



EARLY
LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA

The voice for parents and service providers

PRE SCHOOL MATTERS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PREPARING CHILDREN FOR LIFE
TERM ONE 2015

QUALITY INTERACTIONS –
THE CLASS SYSTEM

100 YEARS OF PLAY

2015 ECE CONFERENCE



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to the first edition of *Preschool Matters*

for 2015. It's an exciting time for service providers, educators and parents as the next few weeks will see children being introduced to new learning opportunities and caring environments across the country.

The New Year also brings with it much anticipation as our sector seeks to engage with the Commonwealth Government on critical policy reform and funding initiatives expected in the lead up to the Federal Budget in May.



In the coming weeks, we expect to learn more about the Government's response to the final report of the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Childcare and Early Childhood Learning – and its proposed changes to the National Quality Framework.

We welcome the recent appointment of Scott Morrison as Minister for Social Services, and will look to work with him – and the Minister for Education and Training, Christopher Pyne – on these vital public policy issues that will shape the future of early childhood education and care services in Australia.

In this edition of *Preschool Matters*, one of our Kindergarten Cluster Management members shares with us their innovative observation tool which focuses on positive learning outcomes for children. Go to page 17 to read this story, which re-inforces the value of investment in quality early education programs for the benefit of children and the wider community.

Investing in the early years is also the theme of the 2015 Early Childhood Education Conference: *Together we grow – investing in our future*. Over two rich and engaging days (29–30 May) the Conference will showcase leading Australian and international academics, educators, policy developers and consultants who will share new research and innovative practices in early learning. Registrations open in February, so please see page 14 to find out more about the program – and book early!

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Preschool Matters* and find it a useful resource in preparing for the year ahead.

Jo Geurts, President



Cover: Ivanhoe Children's Community Co-operative. Photo: Reg Ryan.

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 ISSN 1448-9597 Reg No A0024070C ABN 39058205158

Preschool Matters is a quarterly magazine which communicates issues and developments that concern and assist members in the effective management of early childhood services.

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NEWS & EVENTS



Celebrating Excellence

Congratulations to the staff and community of Doveton College Early Learning Centre in south-east Melbourne on being awarded an Excellent rating by ACECQA on 6 November 2014. The rating is a testament to the extraordinary work and commitment of everyone at Doveton – and to ELAA Vice-President, June McLoughlin, Director of Family and Children's Services at Doveton College.

Doveton College Early Learning Centre's innovative programs and inclusive partnerships have helped the service earn an independently reviewed Excellent rating from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Doveton College ELC works with more than 15 partner agencies to implement key programs that support families within the community, including newly arrived refugees and migrants.

Drop-in playgroups and practical parenting programs provide parents with strategies to support their children's learning and development through play.

Collaborating with other organisations, running English lessons, craft sessions, a men's support group and skill development classes all help to provide families with access to basic needs such as food, clothing, accommodation, travel and furniture.

ACECQA stated that Doveton College's exceptional work to engage an entire neighbourhood and improve outcomes for children and their families was a key to receiving their Excellent rating.

TERM DATES 2015

The Victorian school term dates for 2015 are;

Term 1: 28 January to 27 March

Term 2: 13 April to 26 June

Term 3: 13 July to 18 September

Term 4: 5 October to 18 December

Information on school term dates for all Australian States and Territories is available at www.australia.gov.au/topics/australian-facts-and-figures/school-term-dates

Compulsory educator registration in 2015

Under new legislation, Victorian early childhood educators will be required to be registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) commencing 30 September 2015.

This applies to all early childhood educators who are teaching or intend to teach a preschool or kindergarten program, but not to educators or staff who do not have an approved early childhood teaching qualification.

VIT have released a fact sheet which details all the necessary steps educators must take to be on the mandatory Register of Teachers. For more information and to access the fact sheet, go to the VIT website, www.vit.vic.edu.au.

ELAA'S ADVOCACY WORK

ELAA, along with our colleagues in the sector, has been extremely busy in recent months preparing submissions to government on a range of issues that impact early childhood education and care services and Australian families and carers of young children.

We would like to thank ELAA members who have generously given their time to provide feedback via consultations and surveys to inform this work. The following ELAA submissions can be downloaded from the ELAA website;

- Submission to the RIS on proposed changes to the NQF
- Budget Submission to the Victorian Government 2015–2016
- Final submission to the Draft Productivity Commission Report



Early Childhood Ministers consult the Cluster Manager Group

In November 2014, prior to the Victorian State Elections, Jenny Mikakos, incumbent Minister for Families and Children and Wendy Lovell, former Minister for Education and Early Childhood Development, met with the Kindergarten Cluster Manager Reference Group at the ELAA office. It was a great opportunity for the politicians to listen to the concerns of the sector in the lead up to the State election.

Image: Minister for Families and Children, the Hon. Jenny Mikakos MP with ELAA CEO Shane Lucas and ELAA President Jo Geurts.



FREE ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION SEMINAR IN GEELONG, VICTORIA

Educators and students from Geelong and surrounds are invited to join Catharine Hydon in an engaging and informative seminar at the iconic home of football in Geelong, Kardinia Park, Deakin Cats Community Centre.

ELAA is hosting this fantastic free seminar on **Tuesday 10 March, 7.00pm to 8.30pm.**

Catharine will share practical strategies to support young children's learning about road safety, centred on the latest evidence-based research.

The session will also identify how road safety education links to the EYLF, the National Quality Standard and the National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education.

To find out more about the seminar or to book a place contact the Road Safety Education team via rse@elaa.org.au or call (03) 9489 3500.

ADVICE & TRAINING



Q. I am new to the committee at my child's early childhood service and just wondering what are my legal responsibilities?

David Haesler, Member Services Senior Advisor

As a member of the committee of management you have a number of responsibilities but the most important one is to fulfil your 'Duty of Care'.

Duty of Care means that you should:

- abide by your service's constitution
- always act in the best interest of the organisation
- be committed to the service by attending meetings and making informed decisions (not just rubber stamping)
- take a genuine interest in the operation of the service and responsibilities of the committee, including seeking advice and information about your responsibilities.

All early childhood services have the following legal responsibilities;

- the service must operate in accordance with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*
- all staff must be employed in accordance with the relevant award/agreement and the employer must abide by industrial relations and OHS legislation.
- compliance with a range of additional legislation including Privacy, Equal Opportunity, taxation, Working With Children and the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

As a member of the committee, your legal responsibility will depend on your management structure. Committee members are legally responsible for ensuring that the service operates in accordance with all relevant legislation unless your service is part of a cluster management arrangement. In these situations it is the Cluster Manager who has this responsibility although services who are separately incorporated will still be required to abide by the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

While the extent of responsibilities for new committee members may be overwhelming, there is no need to worry; ELAA provides all the support and resources you need. This includes the ELAA member advisory telephone and email service, ELAA resources and ELAA training. ELAA members are encouraged to contact us for advice on any issue.

There is more about ELAA's free committee training on page 5 or go to the ELAA website to find a training session in your area and information on ELAA management resources, www.elaa.org.au. If your service doesn't have an ELAA membership and requires advice please contact us for membership information, on (03) 9489 3500.

OUR WORK IN ACTION

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



The committee of management of a large service in southern Melbourne contacted ELAA a number of times throughout the year.

We provided advice to them on;

- understanding Sick Leave and Long Service Leave accruals and calculations
- staff appraisal (referred them to ELAA's Employee Management and Development Kit)
- Cluster management (referred them to the Cluster Management Kit and advised they speak to the person in their Departmental region responsible for cluster management)
- introduction of change process
- employment of a student for lunch time cover
- processing payments to a teacher for student supervision.

ELAA worked through each issue individually and provided resources to support them with larger projects such as conducting staff appraisals, making the decision to move to cluster management and changing their management structure.

Does your service need help with a governance or management issue?
Contact ELAA (03)489 3500, rural 1300 730 119 or elaa@elaa.org.au

TRAINING IN TERM 1 & 2

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



FREE FOR COMMITTEES

Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management

Welcome to the Committee

Join us for a comprehensive introduction to the roles and responsibilities of committees of management.

Tuesday 17 February, 7.30pm – 9.30pm, Bayside City Council, 76 Royal Avenue, Sandringham

Monday 23 February, 7pm – 9pm, Manningham City Council, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster

Saturday 28 February, 9.30am – 1.00pm, Hobsons Bay City Council, Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona

Thursday 5 March, 7pm – 9pm, City of Boroondara, 8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell

Tuesday 10 March, 7pm – 9pm, City of Greater Dandenong, Yarraman Centre, 33 Joffre Street, Noble Park

Monday 23 March, 7pm – 9pm, City of Whittlesea, Civic Centre, 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang

Wednesday 25 March, 7pm – 9pm, ELAA Office, Level 3, 145 Smith St, Fitzroy

Free Hot Topic workshops

ELAA presents workshops on specialist topics that are important to volunteer committees as managers of early childhood services.

All Hot Topic workshops are at the ELAA office, Level 3, 145 Smith Street, Fitzroy

Understanding your responsibilities as a member of the committee of an Incorporated Association

An in-depth look at your constitution and the legal and reporting obligations of an Incorporated Association.

Wednesday 25 February, 10am – 11.30am & 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Meetings and Decision Making

Tips on conducting efficient meetings and implementing effective decision making procedures.

Wednesday 11 March, 10am – 11.30am & 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Financial Management

Key practices and procedures to protect your organisation and its members.

Wednesday 29 April, 10am – 11.30am & 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Budget & Fees

Developing and understanding your budget and its impact on the sustainability of your service.

Wednesday 13 May, 10am – 11.30am & 6.30pm – 8.00pm

Free Employee Management and Development Training

For Managers who have direct responsibility for employees.

Please see ELAA's website for training dates and locations.

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 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.

FOR EDUCATORS, PARENTS AND MANAGERS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES

ELAA has an exciting range of seminars and workshops for educators and managers presented by some of Australia's most respected early childhood experts. ELAA members are eligible for discounts on session costs.

The 2015 seminar topics include;

- What is Autism Spectrum Disorder and Positive Behaviour Support? – an overview
- Positive Behaviours Support for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder – 4-part series
- Working with Vulnerable Families
- Learning environments to support positive behaviour
- Making sustainability part of everyday learning
- Sustainability – a step further
- Becoming an Educator
- The practice of educational leadership
- Taking you to Excellence – Leading to exemplary practice

For more information and to register for a training event visit the training section at



www.elaa.org.au

CEO REPORT



There are many important issues being considered in the coming months – and no issue is more important than the future of Commonwealth funding for 15 hours of quality early childhood education in the year before school.

Shane Lucas, CEO, ELAA.

Keeping 15 hours – our advocacy priority for 2015

As an influential voice for parents and early learning service providers, ELAA's efforts to shape policy and funding outcomes for our sector will be critical in 2015.

There are many important issues being considered in the coming months – and no issue is more important than the future of Commonwealth funding for 15 hours of quality early childhood education in the year before school.

The future of 15 hours – and maintaining the Commonwealth Government's one-third funding commitment to kindergarten/preschool programs beyond the end of this year – will continue to be ELAA's campaigning priority in 2015.

Over the next few months, the new Commonwealth Minister for Social Services, Scott Morrison, will reveal the Government's package to assist families and children. This package will incorporate the Government's plans to reform the way childcare is delivered and funded in Australia.

ELAA will be advocating strongly that the importance of ensuring access and affordability of childcare is balanced with the need to ensure that services are of a high quality and are adequately funded.

Over the coming months, the Minister for Education and Training, Christopher Pyne, will detail the Government's response to the review of the National Quality Framework.



ELAA has made submissions on behalf of members throughout the review process and we will continue to argue that the quality of early learning must not be diminished by the Government's efforts to streamline the administration of the assessment system.

As 2015 begins, we are also awaiting the release of the Productivity Commission's final report into *Childcare and Early Childhood Learning*.

The Commission's recommendations will no doubt inform the decisions of Ministers Morrison and Pyne. One important recommendation from the draft report last year was the importance of maintaining Commonwealth funding support for 15 hours of kindergarten/preschool.



We hope the Commission's final report reflects the views of ELAA (and other education and community sector organisations) that highlighted the body of research supporting the importance of both 15 hour programs and quality in early childhood education.

ELAA will keep you on track in 2015

In addition to assisting our advocacy work, an ELAA membership supports the early childhood sector by providing practical advice, latest news and information, up-to-date resources and training. We can provide the information and support you need to successfully deliver a quality early childhood education and care service for your community.

Advice to members

Our member services team have extensive and varied experience in the early childhood sector including: the management of early childhood services, industrial relations with an early childhood focus, regulation assessment, policy development, and early childhood teaching qualifications.

Our knowledge and experience enables us to provide members with relevant, contemporary and accurate advice on a range of issues including:

- employment and management of staff
- constitutions
- managing meetings
- decision making
- dealing with conflict
- policy development

In addition to assisting our advocacy work, an ELAA membership supports the early childhood sector by providing practical advice, latest news and information, up-to-date resources and training. We can provide the information and support you need to successfully deliver a quality early childhood education and care service for your community.

- budgets and financial management
- rostering and program development and
- relevant legislation.

Training and resources

ELAA has a range of resources to assist cluster managers, parent committee members and service providers to understand their role in providing good governance and quality education and care programs for children and families.

ELAA is funded by the Victorian Department of Education and Training to deliver free training to independent, committee-managed services on various topics, including committee roles and responsibilities, AGM preparation, and succession planning; and to provide specialist training for service providers and managers operating in cluster managed sites.

In 2015, we will also be launching a new online training program which will provide flexible access to service providers and committee members on these topics.

Through our consultancy service, we are able to assist with more complex and specialist services such as operational reviews, policy reviews, performance appraisals, recruitment etc.

ELAA has also partnered with other organisations and early childhood specialists to develop an extensive training program for educators, managers, parents and committees on topics such as supporting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder, working with vulnerable families, child behaviour guidance, sustainability and educational leadership. Go to page 5 to learn more about our exciting training program for term 1, 2015.



ELAA's BUDGET SUBMISSION TO THE VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT 2015-2016



A key part of the policy work we undertake each year is advocacy to government on behalf of our members. ELAA's Budget Submission to the Victorian State Government 2015–2016 was presented to the Andrews Government in December 2014.

ELAA's Budget Submission focuses on the need to invest in quality programs, progressive policy and most importantly in our people: service providers, educators, families and children.

The following pages summarise the priority actions and additional opportunities we believe the new Government needs to address in order to provide our children with high quality early learning programs.

The full submission is available on the ELAA website: elaa.org.au/news_advocacy/policy_submissions.

ELAA welcomes member contributions to and feedback on our advocacy work around early childhood education and care policy issues. Please contact us at elaa@elaa.org.au.

Priority actions

We believe the new Victorian Government should address the following priorities to ensure that high quality early learning continues to enrich the development and wellbeing of all children and improve outcomes throughout their lives.

We ask that the new Government focus on the following actions within our identified priorities:

Programs – Minimum of 15 hours of kindergarten

- Negotiate a long-term and transparent funding agreement with the Commonwealth that will ensure that funding for 15 hours of quality early learning continues to be available to children in the year before school – beyond 2015.

Policy – Support the NQF

- Ensure that the National Quality Framework in Victoria is not diluted and continues to deliver quality early learning outcomes.

People – Resolve the industrial dispute

- Act promptly to help resolve the ongoing industrial dispute between not-for-profit and local government kindergarten providers, and the Australian Education Union.

Additional opportunities

We also ask that the new Government consider the additional opportunities detailed below in order to strengthen the early learning sector in Victoria, and to provide children with the best possible start in life. The additional opportunities we have identified are:

Programs

- **Strengthen kindergarten cluster management (KCM)** by:
 - providing stewardship and a transparent and accountable framework for the future development of KCM
 - creating incentives for existing KCMs to invest in growth and expansion
 - providing a stable, more flexible operating environment for KCMs
 - supporting the ongoing viability of KCMs through appropriate funding
- **Review the per capita funding model**, and develop a realistic funding model for kindergarten services that takes into account the actual costs of providing the service in the existing policy environment
- **Review the quantum of the rural funding supplement**, the criteria to access this supplement, and continue to fund the small rural grants initiative
- **Work with the sector to halve the gap in developmental outcomes** (as defined in the AEDC), by 2020 for children from Victoria's most disadvantaged communities, by implementing a range of initiatives identified in this submission
- **Support children with disabilities and additional needs** to access early learning services and receive the additional assistance they require post enrolment.

Policy

- **Make kindergarten genuinely universally accessible** by fully funding the provision of 15 hours of kindergarten for all children in the year before school, and 5 hours of kindergarten for all three-year-old children
- **Work with the Commonwealth Government to ensure the full implementation of the NQF** and in particular maintain current minimum:
 - staffing qualification requirements for education and care services – including Diploma level qualifications for 50% of educators working with children under 3 years
 - educator: child ratios in education and care services and moving to a ratio of 1: 11 for children 3–5 years by 2016.

People

- **Develop standards for training providers in Victoria** to ensure they produce early childhood staff fully equipped for work in services.



ARE YOUR CHILDREN STARTING OUT SAFELY?

Victoria's Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program

"This innovative and imaginative program enables children to become safe and active participants in their community." Catharine Hydon, May 2014

Starting Out Safely, funded by VicRoads, is Victoria's early childhood road safety education program.

Early Learning Association Australia has successfully delivered the Starting Out Safely program in collaboration with VicRoads since 2011.

The Starting Out Safely program works on the premise that effective road safety education delivered during early childhood plays an important role in laying the foundations for safe road use throughout life. The early childhood road safety education program has been developed through evidence-based research,

in collaboration with leading early childhood experts and is based on best practice principals.

Educators and early childhood professionals, working collaboratively with families, can help children become safe and independent road users.

The Starting Out Safely program has four main objectives;

1. **Advocacy** – To improve road safety outcomes for children through advocating for the value of early childhood road safety education and influence early childhood policy at state and national levels.



Starting Out Safely

"I felt that the messages, particularly the visual messages, were extremely effective for assisting our client group (from the Karen Community) to understand the significance of the issues relating to child restraints."

Sue Ghalayini, Bendigo Community Health Service,
CALD Facilitator

2. Professional education – To improve road safety outcomes for children through delivering road safety education professional development sessions to early childhood professionals across Victoria.

3. Child car restraint education – To improve road safety outcomes for children through delivering child car seat and booster seat education sessions across Victoria.

4. Preschool education – To improve road safety outcomes for children through delivering *ThingleToodle* education sessions at preschools across Victoria.

ELAA, in collaboration with VicRoads, has delivered papers and presentations to **key sector conferences and events** across Australia including; the Early Childhood Australia Conference, the annual Early Childhood Education Conference, Australasian Road Safety Research, Policing and Education Conference, Maternal and Child Health conference and major

children's and community events such as Romp & Stomp at Melbourne Museum.

We have some fantastic free resources such as **best practice policies and resources** for educators and early childhood service providers which support the current quality principals in early learning including the Early Years Learning Framework, the National Quality Standards and the National Practices for Early Childhood Road Safety Education.

For more information on the Starting Out Safely program and to access the free policies and resources go to www.elaa.org.au/roadsafety or visit www.roadsafetyeducation.vic.gov.au.

Highlights of the Starting Out Safely program since 2011

Over **3830 early childhood educators** have participated in road safety education professional development sessions, delivered by leading early childhood experts, including over 500 early childhood students from tertiary institutions

Over **1800 preschools** across Victoria have participated in ThingleToodle education sessions, reaching over **24,400** young Victorian children and their families

Over **2400 parents and carers** from culturally and linguistically diverse communities have attended over 125 child car restraint information sessions

More than **1300 family day care educators** have attended a child car restraint information sessions

More than **100 maternal and child health nurses** have attended a child restraint information session.



100 YEARS OF PLAY

Play Australia's centenary celebrations

By Karen Williams

The more things change, the more they stay the same – Proverb

This quote is also true about play! Over the century our society and environments have changed dramatically, through world wars, depressions and recessions, industrialisation, globalisation and our social saturation with information technologies. Yet what remains constant is that children still play wherever they are regardless of the era in which they are born.

In 2014 Play Australia celebrated the milestone of turning 100 years old! It was indeed something to celebrate and acknowledge the commitment of so many remarkable people that have supported the value of play.

To be still standing after 100 years as an independent, not-for-profit organisation, is no mean feat. When Play Australia took the time to look back over their history the stand out indicator to its longevity and continued momentum would have to be the extraordinary people who lead them to this point.

These were incredibly passionate and committed women and men from all different walks of life. They had one thing in common, ensuring children's right to play and alleviating the effects of poverty in which many lived through the tough times of the depression at the start of the last century.

In the early 1900's the Guild of Play built the foundations for the organisation that is still thriving today. Politicians, businessmen, and their influential wives created a loud and successful voice for play. These strong minded and determined women were the driving force behind the legacy of influence and advocacy that is now ours to take forward, and continuing building for the next century.

Interestingly though, as much as the organisation changed from one direction, and one name to the other, children have generally played in the same way.

How children play has not so much been defined by the decade in which they live/d, but by their social class and gender. Children will play differently in the city as opposed to a country lifestyle. The

socio-economic environment in which they are born will certainly affect access to particular play resources. Yet no matter how rich or poor the family background, children have still created their own play activities to suit their interest and amusement.

Back in the early 1900s a large percentage of Melbourne's population were children and without playgrounds, they played wherever they could, with whatever they could. They were viewed as a nuisance in suburban parks, gardens and streets where their play was disturbing to many members of the public. Children were put before the Children's Court for breaking tree branches!

The Australian playscape was changed with the introduction of purpose built playgrounds. In Melbourne, through the initiation of the Guild of Play, came the supervision of children's outside play by Play Leaders.

With school becoming compulsory early in the century, children's playtime was segregated into girls and boys sport and play areas. Teachers were on duty but not interfering. In contemporary school life we now see a significant loss of freedom in play activities, with children advised of 'no running', 'no marbles as it causes arguments', and asphalt has replaced grass. Adults have taken control.

Dr June Factor's PhD thesis of 1989 (Captain Cook chased a chook¹) analyses the Australian context of children's play and the lack of interest in the study of children's folklore by academics and educators, as this group is often seen within the community as without much status and authority.

"The traditions of play provide a secure arena for diverse and versatile linguistic, cognitive, kinetic and social improvisation and experiment. Much is possible in play, and children's folklore allows the relatively dependent and powerless 'middle childhood' young a freedom not otherwise generally available."



L-R: Mary Jeavons, Robyn Munro Miller, Mary Hughes, Jane Tindale, Cathy Kiss

There are children playing in the street who could solve some of my top problems in physics, because they have modes of sensory perception that I lost long ago. J. Robert Oppenheimer



Above: Photos courtesy of the Shirley Fitzgibbon, Dr Dorothy Howard and Miss Eva Greenhatch collections, Melbourne Museum. Below: Mary Hughes (centre) and the Play Leaders, 1950, Photo Play Australia.



“Despite constantly recurring claims to the contrary, these folkloric play traditions have not disappeared in our highly organised and mechanised world. Children continue to clap, skip, hop, rhyme, chant, tongue-twist and all the rest. It seems that childhood and children’s folklore are inseparable”, describes Dr Factor.

With contraception comes a population with less children. We have more time to

be anxious about them, and to concentrate on the few we have. This could be seen in some ways as a misplaced virtue.

In more recent years it has become apparent that adults have assumed the role of organising and monitoring children’s sport and supervised physical activity. A child’s free time out of school is converted into swimming lessons, ballet classes, little athletics, cricket games,

basketball matches, and the list goes on and on.

Stranger danger and streets crowded with traffic have sent our children indoors, on sofas watching TV or at a computer, online.

When you spend any time with adult peers and friends we spend many fond moments recalling our childhood of being outside with our mates, in the street, in the park, in the paddocks, from dawn to dusk. Our mothers on the porch calling us inside for dinner. The cycle is now turning again as research and educators are ringing the alarm bells to a generation of children that could be the first to have a shorter lifespan than their parents.

Play is vital not only to children’s physical, social, emotional health and wellbeing, but to the community at large, to our social fabric. We are bringing the focus back to encourage families and children outdoors, playing and enjoying nature.

As an early childhood community let’s continue to promote the integral value and fundamental importance of spontaneous, imaginative and unstructured play for children for the next 100 years!

Play Australia provides specialist professional development and training for early childhood educators. Training programs discuss the philosophy and practice of working outdoors with children in the early years and explore the value of quality outdoor play in the development and learning of young children. The program also has a focus on developing environments for play that enhance the value of the outdoor program, including plantings for play spaces and incorporating sustainability principles. To register go to playaustralia.org.au.

1 Factor, D (1989). *Captain Cook chased a chook: children’s folklore in Australia: its origins, development, characteristics and functions within a changing historical and cultural context*. Melbourne University.



2015 Early Childhood Education Conference

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

The 2015 Early Childhood Education Conference, Together we grow – investing in our future, will be held on Friday 29 and Saturday 30 May, at Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne. The conference will inspire, engage and bring together over 1000 early childhood professionals that collectively provide quality early childhood education for children.

The conference committee chose the theme for 2015, *investing in our future*, to acknowledge the importance of investing in quality early education and care for the benefit of children and the wider community. We think it is a particularly pertinent theme as the sector awaits the Australian Government's response to major policy and funding reforms.

The theme of *investing in our future* is applicable on many levels, including: investing in children's early years for life-long outcomes; investing in partnerships – educators and families; investing in community and services connections; investing in *yourself* – professionals and educators investing in themselves for positive outcomes for individuals and children.

We are thrilled to present one of the best, and most varied, conference programs yet; lead by high calibre key note speakers, Dr Charles Pascal, Dr Sharon Goldfeld, Paul Pritchard, Robyn Monroe Miller and Anthony Semann.

Some highlights of this year's program include;

Nature-based Practice in Australia facilitated by Niki Buchan

Niki Buchan, will facilitate an engaging presentation and panel discussion on children's experiences in wild nature

including beach, bush, creek, forest or desert and valuing the benefits of risk, which support lifelong learning. Such experiences are what a high quality childhood is about, children trusted, given the freedom to play, being allowed to judge and explore good risks and hazards.

Educators from Family Day Care, Long Day Care, Outside of School Hours Care, inner city and rural settings will share their personal experiences and the experiences of family and community through short presentations. Niki and the panel will talk about perceived versus real risk in taking children into natural spaces.

Niki Buchan is Forest school leader trained, helped to set up and was the Head of the first outdoor nature kindergartens in Scotland. She has a special interest in Nature-based practice, has supported Australian educators in setting up bush and beach schools and is the author of a practical book on working with children in wild nature. She is a Company Director and Senior Educational Consultant of Inspired EC Pty Ltd. She is joined by a panel of specialist educators who work across a variety of education settings.

Playfully yours presented by Robyn Monroe Miller

The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child (UNCRC) lists play as a fundamental right and one that is recognised as important to children's development – but how can we ensure it remains relevant and meaningful in our work with children?

How can we be better advocates for free play? Be prepared to be challenged to think about play in a new context.

Robyn Monroe Miller 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. 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.

Why is 'engagement' so easy to say but so hard to do PROPERLY presented by Paul Pritchard

'Engagement' (of families and communities) is an overused term that lacks a clear and consistent definition. We most often use the term in reference to the way services engage each other or the families that keep coming back. However ***what would it take for our services to respectfully engage with disengaged families as co-planners, co-producers, co-implementers,***

co-managers and co-researchers?

The answer to this question is both embarrassingly simple and scarily complex! This presentation will use two current Australian case studies to pull apart the barriers and enablers to engaging the voice of disengaged families in the process of service design and implementation.

Paul Pritchard is the Training and Development Manager at Centre of Community Child Health at the Royal Children's Hospital and is currently undertaking postgraduate research focusing on participants' experiences of peer-led parenting education. Prior to joining CCCH, Paul played a key role in the development of Good Beginnings Australia from its inception in 1997 to 2009 and was awarded a Centenary Medal by the Commonwealth Government for his work during this time.

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STRENGTHENING KINDERGARTEN CLUSTER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The Kindergarten Cluster Management (KCM) model was introduced to Victoria in 2003, to provide professional employment arrangements for educators and to strengthen the management and delivery of community-based kindergarten programs. Since this time the KCM system has continued to grow and is a key strategy to build a stronger and more responsive kindergarten system across the state.

A KCM review by Deloitte Access Economics in 2014 found that cluster management works to directly support proven drivers of quality, including staff capability, teaching methods, pedagogy and a stable learning environment. It also identified opportunities to strengthen KCM by providing streamlined policy and an outcome-based process.

In response to the KCM review and recent policy reforms in the early childhood sector, it is timely to re-think KCM for the future. In 2014, the Department of Education and Training (DET) established the Strengthening Kindergarten Cluster Management Project. The project aims to:

- ensure the KCM service model directly focuses on delivering improved outcomes for children
- reinforce the leadership role of cluster managers in driving quality reform in the early childhood sector

- provide clear articulation of the roles and responsibilities of all of KCM service model partners (DET, parents, local government and KCMs), to enable them to undertake their role effectively and with confidence.

A KCM Reference Group has been established to facilitate sector consultation throughout the duration of the project. The group consists of a cross section of representatives from Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA), Municipal Association of Victoria, community-based and local government KCMs, and central and regional DET staff. The Reference Group has convened on four occasions to provide their on-the-ground knowledge and expertise to the project. There has been robust discussion of KCM policy issues and feedback provided to DET on key policy and operational issues.

ELAA has also been commissioned to undertake further consultation with independent kindergartens regarding perceptions and experiences of KCM. This work will broaden the feedback obtained through the KCM review regarding the benefits of KCM, along with factors which influence decisions to enter or exit a KCM arrangement.

A revised KCM policy framework is currently being drafted for consideration by Government. It will outline the vision

for KCM in Victoria, describe the elements and outcomes of a sustainable service model, highlight the stewardship role of DET and the role and authority of cluster managers and other KCM service model partners. One of the challenges in revising the policy is responding to feedback provided through the KCM review that identified the limited prescription in the current policy framework. This was found to be an impediment in some circumstances, but also enabled flexibility to tailor the support cluster managers provide to the unique needs of services.

DET will continue to work with the Reference Group and will consult further as the policy framework takes more shape.

The project is aiming to launch the revised KCM Policy Framework in the first half of 2015.

For further information about the project, please contact the DET Strengthening KCM Project Manager, Sarah Riddle on 9637 2254 or riddle.sarah.e@edumail.vic.gov.au.

QUALITY INTERACTIONS – A CLASS ACT

Exploring interactions between educators and children using the CLASS system

By Dinah Humphries

Dinah Humphries is the Kindergarten Program Coordinator at bestchance. She shares with us an innovative observation tool – the CLASS system – and how it has made a difference to quality education programs at bestchance kindergartens.

Who we are...

bestchance Kindergarten Cluster Management supports kindergartens to operate within the National Regulations, Law and National Quality Standards, and provides high quality programs to enhance children's learning and development. bestchance is the approved provider for 62 Kindergartens across 9 municipalities in Melbourne. Within the Kindergarten Cluster Team there are 7 Kindergarten Program Coordinators (KPC) whose role is to provide direct support to individual kindergartens; overseeing the management of staff and the quality of the program provided to children and families.

Research tells us that children learn best in an environment where the educator-child relationship is strong and built on a foundation of warmth, trust and respect. "Relationships are the foundations for the construction of identity – 'who I am', how I belong' and 'what is my influence?'" (EYLF, 2009, p20). It is through the quality of this integral relationship that children feel comfortable to explore, experiment and extend their own learning.

The CLASS (Classroom Assessment Scoring System) tool aims to provide a common vocabulary to describe quality across early childhood education and care settings. The tool assists line managers to observe and provide objective, constructive and consistent feedback and which leads to mentoring educators to promote quality interactions with children for enhanced learning opportunities.

The feedback gathered then supports educators to be increasingly reflective and understand the critical impact of their daily interactions with children.



What CLASS is....

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is based on the developmental theory and research suggestion that interactions between children and adults are the primary mechanism of children's development and learning (Pianta, La Paro & Hamre, 2008).

It is an observation tool that focuses on the effectiveness of classroom interactions among educators and children, "because it is these daily interactions that promote children's social and cognitive development. Children thrive when educators create nurturing, well-managed settings and provide frequent and engaging opportunities to learn" (Pianta, et al, 2008).

The tool is divided into 3 domains which make up classroom quality – emotional support, classroom organisation and instructional support. Within each domain are dimensions – for example, the emotional support domain includes the dimensions of positive climate, teacher sensitivity and regard for student perspectives, while the instructional support domain includes the domains of concept development, quality of feedback and language modelling.

The kindergarten program is viewed as a whole – every adult educator (including students and volunteers) is considered in the process of observing the number and quality of interactions with children.

What we did....

It is the bestchance Kindergarten Cluster Management (KCM) team's vision that all children and families have access to high quality kindergarten programs and to this end, it is the KPC's role to support educators to provide the best possible program that enhances children's learning and development.

It is important that the KPC has the opportunity to observe the practice of educators directly and provide constructive feedback. From an educator's standpoint, it can be somewhat intimidating to be observed.

The CLASS tool examines the number of interactions children have with adults in a particular time period (say, 1 hour or 1 session), and also looks at the quality of those interactions. Through using CLASS, bestchance hoped to find a way for KPCs to start reflective conversations with educators about their practice which were non-threatening, non-personal and non-subjective, and establish strategies to increase the quality of interactions that children experience daily in the educational environment. "The benefits of experiencing high-quality interactions with teachers, peers and learning tasks in preschool settings are well documented: children who experience higher quality interactions show greater academic and social

After observing kindergartens in the cluster, the KCM team found that the domain of emotional support (positive climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for student perspectives) was very high. The educator teams showed through their interactions that they provide a positive, warm, safe and fun environment for children, respect children's opinions and ideas and are sensitive and responsive to children's needs.

development in preschool" (Williford, Whittaker, Vitiello and Downer, 2013).

When educators think about their program, do they consider the conversations they have with children with the upmost importance that evidence suggests they should?

What we found....

One educator felt quite confident going into the process of observation with the KPC. However, she found that during the session, she felt confronted and nervous about being watched. Afterwards, during the feedback conversation with the KPC, she found that she was able to reflect on why she felt particularly confronted and talked about how her practice was a reflection of who she was as an educator, and as a person. "I feel I put my heart and soul into my work as a teacher and was worried about being observed. The CLASS feedback provided me with increased confidence in my work, including some things to continue to work on."

Another educator also found being observed more confronting that she

initially thought and was able to reflect on why that was the case. "You just do what you do and don't consider what other people will think until you are being watched. The conversation afterwards (with the KPC) was great as she used the CLASS tool to point out the positive things that I do that I don't even think about, and I was able to make sure that I continue to do them more consciously."

Some educator teams were very keen to embrace the feedback from the CLASS observation process and followed up with reflective conversations about their program within their team meetings. "It was great to receive constructive feedback which relates to our everyday interactions with children. There were things we were able to change straight away once we were aware – like 'no adult without a child' – and there were other things that were a starting point for conversations within our team." 'No adult without a child' refers to the principle that within a program, there are tasks that adults need to do that can easily include a child or children in the process – for example, cleaning tables, paint pots, preparing experiences, setting up learning environments.

It is also interesting to consider the KPC's experience of using CLASS. "I think educators are aware of the importance of quality interactions but (after the feedback) they are prompted to reflect on how they can take their interactions to the next level."

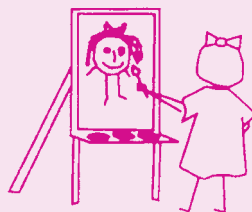
"The most interesting observation I did was when there was a clear drop in the number of observations educators had with children when there was a routine happening, for example, preparing for rest time. Afterwards, we discussed the purpose of rest time in the 4 year old program and the educators agreed that it was a challenging part of their day, and that they were open to different ways of doing things. This resulted in a change in the program where one of the educators would take children outside while another would set up quiet activities inside, in order to meet the needs of all children in the program. This helped significantly in maintaining the high level of interactions between children and educators during this time, as children and educators were much more relaxed during this time."

After observing kindergartens in the cluster, the KCM team found that the domain of emotional support (positive climate, teacher sensitivity, regard for student perspectives) was very high. The educator teams showed through their interactions that they provide a positive, warm, safe and fun environment for children, respect children's opinions and ideas and are sensitive and responsive to children's needs.

The team also found that many of the kindergartens needed to strengthen their

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interactions, specifically in the instructional support domain (including concept development, quality of feedback, language modelling). This meant that as a cluster management team, we needed to consider what it was about this particular domain that educators needed assistance to either understand and/or deliver in their program.

Considering this, the KCM team made a conscious decision to have more targeted conversations with educators about intentional teaching and *shared sustained thinking*. Shared sustained thinking involves “children and educators working together in conversations which provide opportunities to discuss and think about problems or challenges in a serious, extended way” (Touhill, 2012).

For shared sustained thinking to occur regularly, specific strategies may be put in place, which could include:

- reconsidering the daily routine to ensure blocks of time are available in which educators can become deeply involved in conversations with children
- intentionally using routines as opportunities to engage children in meaningful conversations
- providing targeted professional development to ensure educators understand how vital conversation and interactions are so that they are more likely to initiate and engage in them
- providing targeted professional development to ensure educators have skills in using open ended question and other strategies to extend children’s thinking

- considering supervision so that educators can focus on interactions with individuals and small groups
- providing a rich, intentionally planned and considered learning environment with things to talk about, explore, discuss experiment (Touhill, 2012)

Questions that may help educators to promote opportunities for shared, sustained thinking to occur may include:

- What do you think?
- I wonder what would happen if...?
- How do you know?
- How could we find out?
- What else do we need?
- I wonder why...?
- What happened when...?
- Can you tell me more about that?
- What else do you know about...? (Touhill, 2012)

Where to next...

CLASS has provided a valuable tool for the bestchance KCM team to better support educators to deliver quality education and care programs. It has assisted educators to be more reflective about their own practice and for conversations to be had in a non-judgmental, objective way about intentional teaching, children’s thinking and continuous improvement.

Using the CLASS tool has enabled educators and the KCM team alike to consider what is important in children’s early education environments, and

continue to strive to provide best practice programs that enhance and support children’s learning and development in the years before school.

The bestchance Kindergarten Cluster team acknowledges and thanks Rachel Flottman, Lecturer in Early Childhood Education University of Melbourne for delivering the CLASS training to our team. We also acknowledge the support of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to access this learning and development opportunity.

For further enquiries please contact Wendy Morris-Smith Program Manager bestchance Kindergarten Cluster (03) 8562 5100.

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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.

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AVOIDING SLIPS, TRIPS & BREAKS...

It's important to understand the risks in & around your early childhood service

David Roddis, Head of the Risk Services Division of Insurance House, shares with us the common risks in our sector.

Every type of service in the early childhood education and care sector has its own set of challenges in minimizing risk and keeping children, families, volunteers and staff safe.

I have worked with a variety of services across the sector and understand that each environment has different challenges when it comes to risks. These services include;

- Community managed independent kindergartens
- Cluster managers
- Cluster managed services
- Community managed long day services
- Local government children's services
- Early childhood services in government schools
- Local government authorities
- Preschool associations
- Out-of-school hours care programs
- Early childhood programs in independent schools
- Private childcare centres
- Privately owned kindergartens

I have found that what all these service settings have in common is that their environment is often unpredictable and difficult to manage in terms of risk – a fact which anyone working with children and families can attest. I cannot stress enough the importance of having a number of clear approaches and procedures in place when dealing with risks.

Following are some cases I have dealt with and the key learnings for clients from these cases.

1. Child “escapes”

While no serious injury arose, there have been instances of children “escaping” from a centre by climbing fences. They have

often been caused by equipment or high soft fall being too near the fence or they escape through front door.

Key Learnings

- regular audits and hazard inspections by staff – particularly noting “soft fall” levels near fences, damaged fencing or gates, child locks on key entry points.
- many centres now have keyed access entry only

2. Child pulled fixture onto themselves

In one case a child was climbing the lockers that bags were placed in and it fell backwards onto the child. The child suffered a fractured skull, but made a full recovery.

Key Learnings

- most free standing fixtures are now attached to the wall
- using such fixtures for room separation are less frequent
- increased awareness of staff regarding this hazard

3. Slips, trips and breaks caused by;

- climbing equipment such as slides that have an inadequate seating area at top causing child to topple and fall
- cubbies with exposed nails in handles resulted in injury
- door hinges that catch and, in some cases, break or severely damage child fingers
- soft fall or artificial turf that is inadequate or damaged surfaces that are tripping hazards

Key Learnings

- staff conduct daily assessment and hazard audits
- requirements for soft fall reviewed
- when purchasing new equipment always consider the relevant standards that may apply
- installation of door-jam guards to doors to remove the hazard for little fingers

4. Children falling off change tables

Key Learnings

- improved design of change areas and tables, particularly for new centres. For example many change tables now have straps which staff are required to use
- procedures and rules around staff bending and lifting in compliance with implemented OHS policies

5. In one case a child was left asleep in centre after it closed. While potentially it could have been a serious incident regarding the child's safety, the main issue turned out to be the trauma experienced by the parents!

Key Learnings

- sign in and out protocols are mandatory
- premises checks at closing are mandatory

Other safety issues I have come across include; burns and injury through coffee and food, food and other allergies, privacy breaches, child sickness, security, fire, theft, car park liability – just to name a few. When you look at all the potential risks you can understand why many early learning organisations struggle to cope with and manage risks that may impact their operations.

So what can you do?

Identifying the risks is only part of the solution - in the next edition of Preschool Matters I will focus on risk solutions and approaches, which are simple and relevant to your needs. I'll provide hints and ideas that can be easily tailored to your service.

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2014 McARTHUR EARLY CHILDHOOD VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

'Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer'

The McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year Award is an opportunity to thank our dedicated volunteers for all that they do to make our children's kindergartens and our communities a better place.

The presentation of the annual award is always the highlight of ELAA's Annual General Meeting which recognises the significant contribution that volunteers make to early childhood services, and celebrates volunteerism as the backbone of our community, and our economy.

A special commendation for outstanding service to the community was presented to Sharon Howell, the outgoing President of Baxter Kindergarten & Children's Centre. Sharon was a previous recipient of the McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year Award in 2011 and has served on the committee at Baxter for 10 years.

The 2014 short-listed award nominees were;

- Valerie Murray – Lower Plenty Kindergarten Centre, Lower Plenty
- Mark Smith – Yallambie Park Preschool, Yallambie
- Kim Coulter – Forrest Preschool, Forrest
- Joy Vurman – St Luke's Preschool, Mount Waverley
- Maureen Bond – Western Plains Mobile Kindergarten, Derrinalun

And the 2014 finalists...

Rebecca Hoornweg, Alexandra & District Kindergarten in Alexandra.

For the past seven years, Rebecca has worked tirelessly for the kindergarten community and, with her positive attitude and motivating leadership qualities, is known as the 'go-to' person to get things done. Her contribution and her dedication are greatly appreciated by her colleagues on the committee and staff at the kindergarten.



The 2014 finalists (L-R): Tania Watts-Hall, Rebecca Hoornweg, Treena Robinson and Heidi Kilpatrick (Absent Jenny Hordern).

Treena Robinson from William Hovell Preschool in Corio

Treena began volunteering at William Hovell Preschool 30 years ago and currently volunteers 2 days a week. Treena has been a dedicated and enthusiastic member of the kindergarten team, and has maintained a strong rapport with families, staff and the wider community over these years.

Heidi Kilpatrick from Lang Lang Preschool in Lang Lang.

Heidi is currently the Grants Officer of the Preschool Committee and her collaborative work with staff, local council and their Cluster Manager, Kinders Together, has resulted in some amazing improvements at the Preschool.

Jenny Hordern from St Pauls Anglican Kindergarten, Canterbury

Jenny started volunteering at kindergartens back in 1984, and began at St Paul's Kindergarten four years ago. The children, families and staff at St Paul's would love to publicly acknowledge Jenny's incredible work; her dedication, her support and her willingness to give so much of herself to the community.

Congratulations to the winner of the 2014 McArthur Volunteer of the Year...

Tania Watts-Hall from Olympic Avenue Kindergarten, Cheltenham.

Tania has been a member of the Olympic Avenue Kindergarten's committee of management for four years and is considered the kindergarten's most committed volunteer. Tania attributes her willingness to give so much back to the centre due to the fact that they accepted her daughter with disability into their program when many other kindergartens turned her away.

In 2014, Tania consistently volunteered up to 30 hours a week, and beyond her usual responsibilities as Vice-President, she has been heavily involved in a number of projects including a coordinating the \$370,000 redevelopment, winning grant applications, rewriting the Kindergarten's constitution and policies and staff recruitment and appraisals (the Kindergarten had 4 staff members in 2012 and now has 10 staff in 2014).

The ELAA Board and staff would like to congratulate all the 2014 nominees and finalists. Nominations for the 2015 McArthur Volunteer of the Year Award will open in July this year.

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2014 National Training Schedule now available

To help ELAA members begin planning their training requirements for the new year, Allianz' workers compensation courses for 2014 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 2014 training offerings will be reviewed quarterly to ensure they continue to be relevant and topical. Courses scheduled for the second half of 2014 will be released in March.

As well as standard course offerings, three new courses have been introduced. New courses for 2014 are:

- 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/>

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MEMBER PROFILE



In this edition of
Preschool Matters
we catch up with

SHANNAN MUDIE

Regional Manager,
North West Region
Early Childhood Management
Services (ECMS)

I have been in this role since August 2014.

My career path to this job began by working as an educator and Kindergarten teacher in long day care centres. I then had experience as a Centre Co-ordinator of Community, Council and Co-operative Long day care services. Prior to my role at ECMS I worked at CPS Child and Family Centre (Children's Protection Society) as an Early Years Team Leader and Pedagogical Leader for their centre for vulnerable children and families. We ran a pilot research project to measure the impact of high quality care and education on children who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. This service was the first to receive an excellent rating in Victoria from ACECQA.

My working day is extremely diverse and can include liaising with local governments, meetings with a range of professional

partners, support for Early Years Advisors who work directly with ECMS early childhood kindergarten and long day care services, working group meetings on a range of areas including professional development days and conferences, oversee and update the policy and procedures of the organisation, consult with educators on the pedagogical practice, plan and deliver training to parents and other professionals on a range of topics, development of new early childhood services, liaise with parent committees, and lots of emails!

I'm most inspired by the passion and dedication of early childhood professionals who provide high quality education and care programs for the children, using natural and recycled materials. I love going out to services and observing the different environments for children and families.

What I love about my job is no day is ever the same! There is opportunity to mentor, share resources, inspire and learn from a diverse group of professionals. If I wasn't doing this job I would be an early childhood consultant providing training and support to early childhood services.

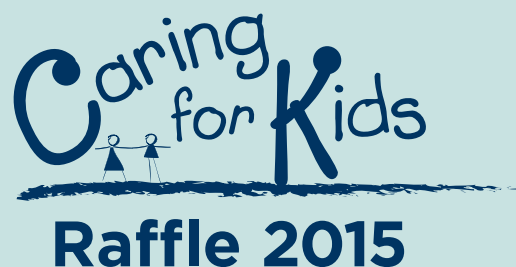
What makes me laugh are the candid comments from the children who are always completely honest and extremely literal. They certainly bring you back down to earth!



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