

Welcome to our first branch newsletter for 2010 and a special welcome to new members.

Remember this is your newsletter and we welcome articles about projects you are undertaking, conferences you attend and reviews of new books.

This year the South Australian Branch of Early Childhood Australia is hosting the ECA National Conference, '*Garla Bauondi*': a Karna phrase meaning 'to fuel the fire'.

ECA national conferences are a major event for people who work with, and advocate for, young children. The three themes of the conference are *The Arts, Professional Leadership* and *Inspiring Environments*.

Conference registration is now open, with early bird registration closing 31 July. For more information visit www.econference.com.au

To stay up to date, join the conference mailing list by emailing conference@earlychildhood.org.au.

As in previous years, ECA SA Branch will be offering scholarships to enable early childhood professionals who would not normally be able to attend to come to the conference. Details of these scholarships will be circulated soon.

Have your say on the new National Curriculum!

The draft national curriculum for K-10 English, mathematics, science and history was released on Monday 1 March for consultation until 23 May 2010.

The easiest way to provide feedback about this curriculum is on the website at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>. There you can

- View, read or print the draft materials
- Provide feedback on any part of the draft curriculum
- Complete an online survey by rating areas of the draft curriculum or providing comments
- Provide additional notes and written feedback online, as an attachment to the survey

Guiding children through a sexualised world

Unfortunately, this is becoming an issue of increasing concern in early childhood. Our environment is full of sexualised images and messages from all types of media: advertising, television, music videos, movies, magazines, billboards and internet sites.

Many parents, educators, health professionals and other community leaders have expressed concern that the mental health of our children is being seriously undermined by this hypersexualised environment.

From early childhood today's children, particularly girls, are getting the message that their self-worth is measured by their appearance, and that they should be thin, "hot" and sexy. This message is potentially very damaging to the development of a healthy sense of self and self esteem.

At the same time, sexualised media messages give boys a distorted and shallow view of girls and women and of their own masculinity. Children exposed to sexualised media may adopt sexual behaviours before they have the maturity to deal with the consequences. On the internet children are in danger of finding inappropriate material, meeting predatory adults, or posting private information and photos of themselves.

At the *Bratz, Britney and Bralettes* seminar, 7:30pm Thursday 13 May 2010 at Walford Anglican School for Girls, author and psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg and Julie Gale from *Kids Free 2B Kids* will talk about these issues, offering strategies for parents and caregivers. Other speakers include child psychologist Rita Princi, Professor Elizabeth Handsley and Archbishop Jeffrey Driver.

Places are limited and registration essential. To find out more, or to register, visit

<http://www.childrenandmedia.org.au>

Time Out - The AAIMHI position.

The Australian Association for Infant Mental Health (AAIMHI) has released a position statement on *time out* for children under three. The following is an overview of the paper. For more information see www.aaimhi.org

Time out involves time away from a rewarding or positive environment as a consequence of some form of misbehaviour, usually for 1 – 5 minutes. The definition used by AAIMHI for this statement is where the child is also removed from the presence of and/or interaction with the parent or carer.

Children under three cannot yet manage their own emotions and they still need a caregiver to help them do this. Many older children need help with feelings as well. When managing children's behaviour it is important to remember that behaviour is an expression of feelings and needs and that the best way for long lasting effectiveness is to understand and respond to the child's underlying problem as well as to the behaviour. This way adults can show that strong feelings can be understood and managed .[Sometimes therapy may be needed for persistent 'out of control' behaviour].

Children learn to manage feelings and behaviour with the help of a supportive adult.

Time out – AAIMHI's Position

AAIMHI concerns in relation to use of exclusionary (where the child is separated from the parent or caregiver) time out for children less than three years are:

- It does not teach constructive ways to deal with problems; instead it teaches separation as a way to deal with problems.
- It does not take into consideration the developmental capacities of young children under three. From an attachment and development-based point of view, children this age are experimenting and do not yet have the necessary skills to control impulses and emotion, i.e. their behaviour is not *misbehaviour*.
- It deliberately cuts off the child from the relationship with parent or carer so that the child feels powerless to connect with the adult; this cutting off from relationship is an intended consequence for the child's behaviour and is seen by the child as a punishment.
- It does not address the message (cause) behind the behaviour.
- It fails to recognise that young children do not learn self regulation of emotions by themselves; they need the support of a parent or carer.

Recommendations

Reinsberg (1999) lists five points to consider in responding to a child:

Is this a developmental stage?

Is this an individual or temperamental difference?

Is the environment causing the behaviour?

Does the child not know something but is ready to learn?

Does the child have unmet emotional needs?

Some practical suggestions

1. Make sure the child's environment provides for the basic needs of love, emotional and physical security, room to explore and encouragement. The emotional context should be with the parent and child in a partnership for growing and learning, not an oppositional one of controlling.
2. The parent needs to be the one in charge (in a guiding way), wiser than the young child. The child does better with a confident, kind caregiver.
3. Let young children be as much involved in helping with activities as is sensible. Show children how to do things that they can feel good about.
4. Monitor a young child's activities and emotional state. Watch for early signs of distress or difficulty and act then (divert, attend to needs, give a hug, change the activity) rather than waiting for the emotional response to develop.

5. Respond to precipitating factors such as a child's level of tiredness or excitement or family changes such as a new baby.
6. Calming routines before difficult situations are a good idea to get your child in a calm, well balanced state, e.g. a quiet game, a bath, a walk outside, a story.
7. Give young children choices where possible and within their capability.
8. Anticipate difficult situations. Think about when they happen and plan to avoid them if possible.
9. Think about the event from the child's perspective.
10. If you see an emotion rising in the child, note it and name it with them. For example: "you are getting cross I know" "I understand you would like ... but we can't because ..." Give a short reason: "We have to make sure you are (healthy, safe, kind to others etc)". "I can help you do (something else)." Or a challenge to the child of something acceptable to you: "Do you think you could ... ?"
11. If the above does not work, take the child away from the situation but keep the child with you (sometimes called 'time in'). Remain as calm as you can and consistently restate your decision. Acknowledge the child's feeling. Offer to connect with the child. "I know it is hard. Do you want a hug?"
12. Predict that this will be over soon. "I know we can calm you down. Very soon you will be fine again".

Specific resources for helping young children with behaviour and feelings.

Time In

The Circle of Security model lists a step by step process called "Time In" during which the adult helps the child "organise their feelings". In their approach, Time Out is for the adult to calm down (emotionally re-regulate) in order to be in a good state to respond to the child. See: www.circleofsecurity.com

Time-in Parenting

This book by Otto Weininger is highly recommended for helping children to learn strategies for self regulation. See: Weininger, Otto (2002). *Time-in parenting: how to teach children emotional self-control, life skills, and problem solving by lending yourself and staying connected*. Toronto: L Rinascente Books. Available in Australia from Open Leaves Books, Ph: 07 38440169.

The emotional life of the toddler

This book by Alicia Lieberman also has very helpful information about toddlers and how the way we respond to them helps them with important learning and development. It gives parents and carers a real insight into the world of the toddler and what is behind their actions and feelings.

Useful websites

<http://www.awareparenting.com/timeout.htm>

<http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu/AngelUnits/OneHour/TimeOut/TimeOutLessonA.html>

<http://www.circleofsecurity.org/publications.html>

http://www.naturalchild.org/guest/peter_haiman.html

Pam Linke

**12th Annual New Zealand
Early Childhood Research
Network Symposium**

**Thursday 6 May 2010
Christchurch, New Zealand**

9.30am - 4.30pm

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



Remember the Early Childhood Australia website

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

for the latest news in early childhood

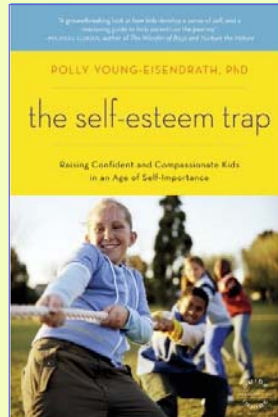
Book Review

The Self-Esteem Trap

Raising Confident and Compassionate Kids in an Age of Self-Importance.

Polly Young-Eisendrath,
2008

www.hachettebookgroup.com



“When children are repeatedly protected from life’s expectable adversities by parents who want them to be happy all the time, the children will assume that ordinary difficulties are extraordinary when they do happen.”

This is just one of the many statements that are explored in this very interesting and thought provoking book.

- Have a whole group of parents overprotected their children to life’s challenges and disappointments to the detriment of their children?
- Are all children extraordinary?
- Do we interfere too much in children’s development by interfering with problem solving and offering solutions?
- Is religion a part of development in children?
- What is the value of being ordinary?
- What is the truth about happiness and how do we get it?

The answers to these questions, according to the

author, have a huge impact on development of self esteem and resilience in children. We want children to develop into self-confident and wise adults. This book gives insight for parents with their own children and educators to reflect on their practice within their sites. I have found this book has given me great insight to my own work with children as well as understanding my own peers and their parenting skills and as a support to families that use my services.

“Wise and packed with insight, this book explodes the myths of specialness and self esteem, replacing them with solid values much more likely to lead successful children and, even more important, children who turn out to be good people.” Jean M Twenge, Phd, author of *Generation Me*.

“This is a brave book! Without blaming mothers, broken families or any of the usual suspects, Dr Polly Young-Eisendrath challenges the notion that what children need most is to grow up feeling ‘special’..... This provocative book by a wise and trusted psychotherapist and educator argues for cultivating the virtue of being ordinary. It is bound to reassure those parents who really want nothing more than to raise children who are loving and capable.” Deborah Anne Luepnitz.

This book is a great addition to your personal, staff and parent book shelves.

Dr Polly Young-Eisendrath is a Jungian analyst and psychologist. She is consultant in Leadership Development at Norwich University and Clinical Associate Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Vermont. Her highly praised books also include “The Resilient Spirit.

Jen Bais

**9th Early Childhood Intervention
Australia National Biennial Conference**

**National Convention Centre, Canberra
20-22 May 2010**

***Every day in every way: Creating
learning opportunities for every child***

<http://www.ecia2010.com.au/>

 **2010**
Early Childhood Education
Conference

Together we grow—building partnerships

**4-5 June 2010
Caulfield Racecourse
Melbourne, Victoria**

<http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/>