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LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA

The voice for parents and service providers

PRE SCHOOL MATTERS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PREPARING CHILDREN FOR LIFE
TERM ONE 2018

2018 ELAA PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

THE E4KIDS STUDY –
WHAT IT MEANS FOR SERVICES

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OF YOUR QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT PLAN





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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to 2018 and the Term 1 edition of *Preschool Matters*.

ELAA strives to make research findings accessible to members. In this edition of *Preschool Matters* we feature a highly informative article by researcher, Dan Cloney, (see pages 12 & 13) on the outcomes of the Australian E4Kids study, its findings regarding levels of quality in early learning programs, and what this means for services and the professional development of early learning educators. In publishing this article, we would like to pay tribute to the life and work of Professor Collette Tayler, who led the E4Kids project, and whose passing in December 2017 was a profound loss for Australia's educational research, and early childhood education and care communities.

We also have an article on KidsMatter Early Childhood, a program led by *beyondblue* in partnership with ECA and the Australian Government. KidsMatter Early Childhood provides early learning services with a promotion, prevention and early intervention framework to support the mental health and wellbeing of young children, families, educators and early childhood professionals. You can find out more on pages 20 & 21.

Services looking for guidance on preparing their Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) should read the article by the Department of Education and Training on QIPs on pages 22 & 23. It provides an excellent overview of how to approach preparing your plan and resources that can help you. And speaking of Quality – don't forget to

look at our Professional Learning Program for terms 1 and 2 on pages 4 & 5.

During Term 1, many of you will be conducting your own AGM's. This is an important chance to acknowledge the work of the many volunteers who have contributed to your service over the past 12 months. So why not take the opportunity to identify some of your valuable volunteers for this year's McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year Awards. The finalists for the 2017 Awards are featured on page 15. Who knows – you could be this year's winner!

Aside from our featured articles, this edition of *Preschool Matters* includes all our regular sections such as 'Regs in Focus', 'Q&A' and 'Advocacy' – all convenient, easy-to-read snap shots designed to give members a quick update on what's happening in the sector

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the commitment and work of our recent CEO, Shane Lucas.

Over more than four years with ELAA, Shane advanced ELAA's position as a major voice for the early learning sector and worked diligently to ensure ELAA's service offerings remained relevant to our members. His leadership has left ELAA well-positioned to pursue its strategic ambitions as articulated in our refreshed Strategic Action Plan 2017–2027: *Excellence for Every Child*. We will miss Shane's impeccable leadership skills, good humour, and wish him all the best for his new role as a Member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Jo Geurts, Acting President, ELAA

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Cover: McKinnon Kindergarten (Glen Eira Kindergarten Association (GEKA)).



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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 75,000 Victorian Children Made Safer On Our Roads

The *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education program reached a major milestone during October 2017 with over 75,000 Victorian preschool children having now participated. To celebrate, ELAA and VicRoads invited the stars of the *Starting Out Safely* program – Professor Eric Speriment and his friend, ThingleToodle – to join the children at Albert Park Kindergarten for some great road safety fun and a magnificent road safety cake. And Victoria's Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Luke Donnellan, dropped by to help the children blow out the candles...

Image: Victorian Minister for Roads and Road Safety, Luke Donnellan (2nd from right front), and ELAA CEO, Shane Lucas (1st from right back), celebrate with The Professor Eric Speriment, ThingleToodle, and the children of Albert Park Kindergarten.

Conference registrations opening in late February

With nearly 80 presentations at this year's Early Childhood Education Conference plus the early learning services and products Trade Exhibition, there's bound to be something for your service. Delegate Registrations open late February. Full details on pages 8 & 9.

Great prizes for the 2018 Raffle

The 2018 Caring for Kids Raffle has great prizes again this year including:

First Prize: \$6000 Flight Centre voucher

Second Prize: \$2500 Harvey Norman voucher

Third Prize: \$750 JB HiFi voucher

Fourth Prize: \$250 ColesMyer voucher

Services earn \$1 for every ticket sold and you can win prizes for selling the most tickets.

Order your tickets from ELAA now and start selling them in Term 2. Go to elaa.org.au/resources/support-services/fundraising



Get your application in for our Road Safety Award

The *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award, sponsored by VicRoads, celebrates educators who demonstrate a commitment to high quality road safety education in their early learning services.

The award is open to all Victorian early childhood educators and the winner's service will receive \$500 plus a set of road safety education resources.

To apply, tell us about an example/s of high quality road safety education or share a great road safety learning experience (about 200 words) that illustrates a connection between the children in your service and the community around them.

Email your submission to rse@elaa.org.au by 11 May 2018. Enquiries to the RSE Team on 03 9489 3500 or rse@elaa.org.au



ELAA 2018 Professional Learning and Development Program – book your training now!

Members will soon receive their printed copy of our 2018 Professional Learning and Development Program in the mail. It's packed full of useful and relevant training sessions for early learning service managers, teachers, educators, coordinators, family day-care providers, maternal child health nurses and committee of management members. But if you can't wait to get your hard copy then jump on line to view the program guide at elaa.org.au/learning-development and book your sessions at elaa.org.au/pld.

INTERIM CEO'S REPORT



Welcome to Term 1 – I am hoping you are as excited about 2018 as we are here at ELAA.

With a Victorian State election scheduled for November this year we expect, and will advocate for, a strong focus on early childhood education from the Victorian Government. ELAA will continue to strive for '5 Big Things in 10 Years for Our Children' as articulated in our refreshed **Strategic Action Plan 2017–2027 Excellence for Every Child**.

Those '5 Big Things' included:

- funding from State and Federal Governments for a minimum of 15 hours a week of high quality early learning for every child in the two years before school
- a wealth of Australian-based research that demonstrates the value of quality early learning and which drives early learning practice
- a qualified and skilled early learning workforce that is acknowledged and recognised for its professionalism
- new integrated service models that address social and economic disadvantage and children with additional needs
- a united, collaborative and influential early learning sector.

These five clear goals identified for our sector in the next decade are aimed at delivering high quality and accessible early years education for all Australian Children. They are clearly aligned with the Victorian Government's **Early Childhood Reform Plan** and also seen as key priorities by ELAA members, stakeholders and early childhood colleagues.

In 2018 ELAA will continue to play a significant role in helping the sector to navigate its way toward implementing the Early Childhood Reform Plan, particularly through our participation in the **Kindergarten Reform Design (KRD) sub-group** which will co-design specific initiatives in the Plan.

The four directions in the Reform Plan allow us to focus on a number of critical conversations, including those related to the need for ongoing funding of 15 hours of quality early learning for all Australian Children which is currently available in the year before school. This includes refocusing the discussion to take account of the research that points to the benefits of two years of formal early learning.

The 2018 **Early Childhood Education and Care Conference** is once again shaping up to be a 'must attend' event for the year.

Our theme of *Our Children Our Communities* promises to be an enlightening topic for participants with our key note speaker, **Jane Vadeloo** – CEO of Children's Ground – talking about her work and background in leading advocacy, reform and service provision for First Nations children and communities. With highly respected invited speakers such as Professor John Tobin (Co-Director of Studies, Human Rights Law, University of Melbourne), Dr Catherine Wade (Parenting Research Centre) and Associate Professor Warwick Teague (Director of Trauma Service at the Royal Children's Hospital), among a program of around 80 presentations, I encourage you to reserve the conference dates of 25 and 26 May in your diary. Online registrations will open later in February and you can read more about the conference on pages 8 & 9 of this edition of *Preschool Matters*.

I wish you all a very successful start to 2018 and here at ELAA we look forward to working with you as we strive to better serve our members and to champion excellence in early learning for every child.

Tina Martin, Interim CEO, ELAA

“With a Victorian State election scheduled for November this year we expect, and will advocate for, a strong focus on early childhood education from the Victorian Government.”



ELAA PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR TERMS 1 & 2 IN 2018

ELAA has developed a comprehensive calendar of Professional Learning and Development workshops for 2018. These will be presented by well-known and respected presenters who are experts in their field.

Our 2018 program:

- covers important issues and contemporary topics relevant to the early childhood sector
- is tailored for all early childhood professionals including teachers, educators and other staff such as service managers, coordinators as well as Committees of Management
- is mapped to the National Quality Standards (NQS) and clearly aligns to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)
- provides participants with a certificate of participation for individual sessions which can be used as evidence for VIT annual professional development requirements.



Safety – not just child's play

Quality Area: 3, 4 & 7
APST: 4.4, 6.2, 7.2, 7.4

Presenter: Zora Marko & Emma Morgan

Date: Monday, 5 March 2018

Time: 9:00am – 5:00pm

Venue: Darebin North East Community Hub, 35 Copernicus Crescent, Bundoora. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$340 Members \$385 Non Members



Supporting the anxious and agitated child

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6
APST: 1.5, 4.3 & 6.4

Presenter: Jo Lange

Date: Wednesday, 7 March 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Quest Caroline Springs, 234 Caroline Springs Boulevard, Caroline Springs. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Documentation – quality vs quantity

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6
APST: 2.3, 5.4, 5.5 & 7.2

Presenter: Heather Barnes

Date: Friday, 16 March 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Abbotsford Convent – Salon Room, 1 St Heliers Street, Abbotsford (Enter Gate 1). Parking on site for \$12 all day.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Creating safer organisations: implementing and embedding the Child Safe Standards

Quality Area: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7
APST: 4.4, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Children's Protection Society

Date: Tuesday, 20 March

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Springvale Service for Children, 23–28 Lightwood Road, Springvale. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Using technology in play-based learning

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6
APST: 1.5, 2.6, 3.4, 4.5, 6.2 & 6.4

Presenter: Daniel Donahoo

Date: Friday, 23 March 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Knox Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South. Free parking on site (enter via Capital City Boulevard).

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



The Quality Improvement Plan: on the table or in the drawer? Making the QIP work for everyone

Quality Area: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7
APST: 3.1, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1, 6.2, 6.3 & 7.2

Presenter: Catharine Hydon

Date: Wednesday, 8 April 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Manningham City Council, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



An introduction to autism and Positive Behaviour Support

Quality Area: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7
APST: 1.5, 1.6, 4.1, 4.3, 6.2, & 7.4

Presenter: ASPECT

Date: Monday, 23 April 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Springvale Service for Children, 23–28 Lightwood Road, Springvale. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Indigenous perspectives in children's programs

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6
APST: 1.4, 2.4, 6.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Annette Sax (Yarn Strong Sista)

Date: Friday, 27 April 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Darebin North East Community Hub, 35 Copernicus Crescent, Bundoora. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Child abuse: recognising, responding, recording and reporting

Quality Area: 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7
APST: 4.4, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Children's Protection Society

Date: Monday, 30 April 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Manningham City Council, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Touchscreens and Tech 101: the basics of technology in your classroom

Quality Area: 1 & 5
APST: 1.5, 2.6, 3.4, 4.5, 6.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Daniel Donahoo

Date: Wednesday, 2 May 2018

Time: 6:30pm – 9:00pm

Venue: Hobson's Bay City Council, Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$85 Members \$100 Non Members



Safety – not just child's play

Quality Area: 3, 4 & 7
APST: 4.4, 6.2, 7.2, 7.4

Presenter: Zora Marko & Emma Morgan

Date: Wednesday, 9 May 2018

Time: 9:00am – 5:00pm

Venue: Recovre, Level 8, 570 Bourke St, Melbourne. Public transport recommended. No free parking on site.

Cost: \$340 Members \$385 Non Members



Fostering Strengths Based Learning (SBL) in early childhood

Quality Area: 1 & 5
APST: 1.2, 1.5, 4.1, 6.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Ariadne Lack

Date: Friday, 11 May 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Quest Caroline Springs, 234 Caroline Springs Boulevard, Caroline Springs. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Strategies and practices to support children with a disability

Quality Area: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6
APST: 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 6.2 & 7.3

Presenter: Yooralla

Date: Tuesday, 15 May 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: CPS Thomastown, 273 Settlement Road, Thomastown. Free Parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Creating safer organisations: implementing and embedding the Child Safe Standards

Quality Area: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 & 7
APST: 4.4, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Children's Protection Society

Date: Monday, 21 May 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Hobson's Bay City Council, Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Music and movement in early childhood programs

Quality Area: 1, 2 & 3
APST: 1.1, 2.1, 3.2, 3.4 & 6.2

Presenter: Anne Belcher

Date: Friday, 1 June 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Manningham City Council, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Unpacking the revised NQS – QA 1 & QAS

Quality Area: 1 & 5
APST: 2.3, 5.4, 5.5 & 7.2

Presenter: Heather Barnes

Date: Monday, 4 June 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Southern Golf Club, Lower Dandenong Road, Keysborough. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Professionalism: what's the big whoop and is it worth it?

Quality Area: 4 & 7
APST: 6.1, 6.3, 7.1 & 7.2

Presenter: Louise Dorrat

Date: Friday, 8 June 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Hobson's Bay City Council, Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Preparing for difficult conversations

Quality Area: 4, 5 & 6
APST: 6.2, 6.3, 7.3, 7.4

Presenter: Dr Lyn O'Grady

Date: Friday, 15 June 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: CPS Thomastown, 273 Settlement Road, Thomastown. Free Parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Supporting children's agency

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6
APST: 1.5, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3, 6.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Debbie Cole

Date: Friday, 22 Jun 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Knox Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South. Free parking on site (enter via Capital City Boulevard).

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Learning environments that support children's wellbeing as well as respectful and considerate behaviour

Quality Area: 1, 3, 4 & 5
APST: 1.5, 4.3, 4.4, 6.3 & 7.4

Presenter: Karen Glancy

Date: Monday, 25 June 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Darebin North East Community Hub, 35 Copernicus Crescent, Bundoora. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members

NQS = National Quality Standard

Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice

Quality Area 2 – Children's Health & Safety

Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment

Quality Area 4 – Staffing Arrangements

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children

Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Quality Area 7 – Governance and Leadership

APST = Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

Register online at www.elaa.org.au/pld or call (03) 9489 3500

Prior registrations are essential. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the commencement of a session.

FREE COMMITTEE TRAINING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND LOCAL COUNCILS

QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Starting from the beginning – governance information and support

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

The free session will cover:

- an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of committees of management to ensure sound governance
- your role as:
 - an Incorporated Association committee
 - an Approved Provider and an early childhood funded service provider
 - an employer of staff in an early childhood service
 - a Manager of an early childhood service.

| DATE | VENUE |
|---|--|
| Wed 21 February 6.30 – 8.30pm | Mornington Peninsula Shire Mornington Council Chambers 2 Queen Street, Mornington |
| Sat 24 February 9.00am – 1.00pm | Hobson's Bay City Council Hobsons Bay Civic Centre 115 Civic Parade, Altona |
| Wed 28 February 6.30 – 8.30pm | Moreland City Council, Concert Hall 90 Bell Street (enter Urquhart Street) Coburg |
| Thu 1 March 6.30 – 8.30pm | City of Greater Dandenong Dandenong Civic Centre rooms Lonsdale Street, Dandenong |
| Tue 6 March 6.30 – 8.30pm | City of Boroondara The Blackwood Room, Building 1 8 Inglesby Road, Camberwell |
| Thu 8 March 6.30 – 8.30pm | City of Stonnington, Malvern Town Hall – Banquet Hall, 1251 High St, Corner Glenferrie Road and High Street, Malvern |
| Thu 15 March 6.30 – 8.30pm | City of Whittlesea Fountain View Room, Civic Centre 25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang |
| Wed 21 March 6.30 – 8.30 pm | Yarra Ranges Council Conference Room 15 Anderson Street, Lilydale |
| Thu 19 April 6.30 – 8.30pm | Banyule City Council Hawdon Room, Level 4 1 Flintoff Street, Greensborough |



Financial management

This session explores the responsibilities of the committee in relation to managing the finances of the incorporated association.

Topics include:

- the legal framework for incorporated associations
- record keeping and reporting
- allocation of financial tasks within the committee
- planning including preparing the budget.

| DATE | VENUE |
|---|---|
| Sat 24 February 9.00am – 1.00pm | Hobson's Bay City Council Hobsons Bay Civic Centre 115 Civic Parade, Altona |

**To register please book on-line at
www.elaa.org.au/pld
and complete the online registration form
or call (03) 9489 3500.**

Please arrive and sign in 15 minutes prior to the commencement of a session.

REGS IN FOCUS

This regular feature focuses on specific Education and Care Services regulations to ensure that services and staff are clear about their responsibilities

Revised Quality Standards coming into effect on 1 February 2018

A National Quality Framework for the provision of early childhood and care throughout Australia was implemented in 2012. This framework included new legislative requirements, the introduction of minimum standards and an assessment and rating system. At the time of the framework's introduction, the government committed to conduct a review of its implementation and effectiveness in improving the quality of early childhood education and care service provision. Following extensive consultation with the early childhood sector this review has now been completed.

As a result, regulatory changes came into effect in all states (other than WA) on 1st October 2017 and on 1 February 2018 changes to the National Quality Standards and the Assessment and Rating process came into effect.

Feedback from the sector indicated that the current standards were confusing and repetitive. The revised NQS reduces overlap with legislation and uses clearer language but retains the same focus on quality education and care. The previous 18 standards have been reduced to 15 and the previous 58 elements have been reduced to 40. There are still 7 quality areas however Quality Area 7 has been renamed and is now referred to as Governance and Leadership (previously it was referred to as Leadership and Service Management).

It is important that service providers familiarise themselves with these new standards in preparation for assessment and rating. Changes to the process for assessment and rating have also been introduced to reflect these changes. Importantly, services will need to be rated as *Exceeding* in all 7 standards in a particular Quality Area for that area to be rated as *Exceeding*. The definition of the



Significant Improvement Required rating has been changed from 'unacceptable risk' to 'significant risk' to increase clarity for families.

ACECQA have developed some new resources to assist services to implement these changes including new posters, videos, information sheets, a new Quality Improvement Plan template and a mapping resource that compares the original elements and standards to the revised NQS to show what has moved and changed. www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf-changes/information-sheets-and-resources

ADVERTISING



Employee Management and Development Kit



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A free ELAA resource that's like an HR Manager at the end of mouse click.

The Kit, developed by ELAA to support early learning services in the ongoing management and development of their employees:

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- is fully downloadable
- includes a range of editable electronic forms
- is completely FREE!

Get the Kit at elaa.org.au/resources/free-resources



The 2018 Early Childhood Education Conference

together we grow

25 and 26 May, 2018 | Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne



Our Children – Our Communities

The focus of the 2018 Early Childhood Education Conference is on preschool children and the communities that influence, shape and support their development. The conference theme: *Our Children – Our Communities* emphasises the centrality of children to the work of all early childhood education and care practitioners and seeks to provoke thinking and discussion about the importance of the broader relationships between educators, researchers, policy makers, specialist service providers, parents, carers and communities to achieving the best learning outcomes for preschool children.

Keynote speaker

We are very excited to announce the 2018 Early Childhood Education Conference Keynote Speaker will be Children's Ground CEO, Jane Vadeloo. Jane's work and background in leading advocacy, reform and service provision for First Nations children and communities complements the 2018 Conference Theme *Our Children – Our Communities*.



Jane Vadeloo is the founding CEO of Children's Ground and has a 20-year history leading reform and services provision with communities experiencing extreme disadvantage and trauma. She has lived in the Northern Territory for 19 years and has over 30 years of connection to the Arrernte people in Central Australia. Jane has worked with children, families and communities at high risk, establishing strength and justice based approaches to

achieve long term change. Children's Ground was created as a 25 year approach to ensure that future generations of children are afforded equity, access and justice to determine their futures – to have quality education, health, social and economic opportunities that privilege their first culture within a global context. In 2014 Jane was listed among the Westpac Australian Financial Review 100 Women of Influence.

An even bigger speaker program than last year

Last year was our largest speaker program ever with 73 presentations but this year it's even bigger with just under 80 presentations across two days. The program covers a huge range of topics so there's something for just about everyone including committees of management, service directors, early learning managers, senior early years educators and those just starting out. To find out more go to the PROGRAM PAGE at www.togetherwegrow.com.au

Program Highlights

Every presentation on our speaker program has been selected for its quality and relevance to delegate interests. The full program will be on the PROGRAM page at www.togetherwegrow.com.au by mid-February but the following demonstrate the diversity of this year's offering:

Jane Vadeloo – CEO, Children's ground regarding the work of Children's Ground and approaches to First Nations early childhood learning, development and wellbeing.

Jacqui Tomlins – working with Rainbow Families in an early learning context.

Associate Professor Warwick Teague – Director, Trauma Service, Royal Children's Hospital regarding making every conversation count toward preventing childhood injury.

Marcia Armstrong – Manager Family Youth and Early Years, Wodonga City Council on the Council's 'No one left behind' concept in relation to vulnerable children and facilitating their access and ongoing participation in universal and supported early years services.

Dr Catherine Wade – Parenting Research Centre regarding the Parenting Today in Victoria Survey findings.

Professor John Tobin – University of Melbourne Law School, on a "rights based approach" to addressing the needs of children in early childhood education.

Sue West – Associate Director of Policy and Service Development at the Royal Children's Hospital's Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) and Co-Group leader of Child Health Policy, Equity and Translation at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute. Sue will present on the *Strong Foundations: Getting it Right in the First 1000 Days* project.

Melissa MacMaster & Samantha Kolasa – the Glen Eira Kindergarten Association (GEKA) vision of working with families and their children as part of a two-year journey prior to their children commencing school.

Madeleine Smith (Executive Director of the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division DET Victoria) – a discussion on the requirements of the revised National Quality Standard (NQS) that commenced 1 February 2018.



Bron Alday (Sea Lake Kindergarten) – Stories in the Stars: creating lifelong links to community through Bush Kinder.

Dr Joanne Tarasuik (Playgroup Victoria) – the three-pronged approach of Playgroup ... nurturing children, supporting families, and building communities.

Jenny Whelan (Albert Park Kindergarten), **Victorian Minister for Mental Health – Martin Foley MP, WorkSafe Victoria and Marcela Slepica** (Access EAP) – this panel discussion will focus on how the wellbeing of adults is supported in our centres and what we can do to ensure educators continue to find joy in their work despite the challenges that can sometimes arise when working in close partnership with children and families.

... and many more high quality and diverse presentations from early learning professionals.

Check out the latest in early years learning resources and equipment at the Trade Exhibition

Try, test, touch and play with the latest resources in early childhood education and talk to experts about essential services for running an early learning centre from financial advice, staff recruitment and superannuation to outdoor surfaces and play equipment. There will be around 60 exhibitors at the Conference Trade Exhibition showcasing the latest quality products for early learning services including art supplies, educational games and puzzles, first aid supplies, teaching resources and more.

Find out more about the Conference

- Visit www.togetherwegrow.com.au
- Check out facebook.com/earlychildhoodeducationconference
- Subscribe to ELAA's fortnightly eNews <http://bit.ly/2jDroD9>

"Thank you for a well-organised, wonderful professional development experience."

"Great sessions, wealth of knowledge."

"I love the extra notes in booklet and links to NQS."

Delegate registrations and early bird discount

Online registrations open in late February. To register as a delegate and for more information on this year's speaker program visit www.togetherwegrow.com.au. Register before 27 April 2018 to receive the 'Early Bird' discount (prices on the conference website).



Q&A

I AM A NEW MEMBER OF A COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT. HOW DO I KNOW WHAT MY ROLE IS AND WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER INFORMATION?

Congratulations and welcome to the Committee of Management. 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.

Your committee will also have specific responsibilities as an Incorporated Association, an Approved Provider of an early childhood funded service, an employer of staff in an early childhood service and a manager of an early childhood service.

Incorporated Association committee members must abide by the service's constitution. As an Approved Provider

you must ensure that the service operates in accordance with the requirements of the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010*, the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* and the Department of Education and Training (DET) funding guidelines. As the employer of staff in an early childhood service all staff must be employed in accordance with the relevant award/agreement and you must abide by industrial relations and OHS legislation.

While the extent of the roles and responsibilities for new committee members may be overwhelming, there is no need to worry. ELAA provides support and resources to meet the requirements of each role. This includes the ELAA Member Services Advisory line (03 9489 3500 or 1300 730 199 (for rural members)) and email service elaa@elaa.org.au, plus ELAA management resources and committee/governance training. ELAA members are encouraged to contact us for advice on any issue.

ELAA offers Free Committee Training in partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET) and local councils entitled **Starting from the**

Beginning – Governance information and support.

This free session covers:

- an introduction to the roles and responsibilities of committees of management to ensure sound governance
- your role as:
 - an Incorporated Association committee
 - an Approved Provider and an early childhood funded service provider
 - an employer of staff in an early childhood service
 - a Manager of an early childhood service.

There is more information about ELAA's free committee training on page 6 or go to the ELAA website to:

- find a training session in your area at elaa.org.au/pld
- information on ELAA management resources elaa.org.au/resources

We hope you can join us for a comprehensive introduction to the roles and responsibilities of committees of management of early childhood services at one of our sessions between February and April 2018.

PUTTING A FACE TO THE VOICE



Shauna Clarke joined ELAA in 2017 as a Member Services Officer.

My work day entails... providing advice over the phone, through emails and in person to our members and early years managers, to support them with managing employees and operating successful early childhood services.

I am most inspired by... my Mum who was a hardworking teacher for 40 years and my Dad who worked for over 40 years, never complained, and now helps look after my three boys after school every day.

What I like most about my job... I enjoy having the opportunity to speak with and meet many amazing volunteers who help to operate successful early childhood services. I also enjoy facilitating professional development sessions and continuing my own professional learning.

If I wasn't doing this job I'd be... relaxing on the beach at the Rosebud foreshore with my husband and our three sons whilst eating ice cream!

ADVOCACY

YOUR COLLECTIVE VOICE

Each edition of Preschool Matters we report on ELAA's advocacy work to represent the collective voice of our members.

ELAA's ongoing commitment to advocacy

ELAA's refreshed **Strategic Action Plan 2017–2027 Excellence for Every Child** identifies our continued commitment to being a strong and influential advocate on behalf of our members and the sector.

The plan identifies a number of priorities in relation to our advocacy efforts including:

- continuing to work with other sector organisations through the *Early Learning Everyone Benefits* campaign to advocate for the importance of early learning, including creating greater community awareness of the critical importance of quality early learning for children and the community
- working to secure a minimum of 15 hours of high quality early learning for every Australian child in the two years before school
- building the engagement and promotion of members' views through high-level reference groups and other consultation forums.

At our AGM, which launched the plan, the Victorian Minister for Families and Children, Early Childhood Education, and Youth Affairs – Jenny Mikakos – acknowledged the advocacy efforts of our sector to Government, particularly on the issue of continued funding of the National Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education, as well as identifying ELAA's part in informing the Government's Early Childhood Reform Plan.

Respectful Relationships

ELAA is a participant in the Respectful Relationships Working Group which is advising the Victorian Government on the implementation of Respectful Relationships in early childhood services and schools. Respectful Relationships supports early childhood settings and

schools to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours and to teach children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence.

Part of the implementation includes training to be developed and delivered to up to 4,000 Victorian early childhood educators. The training will support educators to create cultures of respect, positive conflict resolution and equality in their program planning, thereby embedding respectful relationships in their practice. The training will align with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the National Quality Standards.

Further information about the training will be made available through ELAA's eNews.

Marriage Equality

In the lead-up to the Australian Marriage Law Postal Survey, ELAA launched its statement in support of Marriage Equality. ELAA's statement reflected the clear relationship between an environment that promotes inclusivity, respect and equality and quality early learning.

The statement, published on the ELAA website is reproduced below.

ELAA supports marriage equality, which aligns with our organisational values of inclusivity and respect.

Quality early learning is inclusive and welcomes and celebrates all families, promotes equal rights and values diversity.

Marriage equality establishes a clear basis for all children and their families to be accorded equal rights and respect.

More information, including web-links to research on children of same-sex relationships can be found on our website at www.elaa.org.au/about-us/supporting-marriage-equality

ELAA is here to listen to you

ELAA is pleased to represent the interests of our members and we welcome any questions or input by contacting us at elaa@elaa.org.au





WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE E4KIDS STUDY TO ENSURE ALL CHILDREN HAVE THE BEST START IN LIFE?

BY DAN CLONEY, AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH, DAN.CLONEY@ACER.ORG



In memoriam: Professor Emeritus Collette Tayler passed away on Friday 1 December 2017. Professor Tayler held the Chair in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) at The University of Melbourne, and was the Chief Investigator who led the *Effective Early Educational Experiences* (E4Kids) study. Collette's work has informed best practice curriculum, pedagogy, program, and policy development across Australia and Internationally.

The Collette Tayler Indigenous Education Scholarship has been established to recognise Indigenous Australians, and to support students in endeavours that promote excellent teaching of young Indigenous children, educational leadership and close collaboration with Indigenous leaders and/or communities

<https://scholarships.unimelb.edu.au/awards/collette-tayler-indigenous-education-scholarship>

Image: Chief Investigator for the E4Kids Study – Professor Collette Tayler (image courtesy of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education).

The E4Kids study

The E4Kids study¹ was designed in the years leading up to the reform agenda that delivered the Early Years Learning Framework, the National Quality Standard, and the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. The study commenced recruitment and data collection in 2010 and tracked the quality of ECEC programs, and the learning and development of children for five years. E4Kids is one of few studies to comprehensively assess the impact of participation within *everyday* ECEC programs on children's learning and development outcomes. The study aimed to provide much needed evidence of the extent to which Australian ECEC programs delivered on the promise to give all children the best start in life² and to narrow learning and development

gaps between children from vulnerable backgrounds and their more advantaged peers³.

The study included 2,494 children who attended ECEC programs at three to four years of age. The children were recruited from programs delivered in Victoria and Queensland in 2010. The core aims of the study included:

- to identify the level of quality in everyday ECEC programs, including by observing pedagogical practices
- to evaluate the effect of everyday ECEC programs on children's learning, cognitive and social development, social inclusion and well-being, taking into account the influence of family background, home learning environment, prior non-parental care, and local community.

The study first observed children in centre- and home-based ECEC settings, and tracked their learning and development as they transitioned to school. The final data collection point was their NAPLAN outcomes at least five years after they entered the study.

By using well validated measures of ECEC quality that have established links to children's development⁴ it was shown that the quality of everyday programs is variable.

Key findings and challenges

E4kids made significant findings about how the Australian ECEC system was organised. By using well validated measures of ECEC quality that have established links to children's development⁴ it was shown that the quality of everyday programs is variable. More than 50 per cent of classrooms exhibit high *Emotional Support* (including, the emotional connection between the educators and children and the degree to which the educator places emphasis on children's interests, motivations, and points of view) and more than 25 per cent high *Classroom Organisation* (including, providing clear behavioural expectations and providing opportunities for children to be involved in learning activities) while fewer than 1 per cent of classrooms are considered high-quality for *Instructional Support* (including, promoting children's higher-order thinking and providing feedback that expands learning and understanding). These findings reinforce

the likelihood that Australian ECEC programs will influence social and emotional development, but miss an opportunity to contribute to the development of general and cognitive abilities and to feed into later academic learning⁵.

Importantly, it was also shown that there are substantial challenges to ensuring children from vulnerable backgrounds have equal access to high quality ECEC programs. ECEC Centres operating in neighbourhoods with fewer resources tend to provide lower quality ECEC program quality⁶ and children from lower socioeconomic background families tend to attend ECEC programs operating lower quality programs⁷.

These patterns have important implications for children's learning and development. In Australia, although there are small positive effects for children participating in higher quality ECEC programs, family circumstance is the main driver that predicts outcomes⁸. Importantly, it is these earlier differences in developmental outcomes, at age three and four, that can be attributed to inequality, that are the strongest predictor of school-age outcomes five and six years later. Children who are ahead early are up to 0.5 standard deviations ahead of their peers when they participate in NAPLAN⁹.

Where to next?

The findings of the E4kids study signpost a path to improve the effectiveness of the ECEC system in Australia. At the highest level, there is a need to significantly invest in the sector to ensure, at a minimum, children from the most vulnerable communities and backgrounds access programs of quality equal to that of their more advantaged peers. It is also essential that there is data available to quantify the contribution the system makes to children's learning, and the improvements made over time. Making our impact visible will help to grow the esteem the sector is held in¹⁰. On the ground, it is essential that educators have the tools to meaningfully improve the quality of their practice. There is a substantial potential to focus on improving *Instructional Support* which is low in most settings. To do this, new approaches are needed to leverage large-scale research to develop professional learning strategies. New research¹¹ is seeking to describe the pedagogical behaviours that make up the continuum of Instructional Support from low to high. This would make it possible for educators, and their

This would make it possible for educators, and their communities of practice, to locate the level they are presently operating at and to focus on reaching the level just above them.

communities of practice, to locate the level they are presently operating at and to focus on reaching the level just above them. This would represent a cycle of quality improvement embedded in cutting edge research and known to support children's learning and development.

The final report of the E4Kids study is available now at <https://doi.org/10.4225/49/58f99f47a2ab4>.

- 1 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-2985-1>
- 2 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1126/science.1156019>
- 3 <https://doi.org/10.1162/JEEA.2009.7.2-3.320>
- 4 <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1233517>
- 5 <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12184>
- 6 <https://doi.org/10.1080/10409289.2015.1076674>
- 7 <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/australasian-journal-early-childhood/index-abstracts/ajec-vol-40-no-4-december-2016/selection-ecec-programs-australian-families-quality-availability-usage-family-demographics/>
- 8 <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/australasian-journal-early-childhood/index-abstracts/ajec-vol-40-no-3-september-2015-2/a-bird-in-the-hand-understanding-the-trajectories-of-development-of-young-children-and-the-need-for-action-to-improve-outcomes/>
- 9 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-2985-1>
- 10 <http://www.mitchellinstitute.org.au/papers/quality-key-early-childhood-education-australia/>
- 11 Cloney and Hollingsworth in <https://www.routledge.com/From-Data-and-Analytics-to-the-Classroom-Translating-Learning-Analytics/Lodge-Horvath-Corrin/p/book/9780815362128>

MEMBER PROFILE

RANGEVIEW PRE-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



Rangeview Pre-school has been deeply connected to the Mitcham community for more than 50 years. In a quiet suburban street, our children's learning and development continues to benefit from a strong connection between staff, parents and children. This is evident from our strong tradition of involved, passionate and supportive parent-run management committees who in recent years have overseen a transformation from a one room service to a service with two rooms and weekly bush kinder sessions. This process has been led by ELAA's 2017 Volunteer of the Year, Genevieve Hammerton.

Our approach to early learning focuses on not one particular educational theory or philosophy, but on understanding the needs of the children and families in our service and supporting them as best we can. Our successful Father's Day evening kinder sessions are one example of how we work to build the skills and knowledge

of our parents in the value and purpose behind a play-based learning approach. We have found adopting the Storypark app also supports this, by offering parents and extended family a window into how their children learn and develop at Rangeview through play.

Our proudest moment in recent years has been the ongoing commitment of our committee of management who have overseen the redevelopment of our main buildings to include an additional room, redevelop our backyard area and explored new fundraising approaches which has seen us develop sponsorship partnerships with local business' like real estate, health services and different trades which has resulted in our fundraising efforts more than doubling. This has supported investment in our backyard redevelopment and allowed us to strengthen the quality of our programs.

Lately we've been working on a bush kinder program in partnership with

Whitehorse City Council. Our teachers fostered a relationship with the council employed environmental education officer and they now offer that person as a resource, along with access to a council owned educational facility in the local Yarren Dheran bushland park. Rangeview have developed all the policies and procedures allowing us to use the facility for a weekly bush kinder session.

We are inspired by learning! Every year, we see children across our programs grow and develop. We acknowledge the continual learning our staff does to bring new ideas and new ways of supporting children and families. We value the skills and knowledge brought by our families and parents and the way that is shared and focussed to make Rangeview Pre-school a kindergarten that all involved are proud to be a part of and committed to improving year on year.

Have you registered for your free e-News from ELAA?

e-News is delivered free each fortnight and features all the latest news from the sector, including information on training and resources.

For more information visit www.elaa.org.au/media-news/subscribe-e-enews

CELEBRATING THE DIFFERENCE VOLUNTEERS MAKE TO EARLY LEARNING

So who was the 2017 McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year?

Each year, ELAA and its preferred early learning recruitment partner, McArthur, are proud to celebrate the difference that volunteers make to early learning services.

The 2017 field of applicants was competitive with nominees assisting their services with national quality standards assessments, building projects, and just about everything in between. Each finalist was invited to the ELAA AGM in October where their contributions were acknowledged and the overall winner announced...

Honourable mentions

Four nominees were awarded an Honourable Mention by the selection panel including:

Sarah Cottrill – Dromana Preschool

Suzu Bragulla – Yandell Kindergarten in Greensborough

Emma Jezewski – Gordon Street Preschool in Beaumaris

Danielle Glover – Albert Park Preschool.

2017 finalists

Sean Cassidy from TRY – Melton West Preschool.

A volunteer since 2004, Sean lends a hand with reading sessions, outdoor play, and engaging with the children over card and board games, where he teaches them about turn-taking, following the rules and having fun without always having to be the winner.

Sean helped the preschool to set up iPads used in the ELLA (Early Learning Languages Australia) program. He is well-regarded by present and past TRY families who credit him with teaching their children a range of valuable skills – from how to ride a two-wheeled bike and caring for plants to barracking for Carlton (that's Sean's team).

Olivia Beaman from Alfred Nutall Memorial Kindergarten in Fairfield.

Olivia is currently Committee of Management President at Alfred Nutall and has previously served as Payroll Officer and Treasurer.

She recently managed the process to appoint of a new Kindergarten Director and established processes to efficiently

manage documentation, communication and feedback to the committee, staff and parents.

During 2016, Olivia oversaw the implementation of all the changes resulting from the introduction of the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement (VECTEA) 2016.

Olivia is also a strong advocate for her kindergarten and the early learning sector in general. She has made representations to Government and met with local parliamentarians regarding funding.

Stephen Greene from Birralee Preschool in Vermont South.

As Vice President, and then President, Stephen has supported Birralee in everything from working bees to the daily running of the service. Although, his commitment and collaborative skills are probably best illustrated by his efforts to replace the preschool's leaky roof and he worked tirelessly with the local council to achieve this. It wasn't uncommon for Stephen to be seen at Birralee laying out towels and buckets in anticipation of rainy weekends.

Jodi Stammers from Alfred Nutall Memorial Kindergarten in Fairfield.

Jodi has contributed to the Alfred Nutall Kindergarten community since 2013 and became Vice President in 2016.

Jodi's contribution to the Kindergarten's National Quality Standards and Staffing sub-committees has made a significant difference to the efficient running of the service. In particular, Jodi has taken the lead in assisting Alfred Nutall in its work to meet the recent Child Safe Standards.

Jodi has also worked with parents and the Director to help children and families feel connected through social events and liaises with the local council regarding minor and capital works. She also represents the Kindergarten at municipal network meetings.

And the winner is ...

Genevieve Hammerton from Rangeview Preschool Association in Mitcham.

Genevieve has been an inspiring volunteer for Rangeview Preschool Association for seven years. In 2012 she became Association President, a role she held for four years. She led Rangeview through its first departmental assessment process,



McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year Award winner – Genevieve Hammerton – with Tracie Burwash from McArthur.

resulting in an “Exceeds Expectations” rating while also managing the move to a 15 hour four-year-old program and compliance with changes to staffing ratios.

Genevieve introduced innovative funding ideas such as a pre-three-year-old kinder session and built a partnership with the local council to establish a Bush Kinder program.

She also project managed the redevelopment of the preschool from a single room to a multi-room facility and is credited with injecting a culture of participation, contribution and celebration into the Rangeview community.

Congratulations Genevieve!

Recognise your star volunteer in 2018

If you have a volunteer in your early learning service that deserves to be celebrated then nominate them for the 2018 McArthur Early Childhood Volunteer of the Year Awards. Nominations open around August so keep an eye on the ELAA website www.elaa.org.au, eNews or Facebook page.

ELAA would like to thank our preferred recruiting partner, McArthur, for their generous support in recognising Early Childhood volunteers



Australian
Charities and
Not-for-profits
Commission

THINKING OF REGISTERING YOUR EARLY LEARNING SERVICE AS A CHARITY?

MEET THE REGULATOR: AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS COMMISSION

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) is the independent national regulator of charities – responsible for registering charities, helping them to understand and meet their obligations, and monitoring charities' compliance with ACNC requirements. The ACNC is also responsible for providing advice, guidance and education for both charities and the public, and working to reduce red tape for Australia's not-for-profit sector.

To be registered as a charity with the ACNC, an organisation must have a purpose that is charitable – for example, advancing education. The organisation must also be not-for-profit, and it must benefit the public. A range of organisations can register as charities – including kindergartens, child care centres, preschools, parents and citizens associations and more.

Registration with the ACNC provides charities with:

- access to Commonwealth charity tax concessions, such as income tax

exemption or goods and services tax concessions

- an online presence on the ACNC Charity Register, Australia's free, searchable online database of information about registered charities
- the Registered Charity Tick, a logo designed to show the public that an organisation is registered with the ACNC and is committed to transparency and accountability.

The ACNC also provides advice, guidance and education to charities and members of the public on a range of issues relating to the not-for-profit sector. The ACNC regularly publishes factsheets and guidance on key issues such as administration costs, working with vulnerable people, good governance and more.

Once registered, a charity must continue to meet its obligations to the ACNC – including notifying the ACNC of changes to a charity's details (such as legal name, responsible persons and contact information), maintaining good records, meeting the ACNC's governance standards and submitting the ACNC's Annual Information Statement – which is published on the ACNC Charity Register.

The Annual Information Statement is also used to support one of the ACNC's overarching objectives, to reduce red tape for charities. Often the information available on the Annual Information Statement is shared with other government agencies – including Commonwealth, state and territory regulators – to reduce duplicative reporting burdens for charities.

If your organisation is already registered with the ACNC, please ensure that your information is accurate and up-to-date. You can check this by logging into the ACNC Charity Portal at charity.acnc.gov.au.

If your organisation is not registered as a charity and you would like to apply, there are a range of useful resources available on the ACNC website at acnc.gov.au. Simply visit 'Register My Charity' to find further information about the requirements for registration, and to complete your registration.

If you have further questions, the ACNC's Advice Services team are available to assist – call 13 ACNC (13 22 62) from 9am to 6pm Monday to Friday (AEDT), or email advice@acnc.gov.au.

ON THE CUSP

Preschool Matters likes to hear about our members' approach to learning – Poppy Woodhouse is a kindergarten teacher and educational leader at Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre in Camberwell, Victoria, and sits on the City of Boroondara Early Years Advisory Committee as the Kindergarten Service Provider Representative. Poppy has worked in early years settings in Singapore, Thailand and Cambodia as well as Australia and is passionate about empowering children and supporting them to develop their self-esteem and sense of capability. In this article, Poppy reflects on the changes that are often observed in children during the three-year-old period, and how adults can understand and support this developmental chapter; despite the challenges.

Being three years old is difficult.

At this age, children are on the cusp of emerging into what adults tend to see as true 'childhood'. Leaving the solid, soft world of infancy and total dependency. There is a broadening realisation that the world is bigger than their safe microcosms; that there is mortality, the unknown and unpredictability. Children begin asking questions that to us seem philosophical, but to the child are building blocks with which to construct frames for these new, abstract concepts.

Death seems to be a favourite focus: "When will you die?", "Can spiders die?" "Can dead people jump?" "Am I dead?" It is important that we aren't dismissive: that we don't laugh off these questions as silly or absurd; that we don't tell children they are too young to worry. Children are standing on the edge of a cliff that juts out over a terrifying chasm of the unknown – with every question that we answer honestly and thoughtfully, we add another step to the bridge that supports children to pass safely into maturity.

The child's brain is physically changing in a way that modern science is still trying to fully understand. Before the age of four the brain has grown to 80 percent of its adult size. Synaptic connections are literally strengthening or falling away based on every experience. Grey matter, responsible for memory, emotions, self-regulation, decision making, sensory perception and verbal expression peaks in volume at age four, and then declines over the lifespan (Matsuzawa et al, 2001).

The inner developmental process at this age can cause what seems like a regression in behaviour. Tantrums, defiance, refusal to verbalise – all these are exhausting and

exasperating for adults. This behaviour often flicks a switch in us that turns on an anger response; especially when we are tired and on the verge of a tantrum ourselves. Where has the gentle, compliant and sparkling toddler of only a few weeks ago vanished to? They are still there, but they are being pulled between two worlds. On one side, the comforting world of before: where life is no bigger than home, the park, the early childhood setting, and the supermarket. Where the only options are those presented by caregivers, and threats are managed by those more capable.

On the other side, the side the child is travelling towards, is a vast newness. Places they've never been or even

dreamed. Dangers, and a sense of time outside the immediate future. The ability and drive to say no, the realisation that they have an opinion, that they can be an individual with wants, preferences and self-constructed ideas.

The desire to be yourself is important; and confident arrival at this point is beautiful. The child wants to evolve; but they don't quite have both feet through the door. As adults, we need to push them, gently. Trust in children more and validate their views in a way that is tangible to them: let them drink from a breakable glass, show them how a flower blooms then returns to the earth, tell them it's okay to feel anger – to want to be held or left alone; help them strike a match and light a candle. Perhaps most importantly of all, be patient. Nurture the child in this transformative chrysalis and you will help build a strong, assured and unique set of wings with which the child can soar.

References

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“The desire to be yourself is important; and confident arrival at this point is beautiful. The child wants to evolve; but they don't quite have both feet through the door.”





SHARING THE MESSAGE: COMMUNICATING ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION WITH FAMILIES

BY CATHARINE HYDON – ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION FACILITATOR

Families and early childhood educators share one very important goal – the safety and wellbeing of their young children. Our views may differ on many other aspects of a child's experience at kindergarten but on the need to keep children safe we find ourselves in strong agreement. So as hundreds of children and families are welcomed into early childhood education and care services, it is timely to think about how we can work with families to ensure children remain safe as they learn about themselves and the world around them.

There are, of course, many aspects of children's safety that educators will feature as part of a quality educational program. Children will most likely learn about how to safely climb equipment, be safe in the sun and how to safely approach a dog in a park. But there is one aspect of safety that children have the opportunity to learn in early childhood that affects both children and adults and has a lasting impact on the safety of our whole

community – road safety education. Road safety education responds to the fact that road-related incidents involving children remain one of the leading causes of injury or death for young children and that national road tolls are on the rise. In an increasingly mobile society where children are, from birth, road users (as passengers, pedestrian or cyclist) road safety education teaches children to be safe and responsible on our roads now and into the future.

In response to this evidence, there are now many early childhood services that routinely include the *Starting Out Safely* road safety education program as part of the curriculum. Children are supported to learn about the key road safety messages and practice these skills as they participate in community life. But how do we engage families in this important work?

As part of our commitment to safety and in response to the recently articulated themes defining exceeding practice in the National Quality Standard, it is imperative that educators find meaningful ways to extend their commitment to road safety education to include communication with and support of families to implement safe road use habits. This is best achieved when educators use multiple strategies over a period of time. Token or 'one-off'

efforts seldom translate into daily habits compared to regular reminders that are relevant to families lives. The following suggestions support educators to not only communicate with families but also work with them to promote road safety in home and communities.

- As a first step, educators could consider the context of the community. What are the road safety challenges or issues that families might experience? For example, having to navigate a very busy intersection to access the centre or a small car park shared with another service or a community where children never see footpaths or traffic lights. Perhaps ask the families what they consider to be the challenges on the roads in the local community and what they would like their children to learn about and include these in the curriculum.
- Articulate the commitment of the service to safety in the policies and information provided to families not only when they are at the centre but also on their way to and from the centre and when they are at home. Resources to support policy development, as well as sample policies are available at the *Starting Out Safely* website childroadsafety.org.au.

“ Children are supported to learn about the key road safety messages and practice these skills as they participate in community life. But how do we engage families in this important work?

- Distribute road safety educational materials in the information or welcome pack. These are produced by VicRoads and available to order on the *Starting Out Safely* website. Educators might also consider including specific road safety information relevant to the centre and the local community in the family handbook.
- Include a question in the interview with families about their understanding of road safety and whether they have any concerns or questions about their child's understanding. For example, families might identify that it's hard to get their children to sit in a child restraint or hold their hand as they are walking. These insights might alert you to any gaps in understanding about road safety and assist in decisions about what might be included in the curriculum.
- As information is shared about the curriculum, perhaps at an information night or welcome event, discuss how the program will include teaching children about safety including road safety and why this is important.
- Use signage to remind families about the key safety messages, for example, holding their children's hands and use the safety door as they depart. Encourage children to also share this information with families. Consider

developing signage, with the support of a willing parent volunteer, in relevant community languages as a way of promoting safety messages in accessible ways.

- When planning outings into the community – a practice increasingly featured in quality curriculum decisions – invite families to come along. Not only will this be an opportunity for parents to learn how children connect to and contribute to their communities but also how to keep children safe as they venture out into the streets.

- If the service receives a visit from ThingleToodle this year consider inviting the families – the performance is just as funny for grown-ups with some great safety messages!
- Check out the latest road safety materials and resources on the *Starting Out Safely* childroadsafety.org.au.

Together, educators and families can make a significant difference in the safety of young children on our roads. To paraphrase a well-used saying – it takes a village to raise children safely and that same village to teach safe road use habits!



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SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Article courtesy of beyondblue and KidsMatter.

What is KidsMatter Early Childhood?

KidsMatter Early Childhood provides early learning services with a promotion, prevention and early intervention framework to support the mental health and wellbeing of young children, families, educators and early childhood professionals. The framework offers a comprehensive approach to how relationships, the environment, policies, practices, events and children's development and learning influence wellbeing.

Early childhood education and care services influence many factors known to affect children's mental health and wellbeing. Significant factors are organised into target areas that make up each component.

Figure 1 shows how the KidsMatter Early Childhood components are:

- inter-related
- embedded within and supported by Component 1
- of equal importance

KidsMatter Early Childhood involves continuous service development, relationship building, staff commitment, professional learning and planning, implementation and monitoring. The framework follows a Plan-Do-Review process which helps identify the specific needs within a service and to develop, implement and review strategies that best address these.

A key feature of KidsMatter is flexibility. The KidsMatter journey can be started at any time and allows educators to pick and choose topics to suit their needs.

The professional learning topics include a wide variety of online resources, local

events as well as individualised support and guidance from KidsMatter consultants. These resources can support educators to foster positive mental health in children and recognise and support children with mental health challenges.

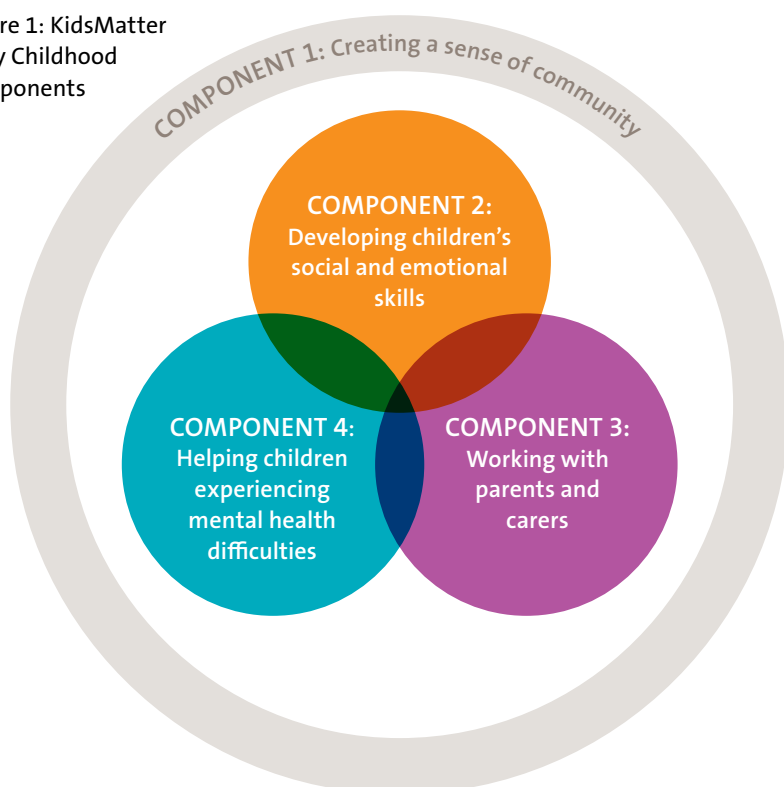
Implementing a promotion, prevention and early intervention approach

Early recognition and intervention can help prevent mental health challenges that would otherwise impact a child's development. Early childhood services are in an ideal position to work closely and collaboratively with children and families. The best outcomes for children can be achieved when early learning services and health and community professionals work together with families.

Educators and teachers are in an optimum position to observe the everyday activities and habits of children. This level of observation can help support children to develop their social and emotional skills, and identify mental health concerns.

“ *The framework follows a Plan-Do-Review process which helps identify the specific needs within a service and to develop, implement and review strategies that best address these.*

Figure 1: KidsMatter Early Childhood components



An easy-to-use tool to record observations and find patterns that will assist in understanding what's going on for a child, is the BETLS tool which is available on the KidsMatter website. BETLS stands for behaviour, emotions, thoughts, learning and social relationships. When observing a child's behaviour, it is helpful to include the following details:

- pervasiveness (Who is impacted by the behaviour? Where does it happen? When does it happen?)
- persistence (How long has it been going on for?)
- frequency (How often do you see this behaviour?)
- severity (How much does the behaviour impact on the child and others?)

The Staff Self-Reflections section of the tool provides a space to reflect on a child's experiences. It allows educators to note their thoughts about a situation, and any other additional information that could be playing a role in the child's behaviour.

ff *Using everyday language and avoiding clinical or educational jargon helps break down any underlying barriers between an educator and a family.*

By using the BELTS tool, educators have a track record of behaviours to refer to in conversation with a family.

Discussing mental health can be challenging. Early childhood professionals need to be able to communicate effectively to have a conversation about children and their needs. Difficult conversations are easier to have if a strong relationship has already been established. Having these conversations can help build trust between a service and the family.

It's not just about the conversation that takes place. The environment in which the conversation occurs plays a large part in creating a safe place in which a family and a child feel comfortable.

Using everyday language and avoiding clinical or educational jargon helps break down any underlying barriers between an educator and a family. Educators can outline the strengths they've noticed in the child's behaviour and progress into any concerns they may have. The meeting is a place to put some planning in place. Setting up an action to follow up or simply arranging a time to meet again ensures the concern is addressed.

Seeking further information and advice

It may be necessary to seek professional advice and assistance from support services that provide health and community professionals. It is not the role of an educator or teacher to diagnose a child's mental health challenges but to develop effective working relationships with support services and families. Making links with local health and community agencies so that children and families can access further support and more appropriate referrals is essential.

Having policies and practices in place for responding to children with mental health issues ensures educators and teachers know what to do and feel supported in doing so. It means that there is a shared understanding between a service and family. KidsMatter offers a wealth of knowledge and experience to help educators ensure the child and family receive the best support.

Visit the KidsMatter website to find out more about getting started:
www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood/components/start-kidsmatter-experience



A new, unified approach to mental health in education

From August 2018, *beyondblue* will lead a new National Education Initiative with support from headspace and Early Childhood Australia, with funding from the Australian Government Department of Health.

The vision of the National Education Initiative is that every Australian early learning service and school is a positive, inclusive and resilient community where every child, young person, staff member and parent/carer can achieve their best possible mental health.

This new initiative will transform Australia's approach to child and youth mental health care by providing a single end-to-end school-based mental health framework. Covering the continuum from birth to 18, the National Education Initiative will help families, educators and mental health professionals to work together to support the positive mental health of children and young people through mental health promotion, prevention, early intervention and suicide response and support.

The initiative will integrate and build on the strengths and evidence-based principles of key existing Commonwealth Government mental health initiatives being delivered in education settings, including KidsMatter Early Childhood as well as:

- Response Ability (pre-service training in University and VET settings)
- KidsMatter Primary
- MindMatters
- headspace school support (post suicide support to secondary schools).

QIPs – PLANNING FOR QUALITY



The beginning of the year is a good time to think about performance and quality improvement in your service. In this article, the Victoria's early learning regulatory authority, the Department of Education and Training, outlines the role of the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and the process for developing, reviewing and updating a QIP. It has information on good practice and what an authorised officer might look for when reviewing a QIP. It also gives an update on QIPs in the context of the new themes for determining a quality rating of Exceeding National Quality Standard (NQS), which are being introduced along with the revised NQS on 1 February 2018.

What is a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)?

Your service must have a QIP that:

- includes an assessment of the quality of your service's practices against the NQS and the National Law and National Regulations
- identifies areas for improvement
- includes a statement of your service's philosophy that underpins and informs outcomes for children.

The QIP helps you self-assess your service's performance in delivering quality education and care, and plan future improvements.

You must review and revise your QIP at least annually, or at any time when directed by the regulatory authority.

The quality improvement planning process

Self-assessment

- The first step in the quality improvement planning process is to conduct a self-assessment of your service.

- An essential part of the self-assessment is to focus on your service's **overarching philosophy**. The philosophy and the QIP should be developed in light of the guiding principles of the National Quality Framework.
- The QIP and service philosophy should reflect the unique environmental, cultural and community context of your service, and incorporate the diverse perspectives of educators, children, families, and the community.
- Consider how effective, relevant and fair your practice is for all involved. What are your service's strengths and weaknesses? The *Guide to the National Quality Framework* (NQF) has a set of reflective questions to help you explore current practice.

Writing the QIP

- The QIP is a dynamic, living document that evolves as goals are achieved and new priorities identified. It should identify your service's short, medium and longer-term key priorities and set achievable strategies and goals.

- What opportunities are there for quality improvement against the seven quality areas of the NQS and the related regulatory requirements? You do not have to address all quality areas each year.
- The QIP is also a way to acknowledge successes, and identify how you will maintain that success.

Reviewing the QIP

- When you have updated your QIP, keep the momentum going by reviewing progress regularly. You could add the QIP to your regular team meeting agenda.
- Consider what has changed – are there any new or emerging issues (e.g. new staff, new children with particular needs)?
- Revisit past decisions and reflect if they are still current – just because you've always done something a particular way doesn't mean it has to stay that way.
- There's always something more you can do to improve. What is the next goal? How can your educators use the latest research to drive improved outcomes?
- Update your QIP after an assessment and rating to reflect the outcomes of that process. The assessment and rating report, especially the information in the QIP notes, is a rich source of information.

What does an authorised officer look for in a QIP?

As part of the assessment and rating process, the authorised officer will review your service's QIP. It helps them understand your service's context, and helps inform and focus their visit. The QIP is an important indicator, but is not a formal part the assessment – it will not be "marked", and you will not be penalised for identifying areas to work on.

The authorised officer will be looking for how the QIP reflects your **service's particular context** i.e. how it addresses the unique circumstances of your children, families and community. They will expect to see that it is **your service's own working document**, not a set piece. For example, the QIP of a kindergarten attached to a school should reflect the context of the specific school.

They'll expect to see how your QIP **drives quality improvement** through clear alignment between program delivery and quality improvement planning, and your processes for regularly updating the QIP.

They'll particularly be looking for how **parents' feedback** is reflected and how **children's voices are captured**. For example, if your service has sustained, shared thinking during everyday interactions with children, they'll expect to see this in your QIP.

Quality improvement planning and Exceeding NQS practice

Quality services regularly update and maintain their QIP as a dynamic document to guide progress towards quality improvement. The QIP should demonstrate this commitment.

Under the revised (2018) NQS, a service will need to demonstrate **three themes** for a standard to be rated Exceeding NQS. The QIP will need to reflect how the service is demonstrating these themes.

The *Guide to the NQF* provides indicators of exceeding practice in relation to continuous improvement and the QIP process (Quality Area 7 Leadership, Standard 7.2, Element 7.2.1).

Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations:

Across the service, observed and discussed quality improvement processes align with the service's QIP and with other supporting documentation, including individual professional development plans for staff members

Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

The leadership team regularly reflects on the service's quality improvement processes and makes changes where opportunities are identified to enhance outcomes for the service team, children and families

Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and communities:

Support families and the community to participate meaningfully in the service's quality improvement processes, including the development and review of the QIP

Quality improvement processes contribute to a culture of inclusiveness and a sense of belonging at the service, and suit the unique context of the service

In your self-assessment, consider how your service demonstrates the three Exceeding themes in relation to leadership and continuous quality improvement processes. This will provide a starting point for embedding the Exceeding NQS themes across all of the standards.



Image concept sourced from Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority www.acecqa.gov.au

Is your QIP current?

When you next review your service's QIP – double check that it reflects the 1 October 2017 changes to the NQF and the revised (2018) NQS.

Everyone's voice counts!

- Create an open environment where everyone is comfortable to contribute.
- A sheet of butcher paper on the wall is a great way for children, parents and stakeholders to provide input any time.
- Draw a mind map and invite children to contribute ideas about how to progress a project.

Find out more

Visit the ACECQA website (acecqa.gov.au) to access the revised quality improvement plan template, updated to reflect the revised NQS, and the following resources:

- *Reviewing your Quality Improvement Plan*
- Guidance on determining Exceeding NQS for Standards
- Guide to the National Quality Standard and assessment and rating process in the Guide to the National Quality Framework

Additional reading:

- 'Continuous Improvement: The New Normal' by Catharine Hydon in *Regulation and Quality Assessment Update* Issue 22 December 2016, Department of Education and Training
- 'Reflecting on Reflective Practice' by Heather Barnes in *Regulation and Quality Assessment Update* Issue 20 May 2016, Department of Education and Training

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