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LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA



The voice for parents and service providers

PRE SCHOOL MATTERS

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
PREPARING CHILDREN FOR LIFE
TERM TWO 2017

2017 EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION CONFERENCE

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
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PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Welcome to Term 2. We're busy preparing for the Early Childhood Education Conference: together we grow – the child

in focus on 26 and 27 May at Caulfield Racecourse. This year's conference features our biggest speaker program to date with over 70 presentations across the two days.

Thanks to the support of the Creswick Foundation, we are delighted to welcome Professor Edward Melhuish OBE of Oxford University as this year's keynote speaker. Ted's insights and contemporary research into the long-term influence of early childhood experience on a child's social and emotional development, and the consequent effects on national prosperity, have influenced government policy around the world.

The Conference speaker program is broad and varied and includes well-known early learning experts such as Anne Stonehouse, Warren Cann, Heather Barnes and Collette Tayler, plus first-time presenters from a range of organisations such as the Melbourne Museum and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation.

If you haven't registered for the Conference already, make sure you don't miss out on this major professional development and networking event for our sector by registering at www.togetherwegrow.com.au. There's also a full overview of the Conference on pages 11–13.

We are also eagerly anticipating the launch of the new-look ELAA website in Term 2.

The team at ELAA have worked hard to produce a fresh, easily accessible and valuable online experience for our members and friends, and we hope the new site assists you in delivering excellence in early learning.

In this edition... ELAA CEO, Shane Lucas, reviews our 2017–18 Budget Submission to the Victorian Government. Our submission is built on the input of our diverse membership and reflects our sector's priorities for the coming year – and beyond. The Federal Government's budget will also be handed down in May. There are some great tips on page 4 on how you can let Education Minister, Simon Birmingham, know that ELAA members want to see the Commonwealth maintain its funding contribution for 15 hours a week of quality early learning in the year before school beyond 2017.

There's also an update on ELAA's advocacy work on page 7 and details of our Professional Learning program for educators, managers and committees on pages 8–10. You can also read about the development of the new Melbourne Museum Children's Gallery (pages 14–15); the changing face of our Road Safety Education Program (pages 18–19); the transition of Kensington Community Childcare Cooperative to an age integrated service model (pages 16–17); regional leadership in the Child Friendly Cities initiative (pages 20–21) plus all our regular sections and more.

I hope you find this edition of *Preschool Matters* informative and entertaining, and I look forward to seeing you at the Conference in May.

Lee Cath President, ELAA

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Cover: Girl playing in the woven climbing net at the Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery, Melbourne Museum. Image courtesy of Museums Victoria. Photo by Joel Checkley. See feature on the Children's Gallery on pages 14 and 15.



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

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CEO's REPORT



Welcome to Term 2 which promises to be crucial to our sector with State and Federal budgets due to be handed down – budgets that will have significant ramifications for the standard and accessibility of early learning for years to come.

Jobs for Families Package

ELAA and our many sector partners engaged in a lengthy dialogue with the Federal Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham, to improve this package, particularly in terms of outcomes for vulnerable children. Disappointingly, the Australian Government (with the aid of the cross-bench senators) passed the legislation through the Senate without including all our recommendations. Most notably, the revised package:

- reduces the baseline entitlement of children to subsidised care from the existing 24 hours per week to 12 hours.
- fails to incorporate proposed amendments that would have provided a minimum of 22.5 hours a week of subsidised care for indigenous children.

While the government's final package has some positives – and the legislation did not include welfare payment cuts – we remain concerned that these aspects will adversely affect our most vulnerable young Australians.

Keep funding 15 hours

The Federal Budget will be handed down on 9 May and we hope to see the Federal Government extend Commonwealth funding to the National

Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education, which currently guarantees that every Australian child has access to 15 hours a week of quality early learning in the year before school. Funding for the Commonwealth portion (five hours) expires at the end of 2017.

ELAA has campaigned on this issue over many years with a refreshed focus on “keep funding 15 hours” prior to the 2016 Federal election. Our online petition to the Minister for Education and Training, Senator Simon Birmingham, to maintain Commonwealth funding has gathered in excess of 3200 signatures.

There's still time to add your name to the petition and to use the other communications resources on ELAA's keep funding 15 hours campaign site to let the Federal Government know Australians want and need continued funding of 15 hours. Please see page 4 for further details.

ELAA's Budget Submission to the Victorian Government 2017–2018

ELAA's 2017–2018 State budget submission to the Victorian State Government is informed by the *Ten Principles¹ for an Early Childhood Education State* and structured around the five outcomes from the Early Years Management Framework.

We urge the Andrews Government to continue to invest in the Education State and the provision of high quality early childhood education and care services. Below is a summary of the key recommendations from our budget submission:

1. Sustainable and responsive services

Introduce a place-based funding model

A robust funding model needs to consider place-based disadvantage and the additional expectations on services to provide intensive interventions for children and families at risk, as envisaged in the Roadmap for Reform: strong families, safe children.

Build the capacity of EYM services

The successful implementation of the EYM framework would be supported by building organisational capacity across a range of performance measures.

Support for transitions

A small grants program could be established and administered with the aim of supporting the implementation of the EYM framework.

Child Safe Organisations

The successful implementation of the Child Safe Standards will rely (in part) on adequate resourcing of the Commission for Children and Young People.

2. Access and Participation

Securing an ongoing commitment to quality preschool

We believe that State government support to maintain 15 hours of preschool in the year before school is a priority and that this should be extended to 20 hours for children who are experiencing disadvantage.

Vulnerable children's access

A Vulnerable Children's Fund with an initial \$10M investment would provide the necessary financial assistance to families who are struggling to ensure their children can access ECEC services.

Building infrastructure for the long-term

An assessment of infrastructure needs across the State will assist planning and support expanded delivery of services.

3. Quality and innovation

Planning for the future

The Mitchell Institute Report *Preschool – two years are better than one* has scoped the issues to be considered in the expansion of preschool education to the two years before school. ELAA commends this report to the Government for consideration.

Centralised enrolment

Introducing centralised enrolment places, supported by the Municipal Association of Victoria, will have multiple benefits for families and services.

Addressing barriers between long-day care/ kindergarten

There is an opportunity to bridge the gap between long day care and kindergarten by providing top-up funding for bachelor qualified teachers to work in long day care.

NEWS & EVENTS

Enhancing road safety education

The Andrews Government plan to establish the world's first road safety education centre should be expanded to include preschool aged children.

4. Highly-skilled, collaborative workforce

Workforce planning

ELAA member feedback indicates services are experiencing staffing shortages – greater workforce planning is required.

Educational leadership

Developing educational leadership would develop area-based best practice, support educators to work across services and support the implementation of the reform agenda.

Trauma informed practice

Training for staff to recognise and work with trauma will help to unlock the potential of traumatised children.

5. Strong Partnerships

Partnering in the Roadmap for Reform

We welcome the government's commitment to a co-design process to develop Safety and Support Hubs.

Empowering families caring for a child with a disability

Investment in early childhood intervention services is required to bring services up to the standards of the National Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Intervention.

Further information

ELAA's Budget Submission to the Victorian State Government 2017–18 can be found at elaa.org.au/news_advocacy/publications

Shane Lucas, CEO, ELAA

1 In 2015, ELAA led the development of the Ten Principles in collaboration with early childhood peak bodies, service providers, community sector organisations and research institutions. The principles were developed to provide a framework to guide the Victorian Government's reform agenda in early childhood education for the next ten years.



2017 Early Childhood Education Conference – book now

Registrations are open for the 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference at Caulfield Racecourse on 26 and 27 May. With over 70 speaker sessions, this year's program is the largest in the Conference's history. There's also assistance available for early learning services from disadvantaged areas to attend and accommodation rebates available for rural services. To register go to www.togetherwegrow.com.au or for more information see pages 11–13.

RSE Award nominations open

The annual *Starting Out Safely* Road Safety Education Award recognises and celebrates the achievements of early childhood services and educators in providing road safety education.

Be in the running to receive \$500 for your service and a road safety education pack full of great resources. To nominate your service for this year's Award email rse@elaa.org.au by Friday 12 May, 2017. See page 12 for more information.

Caring for Kids Raffle – still time to order tickets

Earn \$1 from every \$2 ticket sold in the annual Caring for Kids Raffle. With the ticket selling period ending 28 May there's still time to order your ticket books and raffle kit. For more information and to order your tickets go to elaa.org.au/services_resources/our_services/fundraising or call 03 9489 3500.

KEEP FUNDING 15 HOURS – SPEAK UP BEFORE BUDGET NIGHT

The National Partnership Agreement for Early Childhood Education currently guarantees that every Australian child has access to 15 hours a week (for 40 weeks) of quality early learning in the year before school.

The Federal Government's commitment to funding the Commonwealth portion (5 hours) of the 15 hours expires at the end of 2017.

Compelling research that tells us that Australians will benefit economically and socially from the continued funding of 15 hours.

In the lead up to the 2017/18 Federal Budget on 9 May, it is vital that ELAA members, educators, parents and all those who appreciate the value of quality early childhood education, send a loud and clear message to the Federal Government that Australians value and need a minimum of 15 hours a week of quality early learning for their children.

10 things you can do to keep funding 15 hours

1. Get the facts about the benefits of 15 hours from ELAA's Keep Funding 15 Hours campaign website at keepfunding15hours.org.au
2. Go to the Act Now page on the campaign website and join over 3000 other supporters by signing ELAA's 'keep funding 15 hours' online petition to Senator Simon Birmingham
3. Encourage educators, parents and friends to sign the online petition and promote it through their networks
4. Like and share 'keep funding 15 hours' campaign promotions on ELAA's Keep Funding 15 Hours Facebook page
5. Tell your friends about the importance of quality early learning on Facebook or through other mediums – and ask them to spread the word about this campaign
6. Ask your preschool or kindergarten to include information about ELAA's Keep Funding 15 Hours campaign in newsletters to families
7. Download the Campaign Resource Kit for Parents and Educators at the end of the Act Now page
8. Use the Campaign Resource Kit template letter to write to the Hon Simon Birmingham, Minister for Education and Training
9. Use the Campaign Resource Kit template letter to write to or call your local Federal member of parliament
10. Use the Campaign Resource Kit template letter to write to the media.

PUTTING A FACE TO THE VOICE



Julie Thompson worked briefly as Executive Assistant to ELAA CEO, Shane Lucas, in 2015 and returned to ELAA in November 2016 as Project Administration Officer. With an administrative background, Julie assists in organising the Conference, Trade Fair and Caring for Kids raffle.

My work day entails... helping answer calls from members, conference registrations, organising exhibitions at the trade fair, coordinating the Caring for Kids raffle and weekly job board alert.

I am most inspired by... anyone that speaks another language fluently. Over the years I have tried to learn French, Italian, Spanish and now Norwegian, with 29 letters in the alphabet, no easy feat.

What I like most about my job... is the people – I admire their passion, commitment and dedication. They go above and beyond and are very supportive co-workers. Oh, and I love the food on Smith Street!

If I wasn't doing this job I'd be... eating my way around Italy then retreating to Oslo to spend time with my daughter, her partner and their new puppy Alfie – a very cute French Bulldog!

REGS IN FOCUS



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

Working With Children Checks (WWCC) and Police Checks (PC) – what is the difference?

The WWCC check and PC are two different checks which are part of a suite of tools used by employers and managers of children's services to determine a person's suitability for working with children. Both of these checks may contribute to a service's commitment to implementing the Child Safe Standards.

What is a Working With Children Check (WWCC)?

The WWCC legislation (*Working With Children Act 2005*) was introduced in 2006 to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process.

Under this legislation it is an offence to engage anyone either as an employee or a volunteer in child related work (some exemptions apply, such as teachers who hold a current VIT registration) without a valid WWCC.

The WWCC examines relevant information from a person's national criminal records and, in some cases, reports by some professional bodies about a person's professional conduct. This process examines serious criminal charges, offences, findings of guilt and professional conduct reports related to the safety of children across a person's lifetime. If the check finds serious sexual, violent or drug offences, or adverse professional reports, the department assesses these to determine if the person will pass the check. A card (assessment notice) is

evidence that an individual has passed the assessment and the assessment is valid for 5 years with continual monitoring. However, the check only forms part of an assessment of the potential employee or volunteer's suitability for working with children. It is the responsibility of the organisation to assess if a person is suitable to work with children and to continue monitoring their workers' and volunteer's behaviour around children.

What is a Police Check (PC)?

In Victoria, a PC involves getting a National Police Certificate issued by Victoria Police. A National Police Certificate is a record of a person's criminal history and is generally used by organisations as part of their screening process to assess a person's trustworthiness. In most cases it lists all non-expunged criminal offences and may also include traffic offences such as speeding and drunk-driving but does not include offences which are not able to be disclosed. There are three types of PCs but the one that is commonly used for early childhood services is a name only check. Volunteers are able to apply for a PC at a reduced cost if the organisation has registered with the Victoria Police and been granted a valid Community Volunteer Fee (CVF) number. Certificates do not have an expiry date and are the result of a police records check up to the date of issue.

Additional information is available from
www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/utility/home
www.acecqa.gov.au

Make sure you check the Term 3 issue of *Preschool Matters* for an explanation of the recent amendments to the *Working with Children Check Act 2005* and who needs a Working With Children Check and/or a Police Check.

Q&A

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY – WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

So... you are reluctant to go into the kinder store room just in case you are hit on the head by some broken equipment that's been in storage since 1975? Well, the time to act on this potential hazard is long overdue!

Who is responsible?

Under the OHS Act, Employers have a duty and, therefore the final responsibility, to provide and maintain safe equipment and systems that do not compromise the health of their employees or any other person in the workplace. This means that the Committee of Management, Board, or Early Years Management organisation is ultimately accountable for the safety of everyone who enters an early childhood service. Therefore, it is vital that within your organisation there is an employer representative who is given the task to ensure that the workplace is safe and without risk to health.

Despite this, everyone also has a duty of care to continually consider the wellbeing, not only of the children who attend the service, but also staff, visitors, families, volunteers and contractors who may visit the premises from time to time.

How do we provide a safe workplace?

• Hazard Identification

As an employer, one of the first tasks you should undertake is to identify all the hazards in your service. A hazard is something with the potential to cause injury, illness or disease. Ask yourself "what could possibly go wrong here to cause an injury or disease?"

You can use checklists to carry out your inspections and it is important to consult staff about issues they may be aware of. You can also use incident reports of injuries and near misses to inform you about any hazards.

• Risk Assessment

The next step is to prioritise the hazards so that you can determine which hazards

to deal with first. You need to think about the likelihood of an injury and what the consequences are. If the likelihood is high and the consequences severe then clearly that particular hazard needs to be dealt with quickly. Performing a risk assessment and using a risk matrix is a good way to rate the hazards.

• Fixing the hazards

You are required to consult with staff on any matters relating to OHS. Therefore, talk to the staff about what could be done to remove the hazard or to reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

• Review

Once you have put in place the measures to remove or minimise the hazard then perform another hazard identification

process. Too often, you may think you have fixed a situation only to introduce another hazard.

The process then continues from the start.

Where to get help with OHS

ELAA provides checklists and information regarding OHS in:

- The ELAA Early Childhood Management Manual (available for purchase through the ELAA website)
- ELAA website www.elaa.org.au (click on the OHS tab)
- OHS inspections can also be arranged (at a cost) by contacting Sonali Le Brocque, consultancies co-ordinator, on 9489 3500 or elaa@elaa.org.au

Common injuries in the Early Childhood Setting

The majority of reported injuries at kindergartens and child care centres are musculoskeletal in nature and result from lifting, bending, twisting and awkward positioning. Injuries can also occur due to insufficient space, non-functional arrangement of furniture and equipment, incorrect handling of chemicals, poorly maintained equipment and poor storage, to name a few areas where hazards can be identified.

Safety management tips

- Don't use containers that are heavy, store objects in smaller containers.
- Store items that are frequently used between shoulder and knee height.
- Inspect equipment regularly.
- Use a trolley with lockable wheels to transport heavy items from one place to another. Use more than one person to perform heavy lifts. Use ladders and platforms to safely access items.
- Check for tripping hazards and try to level out the transition from one learning space to another.
- Storage – DECLUTTER!!! Check the Early Childhood Regulations for how long particular records need to be kept.
- Only use furniture and equipment for the purpose it has been designed for and be very selective when using second hand equipment.
- Identify and label containers, especially those containing chemicals and make sure you have the relevant Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) available.
- Make sure all staff and committee members have access to OHS training.

Be vigilant, inspect, maintain, identify and educate.

ADVOCACY

YOUR COLLECTIVE VOICE

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

Education and Care Services National Law Amendment Bill 2017

In February 2017, the Australian, state and territory education Ministers agreed to changes to the National Quality Framework (NQF) intended to strengthen quality in early childhood education and care and reduce red tape for the sector.

ELAA was invited to provide feedback from members on the resulting changes proposed to the Education and Care Services National Law Amendment Bill 2017 which are due to take effect in October 2017, and changes to the National Quality Framework due to take effect from 1 February 2018.

Following consultation with members, ELAA noted:

- Removal of supervisor certificates will increase the flexibility of services to appoint a person in day-to-day charge who has met minimum standards.
- Concerns regarding the proposed change to no longer requiring providers to notify the regulatory authority "of any complaints alleging that the safety, health and wellbeing of a child is being compromised while the child is being educated and cared for". However, it was also recognised that notification of complaints and serious incidents was a duplication of reporting.
- Concerns about the change to standard 1.1.5 (related to a child's participation in the program) which appears to have been replaced with standard 6.2.2 which requires effective partnership to support children's access, inclusion and participation. It was noted that this changed description may make it easier to assess service performance.

CEO Group and Early Years Management Reference Group

The CEO Group, which comprises senior executives and thought leaders across our membership, has been working on the development of a plan to support the implementation of the Early Years Management Framework and promote quality improvements across the sector.

The Early Years Management Reference Group is also developing a plan to support the CEO Group plan outcomes and to:

- enhance the quality and consistency of early years management
- improve the effectiveness and efficiency of EYM through collaboration
- enhance partnerships and communication.

The two plans will be finalised in the coming months.

Early Years Strategic Partnership Group

ELAA sits on the Early Years Strategic Partnership Group (SPG) alongside senior representatives from the Department of Education and Training and the Municipal Association of Victoria. The role of the SPG is to:

- inform and support strategic planning processes for early years management (EYM) including reviewing the performance of the system

- policy review and monitoring broader early years reform directions
- promoting EYM to the broader sector.

The SPG will work in collaboration with a soon to be formed Strategic Partnership Forum (SPF) which will consist of nominated, senior representatives from EYM organisations representing multiple service types and locations.

Respectful Relationships Reference Group

The Victorian Government is implementing a Respectful Relationships initiative across Victorian schools and early childhood services. The initiative is designed to strengthen the ability of schools and early childhood services to promote and model gender equity in everything they do and support students and staff affected by family violence.

ELAA is a member of the Respectful Relationships Reference Group which will provide feedback and guidance to the Government on implementation, communications and promotions, enhancement opportunities, cross-sectorial collaboration, and risk management.

ELAA is here to listen to you

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



ELAA PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR TERMS 2 & 3 IN 2017

ELAA has put together an extensive Professional Learning and Development Program for 2017.

Our 2017 program features some of Australia's leading early childhood education and care experts and is tailored for all early childhood education and care professionals with each seminar mapped to the National Quality Standards (NQS). The program also clearly aligns to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST), making it easier for teachers to record and fulfil their Victorian Institute of Teaching professional development requirements. Program participants receive a certificate of participation for all sessions which can be used as evidence for VIT annual professional development requirements.

APST = Australian Professional Standards for Teachers

NQS = National Quality Standard

Quality Area 1 – Educational Program and Practice

Quality Area 2 – Children's Health & Safety

Quality Area 3 – Physical Environment

Quality Area 4 – Staffing Arrangements

Quality Area 5 – Relationships with Children

Quality Area 6 – Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Quality Area 7 – Leadership and Service Management



New frontiers for planning: taking assessment for learning to the next level

Quality Area: 1, 6 & 7

APST: 2.1, 2.2, 3.6, 5.1, 5.4, 7.2

Presenter: Catharine Hydon

Date: Friday, 21 April

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Digital technology in the early years

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6

APST: 1.5, 2.6, 3.4, 4.5, 6.2, 6.4

Presenter: Daniel Donahoo

Date: Thursday, 27 April

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



What is Autism Spectrum Disorder and Positive Behaviour Support – an overview

Quality Area: 1, 2, 5 & 6

APST: 1.5, 1.6, 4.1, 6.2

Presenter: ASPECT

Date: Monday, 1 May

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

Venue: Victorian Archive Centre, 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne. Free parking on site (enter via Macaulay Street).

Cost: \$80 members \$95 non-members



Collaboration in teams: the make or break of greatness in teams

Quality Area: 1, 4 & 7

APST: 1.2, 6.2, 6.3, 7.4

Presenter: Anthony Semann

Date: Friday, 5 May

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Digital technology in the early years

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6

APST: 1.5, 2.6, 3.4, 4.5, 6.2, 6.4

Presenter: Daniel Donahoo

Date: Tuesday, 9 May

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Venue: Eastern Hub Geelong, 285a McKillop Street, East Geelong. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Using positive relationships and the EYLF to plan for and support children whose behaviour is affected by challenging life circumstances

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

APST: 1.3, 3.5, 4.1, 4.3, 6.2

Presenter: Children's Protection Society

Date: Thursday, 11 May

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Health and wellbeing for early years professionals

Quality Area: 4 & 7

APST: 6.2, 6.3, 7.4

Presenter: Dr Lyn O'Grady

Date: Friday, 19 May

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Safety – not just child's play

Quality Area: 3, 4 & 7

APST: 4.4, 6.2, 7.2, 7.4

Presenter: Zora Marko & Emma Morgan

Date: Tuesday, 6 June

Time: 9.00am – 5.00pm

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

Cost: \$323.50 members \$367.50 non-members



Exploring the EYLF – starting from the beginning

Quality Area: 1, 5 & 6
APST: 2.1, 2.3, 6.2, 7.2, 7.4

Presenter: Catharine Hydon

Date: Wednesday, 7 June

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Strategies to include physical education and wellness in the 1–5 years program

Quality Area: 1, 2, & 3
APST: 1.1, 1.5, 3.3, 6.4

Presenter: Paul Pennisi

Date: Wednesday, 14 June

Time: 6.30pm – 9.00pm

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

Cost: \$80 members \$95 non-members



Brave leadership in the everyday – living life on the edge

Quality Area: 4 & 7
APST: 2.3, 3.3, 6.1, 6.2, 7.4

Presenter: Anthony Semann

Date: Friday, 16 June

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Resilience, independence and self-esteem – a 3 to 5-year-old focus

Quality Area: 1, 2, 5, & 6
APST: 1.1, 3.3, 3.5, 6.3, 6.4

Presenter: Jo Lange

Date: Monday, 19 June

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Venue: Eastern Hub Geelong, 285a McKillop Street, East Geelong. Free parking on site.

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Indigenous perspectives in children's programs

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

Presenter: Annette Sax (Yarn Strong Sista)

Date: Thursday, 22 June

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Venue: Victorian Archive Centre, 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne. Free parking on site (enter via Macaulay Street).

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Literacy, numeracy and science in the outdoors

Quality Area: 1 & 5
APST: 1.1, 2.5, 3.4, 6.2, 7.4

Presenter: Karen Glancy

Date: Tuesday, 27 June

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Music and movement in early childhood programs

Quality Area: 1, 2 & 5
APST: 1.1, 2.1, 3.2, 3.4, 6.2

Presenter: Anne Belcher

Date: Friday, 21 July

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



What is Autism Spectrum Disorder and Positive Behaviour Support – an overview

Quality Area: 1, 2, 5 & 6
APST: 1.5, 1.6, 4.1, 6.2

Presenter: ASPECT

Date: Tuesday, 25 July

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

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

Cost: \$80 members \$95 non-members



Myths and realities of documentation and planning

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

Presenter: Heather Barnes

Date: Friday, 28 July

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Venue: Victorian Archive Centre, 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne. Free parking on site (enter via Macaulay Street).

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Strategies for improving participation and inclusion of children with disability

Quality Area: 1, 2, 3, 5 & 6
APST: 1.5, 1.6, 4.1, 6.2

Presenter: Yooralla

Date: Monday, 31 July

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members

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

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



Digital technology in the early years

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

Presenter: Daniel Donahoo

Date: Friday, 4 August

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Strategies to include physical education and wellness in the 1–5 years program

Quality Area: 1, 2, & 3
APST: 1.1, 1.5, 3.3, 6.4

Presenter: Paul Pennisi

Date: Wednesday, 9 August

Time: 6.30am – 9.00pm

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

Cost: \$80 members \$95 non-members



Resilience, independence and self-esteem – a 3 to 5 year old focus

Quality Area: 1, 2, 5, & 6
APST: 1.1, 3.3, 3.5, 6.3, 6.4

Presenter: Jo Lange

Date: Wednesday, 16 August

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Indigenous perspectives in children's programs

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

Presenter: Annette Sax (Yarn Strong Sista)

Date: Tuesday, 22 August

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Venue: Eastern Hub Geelong, 285a McKillop Street, East Geelong.
Free parking on site.

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Health and wellbeing for early years professionals

Quality Area: 4 & 7
APST: 6.2, 6.3, 7.4

Presenter: Dr Lyn O'Grady

Date: Friday, 25 August

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Exploring curriculum and pedagogy

Quality Area: 1
APST: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.3, 6.3, 7.4

Presenter: Catharine Hydon

Date: Thursday, 31 August

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Venue: Victorian Archive Centre, 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne. Free parking on site (enter via Macaulay Street).

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Educational leadership – now I have the title what do I do next?

Quality Area: 1, 4 & 7
APST: 1.1, 2.1, 6.3, 7.4

Presenter: Anthony Semann

Date: Wednesday, 6 September

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

Venue: Victorian Archive Centre, 99 Shiel St, North Melbourne. Free parking on site (enter via Macaulay Street).

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Music and movement in early childhood programs

Quality Area: 1, 2 & 5
APST: 1.1, 2.1, 3.2, 3.4, 6.2

Presenter: Anne Belcher

Date: Friday, 8 September

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Demystifying your assessment and rating visit

Quality Area: 1 to 7
APST: 1.4, 2.4, 6.2, 7.4

Presenter: Heather Barnes

Date: Monday, 11 September

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



Being an ethical professional – embedding ethics in our everyday practice

Quality Area 1 to 7
APST: 6.2, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2

Presenter: Catharine Hydon

Date: Tuesday, 19 September

Time: 9.30am – 2.30pm

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

Cost: \$175 members \$250 non-members



What is Autism Spectrum Disorder and Positive Behaviour Support – an overview

Quality Area: 1, 2, 5 & 6
APST: 1.5, 1.6, 4.1, 6.2

Presenter: ASPECT

Date: Wednesday, 20 September

Time: 10.00am – 12.00pm

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

Cost: \$80 members \$95 non-members



Safety – not just child's play

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

Presenter: Zora Marko & Emma Morgan

Date: Thursday, 21 September

Time: 9.00am – 5.00pm

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

Cost: \$323.50 members \$367.50 non-members



2017 Early Childhood Education Conference



The 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference – together we grow the child in focus kicks off at the Caulfield Racecourse from May 26 to 27.

Brought to you by ELAA and Gowrie Victoria, the Conference covers a huge range of topics from numeracy, literacy and children's rights to integrated service models, professional ethics and much more. There's also:

- a trade fair featuring over 50 exhibitors with the latest in early learning products and services
- morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea on both days
- cocktail party on the Friday evening
- prizes
- fantastic opportunities to network with colleagues from across Victoria and Australia.

Keynote address – Early childhood experience, long-term development and the wealth of nations

Recent evidence from studies in many countries indicates how differing patterns of experience in the early years, both in the home and outside the home (such as early childhood education and care), can have long-term impact on children's educational and socio-emotional development.

The impacts can be profound and shape a child's future through their influence on educational attainment, socio-emotional development, employability, criminality,

and mental and physical health. There is, however, good news with evidence suggesting some of the influential aspects of a child's early experience (such as oral language and self-regulation development) are open to improvement.

Join our 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference Keynote Speaker, Professor Edward Melhuish OBE, as he discusses the latest international research in this area its relevance to practice and policy, including resource allocation at both a local and national level.

Professor Edward Melhuish OBE – is Professor of Human Development at Oxford University, and a visiting professor at the University of Wollongong. He was involved in studies affecting policy in the UK and is currently undertaking studies in Norway, the European community, UK, and Australia. His research influenced the 1989 Children Act, the 2005 Children Act, 2006 Childcare Bill and policy on childcare, early education, child poverty and parental support in the UK and other countries. He is a scientific advisor to research councils in Norway, Finland, Portugal, South Korea, Chile, Australia, and Canada, and a consultant to the European Commission, OECD and WHO.

Our biggest speaker program yet

This year's Early Childhood Education Conference is the biggest yet with over 70 speaker sessions on offer. With a theme of *the child in focus* some of the many highlights include:

- The Hon. Jenny Mikakos MP (Vic Minister for Families and Children) – Conference opening.
- Bruce Hurst – Development isn't something that just happens. It is also something you do. (Children's development and the importance of age in children's identities).
- Carmel Phillips & Anne Stonehouse – Too high, to low, just right: expectations of very young children.
- Rhonda Livingstone – Children's identity, growth and sense of belonging – connection and engagement through community.
- Saturday morning panel discussion – Baby talk: theoretical perspectives and observations as pedagogical foundations with Anne Stonehouse, Sandra Cheeseman, Katherine Whitty and Professor Edward Melhuish.
- Alex Price – Five hundred children and one museum. (The creation of the new Melbourne Museum Children's Gallery).
- Heather Barnes – STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics): supporting teaching, environments and motivation.
- Stacey Fox (Mitchell Institute) – What policies do we need to make sure every child has the opportunity to be a confident and engaged learner?

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

STOP PRESS! We are excited to announce that the Australian Department of Education and Training has committed to providing financial assistance to assist services from disadvantaged or remote communities throughout Australia to attend the Conference. For more details and to apply go to the 'Program' page on the Conference website www.togetherwegrow.com.au or check ELAA's eNews bulletins.



2017 Early Childhood Education Conference



Social Media

Connect with professional peers by following our Conference Facebook page facebook.com/earlychildhoodeducationconference. You can also comment on sessions and follow the action via our Twitter feeds @TWGchildinfocus and @ELAAustralia. Search and tag with #twg2017 and #TWGchildinfocus.



ELAA and Gowrie Victoria offer assistance to services from disadvantaged communities

As Conference hosts, ELAA and Gowrie Victoria are pleased to offer assistance to services from disadvantaged communities to attend the conference this year.

To apply for this special funding, please tell us in 250 words or less what type of early childhood service you provide; why your organisation requests this assistance; and who you would like to attend the conference. A panel of the Conference Reference Committee will review applications and select the recipients.

Please send applications to Tania De Carli at tdecarli@elaa.org.au by Friday 5 May 2017.

This assistance is limited and in the interest of fairness, will be available to applicants who have not previously received support.



Starting Out Safely Road Safety Education Award

Sponsored by VicRoads

The annual Starting Out Safely Road Safety Education Award recognises and celebrates the achievements of early childhood services and educators in providing road safety education.

Sponsored by VicRoads, the Award is open to all Victorian early childhood services and educators and will be presented at the 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference. The winner will receive \$500 for their service together with a road safety education pack full of great resources.

Award nominations will be reviewed by a panel of early childhood education experts and the sponsor, VicRoads.

To nominate your service for this year's Award email rse@elaa.org.au and tell us about your service's Road Safety Education Journey by Friday 12 May, 2017 or for more information contact Anita Valenzisi 03 9489 3500.

Image captions: 2016 Starting Out Safely Road Safety Education Award winners, Newport Gardens Early Years Centre, embraced Road Safety Education at their centre.

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

26 and 27 May, 2017 at the Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne

together we grow **the child in focus**

DET accommodation assistance

Conference Gold Sponsor, the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) provides funding to ELAA to offer Victorian children's services employees and early childhood educators in Prep, Years 1 and 2 working in a rural area with rebates for their conference accommodation costs.

Accommodation will be provided at the Pullman and Mercure Melbourne at Albert Park.

DET will pay accommodation for one night (\$185 standard room rate – Thursday or Friday night only) for delegates attending one day of the conference, and accommodation for two nights (\$370 standard room rate – Thursday and Friday nights only) for delegates attending both the Friday and Saturday sessions.

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

Please note that this assistance is limited and will be provided on a first come, first served basis. To apply for this assistance, you must book and pay for your accommodation at the Pullman and Mercure at Albert Park then email tdecarli@elaa.org.au your request for a rebate along with a copy of the booking confirmation from the hotel.

Your rebate cheque/EFT will be reimbursed to you after the conference.

If you have any questions, please call Tania De Carli at ELAA on (03) 9489 3500.

Download the free Conference App

Get more out of this year's Conference by downloading the 2017 Conference App to your mobile device. The App puts the Conference "in your pocket" with loads of handy features including:

- access to the full Conference Program including times, room details, presentation summaries, and speaker biographies
- create notes on individual presentations
- rate individual presentations
- submit questions to presenters during sessions and participate in in-session polling*
- find your session location with venue maps
- short list the Trade Fair exhibitors you want to visit
- join Group Discussions within the App**
- tweet and Facebook about your favourite presentations directly from the App
- get in-App event alerts
- access handy general information regarding the venue and event services.

* selected sessions only (more information to follow)

**Group discussion function will be enabled closer to the event date



Downloading the App

The App is simple (and free) to download. Just browse to eventmobi.com/togetherwegrow on your phone and then follow the prompts to save the App to your phone's home screen.

Creating your own personal attendee profile

Once you have downloaded the App you can create your own attendee personal profile and then build your personalised session list, view your session notes and short listed Trade Fair exhibitors, start Group discussions, and view your favourite documents. To create your personal profile just open the App and click the login icon in the right hand top corner. Enter your email address and that's it – you're logged in and ready to build your profile. You don't need to nominate a password because your email is your password.

Register now

When: 26–27 May 2017 **Where:** Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne

For program information and to register as a delegate visit www.togetherwegrow.com.au. Group booking discounts apply.

Inquiries: 03 9489 3500



AN AMAZING NEW LEARNING SPACE FOR BABIES TO FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

BY ALEX PRICE – PROGRAMS OFFICER, MELBOURNE MUSEUM CHILDREN'S GALLERY REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In 1917, the first Children's Room opened at the National Museum of Victoria. The display cases were lowered and the Latin names were removed. One hundred years later, and Museums Victoria early learning experiences go well beyond a single gallery, display cases and simplified labels.

In December 2016, the Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery, for babies to five year olds, opened at Melbourne Museum. The 2000m² inside and outside gallery takes up a quarter of the exhibition space on the ground floor of the museum and has a vision to be 'a wondrous museum place filled with multi-sensory, child-led, play-based learning adventures where children's minds run free.' The concept, design development and construction took nearly three years, and consultations involved over 100 adults and approximately 500 children; brainstorming, testing and evaluating exhibition experiences.

Research and consultation

At the beginning of the project, a stakeholder reference group was established. Members included representatives from: Department of Education, VCAA, Yarra Children's Services, Berry Street Early Years, Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA), Maternal and Child Health, Playgroup Victoria, University of Melbourne and Victoria University. They were briefed at each stage of the project and their insights into the sector and latest research were invaluable.

We were also grateful to have significant input from early childhood practitioners. The project team invited early childhood educators from the Museums Victoria Teachers Program to participate in focus groups. Sessions were held with educators from kindergartens, long day care centres, early learning centres (in independent schools), special schools, family day carers and the Royal Children's Hospital Education Institute, to gain insights on using the gallery with formal education groups. We formed a close relationship with the Gowrie Victoria Harbour Family and Children's Centre early on in the project. They were involved in educator focus groups, parent consultation sessions and with testing and evaluating exhibition experiences. Two workshops facilitated by Polyglot Theatre Company were held at their centre, and involved every child attending the centre on those days.

A Health and Additional Needs Professionals working group was involved throughout the project. This was made up of representatives from Amaze, Vision Australia, Department of Education,

Taralye, Early Education for Hearing Impaired Children, Noah's Ark, Yarra Preschool Field Officer, Brotherhood of St Lawrence, and Melbourne City Mission. This group met with us six times throughout the project, reviewing designs and providing feedback. They provided valuable insights into designing and modifying experiences to enhance the experience of children and families with additional needs. It quickly became obvious that when we considered the needs of these families, it often enhanced the experience for every visitor. For example, the inclusion of a blue coloured rope showing children the way out of the net climbing structure is useful for children with vision impairment, but can aid every climber engaging in the experience.

Tested by children

As the project moved into Design Development, educators were invited through the Museums Victoria Teachers Program and the Health and Additional Needs Professionals working group, to bring children into the museum to test programs and exhibition elements. Participating groups were from CBD, inner and outer metropolitan and rural educational services including private and community – managed long day care, Montessori long day care, two Aboriginal long day care, three kindergartens,

culturally diverse, bush, and country play groups, special needs school, family day care groups, and museum member and staff families. We had insightful discussions from dedicated educators about excursions to the museum, and were very appreciative of the effort they took to attend. Local playgroups walked, kindergarten groups came from Werribee on the bus, family day carers from the City of Casey brought their children on the train, and a playgroup came all the way from near Healesville. From these sessions, exhibition elements were adapted and refined (or rejected), and education programs developed. Comments such as this one from Patrick, 4yrs: "I didn't like the bee music. It made me feel angry" assisted with the development of soundscapes.

Links to the VEYLD

Since the gallery opened, children have engaged in play-based museum experiences which link to VEYLD outcomes. Visitors are welcomed to the gallery with welcome word clouds: simple labels using 45 languages including five Aboriginal, Auslan and Braille languages. Children excavate a Mamenchiasaurus dinosaur outside, hear Uncle Herb Patten tell the Gunai-Kurnai Aboriginal story of Tiddalik, talk about spotty and stripey animals, listen to lullabies from 14 cultures, climb the net structure, dance alone or with others in the camouflage disco and a lot more. Early childhood

education groups are invited to visit the gallery and participate in a new program, 'Grandad's Shed'. In this, children hear the story of two Koorie children, Kiriki and Ruby, who are visiting their grandparent's place near the Murray River. They explore the grandfather's collection of objects in his shed and are introduced to the concept of place and environment through narrative, objects, sounds and movements. These sessions run for approximately 30 minutes and then children are invited to play and explore the Children's Gallery. This program complements four other early learning programs at Melbourne Museum.

Outreach program

For those who find visiting the museum venues a challenge, Museums Victoria offers an Outreach Program. We have a travelling museum in a van and kit loan service providing access to Museums Victoria's collections for 4-year-old kindergarten groups. Post visit feedback on the Outreach Program shows that rural educators see it as a valuable and unique service for their children:

"Rural children of this age have limited access to these types of experiences due to distance."

"...It's something that the majority of our rural children would not experience outside of preschool."

"(it has) high quality clear links to learning frameworks and it is well pitched for their age."

Learn more about the Children's Gallery at this year's Early Childhood Education Conference

Discover how 500 children helped plan the new Melbourne Museum Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery. Gallery Programs Officer, Alex Price, will take the audience on a journey of collaboration with the children who shaped Victoria's most contemporary and dynamic learning space for babies to five-year-olds.

When: Saturday, 27 May at 3.30pm

Where: 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference – together we grow *the child in focus*, Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne.

More information: for program information and to register for the session go to www.togetherwegrow.com.au

Sessions are led by a presenter skilled in early learning and include specimens, objects, replicas and photographs and most of the items presented can be handled. Programs offered are: Australian Animals, Backyard Bugs, Dinosaurs and Fossils, Ocean Wonders. Bookings are limited and priority is given to early learning centres in a regional or outer metropolitan locations.

Rounding off the 100-year anniversary of children at Museums Victoria is an exciting new exhibition for babies to five-year-olds at Scienceworks, opening December 2017. It will immerse young children in an imaginative world of sensory discovery and construction-play that will ignite their lifelong engagement with science, technology, engineering and maths.

About the author

Alex Price has a B. Early Childhood Studies and a Grad Dip. Behaviour Science. She has worked in Museum Education and Community Programs for 13 years and was the Programs Officer on the Children's Gallery Redevelopment Project.



Handy links

<https://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournmuseum/whats-on/childrens-gallery>

<https://museumvictoria.com.au/melbournmuseum/learning/early-years-learning>

<https://museumvictoria.com.au/education/outreach-program>

Images: Above: Climbing structure in the Big Box at the Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery, Melbourne Museum. Source: Museums Victoria. Photographer: John Gollings. Left: Alison Webster, from NOAH's Ark, meeting with Georgie Meyer, Kathy Fox and Alex Price to discuss children's access to the new Children's Gallery space. Source: Museums Victoria. Photographer: Rodney Start. Top of page 14: Entry to Pauline Gandel Children's Gallery, Melbourne Museum. Source: Museums Victoria. Photographer: John Gollings.

THE CHILD IN FOCUS – MOVING TO AN INTEGRATED SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL IN 2016

BY SIGI HYETT (GENERAL MANAGER) – KENSINGTON COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CO-OPERATIVE

Kensington Community Children's Co-operative (KCCC) is a community-managed service that provides education and care to 140 children each day, has nine rooms, including two kindergarten rooms with 287 children across the week and employs 50 staff.

In 2014 the delivery model at KCCC was based on age segregated rooms. The outdoor area was separated by a fence for younger and older children. Children and educators moved up to new rooms each year and each room operated quite separately from the other.

In 2014, a child in the outdoor yard wishing to visit her sibling became distressed when she needed to wait for an educator to open the gate between the two play spaces at our service.

This became the catalyst for our service to reflect on whether the traditional age-segregated delivery model was as child focussed as it could be and led us to investigate other delivery models.

"As soon as one can no longer think things as one formally thought about then transformation becomes both very urgent, very difficult and quite possible" (Foucault, 1988. pp 323–330)

It was not too long ago, that our thinking changed, it became urgent and was not always easy, however, quite possible.

How

A key to our successful change included planning a robust professional development program which commenced in July 2014 and continued over 18 months.

We engaged an external experienced early years consultant, Heather Barnes, to explore the topic of integrated service delivery through critical reflective practice on all aspects.

The workshops and PD sessions provided opportunities for questioning our experiences and views. They encouraged critically thinking about values and assumptions underlying practice and considering different perspectives and possibilities.

Educators visited other services that were successfully delivering multi-age grouping which included one of our educators spending two months at our sister school in Denmark as part of our staff host exchange. Representatives from other services were also invited to attend our staff meetings for a Q & A session.

These partnerships enabled educators to engage in investigating real-life examples and link these to our own setting.

Families were offered an information session facilitated by Heather Barnes, drop in sessions which provided them opportunity to unpack and ask further questions, and detailed information packs were provided to families.

The KCCC Board, that comprises families and represents the family body, endorsed KCCC moving to a multi-age grouping model which was introduced in 2016.

What does this look like now?

Having children of varying ages in a group encourages educators to see children as individuals and tailor programs to address their individual needs. This supports the development of personalised learning with the CHILD IN FOCUS.

The feedback received from educators and families has been largely positive and the model embraced by our dedicated and empowered staff. Staff have undertaken action research projects which enable continued reflective practice with a focus on each child. Educators have and continue to share stories about their own professional and personal growth and how this impacts on their practice.

There are many benefits for children, including increased language and social skills, greater sense of agency and individualised planning.

Our recent rating of EXCEEDING the National Quality Standards has certainly validated that transformation is quite possible.

The strengths of the service now include effective curriculum decision making that promotes a child focused approach in the program. A clear and ongoing cycle of planning that includes the elements of observation, interpretation, implementation and evaluation is evident in the programs. The structure supports effective critical reflection to occur at individual, service and system levels that consistently drive the program.



Moving forward

The teams at KCCC will continue to undertake action research projects, ensuring that we continuously practise critical reflection.

Some of the actions we have already reflected on and have in place for 2017 to strengthen the integrated service delivery include:

- The implementation of an Outdoor/Excursion Educator who supports Educators to effectively collaborate ideas about children's learning in the integrated yard and extend on planning possibilities. The Educator facilitates regular planned small group excursions which support strengthened relationships and connections with the local community.
- Partnerships with the Wurundjeri tribe Elders where the elders will work with educators and children about cultural competencies and strengthen the community connection within the service, learning about our connection to our place, bringing the whole community together.
- The implementation of Story Park, where families have further opportunity to be involved in their child's program and planning through an online interactive forum.
- Effectively utilising educator's strengths across the service on projects where educators have the opportunity to share their areas of expertise with the full service. Examples include:



- a cooking program where one educator shares her knowledge and passion and provides opportunities for the children from all rooms to partake
- sharing the knowledge and skills of educators who speak another language to run language group times and story times across rooms.
- continuing to ensure our roster development provides opportunity for excursions/projects to occur across the centre, where children are provided the opportunity to partake in an excursion or projects with a range of children from across the whole centre. This provides opportunities for siblings and peers to engage with each other in smaller group settings.

We will continue to critically reflect on the ways in which we can strengthen integrated service delivery with a focus on the rights of each child at KCCC.

Learn more about the KCCC journey to integrated service delivery at the 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference

Learn how moving to an integrated service delivery model with multi-age grouping has resulted in the children and educators at Kensington Community Child Care Co-operative feeling proud, engaged and empowered.

When: Friday, 26 May at 3.30pm

Where: 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference – together we grow *the child in focus*, Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne.

More information: for program information and to register for the session go to www.togetherwegrow.com.au

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ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION REVISITED, REIMAGINED AND RE-ENERGISED!

BY CATHARINE HYDON – ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION FACILITATOR



Then

Road safety education has played an important part in the lives of young children over the last fifty years. We all remember snippets of programs introduced to us at school and in our lounge rooms that helped us learn to ride our bicycles safely and cross the road at the lights. I remember Hector the Road Safety Cat who promoted road safety in the 1970s on posters, in comic strips and television commercials. And then there was my annual visit to the traffic school where I and my kindergarten peers rode our bicycles, with training wheels attached, around the make-believe roads and intersections. And when I became an educator some thirty years ago, I continued the practice utilising

the resources of the VicRoads Starting Out Safely program to teach children how to hold their parents' hands, wear their seat belts and use the passenger door.

Now

Fast forward to the twenty first century road safety education programs – something significant has changed. While the purpose of the program remains the same; ensuring that children along with their families, are well equipped to safely navigate the roads as passenger, pedestrians and cyclists; the methodology is significantly different. Children are no longer seen as passive recipients of predetermined road safety concepts offered in static ways and in short doses.

Instead when educators participate in the professional learning opportunities on offer in the Starting Out Safely program they are challenged to know and understand the evidence and research about road safety and combine it with a contemporary understanding of how children learn. Rather than delivering the road safety message in theoretical ways, children are supported through intentional teaching to learn how to be active participants in their own and others safety. The result is a far more dynamic approach to road safety education that encourages educators, children and families to leave the safety of their early childhood spaces and venture into the real world of road safety.

“ It is truly a captivating notion that through the everyday practice of road safety children and their educators can take up their right to participate in community life.”

Connecting with communities through contemporary learning

The invitation to explore road safety in this way connects strongly to the principles that now define early childhood education. Children as capable and competent citizens with ideas and opinions on matters that affect them has become a central tenet of this road safety approach and one of the main reasons that I have been pleased to be a part of the team delivering these messages to the early childhood community in Victoria. It is truly a captivating notion that through the everyday practice of road safety children and their educators can take up their right to participate in community life. Furthermore, their capacity to make lasting contributions can be fully realised if children know how to navigate the streets and footpaths of their local neighbourhood. When children can cross the road safely they can visit the aged care facility and bring joy and laughter to others. When children learn to ride a bus or a tram safely they can visit the museum and learn about the world around them. When children learn to use the traffic lights they can join with other members of the community to clean up their local creek. And when children can walk safely to the local shopping strip they can join in the

important community events that join us together.

As ELAA's team of Road Safety Education facilitators travels around Victoria, we have been excited to hear about educators who have embraced the possibilities that a strong road safety education program can offer. Invariably educators leave the professional learning session motivated to challenge the “taken for granted” practices that prevent children from getting out and about.

If your understanding of road safety education seems a bit disconnected from these ideas or you feel that the potential of road safety in your centre hasn't been fully harnessed, then maybe it's time to get along to a professional learning session. Not only will you learn about the current evidence and research about road safety and young children but you might just unlock the world beyond the gate!

For more information about the Starting Out Safely program go to www.childroadsafety.org.au or email rse@elaa.org.au.

Learn more about contemporary approaches to early years Road Safety Education at this year's Early Childhood Education Conference

Join ELAA's team of Road Safety Education facilitators (Catharine Hydon, Louise Dorrat, Nicole Pilsworth, Karen Glancy and Gilda Howard) for *Inroads to community* – an interactive panel that will challenge you to become a pedagogical innovator in Road Safety Education by removing the assumption that road safety education is a one off event and looking at it as an ongoing exploration of ideas driven by children. This expert panel will motivate you to explore and share how to exercise contemporary pedagogy, theory and practice wisdom to deliver outstanding road safety education.

When: Friday, 26 May at 2.15pm

Where: 2017 Early Childhood Education Conference – together we grow *the child in focus*, Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne.

More information: for program information and to register for the session go to www.togetherwegrow.com.au

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EMPOWERING CHILDREN TO HELP BUILD CHILD FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Child Friendly Cities and Communities improve outcomes for children and their communities and give planners and policy makers a framework to consider the needs of children in urban planning. The Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network, including two of Victoria's major regional cities (Ballarat and Bendigo), are innovators and leaders in this initiative and share their experiences of creating Child Friendly Cities and Communities with Preschool Matters.

Why children's decision making matters

The Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network of the Victorian Local Governance Association recognises the need for increased participation by children in decision making forums and creating child friendly environments.

Wendy Jones and **Samantha Neville** from the Network provide an overview of why children's decision making matters and how it can be implemented.

In 1996, the Child Friendly Cities Initiative was launched to act on the resolution passed during the second UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II). The Conference had declared that "the well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and good governance."

Following this lead, The Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities (CFCC) Network partnered with the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) in 2012 and launched the first Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter (The Charter) in 2013.

The Charter was developed specifically for local governments, organisations and individuals to take action. It is a statement of principles and actions that underpin the right to be considered child friendly.

Recognising the need for increased participation by children in decision making forums and creating child friendly environments, the following principles were developed:

- freedom for children to experience environments that consider their needs
- respect and dignity for children to express their individual opinions, participate in and contribute to decisions about their communities and wellbeing
- equitable access to supportive environments and services for children regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion or ability.

A number of local governments, including the City of Ballarat, have committed to making their communities more child friendly. Initiatives include:

- consulting with children for community plans
- establishing forums to encourage community organisations to actively engage with children
- mapping child outcomes
- facilitating child participation in community events
- documenting policies that recognise child rights.

The involvement of children in decision-making processes in areas that impact on their lives has gained growing support over the past 20 years.

Child friendly cities and communities provide opportunity for:

Children to:

- participate in matters that directly affect them
- see their community in a new way
- meet new people
- develop confidence and sense of self
- improve their experience in receiving services, increasing potential success of interventions.

Community to:

- develop intergenerational interactions and understandings
- build a strong sense of community
- recognise the value of children's contribution to community.

Policy makers to:

- ground decision-making in the reality of children's and young people's experience
- remove assumptions about who children and young people are, what they need and what they want
- recognise children's right to participate in community development processes as citizens of their community
- recognise that how children and young people experience their environments differs from adults.

“ *The well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and good governance.* **”**



BALLARAT

The City of Ballarat: A leader in Children's Consultation

The City of Ballarat was the first signatory to the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter and the city prides itself on the conversations undertaken with its youngest residents.

Ballarat Council utilises opportunities such as Children's Week, Begonia festival, Ballarat's Biggest Playgroup and other community consultations to ensure they capture the voice of children in decision making processes. Methods undertaken to capture the voices of children have included surveys; conversations; drawings – individual and in the classroom; and clay modelling.

“ The City of Ballarat believes that the voices of our youngest residents are key to planning for the future of our growing city.”

In 2015, the City of Ballarat surveyed 1,520 children from local primary schools and early years services about the liveability and safety of their neighbourhood. The results from this children's consultation will inform future Ballarat City Council policies and strategic plans, including the City of Ballarat's Cycling Strategy, Municipal Health Plan, Transport Action Plan, Road Safety Strategy and Playspace Strategy.

The City of Ballarat believes that the voices of our youngest residents are key to planning for the future of our growing city.

For further information about Child Friendly Cities and Communities and the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network see <http://www.vlga.org.au/Policy-Advocacy/Victorian-Child-Friendly-Cities-and-Communities-Hub>.



BENDIGO

Child-friendly Bendigo by Alicia O'Brien

The City of Greater Bendigo endorsed the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter through the Greater Bendigo Municipal Early Years Plan 2015–18.

At the City, there is a commitment to children and their right to express their opinions and participate in decision-making about their community and wellbeing.

We do this by ensuring children's voices are heard when developing new infrastructure such as play facilities, as well as in community planning processes, and running free children's events throughout the year.

We have an extensive annual program of free family fun days in different locations around Greater Bendigo, which are great experiences for children and a way for families to meet new people and find support.

These events are open to everyone in the community and include arts and crafts, physical activities, live performances, face painting, animal farms and more. When organising these types of events, we consult with children about what type of activities they like and involve them in running the event.

When developing new infrastructure specifically for children, such as play spaces in parks or preschools, the process starts with extensive consultation with children. Examples of best-practice include the Children's Space in the Botanical Gardens in White Hills and the Fun Loong play space located in Hargreaves Mall in the CBD. Fun Loong was the most popular design choice for a playground for the Mall when more than 2500 children voted in 2015.

When we create community plans, we engage with children to make sure their views are considered. We do this in a variety of ways, including photography (children are provided with cameras to capture their views), survey questions, drawing and stickers that allow children to select their preferences and show their perspective.

Being child-friendly is an important way to create a sustainable and inclusive future for Greater Bendigo.



THE TRANSITION: A POSITIVE START TO SCHOOL INITIATIVE

The *Transition: A Positive Start to School Initiative* (the Transition Initiative) was originally launched in 2009, to improve the development and consistent delivery of transition programs and improve the relationships and sharing of information between children, families and early childhood professionals including Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) educators and teachers, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) educators and school teachers. The Transition Initiative is a key element of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYDLF).

Continuous improvement

Since the introduction of the Transition Initiative in 2009, many early childhood services and schools have continued to develop innovative local approaches to support effective transitions. Additionally, a considerable amount of research, evaluation and consultation has provided greater insight and evidence into what works well to ensure effective transitions for all children, and why.

“ New resources and professional learning have been developed in response to the VAGO findings, informed by experts and a state-wide sector consultation on Transition to School undertaken in 2015.”

In March 2015, the Victorian Auditor General's Office (VAGO) released its Education Transitions report. It found that through the Transition Initiative and the VEYDLF, Victoria has developed a comprehensive, well-researched framework that has contributed to improved outcomes for children transitioning into their first year of school.

To build on this, VAGO recommended that there should be a focus on areas where there are differences in transition outcomes for children based on factors like gender, geographic location, culture and language. It also highlighted the need to further improve shared understanding

between educators in early childhood services and teachers in schools about their role in transitions.

New resources and professional learning have been developed in response to the VAGO findings, informed by experts and a state-wide sector consultation on Transition to School undertaken in 2015.

Trialling the new resources and professional learning

The new resources (including a new online version of the Transition to School Statement) and professional learning were trialed in five diverse sites between August 2016 and February 2017. Educators and teachers attended a one-day professional learning workshop and contributed to an independent evaluation.

The professional learning trial focused on:

- ensuring that children and families who are more at risk of poor transition experiences are well supported
- sharing information effectively through Transition Statements (including trialing a new online Statement)
- minimising duplication for parents/guardians in sharing information, particularly when their child has a disability or developmental delay
- achieving consistent information-sharing practices across the State
- achieving continuity in children's learning and development progress as they move from home and/or early childhood settings into school.

One aspect of the Transition Initiative, is the Transition Statement. A Statement must be completed for every child attending a funded kindergarten program before they start school, with input from parents/guardians. Statements are then provided to the school (and OSHC service where applicable). Educators in other children's services are also encouraged to contribute to the Transition Statement or complete it for any children not attending a funded kindergarten program.

Article courtesy of The Victorian Department of Education and Training.

Transition: A Positive Start to School – State-wide free professional learning workshops 2017

The evaluation of the trial has informed further refinements and improvements to the Transition: A Positive Start to School Kit. The new Transition Kit will be delivered to all services early in Term 2 and the Professional Learning Workshops will be delivered across Victoria in Terms 2 and 3, 2017.

Developing professional partnerships across sectors and responding to the local context supports effective transition practice. In recognition of this, the workshops are being delivered in local communities with participants from early childhood, OSHC and primary school. This provides a unique opportunity to build on existing local transition practice or to establish connections and collaboration.

Key themes for the workshop include:

- Relationships to support transitions
- Continuity of learning
- Equity and diversity
- Planning and evaluation
- Writing and using Transition Statements
- Using the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the first three levels of the Victorian Curriculum F-10 to plan for effective transitions.

To register in a workshop near you go to: <https://blogs.deakin.edu.au/transition-to-school>

For more information on *Transition: a Positive Start to School* visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/transitiontoschool

MEMBER PROFILE

ASHWOOD CHILDREN'S CENTRE



Our service has been operating since...

Ashwood Children's Centre is a 70-place long day care service and funded kindergarten in suburban Ashwood. We amalgamated two services – Ashwood Childcare Centre (which commenced in 1986), and Ashwood Central Preschool (which began as Jordanville Nth Preschool in the 1960s).

The services, existing on Monash Council land, amalgamated in 1999 and, following a large renovation, began trading as Ashwood Children's Centre in 2000. This proactive step supported a long and positive future for the service in the community.

Our approach to early learning focuses on...

Ours is a play based curriculum through and through! It intentionally follows the interests and needs of the children whilst focusing on strong relationships with children and families to ensure all stakeholders have a keen sense of belonging.

Engagement with our local community is important to our management and educator teams, and we endeavour to get out and about at every opportunity. We believe children learn enormously through rich and diverse experiences linked closely to their immediate community.

Our physical environment and sustainable practices are paramount in everyday life at ACC. The menagerie of animals eating our food scraps, recycled water flushing our toilets, solar panels atop our roof and child oriented recycling program are all evidence of a strong and ongoing commitment to the environment.

Our proudest moments were... The successful amalgamation of two sizeable early childhood services in 1999/2000, and the subsequent renovation of the buildings which required a high level of management and co-ordination over a 12-month period.

The other key achievement of our service (on a daily basis) is the careful

and successful management of every single incidental moment, sometimes conundrums, that come across our radar.

We are also extremely proud to have four Bachelor qualified educators in three of our four learning spaces, and a full-time Educational Leader to guide program development and quality. We believe this is imperative to ensure positive outcomes for our children.

Lately we've been working on... Term one, 2017 has seen us strive to achieve settled and calm children and families in our learning spaces, consistency of educators to reach this end, and moving forward on our Quality Improvement Plan.

Priority is given to increased staffing across Term 1, well above the legal requirements in our babies room to ensure a 1:2 ratio. This provides maximum support for the children and their families who are often having their first experience in a long day setting. Going on from that, we are excited to be planning for an additional tertiary qualified educator in our babies' space. This is a long-term goal for our service which we hope will be achieved by 2019.

We are inspired by... The opportunity to positively influence the lives of children, families and the local community – all day, every day. Also, the feeling of community amongst the parent and educator groups demonstrated at recent working bees. This effort made by families to go beyond a basic involvement level is awesome! But right now we're most inspired by a child who carries around his backpack, hat, drink bottle and family photo because he is comfortable and secure in our environment. He is creating that connection between our service and home for himself, and he is absolutely respected by everyone to do this.

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1000 BOOKS BEFORE SCHOOL – READING FOR LIFE

Debra Rosenfeldt – Manager, Public Libraries for State Library Victoria – talks about a great program to help children develop literacy skills and a love of reading before they start school.

It's mid-morning on a sublimely autumnal day and the Ballan public library in regional Victoria is overflowing with babies, toddlers and their mums and dads. They've come for the weekly storytime and to meet the mayor, who is there for the local launch of the 1000 Books Before School campaign. Over 200 Victorian public libraries and State Library Victoria are participating in this campaign to build the early years literacy skills that will position participants for success at school and throughout their lives.

Literacy is an essential life skill. It is fundamental to all learning, a building

block of education and development, and integral to economic, civic and social participation. Yes, the Australian Early Development Census (2015) shows that 16 percent of Victorian pre-school children have been assessed as 'vulnerable' or 'at risk' in language and cognitive skills. We know that these children who start school behind will most likely stay behind. We also know that the best time to intervene is in the early years, the nought to three year age range, before children are part of the formal education system.

This is why a program like 1000 Books Before School is so vital. It encourages parents and other carers to read with their children from the time they are born, to develop the reading habit; it provides tips on how to make reading together a fun and joyful experience that strengthens family bonds, enlarges the child's world and builds language and literacy skills; and it's easy to participate.

Children register at their local library to receive their first Reading Record and reading kit. Each time a book is read with the child a sticker is placed on the Reading Record, and special rewards are provided by the library as milestones are reached. The program finishes once the child reaches 1000 books, or starts school.

The fact that 1000 Books Before School is a library program is important.

Not every family can afford to buy books. Not every parent has the literacy skills and know-how to be able to develop the literacy skills of their children, either because they never learnt to read themselves, or because English is not their first language. Libraries participating in 1000 Books Before School are working with their community partners, reaching out to these most vulnerable groups, bringing them into the library to explore its great treasure trove of picture story books and participate in book reading activities such as the weekly storytimes, and in some libraries, the daily storytimes that are run by library staff.

The 1000 Books Before School campaign began in the USA and has spread around the world. Victoria has led the way in Australia, with its state-wide launch of the campaign in October 2016. Already, Victorian public libraries are well on their way to achieving their target of 60,000 participants reading sixty million books.

Feedback from parents has been overwhelmingly positive:

'This initiative is so lovely! Everyone in our house is participating.'

'(Our daughter) is very excited and we can see her love of books and stories developing. This program is a wonderful idea.'

As acclaimed writer and artist Theodor Geisel, better known as Dr Seuss, says: 'The more that you read, the more things that you will know, the more that you learn, the more places you'll go'.

To find out more about the 1000 Books Before School campaign and participating libraries, go to the State Library Victoria website: www.slv.vic.gov.au



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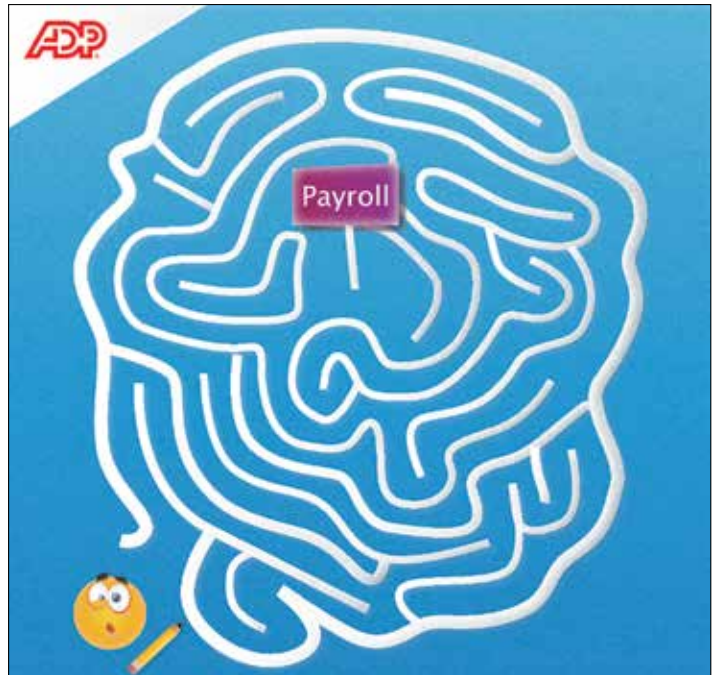
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- Road Safety Education Policies for early childhood services and Family Day Care
- Child car seats – information on keeping children safe
- Child car seats – multilingual information
- Research and publications about road safety

Visit the Child Road Safety website, childroadsafety.org.au

ELAA delivers the Victorian Government's early childhood road safety education program, Starting Out Safely, on behalf of VicRoads. Contact the RSE team on (03) 9489 3500 or email rse@elaa.org.au



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