

# EVERY Child

Australia's premier national early childhood magazine

Volume 10 No. 1 Summer 2004



**The changing nature of  
child care in Australia**

**Teaching preschool in  
a remote Indigenous  
community**

**Grandparenting project**

**Changing curriculum  
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Cover Photograph: Jeanne Treloar  
Photographs: R. Barry, Cooloon Children's  
Centre, C. Connelly, J. Tempest,  
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**Address correspondence and advertising queries to:** The Publications Section,  
PO Box 105, Watson ACT 2602  
**Tel:** (02) 6242 1800 **Fax:** (02) 6242 1818  
**Email:** publishing@earlychildhood.org.au  
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# The changing contours of early childhood



***Every Child* celebrates its 10th birthday this year. A decade has somehow**

**evaporated since we planned *Every Child's* first issues. We set high standards for ourselves, the community and Government and ten years on we have good cause for celebration!**

Much has happened over this ten-year period. The biggest positive change for young children is the state and federal government's growing understanding of the implications of *brain research*. Evidence that trusting and caring relationships in the early years are vital for children's future growth and development has been widely accepted. It is a long time since there has been such strong, public endorsement of a Government's responsibility to invest in these early years. The current federal Government has developed a national agenda for children, so the quest is on for interventions that will ensure children are nurtured through this significant and vulnerable time. This work has transcended political lines, gaining full support from all major parties. There is real potential to achieve gains for young children and their families. The question is how to make sure children feature in voters' minds as they approach the ballot boxes at the next election.

Demographically, there have also been big changes in Australia. Women with children under five have increased their participation in the labour force over the last decade. Families with both parents working are now the most common family type (43%). There are a greater number of lone parent households, with female-headed households up from 14.9 per cent in

1992 to 20.3 per cent in 2002. Male-headed lone parent households have nearly doubled from 1.5 per cent to 2.7 per cent over the same period. Unemployment has increased in single parent and coupled households.

These movements have enormous implications for the way children spend their early years. Parents, both in and out of the paid workforce, see children's services as having an integral role in the development of their very young children. This has escalated over the last ten years as more and more children spend significant parts of their lives in child care and preschool services. Fifty per cent more three- and four-year-olds attend children's services now than did ten years ago.

The tremendous growth in the use of services has resulted in the presence of large corporate providers within the child-care system. It is not clear what this will mean. Assessment of this development, be it positive or otherwise, must be measured by the ability of services to meet children's needs. These needs are compromised if they receive anything less than the highest quality care within any given service.

When the first edition of *Every Child* was published, the new Quality Assurance and Accreditation System had just emerged and we basked in the knowledge that Australia was the only country in the world to establish a mandated, national accreditation system for long day care centres. Since then we have seen the development of a quality assurance system for Family Day Care. This quality assurance system acknowledges the importance of the nexus between co-ordination unit and carer that is so intrinsic to the quality guarantee in Family Day Care. Quality assurance for Outside School Hours Care, whilst still in its infancy, is an important step in the commitment to assure quality in all services.

In ten years we have made a proud start in the quest for a quality guarantee for children using children's services. The process of improvement for all services is a fixture on the agenda, looming particularly for services that did not achieve accredited status. The next really important step in quality assurance will be to support parents to see and understand the implications of the service profile. This profile will detail their child care service's performance against each of the quality principles and so provide a transparent reference for service users and providers.

Parents are our allies in the quest for quality. They are powerful advocates for children and the early childhood profession when they understand the link between quality, child:staff ratios, total group size and the qualities and qualifications of those who are responsible for their children. This is as relevant for the early years of school as it is for services in the before school years. These are issues that confront the entire early childhood sector from birth – eight years, that threaten the system quite fundamentally.

Although a great deal has changed in positive ways, some things remain the same and much work is still to be done. *Every Child* will continue to raise issues, push for positive change and provide support. Our most immediate support to children is channelled through our commitment to assist all of you who work with young children to realise the full potential of your role within a profession that society has entrusted the most important task of all – the care and development of its youngest citizens.

Alison Elliott



# Quality in children's services



**This year is an exciting time for the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC), as it marks ten**

**years of Quality Assurance in Australian children's services. Over this time NCAC has developed a solid reputation for leadership on children's issues in Australia and is proud of its mandate to promote quality child care practices, which is essential to fully nurture children's development in early and middle childhood.**

Getting to this point, however, has been a long journey involving many dedicated members of the early childhood and school-age care professions. The NCAC began administering the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) on 1 January, 1994. During the first six years of operation, some 4,200 centres progressed through the quality improvement and accreditation process a number of times.

Since inception NCAC has supported the extension of quality to other forms of children's services and has provided support and assistance to children's services, evaluating quality assurance for their service type. NCAC commenced the administration of Family Day Care Quality Assurance (FDCQA) on 1 July, 2001. The commencement of Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) in 2003 has extended the range of information

available to families as they make choices for care of their children.

Now is a time to reflect upon how the Quality Assurance Systems have evolved from a singular system for long day care centres, to three systems that seek to improve the quality of care for the over 732,000 children attending child care in Australia (2002 Census of Child Care Services: Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services).

Changes in utilisation of, and attitudes towards child care in Australia, have been significant over the past 20 years. In the early 1980's 'child care was widely viewed as a worthwhile way to amuse children for a few hours per week while introducing them to the routines they would encounter at school, where the real learning would begin' (Putting Children First: Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Handbook, 1993, Foreword).

These attitudes are changing rapidly, alongside increased understanding of the significance of the early years in a child's life and changing family contexts. Research on brain development has shown that positive quality child care can enhance children's development and plays an important role in reducing criminal activity and poor health in later life. It is now widely accepted that we learn more in the first five years of life than in any other five-year period.

Many Australian children are cared for across several settings in their early years of development. For example, some children may attend family day care three days a week and long day care on the other two days. Many children will move from long day care to outside school hours care. Families of children in all service

types need an assurance that their children are being cared for in a quality environment. Staff in those services also need recognition for the excellent work they do. So it is crucial that quality assurance be extended across all children's service types.

The fact that Australia has funded and supported Quality Assurance Systems has brought a number of benefits to the child care profession, including raising community awareness of the work and worth of the child care profession; the development of more accessible resources for child care services on a national basis due to interstate networking and the sharing of ideas; and an increase in the national exchange of ideas relating to good practice which means that a child care service on one side of the country can now benefit from the experience of a service on the other side of the country.

Since the QIAS commenced in 1994, the quality of care provided by services—as measured by the QIAS—has improved dramatically. Between 1995 and 1999, over 90 per cent of services that had worked through the QIAS at least twice, maintained or improved quality practices. This huge improvement in quality is a testament to the dedicated and committed professionals who work in child care services.

For more information on the NCAC, the Quality Assurance Systems, or to search for registered child care services please visit our website at [www.ncac.gov.au](http://www.ncac.gov.au).

## **John Tainton**

Chair  
National Childcare Accreditation Council

# Working with mature-age parents

Today, many parents who use child care centres or other early childhood programs may be sporting a fair amount of grey hair as the entry into parenthood is delayed.

Increasingly, early childhood educators and child care personnel are likely to work with families where Mum and Dad are well over the age of 35 by the time their child reaches an early childhood program. (NZ Dept. of Statistics, 2001; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000). As the parenting population increases in age, it may be necessary for today's early childhood care and education providers to look at some of the specific issues and concerns facing the mature-age parent who chooses to utilise an early childhood program for their child. How might the needs of these parents be different from, or similar to, the needs of parents in general within an early childhood program?

## A profile of the mature-age parent encountered in early childhood settings

The typical mature-age parent encountered in the early childhood setting may seem somewhat different to younger parents. Research about the transition to parenthood (Powell, 1999; Swiss and Walker, 1993; Morris 1995) indicates that older, mature-age parents:

- are 35 years and over at the time of the child's birth or the births of older siblings. This is a medically designated age classification for mothers. Mature-age fathers may be much older. These days it is becoming increasingly common for 35 year-old plus first-time mothers to have partners who are well over 50 and who may be fathering a second family.
- may have had parenting experience with a partner's children in a step-parent capacity. Sending their own child to an early childhood program may be a new experience for some of these parents, but they may have previously assumed parenting responsibilities by coping with teenage step children, going to school meetings, or taking children to sports. It is important that we, as early childhood educators, do not assume that new parental experiences such as bringing a child to preschool means that a parent is a novice in the parenting area. Some of that grey hair may have been earned for a reason!

- may have been in paid employment for several years. Demographically, it is most likely that these parents will be employed in professional careers such as teaching, health professions, or in business related positions. There is increasingly a high correlation between professional couples and couples who postpone parenthood.

## Myths and realities about mature-age parents

Most mature-age parents who bring a child to your early childhood program will be like other parents you encounter, but early childhood professionals need to understand how the circumstances of these parents may actually differ from the myths about mature-age parents.

### *Myth 1: Financial security of the mature-age parent*

It is often assumed that mature-age parents are highly career-oriented and financially secure when they enter parenthood. This impression comes from the earliest studies of mature-age parents which focused on first-time mothers in North America using samples of women in high-powered, high-earning professions such as law and medicine (Daniels and Weingarten, 1982; Walter, 1986). Recent research (Powell, 1999; Powell and Powell, 2001) indicates, however, that mature-age parents may actually be financially stretched. Unstable finances for mature-age parents can result from parents having previous financial obligations to children from past relationships. The dilemma of saving for retirement late in one's career while simultaneously financing the needs of young children when parenthood has been delayed can also contribute to financial instability. For women in particular, taking time out of the work force late in life at the peak of their career earnings and close to the age of retirement can be very costly. Placing children in an early childhood setting as they pursue a career may be an expensive necessity.

### *Myth 2: The career-focused parent*

Many mature-age parents using your program may be in positions of seniority in their work and may experience a lot of stress from their responsibilities. The myth of the career-focused mature-age parent, however, may not necessarily hold for all parents you encounter in your program. Combining work and family

may be particularly challenging for the mature-age parent simply because of the delay in parenthood itself. These parents may have worked hard for many years to achieve their success at work, but now advancing up the career ladder may suddenly seem less important, particularly for women who have waited years to have a child. The 'maternal wall' (Swiss and Walker, 1993) or the barriers to combining family and work life may seem very daunting for a woman who might rather be baking cookies with her four year-old instead of leaving her child at a child care centre.

### *Myth 3: Career before parenthood?*

Mature-age parents who have made the decision to return to work may also be judged by the myth that devotion to a long developed career somehow precludes devotion to parenthood. On the contrary, qualitative research with mature-age, first-time mothers shows many have worked hard for many years in their careers but have willingly put those careers on hold once they have finally become parents. They may then return to work reluctantly and perhaps out of necessity while their child is very young (Powell, 1999). Most of the mature-age mothers I interviewed had never expected to become parents, and had therefore not begun to save for retirement. As their child became ready for a formal child care or early childhood setting, these women were now trying to re-enter the work force (when most would rather have been at home) simply to ensure that their family was financially secure. Financial security, it was perceived, would enhance the children's future educational options such as a university education. This willingness to consider the educational future of the child may be why many mature-age parents are viewed as career and money driven instead of appearing to make parenting a priority by staying at home and forsaking valuable income.

## Possible concerns of the mature-age parent using an early childhood service

The concerns that parents have regarding children in early childhood programs are likely to be no different for mature-age parents than for younger-aged parents. Nevertheless, working with mature-age parents can often be challenging for early childhood professionals.



Mature-age parents who have waited a long time to become parents are likely to be highly involved in their children's lives and keenly interested in every aspect of the child's development (Powell, 1999). Mature-age parents in your centre may express the following concerns:

- The mature-age parent may seem anxious about leaving a child at your centre. Having waited longer than other parents to have a child, the mature-age parent is often reluctant to forsake care of the child when they return to work despite having invested many years developing a career. Leaving a 'precious' (and perhaps only) child in an early childhood centre may therefore be difficult for parents experiencing ambivalent feelings about work/ parenting obligations.
- The mature-age parent may be acutely interested in the details of your program including how you develop curriculum goals, how you incorporate developmentally appropriate practices in your everyday routines, and how you foster social development for their child. These are generally parents who may have high expectations for themselves and for their children. Interest in your program is likely to be a manifestation of these high expectations. Most mature-age parents have had a wealth of work and life experiences prior to encountering your early childhood program. It should therefore come as no surprise that these are likely to be the parents who challenge you to justify the practices that you adopt in your program. They are more likely to have the confidence to discuss issues with you compared to many younger parents. Being confident yourself may be another matter if you happen to be younger than the parent and feel intimidated by an older person who has just come glamorously dressed from their office while you are covered in play dough and paint!

- The need for intensive discussion about their child may also be a notable characteristic of the mature-age parent. This may present particular challenges if you have a busy centre where lengthy, personal discussions are difficult to schedule. Remember that the term 'mature-age' may mean more than acquired years in these parents. 'Maturity' is likely to mean a well-developed ability to interact and discuss, a degree of confidence that enables the parent to seek your advice or help, and an ability to prioritise and articulate issues that the parent views as relevant to his or her child.

## How can we support the mature-age parent who brings a child to an early childhood setting?

In addition to the usual best practices that would be advocated for incorporating the needs of parents into the smooth running of an early childhood program, the mature-age parent may benefit from the following considerations and approaches in a high quality early childhood program.

- How knowledgeable are you and your staff about the parents' work, their responsibilities, and the demands that the parents' careers place on the family? Find out how much the child understands about the parents' work, and offer ways of assisting parents to educate children about their parents' work. Help the parents to develop strategies which assist children to make smooth transitions from parent-care to centre-care when the parent leaves for work.
- How flexible is your centre or program in allowing parents to involve themselves in the program? Do parents who work have the opportunity to come for lunch visits, for outings or for special events?
- What methods are there for communicating about the child's day with the caregiver or parent? Are the communication tools (diary, notebook, informal conferences) easily managed if the parent has a long day at work and a demanding career?
- How are the goals, objectives and daily events of your program conveyed to parents? Do you offer enough detail in your communications to satisfy highly educated parents who may want as much detail as possible?

Looking beyond the myths associated with mature-age parents may enable early childhood educators to more effectively assist these parents as they contend with the complexities of using an early childhood program for their child while combining work and parenthood. Mature-age parents are parents first and foremost, and they can bring a wealth of life experience to your program. Taking the time to incorporate their concerns is likely to result in a more 'parent-friendly' program for all your families.

### Kimberley Powell

School of Education, Massey University  
Palmerston North, New Zealand

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### An early childhood centre that is supportive to mature-age parents will:

- Be sympathetic and knowledgeable about the parents' work obligations and how those impact on the well-being of the child.
- Be flexible in how parents are involved in the program and special events.
- Provide a variety of parent-centre communication tools that allow working parents the flexibility needed to effectively monitor their child's progress.
- Provide detailed but concise information about the child's development and the early childhood program, and ensure information is appropriate for parents who have advanced educational and analytic skills.



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**JAMES GARBARINO**, Professor of Human Development at Cornell University, doctorate in human development and family studies. His current research focuses on the impact of family and community violence and trauma on child development and interventions to deal with these effects.

**PILAR BACAR**, has worked with Professor David Olds and colleagues at the University of Colorado on the research and development of the Nurse-Family Partnership, a home visitation program for high-risk, first-time mothers. She is co-author, with Jo Ann Robinson, of the home visitation strategies for Partners in Parenting Education, an experiential and interactive curriculum that fosters attachment, self-regulation and emotional development for infants, toddlers and their caregivers.

**MEREDITH SMALL**, Professor of Anthropology, Cornell University, who works in the field of ethno-paediatrics – the study of parents, children and child rearing across cultures. Professor Small asserts that our ideas about how we raise our children are culturally more than biologically or individually determined so that parenting styles are not "right" or "wrong" but appropriate or inappropriate for the culture the parents live in. Her insights are particularly relevant, to parenting in a multicultural society.

### Conference Secretariat contact details

For information about registration or submitting abstracts:

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**Child and Youth Health**  
**295 South Terrace**  
**Adelaide SA 5000**

**Australia**

Contact Mel Wood

Telephone: **+61 8 8303 1508**

Facsimile: **+61 8 8303 1657**

E-mail: [mailto:wood.melanie@saugov.sa.gov.au](mailto:mailto:wood.melanie@saugov.sa.gov.au)

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In May 2001, an environmental group in the USA published a booklet, raising questions about the risk of arsenic poisoning associated with CCA (chromated copper arsenate)-treated timber (Sharp and Walker 2001). This was part of a larger campaign organised to force the US government to lower the 'official hazardous level' of arsenic in drinking water.

the timber products which created design shortfalls, especially hand grip surfaces, and also because there are effective alternatives.

## The facts

Soft woods are prone to be attacked by fungus, termites and other insects; CCA was developed to impregnate the wood under high pressure with chemicals which slow down deterioration (from a one year to a 20 year life span). Obviously there are other treatments or surface sealants

## The questions

The question to ask is not: 'Does this contain arsenic?' but: 'Is the arsenic able to be absorbed into the body?' The short answer is that arsenic is not absorbed readily through the skin; so running a hand on CCA timber may pick up some arsenic but it would then have to be transferred to the mouth before it could do harm. It would need constant and intimate contact with arsenic containing substances for 20–30

# CCA-treated timber: Is it a risk?

In the USA, CCA-treated timber enjoys special exemptions to products containing arsenic, so it was an obvious campaign point. The Sharp and Walker booklet was placed on the internet and picked up by newspaper sources in Australia, who proceeded to seek the reactions of authorities here to selected extracts. This is not unusual, but those newspapers should have checked the facts before sensationalising the issue. Their failure to do so has caused unwarranted concern to parents, teachers and the regulatory authorities.

If the alarmist view was true, then many early childhood facilities, homes, schools and parks, who make use of CCA-treated-timber for decks, play structures and retaining walls, would have a worrying situation on their hands. While CCA-treated-timber has been used extensively in playgrounds in the past, it is not used for that purpose as much these days, primarily because of the scale of

which will also slow the deterioration. But are the levels of arsenic, which slowly leach out of the timbers, a health hazard? The quoted research involves claim and counterclaim especially relating to flawed methodology. It is true that CCA does contain arsenic—but then so do many naturally occurring substances (like fish, cereals and meat), manufactured products (like paper, glass and electronics) and also every body of water and soil. The levels (and biological availability) of the arsenic in all these vary, but the fact is that the public is exposed to copper, chromium and arsenic through other sources (APVMA 2003).



Inappropriate CCA fixed equipment removed from playgrounds due to height and insufficient grip surfaces which caused a child to fall and fracture their skull

years for a positive linkage to cancer. CCA-treated timber has been used overseas for 60 years and in Australia for 20 years without any reports of harm from overexposure. But while this is no reason for complacency, the current scare campaign is not a reason to panic and remove all CCA-timber from a dwelling or playground.

The debate really focuses on what evidence is produced to support a predetermined point of view:

- The Sharp and Walker view is that any increase in arsenic is not to be tolerated for any reason (2001).
- The US Wood Preservation Science Council (2003) quotes the US Consumer Product Safety Commission as concluding: *over a lifetime, arsenic exposures from food, especially foods such as rice, other grains and meats; drinking water; and other sources could be much larger than exposures from playground equipment during childhood.*





Part of the questioning process (especially for those who tend towards the Sharp and Walker view) is to look at the alternatives to CCA-timber, assuming that playground equipment will still be used. There are a range of materials such as plastics and steel; not all plastics are benign (eg. phthalates, a class of chemicals found in most plastics, have the potential to be endocrine disruptors), and steel tends to become too hot/cold and to rust. Definitive research is yet to arrive.

## The scientific answers

In Australia, we have several levels of government agencies trying to sort the myths from the facts:

- *The safe level aspects.* CCA is approved for use by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority—who take advice on health aspects from the Office of Chemical Safety within the Therapeutic Goods Administration. Additionally we have Australian standards for these CCA products [AS3660.1 and AS1604.1]. The States license the use of CCA, consulting widely between officers of relevant departments and the Environmental Protection Authorities.
- *The manufacturing aspects.* The States license the use of CCA, consulting widely between officers of relevant departments and the Environmental Protection Authorities.

As a result of the public concern and new information, states such as NSW have declared an interim measure that effectively says, 'don't do anything until we have examined the situation'. It is not

just that little is known about the levels of arsenic released (especially given the climatic differences between USA and Australia), but the authorities want to examine the differences in the standards they require of Australian manufacturers. As in all equipment-related matters, the situation needs to be periodically re-examined because of technological changes. The results of the authorities' determinations [US EPA late 2003; APVMA mid 2004] and some overseas research are being actively followed by state authorities. Up-to-date hard data can be obtained from the NSW government website at: [www.epa.nsw.gov.au/waste/immoblstnapriv.htm](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/waste/immoblstnapriv.htm).



Inappropriate fixed equipment—the type of obsolete climbing equipment that has been removed from playgrounds due to safety reasons, notably insufficient grip surface, insufficient head clearance heights, horizontal infill rails

## The practical solution

One of the areas of concern is that schools and other child care facilities will take fright and rip out any suspected CCA-treated equipment. This is not a good idea however well meaning. Not only does it deprive children of play opportunities, but how do you know it has been CCA-treated (other treatments can also result in a green tinge). Additionally, research indicates that the older the CCA-treated timber gets, the less it leaches arsenic. Disposal of CCA

logs and milled timber can also be a problem: if they are burnt, they release toxins into the air, while the ash still presents a disposal problem, and if they are collected in a landfill, then they may contaminate the groundwater.

Any facilities that are concerned about existing CCA-treated timber can paint the timber with sealants (although since these eventually peel and crack, they will require regular maintenance). Similarly, any of the wood-oil products designed to protect outdoor furniture will slow down the timber oxidation process, as well as conserving moisture in the timber, leading to less shrinkage and less sloughing of surface dust.

So from all points of view, we would be wise to wait for the reports and reviews before jumping to conclusions (as advised by Jill Rice) about the way our playgrounds need to change. Common sense is needed. From a wider perspective, the issue of most concern is that CCA-treated timber has become the centre of a safety-storm and a deliberately dramatic situation based on inadequate (or even misleading) information. The area of child safety needs good quality research; it needs to have updated safety standards. The Australian authorities are to be commended for acting so quickly to review the situation—especially as these reviews will also be considering technical alternatives to CCA: for example, the copper quats (quaternary copper compounds), copper azole, boron, pyrethroid-based and metal-based light organic solvent preservatives (LOSPs).

**Prue Walsh**



CCA timber upright posts and crossbars for swing frames and including raised garden bed designed to minimise the risk of children running in front of moving swings

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I wish to acknowledge the input of Jack Dempsey, Environmental Health in the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing for valuable technical information, and Valerie Eldershaw for editorial assistance.

## Copper chrome arsenate (CCA):

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has released a draft report on the Review of Arsenic Timber Treatments (copper chrome arsenate (CCA) and arsenic trioxide). The recommendations are still draft and will not be finalised until autumn 2004. The draft recommendations include:

- CCA timber treatment products will be prohibited for future use on timber intended for use in children's play equipment, picnic tables, decking and handrails.
- supply of CCA timber treatment products will be restricted to appropriately trained users.
- timber treatment facilities must be designed and operated to

meet Australian Standards for timber treatment.

- CCA product labels will be required to provide more information on application of CCA, how to manage freshly treated timber and liquids, sludge or wastes containing CCA residues, protection of the environment and storage and disposal.



CCA timber garden retaining wall and fixed equipment uprights.

At this stage the APVMA has said existing play equipment, decks, hand rails and picnic tables do not need to be removed. More advice on how to deal with existing structures is likely to be provided during 2004.

<http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/pesticides/index.htm>

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# Blind and curtain cord safety campaign

Many people don't realise that babies and young children – particularly those under the age of three — can accidentally injure, or even strangle themselves on blind and curtain cords. A child can place their head in the loop created by a blind cord. If the child then tries to sit or falls down, they can hang themselves in the loop. The cord or chain loop used to open and close vertical blinds can also strangle children.

Since 1991, over 170 children have died this way in the United States. Over ten Australian children have also been accidentally strangled by blind and curtain cords.

Responsible segments of the blind manufacturing industry have already embarked on new product modifications and included warnings with their products.

However, because there are many millions of blinds and curtains in Australian homes, and because children can get into trouble in only a few seconds, public awareness is the best way to prevent these deaths. That's why the Australian Government has initiated a national campaign to alert parents and child care workers to the strangulation hazards of looped blind and curtain cords.

In December, the Treasury and the Department of Health and Ageing jointly launched a national awareness campaign. As part of the strategy, a Safety Alert! *Blind & Curtain Cords* brochure and poster have been distributed across Australia through maternal and child health centres; child care centres; family day care workers; state and territory consumer protection agencies; Kidsafe Offices; and blind and curtain shops.

The brochure and poster illustrate some simple steps parents and carers can take to help keep children safe:

- Attach a cleat (available from hardware stores) to the wall near the top of the curtain or blind, then wind the cord around the cleat. Other products which are designed to enclose the wound-up cord are also available.
- Install a cord tensioning device (available from hardware stores or curtain shops) which encloses the cord or chain loops of vertical blinds
- Be aware that children can climb onto furniture and play with blind and curtain cords. Make sure that furniture is not placed near a window where they can reach the curtain or blind cord.



- Make sure that curtain and blind cords are not left hanging within the reach of children. The bottom of any cord should be at least 1600 millimetres above the floor.

A copy of *Safety Alert! Blind & Curtain Cords* has been provided with this issue of *Every Child*.

To get extra copies, a campaign poster, or information on other child product safety issues,

**please call 1300 305 866 (for the cost of a local call) or order online at [www.consumersonline.gov.au](http://www.consumersonline.gov.au).**

## Teaching preschool in a remote Indigenous community

Noonkanbah station is home to the Yungngora Community. It is situated 360 kilometres east of Broome in Western Australia and is on the edge of the Great Sandy Desert. The Community has taken a significant leadership role in the fight for land-rights. The Nyikina, Walmajarri and others originally worked the station when it was under white ownership. In 1969 they walked off the property, due to poor working conditions, and began a protracted battle for ownership of their land. Their land-rights claim in 1972 was the first in Australia. In 1976 they return as the owners of the site after 90 years of dispossession. One of their first acts was to make the community a 'dry' (drug and alcohol free) community and to establish a community-run school. They employed two teachers and conducted the school under the control of a school board consisting of local community members.

The original vision of the Community was to 'bring young people back to the Law, making sure they married the right way, making sure they spoke Walmajarri before they spoke English, caring for the land, conducting ceremonies' (Hawke & Gallagher, 1989: 85). Their priority was cultural and social rather than economic. The Community had watched the negative effect of their children being schooled away from them in Fitzroy Crossing with the loss of social and cultural ties that this entailed.

The Yungngora community, as it is now called, have a different vision for their children in the twenty-first century. Dickey Cox, community chairperson says he wants:

*these kids to learn more reading and more writing so they can carry on. If they learn more then they can run the community. We started with the cultural stuff but now people are marrying others from different skins and that's alright. People used to get punished for these things by the old people.*

Owen Button, a community member, expressed a similar view:

*The world is changing and going forward. Aboriginal people are changing with the world. People are now marrying people who they like and feel comfortable with.*

The Community want the children to be well educated so they can eventually take leadership roles as teachers, administrators, mechanics, doctors, health care workers, nurses and translators across the languages used within the Community. Yet, preparing for these jobs means leaving the Community and the danger is that they don't come back. A member of the School Board, stated: 'You want them to go, yet you want them to stay.' The Community also want the children to enjoy their learning, to have achievable goals for themselves and for teachers to work with the individuality of children with their own likes and dislikes.

Kulkariya School has four classes including a preschool. There are eighty students in the school with fourteen in the preschool (3 to 6 years of age). Madeleine Bell is currently the preschool teacher and Lurline Button is the Aboriginal Education Worker. Lurline is studying for a Diploma of Teaching at Notre Dame University in Broome. Madeleine came here in 1998 straight from university. The preschool children had not had a formal preschool teacher for some time and were not used to a *kartiya* (white) teacher. Initially she found it necessary to train the children in school routines such as sitting on the mat and at the table at morning tea time, using equipment and packing it away and toileting. Teaching these skills is less necessary now as the older children teach them to the younger children before they come to school. This makes her job easier and she is able to concentrate on other parts of the curriculum.

It took Madeleine time, when she first arrived, to get used to the new context in which she found herself. For example, in mainstream preschools there are strict rules about the use of play equipment but here there is more freedom. The children are used to climbing and jumping in a way that white children are not usually allowed. Many of the children also get themselves up and to kindy, so to make it easier for the small children, the preschool is positioned closer to the community than the main school (the school runs from 7am to 12.30pm). It is essential to make the program appealing so the children want to come. Rewards are included in this process. If they come everyday they get a lucky dip



prize. The process works and the children attend approximately 85 per cent of the time.

The preschool is conducted in keeping with those in other parts of Australia. Programming is based on the *Western Australian Curriculum Frameworks* and *Student Outcomes* as well as the *Preschool Profiles*. Language, in term three this year, is focused on the book *Fancy That* by Pamela Allen. Kulkarriya School is one of a number of community schools involved in the Scaffolding Literacy Project established by Dr Brian Grey and Wendy Cowey at the University of Canberra. This year Kulkarriya School has been named winner of the National Literacy and Numeracy Awards. The community is delighted with the rapid improvement in the children's literacy.

Scaffolding at the preschool level involves Low Order Book Orientation-- including letter and word recognition and discussing the meaning attached to the pictures and how they can be 'read' to gain information. This process is at the heart of scaffolding, letting children into the secrets of why writers make certain choices and how they strategically place information. The result of the process is that the children are scaffolded into white culture discourse. Spelling follows on which the children seem to enjoy best. They love to write words. Madeleine also fosters language via the day-to-day routine, for example, encouraging the children to ask questions (permission) to do certain activities. The children tend to make statements in their everyday language and need to be guided to ask questions.

Maths this term is measurement and sorting objects into different categories and exploring numbers on calculators. The children are comparing calculator numbers and written numbers. Measurement is, at this stage, using different objects (hands, lego, etc.). They also love working with numbers, playing games such as snap and memory, and especially writing numbers. For them, writing is 'real work'! One day as they were finishing school, a student commented to Madeleine, 'But we haven't done our work yet!', 'Yes we have', was her response as she listed the activities they had done that day and told him that they didn't have to write every day. He left not fully convinced.

This term the children have been practising for the big sports carnival held at Fitzroy Crossing, 180 kilometres away. This is an annual event that brings together schools from the surrounding Kimberley region.



It runs for two days and the children can elect, with parents' permission, to camp overnight with the other students or to stay with their families if they are in town. The community runs Noonkanbah cattle station as well as the central services, so not all are able to visit Fitzroy for the sports. However, those of the community who are able come into town for the two days, and it is a time for teachers, students and different communities to catch up.

Social and environmental education incorporates the community as the children explore employment. Yungngora Community consists of approximately 250 people. Their traditional language is Nyikina but there are only a few speakers left. Walmajarri is also spoken and taught at the school by the elders of the community. The people tend to speak Kriol (slightly different from Aboriginal English) on a day-to-day basis. The school is a central part of the community, but so is the store that provides a wide range of goods. It is the focus of occasional visits from the preschool where the children will explore working there. They will also visit the power house (diesel run generator) that services the community and the water station where the main tanks are located to collect the bore water. Both of these services are run by a local community member. There is also a community office (which provides administration for the community), a health and community aged care centre, clinic and a women's centre (TAFE) where they can do sewing, cooking, computer courses, art and craft workshops. At each of these places the employees will share with the children what their work entails.

As in other preschools, the children make constructions from objects they bring in, however, unlike children in other settings who make cars, houses, robots etc the children here simply enjoy the process of abstractly

joining objects together. Sometimes they are directed to make recognisable constructions, which they do, but at other times they are left to enjoy the freedom of making their own creations. Science this term focuses on children exploring notions of likes and dislikes which will tie in with the restaurant being established in the school. The restaurant is being set up as part of the homemaker (canteen) where they can buy a hot lunch. The idea is to provide an opportunity for the high school students to learn to run a restaurant where they make and serve diabetes-friendly food. They will practise food preparation and cooking skills, waiting on tables, budgeting, communication and oral English skills. The community will be invited to eat there regularly. Madeleine and Lurline have set up a restaurant corner at the preschool where the children role-play their experiences. Science this term will also include learning about making choices to gain a desired effect, for example, flying kites to see how the wind works.

Language is integrated into all key learning areas including music and art. As with technology, they enjoy the freedom of art and readily take to producing their own works. Their movement to music is different from that of children Madeleine has worked with before. The children here readily use their whole bodies, are quick to respond to the beat and create their own fluent movements.

Teaching preschool children in this remote setting is not that different from teaching in other settings. The children are fun loving, eager to learn and with a range of intelligence much as you would find anywhere else. The main difference is that they miss time at school due to having to accompany their parents when they are travelling on family business. Madeleine has been teaching here for five years. She stays because she enjoys seeing the school grow and offering the children choices for the future.

Note: This article and the pictures have been approved by the Yungngora Community.

**Christine Trimmingham Jack**

School of Teacher Education, University of Canberra

**Madeleine Bell**

Kulkarriya School, Noonkanbah Station

Hawke, S. & Gallagher, M. (1989) *Noonkanbah: Whose Land. Whose Law*. Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Press.

Angelica (nickname Jelly) is an identical twin. She and her sister are third in a family of five. She has curly brown hair, big brown eyes with long eyelashes and she always wants to be the best at everything! Today she was brought to school by her grandfather on the front of a four-wheel motor bike. She came into class, said good morning to Madeleine and put her name label up on the 'who's at kindy today?' chart. Some musical instruments were out on the mat and Jelly picked up two bells, held her arms out at right angles and rang them enthusiastically smiling at the noise she created. Then she pretended to be a teacher picking up a ruler and pointing to the number chart with some other children taking the role of students. When Madeleine turned and noticed her game, Jelly giggled shyly and stopped her imaginary play for a moment before resuming it. Today the children had a bookmark making activity. Jelly did hers by carefully colouring in two teddy bears markers using brown, orange, purple and mustard. Madeleine wrote her name on them and cut them out for her.

Later in the morning, Madeleine modelled making an octopus for the sea display the children are working on this term. Jelly set to work. First, she chose a blue balloon, blew it up and tied her own knot—she was the only one who could tie it by herself. Then she drew eyes, nose, mouth and hair with a texta. After selecting a blue piece of cardboard, she drew straight lines on it and cut them out to make legs for her octopus. Initially, she made nine legs but after counting them realised she had made one too many. She used sticky tape to attach the legs to the balloon and Madeleine hung it from the ceiling.

The children practised writing their name on a name sheet and Jelly flew through writing the eight letters of her name. When she finished she put it in her work envelope tacked on one of the walls. Visiting the library corner, she looked through some of the Aboriginal story-books put out by Madeleine for today's use. At the end of reading time, she worked with the other children to pack the books away before drinking milo for morning tea. It was time to go home but before she left Madeleine asked her what she liked about preschool: *Playing and reading books. I like putting [my] name up and I like coming to Kindy and I like Milo and I like colouring the work and I like putting [my] sticker up and I like playing store.*





# OMEP

## **World Early Childhood Education Congress comes to Melbourne in July 2004**

The OMEP *One World: Many Childhoods* Congress will provide a unique opportunity for early childhood practitioners working with children (0–8 years) to hear the latest research findings, exchange information and celebrate the enrichment of communities through the lives of young children.

For everyone working in the broad field of early childhood, this Congress will bring together eleven international and eight national keynote presenters. They will debate the theme within four discrete forums. These are:

- Children in difficult circumstances
- Innovation in service delivery
- Indigenous children's needs and services
- Children's health and social services

The Congress is the first international gathering to do with early childhood education (0–8) to be held in Australia and will be conducted in English, Spanish and French, using simultaneous interpreters.

Professor Fiona Stanley, AC Australian of the Year 2003, is the Congress Patron.

OMEP (Organisation Mondiale pour L'Education Prescolaire) is a worldwide organisation dedicated to the enhancement of health, education and welfare matters in their many forms for children birth to eight years. Its objectives reflect its close links with UNICEF, UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

# AUSTRALIA

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# The numeracy skills of preschoolers

An increasing number of children are spending more time in day care, preschool and early learning centres around Australia. So, it is more important than ever that we are aware of the extent to which numeracy is part of the preschool 'curriculum'. By gaining an awareness of questions such as what skills preschoolers bring to their first year of school and what strategies our most effective preschool teachers are employing, we are able to better understand what numeracy means at the preschool level. We are then in an excellent position to enhance the success, enjoyment and confidence of a greater number of children in regard to their numeracy development.

Project Good Start, is a two-year study commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and conducted by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), as part of the Australian Government's Numeracy Research and Development Initiative. Under this initiative, ten state and territory projects and four national projects are being conducted. All projects focus on improving students' outcomes in numeracy by identifying effective teaching and learning practices in the primary and pre-primary years.

The first phase of Project Good Start focused on 1600 preschoolers in 80 centres from all Australian states and territories. Initial findings of a literature review have been published as *A good start to numeracy: Effective numeracy strategies from research and practice in early childhood*, (Doig, B. et al. 2002). This was released recently and may be downloaded from the ACER website at: [www.acer.edu.au/documents/GoodStart.pdf](http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/GoodStart.pdf). and on the DEST web site at: [www.dest.gov.au/school/publications/index.htm](http://www.dest.gov.au/school/publications/index.htm).

Of particular interest to teachers may be the aptly named, 70 'Sandpit Suggestions' that give practical advice for teaching numeracy in the preschool and prep grade based upon the literature.

Two assessment tasks, *Who Am I?* and *I Can Do Maths*, both developed by Brian Doig and Marion de Lemos, and published by ACER, were given to the children in

their last year of preschool. To the surprise of most preschool teachers in the study and researchers alike, many children at the end of their preschool year were able to make progress on *I Can Do Maths* considerably beyond expectations, given that the instrument was devised for children in the first year of school. For example, 40 per cent were able to identify a cylinder and the number that was 'one more than 8'. Thirty per cent of the sample could solve problems '4 more than 5' and '2 less than 6' when the problems were set in an appropriate context.



While 30 per cent of children in the Good Start study knew '4 more than 5' and '2 less than 6' when presented in a meaningful context, there were another 30 per cent of children who could not count 8 objects. This finding presents a challenge, even for educators at these very early levels, to

cater for the surprisingly wide range of abilities, skills and knowledge of the children.

Similar findings were made in the Early Years Numeracy Project in Victoria (1999–2001). This study reported that most prep children (the year before grade one in Victoria) arrived at school with considerable numeracy skills and understandings in areas that have been traditional content for this grade level. This suggests that educational expectations could be raised considerably in terms of what can be achieved in the first year at school.

The surprisingly high numeracy knowledge and achievement of some preschoolers was often less surprising to parents. They frequently noted that their preschoolers learned numeracy skills from their older siblings who were keen to show their younger brother or sister what they had learned at school. Programs that are effective in promoting numeracy among young children recognise this and aim to build upon it (Perry, 2000).



A second part of the Good Start study was to visit selected centres with a view to identifying the key attributes of effective teachers and their programs. Twenty case study reports identified some common features of effective preschool teachers and their programs. While many centres were equally well-resourced, it was teacher quality that appeared to be most critical. While this is hardly surprising, the study seeks to clarify what effectiveness means in terms of developing numeracy understanding, success, enjoyment and confidence at the preschool level.

Three centres have received second visits and videos of effective teachers at work. This will enable a 'reflective dialogue' to take place to more deeply probe teacher thinking and beliefs. This video material and subsequent analysis will add to our knowledge of what it means to develop numeracy at this level. The final research report for Project Good Start is not due to be completed until early 2004. A booklet for practitioners and parents providing guidelines for effective practice will also be produced.

It has been traditional for early childhood education in Australia to be holistic rather than curriculum focused. Even the concept of 'teacher' is sometimes thought of as inappropriate at the preschool level since for some, 'teaching' can mean interfering in the 'natural' process of learning. However, one early indication from Project Good Start is that children in centres where teachers (and parents) have a high level of 'numeracy awareness' appear to be ahead of their peers on early measures of numeracy, even when other factors, such as socio-economic status, were taken into account.

One possibility suggested by this study is that the professional mathematics associations in each state or territory could be more involved in offering and supporting professional development opportunities in numeracy for early childhood teachers. This could support the previously identified need for early childhood teachers to develop and enhance their own competence and confidence in mathematics (Perry, 2000).

The Mathematical Association of Victoria (MAV) is the professional association for teachers of mathematics in Victoria, traditionally those in primary and secondary schools. However, in 2003 the MAV Council began, and

continues, investigating ways to support teachers in other sectors such as TAFE and early childhood.

**With this in mind, the MAV would like to hear from** preschool, early learning centre and child care teachers who would be interested in being part of a focus group throughout 2004. Information gathered from this group would assist the design and trialing of a program to support early childhood professionals in developing numeracy programs. This would build on the work of Project Good Start, with the practitioner/parent booklet providing a useful starting point. Interested teachers could contact the authors of this article or the MAV on (03) 9380 2399.

The views expressed in this article do not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

#### AUTHORS

Ray Peck is President of the Mathematical Association of Victoria (MAV) and a Research Fellow at the Australian Council for Educational Research. He may be contacted by email at [peck@acer.edu.au](mailto:peck@acer.edu.au) or by telephone at (03) 9277 5767.

Anne Grant is an Early Childhood Consultant and a Councillor of the MAV. She may be contacted by email at [forgrant@alphalink.com.au](mailto:forgrant@alphalink.com.au) or by telephone at (03) 9877 1463.

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## Baby Bilby, where do you sleep?

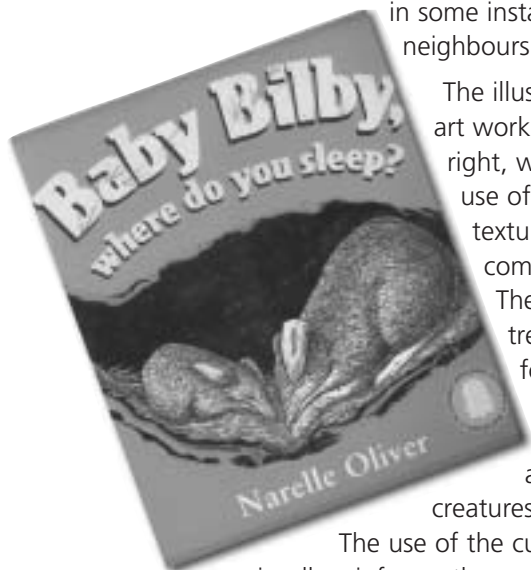
**Narelle Oliver**

Lothian books (2002)  
ISBN 0734402309

**RRP \$24.95**

Another wonderful picture book from Narelle Oliver, and a worthy recipient of Honour Book in the 2002 Children's Book Council of Australia awards. While this is an information book, it has literary elements that make it exceptional. The book identifies where an interesting array of desert creatures hide during the daytime, these include animals, reptiles and birds.

The text and illustrations show their habitats and, in some instances, their neighbours.



The illustrations are art works in their own right, with attractive use of colour, line, texture and composition.

They are also a treasure trove for the observant child with additional creatures to discover.

The use of the cut-out holes visually reinforces the creature stated, and then each creatures tracks. The final page shows and names all the creatures hidden in the illustrations.

The rhyming language used in this book is poetic in its meter and flow. The repetitive nature of the text is appealing to young children, while the use of an interesting array of verbs and pleasant sprinkling of alliteration lift it above the ordinary.

This is a book that will be enjoyed by the very young with an adult to support the fun of looking for things, yet would be just as effective with the school child doing work on the desert regions of Australia.

**Lenore Lindbeck**

University of Southern Queensland

## When I Was Little, Like You

**Mary Malbunka**

Allen & Unwin (2003)  
ISBN 1865089036

**RRP: \$29.95**

In this picture book, Mary Malbunka tells the story of her upbringing.

She was raised 250 km west of Alice Springs and this story reflects her outback childhood.

The illustrations are bright and simple capturing the essence of the story as it unfolds.

The inclusion of traditional Indigenous art throughout is a reflection of the symbolic role of Aboriginal art in preserving the story of its people.

The book includes diagrams of how to read these pictures.



The text is a rolling narrative recalling social structures, the different tribes and their languages, living conditions, family and family events, customs and traditional lore. It is a detailed and realistic portrayal of the life of an outback Aboriginal child in the 1960s. This book stands out as one of a limited (though growing) number of picture books that respectfully reflects contemporary Indigenous life. The book is written in a colloquial and chatty style that creates an intimacy between the narrative and the reader. The story is littered with Luritja words and phrases that challenge the tongue and authenticate the tale.

The narrative is long and detailed which makes it most appropriate for the late preschool and early school years. Its rich and authentic portrayal of traditional desert life also makes this book a great resource for independent readers in school. It includes detailed notes in the back that enrich the knowledge of the Luritja language, paintings and pronunciations.

**Lenore Lindbeck**

## Enough is Enough

**Scott Willis and Jenna Packer**

Scholastic (2003)  
ISBN 186504576 4

**RRP: \$27.95**

Balthus (the cat) and his owner Henry take us through the excitement and pitfalls of moving to a new country where you do not speak the language. We share their adventure of shopping in an exotic market. Henry is constantly given more than he asks for, and the result is an over abundance of new and exotic food! The crisis is resolved when all their new friends and neighbours come to dinner.

This book introduces a culture quite different from Australia, and is a lovely culinary adventure introducing an impressive range of Italian foods that may not be well known to many young children. The language used is effective and evocative, painting the story with the hustle, smells and colours of the town and especially the markets and foods. The text is enhanced with imagery, onomatopoeia, and alliteration, and is rich in its vocabulary.

The illustrations are busy and bright, with lots of interesting things to look at. They effectively portray the diversity and difference of an Italian market. Children will enjoy looking for Balthus as he weaves his way through the different foods as they make their way in and out of the markets.

**Lenore Lindbeck**

University of Southern Queensland



## People in the community

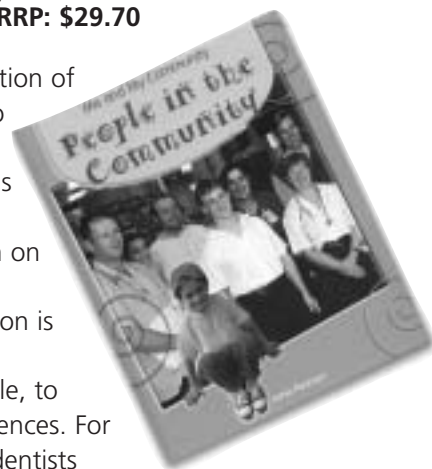
(Me and my community series)

**Jane Pearson**

Binara Publishing Pty Ltd. (2003)  
ISBN 1740708180

**RRP: \$29.70**

Developing an appreciation of how we work together to build a community forms the main emphasis for this volume of work. While providing key information on the roles and details of people's work, Jane Pearson is also careful to apply this information where possible, to children's lives and experiences. For example, the section on dentists includes a paragraph on 'Will it hurt?'. The concluding section entitled 'Where do you fit in?' encourages children to reflect on their roles in the community; each section of the book encourages this with questions directed to the reader. The professions covered in this book include doctors, nurses, dentists, police officers, firefighters, ambulance officers, postal workers, garbage, gardens and maintenance workers, teachers and librarians, crossing supervisors and lifesavers, sales assistants and bus, train and tram drivers. Two pages of text are devoted to each profession and include bright colourful headings and photographs. Careful attention is given to depicting women in a number of professional roles including doctor, dentist, postal worker, gardener and crossing supervisor. This volume also includes a contents section, glossary and index for easy reference.



*People in the Community* is one of four volumes - *Keeping Healthy*, *Living in the Community* and *Safety First* which make up the 'Me and My Community' series. It is an informative book with a good lay out that assists children to reflect on the important role they play in the wider community. This would make a valuable addition to libraries in early childhood and primary school settings.

**Jane Page**

Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood  
University of Melbourne.

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## Only Connect: The Tasmanian Essential Connections project

Tasmanian schools have a new curriculum – the Essential Learnings Framework – the first 'Birth to Sixteen' curriculum produced for the state. The curriculum is mandatory for government schools and optional for use in children's services settings. Children's services practitioners had an interest in exploring the application of the curriculum to their programs and in exploring the important planning relationship between the new curriculum and quality assurance requirements. A project was therefore established to develop a detailed guide relating to children from birth to five. The guide is titled *Essential Connections*.

The curriculum has five categories: *Thinking, Communicating, Personal futures, Social responsibility and World futures*. These closely resemble ways in which early childhood programs are organised around a child's personal, emotional and social needs, and opportunities for them to use their growing capacity to think and communicate. Teams of practitioner researchers in child care and school settings were asked to observe and document the learning of very young children.

Looking closely at children, and documenting significant aspects of their growth and development as learners, often challenges educators' preconceptions about children's competence at different



ages. It also challenges their expectations about the level at which even very young children can think, communicate, understand and act. These planned and systematic observations also clearly demonstrate the core role of the educator in creating an environment that enhances (or limits) a child's learning.

### Form

*Essential Connections* is a practical document designed to help early years' practitioners operate professionally at the highest possible level.

*Essential Connections* is structured in the following way:

- There is a description of young children's learning in relation to each organiser, that helps to locate the curriculum in an early years' context.
- 'Learning markers' provide indicators of increasing competence.

- Individual 'learning stories' offer vignettes of children's learning in action. Because the examples come from real child care and school settings, they have a true voice that helps readers to imagine 'their children' demonstrating similar learning.
- 'Provision for learning' describes the role of the educator and the nature of the enabling learning environment.
- Links with key aspects of the National Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS) are identified and referenced throughout.

An example from the Thinking Essential is included below to illustrate how the curriculum has been translated into contexts for very young children. Practitioners identified the key markers, provided the learning vignettes and suggested how the educator might respond.



## The thinking essential

### What is it about?

At first, educators may wonder whether very young children think in systematic and reflective ways about experience and ideas. While a highly rational approach to solving problems takes time to develop, the research of professionals in child care and schools indicates that signs of this kind of thinking are evident very early in a child's life. The message for the educator is that the right kind of environment and response from the adults who interact with children can foster the development of habits of mind that promote thinking.

'Quality thinking' does not happen automatically, educators need to

plan to provide an environment that provokes puzzlement, stimulates curiosity, encourages a sense of wonder, and prompts questions and investigations. Within such an environment, educators need to interact with young learners in ways that model thinking and problem solving approaches and challenge children's existing ideas about how things work.

The Thinking Essential has two key elements – Inquiry and Reflective thinking.

### Inquiry

Inquiry involves just what you'd expect – asking questions, investigating, gathering information, considering the possibilities and coming to tentative conclusions that you can justify and test. Even very young children engage in these processes as they explore their physical and social environments, trying out actions, seeing what happens and adjusting their behaviours to achieve a desired goal. Babies, for example, are following an inquiry path when they throw a toy out of the cot, watch an adult pick it up and return it, smile and toss it out many more times until the adult becomes tired of 'the game'.

Toddlers will spend hours watching marbles roll down a chute, three- and four-year-olds will adapt the design of the tower they're building to prevent it falling over, and preschoolers enjoy 'the science' of planting seeds, watching them grow and 'recording' the conditions plants need to survive – all this is 'inquiry'.

## Reflective thinking

Reflective thinking is less familiar to us. Reflective thinking is 'self conscious thinking'. It is a deliberate process by which we look for reasons and causes; we seek a plan, an explanation or resolution of some kind. Even young children can learn to see and respect different perspectives and plan their next inquiry in a more systematic and effective way. This can be achieved through talking about their thinking and reflecting on how valid their actions and conclusions seem to be with benefit of hindsight.

Thinking ethically begins for young children when adults explain that a situation may be more complex than they realise and that there may be points of view other than their own. It is important to talk with children about right and wrong ways to act, how an action might harm another and why we agree to consider others and make decisions for the common good.

## Thinking

*Essential Connections* will provide practitioners who work with children in the pre-compulsory years in different settings, with a shared basis for planning for young children's learning. When educators work from a similar framework, the opportunities for seamless provision and communication between all stakeholders are greatly enhanced.

**Jenni Connor**

Learning markers	Learning stories	Provision for learning	QIAS links
<b>Inquiry</b>			
Holds and examines objects with interest	Kira (8 months) carefully examines several toys before 'selecting' one that plays a tune	Provide a range of toys with increasing challenge and interest eg. toys that hang, ones with limbs that move, ones with sounds	
Shows curiosity, exploring their environment	Amy (10 months) begins to poke her head around the cubby, to play 'peekaboo' with Kylie (1.2). When her mother comes, Amy plays peekaboo with her	Spend time playing games and interacting with babies and encourage interaction between them. Language and sensory stimulation are vital for brain development.	KC 6 (p.59):Appropriate independence, self-help skills, curiosity, problem-solving, logical inquiry, mathematical thinking and originality of thought and action should be valued for learning and development to occur in balanced ways.
Gathers information through the senses	Children 1.3–2 years feel and crackle papers, fabrics and plastics in the play pen	Provide a range of tactile materials that make different sounds when explored	
Follows an inquiry path, repeating actions to test what happens	Eddie (2.6) tries pieces in the shape sorter until he finds one that fits; he tips them out and repeats the action accurately again	Talk about processes of investigation in systematic ways – 'First we did this, then that, let's see what happens when...'	
Sets own questions for investigation	Kim (2.6) takes the trains from the set to the slide and 'experiments' until they move smoothly down the slope	Talk with children about their investigations, encouraging them to articulate their predictions, findings and explanations	
Collaborates on an investigation	Alex & Lou (3.5) investigate pine cones in a water trough, feeling and shaking them and checking to see if they float	Vary materials in sand and water play environments. Ask questions and encourage children to test theories	
Observes, measures, hypothesises ('I think this will happen'), builds models and tests	Jason (4) regularly goes to the height chart to check if he has grown; he measures himself against the door handle and says 'I'll be higher than the handle soon'	Model techniques for checking observations and interpretations.	
Formulates interpretations of events	Annie and Daniel (4.8) observe twigs on the ground, point up and say 'The sticks are from the tree, the wind's blowing them down'	Model 'not knowing' and ways to find out	
Adapts actions in the light of consequences	Jack (3.5) adjusts his tower building to place larger blocks on the bottom after it falls over when the height/width proportions are not right	Provide the language to discuss what appears to be happening. Ask why the tower is more stable this time.	
'Records' findings from 'experiments' and can talk about their meaning	Four-year-olds have been growing seedlings, drawing them at different stages of growth and marking their height on a timeline	Provide 'pre-literate' means for children to record through drawing, pictograms, cut outs from magazines and a pre-made timeline	



## Diana Roe



Child psychologist and author of *Young children and stress: How can we help?*, *Young children with attention difficulties: How can we help?*, and *Autism Spectrum Disorder and young children*.

### What have I been doing lately?

I run a busy private practice working as a child psychologist. I love my work (except for the reports, which are often late!) and enjoy working with young children with a range of needs. My particular interests are children with autism, with attention difficulties, with learning problems and also children who are stressed or anxious. Some of my most rewarding clients are young children who have suffered traumas early in their lives. I am always impressed by the resilience shown by many of these children and one of my great joys is to help them develop strategies to overcome the challenges they have faced.

The other part of my practice that I greatly enjoy, is working with professionals, parents and carers, in a training and consultation role. I really appreciate the chance to work with others who value children and want to give them the very best start they can. I supervise a number of young psychologists and others working with children in need, and find this a fascinating and challenging part of my work.

### The people most influential on my career

My background is as an early childhood teacher, then a lecturer in early childhood. In my thirties I had a slight change in direction and went back to university to become a psychologist. Throughout all this time, by far the greatest influence on the way I work has been the children themselves. If we take the time to talk to children, even very young ones, they often have quite profound ideas about how best to help themselves. And they say it without any jargon!

Many others have given me ideas and thoughts about working with children. One of the first was Dr Molly Walker, the principal of the Sydney Kindergarten Training College when I was a young and very naïve trainee kindergarten teacher. She taught us that working with young children is the hardest and the most rewarding thing we can do, and really expected total commitment from all her students. Her challenge to do the very best we can has stayed with me! Others who have increased my understanding and helped my way of thinking include Peg West, the founder of the Protective Behaviours Program, Tony Attwood for his common-sense approach to working with people with Autism Spectrum Disorder, and Virginia Axline. Her books *Play Therapy* and *Dibs – In Search of Self* started my interest and work in helping children through play.

### Favourite things to do

Away from work I lead an extremely busy life, trying to fit in all my other interests. Probably the most important is music; I play in a small recorder consort which is very challenging and satisfying and I also sing in a community choir. I find the best way to debrief after an exhausting or stressful day working is to sing or play, because you cannot think of work at the same time! I also love travel and have been lucky enough to have some really wonderful holidays over the past years, both with friends and with family. The South Pacific islands and Lord Howe Island are my favourite places for a really relaxing holiday with lots of swimming and snorkelling. But there is also Paris or London or Rome, as well as so many places I haven't yet visited!

My other great joy is being with my friends and having fun with them. I love games and can often be found

persuading someone to play Scrabble or chess or cards with me. And there is reading...and spending time with my family...and going to the theatre...

## Issues dear to my heart

I have great concern at the moment about where our world is heading, and strongly support those who are working for peace, justice and equity for all. Children are our future, and by giving them security, love and a safe structure to grow in, we are working towards a more tolerant and caring community. I believe that if each of us can help in small ways to increase tolerance and resolution of difficulties we *can* make a difference.

I have two adult disabled children of my own, and for this reason also feel very strongly about the rights of those with disabilities or other special needs. I have particular awareness of the needs of parents, and also of the many carers who work with children who have exceptional needs of all kinds. At various times in my life I have been involved in many committees and organisations aimed at the welfare of those with disabilities, although at present my other commitments have limited this. I am particularly aware of the needs of those parents who are less articulate or able to access the support and help they need. It is hard enough to parent or care for a child with difficulties, but for many, language or culture or even lack of confidence makes it even harder to access the help available.

## Where to from here?

Many people ask me when my next book is coming and what it will be about. I have lots of ideas, and certainly want to spend some of 2004 writing. I have been gratified by the many positive comments about my writing, as I have always tried to write simply and succinctly, so that my books are accessible to a very wide range of people. Some ideas that I am looking at include: Working with young children with mental health difficulties, working with children who have suffered abuse and trauma, and some ideas for foster carers and others working with children who are living out of home. As I approach my sixtieth year, I also think about retiring, but not very seriously!

**Diana Roe**

## Early Childhood Australia books by Diana Roe:

### Autism Spectrum Disorder and young children (\$14.95)

*I commend the many practical tips contained in this excellent book... it points the way ahead in an exciting practical way.*—Tim Fischer

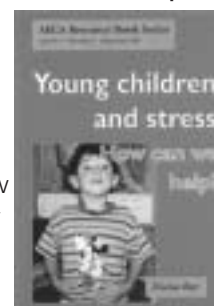
More young children are being diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. Whether mild or high-functioning, children affected often find it difficult to communicate, both linguistically and socially, have difficulty with imaginative play and flexibility and may also go through times of acute stress.

Diana Roe outlines the different kinds of Autism Spectrum Disorders, how to recognise symptoms and how a child is assessed for ASD. The book also contains useful tips for carers and parents in communicating with children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.



### Young children and stress: How can we help? (\$12.95)

Stress is not just felt by adults, even young children and babies can feel stressed. While some stress is useful in keeping us motivated, too much can be problematic. This book looks at how children can become stressed and how adults can help them cope with it.



### Young children with Attention Difficulties: How can we help? (\$14.95)

Many children experience difficulties with attention or concentration, and in some cases, this difficulty may be diagnosed as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD). This book explains to parents, carers and teachers how they can help children who suffer from attention difficulties, and presents a practical, positive approach to managing AD/HD. Rewarding and informative reading.



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The challenges for early childhood educators have been clearly articulated in the Summer 2003 edition of *Every Child* when both Alison Elliott and Brendon Nelson highlighted the importance of the early years of schooling. Nelson argues that research has shown that:

*early childhood programmes can have lasting positive effects by increasing children's chances of continuing education ...*

*The significance of the years prior to school cannot be underestimated in terms of providing early years experiences...that make transition to school, increasing chances of school success and more broadly, life chances.*

*Do I know what I need to learn? And do you know how to teach me? Are you confident that you can design a curriculum, which will equip me to live in my world?* (Beare, 2001)

Also, a visit to the website of Gary Marx, a futurist, is even more confronting in terms of the future world in which children in the early years of education today will enter (Marx, 2002).

## New demands of 21st century workplaces...

Nelson and Elliott's comments, Beare's challenge and Marx's future world scenario all echo commentary from the literature which calls for new approaches to teaching and requires

the full range of skills, including: project, group and performance assessment;

- have a diverse range of teaching models and delivery strategies as well as unprecedented flexibility and to be excellent learners, frequently arriving at situations without pre-ordained answers; have problem-solving skills; be active and sceptical inquirers, aware of alternative perspectives and approaches to education due to changing needs (cultural and technical); and
- develop reflective practice as a skill for learning to be lifelong learners – developing their own professional

# Early childhood educators in the 21st century: The challenges

Alison Elliott suggests that:

*in today's world of tragedy and uncertainty it is more important than ever before that children have a secure environment and engage in challenging and stimulating activities. These activities should build resilience and problem solving capacities ... that educators should ensure open communication, confidence-building, co-construction of learning communities, justice, equity and inclusive practices.*

Then consider the challenging messages in Headley Beare's recent book *Creating the Future School*. In his book, Beare depicts an image of a future world as told by a child starting school today and poses the question of the nature of a futures curriculum:

*I am Angelica, a future's child, and my world is already different from the one you have grown up in...my school teachers are very important to me because they tell me how to deal with the future – the long, long future.*

*So do you know what to teach me?*

new demands of educators working in 21st century education workplaces.

Peter Drucker, an international business organisational theorist, views the importance of educators (the knowledge workers) and educational settings in the 21st century and states; 'Education will become the centre of the knowledge society, and the school its key institution' (Drucker, 1994).

Mary Kalantzis, Dean of Education, RMIT, Victoria, takes the challenge of the knowledge worker further and describes the work of educators in the 21st century indicating that they need to:

- focus on learning and teaching the new basics (ICT, foreign languages, problem-solving skills) as well as developing the capacity for collaborative activity;
- maximise student engagement by accommodating and supporting different learning styles and developing a diversity of assessment techniques enabling assessment of

development needs (Kalantzis, 2002).

A view from the Professor Frank Crowther, Dean of Education, University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba indicates that:

*A knowledge society means communities of people working together so that their collective intelligence results in the creation of new knowledge to enhance their quality of life and contribute to a sustainable and better world for others* (2003).

## Educating the 'future child': Working differently

Our research at the Leadership Research Institute, working with schools in the whole-school revitalisation project, IDEAS (Innovative Design for Enhancing Achievement in Schools), has shown that by working together, educators can create an image of a future for their school community and a shared understanding of what that means in their classrooms. The process



of school revitalisation is managed and lead by teacher-leaders working in parallel with the strategic leader, the principal.

Professor Frank Crowther reflecting on the experience of working with teachers in IDEAS schools indicates:

*When teachers work together synergistically to create a shared schoolwide approach to pedagogy, the potential of the profession to enhance school outcomes, and in so doing affect life-chances of children from all backgrounds, is immense* (2003).

## Shared approach to pedagogy: What does it look like?

IDEAS schools collaboratively develop inspirational visions—*Riding the waves to success*; *Oceans of opportunity*; and *Navigating rivers of opportunity: Creating a future together at Bluehills State School*— which capture the essence of the community in which the educators work, excite and inspire the community in which the educational institution is located.

The shared vision for the future is reflected in a shared approach to pedagogy (Schoolwide Pedagogy SWP). It is through a shared understanding of a new way of working that educators are creating a new culture of teaching, a school-based distinctiveness that centres on the work of teachers in the classroom and reflects the vision of the community for the school. The outcome of the shared vision and a schoolwide approach to pedagogy (SWP) is measured in enhanced learning outcomes for students, the creation of new knowledge skills and dispositions within the professional learning community, enhanced school-community relations and alignment within the organisation.

The following are two examples that reflect an inspirational vision and the associated schoolwide approach to teaching, learning, and assessment. Both examples have been the result of a

professional learning community's expression of collective social action to build a school community for the future.

## Example one

*Vision: Riding the waves to success*

- Healthy body, healthy mind
- Little waves, big waves
- Finding our own balance
- Keeping our world beautiful
- There's always another wave coming

Success in these principles is achieved through students engaging in waves of thinking, investigating, participating, reflecting, participating and communicating.

## Example two:

*Vision: Our future – Together we can make it better*

- Facilitating self and group discovery
- Learning through experience
- Encouraging adventure and challenge
- Seeking connectedness with the environment
- Reflecting on personal and group actions
- Utilising conflict to think outside the square

Success in these principles is achieved through students engaging in self and group discovery.

The SWP is a reflection of the creation of a new knowledge reflected in a shared understanding of contextually focused classroom action – 'the way we do things around here'. Both schools have perceived the enhancement of outcomes for students and a stronger community affiliation with the school.

## Challenges of distinctiveness

The development of distinctiveness, based on shared purpose and action, has significant implications for all educational institutions. These challenges reflect new forms of leadership, in particular the emergence of teacher leadership in the form of

pedagogical leadership and educators working in professional learning communities. These educational settings are designing distinctive learning environments to reflect their collaborative understanding of schoolwide pedagogy.

These *knowledge workers* are meeting the challenge of the *future child*, enhancing their quality of life in their community and contributing to a sustainable and better world for others.

## The challenge for the 21st century educator

I recently sighted a vision statement outside an early childhood centre in Queensland, which stated:

*Enter at your own risk – we are growing in all directions inside*

Certainly an inspirational vision for a 21st century early childhood centre and just one of many that do, or could, exist.

The question for educators is how to build a distinctive pedagogy that will enable the professional community to meet the challenges for educating in the 21st century.

### Dorothy Andrews

Associate Dean (Research), University of Southern Queensland.

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# Early childhood professionals: Leading today and tomorrow

To be a leader in early childhood services is to undertake a challenging and demanding professional role. There are increasing pressures to provide high quality services, often with reduced resources, both physical and human. Standards of practices are being scrutinised, and early childhood leaders are looking for support to deliver excellent quality in difficult times. Escalating accountability requirements increases work-place demands on already hard-pressed staff. One of the challenges facing the early childhood leader is to respond efficiently to these day-to-day challenges, while being aware of the exact nature of the challenges.

If leaders of today and tomorrow are to be effective they have to:

- be dynamic, informed and responsive to societal needs;
- be cognisant of the need for change and direct change, rather than being rear guard responders;
- be multifaceted and be able to work effectively with staff, families, other service providers and the wider community, including governments;
- employ strong advocacy strategies for the early childhood profession in its broadest sense;
- influence and contribute to a range of early childhood programs which are of excellent quality and meet community needs and demands.

Most early childhood leaders are well aware of the critical part they can play in being child advocates. Despite strong advances in leadership in early childhood services, some entrenched problems prevail. Two of the most pressing problems are the low status and inadequate employment conditions that devalue the work, role and morale of staff in child care. These are very difficult

issues and are often considered beyond early childhood leaders, given their industrial orientation.

## Employment conditions

The necessity of, and demand for, quality child care is unquestioned. Improved training for students undertaking programs in both departments of technical and further education and universities has meant that qualified people are seeking work. However, because of adverse employment conditions for early childhood professionals, graduates avoid entering the child care work force. The big disparity between preschool and child care employment conditions reinforces these decisions. A recent review of early childhood graduates from one university showed that of 80 graduates, only one actively sought and found work in child care.

How can leaders influence and bring about change that will improve the situations outlined above? Some progress is being made through collaboration with the relevant Unions, but this is a drop of water in an ocean of concerns. To be pro active and responsive, leaders need to utilise a multifaceted approach to understand the processes of policy-making and how to influence policy at all levels of government. Working with others to identify ways of tackling these problems, and being unified in approach, are also important leadership strategies. In addition, they may need to look at new ways of communicating the problem to influence others. As Blank

(1997) has reminded us, 'leaders must strive to think of new ways to get their messages across'. Leaders need to bring whatever collective knowledge, wisdom and experience they have to facilitate new thinking on 'old problems'. It is essential that families and communities understand issues impacting on service delivery and are able to support staff in their quest to upgrade employment conditions. Managing change is a skill which leaders need and some do this extremely well.

## The impact of globalisation

A unified approach amongst early childhood leaders is crucial if the care/education divide is to be overcome for the improvement of staff conditions, and program quality for children and their families. Poor working conditions and low public status confronting early childhood services in Australia is found worldwide, including the UK, USA, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. As Caldwell (Ebbeck & Waniganayake, 2003) stated

*...the field of early childhood is truly a world-wide movement: what happens in Africa impacts on what happens in Australia which in turn impacts on what happens in Singapore, and so on around the globe. All of these developments bear directly on the range of possible futures for children – for what they can become.*

Caldwell's comments are relevant to bringing about much needed change for early childhood staff in Australia and elsewhere.

“To be pro active and responsive, leaders need to utilise a multifaceted approach to understand the processes of policy-making and how to influence policy at all levels of government.”



Globalisation requires early childhood leaders to respect the values and cultures of the communities represented by the children and families that they work with. However, globalisation does require leaders to identify broader influences and work towards achieving necessary changes at local levels. Change effects every human endeavour. Leaders in early childhood have to manage change in all its manifestations every day; e.g. changes to funding practices, curriculum emphases, and centre take-overs. The early childhood leader has to be 'on top' of changes, to be knowledgeable about them and the politics behind them. Being global in thinking is being futures-oriented. It requires early childhood leaders to consider the potential impact on children of any issue or trend, both local and global.

## Being a leader

Being a leader is more than holding the position of the Director or Coordinator of a centre and being responsible for managing its day-to-day work. In early childhood, the leader must be a 'jack of all trades'. Leaders have a responsibility to their peer group, the profession, the families and, most importantly, the children. There are few, if any, quick fixes for leaders and no easy recipes for working effectively in the day-to-day activities of diverse early childhood services, it will continue to be complex and challenging. The multifaceted skills and knowledge-base of true leaders will continue to be brought into action – as an advocate, policy maker, supporter of new staff, confidant of parents, curriculum innovator or a

combination of these and other roles.

As early childhood professionals respond to the exciting and daunting challenges of the twenty first century, they must continue to identify strategic ways to deal with change. Other contemporary leadership issues such as quality assurance, conflict management and mediation, partnerships with families and communities, advocacy for children and families, globalisation and futures are all on the professional agenda. Leaders cannot afford to work alone. To realise the potential of today and tomorrow, early childhood leaders must work collaboratively and empower others—children, families, professionals as well as governments and the community at large.

**Professor Marjory Ebbeck and Dr Manjula Waniganayake**

## References

Blank, H.K. (1997). 'Advocacy leadership' in S. L. Kagan & B. Bowman (eds) *Leadership in early care and education*, NAEYC, Washington, DC. (pp.39–45).

Ebbeck, M. & Waniganayake, M. (2003). *Early childhood professionals: Leading today & tomorrow*. NSW: MacLennan & Petty.

This focus on the complexities of employment conditions for early childhood professionals is linked with the leadership themes discussed in the new book *Early childhood professionals: Leading today & tomorrow* published by MacLennan & Petty.

“Being global in thinking is being futures-oriented.”

## Play school outliners' workshop

### Would you like to be part of the Play School team?

**Play School is looking for Outliners. A one day workshop for potential Outliners is planned to be held at the ABC's Ultimo premises within the next two months.**

**The role:** The Outliner provides appropriate pre-school ideas and the suggested structure from which the television program is planned.

**Requirements:** You must be currently working with pre-school children, possess a strong visual sense, have fresh, innovative pre-school appropriate ideas able to be realised for television, and be able to work to deadlines in a rigorous, intellectually demanding environment. (Sydney-based).

If you feel you have what it takes, please send your CV and a brief covering letter, marked **Play School Outliner**, to: [playschool@your.abc.net.au](mailto:playschool@your.abc.net.au)

### Closing date:

**Friday 19th March 2004**

**Places will be limited to ten. There is no financial remuneration for participation in this workshop. It is unlikely that all who take part will be offered the opportunity to devise outlines for Play School.**

**Please note:** Outlining for Play School is a part-time activity that would require you to attend six half-day meetings per series. Most Outliners would complete a maximum of three series per year.

## Early Childhood Australia collaborates with national seniors organisation on grandparenting project



Increasing numbers of grandparents are taking on significant roles in the raising of their grandchildren. Although many do this because of family breakdown, dysfunction and/or tragedy, this is not always the case. Many other grandparents provide significant regular child care for their grandchildren as part of the child care arrangements made by working parents.

Early Childhood Australia and COTA National Seniors have been funded by the Commonwealth Government to undertake a pilot study to find out where, and from whom, grandparents who have significant, regular responsibility for the rearing of their grandchildren, seek information and support.

Specifically, the project will develop and pilot a survey and knowledge-mapping tool to provide information about:

- The issues of concern to grandparents;
- Which services, professional and otherwise, grandparents with child-rearing responsibilities seek support for their grand-parenting role; and
- How the capacity for the work of services providing support to grandparents could be resourced and supported.

The project's approach reflects the assumptions that grandparents themselves are the very best source of information about their needs and the agencies, services, professionals and individuals from whom they seek and gain support. The project is grounded in the following assumptions:

- Most people know others—people, agencies, professionals in the community—who they trust, and from whom they seek support and advice. Such people are knowledge brokers and they act as intermediaries between existing knowledge and those who need it.
- Building on, and resourcing, existing relationships, networks, agencies and support systems builds capacity by leveraging the confidence and connections that already exist in communities. Mapping these sources of knowledge and support is a crucial first step in developing a sustainable support system for grandparents with child-rearing responsibilities.
- A sustainable system of support almost inevitably leverages what exists rather than positing the creation of new programs and resources.

- Trusting stable relationships with known adults is the foundation for the social and emotional foundations of growth and learning in young children.

Early Childhood Australia hopes that this project will provide the impetus for a larger project. Regardless, the outcomes will add to the growing information about the needs of grandparents who play a key role in the growth and development of their grandchildren. It will also help sharpen the focus of Early Childhood Australia and early childhood professionals on the role we can play in supporting these grandparents

If you are interested in grandparenting issues, copies of the research report *Grandcaring: Insights into grandparents' experiences as regular child care providers* by Dr Joy Goodfellow and Judy Laverty are available from Early Childhood Australia for \$7.95 (Toll free 1800 356 900).



The Hon Larry Anthony, Minister for Children & Youth Affairs, commissioned COTA National Seniors to undertake some research on grandparents raising grandchildren. The report of the project can be downloaded at:  
[http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/content/parenting\\_early\\_childhood\\_intervention.htm#grandparents](http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/content/parenting_early_childhood_intervention.htm#grandparents)

### New figures on child abuse underline need for Federal involvement

Families Australia has renewed its call on the Federal Government to join the fight against child abuse and neglect following the release yesterday of figures which show that the reported number of abused and neglected children in Australia increased by 43 per cent last year.

*Child Protection Australia 2002–03*, a document prepared by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), indicates that the number of child protection notifications in Australia increased from approximately 138,000 in 2001–02 to nearly 200,000 in 2002–03.

In the same period, the number of substantiated cases of abuse and neglect increased by 10,000 to 40,000 cases, an increase of 33 per cent.

The Chairperson of Families Australia, Ms Sandie de Wolf, says the new AIHW data underlines the need for a concerted national effort to tackle child abuse and neglect.

‘As well as representing an alarming increase in the number of young lives being destroyed by abuse and neglect’, says Ms de Wolf, ‘the AIHW figures reflect the increasing stress under which Australian families live and the harmful impact of that stress on children’.

‘The rising incidence of child abuse and neglect is a matter of national concern’, she says, ‘and the Federal and State Governments should develop a coordinated approach to tackling the problem. Without Federal involvement, in 30 years time there’ll be another generation asking why it was not protected’.

Families Australia is a peak welfare body with more than 300 member organisations dedicated to promoting the interests of families. Last year it released a six point plan which, among other things, proposed the development of a national strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect.

The AIHW report can be accessed at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/whatsnew/releases.html>.

**Contact: Sandie de Wolf, Families Australia**  
**phone: 03 9429 9266**

### Conference announcement **‘Globalisation, families and work: Meeting the policy challenges of the next two decades’**

**1–2 April 2004 Brisbane QLD**

**Register your interest**

**email: [conference@familiesaustralia.org.au](mailto:conference@familiesaustralia.org.au)**

### Conference alert **‘Stepping out’**

**Friday 26th March 2004**

**Children’s Services Professional Development  
Conference**

**National Press Club in Barton, ACT.**

This full day conference is open to all staff working in the ACT region children’s services sector. Registration is also available for personnel in related services, agencies and organisations. The conference includes prominent local and national guest speakers and a range of seminars presented by professional coaches, and early childhood educators and trainers. Registration is \$50.00 per day for children’s services staff and \$65.00 for others.

This conference is brought to you by the collaborative sponsorship of CSRAP, Communities@work, the Department of Education, Youth & Family Services, LHMU, IEU, Guild Insurance and local businesses.

**For further information contact Norma Williams,  
Conference Manager**

**Telephone: 02 6295 3800 Email:**  
**[eo@prodevcsrap.act.edu.au](mailto:eo@prodevcsrap.act.edu.au)**

**Or visit our website: [www.prodevcsrap.act.com.au](http://www.prodevcsrap.act.com.au)**



### **Farewell & thank you**

The National Office of Early Childhood Australia would like to farewell Terri-Anne Simmonds and sincerely thank her for all her hard work as communications coordinator and *Every Child* in-house editor.



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