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www.earlychildhood.org.au

From the president

Dear Early Childhood Australia Members and Friends,

As I write this we are waiting to find out the result of the federal election and the potential 'hung parliament'. As you read it the result may all be clear but what will it mean for Early Childhood? As you know the National Office of ECA worked hard to highlight what they felt were important issues for children and families. They encouraged people to present these to the different parties via the e-card and they asked each party to respond with detailed policies about their intent. If you sent an e-card you will know that some responses included more detail than others! Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could gather the best of the policies and ideas and move Australia forward with these!

Those of us that work with young children are familiar with uncertainty in our day. We often set out to do "this that and the other" (in our heads and perhaps in our written work) and then the children arrive with their own ideas and the plans change. We are good at being flexible, thinking on our feet, going with the flow and changing plans on the run. Most of us enjoy this aspect of our work and have personalities that manage our changing days well. In fact we might find a predictable work environment a bit boring. Yet constant change, uncertainty and the feeling of 'one step forward two steps backwards' can wear us all down at times, particularly if we feel we have no control over the changes. Queensland early childhood professionals are currently facing many changes in curriculums, accreditation systems, funding models, management structures, Kindy enrolment priorities, regulatory requirements and responsibilities. I have seen signs of 'stress' amongst professionals working in the early childhood area in emails, meetings and conversations. There has been confusion about next years Kindy funding, anxiety about the future for services, frustration in trying to understand and implement a new curriculum and uncertainty about what the 'changes' will mean in practice. At

the same time everyone is busy with their day to day work and trying to fit this in to a manageable and reasonable percentage of their family and personal life.

Members of the Qld branch of ECA have been responding to questions, attending meetings, networking with colleagues and working on committees and reference groups as we highlight what these changes might mean to services; advocate for the best options for children, families and staff and gather as much information to share as we can. PD sessions, other professional organisations, The Office of Early Childhood Education and Care newsletter, C&K road show and various web sites such as ECA webwatch are some of the ways that we are all receiving information.

As we wait to see what will happen with our Federal Government and what this means for the current Quality Reform Agenda I hope that your work with, and for children and families will continue to remain positive and joyful. I would love to send everyone a voucher so they could find time to meet with a colleague or two for some 'time out' (perhaps some chocolate cake) and mutual support. We are all wondering what the future holds for early childhood so contact with early childhood friends and colleagues may offer that much needed understanding and an essential smile or two. In the Toowoomba area we are hoping to do this on September 13th. It would be wonderful to hear that EC professionals have gathered to network, support each other and socialize throughout the state.



Jo Darbyshire



Welcome from the New Editor

Greetings to the early childhood community of Queensland. My name is Susanne Garvis and I am an early childhood lecturer in the Griffith University. Based at the Gold Coast campus, I am passionate about promoting the early years. I look forward to working with you as I take on the role of editor for Turn it Up.

At Griffith University we are pleased to have launched the new Early Childhood Education Centre. The Early Childhood Education Centre strives to continue current work in the field related to early childhood education. The Centre consists of academics with specialist

knowledge and interest in improving the quality of early year's education.

The Centre is currently working with the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to evaluate the implementation of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. This Framework has been designed to advance all children's learning and development from birth to 8 years by supporting all early childhood professionals to work together and with families to support all children to achieve the learning and development outcomes.



News about Government Initiatives

"My Time. Our Place": Draft School Age Care Framework Released

It is an exciting time for the school age care sector in Australia. Governments are developing a national school age care framework. Titled "My Time, Our Place" the framework articulates outcomes for children attending a quality school age care service and suggests the type of experiences that are offered to achieve these outcomes. The framework for school age care will articulate the work of the school age care educator and

the value of that work in the community. The draft framework is now released for reading and reflection. DEEWR will be conducting consultations on the document later in the year. Please use this link to get to the document on the National Out Of School Hours Services Association website: http://www.netoosh.org.au/noshsa/current_issues.htm

Voices from Future Early Childhood Teachers

Across the state, many pre-service teachers are currently enrolled in early childhood education programs. In this issue, we hear from two students currently studying teacher education. Both students are currently enrolled in the new Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Education at Griffith University.

Virginia Ward

(Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Education Student, Griffith University)

As I excitedly anticipate the November launch of my midlife career, I find myself reflecting on where I am and where I see myself heading. My choice to embark on a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education in my forties, with the associated challenges and changes that come from giving up full-time employment to study full-time for a year has been seen as crazy by many of my friends! Actually, tentatively making the decision to follow my instinct has proven to be a relief – something like the reticence you feel before diving into a cold pool on a lovely hot day and then realising how good it feels that you're in! Both my maternal grandmother and my mother were early childhood teachers, so I guess my joining the line-up was inevitable! Also, my first career was in speech pathology, and my most valued calling has been parenting. I love children and am passionate about communication and relationships, authentic and playful learning experiences, the value of community and the individuals within it. This year I have been affirmed in my conviction that my passionate beliefs and values sit comfortably with the education of young children. Social constructivist and critical theories in particular resonate with my view of the world.

My university education this year has been fabulous! I have loved every minute of it and have been especially encouraged by the focus on children as "whole" and learning as integrated and meaningful. One of the aspects I found most challenging in speech pathology was focussing almost exclusively on a child's communication skills, often in an isolated or artificial context. Not surprisingly, my greatest challenge (and reward) has been in training myself to focus on the whole child and what he/she CAN do, rather than slipping into the familiar medical model that dominates the therapies and sees deficits first in order to remediate. This is an aspect of being a teacher that really appeals to me, although I do recognise that my skills in identifying children who are experiencing communication and learning challenges will be valuable. This year I have also observed that there is a heartening focus in education on creating and supporting communities of learning, where every stakeholder knows they are valued; incorporating the "real-world" with

school-based learning. How exciting!

I am thrilled to be becoming an early childhood teacher and look forward to spending the remainder of my working life inspiring and challenging young people and myself to explore more, make new discoveries and link them to what is already known. I feel the joy of being a child again, engaged in an in depth investigation – loving where it is now, and embracing the excited anticipation of not knowing exactly where it will lead...

Kim Mclean

(Graduate Diploma of Early Childhood Education Student, Griffith University)

My name is Kim Mclean and I am enrolled in the Graduate Diploma of Early childhood Education at Griffith University on the Gold Coast. I have been asked to write about my experiences in the course to date.

Having entered the course as a mature age student and the single mum of a gorgeous four year old, I can honestly say that to date it has been an intense but extremely rewarding experience. The course has provided me with a sound knowledge and understanding of theory and practice to guide me in my future teaching career. I have particularly enjoyed witnessing the dedication and passion that true Early Childhood Educators bring to their profession. Their commitment to enriching the lives of all children and providing quality care has been a constant reminder of the huge responsibility I have as a future teacher. The Queensland Department of Education and Training's slogan is Make a difference. Teach. The graduate Diploma has provided me with this opportunity. It has taught me that an important part of being an effective teacher is a dedication to being a lifelong learner. This has been proven through the wealth of knowledge I have gained from participating in wider professional experience workshops and conferences.

I can't wait for the opportunity to teach next year and would encourage all those thinking about a career in Early Childhood to jump in and do it!



Academicus for Young Gifted Children

Gifted education in Australia is a growing field, emerging as a key focus within state educational policy. Gifted and talented students are defined as those who have outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance and who require differentiated educational programs. Within Queensland, gifted education has emerged as a key prerogative directed by the Gifted Framework (2004), with guidelines for students, teachers, parents and principals. It provides key identification strategies for selection of these students. It is hoped through explicit policy, the quality of education for students with gifts and talents will improve.

Identifying young gifted children in classrooms can be difficult for teachers. When Gagne's (1993) model of development is applied, 15% of students within every classroom are gifted. This would suggest that up to 90,000 students in Queensland classrooms may be gifted. Given the relatively low numbers of children who are identified as gifted,

there is a significant number of students with gifts and talents who remain unidentified within the Queensland system.

To help provide enrichment programs for young gifted children, 'Academicus' will be running at Griffith University (Gold Coast) during the September schools holidays. Programs will be run by BRAINways Education (<http://www.brainways.com.au/academicus.html>), and include:

- The Mathematics of Music
- Imagination Theatre
- Creative Writing: The Journey
- The Science of Toys
- Games Through History and Cultures
- Philosopher's Play

For further information regarding Academicus, please contact Dr Mirella Olivier on 0433 995 067.



Professional Development

QECSN held its first gathering event on Thursday 5th August at C&K Mt Gravatt Kindergarten. The Director Melindi Robertson shared her knowledge and insight in developing the natural play environment and the children's response to the natural setting. Thanks Melindi for offering your centre for a meeting and allowing us to view your work. I encourage others to do the same.

The next major event will be held at C&K Redlands Kindergarten on Saturday 18th September. The Director Margaret Sear was recently presented with a leadership award for her work in creating a sustainable environment. Margaret and Suallyn Mitchelmore will start the day with the workshop - An Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Program in Action. Dr Lyndal O'Gorman from QUT will follow this with her presentation - The Arts and Education for Sustainability.

For a number of years Fleur Carter from Live Better Greener, has been involved in ecological auditing centres, including C&K Redlands. Fleur's presentation Creating Sustainable Early Childhood Environments through Ecological Auditing is not to be missed. The Redland Indigiscapes Indigenous Planting to Attract Wildlife is another presentation will inspire and give ideas to add to your environment. The last presentation Sharing Experiences of the Forest Kindergartens in Denmark by Joanne Sørensen is thought provoking and will give you insight into what is happening overseas. Joanne has lots of photographs to support her presentation. You will be pleased to know that QECSN is now on face book and twitter - check us out. If you would like further information, please contact qecsn@earlychildhood.org.au

