



# 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?

## March 2011

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1 Lymphoedema Awareness Month	2	3	4	5	6
7 World Glaucoma Week	8 International Women's Day	9 Ash Wednesday	10 Childrens Vision Day	11	12	13
14 Coeliac Awareness Week	15	16 Harmony Day Malak NT 9am-12pm	17 St Patricks Day Ireland	18	19	20 Purim Jewish
21 Harmony Day Australia	22	23	24	25 Greek Independence Day	26	27
28	29	30	31			APRIL Autism awareness month



# Newsletter



### Managers Report

### Dear ECA Members and Friends,

What an exciting year this is going to be! I hope you have all started the year refreshed and full of energy.

Within this edition, we have the dates for the Regulation Consultations. These Regulations are going to be the 'new' licencing standards. So come along and have your say; this is the time when you can have some influence! [See page 5 ]

If you ever doubt how important you are in children's lives, turn to page 4 of this edition and read the accompanying story. It is a wonderful example of how important it is for a child to feel like he/she belongs. You are literally helping to sculpt a child's brain and thus his ability to function well as a member of our community.

Also released recently were the dates and places for the EYLF Professional Learning Program Workshops. In the NT there will be workshops in Alice Springs and in Darwin.

The EYLF Professional Learning Workshops are full-day workshops (9:30am – 4:00pm). While Workshops will be adapted to suit the needs of participants and the style of facilitators, they will include some common components. Film Vignettes will provide a vehicle for interpreting children's learning and a Learning Circle model will guide questioning and collaborative reflection. For additional information go to:

[www.eylplp.org.au](http://www.eylplp.org.au)

Participants at the workshops will receive copies of the six Early Childhood Australia EYLF publications listed below, the *Thinking about practice: Working with the EYLF* by Jenni Connor, the *Belonging, Being and Becoming. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* and the ECA Code of Ethics. The total value of these resources is \$90. Participants will also be given state/territory specific information about government and other ongoing support for the implementation of the EYLF that is available locally.

And finally our Branch is looking for someone to join our team as an Inclusion Support Facilitator. We require someone with excellent people skills, a passion for inclusion and an ability to be reflective about their own practice as well as the ability to coach others in this vital skill. We have a great team, who enjoy their work and are supportive of each other.

We have included our complaints policy with this newsletter. We strive to deliver a quality service to our members and the childcare sector. If you are not satisfied with our service please do not hesitate to contact us. We cannot improve if we do not know what you need. So please feel free to use the enclosed form if you would like to. We look at complaints as one part of our own quality improvement practices.

MAREE TOLL

## Dear ECA Members and Friends,

BY MORAG BELL

### KidsMatter Early Childhood Update

KidsMatter Early Childhood (KMEC) is the first national mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention initiative specifically developed for early childhood services and is being piloted nationally in over 100 preschools and long day care centres throughout 2010 & 2011.

#### Where are we up to in the pilot?

While KMEC pilot services are still busily working on **Component 2: Developing children's social & emotional skills**, professional Learning for **Component 3: Working with parents & carers** is now also under way. Component 3 is made up of three target areas: *collaborative partnerships with families, connecting families, and supporting parenting*. Each of these target areas were developed from the early childhood mental health literature and contribute towards working effectively with parents and carers in order to support children's mental health and wellbeing. The following diagram shows some examples of how collaborative partnerships with families can be developed and supported.



#### National Early Childhood Reform Agenda

Challenging but exciting times are ahead as Commonwealth and State Governments work with expert policy groups and key stakeholders to continue the development and implementation of the Early Childhood Reform Agenda. State and Territory Governments are building on the existing system as we work towards providing 15 hours of preschool education per week with a qualified early childhood teacher for all four-year-old children. The National Quality Standard is currently being piloted and will result in a national streamlined, regulatory, accreditation and quality assurance system for preschool and childcare. An integral part of the Quality Standard is the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF provides opportunity to reflect and improve current practice and provision of early childhood experiences for children across Australia. The Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Program (EYLF PLP) will take place in 2010 – 2011 and will provide ongoing professional support to services as they engage in the EYLF implementation process. For more information you can visit [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfplp](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfplp). The EYLF Professional Learning Project is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and has been developed by Early Childhood Australia. If you have any questions about KidsMatter Early Childhood please visit our new website at <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/ec/> or email/call me at [mbell@earlychildhood.org.au](mailto:mbell@earlychildhood.org.au) or 0448 408 444

#### 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,

### Reflective Practice and Inclusion

BY GLORIA HACKETT

Child Australia has joined up in partnership with Semann & Slattery to deliver this Reflective Practice and Inclusion Project with funding from DEEWR. The project is aimed to ascertain understandings, practices and policies around reflective practice, difference, diversity and inclusion. Each participant was given the choice to investigate areas of diversity and difference that are of personal interest to each of us, which will in turn enhance our understandings of the processes and significance of Action Research and Reflective Practice. The reason I decided to do this project was that I felt there wasn't enough awareness on children's mental health and wellbeing needs. So the focus of my research is: How can Early Childhood and Middle Childhood Professionals be better supported to gain a deeper understanding of what they require in order to identify, nurture and more successfully respond to children's mental health and wellbeing needs? As an Inclusion Support Facilitator and an employee of Early Childhood Australia Northern Territory, I work directly with staff in child care services to provide practical advice and facilitate access to a range of supports, designed to strengthen the services abilities to create quality care environments inclusive of all children. These supports include but are not limited to providing onsite assistance by developing Service Support Plans and facilitating access to specialist equipment, a General Resources Library, professional support, funding through Flexible Support Funding or Inclusion Support Subsidy and Bicultural Support. When the invitation went out in our community, I was very interested in being part of this creative research project. The reason I have chosen the question above in this research is to identify strategies that improve quality practice so that Educators will have a greater awareness &&

and understanding of how to best support children with mental health concerns.

The group have already attended three workshops with the final workshop being held in June 2011. Cristyn Davies from Semann & Slattery, and Associate Professor Kerry Robinson from the University of Western Sydney are leading and facilitating the project. I have found this project to be very interesting and I have thoroughly enjoyed the research involved in the project. My work has involved: putting a questionnaire together after researching how important it is for primary educators to build intimate relationships with the children in their care and defining what type of attachment we have with each of our children. This enables us to help children that aren't in secure attachments to move confidently to secure attachments. Children's developing brains need relationships with significant educators early in life so they can then go on to develop attachments later in life.

I have had positive responses from the services who I have asked to be part of this project. The 30-40minute questionnaire covers topics relating to educators understanding of attachment theory, their capacity for reflection, being emotionally available and building relationships with children and their families. I have used the Australian Early Developmental Index (AEDI) results to support my decision to choose child care services in different communities around Darwin and Palmerston. If your service would be interested in being part of this research, I would be delighted to hear from you. I look forward to sharing the end product with you around the middle of the year. The findings of this project will be written up and presented as a series of short plays at the 2011 WA Early Childhood Education and Care Conference on the 18th and 19th June 2011 and at a location in Darwin. (venue and date TBA). These short plays will be used as a key resource for training and critical reflection around inclusion, diversity and difference within the children's services sector.

# 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:  
robyn.blake@ecant.org.au

Opening Hours:  
Monday—Friday  
8.30am—4.30pm

We value your patronage and strive to be of service to you.

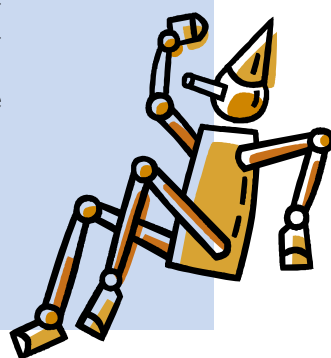
Library resources and toys are provided for the benefit of all users. To maximize these benefits, the Northern Territory Children's Resource Library asks that library members treat all library resources with care.

As this Library is not funded for breakages and lost & damaged item replacement, members are responsible and accountable for lost or damaged resources.

Proper care of books, magazines, audiotapes, CDs, videotapes, DVDs and toys begins in the library and extends to home and car use.

The following guidelines are in place so that the library can offer a wide variety of materials, in good condition, to the child care community.

- \* If you need to make notes, use a separate paper or post-it. Please don't write in the library books or allow children to write in them.
- \* Put outside toys and equipment in areas that won't be affected by wind or rain.
- \* Teach children to handle books and toys carefully; even very young children can handle pages/toys gently
- \* Put books and toys in a safe place where they will not be damaged when they are not in use.
- \* Be careful around food and drink which can cause stains and water damage.
- \* Toys should be cleaned before they are returned to the Library



Dear ECA Members and Friends,

## 10 Essential Communication Strategies for Positive Behaviours Support for children on the Autism Spectrum (ASD)

### Avoid:

- ◆ Telling the child what NOT to do.
  - ◆ Instructions and rules should always be phrased in the positive.
  - ◆ Assuming the child has understood what you have said just because he can recite verbatim what you said.
  - ◆ Verbal overload - No matter how verbal a child appears
  - ◆ Nicknames, idioms and double meanings - Mean what you say
  - ◆ Getting angry.
  - \* Most behaviours are a form of communication
  - \* These are usually frustration and/or confusion
  - ◆ Gather information about what happens before and after the behaviour that you want to change
  - ◆ Never assume the child has behaved in a particular way to upset you.
  - \* He cannot take your perspective.
  - \* He only knows what he is feeling
  - ◆ Thinking that the child is rude
  - \* He simply doesn't understand or interpret body language or facial expressions
  - ◆ Telling the child what to do in abstract terms such as: Don't be rude or Go and play
  - ◆ Underestimating links between communication and behaviour.
  - \* Improved communication skills are likely to improve behaviour.
  - ◆ Avoid being misled by the child's strengths in one area and assuming that the child is as easily capable in others.
- Don't Forget that:**
- \* Social activities involve proximity and this may cause sensory overload.
  - \* ASD children don't derive the same pleasure from social activities and events as we do. You may have to accept partial participation.

<http://www.suelarkey.com/>

## Early Years Learning Framework Professional Learning Workshops

21st May 2011

Saturday

Darwin

4th June 2011

Saturday

Alice Springs

26th June 2011

Monday

Darwin

The Workshops are designed for educators who have responsibility for the implementation of the EYLF in various settings (family day care, long day care, preschool and four year old programs in primary school). Each workshop will accommodate a maximum of 100 participants.

For additional information go to:

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylfplp>

## Dear ECA Members and Friends,

*"A Romanian Story"*

*This is a story for everyone who ever loved a child. This is a story for every educator, every parent and every caregiver. This is your story and my story. We write on the souls of every child we touch. They may not remember our faces but the evidence of our kindness is written on their souls.*

**Romania, in the middle of the last century, was an impoverished country where families could not afford to have children because they were too poor to keep food on the table.**

The Czar of Romania at that time was concerned that without a population, one day there would be no more Romania. He decided he would pay a stipend to each woman within child bearing age for each child that she had. He requested that these women have five children.

The women of Romania were thrilled because now they could have the children they always wanted. They immediately began having children. Everything went great for a while but then one day the Czar was overthrown and a new leader took his place. The new Czar didn't want to spend the money in his treasury on the stipends so he stopped them.

Families were unable to feed their children so it became necessary to send them to orphanages. Most orphanages did not take older children so it was the infants and toddlers that were sent. The structure of the orphanages in Romania is the same – a central tower with four wings, three stories high and room for forty children on each wing. To each wing there was assigned a single caretaker. Since there was no way one person could care effectively for forty babies, there was a rule that severely limited caretaker interaction with children. Caretakers were told to prop bottles, change diapers only when necessary and limit both verbal interaction and physical contact. This rule applied to everyone – caretakers, orphanage administrators and custodians.

No interaction creates failure to thrive. The children become lethargic and therefore "are no trouble".

There was a US researcher whose research focus was the effects of early deprivation on the structure and capacity of the developing brain. The Romanian orphans became subjects of his research when they were adopted and brought to the US. He followed their lives through childhood and into adulthood. What he found was disturbing. Most of these children had a tough time overcoming the impact of early deprivation. They struggled in school. As adults, they were socially impaired – they had a difficult time working with colleagues and a difficult time with intimate relationships. They were often loners. They were often goal orientated. Basically, they struggled to be functioning members of society. Many times they ended up in local prisons or in juvenile homes. However, occasionally he would find a subject who seemed to have fared better – they were able to function well as members of society. He concluded that these individuals must have been the more attractive or more persistent children, who despite the rules, were able to solicit enough attention to forge critical neurological wiring in their early development.

With the advancements of technology in the 1980's, the researcher was able to enlarge his research project to include PET scans and functional MRI's. He hired research assistants to help collect and organise the data. One day, when one of the assistants was filing away scans and follow-up studies, she noticed that all the scans and follow-up studies that showed a more positive outcome came from subjects who had come from the same orphanage – same floor – same wing. With this information, the researcher now realised that his initial conclusions had been wrong. There had to be more to the story. He travelled to Romania to unlock the mystery. What he found was that in this orphanage, on this floor, on this wing, was a custodian who every night when she finished her work, hung up her broom and rocked every child on that wing. When he found the women, she fell on her knees in tears and said, "I never thought I did enough." When asked what she had done, she said, "I picked them up, I told them they were beautiful, I rocked them, I sang them a song, I kissed them goodnight and tucked them into bed. Then I picked up another child and did the same."

As told by Dr Pam Schiller

"Everybody Belongs"



**Harmony Day Celebration**  
**Welcomes You**

**Where: Malak Community Hall  
 Malak Crescent  
 Malak**

**Date: Wednesday 16th March 2011  
 Time: 9am-12am**

**Free Sausage Sizzle, face painting,  
 art activities, dress-ups,  
 and much more!**

**For children birth to 5 years old**

*"It's about community participation,  
 inclusiveness, respect and a sense of  
 belonging for everyone"*

**For catering purposes, please advise if you are bringing a group**

**For additional information phone  
 Early Childhood Australia NT—Ph: 8986 7142**

"Everybody Belongs"



### National Quality Framework Consultations

It is hoped that the sessions will stimulate discussion and feedback on the draft regulations and the reforms more broadly, to ensure the regulations work in a practical way.

NORTHERN TERRITORY			
DATE	TIME	LOCATION	VENUE
Tuesday 22nd March 2011	9.00am-12.00pm	Darwin	Convention Centre
Wednesday 23rd March 2011	8.30am-11.00am	Alice Springs	Crowne Plaza
	12.30pm-2.30pm	Alice Springs	Crowne Plaza
Thursday 24th March 2011	10.00am-12.00pm	Katherine	Knotts Crossing R/T
	5.00pm—7.00pm	Palmerston	Quest Palmerston
Friday 25th March 2011	8.30am-11.30am	Darwin	Convention Centre

[http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy Agenda/Pages/DraftNQFRegDocs.aspx](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy%20Agenda/Pages/DraftNQFRegDocs.aspx)

This is an open event where everyone is welcome