

# Roundtable

Autumn 2017 | Community Child Care Association



**Helping Children  
Make Sense of  
the World**

*Child Safe  
Standards –  
Are your policies  
up to date?*

*Spotlight on  
Intergenerational  
Programs*

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# Spotlight on Educator Exchange Program



**Kensington Community Children's Cooperative (KCCC) is a 140 place early learning centre providing education and care for children aged six weeks – six years. They have been a member of Community Child Care Association for over fifteen years. As part of a program that promotes global collaboration and shared learning the service has established an educator exchange program, with a centre in Denmark.**

## **How does the educator exchange program work?**

The program provides opportunity for our educators to spend time at our sister school, Frederiksberg, in Denmark, to broaden their knowledge, share ideas, observe and engage in new ways of practice. These visits are reciprocated, with Danish educators having the opportunity to spend time here at KCCC.

So far we have had one of our educators, Hayley, spend eight weeks at Frederiksberg. The program was fully funded by KCCC and Hayley was hosted by families from Frederiksberg. In return we have had two educators from Denmark, Anne Sofie and Jette, come to KCCC together, for a three week period and during their time here they were hosted by families from KCCC.

## **What was the purpose behind starting an educator exchange program?**

We believed having this connection with a sister school in Denmark would support children to become involved global citizens. As we have shared stories, photos, and resources and have Danish educators visit us; the children are exposed to another way of life.

They begin to develop an understanding of a bigger and more diverse world.

For our educators, we wanted them to learn about new ways of engaging in practice as well as sharing their skills and knowledge with our colleagues in Denmark. We recognised that this was an opportunity for our educators to broaden their career opportunities, knowledge and skill level.

However, whilst all of the impacts this program would have on KCCC were important to us, an overarching aim was to raise the profile of early years education. These types of programs happen in primary and secondary education and we thought why can't they occur in the early years?

## **What are some of the key changes that have occurred at KCCC as a result of the educator exchange?**

One of the significant points of learning from Denmark is the concept of 'hygge'. This is the idea of making moments meaningful and creating feelings such as security, kinship, reassurance, comfort and familiarity. While 'hygge' has no English translation we thought about this concept in terms of our relationships and transitions here at KCCC. To support the concept of 'hygge' at Frederiksberg, children are not separated in strict age groups, they have an under three and over three group but slowly move children through transitions, sometimes even taking up to six months to move to the over three age group.

This supported our introduction to a similar multi-age curriculum at KCCC where children are kept together in social groups rather than being moved around the service based upon their age. This supports children's transitions and also allows educators to develop meaningful relationships as they stay with their groups of children for a prolonged period of time. During the last visit from the Danish

staff, it was identified that significantly larger groups of children attend services over the week in Australia than in Denmark. Questions were raised on how this may affect peer group interactions and relationships across the services.

This notion of relationships has also extended to our excursion program where we have worked hard to develop relationships between children and community. By ensuring all children, regardless of their age, have the opportunity to leave the service and engage with local services, we are promoting connection to community and supporting children to be recognised and visible as a valued part of community.

When Hayley spent her time in Denmark her biggest focus was engaging in the dialogic reading program they run and working out how we could implement it here at KCCC. Dialogic reading is a technique where educators use a variety of prompts in order to support the children to be actively involved with their reading and literacy learning. It is not necessarily about the text within a book. It draws on children's memory recall, along with being able to incorporate their own thoughts and feelings, existing knowledge of a situation and being able to interact in small group learning. Hayley has since trained all of the team here at KCCC in dialogic reading and it has become a very successful part of our program used with small groups of children.

*Thanks to Centre Director, Sigi Hyett and Pedagogical Leader, Melissa Bell for sharing their story with us. CCC congratulates them and their staff team on their recent Exceeding NQS rating. It is inspiring to see the passion and dedication for education in the early years driving their work. ◀*