

SA National Vice Presidents Report

The first National Executive meeting for 2005 was held in Canberra on 11 & 12 February. This was the first meeting of the executive since the National Council in October last year, so there was a full agenda and plenty to discuss. The following report provides a summary of those discussions and decisions that have an impact on, or potentially of interest to the SA branch.

Parent Information Website

ECA was disappointed to learn recently that it had not won the tender from the Australian Government to develop the Parent Information Website. ECA had joined forces with Child and Youth Health and EdNA in developing a submission and through the tender process has strengthened their links with these organisations and developed the skills and knowledge to improve the ECA website.

ECA congratulates the Raising Children Network Consortium (Smart Population Foundation, the Centre for Community Child Health and the Victorian Parenting Centre). The website will be populated with in-depth information and tools for those caring for children aged 0 to 8 years of age, and should be available by the end of the year.

Issues for children

Participants at the 2004 National Council spent some time exploring the public stand ECA is prepared to take on the issues facing children. The context for that discussion was:

- The 2004 Federal Election
- Thinking about ECA's strategic direction for the next three years
- The lack of progress on such issues as child:staff ratios, proper wages and conditions for people working child care and a recognition of the need for early childhood leadership in services and schools. Indeed the lack of progress on almost all of the issues included in ECA's Agenda for Children
- The knowledge that these issues do not effect the voting patterns of the majority of families
- The knowledge that until families see these issues as urgent there will be little real political

will to change them;

- The knowledge that most political movements evolve because of the desire to alleviate pain or injustice or potential pain.
- The knowledge that current situation is not good enough for children.

A draft paper was considered by the executive, with suggested additions considered. The next version of the paper will be sent to branches for their consideration and will become a major advocacy tool as ECA confronts its position on unacceptable conditions for young children.

Code of Ethics

A preliminary literature review has been completed and a report has been posted on the website (www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au).

National Committees

Early Childhood Australia, and therefore all its members, are represented on a number of national committees and the most recent reports included:

- National Education Forum has been exploring the work of the National Institute for Quality Teaching and School Leadership.
- National Children's Services Forum met with the new Minister for Families and Community Services, Senator Kay Patterson and Department representatives about her vision for children's services and the child care support program.
- National Child Care Advisory Committee – re-draft of resource book is available on their website for comment.
- Literacy Review Reference Group. The Minister for Employment, Education and Training, Dr Brendan Nelson has initiated an Inquiry into the teaching of literacy. The terms of reference and information about the Inquiry is available at www.dest.gov.au/schools/literacyinquiry. ECA is currently developing a submission.
- National Immunisation Council - ECA will support the new immunisation guidelines.

Early Childhood News

Police Checks for Student Teachers

On 21 January 2004 the Minister for Employment, Training and Further Education published a media release announcing that student teachers must undergo a national police check before they will be allowed to teach in South Australian schools. This initiative is part of the Rann Government's *Keeping Them Safe* child protection reforms.

In 2004 Parliament passed reforms that require that all State government teachers pass a police check this year.

The Minister is also proposing that legislation be passed requiring Out of School Hours Care staff are to pass police checks.

Awards for Literacy and Numeracy Outcomes

The Minister's Awards for Outstanding Contribution to Improving Literacy and/or Numeracy 2005 offers up to 5 awards of \$10,000 each for individuals who have made a major contribution to literacy and/or numeracy learning outcomes. The Awards provide recipients with the recognition and support that will allow them to continue and/or enhance their work. Award recipients will be announced during National Literacy and Numeracy Week 29 August to 4 September 2005.

For more information visit: www.literacyandnumeracyweek.gov.au through the *Minister's Awards* tab located on the left hand side of the home page.

Nominations close at **5pm on 28 April 2005**.

Surfing the Web

Tsunami Education Package

DECS staff have been working with volunteer teachers, associations, World Vision and other international aid agencies to prepare curriculum and support materials and guidelines to assist all sites in relation to the Asian Tsunami disaster.

The package can be downloaded from the address below:

→ <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/deptinit/pages/default/tsunami/>

Slip! Slop! Slap!

The Cancer Council of South Australia features a "School Zone" on their web site. Check it out for information about their Early Childhood Skin Protection Program and the latest issue of their Early Childhood newsletter.

→ <http://www.cancersa.org.au/>

Arguments for qualified staff

→ <http://nieer.org/resources/factsheets/5.pdf>

Trying to balance our busy lives based on our values..

→ <http://www.ccl.org/CCLCommerce/news/newsletters/enewsletter/2005/JANchoo>

Parent programs and student outcomes

Interesting study of the effectiveness of a comprehensive parent program on student learning outcomes

→ <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/content/projects/fine/resources/research/redding.pdf>

Encouraging children to read books

→ <http://www.readingrockets.org/article.php?ID=544>

Building Better Communities for Children

The latest issue of the Building Better Communities for Children Newsletter

provides an update on community implementation of the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) in 2004, the release of the 2004 results, the AEDI validation study and new publications and is available at

→ http://www.rch.org.au/australianedi/pub.cfm?doc_id=7707

The South Australian National Investment for the Early Years committee (NIFTEY)

The South Australian National Investment for the Early Years committee (NIFTEY (SA)) is seeking nominations for the 2005 awards.

The 2005 awards nomination brochure and further information is available on the website. Please circulate to other organisations

→ <http://niftey.cyh.com/webpages/stategroups/sa/saframe.htm>

Mental Health Council of Australia - March Newsletter

The MHCA March newsletter is now available online at

→ <http://www.mhca.com.au/Public/Newsletters/default.html>



Conferences and Events

ECA National Conference

Early Childhood Australia Inc. will hold its Biennial Conference 2005 "Kaleidoscope - Changing Images of Childhood" in Brisbane at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, 28 September to 1 October 2005. To register your interest visit the conference website at <http://www.eca2005.com/>, or for more information contact the Conference Secretariat:

Telephone (07) 3368 2644
Facsimile (07) 3369 3731
E-mail eca2005@ccm.com.au

Our Children The Future 4: Challenging Realities

Rights, Relationships, Research
16 - 18 June 2005, Adelaide Convention Centre

Keynote Speakers

- Challenging Realities Dr Peter Moss, UK
- Rights Dr. Priscilla Clarke OAM, Aust
- Relationships Professor Ferre Laevers, Belgium
- Research Professor Philip Gammage, Aust & UK
- Action & Reaction Louise Bywaters, SA

For more information visit the conference website at <http://www.octf.sa.edu.au/> or contact the OCTF office:
Phone: (08) 8226 0044, Fax: (08) 8410 2406
Email octf@saugov.sa.gov.au

Nurturing Thinkers

This conference will bring together a diverse range of professionals, all working for young children and their families, to provoke discussion around this premise from a multitude of perspectives.

The key issues are;

- how do we nurture thinkers, both from the child's & adults' perspectives?
- what is management's role?
- how does licensing and accreditation support creative programs?

The target audience for this inaugural conference will be a combination of the following;

- Owners, Managers, Licensees and Directors of early childhood services
- Staff of early childhood services
- Professionals working with children's services
- Key stakeholders from the community services sector
- Trade service providers

For more information visit <http://www.nurturingthinkers.com/> or contact: enquiries@nurturingthinkers.com or (02) 6299 2533. All registrations will close Friday March 25, 2005

ECA SA Branch Planning Day 2005

On Wednesday, 19 January 2005 the ECA Executive Committee met for the ECA Planning Day 2005. The Planning Day is an opportunity for the Committee to review the achievement of the last year, to find focus for the new year, and to evaluate and update the Strategic and Operational Plans.

In 2005 the ECA SA Branch will continue act as a "voice for young children" by focusing on"

- Building alliances with like-organisations to increase outcomes and achievements
- Continuing to have active participation in conferences, forums, seminars and meetings

- Providing timely and accurate information to members through a range of media, including newsletters and the ECA website.
- Continuing to provide professional development opportunities for early childhood educators
- Continuing to contribute to early childhood research through the presentation of scholarships
- Reviewing and contributing to early childhood enquiries and reviews at both national and state levels

Children's Services Mailing List

CSNews Needs More Subscribers!

The newspaper will be free of charge and will be distributed by email each week. We have an outstanding editor and a number of excellent journalists but we shall also be carrying articles from industry leaders throughout Australia.

The newspaper can be provided free of charge because we will be sponsored by a major Australian company but that company requires that we have at least 5,000 subscribers before we commence and we currently have just under 50% of that target. If you know of people who have an interest in this area, please forward them this information and have them provide us their email address then we will more quickly reach our

target. The email address can be their service's address or a staff member's address or any email address at all as long as the person receiving the newspaper passes it on to the service. All you need do is have them send an email to

office@csnews.com.au

Early Childhood Australia supports and endorses CSNews because a free, quality, national children's services newspaper, delivered by email, will create a national network of children's services centered on news and information and this can only strengthen the sector as it strives to meet the needs of all children and families.

Making a Difference

On the 16th October ECA-South Australian Branch presented a half day conference for Early Childhood Professionals. The focus of the conference was Dr Pam Winter's recent research and we were encouraged to reflect on the ways we as early childhood educators can critically evaluate our practices and improve them.

Pam challenged us with her thought provoking presentation, which focused on the relationships and ensuring our active involvement in children's learning. Participants commented that they found Pam's research had inspired them and renewed their enthusiasm to create best practices.

Participants then had the opportunity to attend one of seven workshops which had a range of focuses including arts, settling infants into care, secure attachments, play in the junior primary setting and programming in OSHC. The core concept though running through all workshops was the need for active engagement of all children.

This half day conference was a valuable opportunity for early childhood professionals working in a range of contexts to share and discover new approaches and responses to current research findings.



Pam Winter with attendees at the conference

Family Day Care

Are you interested in becoming a Careprovider with Family Day Care?

Family Day Care in South Australia is a quality child care service with care provided in the homes of approved Careproviders. Family Day Care in South Australia is sponsored by the Department of Education and Children's Services and funded by the Commonwealth Government through the Department of Family and Community Services.

Family Day Care provides accredited pre-service training in Certificate III in Children's Services, a nationally recognised qualification that is competency based. It is part of the national Vocational Education and Training system. This training is provided to all potential Careproviders.

Careproviders are responsibly people who have a genuine interest in children. They are healthy, energetic and flexible, work cooperatively with families and staff as well as children and have an understanding of their own strengths and limitations.

To be considered for approval as a Family Day Care-provider a person must:

- Be 18 years of age or over
- Lodge an initial application form with their nearest Family Day Care Office
- Submit a medical information release form to their regular doctor
- Provide the names, addresses and phone numbers of 2 referees (not relatives)
- Submit a person history (police check) release form for the applicant and anyone who is over 18 years of age and is resident in the home or is a frequent visitor
- Meet with Family Day Care staff to discuss their suitability
- Have their home assessed as to its suitability as a care environment.
- Complete an approved training program or provide evidence of the competencies required by Family Day Care

If you would like more information about becoming a Careprovider with Family Day Care, please contact (08) 8226 0044

**Early Childhood Australia Inc.
South Australian Branch**

c/o Lady Gowrie Children's Centre
39a Dew St

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