lids back down. Similarly, labelling, validating and sharing emotions has helped children to manage them more appropriately. Empathy is promoted as children listen to others describe their feelings and emotions.

During mindfulness we have noticed a strange and immediate calm, a sense of focus and purpose. Not only have children expressed feeling happier following these periods, but so too, have educators. Mindfulness is a time, not so much for clearing the mind, but focusing it on the now; allowing us to reset and energize for the rest of the day. Each day we spend from one or two minutes, to as long as 25 minutes on mindfulness time, according to mood of the group. Our toolbox is beginning to fill up with a range of hand and body techniques. We have created our own private imaginary spaces including a bubble – our bubbles can be taken out whenever we wish, need or choose. Some are kept in pockets, behind ears or just about anywhere. The children place their bubbles around them, they have painted them in their favourite colours; into these we have added several things which make them feel happy. We have placed something we love, something to touch, something to make us laugh, and something we love about

ourselves. The latter of these gave us an interesting insight into the children. Many struggled to find something they loved about themselves, often naming toys or things. Others were proud of their jumping or singing skills. This is an area we are keen to further expand and explore.

As these techniques become more and more familiar, they become easier to use. We have seen children implement them in their everyday lives, both independently and interdependently. Children remind one another of the techniques such as their bubbles. They identify when they have 'flipped their lids' and support one another to put their lids down. At other times children have simply sat and used their hand techniques, such as, running a finger up and down each finger of the other hand, tracing a line from one side of the hand to the other. Families have provided feedback on how these tools have been used at home and children have proudly taught their parents how to be mindful.

Educators have acted as both facilitators and co-learners, and in this way, the program has had a dual purpose of supporting children and educator's mental health. As the program expands and grows, we have combined it with our work on the Healthy Together Achievement Program (a government initiative to promote healthy lifestyles for all Victorians). We are beginning to share our work across the service and beyond. The more we connect with families, the more we understand the children as members of different communities, and the better our programs are informed. Our mindfulness program, so far, has created a unique space for children to better understand themselves and the hearts and minds of others.

This article is underpinned by significant research. Please contact the author for more information on references, links and acknowledgements.

KarenB@gowrievictoria.org.au



KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES – WHAT DOES MANDATORY REPORTING MEAN FOR YOU?

By Tina Baldwin, ELAA Policy & Research Officer

The introduction of new legislation will require qualified early childhood teachers in Victoria to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) from 30 September this year. Registered teachers will become ‘mandatory reporters’, and will be obliged to report any concerns of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authority. This article examines what this will mean for you, for your service and for the children in your care.

“Every child has the right to live a full and productive life. It is up to all of us to ensure our children grow up in environments that build confidence, friendship, security and happiness, irrespective of a person’s family circumstances and background”ⁱ. The protection of children, one of the most vulnerable groups in society, is a shared

community responsibility and involves ensuring that all children are safe, their needs are met and the possibility of child abuse is minimised.

Keeping children safe requires vigilance and an informed community. In Victoria, the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (CYFA) provides the legislative basis for the delivery of services to vulnerable children, young people and their families, and places children’s best interests at the heart of decision-making and service delivery.

Under current *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, the Approved Provider must ensure that all educators and staff are familiar with current policies and procedures with regard to child protection, including state and territory legislative responsibilities and their obligations under these laws (Regulation 84).

All service staff or volunteers have a duty of care to protect children from harm and are ethically bound to take action if they form a reasonable belief (see below) that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm. A broad range of professionals in our community are legally obliged to take action – to undertake mandatory reporting.

Who is required to mandatorily report?

Professional groups identified in the *Children Youth and Families Act* as ‘mandatory reporters’ include:

- primary and secondary school teachers and principals (including students in training to become teachers)
- registered medical practitioners (including psychiatrists)
- nurses (including school nurses)
- police

The law states that there must be reasonable grounds for forming the belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer physical or sexual abuse. This means that the teacher does not have to be absolutely certain to notify the Department of child abuse, but must genuinely believe, on the basis of the evidence, that the child might have been abused.

From 30 September 2015, this list will also include qualified early childhood teachers who are teaching or intend to teach as an early childhood teacher in an education and care service or a Victorian children's service.

The *Children, Youth and Families Act* (CYFA) specifies that a person registered under the *Education Training and Reform Act 2006*, or with permission to teach under that Act, is designated as a mandatory reporter.

Non-mandated staff members

Mandatory reporting will not apply to educators or staff with qualifications other than an approved early childhood qualification. However, under the CYFA **any person** who believes on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection may report their concerns to Child Protection. This applies to all service staff and volunteers.

What does *mandatory reporting* mean?

Mandatory reporting is the legal obligation to report to police or to child protection authorities when a belief is formed on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from significant harm. This harm could be the result of physical injury, sexual abuse, or neglect from which the child's parents or guardians are unwilling or unable to provide protection.

What do I need to do?

Mandatory reporters must report the abuse as soon as practicable to:

- the police, by calling 000, if the offence requires immediate police attention, or
- Child Protection authorities, if they suspect, on reasonable grounds, that a child is suffering abuse or neglect, or wish to discuss their concerns about a child or young person. Telephone the Child Protection Crisis Line: toll free on 13 12 78, or a regional DHHS office.

So what are *reasonable grounds*?

The law states that there must be reasonable grounds for forming the

belief that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer physical or sexual abuse. This means that the teacher does not have to be absolutely certain to notify the DHHS of child abuse, but must genuinely believe, on the basis of the evidence, that the child might have been abused. A reasonable belief can be formed on different types of evidence including: a dramatic change in the behaviour of a student, a drop in grades, withdrawing from social contact, bruises, etc. It is important for teachers to receive training on the symptoms of child abuse. (The information in this section comes from the VIT website. For further information refer to *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people*).

How and when do I register with VIT?

Details about qualification requirements and how to undertake early childhood teacher registration are available on the **Victorian Institute of Teaching** website: www.vit.vic.edu.au It is anticipated that registrations will begin from July 2015. Information is also provided on the ELAA website.

Where do I find out more?

Further information about Child Protection is available from:

- the Victorian Department of Education and Training website – including the joint protocol on *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people* – at: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/health/Pages/childprotection.aspx>
- the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services – including how to make a report to child protection – at: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/children,-families-and-young-people/child-protection/about-child-abuse/how-to-make-a-report-to-child-protection>
- ELAA is currently providing a one day seminar on *Working with Vulnerable Families*. Visit the ELAA website for details.
- The VIT website also provides information about mandatory reporting.
- i *Protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people: a joint protocol of the Department of Human Services Child Protection, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Licensed Children's Services and Victorian Schools*. May 2010. Viewed at: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/library/protocols>

How will I know my responsibilities at the service?

All education and care services are required by law to have policies and procedures in place in relation to providing a child safe environment. This includes issues of child protection. The service's Child Protection Policy should outline specific responsibilities for everyone at the service – the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, certified supervisors, educators and other staff, parents and volunteers.

PolicyWorks Manual – National Quality Framework was developed by ELAA to enable early childhood services to meet the legal requirement to have specific policies and procedures in place. ELAA is currently in the process of updating the *Child Protection Policy* for the manual. This policy will be separate from, but related to, the *Child Safe Environment Policy* which is also being revised. Services that have previously purchased *PolicyWorks* will be able to download the updated policies free of charge from the ELAA website. Services wishing to purchase *PolicyWorks* can do this on the ELAA website.



2015 Early Childhood Education Conference



The 2015 Early Childhood Education conference will be held on 29 and 30 May at Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne. It promises to inspire, engage and bring together the early childhood sector that collectively provides quality early childhood education, with a special emphasis on investing in our future.

High calibre speakers from Australia and overseas will share their views and expertise with our audience – everyone involved in early childhood education from birth to the early years of school. Inspiring speakers include:

Charles E Pascal

Charles E. Pascal is an internationally recognized educator with expertise in early and higher education, public policy, leadership/organisational development and strategic philanthropy. His 2009 seminal report to the Premier of Ontario – *With Our Best Future in Mind* – is informing policy and practice in early childhood education within and outside of Canada.

A former college president and Ontario deputy minister, Charles is currently Professor of Applied Psychology & Human Development at the University of Toronto where he is coordinator of the PhD. Program in Early Learning.

Charles and his teenage daughter, Tai Pascal Notar, have recently published their book, *Too Far from Perfect: A Father-Daughter Conversation about Public Education*. www.toofarfromperfect.com. He is currently writing a book on leadership, *Confessions of a Public Servant: Hard Earned Leadership Lessons*.

Charles has a PhD. in Psychology (Michigan) and has received recognition from many organisations to date, including five honorary diplomas and doctorates. He was appointed a member of the Order of Canada in December of 2014. Website: www.charlespascal.com.

Read Charles recent article on the Australian Early Childhood policy debate and Productivity commission report on page 18.

Sharon Goldfeld

Associate Professor Sharon Goldfeld is a paediatrician and public health physician at the Royal Children's Hospital's Centre for Community Child Health (CCH) and Co-Group leader of Child Health Policy, Equity and Translation at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute. She has a decade of experience in state government as a senior policymaker in health and education including Principal Medical Advisor in the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. She has been the recipient

of the prestigious international Harkness Fellowship in Health Care Policy and the Aileen Plant Medal in Public Health Research.

Associate Professor Goldfeld has established a child health equity and policy research group. Her research focus of developing data and indicators, investigating community based systems change and implementing equity based community intervention trials in health and education, has aligned with her substantial policy experience focusing on projects that keep child health on the policy and political agenda in Victoria and nationally.

Anthony Semann

Anthony is a Director at Semann & Slattery. Anthony has a degree in education, a masters qualification in sociology and is currently completing a PhD investigating the relationship between courage and leadership. He has authored and co-authored books and other publications, including a recent chapter on race and identity, and has been an editor and reviewer for education and cultural studies journals.

Anthony has recently co-edited a special edition journal on cultural amnesia, loss and sexual identity. He has been acknowledged by his peers as advocate of the year as well as manager of the year.

A conference for everyone involved in early childhood education
from birth to the early years of school

29–30 May 2015, Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne

together we grow investing in our future

Robyn Monro Miller

Robyn is the CEO of Network of Community Activities in NSW. She has been an advocate for children at a State, National and international level for the past 25 years, most notably as Chair of the National Out of School Hours Services Association, the Board of the Children's Week Council of Australia, and as Vice President of the International Play Association. Highlights of this advocacy include her work on the development of the first National Quality Assurance system for OSHC Services in Australia and the development of the first Australian school age care framework "My Time, Our Place." In 2012, Robyn was part of the international delegation to the United Nations in Geneva to progress the development of the UN General Comment on Article 31 "The child's right to play" which was adopted in February 2013.

Robyn's work has been recognised at a number of levels with the presentation of a South Sydney Council Community Achievement Award, a NSW Children's Week Award for services to children and the awarding of a Commonwealth Government Centenary Medal for services to Australian Children's Services. She is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Community Practice and Governance and an Alumni of the NSW Benevolent Society's "Sydney Leadership" program. In 2012, Robyn was awarded The Allan

Laughlin Perpetual Award for excellence in leadership from the Australian College of Educators, followed by a Fellowship in 2014.

Robyn remains passionately committed to social inclusion and the development of communities that nurture and support children, and offer opportunities for them to engage with their local community.

Jo Lange

Jo has worked for 18 years as a behaviour specialist, after a career of over 30 years as an educator in a diverse range of settings. Jo has worked teaching early childhood in the TAFE sector as well as writing national curriculum & teaching in the areas of child development & psychology. She has also been a primary school teacher,

extending her experiences to co-ordinate & teach within 'at risk' youth programs. She has also worked in community education in welfare areas such as the alcohol & drug sector, as well as the disability services area.

Jo undertakes a diverse range of workshops & seminars. These range from behaviour guidance, resilience and self-esteem building, to working with anxious and easily agitated children.

Jo's passion is supporting early childhood settings, and homes, to positively manage those on-going 'tricky' issues with children. Jo also conducts programs focused on educator well-being, leadership and team dynamics.





2015 Early Childhood Education Conference

DET, the Gold Sponsor, offers accommodation support

The Department of Education and Training will provide Victorian children's services employees and early childhood educators of Kindergarten, Prep, Years 1 and 2 working in a rural area with rebates for their conference accommodation costs.

Please note that this assistance is limited and will be provided on a first come, first serve basis, at the Pullman and Mercure Melbourne Albert Park.

DET will pay for one nights accommodation (up to \$175 standard room rate – Thursday or Friday night only) for delegates attending one day of the conference, and 2 nights accommodation (up to \$350 standard room rate – Thursday & Friday nights only) for delegates attending both the Friday and Saturday sessions.

In addition, transport to and from the conference venue will be provided on both days of the conference.

To apply for this assistance, you must register for the conference, book and pay for your accommodation at the Pullman and Mercure Melbourne Albert Park, then email cmarxsen@elaa.org.au your request for a rebate along with a copy of the booking confirmation from the hotel. Your rebate cheque will be mailed to you after the conference.



Conference social networking

Updates on the conference will be posted regularly on the ELAA Facebook page and via Twitter @ELAAustralia. Don't forget to follow the action during the conference on twitter by using the hashtag #2015twg and @togetherwegrow.



The 2015 Starting Out Safely Road Safety Education Award

The Starting Out Safely Road Safety Education Award, sponsored by VicRoads, will be presented on Saturday 30 May 2015 at the conference.

Nominations are now open for the Award and are available to all Victorian early childhood educators and services. The Award recognises and celebrates the achievements of early childhood educators in providing exemplary road safety education.

The winner will receive \$500 and a resource prize pack for their nominated service. To apply for this Award please share a practice example or learning story (approximately 200 words) highlighting how road safety education is embedded into your curriculum and prepares children for life.

Please email your nomination to rse@elaa.org.au by **12 May 2015**.

ELAA and Gowrie Victoria offers assistance to disadvantaged services

ELAA and Gowrie Victoria are pleased to announce that we are offering assistance to disadvantaged services to attend the conference this year.

To apply for this special funding, tell us in 250 words or less what type of early childhood service you provide, why your organisation requires this assistance and who you would like to attend the conference. A panel of members from the ECEC organising committee will review applications and select the recipients. Send your applications to Cass Marxsen at cmarxsen@elaa.org.au by **Friday 8 May 2015**. Please note the assistance is available to applicants that have not previously received this funding.

For more information go to www.togetherwegrow.com.au

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The ECE conference organisers committed to a greener event

ELAA and Gowrie Victoria work with the *Together we grow* Conference Reference Committee to develop the themes of the conference and put together a program which is filled with local and internationally renowned speakers. The Conference Reference Committee comprises a group of experts representing a diverse range of early childhood and family organisations.*

We work with the presenting partners to improve the conference experience for everyone attending, including taking a greener approach to organising the conference and creating some socially responsible initiatives.

We have substantially reduced our use of paper. Presentations will be available on the conference website after the event. We will not be including inserts in our conference pack this year and have sourced bags which are ethically manufactured using renewable materials.

The water at the conference will be supplied by Thankyou™ which is a social enterprise that funds life-changing and sustainable water projects in developing nations. Thank you gifts for conference presenters will include a donation to programs supporting vulnerable children and families and chocolates from the Mildura Chocolate Company who provide work-skills for its supported workforce.

* The *Together we grow* conference reference committee includes representatives from Community Child Care, Centre for Community and Child Health, City of Melbourne, City Of Monash, Department of Education and Training, Early Learning Association Australia, FKA, Gowrie Victoria, Noah's Ark, Playgroup Victoria and Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc.



The Conference App

The 2015 *Together we grow* app is designed to enhance your conference experience. It enables you to create your own schedule, record your program selections, access the program, session and speaker information, browse the trade fair exhibitors and receive up-date alerts.

To download free to your mobile or tablet simply go to eventmobi.com/togetherwegrow2015 in your mobile or tablet browser and the app will download automatically.

To register on-line for the conference and to find out more about the program and speakers, visit our website www.togetherwegrow.com.au



2015 Early Childhood Education Conference

QUALITY COUNTS FOR CANADA'S EARLY LEARNING MODEL

By Professor Charles E Pascal, Professor, Applied Psychology & Human Development at University of Toronto

As a Canadian researcher, it was good to read Prime Minister Tony Abbott's recent reference to my country as justification for investing more in childcare. Unfortunately, he seems to be focusing on only half of what's needed.

He said if Australia could shift its low rate of female workforce participation to Canada's rate – one of the highest in the world – the Australian economy would be A\$25 billion a year better off.

It's true. In 1997, Quebec, for example, decided to tackle its low rate of maternal workforce participation by subsidising low-cost childcare. As a result, 70,000 mothers were able to return to work. And the policy that cost \$2 billion a year actually ended up saving the government money because of the taxes generated by this workforce increase.

While it is important to note that raising workforce participation is key to a nation's productivity, this is only half of the economic benefit that a country can achieve from investing in high-quality early learning and care.

In order to build the human capital required for a creative and flexible "all hands on deck" economy, governments must also pay attention to the human development side of things. The neurological science and economic research is clear about the remarkable return from the right investments in the first 2000 days of a child's life.

Our countries have much to learn from each other. We share, for example, the use of the Educational Development Index, a Canadian invention that measures how many children start school developmentally vulnerable. Frankly, its effective and widespread use in Australia (AEDI) trumps our own application. The Index tells us,

that in both countries, more than 20% of children start school with challenging vulnerabilities, well behind their peers. Many of them never catch up.

But measuring is one thing. Doing something with results is another.

In Australia, there are many examples of AEDI results driving local community action.

Canada's largest province of Ontario, when faced with a vulnerability rate of 27% in 2009, introduced two years of free universal high-quality full-day preschool for all children. After four years of implementation, the results are startling. The vulnerability rate is rapidly moving downward as social, emotional and language development indicators are rising dramatically.

And what about the economic return? Research sponsored by the Business Council of British Columbia notes that for every 1% drop in the vulnerability rate, a 1% increase to the GDP will accrue as a result over the working life of each 1% of the cohort no longer vulnerable. This is a massive multi-billion-dollar gain but only if the quality of non-parental early learning and care is improved.

The quality counts

The key to these results is the quality of the education and care, including an evidence-based curriculum delivered in a consistent manner across all learning centres by well-qualified early learning professionals. Improving the relationships between parents and early learning professionals is also key, as is the dire need to improve the quality and availability of our early learning and childcare for children aged 0 to 3.

While it is promising to see the new Minister for Social Services, Scott Morrison, recognising the critical importance of

Australia's National Quality Framework as a major quality lever, affordability seems to hold priority prominence. A healthier and more prosperous Australian future requires equal attention to affordability and quality, not a war between the two.

Abbott is correct in encouraging policy that enables an increase in the participation of women in the workforce. But he must keep in mind that who the children are with and what they are doing while mums are working, is the other half of a winning equation. And this means investing in high-quality early learning and care centres, not subsidising the use of nannies for the well-off.

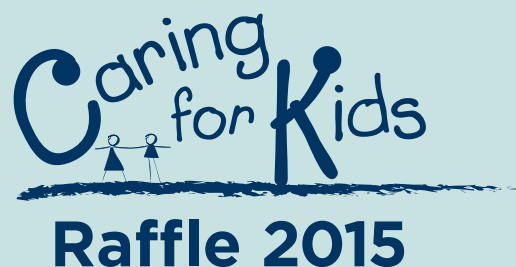
In these challenging times, with budget choices increasingly difficult, we hear about the value of attending to a nation's infrastructure – roads, public buildings, the digital highway. In this context, there is no more important "infrastructure" than quality early child development, the very best social and economic choice with Australia's best future in mind.

Originally published in The Conversation, March 12, 2015.

THE CONVERSATION

Charles E Pascal is the keynote speaker on Friday 29 May at the 2015 Early Childhood Education Conference, *Together we grow – investing in our future*. Register on-line at www.togetherwegrow.com.au

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RETURNING INJURED WORKERS BACK TO WORK – GOOD FOR US ALL

The Victorian *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation Compensation Act 2013* (the Act) sets out the legal obligations of an employer and an injured worker.

Section 103 of the Act identifies Employer's obligations to "Provide Employment"... *An employer must, to the extent that it is reasonable to do so, provide to a worker until the expiration of the employment obligation period— (a) suitable employment, while the worker has a current work capacity; and (b) pre-injury employment, while the worker no longer has an incapacity for work.*

Section 111 describes the worker's obligation to make reasonable efforts to actively participate and cooperate in planning for return to work (RTW), which is consistent with their capacity for work.

The benefits of getting an injured worker back to work, however, go much further than just meeting legislative requirements.

There is multiple and growing evidence and research as to the benefits of getting an injured worker back to work as soon as is safely possible. There is also much

research as to the benefit of being at work in general. Dame Carol Black's "Working for a healthier tomorrow" describes that *...for most people, their work is a key determinant of self-worth, family esteem, identity and standing within the community, besides, of course, material progress and a means of social participation and fulfilment*¹.

It is often not until we are unable to work (or not working) that we understand the importance of us being able to work and the benefits that come from participating in healthy work.

The common detrimental effects observed for workers being off work for an extended period can include:

- **Increased risk of psychological and psychosocial impacts** – including, reduced self-confidence and self-worth; anxiety related to facing the workplace or injury re-aggravation; depression; personal relationship issues; family life affected; social interactions and participation in leisure interests reduced or eliminated, etc.

- **Deconditioning and fatigue** – being at work can increase or maintain a worker's physical and psychological condition. Time off work can have the opposite effect and may impede recovery and loss of job skills.

- **Financial impacts** – whilst an injured worker may be receiving worker's compensation payment for salary and medical expenses, there will be some be reduction of wages and potentially out of pocket medical and like expenses.

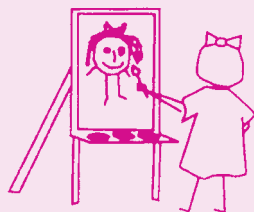
Safe Work Australia, 2014, identified that a typical serious workers' compensation claim involves four weeks absence from work and one-quarter of serious claims required 12 or more weeks off work.

These periods off work can also have high impacts on a workplace. An Employer will suffer financial impacts through workers' compensation premiums, possible loss of productivity and/or staff replacement costs, retraining costs etc. and workplace morale may also be impacted.

Another important impact, and one often not considered or addressed, is the

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impact on other workers. Their concerns may include;

- their colleague's safety upon their return to work
- their own risk of injury
- extra demands on them due to additional work requirements
- extra demands on them due to the modified workload of the returning colleague.

These are common issues seen by co-workers and employers when planning for an injured worker's RTW. Consideration and preparation for the whole workplace is very important. Whilst an injured worker's condition cannot be disclosed, an employer should advise the workplace of a pending RTW and why certain modifications to tasks and duties are provided. Consideration should be given on how this may impact others.

Co-workers also can have an incredibly important role in the success (or not) of getting an injured colleague back to work. Through their demonstrated support and understanding they can significantly impact how a worker may respond when coming back. Frequently, injured workers are very concerned about how their colleagues perceive the legitimacy of their injury (are they believed), how the return to work will impact on the colleagues work load, will they be treated differently, etc.

Employers are required to maintain contact with injured staff when they are off work to plan for a return, but contact with colleagues through this period may also have positive effects for the worker.

Some tips to consider in the planning of a return to work may include:

- invite the injured worker to staff meetings and social events when still off work (provided it's safe to do so for their injury type – consider teleconferencing or Skype)
- send them staff notices, newsletters etc
- employer is to maintain regular contact but also to consider appropriate colleagues that could make contact with the worker
- with a RTW plan, consider if the suitable duties, modifications or reduced work hours are going to impact on others and educate the workplace on the RTW requirements and benefits prior to the injured worker commencing
- ensure that there is a dedicated person to meet the returning staff member and follow the RTW Plan and be a "go to" person
- regularly monitor the RTW plan to identify potential issues and barriers early.

Returning to work is important as it provides opportunities for the employee to stay at work, even if the work may be modified or have hours reduced. In most circumstances an early and supportive RTW will allow the worker to recover to pre-injury duties more quickly. Assisting the worker back to work is also highly beneficial for the employee, employer and workplace through maintaining productivity, improving workforce morale, and lowering Insurance premiums.

In summary, best practice to support an injured worker back to work includes: keeping in touch; preparing the workplace to support the worker, considering all stakeholders, monitoring and reviewing – remember a return to work of an injured worker is good for us all.

Jenny is a child care worker who suffered a workplace injury. Hear Jenny's story about her RTW journey and how the support of her employer and colleagues made a significant difference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-OymZcJtk>

For more information on early childhood specific OHS & RTW policies and resources, go to ELAA's OHS website www.ohsinecservices.org.au.

- 1 Dame Carol Black's Review of the health of Britain's working age population – Working for a healthier tomorrow, 17th March 2008

Recovre and ELAA are presenting a series of OH&S seminars during 2015, the first session is on Tuesday, 18 May at Recovre, Level 18/570 Bourke St, Melbourne and in Geelong on 28 July (venue to be advised). Book at the ELAA website, www.elaa.org.au.

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Why was the Early Childhood Education Foundation established?

ELAA established the Early Childhood Education Foundation to address concerns that many Victorian families were not accessing preschool. Due to financial hardships and other factors many children are not experiencing this vital year of development.

The ELAA Early Childhood Education Foundation believes that all young children and their families should have access to high quality educational programs.

Please help us to help those families in need. Donations will assist us in providing a child with the opportunity of accessing this vital year of development.

To make a donation or to apply for funding, call 9489 3500 or download an application form from www.elaa.org.au and send to PO Box 1246, Collingwood Vic 3066.



**Early Childhood
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EARLY
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ARE YOU SUPERSTREAM READY?

The Government has changed the way employers must pay super contributions.

The changes were introduced to speed up the processing of rollovers and contributions, and reduce the number of lost accounts and unclaimed super. The new SuperStream legislation requires you to pay your employees' super using standardised data within an approved online payment system.

This means you will soon be unable to make super payments by either post or using a non-compliant online system.

What you need to do

Under the changes, you're required to make contributions through a payment system that lets you:

- make super payments electronically
- provide employee data online in a standard format, and
- link money and data with a unique payment reference number.

If you have 20 or more employees, the reforms started on 1 July 2014*. If you have 19 or fewer employees, SuperStream applies from 1 July 2015*.

We can help you comply

QuickSuper†, AustralianSuper's free online payment solution, can help you meet your SuperStream obligations.

It meets all of the new Government super requirements and lets you pay your employees' super into multiple funds with just one payment.

QuickSuper is suitable for all types of businesses and benefits include:

- it's free to use
- it's Government compliant
- it's secure
- it's all completed online, so there's no paperwork
- it improves accuracy by pre-validating your submitted data and letting you know if there are any missing details
- you can pay by file upload (for many employees) or by direct entry (for few employees).

More information

To learn more about SuperStream or how to register‡ for QuickSuper see www.australiansuper.com/PaySuper

You'll need to have your company details and AustralianSuper employer number handy when you register for QuickSuper. If you don't have an AustralianSuper employer number, you can join us at

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And if you have any questions about SuperStream or need help setting up a QuickSuper account, call us on **1300 300 273**.

* If you have 20 or more employees, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) may provide some flexibility on your start-up date, provided you're making a genuine attempt to implement and have a firm plan to do so by no later than 30 June 2015. If you have 19 or fewer employees, the ATO will be flexible provided you have a plan to apply SuperStream by 30 June 2016.

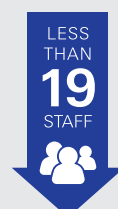
† QuickSuper is a registered trademark and a product owned and operated by Westpac Banking Corporation ABN 33 007 457 141. Westpac's terms and conditions applicable to the QuickSuper service are available after your eligibility for the free clearing house service is assessed by AustralianSuper. A Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) is available from Westpac upon request.

‡ You can choose to submit your contributions using a different service, but it needs to meet the Government's minimum data standards as legislated. See www.australiansuper.com/StrongerSuper for more information.

SuperStream deadlines – key dates for compliance



Organisations with 20 or more employees need to comply by **1 July 2015**



Organisations with fewer than 20 employees need to comply by **1 July 2016**



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MEMBER PROFILE



In this edition of
Preschool Matters
we catch up with

NEROLEE DAGLEY

Coordinator of the Early Learning
Centre at Ivanhoe Grammar School

Educator of a preschool class

I'm inspired by the children I work with, the dedicated staff in the Early Learning Centre and the ethos of Ivanhoe Grammar School. We should never underestimate the abilities of a pre-schooler and what they can achieve at such a young age. Each day is interesting and exciting when you work with children.

School. We should never underestimate the abilities of a pre-schooler and what they can achieve at such a young age. Each day is interesting and exciting when you work with children. It is what they do and say and how eager they are to learn that inspires me. The ELC team I work with are supportive, inspiring and passionate about educating young children.

What I love about my job is the profound effect early childhood educators have on young children. It is how the program we implement, and the environment we create for the children, can set the children up for a desire to learn and experience the many opportunities offered to them. The children have a thirst for knowledge and they also have many ideas and thoughts of their own to share.

If I wasn't doing this job, I would probably be an events planner.

What makes me laugh at times are the honest comments children make.

I have been an educator in the Early Learning Centre since it was established in 1997. I have held the coordinator's role for nearly 15 years.

My career path to this job began when I graduated as a primary school teacher. After teaching in Brighton for only a short time, I moved to England for two years. On my return to Australia, I chose to become a relief teacher for some time. One of the schools I worked at was Ivanhoe Grammar School where I was given a permanent teaching role in their junior school – Buckley House. In 1997, the school opened its Early Learning Centre and I commenced teaching a preschool class. The following year I completed an early childhood teaching qualification. I have been at Ivanhoe Grammar School for almost 20 years.

My working day is varied and interesting. I work with 22 preschool children for 3.5 days each week, planning and implementing a high quality, play-based program. I head a team of seven staff members and we meet regularly to discuss such items as program planning, policies, pastoral care, professional development opportunities and current updates related to early childhood. I am involved in interviewing prospective families for our Early Learning Centre, engaging in meetings with the Head of Buckley House to share information about the centre, reviewing policies and procedures, arranging professional development for staff, liaising with parents and other staff members, as well as completing many administrative tasks.

I'm inspired by the children I work with, the dedicated staff in the Early Learning Centre and the ethos of Ivanhoe Grammar



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To help ELAA members begin planning their training requirements for the new year, Allianz' workers compensation courses for 2015 are now available online.

The online National Training Schedule, gives you access to book your training courses 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Other benefits include immediate confirmation for your booked course, email and SMS reminders and the ability to pay for courses via EFT, MasterCard or Visa, that incur a fee.

Our 2015 training offerings will be reviewed quarterly to ensure they continue to be relevant and topical. Courses scheduled for the second half of 2015 will be released in March.

As well as standard course offerings, three new courses have been introduced.

- Incident Investigation – This course will provide participants with an overview of incident investigations, reporting, notification obligations and prevention strategies in the workplace;
- Prevention of Musculoskeletal Injuries in the Workplace – This course will examine the common causes of musculoskeletal injuries, including manual tasks and slips, trips and falls. The course will focus on prevention and provide ergonomic principles and risk management strategies to implement in the workplace.
- Enhancing Wellbeing in the Workplace – This workshop will help you understand the impact of health and wellbeing levels on workforce capability and the benefits that a wellbeing program can add to your workplace. It will also assist you to develop and implement a strategic wellbeing program in your workplace.

For more detailed descriptions of these new courses and all other courses available go to <http://www.allianz.com.au/workers-compensation/training/>

For all queries regarding the ELAA/Allianz partnership and the benefits it provides or general queries regarding Workers' Compensation, please contact your Allianz Business Account Manager, Ryan Phillips, on (03) 9234 3633 or via email ryan.phillips@allianz.com.au.





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