



EARLY
LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA

The voice for parents and service providers

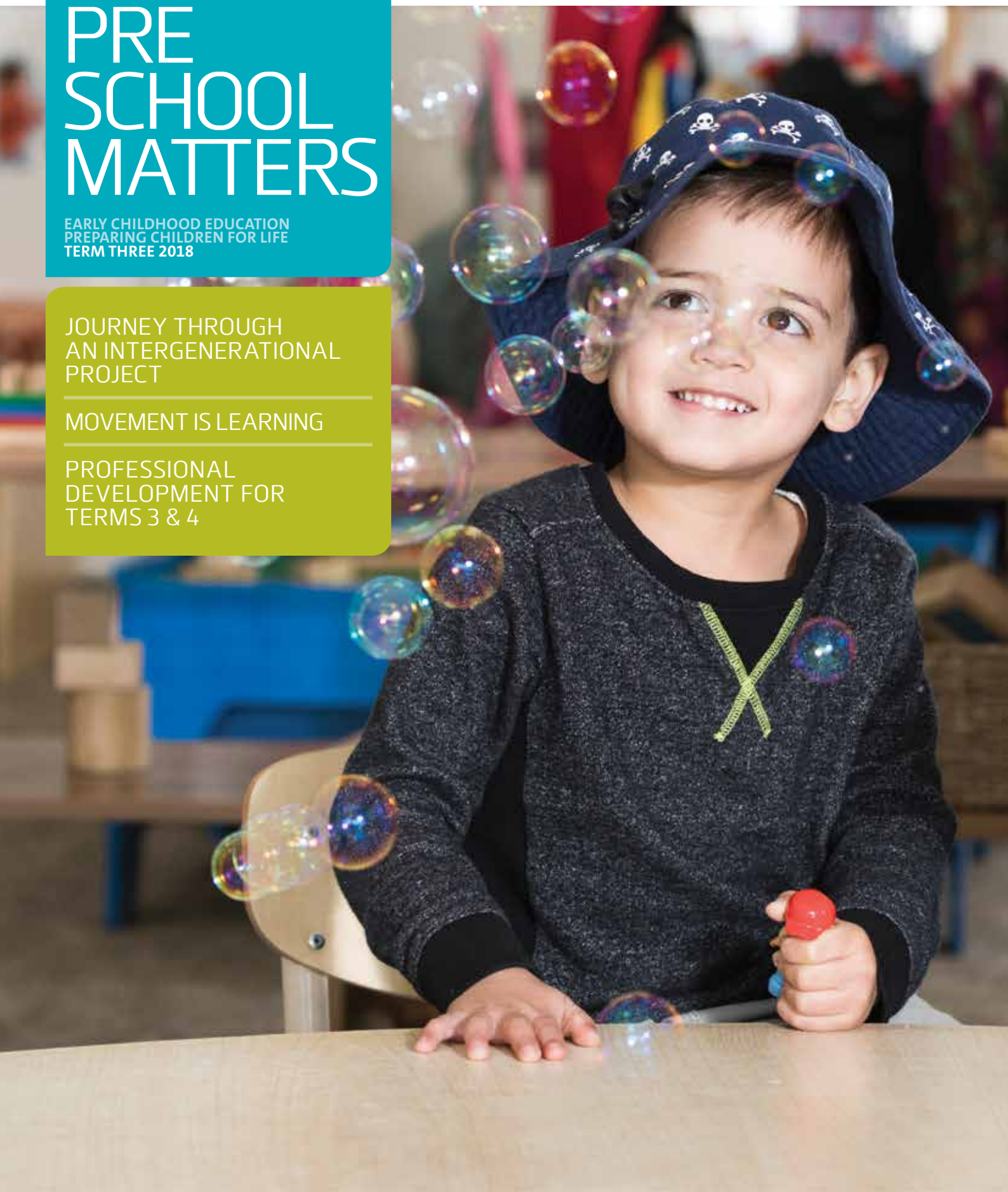
PRE SCHOOL MATTERS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PREPARING CHILDREN FOR LIFE
TERM THREE 2018

JOURNEY THROUGH
AN INTERGENERATIONAL
PROJECT

MOVEMENT IS LEARNING

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT FOR
TERMS 3 & 4



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Welcome to Term 3 – we are very excited as we move into the second half of the year with our newly appointed CEO, David Worland, and get ready to tackle two key elections (Victorian and Federal) in the next 12 months.

The Victorian Election is on November 24 and ELAA, along with Community Child Care Association and ECA (Victoria) – are eagerly looking forward to hosting a pre-election Education and Care Forum on 28 August (6.30 – 8.30pm). The forum will include presentations from the spokespeople on early childhood education and care from the Victorian ALP, Liberal Party and Greens. More details will be coming over the next few weeks in eNews and the ELAA Facebook page.

We're also working on some key national issues including advocating for the continued funding for 15 hours of universal access and reinstating funding for the National Quality Agenda. As a partner in the Early Learning Everyone Benefits campaign, we're approaching selected ELAA members about taking part in Early Learning Matters Week (5 – 12 August). During this week federal politicians will be invited to visit services across Australia to see quality early learning in action and learn more about why giving all children access to quality early learning is so important. You can read more about ELAA's recent Advocacy activity on page 5.

In this Term's edition of *Preschool Matters* there are some essential articles for Committees and service managers – be sure to read the Regs In Focus section on

page 11 for important updates to Long Service Leave, Qualification and Ratio requirements, and more recent changes to other legislation and regulations. There's also a great article about getting creative with fundraising projects on page 10 and essential reading from DET (Victoria) about changes to assessment and rating (page 24).

Early childhood inclusion education teacher, Clare Crew, has some great practical tips for service directors and educators on the importance of motor skill development to learning on pages 22 and 23. Also, Kate Hall and Amanda Testro discuss an Intergenerational project that bridges understanding and learning between the children in their service and the residents of two local aged care facilities (pages 20 and 21). If you are looking to step up your Road Safety Education program, then you should also read the story on our 2018 *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award winner, Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre, on page 18.

I also encourage you to take a look at the fantastic professional development sessions on offer for Terms 3 and 4 on pages 6, 7 and 8 and read the wrap up on our Annual Conference (pages 12, 13 and 14).

Before I finish, I would also like to acknowledge the tireless efforts of Ms Jo Guerts for acting as President for the last seven months. Jo is an amazing asset to ELAA and the Early Childhood Education and Care sector more generally and we are very lucky to be able to draw on her energy and expertise in that capacity.

All the best for the coming Term.

Lee Cath, President, ELAA

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Cover: Liam attends day care at ELAA member, Bassett's Road Early Learning Centre (Doreen) and is looking forward to starting in the three-year-old room next year. His parents, Vanaja and Jason, recognise the importance of two years of quality early childhood education in preparing their child for school.



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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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ELAA acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live and work and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future.

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CEO'S REPORT



I'm very pleased to be writing my first report for Preschool Matters as the new CEO of ELAA. There has been a lot of activity in the sector (even in the two months since I commenced with ELAA) and plenty on the horizon.

Conference

Firstly, a huge thanks to all those who contributed to this year's Early Childhood Education Conference including delegates, presenters, the Conference Reference Committee, and ELAA and Gowrie Victoria staff. The depth and breadth of the speaker program was very positively received by delegates and work has already begun on the 2019 event with plenty of possibilities for a refreshed program and event structure being considered.

Funding, policy and regulatory environment

Child Care Subsidy

By the time you read this article, a huge change to the funding of early childhood education and care will have been implemented i.e. the national roll out of the new Child Care Subsidy on July 2.

The changes will impact families according to their level of activity and income. Whilst there are additional subsidies for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, many families will be worse off under the new funding. For example, families earning

over \$65,710 that do not meet the activity test will no longer be able to access subsidised child care. ELAA continues to advocate against this policy and would prefer that affordable, accessible and high quality early childhood education is available to all children, irrespective of their parents' workforce participation.

NSW fund preschool for 3-year-olds

The NSW Government has announced funding for preschool education for 3-year-old children in community based preschools. The decision is based on the overwhelming research that two years of preschool is better than one for a child's long term development, education end life outcomes. Whilst the funding is only available to 17% of NSW preschool aged children, ELAA is supportive of the news. We will continue to advocate for the full extension of universal access to 3-year-old children, both at a national and State level.

Quality

National Quality Framework Snapshot

According to data in the Q1 2018 NQF Snapshot, more than two thirds of services previously rated as "Working Towards the National Quality Standard" have improved their overall rating at reassessment. This is a fantastic result for Australian families and children, as contemporary research consistently points to a correlation between high quality early childhood education and positive long-term outcomes for children, the community and the economy. Unfortunately over 20% of services assessed nationally are still rated as "Working Towards The National Quality Standard". ELAA continues to advocate for a commitment from the Federal Government to ongoing funding for the National Partnership on the National Quality Agenda beyond 31 December 2018.

Industrial relations

Long Service Benefits Portability Bill

A Bill is currently working its way through the Victorian Parliament to implement a Portable Long Service Leave Scheme across the Victorian community services and early childhood sectors. The purpose of the scheme is to improve financial outcomes for staff in the sector by facilitating transferable leave across employers.

Whilst there are additional subsidies for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, many families will be worse off under the new funding.

Unfortunately, the scope of the draft legislation does not extend to privately operated services. This limited scope inherently detracts from the value of the scheme for employees and also creates a two-tiered inequitable system for employers.

ELAA is working on behalf of members to influence the design of the legislation and issues around implementation if passed by the Victorian Parliament in August 2018.

Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement (VECTEA)

ELAA has commenced early discussions with both the Victorian Department of Education and Training and the Australian Education Union regarding the next iteration of the VECTEA agreement. The current agreement expires on 30 June 2018 and describes the industrial relations framework for many of Victoria's community based early childhood services.

It is expected that formal negotiation on the VECTEA will commence in January 2019, when the AEU submits a log of claims. ELAA remains focused on achieving positive sector outcomes across salaries, workloads, and workplace flexibility. Regular updates will be provided to members as the process develops.

ELAA membership

Members would have recently received their 2018/19 ELAA membership renewal pack. The pack includes details on some of our achievements for members over the past 12 months, a member dashboard report, plus a quick guide to our services. Please be sure to renew your membership by the due date so you can be sure that we are there for you as soon as you need us. One of my top priorities as the new CEO is to review and enhance the benefits we provide to members so watch this space for more news on how we will be adding value to all memberships.

Finally, I would like to thank the ELAA Board, staff and members I have met to date for the warm welcome that has been extended to me and I'm looking forward to getting out and meeting more members in the second half of the year.

All the best,

David Worland, CEO ELAA

NEWS & EVENTS



Victorian Election Forum – save the date

The Victorian State Election takes place on 24 November. What are the issues affecting early childhood education and care services in Victoria that you most want our politicians to know about? Join ELAA, Community Childcare Victoria, and ECA (Vic) for a forum to discuss the issues prior to the election and hear from the spokespeople on early childhood education and care from the major Victorian parties. Make a date in your diary for Tuesday 28 August 6.30–8.30pm. More information to come in ELAA's eNews. Subscribe at www.elaa.org.au/media-news/subscribe-e-news

2018 Caring for Kids Raffle winners

Congratulations to the winners of the 2018 Caring for Kids Raffle presented by ELAA and Playgroup Victoria.

The Raffle was drawn on 29 June at the ELAA office.

1st Prize – Ticket 22364 – Yana Zheng (Hawthorn). Ticket purchased from Indra Preschool. \$6,000 Flight Centre voucher

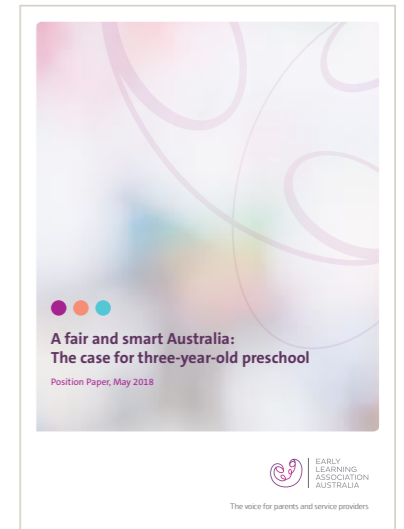
2nd Prize – Ticket 16343 – Sarah Driscoll (Essendon). Ticket purchased from Ascot Vale Progress Kindergarten. \$2,500 Harvey Norman voucher

3rd Prize – Ticket 17202 – Carrie Giacometti (Chadstone). Ticket purchased from Ashwood Children's Centre. \$750 JB HiFi voucher

A fair and smart Australia: the case for three-year-old preschool

ELAA has released a position paper outlining the case for funded three-year-old preschool for all Australian children. The paper is informed by the work of the Early Learning: Everyone Benefits campaign, the Mitchell Institute and the Lifting Our Game report. ELAA's CEO Group has guided the development of the paper which is available at www.elaa.org.au/advocacy-research/campaigns

A series of resources will be developed to support the promotion of a campaign for funded three-year-old preschool. To keep in touch with the campaign, subscribe to ELAA's eNews: www.elaa.org.au/media-news/subscribe-e-news



Awards for Poppy

Congratulations to Poppy Woodhouse on winning the Victorian and then National 'Educator of the Year' Award as part of the Australian Early Education and Care Awards. Poppy is an early childhood teacher at ELAA member, Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre, in Camberwell. Poppy received her national award at an Awards Gala Dinner in Sydney during June.



Sarah and Harry with their Harvey Norman voucher (2nd prize) which they won after purchasing a ticket at Progress Kinder – Ascot Vale.

MEMBER PROFILE

BRANDON PARK CHILDREN'S CENTRE



Brandon Park Children's Centre (BPCC) opened its doors to the families of Monash in October 1987. Back then we catered for 35 children a day. Thirty years later, we welcome 60 children a day and educate over 100 children weekly. We are privileged to educate and nurture the children of Monash and surrounding suburbs and have been fortunate to have staff at BPCC who have been part of the BPCC family since we opened our doors 30 years ago.

Our approach to early learning focuses on a holistic approach to learning. We see the children as individuals and cater for their own set of learning dispositions, goals and interests. We believe that children learn best through play and experiencing the real world around them. Children are encouraged to get involved in areas that

affect them. We have faith that our children are confident and involved learners and will develop to be resilient and compassionate leaders. We encourage our families and community to be involved with us through each child's learning journey.

BPCC educators, families and the parent management committee have a collaborative relationship which enables us to discuss, plan, implement and evaluate goals which we see as improving the service now and into the future.

Our proudest moment in recent times has been the development and implementation of the Bush Kinder program. The Kinder children venture out to the reserve adjacent to our centre. They walk over to the reserve on Tuesday or Thursday (alternating weeks)

and spend a few hours engaging with nature. Time spent in nature can strengthen social bonds between children. The unstructured time inherent in play allows for social interactions that are important building blocks of emotional intelligence. When play takes place in nature, children have increased opportunity for negotiating, sharing, problem solving and working together toward a common goal.

Lately we have been working on a small makeover to our yard – we have relocated the cubby house which has allowed us to create more of a natural play space for the children to explore and learn in. Thanks to the involvement of families in assisting us with the makeover, we have also been able to install a rainwater tank and guttering within this space. We use this to allow the children the opportunity to discuss saving water and using sustainable practices. By redesigning the yard space, we have also put in a digging patch and some mud to complement our mud kitchen. We are also working on developing a compost bin and worm farm to begin to recycle and repurpose our kitchen scraps.

We are forever inspired by the children and their ideas that lead our projects. Their enthusiasm and hope pushes us to develop these spaces. We take inspiration from indigenous culture and their outlook on the land on which we live. The respect that indigenous Australians show for the land is something that we weave into our daily practice. BPCC is a family and we are proud of all the achievements of those involved with our service. We are inspired by following the children's curiosity and hunger for learning, which we think makes our centre a rich and inviting experience for our children, families and educators.

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-news

ADVOCACY YOUR COLLECTIVE VOICE

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

Call for universal learning for every Australian child

ELAA was a signatory to a letter to the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull advocating for universal early learning for every Australian child. The letter called on federal, state and territory governments to accept and implement the recommendations of 'Lifting Our Game': Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools through Early Childhood Interventions. ELAA had contributed to consultations undertaken to develop the report, which was commissioned at the request of all Australian states and territories. The report outlines the benefits of early learning for children who have experienced disadvantage as well as the broader benefits for all Australians and the compelling evidence that supports this.

Universal Partnership Agreement on National Quality Framework

ELAA, together with Community Child Care VCOSS and Early Childhood Australia (Vic Branch), have sent a joint letter to Simon Birmingham, the Federal Minister for Education about the Universal Partnership

Agreement on the National Quality Agenda which concluded on 30 June. The letter outlines the critical role of the Commonwealth-State/Territory partnership agreement to the continued implementation of the National Quality Framework. ELAA will continue to campaign with our members for a new partnership agreement to ensure that the critical focus on quality is maintained long-term.

Portability of Long Service Leave

The Victorian State Government has introduced a new Bill to legislate for portable long service leave for the community services sector, including in kindergartens. Whilst ELAA has long been a supporter of portability of long service leave for staff, there are a significant number of grey areas to be worked through and ELAA has been representing members' issues in discussions about the implementation of the new legislation. The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services plans to issue a Regulatory Impact Statement for consultation during July 2018 and feedback from members will inform ELAA's response.

Wide-ranging engagement across sector issues

ELAA's advocacy encompasses many different activities. A snapshot of some of our recent engagement includes:

- providing submissions on the implementation of Child Information Sharing legislation, and the draft national ALP policy on early childhood
- meetings with sector partners in relation to the November State election
- advising on the implementation of Respectful Relationships professional development program for educators
- advising on the promotion of Early ABLES, an online tool to assist educators to develop an individual education plan for children with a disability or developmental delay
- advising on the implementation of the *beyondblue* National Education Initiative to support evidence-based mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention
- representing the sector on the Department of Education and Training Community Services Organisations governance group
- fulfilling our responsibilities as a partner of the Early Childhood Agreement for Children in Out-of-home care.

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

ADVERTISING



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ELAA PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR TERMS 3 & 4 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.

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



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: Friday, 20 July 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



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: Tuesday, 24 July 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

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

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Brave leadership in the everyday – living life on the edge

Quality Area: 4 & 7

APST: 2.3, 3.3, 6.1, 6.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Anthony Semann

Date: Friday, 27 July 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



Bush Kinder in your own back yard

Quality Area: 1, 2, 3 & 6

APST: 2.3, 3.3, 3.4 & 7.4

Presenter: Karen Glancy

Date: Monday, 6 August 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

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

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 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: Tuesday, 14 August 2018

Time: 9:00am – 5:00pm

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

Cost: \$340 Members \$385 Non Members



Strengthening communication with families

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6

APST: 3.5, 3.7, 6.2 & 7.4

Presenter: Debbie Cole

Date: Friday, 17 August 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

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

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



The art of educational leadership

Quality Area: 1, 4 & 7

APST: 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.6, 4.1, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1 & 7.2

Presenter: Catharine Hydon

Date: Tuesday, 21 August 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: CRecovre, Level 8, 570 Bourke St, Melbourne. Public transport recommended. No 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, 31 August 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



Keeping children active: strategies to include physical education and wellness in children's programs

Quality Area: 1, 2 & 3

APST: 1.1, 1.5, 3.3 & 6.4

Presenter: Paul Pennisi

Date: Tuesday, 4 September 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



Self-care and stress management for the early childhood professional

Quality Area: 4 & 7

APST: 6.2, 6.3 & 7.4

Presenter: Dr Lyn O'Grady

Date: Friday, 7 September 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



Supporting inclusion of children with a disability

Quality Area: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7

APST: 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 6.2 & 7.3

Presenter: Yooralla

Date: Friday, 14 September 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

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

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, 17 September 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

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

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Defending our pedagogy and practices: how do we convince others to care about what we care about?

Quality Area: 1, 6, & 7

APST: 1.2, 3.7, 7.3 & 7.4

Presenter: Anthony Semann

Date: Friday, 12 October 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Manningham City Council, 699 Doncaster Road, Doncaster

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: Monday, 15 October 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Hobson's Bay City Council, Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona

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: Thursday, 18 October 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: Knox Civic Centre, 511 Burwood Highway, Wantirna South

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Music and movement in early childhood programs

Quality Area: 1, 2 & 5

APST: 1.1, 2.1, 3.2, 3.4 & 6.2

Presenter: Anne Belcher

Date: Friday, 26 October 2018

Time: 9:30am – 2:30pm

Venue: 23-28 Lightwood Road, Springvale

Cost: \$185 Members \$265 Non Members



Safety – not just child's play: Hobson's Bay

Quality Area: 3, 4, & 7

APST: 4.4, 6.2, 7.2, & 7.4

Presenter: Zora Marko and Emma Morgan

Date: Thursday, 8 November 2018

Time: 9:00am – 5:00pm

Venue: Hobson's Bay City Council, Civic Centre, 115 Civic Parade, Altona

Cost: \$340 Members \$385 Non Members



Protective Behaviours: talking to children about safety

Quality Area: 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6

APST: 4.4, 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, & 7.4

Presenter: Children's Protection Society

Date: Wednesday, 14 November 2018

Time: 6:30pm - 9:00pm

Venue: Abbotsford Convent – Salon Room 1 St Heliers Street, Abbotsford

Cost: \$85 Members, \$100 Non Members

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.



Ending the year on a high – planning your Annual General Meeting (AGM) and successful handover to the new committee

QUALITY AREA 7: LEADERSHIP
AND SERVICE MANAGEMENT

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

Join us for a comprehensive presentation on preparing for your AGM and how to ensure a positive handover is provided to the new committee.

The free session will cover:

- Effective Annual General Meetings (AGM)
 - constitutional requirements
 - committee recruitment
 - planning the meeting
 - agenda and reports
 - committee elections
 - strategies to encourage attendance
- Handover essentials – what, when and who?

ABOUT OUR PRESENTERS

Our ELAA Member Services Team bring specialist skills and extensive experience to these sessions. With backgrounds in the management of early childhood services, industrial relations, early childhood assessment and early childhood teaching, they understand the governance and management challenges that you face as a committee member.

DATE	VENUE
Monday 13 August 2018 6.30pm – 8.30pm	Kingston City Council Mentone Room 34 Brindisi St Mentone
Wednesday 22 August 2018 7.00pm – 9.00pm	Bayside City Council Bayside Corporate Centre 76 Royal Avenue Sandringham
Tuesday 28 August 2018 6.30pm – 8.30pm	Manningham City Council Function Room 3 699 Donaster Road Doncaster
Wednesday 29 August 2018 6.30pm – 8.30pm	Mornington Peninsula Shire Council Chambers 2 Queen Street Mornington
Thursday 6 September 2018 6.30pm – 8.30pm	Whitehorse City Council Waratah Room 1 Whitehorse Centre 379-397 Whitehorse Road Nunawading
Monday 10 September 2018 7.00pm – 9.00pm	Nillumbik Shire Council Council Chambers 34 Civic Drive Greensborough

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.

Q&A

WE NEED TO DETERMINE WHAT OUR FEES WILL BE FOR 2019. HOW DO WE DO THIS?

Each year early childhood service providers are responsible for reviewing their program structure and fees to ensure that their service meets the needs of the children and families in the community. A budget is drawn up to ensure that the service is financially viable. Unless there are significant changes to the numbers of children attending each program the current budget would be adjusted to reflect:

- increases in government funding – the rates from July 2019 are yet to be announced so presume that the usual 2.5% increase will apply
- salary increases. VECTEA rates will increase in August 2018 and this is the last increase under the current agreement. For budget purposes only presume that the new agreement will follow the pattern of 1.5% increase every six months. Although salary increases will not be paid to employees until a new agreement is approved it is wise to have money set aside to cover any salary increases that are in the new agreement
- the annual wage review in July each year affects the wages of other employees. Over recent years the increases have been just over 3%
- use the consumer price index as an indication of other cost increases.



If significant changes to the number of enrolments are likely then a more comprehensive review of the program structure will be needed.

When determining the appropriate fee level, service providers should consider:

- budget outcomes (what is the minimum amount that can be charged to ensure that expenses are covered)
- capacity of parents to pay
- fees charged by other services in the area
- keeping increases to a minimum every year rather than a large increase every two or three years

- can changes be made to the program and/or staffing to minimise expenditure
- requirements of the DET Kindergarten Guide – fees should be affordable and not a barrier to attendance in a four year old program. It is important to be aware that children who are eligible for the Kindergarten fee subsidy e.g. Health Care Card Holders are not required to pay any fees for the 15 hour program. Most services try to keep their fees similar to the Kindergarten Fee subsidy so that their income is not impacted if there is an increase in the number of children eligible for this supplement.

PUTTING A FACE TO THE VOICE



Member Services Officer, Maryam Zadeh, Joined ELAA in April 2017. She has a Bachelor Degree in Science (Physics, Maths, Computer Studies) and completed an MBA with dual specialisation in Human Resources and Marketing Management in 2007. Maryam has 12 years of experience in Human Resources and Operations in different industries. Her previous roles include HR Manager, Radio Station Manager and Office Manager.

My work day entails... providing prompt and efficient advice to our members either by telephone, email or in person in relation to governance, management issues and employment related matters.

I am most inspired by... a random act of kindness

What I like most about my job... being able to help our members understand their roles and responsibilities as employers.

If I wasn't doing this job I'd be... doing my PhD.

USING CREATIVE PLANNING TO FOSTER COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

BY FIONA TOPOLCSANYI – EDUCATOR,
NEXT STEPS EARLY LEARNING CENTRE (WAURN PONDS).

Recently, I have been reflecting on my '20 plus' years of experience in community program management, and pondering why some ideas have been successful while others haven't.

In my view, the key to the successful projects has been to combine a personal passion with an idea of the 'image of the child'.

For example, the image of a kindergarten child being a conservationist or scientist captures the imagination and support of individuals and the wider community, which then (of course) generates more connections and support. In short, it is far easier to gain support to help children realise a role in society (such as a scientist) than it is to raise money to buy resources for science i.e. by humanising an outcome there is greater potential to tap into emotional touchstones that resonate within communities and the general public.

“ In my view, the key to the successful projects has been to combine a personal passion with an idea of the 'image of the child'.

Children as conservationists – protecting the wallabies of Ocean Grove Nature Reserve

I am part of the Friends of the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve, which is a wildlife reserve that will soon become a neighbour to new Woolworths and McDonalds stores.

Currently, over ten kindergarten groups use the Reserve as part of their bush kinder programs and they are very keen to protect the wallabies that live there. Based on this, I devised the idea for a Community Awareness Program where kindergarten children could design and name a Wallaby Hero. I pitched the idea to the local Community Grants Board who approved my funding and matched it with the equivalent in advertising.

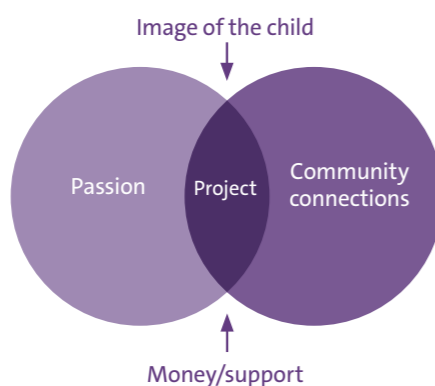


The mechanics of the program were as follows:

- staff from Parks Victoria visited kindergartens to talk about how we could protect the wallabies and the environment
- the kindergarten children drew pictures and said what they believe the Wallaby Hero should be like
- this information was given to the local high school where we are running a competition to design the Wallaby Hero based on the kindergarten children's ideas
- finally, the local kindergarten families will then vote for the winning entry. The new Wallaby Hero will be launched in Spring with all the community invited.

How to formulate a plan

Combining your passion with an 'image of the child' can lead to a concept that really connects with your community and encourages support and partnerships. Filling in the simple map below using the key elements of Passion, Image of the Child, Community Connections and Possible Sources of Support can act as a guide.



Passion: base your idea on something that you are passionate about. This could include gardening, dancing, sewing or engineering ... think beyond the obvious.

Community Connections: given your passion/interest, who else do you know within the community that may support your idea? Often, people will be happy to offer advice or help especially if there is a shared interest.

Image of the Child: your image of the child is key to the project and what you would like to achieve. It allows for so many open-ended possibilities where families and community partners can see themselves being part of the journey.

Source of Support: audit the potential sources of support and/or funding in your community. Most communities have many, from councils to community and business groups to local businesses themselves.

In planning your project think small and use what you know and enjoy. Make use of the connections between the staff and parents within your service. Most of all, have fun and keep an open mind about how you reach your goal.

Fiona Topolcsanyi has been working in the early childhood field for over 20 years. She has a passion for science and nature play and regularly uses these as a way for children to engage with the natural world and wider community.

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

Changes to Long Service Leave

A new Long Service Leave (LSL) Act (which should not be confused with the Long Service Benefits Portability Bill currently before the Victorian Parliament) comes into effect on 1 November 2018 following the approval of the Long Service Leave Act 2018 (Vic) on 15th May 2018. This Act replaces the Long Service Leave Act 1992 (Vic) and includes some significant changes for Victorian employees including:

- Employees will be entitled to take LSL after seven years of continuous service (currently employees needed to have completed 10 years of continuous service although an employee is paid their accrued long service leave entitlement on termination of employment after seven years of employment).
- Employees will be entitled to request LSL for a period of not less than 1 day (currently LSL is to be taken in one period or with agreement LSL can be taken in 2 or 3 separate periods) – **Employers will need to ensure that accurate records are kept of all LSL taken to avoid the possibility of overpaying LSL entitlements.**
- Any period of unpaid parental leave (up to 52 weeks) will be counted as service (currently periods of unpaid leave including Parental leave do not accrue LSL).
- If an employee's hours have changed within the previous two years (currently it is only if they have changed within the previous 12 months) then LSL is taken/paid at the average of the past 12 months or 5 years (whichever is the greater). Early childhood service providers need to ensure that records of employee hours are well maintained as many early childhood employees will need to have their hours averaged due to regular changes in hours each year.

Tip: ELAA members can contact the Member Services Team for assistance with calculating long service leave entitlements for staff.

Update on qualification and ratio requirements

Qualifications

When employing a staff member as an Early Childhood Teacher, employers need to ensure that the applicant is registered with VIT as an Early Childhood Teacher. VIT will have checked the person's qualifications prior to registration and therefore employers can be confident that the person is eligible to be employed as an Early Childhood Teacher.

Employers need to be aware that the following transitional arrangements introduced by ACEQA in September 2013 will cease at the end of 2019. These arrangements allowed a person who holds ALL of the following to be recognised as equivalent to an early childhood teacher:

- a primary teaching qualification that includes at least a focus on children aged 5 to 8 years old (e.g. a qualification with a focus on children aged 3 to 8 or 5 to 12) AND
- an ACEQA approved diploma level (or higher) education and care qualification AND
- VIT registration as an Early Childhood Teacher (Vic)

Educators who have obtained this combination of qualifications before the end of 2019 will continue to be recognised under the transitional arrangements.

For further details go to www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications/requirements/children-preschool-age-or-under/recognition-as-an-equivalent-early-childhood-teacher

Lunch break ratios

The Victorian Department of Education and Training have confirmed that if a service is meeting the child/staff ratios according to the regulations (for short breaks such as lunch breaks) they are also meeting the requirements for funding. Therefore if a service is unable to replace a teacher with another teacher during a lunch break, the teacher can be replaced with a Diploma qualified educator.

Consumer Affairs and ACNC reporting obligations

From 1 July 2018, thousands of Victorian charities will benefit from new streamlined

reporting arrangements. Incorporated associations that are also charities registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission (ACNC) will no longer need to:

- lodge an annual statement with CAV, and
- pay an annual statement lodgement fee to CAV.

Instead, these charities will continue to submit their ACNC Annual Information Statement each year, and the ACNC will share the relevant data with CAV on the charity's behalf.

For further details go to www.acnc.gov.au/ACNC/Comms/LN/LN_20180604.aspx

Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 – Reportable Conduct Scheme

The first phase (including government and non-government schools) of the Victorian reportable Conduct Scheme established under this Act commenced on 1 July 2017. Phase two commenced in January 2018 and included disability services. All approved education and care services and children's services including kindergartens, long day care services, and occasional care services will be included in the third phase commencing on 1 January 2019. Fact sheets and further information are available from www.cyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/about-the-reportable-conduct-scheme

Children Legislation Amendment (Information Sharing) Act 2018

This legislation received Royal Assent on 10 April 2018 and establishes a Child Information Sharing (CIS) Scheme that authorises prescribed professionals and service providers to share information to promote the wellbeing and safety of children. The scheme commences on 3 September 2018 and is modelled on recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It will be phased in over the next few years with Early Childhood Service providers expected to be part of the third phase of the rollout in 2020.

For further information: www.vic.gov.au/childinfosharing/professionals-and-service-providers.html

With a theme of Our Children – Our Communities, this year's Early Childhood Education Conference delivered a diverse program of speakers to address the key issues in the early childhood education and care sector while also including a strong selection of forums with a highly practical focus for educators, service managers, and committees of management.

The 2018 Early Childhood Education Conference *together we grow*



There were too many presentations (78 in all) to mention all of them in this article but some of the highlights included ...

Practice

Delegates were treated a wide variety of presentations on matters of practice and program delivery with LGBTIQ writer, speaker, educator and advocate, Jacqui Tomlins, talking about how services can work effectively with rainbow families. Bron Alday from Sea Lake Kindergarten shared the wonderful story of how her service strengthened links within the local community through combining stargazing with Bush Kinder while Clarendon Children's Centre and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation delivered highly engaging sessions on the joy and benefits of food education for children. Renae Plueckhahn (Play Therapy SA) presented a fascinating collection of case studies on how Play Therapy can be used to manage externalised behaviours in the classroom while Catherine Way and Murphy Peoples from Museums Victoria talked about creating engaging STEM experiences for young children and how doing this at an early stage in a child's life can establish pathways to careers and life-long enjoyment of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



Service management

Service managers needing to know about insurance options for their service learnt a lot from Kathryn Vuarchoz & Jane Boag (VMIA); Susie Rosback (CEO at Bubup Womindjeka Family and Children's Service) provided an enlightening perspective on becoming an employer of choice; and Madeleine Smith (Executive Director of the Quality Assessment and Regulation Division of DET Victoria) provided valuable insights for managers wanting to better understand the revised NQA 'Exceeding' requirements re engaging with families and communities.

Transition

The journey from kindergarten to school and the importance of managing the transition through engagement of families, early years services and schools was well covered by Rhonda Livingstone (National Education Leader, ACECQA) in her presentation on strengthening transition (to school) partnerships and by Melissa MacMaster & Samantha Kolasa (GEKA) re working with families and their children as part of a two-year journey prior to school.

Left: Professor Deborah Brennan discussed the findings of the 'Lifting Our Game Report'. Below: The Saturday Morning Panel (L-R) Clare Amies (Chief Executive – WorkSafe Victoria), Marcela Slepica (Access EAP), Jenny Whelan (Albert Park Kindergarten), and Victorian Minister for Mental Health – Martin Foley MP.



Workforce development

Denise Nash (Sutherland Shire Council) and Catherine Daniels explored how to advocate for the importance of early learning in conversations with families in their presentation *Jargon, gibberish and professional language* while Kay Fitzgerald (Moonee Valley City Council), Grace Pupillo & and Kate Alexander discussed their experience of building professional partnerships and shared language among early years professionals working within Moonee Valley services. Another standout early years staff-focussed session was the Saturday morning panel. Titled *What do you do with a problem? Supporting mental health and wellbeing in the early childhood sector*, the panel featured Jenny Whelan (Albert Park Kindergarten), Victorian Minister for Mental Health – Martin Foley MP, Clare Amies (Chief Executive – WorkSafe Victoria) and Marcela Slepica (Access EAP). The discussion focused 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.



Top: Children's Ground CEO and Keynote Speaker – Jane Vadeloo.
Above: The Trade Fair is one of the largest for the early learning sector in Victoria.
Right: Professor John Tobin.

Keynote address

This year's Conference Keynote Speaker was Children's Ground CEO, Jane Vadeloo. Jane's work and background is in leading advocacy, reform and service provision for First Nations children and communities. Her keynote address *Community, culture and identity: nurturing brilliance in early childhood* examined how critical influences of family, community, languages and cultures nurture brilliance and are protective factors. Her presentation highlighted rich cultural learning environments and leading early years practice in First Nations communities.



Child health, well-being and safety

Associate Professor Warwick Teague (Director of Trauma at Melbourne's Royal Children's Hospital) presented a fascinating and alarming presentation on the 'critical numbers' for parents, educators and carers about traumatic injury as the number one cause of death and injury to young children in Australia. Warwick's passion for his professional mission (reducing injury to children) really came through in his presentation about how childhood injury is everyone's businesses and how it is often preventable. The session was confronting, particularly concerning childhood deaths relating to quad bikes and swallowing button batteries and also touched on the ELAA and VicRoads *Car Seats Save Lives* initiative. Other related sessions included Sue McLaren (Animal Fun Program) and Clare Crew (Thriving Children) re child motor skill development, and Megan Meek (Cancer Council Victoria) re health promotion in the early years.

Policy and advocacy

At this year's conference we were privileged to have Professor Deborah Brennan join the program. Professor Brennan is a co-author (with Susan Pascoe AM) of the 'Lifting Our Game' *Report of the Review to Achieve Educational Excellence in Australian Schools Through Early Childhood Interventions*. Deborah discussed the Report's key findings and recommendations for reforming the early learning sector in Australia. The report is one of the most important concerning Australia's early childhood education and care sector to be released in decades and Deborah's session provided delegates with a succinct snapshot of the current state-of-play in our sector and the options and challenges ahead. Another key policy focussed session came from Shelli Hardwick – Wodonga City Council – regarding the Council's 'No one left behind' approach to vulnerable children and facilitating their access and ongoing participation in universal and supported early years services.

Research

The Conference always features a strong research-based stream and this year was no exception. Dr Catherine Wade – Parenting Research Centre – gave delegates a good overview of the *Parenting Today in Victoria* Survey findings; Professor John Tobin – University of Melbourne Professor of Law – discussed a 'rights based approach' to addressing the needs of children in early childhood education; and Noushin Arefadib (Senior Project Officer, Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute) presented on the *Strong Foundations: Getting it Right in the First 1000 Days* project.

Presentations online – the Powerpoint presentations for most of the sessions at this year's conference are available (free) at www.elaa.org.au/conference/program.

Trade exhibition

The Early Childhood Education Conference is more than a conference ... it also hosts one of the largest early childhood education and care Trade Exhibitions in Victoria.

This year's Trade Exhibition featured 60 exhibitors showcasing the latest quality products and services for early learning services including art supplies, educational games and puzzles, first aid supplies, teaching resources, insurance, superannuation, and more. We were thrilled to have many regular exhibitors such as The Victorian Department of Education and Training, MTA, Pavanto, BellbirdKidz, Teaching Solutions, and Educational Experience back at the Conference in 2018 and welcomed many first-time exhibitors including WorkSafe, CrimCheck, MudKitchen and Ceres.

To view the full range of exhibitors at this year's Trade Fair and to link to their websites go to www.elaa.org.au/conference/exhibition.



Clockwise from top left: Clare Amies (Chief Executive – WorkSafe Victoria); the Victorian DET were one of 60 exhibitors at the Trade Exhibition; Minister for Early Childhood Education – Jenny Mikakos MP – opened the Conference; delegates in the Plenary.

Thanks to our VIPs, partners and supporters

ELAA wishes to thank its Early Childhood Education Conference co-presenter, Gowrie Victoria, and the Gowrie and ELAA staff for all their work and assistance in delivering yet another successful conference. Thank you to our Conference Gold Sponsor, the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) for their ongoing support and to the Minister for Early Childhood Education, Families & Children, and Youth Affairs – Jenny Mikakos MP – for her opening address. Thank you to our major sponsors – VicRoads, AustralianSuper, Australian First Aid, and McArthur; and contributor, Insurance House. Finally, a huge thanks to everyone who served on the 2018 Conference Reference Committee including representatives from ELAA, Gowrie Victoria, DET Victoria, Playgroup Victoria, Noah's Ark, fka Children's Services, Community Child Care (Vic), Banyule City Council, Early Childhood Australia, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, the Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc. (VAEAI) and Early Childhood Intervention Australia (Victoria / Tasmania) (ecia Victoria/Tasmania Limited).

Thank you to McArthur for giving more children the opportunity to attend Kindergarten

A big thank you to our preferred recruitment partner, McArthur, for sponsoring the barista Coffee Cart at this year's Conference and for generously agreeing to donate all money placed in the Coffee Cart tip jar to ELAA's Early Childhood Education Fund which assists disadvantaged families with kindergarten fees. The total amount raised was \$750.

Save the dates

The 2019 Early Childhood Education Conference will be held in Melbourne on Friday, 24 May – Saturday, 25 May.

Initial expressions of interest to present at the Conference or recommendations for speakers to approach may be sent to elaa@elaa.org.au



INDEPENDENT MEMBERS SURVEY

Top ELAA Services

85% of respondents indicated that they have contacted and utilised ELAA services in the past 12 months. This is a strong indicator that members are benefitting from ELAA services.



ELAA welcomes feedback from members about how we meet your needs and any areas for improvement.

We collect feedback from members in a number of ways, including evaluation feedback forms from professional development sessions and the annual Early Childhood Education conference, and from the many compliments we receive and the rare but important complaints. Early Years Management organisations also have the opportunity to inform ELAA's work through the CEO Group and the Early Years Management Reference Group.

In November 2017 ELAA conducted a survey of our independent members, inviting the person who has the most contact with ELAA to respond. The survey, sent to over 500 members, had an excellent response rate of over 20 per cent well above the expected return rate for surveys of this kind.

Awareness of ELAA's services

ELAA is keen to ensure that our members are aware of the full range of services that we offer. Survey respondents had a very high awareness of Members Services advisory support (93 percent) and a high percentage of respondents had also used Members Services in the last 12 months (85 percent). There was also a high awareness of the ELAA and Gowrie Early Childhood Education Conference, ELAA's Professional Learning and Development Program and the free governance training.

Fewer members were aware of ELAA's consultancy services which the Member Services Team also provides such as intensive support for unique situations

that may arise at early learning services including:

- organisational review and restructure
- recruitment of new staff
- policy review
- development of tailored resources
- OHS inspections
- targeted training
- mediation.

Survey respondents also demonstrated low awareness of the advocacy work that ELAA does. We have increased our efforts to communicate regarding the advocacy we do on behalf of members through a regular article in *Preschool Matters* and updates in eNews.

There was also a low awareness of the work ELAA does in relation to enterprise bargaining agreement, however this is likely to increase over the next 12 months as we enter negotiations on a new agreement.

Satisfaction with ELAA's services

The survey showed that there are high levels of satisfaction with ELAA's Members Services:

- over 90% indicated a high level of satisfaction when using ELAA's services
- 83 percent agreed they would recommend the services to others
- over 80 per cent of respondents were able to identify the range of ways that they have been assisted and supported, including increasing knowledge across leadership, governance and practices; building confidence to implement improvement strategies; improving the quality of services; and resolving service issues.

Almost all respondents agreed that the content of *Preschool Matters* is relevant (98 percent) and there was a high readership among respondents of eNews (80 percent).

Areas where independent members identified that ELAA can improve include increased legislative and regulatory support and faster updates to policies and practical compliance advice. To respond to this over the coming 12 months, ELAA will be working to centralise more of our resources, such as policy guidance and templates, into an online portal that is faster to update and easier to search.

Shaping ELAA's future activities

In addition, the survey provided valuable information which will inform ELAA's future activities such as:

- advocacy priorities including funding for two years of quality early childhood education before school, access and participation for all children and a skilled and collaborative workforce which will inform our election campaign materials and budget submissions
- ensuring *Preschool Matters* content covers a diverse range of regulation and legislative updates, best practice from services, rating improvement support, training highlights and research into practice and pedagogy
- ensuring eNews covers policy updates, best practice, wages information, sector news and industrial relations information
- providing promotional information, such as preferred partner offers and professional development and learning brochures in an electronic format.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. ELAA prides itself on being a learning organisation – it is through your feedback that we know what is working and where we can better meet your needs.

ELAA welcomes your feedback at any time. Please get in touch with any feedback you have about ELAA's services and member offerings by contacting us at elaa@elaa.org.au



KINDERGARTEN: A TWO YEAR JOURNEY...

BY MELISSA MACMASTER (GENERAL MANAGER, OPERATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL LEADER) AND SAMANTHA KOLASA (CEO), GEKA

The benefits of quality early learning cannot be underestimated. Parents, teachers, educators, policy makers and of course – children themselves – are aware of the positive impacts across multiple domains. Early learning promotes socialisation, learning, development, empathy, physical and emotional awareness, responsibility... the list is endless. At the Glen Eira Kindergarten Association (GEKA), we actively encourage children within our community to participate in not one, but two years of quality learning with us. Over the last six years, we have developed a model of engagement and service delivery for our families that supports what the research tells us.

What the research tells us

In 2017, the ‘Lifting Our Game’ report was commissioned to review how to achieve educational excellence in Australian schools through early childhood interventions. The report found:

- only 15% of three-year-olds in Australia participate in pre-primary education, compared with the OECD average of 68.6%
- a child’s brain develops rapidly in the early years, with around 85-90% of brain

- development occurring in the first five years of life
- participating in an early childhood education program for two years, rather than one, has a significant positive influence on children’s outcomes. This is evident for all children, but is even greater for those experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage
- OECD analysis of PISA results from 72 countries established that two years of early childhood education is the

minimum duration needed to improve student performance at age 15

- PISA data shows that better student performance at age 15 is strongest in school systems that provide a longer duration of pre-primary education.

Furthermore, the Mitchell Institute at Victoria University, who work directly with governments and providers to build an education system that is future-focused, supports individual success, and meets the needs of a globalised economy found that:

- two years of kindergarten is beneficial for many children
- children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage benefit the most
- the quality of programs matters, as low and medium quality programs do not achieve short or long term impacts
- kindergarten improves social and emotional outcomes.

“ We emphasise the importance of a two-year kindergarten journey, from the very first conversation we have with families.

What GEKA is doing

Ensuring access to a developmentally appropriate kindergarten program for three-year-old children ensures all children have the opportunity to engage in a learning program that delivers a substantial and sustained impact on their development and outcomes. GEKA support this in two key ways; through our investment in supporting families at the time of enrolment and through the value we place on the assessment of learning across two years of kindergarten.

The right time to start kindergarten

We emphasise the importance of a two-year kindergarten journey, from the very first conversation we have with families. Our goal is to establish a personalised relationship, support families to make an informed decision about when to start and then to check-in regularly with the family. Knowing what is important to the family early on, helps us to implement more appropriate support and strategies, so we can meet their child’s needs and individual learning goals. GEKA employ an Inclusion Practice Coordinator (IPC), who specifically supports families regarding the right time to start kindergarten and to provide ongoing support with specific additional needs.

Year	Program	Additional Information
2018	3-year-old Kindergarten	Additional year possible in consultation with GEKA teachers
2019	4-year-old Kindergarten	Additional year only possible if a child has a delay in 2 or more developmental areas (as per DET guidelines)
2020	Prep – Primary School	Exemption from DET required if a child starts school after 6 years of age



We help families to understand the bigger picture and funding implications. When deciding whether to accept an offer at a kindergarten, it is important to carefully consider which year your child will start, because when your child attends 4-year-old kindergarten in the following year, they are only able to receive one year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten. We also understand the volume of information can be overwhelming, so have developed a visual graphic to help families understand the ‘ripple effect’ starting kindergarten has, especially on when their child will start school.

Learning on a continuum

We support educators to consider learning as a lifelong process, one that does not stop and start from year to year. Research tells us that quality documentation is achieved when we are able to reflect on data over a longer period of time. Two years of data enables deeper analysis of learning and assessment and this is evident in the documentation that we observe. Children’s portfolios, for example, are established when the child starts the 3 year old program and transitions with them as they complete 4 year old kindergarten and move through to primary school. An example of this is evident in Helena’s portfolio: “Helena, we

have been reflecting on the way you convey meaning through your drawings, by looking back over your work from the past 18 months. Do you remember when you first started kindergarten? You used to experiment with the colours that were provided, by filling your page with lots of pencil marks. As your confidence increased and you got to know us, you began to use drawing as a way to communicate.”

Establishing access to two years of kindergarten for all children, is the most practical and achievable way of leveraging our current investment and service system to accelerate outcomes for Australian children. When we support families to view kindergarten as a two-year experience, children are more likely to start at the right time for them. This approach also reduces the number of children needing to repeat one or both years of kindergarten, therefore protecting positions for children yet to experience a quality kindergarten program. Critical reflection on learning across a two-year period supports the building of existing knowledge from one context to the next as well as supporting the continuity of learning from kindergarten into primary school – and beyond.



RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE IN ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION

The staff and Committee of Management at Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre in Camberwell believe in being active and visible in the community and keeping their children safe through, not only supervision, but through education that equips them with self protection skills for life.

It was through this approach, plus a multi-faceted Road Safety Education program, that Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre was chosen to be the 2018 *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award winner at this year's Early Childhood Education Conference.

"The *Starting Out Safely* Professional Development inspired us to make additions and changes to our practices and approaches to informing both children and families," said Through Road Early Childhood Teacher, Poppy Woodhouse.

However those "additions and changes" were also inspired by very practical considerations says Poppy, "We are in a fortunate location – on a street with a lovely community and within walking distance to local parks, aged care services

and schools – however, we are also near two major busy roads, tramlines, train stations/crossings and unsigned laneways".

To address the road safety education needs relevant to their service, Through Road developed a strategy that focused on three key areas:

- prioritising resources and teaching that fosters conversation and awareness of road safety among children
- making the most of external resources within the community
- using regular excursions as opportunities to find 'teachable moments'.

In addition to car sets and wooden road signage kits, Poppy Woodhouse says her service invested in "quality location-specific resources such as wooden models of Melbourne trams so educators could scaffold learning around the specific hazards of the children's world". Poppy notes that staff also encouraged the children to express their knowledge and experience as passengers in vehicles during play. Staff would note the children's comments and responses during these times and use those observations to inform further teaching opportunities and communication with families.

The centre also looked outside its boundaries for resources and sources of inspiration including watching videos such as 'Stop. Look. Listen. Think' and 'King of the Road'; visits from the Police; and talking about the role of crossing supervisors in keeping children safe. "We also find the ThingleToodle road safety incursion is a great way to engage the children in a fun, and highly memorable way, whilst providing us with new resources in the form of songs and activities," said Poppy.

Poppy says the centre also makes the most of the opportunities presented by excursions into the local community. "On our way to our regular Bush Kinder sessions we pass by a local mechanic. We can look in at their work and see damaged cars being repaired. Children hypothesise what might have happened to cause accidents; how drivers or people may not have been safe and we have observed the children incorporating their experiences from the police visits and mechanic into their play."

ELAA congratulates the children, staff, and committee at Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre on winning the 2018 *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award.



Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre.

Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre is a not-for-profit, 44-place long day care centre in Camberwell, Victoria. The centre is community based, and overseen by a parent committee of management. At its last assessment, Through Road received an overall rating of Exceeding National Quality Service in all areas, under the National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education and Care.

The program has been developed through evidence based research, in collaboration with early childhood experts.



Want a Road Safety Education program like Through Road Kindergarten and Children's Centre? ELAA can help you.

ELAA has delivered the *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Program on behalf of Vic Roads since 2011.

The program has been developed through evidence based research, in collaboration with early childhood experts. It works with children, parents, carers and early childhood educators to guide children's learning in being and becoming safe, independent road users.

The program differs from other Australian states in that it takes a holistic approach to Road Safety Education. It not only reaches out directly to children (over 75000) through dedicated 'ThingleToodle' sessions at their preschool and care centres, but also provides professional development for early childhood educators. This equips educators to prepare children for the road safety sessions and to embed ongoing Road Safety Education in centres.

The *Starting Out Safely* program website childroadsafety.org.au has plenty of resources to help you develop a best-practice Road Safety Education program for your service including:

- RSE resources and information for educators
- information on the professional development program and ThingleToodle incursions
- RSE policies for services
- RSE information for families
- information on choosing and using child car seats (in 22 languages and 10 audio versions)
- transportation of children with additional needs
- link to the Car Seats Save Lives website including Victoria's latest video for parents and carers
- links to research and publications.

Further enquiries about the *Starting Out Safely* Program may be directed to ELAA's RSE team at rse@elaa.org.au



BRIDGING, LEARNING AND EXCEEDING THROUGH AN INTERGENERATIONAL PROJECT

ARTICLE COURTESY OF KATE HALL (DIRECTOR – SOUTH MELBOURNE CHILD CARE CO-OPERATIVE) AND AMANDA TESTRO (MUSIC PRESENTER – HEY DEE HO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES).

In 2014 South Melbourne Child Care Co-operative (Neighbourhood House) started the process of establishing a partnership with our local Nursing Home, South Port Community Residential Home (CaSPA Care).

As a community we felt strongly committed to this initiative due to our Centre's data indicating our families are a relatively transient community with limited day-to-day contact with grandparents and elderly relatives.

Establishing the partnership involved working closely with the staff at South Port. Initially they were reluctant to establish a partnership due to their previous experience of Preschool and School visits which were sporadic and brief, leaving residents and staff disappointed.

To overcome this barrier we needed to demonstrate our commitment to establishing the partnership with South Port as we in no way wanted it to be tokenistic. Our vision was to embed these visits into our weekly program to benefit both the residents and our service. We realised that we needed an opportunity to meet with South Port staff to communicate our vision and show our genuine commitment to setting up this regular program.

In late 2014 a new life style coach was employed at South Port and, as we wanted her to get to know us as a community and also demonstrate just how genuine we were in our efforts to form this partnership, we invited her to our centre for morning tea. We took this opportunity to present our vision, documented guidelines for the proposed partnership and well-researched evidence highlighting the benefits for both services.

South Port agreed with the proposal which meant our educational team could begin preparations needed for the program's implementation. This involved educators visiting the residential home on several occasions to form connections with key staff members; taking photos of the environment so they could be shared with our preschool children and wider community; and gain as much information as possible.

From January 2015 our Preschool children visited the residents of South Port Community Residential Home every Friday until late 2016 at which time we formed an added partnership with Amanda from hey dee ho music. At this stage CaSPA Care opened a larger facility and we then began alternating our fortnightly visits between South Port and Emerald Hill.

“ *Within no time the children realised that residents were like them in many ways.*

Friday's came to be a special day for the children as they eagerly awaited their opportunity to visit the residents they had made connections with. In no time at all the way in which the children and residents viewed each other changed significantly.

In the very early weeks of our visits we witnessed the honest and in some cases confronting images that the children and residents had of each other.

For example: for the first couple of weeks it was not uncommon for us to arrive to be greeted by a resident saying "The children from the orphanage are here again!"

On the other hand while preparing for a visit to South Port I said to one of the children "do you enjoy going to visit the nursing home?" to which he responded "Yes, I like going to see the dead people".

From the outset we knew that we had much work to do to facilitate and nurture the relationships between two of the most vulnerable groups within our community.

Within no time the children realised that residents were like them in many ways. Sometimes we want to be alone, other days we love company. Some days we are tired and on other days we are full of energy. By engaging in this program children have broadened their knowledge about other people in their community; what happens when we age and the similarities and differences in interests and life styles across all age groups. They have learnt about empathy and the joy that comes from giving to others.

Some of the program's most wonderful achievements have been made clearly evident by the sometimes joyous reactions of the residents. To the astonishment of her carers, Vera who had not been outside for over three years left her room one day to join the children for afternoon tea in the garden. Heather who had always wanted to get married loved the children's idea of her having a 'wedding party' and wanted them all to be present.

Tips on how to partner with a children's program offering Intergenerational Incursions

- Locate the local Aged Care Facilities that are within walking distance from your centre.
- Contact pre-school music organisations and ask if they offer Intergenerational music Incursions.
- Contact Aged Care Facilities with a view to setting up a partnership between your centre, the facility and the pre-school music organisation.
- Ensure the pre-school music organisation is risk management compliant/suitable for the mix of children and aged care residents with particular attention to dementia patients whose responses can at times be unpredictable.



It is evident from these anecdotes that the program is highly successful in enhancing the well-being of residents and children alike. Parents of our children attest to the power of the program to inspire family conversations about ageing, disability, relationships and even death. In addition the project provided a real world context that assisted parents to teach their children about community diversity and empathy.

The program contributed to us obtaining a rating of EXCEEDING the National Quality Standards and fully contributes to Quality Area 6. It supports the Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics which encourages educators to promote and "Connect with People, Services and Agencies within the Communities that support children and families".



MOVEMENT IS LEARNING

BY CLARE CREW FROM THRIVING CHILDREN

Spend time in any early childhood setting and it becomes immediately evident that babies, toddlers and preschoolers are in a state of constant motion. Their intrinsic need to move can perplex and at times frustrate us. Why can't she stay in one place while eating her food? Why won't he sit in my lap until the end of the story? Why is there so much wriggling during group times?

Young children's drive to move is exactly as nature intended. As much as we like to think the brain works in isolation to help us learn, it's the connection between the brain and body that makes the process possible, especially in the early years of life.

To describe the intimate connection between movement and learning, let's take a closer look at reflex development during babyhood.

Primitive reflexes

Primitive reflexes are the foundation of a child's development. They're the involuntary movements a newborn baby makes in response to specific stimulation. They develop while the baby is in utero and are controlled by the brain stem.

These primitive reflexes:

- help us move through the birth canal
- support our survival in the early weeks and months of life
- provide the necessary sensory and motor input for brain development

The important thing to know about primitive reflexes is they come with a use-by date. While they're crucial in our first six to twelve months of life, they actually restrict growth and development if they remain longer than they should.

Areas of potential challenge

Poor reflex integration can lead to lifelong problems with:

- learning
- attention
- behaviour
- coordination
- emotional wellbeing

The process of integration

Primitive reflexes are integrated through movement in the first year of life. Wriggling during floor time (on the tummy and back), rolling, rocking, and crawling are innate movements that support reflex development.

Here are two examples of primitive reflexes, their role during babyhood, and the challenges that may eventuate if they remain.

Moro Reflex

The Moro reflex is activated by sudden changes of sensory input such as movement, bright lights, loud noises and temperature fluctuation. The baby's arms move to the side of their body, they take a sharp breath, adrenaline and cortisol enter their bloodstream, and they let out a loud cry.

Retaining the Moro reflex beyond babyhood can result in hypersensitivity. There may be a diagnosis of Sensory Processing Disorder or obvious challenges adapting to change. While structure and predictability can help these children feel safe in the world, they may still live on the edge in a constant state of 'fight or flight'. Meltdowns are common, as is hyperactivity.

Tonic Labyrinthine Reflex (TLR)

The TLR connects a baby's head and body movements. When their head moves forward (chin to chest), they curl into a foetal position. When their head moves back, their body arches at the spine. This reflex helps babies to gain control of their head and neck. And tummy time plays a critical role in the process.

An older individual with an active TLR can face challenges with balance, eye tracking, auditory processing and muscle tone, as these all rely on correct head alignment.

Putting it into practice

If we value children's cognitive development, we must also value their physical development – the two are connected. And when movement becomes central to our daily rituals, everyone benefits. Learning spaces become energised, children are calmer, and educators have an enhanced sense of wellbeing.

Here are some motor play ideas to get you started, spanning across the ages of birth to five:

- baby equipment minimises movement. Floor time, especially on the tummy, is crucial in early life
- physical touch builds relationships and body awareness (essential for coordination)
- having bare feet sends increased sensory feedback to the brain (great for balance and sensory processing)
- dancing to music is purposeful and engaging (with babies this can be done in a chest-to-chest hold)
- being outside offers a more soothing sensory environment than indoors, and naturally encourages physical movement
- tapping balloons with fly swats is a fun and affordable experience for toddlers and preschoolers (good for eye-hand coordination too)
- begin group times with a dance or movement experience. It adds a layer of fun and also enhances children's ability to find a few moments of stillness.

- create obstacle courses that encourage children to move left, right, up, down, over, under, through, around... (we need to feel these directions many times over before understanding them as mathematical concepts)
- Offer high and low climbing equipment, allowing for children's individual level of challenge (rather than their age)
- tree climbing engages many muscle groups, and allows children to dabble in risk taking
- swinging, spinning, running and riding develops the vestibular system (needed for balance, listening and later, being still)
- rough and tumble play provides a calming source of sensory input, called proprioception. Alternatives include pushing, pulling, or carrying heavy loads, as well as jumping from a height onto a soft surface.

Brain development is dependent upon movement. Knowing this, what will you do differently in your setting?

Clare Crew is an early childhood and inclusive education teacher who specialises in the brain-body connection. Clare's teaching experience spans across child care settings, preschools, junior primary classrooms and playgroups. www.thrivingchildren.com.au

“ Brain development is dependent upon movement. Knowing this, what will you do differently in your setting? ”

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ASSESSMENT AND RATING IN VICTORIA

ARTICLE COURTESY OF THE VICTORIAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

On 1 February 2018, the revised National Quality Standard (NQS 2018)¹ came into effect.

Changes to the National Quality Standard

The NQS 2018 has been streamlined and new concepts have been introduced to make the focus of each standard and element clearer. There are now 15 standards and 40 elements.

Other changes

Quality area 1, Educational Program and practice has increased from two to three standards recognising the importance of enhancing children's learning and development and the crucial role of early childhood teachers and educators in planning and implementing the program.

Quality area 7, Governance and Leadership, requires that governance supports the operation of a quality service and effective leadership builds and promotes a positive organisational culture and a professional learning community.

Exceeding themes

There are three exceeding themes. Each of these themes need to be demonstrated for a standard to be rated exceeding NQS.



The NQS 2018 has been streamlined and new concepts have been introduced to make the focus of each standard and element clearer.

Theme 1: Practice is embedded in service operations

High quality practice for the standard must be demonstrated consistently and frequently across the service.

For example:

- high quality practice is the usual practice across the service
- quality practice is consistent across all educators
- each educator's practice reflects a clear understanding of the requirements of each standard
- practice for the standard reflects the service philosophy and the principles of the approved learning frameworks.

Theme 2: Practice is informed by critical reflection

When practice is informed by critical reflection, educators consider, question, analyse and re-evaluate planning and decision-making for that standard. This supports a culture of ongoing self-assessment that helps identify continuous improvement and improved outcomes for children, families and educators.

For example:

- reflection on practice is regular and ongoing
- opportunities for improvements are identified and implemented
- decision-making processes draw on diverse perspectives
- feedback from families/community is integrated in the service's critical reflection and informs the service's complaints policy and procedures.

Theme 3: Practice is shaped by meaningful engagement with families and/or the community

Every education and care service is unique, as are the children, families and community at the service. This theme recognises that high quality practice is informed by and tailored to the unique strengths and needs of children, families and the community and the differences across service types.

For example:

- the voices and strengths of children, families and the community shape practice
- families and/or the community participate in shared decision-making and problem solving
- practice is shaped by the unique environmental, cultural and community context of the service and fosters a culture of inclusiveness
- respectful and reciprocal relationships with children, families and the community are evident
- communication with families is contextual and reflective of the needs of each family
- the service's philosophy reflects the diverse needs of all children and families including culturally and linguistically diverse and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- the service collaborates with a range of professionals to support each child's learning and development
- the community in which the service operates shapes the practice of the service.

Every education and care service is unique, as are the children, families and community at the service.



How can services become familiar with the changes to the NQS?

Each service is encouraged to review their Quality Improvement Plan to align with the NQS 2018 and to regularly consider the ways in which they demonstrate the exceeding themes. Recent changes to the National Law and National Regulations need to be addressed. Services should also ensure their philosophy reflects the unique context of the service's children, families and community.

Assessment and rating process

Some changes have been made to the assessment and rating process to reflect the NQS 2018 and the assessment of the new exceeding themes. Services should prepare to share information during the visit process that shows how they are addressing the NQS and the exceeding themes.

In line with the NQS 2018, ACECQA has developed a new assessment and rating report for services. In Victoria the focus of the report is to provide advice to support the service's continuous quality improvement.

More information is available in the Guide to the National Quality Framework – NQF Assessment and Rating² (chapter 3)

1 <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/regulation/NQSDescriptorTable.pdf>
2 <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide>



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