



Early Childhood Australia
A voice for young children

Newsletter

Our Mission:

Early Childhood Australia will advocate to ensure quality, social justice and equity in all issues relating to the education and care of children from birth to eight years.

Our values are:

- The rights of children
- Leadership, excellence and respect
- Courage, honesty and openness
- Collaboration and diversity
- Justice
- Social inclusion of children

Early Childhood Australia Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of Early Childhood Australia. By publishing a diversity of opinion, we hope to provide a forum which promotes professional growth, creativity, and debate in the early childhood field.

What's On? December 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1 Hannukah	2	3 International Day of people with a disability	4
5	6	7	8	9	10 Human Rights Day	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19 NTCSRL Library closed	20 NTCSRL Library closed	21 NTCSRL Library closed	22	23 ECA NT Offices Close	24	25
26 Boxing Day	27	28	29	30	31 New Years Eve	ECA NT re-opens 3rd January



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Newsletter



Managers Report

Dear ECA Members and Friends,

As we come to the end of 2011, many of you have been on a journey to gain deeper understandings of the work you do in early childhood education and care. The new Curriculum Framework, Belonging, Being and Becoming is now a part of your everyday practice.

The Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Bill 2011 has been passed by the NT Legislative Assembly; so from January 2012 The National Quality Standards and Regulations will be there to guide and support your practice.

For our very youngest children in services, the staff to child ratio changes to 1:4. This is a very important first step in our attempts to increase the quality of care for children under three. There has been a tendency to put our least experienced and least qualified educators into these groups over the years. It is my hope that the new National Quality Standards will change some of these management practices.

Management practices which include rotating educators through the different age groups, changing shifts on a regular basis and casually moving staff from babies rooms to cover for educators away in the larger and older groups.

When an educator in the older age group leaves the service the decision is sometimes made to move an educator from the toddlers group into the older group and replace the toddler educator with one from the babies group and hire a new babies' educator.

These examples are not good practice and do not reflect on what we know is essential for our youngest children. How we manage our services should reflect the latest knowledge we have.

A recent presentation by Professor Sven Silburn on the AEDI results reiterated yet again the importance of the first three years in determining the adult the child will grow to be.

This is the period when the brain is growing the fastest and new neural pathways are being laid down at a fantastic rate. These first three years will have a major impact on the health, relationships and capabilities of the adult.

There is sometimes a mentality in services that sees moving from babies to toddler groups and ultimately into the over three group as a kind of promotion for early childhood educators. It is upsetting to hear educators who work with babies reflect that attitude in the way they talk about themselves and their work.

It is an honour and a privilege to look after someone's child, but being allowed to work with children whose brains are still growing, who are learning at an incredible rate and who are dependent upon you to respond to their changing needs is a massive responsibility. It is one that must be

respected by staff and management alike. Selecting staff to work with babies and toddlers is one of the most significant decisions managers make in services.

For early childhood educators working in services, it is not always easy to speak up about important issues in your workplace. Now under the new National Quality Framework and the Early Years Learning Framework there is support for changing *the way it has always been done*.

The practices I mentioned before are still happening. If your service caters for babies and toddlers then I urge you to start the discussion about new ways of working that will see highly qualified educators working with our youngest children and being supported to give them the consistent, warm responsive care they require.

My thanks to the Department of Education Staff who advised us when the debate in the Legislative Assembly was occurring. It was a very interesting experience to listen to our elected representatives talk about our sector. It did highlight the need for early childhood professionals to talk regularly to the wider community, including politicians, about our work. It was evident during the debate (especially when the dreaded words 'child minding' were repeated several times.) With all these changes occurring for the good of young children, we need to bring the wider community along with us.

The NT Government as part of their [NT Early Childhood Workforce Plan 2011-2021](#) have announced scholarships to support early childhood educators to upgrade their qualifications. So if you are an employer, you can encourage one or two of your workforce to upgrade to a teaching qualifications. This is a wonderful opportunity for both employers and employees—including those working with babies!

Dear ECA Members and Friends,

KidsMatter Early Childhood Update

The Pilot phase of KidsMatter Early Childhood is nearing completion!

KidsMatter Early Childhood (KMEC) is the first national mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative specifically developed for early childhood services

Where are we up to in the pilot?

As we are approaching the final months of the pilot of KidsMatter Early Childhood, our services are completing Component Four: Helping children who are experiencing mental health difficulties. Services have been undergoing Professional Learning for this component and are focusing on understanding children's mental health and wellbeing, observing children's behaviour and supporting children who may be experiencing mental health difficulties.

Please await future ECA NT Newsletters to find out how your early childhood service can become involved in the KidsMatter Early Childhood initiative!

Self Regulation

'...how important it is to help children manage their emotions, behaviour and attention in ways that are socially acceptable and help them achieve positive goals. ...discussions raised questions about how to help children deal with their angry feelings. There was considerable agreement that the more we can understand the thinking and emotions that underpin a child's behaviour, the more likely we are to be able to help that child. In relation to this, I was interested to read the following quote by Fred Rogers in Cindy Croft's book, *Six Keys: Strategies for Promoting Children's Mental Health in Early Childhood Programs*. (p.121)'

"A 5-year-old boy once asked me, "What do you do with the mad that you feel when you feel so mad you could bite?" Listening to his question made me think about what anger means to children. One thing I heard in his question was a reminder that children can have intense angry feelings, too.



Their anger, like ours, comes as a reaction to other feelings – for example, when they feel small, inadequate, rejected, hurt or disappointed. Those feelings are painful, and they are very much a part of childhood.....That 5-year-old's question made me realise again that children want some concrete alternatives to biting, hitting, and hurting."

(The above is an excerpt from a newsletter written by our Tasmanian KMEC Facilitator).

A leading researcher in the area of self-regulation, Dr Stuart Shanker writes:

"There is a growing interest, and debate, about the ways in which our development, our brains, our behaviour and our attitudes are connected. Importantly self-regulation has been identified as a key factor in wellbeing, learning & development."

He goes on to write:

"We need to focus on the emotional qualities that create mentally healthy children: their motivation, curiosity, empathy, emotional range, self esteem, internal discipline, creativity, moral integrity."

References:

Croft, C. (2007) *The six keys: Strategies for promoting children's mental health in early childhood programs.* Farmington, Minnesota: Sparrow Media Group.
Shankar, S. (2011) *Self-regulation. Foundations.* September 2011. Hunter Institute of Mental Health.

To find out more please visit our website:

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/ec/>
or email or call me at
mbell@earlychildhood.org.au or 0448 408 444

Thanks, Morag
KidsMatter Early Childhood Facilitator – NT

KidsMatter Partners
KidsMatter Australian Early Childhood Mental Health Initiative has been developed in collaboration with *Beyondblue: the national depression initiative*, the Australian Psychological Society, Early Childhood Australia and, with funding from, the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing and *beyondblue: the national depression initiative*.

Dear ECA Members and Friends,

Communication by Robyn Blake

As an Inclusion Support Facilitator, I am often asked for tools to help with children's communication.

Remember, it takes two to talk and the most important way you can promote a child's communication skills is to interact with them because a child doesn't learn to communicate by himself. He learns communication through involvement with his world and we, as educators, are part of that world. Spontaneous conversation, taking a genuine interest in what the child is doing or saying and allowing them to express themselves by singing, dancing, drama, games and music, allows children to connect with others and at the same time develop their learning.

Communication is crucial to belonging, being and becoming. (EYLF *Belonging, Being & Becoming* pg 40)

Here are some examples where, we as educators, can stimulate communication in young children:

- * Make speaking and listening experiences pleasant, worthwhile and fun
- * Read books: encouraging the child to tell stories using the books and pictures
- * Be a good speech model: talk simply, clearly and slowly
- * Repeat new words often and frequently - using words the child has trouble with
- * Have a conversation; asking questions to stimulate additional thought and language
- * Talk about what you are doing
- * Provide experiences to stimulate speech and language development:- take walks, go shopping, plant a garden, have a picnic, clean together
- * Praising the child's efforts to communicate
- * Extend the conversation
- * Talk to the child as you would to any other person
- * Remember that the child will understand more than he will be able to say

- * Listen when the child talks to you
- * Encourage the child to use language to express his feelings, ideas, dreams, wishes and fears

Pro-Ed; Mary Brooks & Deedra Engmann 1976

By **using facial expressions** and gestures when we talk, the child finds it easier to understand our words and learns a way of expressing himself before he is able to talk.

By **imitating** what the child does or says and **adding a word or action** connected to it, the child is exposed to information at a time when he is interested.

By **interpreting** the child's feelings or wants, the child has the opportunity to hear the words he wants to say when he needs them.

By **exaggerating sounds or key words**, the child finds it easier to focus on the new sounds or words and to associate them with what is happening.

By **repeating** the same words or phrases every time we play a game, the child finds it easier to understand and then say the word and begins to anticipate what comes next.

By **expanding** on what the child is doing or saying, the child is exposed to a wealth of new ideas and language connected to what he is interested in. The child comes to understand how objects and events are associated and learns language to express more complete ideas.

"It Takes Two to Talk" A. Manolson 1992

The educator is able to track communication development by matching the child's skills to the developmental milestones. If you have any concerns about delays in development, please contact your Inclusion Support Facilitator on

08 89867142 or

email us at ecant@earlychildhood.org.au



NT Children's Resource Library

Early Childhood Australia NT Branch
71 Coonawarra Road
(Cnr of Bombing and Coonawarra Roads)

Phone: 8986 7142
Fax: 8947 2884
Email:
erika.pickworth@ecant.org.au

Opening Hours:

Monday—Friday

8.30am—4.30pm

Dear ECA Members and Friends,

It's that time of the year again when everyone winds down and gets ready for the festive season. We are very excited about a Multicultural grant from the NT Government that has just been awarded to the library. There will be new items on the shelf very soon so feel free to pop in and have a browse.

A gentle reminder - we have had some items returned to the library that were a little worse for wear and we would, therefore, like to remind services, individuals, students and teachers that it is their responsibility to return items in the same condition as when they left the library.

Cleaning of toys

All toys and games are so much more appealing if they are clean & properly packaged. No one likes to borrow a dirty toy. Therefore all members should read carefully through the following information and special tips for care and cleaning.

Cleaning Kit

A cleaning formula which removes grease and kitchen/household smells, eg Something like Nifti (stubborn stains) or Spray & Wipe (for grease)
Vanilla Fridge Wipe (for smells)
Bicarbonate Soda and vinegar (environmentally friendly & non-toxic)
Some disinfectant, like Pine-O-Cleen or Dettol
An old toothbrush, cocktail sticks or toothpicks with a little cotton wool wrapped around them, for cleaning in the corners.
A sponge/ chux
A clean tea towel for drying

How to do it

First, if it is appropriate, wash the toy well in a laundry tub full of hot soapy water with some disinfectant in it. Don't soak the toy though. Use the old toothbrush to get into nooks & crannies. Rinse with hot water & drain or dry with a clean tea towel. Now that it is perfectly clean, hide it!

For services who are closing over the festive seasonplease clean and prepare your loaned resources for return so that you can head off on your well deserved holiday knowing that your resources have been returned successfully.

The library will also be closed on the 19th, 20th and 21st December due to our annual stock take.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a wonderful time over the festive season and may you come back well rested in 2012.

Blessings

Erika



Continued from page 1.

I know many of you are waiting, as we are, for the release of the NT Government's Early Childhood Plan. It was promised in October but no announcements have been forthcoming. We are hopeful the Plan will provide increased opportunities and support for Government Departments and organisations to work together.

National Council 2011 Update

Early Childhood Australia in early October held its Annual Council Meeting in Tasmania. The NT Branch had strong representation at the meeting with seven members attending, the NT National Board Representative, four committee members and two staff members. This year there were two guest speakers; Rachael Hunter, the Chair of the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and Professor Collette Taylor who is developing the National Quality Standards Assessor Training for ACECQA. They were both very informative. It was very apparent that Professor Taylor has a very accurate picture of the state of the sector.

National CEO, Pam Cahir, gave her Year in Review presentation on what ECA has done at the national level since the last Council Meeting. One stand out item was the number of times ECA has been asked to comment in the media on issues related to early childhood during this period. The figures were up to 40 times in any one week. This is a measure of how important it is to have an independent voice for young children.

Each Branch gave a short presentation on what they have done through out the previous year and spoke .

about their challenges. After these presentations, we broke into small groups that included representatives from each branch, so we had the opportunity to network and ask questions.

There was a discussion about the loss of play in many early childhood settings. While each jurisdiction could name stand out services where a true play based curriculum was practiced, they could also list many programs where the concept of learning through play was not in evidence at all. The Early Years Learning Framework provides practitioners with the impetus to engage in play based learning. Early childhood educators in school settings were acknowledged to have different pressures on them and that may constrain their attempts to introduce play based learning.

There was an update on the progress made on the development of an ECA Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The NT Branch has taken the decision to wait for the National Plan and then make a decision as to what we can do in this regard.

Our continued contribution to the National RAP was acknowledged by the President Margaret Young. Council is an opportunity for professional development as you sit at a table with over forty people from all aspects of the early childhood education and care sector. You gain a deeper understanding of the National picture but at the same time know your voice will be listened to too. Rare opportunities!

I hope you all have a wonderful break over Christmas and from all at the Northern Territory Branch we wish you peace and happiness.

Maree Toll

Guess who's coming to town? Not in December but in February - Catharine Hydon

So please set aside Saturday 25th February 2012, because Catharine is presenting a workshop in Darwin.

Speaking up for quality: ethical advocacy in changing times.

Quality early childhood practice is not a secret - it must increasingly be articulated to those with whom we work; colleagues, families and communities. It relies on educators understanding of contemporary theory & practice evidence, strong relationships with children & their families & the courage to stand up and be counted.

As part of the National Quality Standard, the assessment process will require educators to discuss their curriculum decisions in ways that demonstrate ethical thinking, make the links to frameworks understood and children's learning visible. For many of us the prospect is daunting and the words don't come easily. This workshop will demonstrate how we can become better advocates for our own practice and offer strategies to enable educators to become effective advocates for what we do.

Catharine is a dynamic presenter who has much to offer us. She has her Masters of Education (Early Childhood Education). She has just finished a six year term on the ECA National Board. As an independent early childhood consultant Catharine supports quality practice and innovation in early childhood service provision.



Date: Saturday 25th February 2012 Times: 9.00 - 3.00 Place: TBA

Dear ECA Members and Friends,

MEDIA RELEASE

MONDAY 21st November 2011

Childcare reforms too important to delay

Early Childhood Australia said today that despite the campaign targeted at parents by some childcare services, the early childhood education and care reforms is affordable and services have known about them for well over two years.

ECA chief executive officer Pam Cahir said that many services are already meeting the standards and are still offering affordable, high quality early childhood education and care.

“Many services are already meeting the standards and other operators such as Goodstart, are now confident the reforms would only cost around \$3 to \$5 per day.

Goodstart, the organisation that took over the 670 ABC long day care services has said that the average cost of these initial reforms will be between \$3 to \$5 a day for most services, and for a very few services fees will rise by \$6 per day.

“After the Child Care rebate, which is not means tested, the majority of families using childcare will get 50 per cent of any fee increase back.

“This will mean a real cost of between \$1.50 to \$3 per day for a great number of families.

Ms Chair said it was troubling to see a scare campaign being waged against the reforms by people who are calling them rushed and ill considered.

“The reality is that these reforms have been negotiated at length by all levels of Government over the last 12 to 18 months. COAG agreed to the reforms in 2009 and services have been widely consulted and kept well informed on progress.

“Services need to stop trying to frighten parents, and start working with them to ensure that children get the best possible care and education possible”.

Ms Chair said costs could increase as a result of the reforms, but the Child Care rebate, which pays 50 per cent of out of pocket expenses for childcare up to \$7500 per child, is available to the majority of parents.

For more information contact:

Pam Chair, 0407008524

Claire Johnston, 0434489533



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

ACECQA is a national entity, which will oversee important changes to early childhood education and care and school age care in Australia.

Education and care plays a vital role in the lives of Australian children and their families and we want the best possible outcomes for our children.

ACECQA is the new national body ensuring early childhood education and care across Australia is high quality.

On 1 January 2012, the 'National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care' begins. It is being introduced across Australia to help our children have the best possible start.

The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) can be contacted at:

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Address: Level 15, 255 Elizabeth Street, Sydney, NSW, 2000

Postal Address: PO Box A292, Sydney, NSW 2000

Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au

Phone: 1800 181 088

Media only: 0477 301 274



Australian Children's
Education & Care
Quality Authority

Northern Territory
Quality Education and Care NT
Department of Education and Training
Website: www.det.nt.gov.au
E-mail: qualityecnt.det@nt.gov.au
GPO Box 4821
Darwin NT
Contact: 08 89993561 (ph) or 08 89995677 (fax)



to our new
2011 - 2012
Committee

National Board Representative—Alison Breheny

President—Sarah Lloyd

Vice President—Belinda Downey

Secretary—Lavinia Mills

Treasurer—Heather Havens

General Committee Member—Leta Buckley

General Committee Member—Nina Levin

General Committee Member—Tania Sellers

General Committee Member—Deb Gleeson



to our outgoing
Committee

General Committee Members

Jaya Srinivas

Tanya Wotton

Peta Romeyn

*We appreciate the time & effort you
put into ECA NT*