

President's Report

Welcome to the first ECA-SA Branch Newsletter for 2006. This year's executive committee is enthusiastic and vibrant, consisting of continuing members as well as new members - Cathie Home, from Inclusive Directions South, Gail Mondy, from Children, Youth and Women's Health Service and Gayle Mills from CaFE Enfield CCC. Christy Ward, who has returned to Adelaide, is also warmly welcomed back to the executive.

It was a pleasure to start the year by congratulating Pam Linke on being awarded a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of her "service to children, particularly early childhood development as a researcher and author on parenting skills and infant mental health" (The Advertiser, 26 January 2006)

Congratulations also to Lynne Rutherford on receiving an award at the ECA National Conference in Brisbane last September in recognition for her advocacy work as a newer member to the profession.

In line with ECA's National Strategic Directions, the SA Branch is committed to advocating for young children and supporting a strong and cohesive early childhood profession.

As advocates for the early years, the SA election was one of the branch's first tasks for the year. Although timelines were tight, posters and postcards with the theme "Hands up for Children! Make your vote count". were developed and distributed to members This provided an ideal opportunity for ECA members to promote the interests of children and their families with political parties and the local community.

ECA's National Director, Pam Cahir, gave a comprehensive report on the National Office priorities and directions at our February meeting. The topics she covered included:

- Federal Government's request for input to FACS on

- achieving integration of early childhood education and care services,
- ways to build sector capacity to identify and support vulnerable families with young children, and
- engaging fathers to better support the role of fathers in children's early development

- ECA Website - the success of ECA's Web-watch, currently sent to 8,400 recipients.
- Childcare Accreditation - Issues raised with NCAC and Minister's Advisors regarding difficulty with Quality Assurance, qualifications and leadership in childcare.

Each year a graduate from UniSA's Bachelor Early Childhood Education, and a graduate from TAFE SA's Diploma of Children's Services, is awarded one year membership of ECA. This year's Early Childhood Education Graduate Award was presented to Marissa Belperio from UniSA for her efforts to engage children in the broader community through her work with Windmill Performing Arts and the South Australian Museum. The TAFE SA graduate award will be advised at a later date.

ECA-SA Branch has representatives on a number of committees including:

- Professional Support Co-ordinator Sector Advisory Group - Gowrie Training Centre
- DECS Early Years Literacy Program Stakeholders' Forum
- DECS Learner Wellbeing Project Steering Committee
- Children's Services Consultative Committee
- Ministerial Advisory Committee: Students with Disabilities
- SACSA Executive Group - DECS

Other recent activities of the ECA-SA Branch have included:

- Feedback to ECA (QLD Branch)—on the position statement about the "Planning the Location of Centre based Early Childhood Services"

Continued P2.....

.....Continued from P1

- Submitting a response to DECS on the Early Literacy Assessment and Monitoring (ELAM) document
- Participating and making recommendations at the SACSA Curriculum Leaders Forum
- Input to ECA National Office on SA's experience in the integration of early childhood and care services as one of the issues for children identified by FACS
- Representation at the Child Care Consultation meeting held by Tanya Plibersek MP
- Participating in the National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA) Selection Panel

The Professional Development subcommittee together with DECS is planning a half day Workshop on Mapping Multiliteracies on Saturday 29th July, 2006 at EDC, Milner St. Hindmarsh. Further details will be available closer to the date. There

has been some interest in establishing a First Years of School subcommittee. If you would like to be involved or have some thoughts the committee would be pleased to hear from you.

Members are welcome to attend Branch meetings, held monthly at the Education Development Centre, Milner St. Hindmarsh. A list of ECA SA Branch meeting dates and times can be found on the ECA website

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

**Sherry Thompson, Executive Director,
Office of Early Childhood Services
will be our guest at the next meeting
Monday, 15th May between 6.00 –7.00 pm.
All members are welcome.**

Italia Parletta
President SA Branch

The Circle of Security Approach

A report on the two day introductory training

The opportunity to attend the two day Circle of Security Training in Adelaide recently with Kent Hoffman has served to deepen our understanding of the complexities of this approach first introduced to us by Robyn Dolby. The Circle of Security (COS) Project is an early intervention programme based on Attachment Theory designed to help families at risk understand and develop secure attachments (Marvin, Cooper, Hoffman & Powell, 2002).

Put simply it aims to strengthen attachment relationships between parents and their children. This happens as the adult recognises cues and develops an understanding of the child's need to be supported in their exploration of the environment as the adult watches over, helps, delights and enjoys with their child in this exploration. When necessary, the child should be welcomed back for protection, comfort, delight and help with organising feelings when they exceed the limit of the child's control.

Attachment Theory forms an integral part of our teaching in Children's Services programmes at Gilles Plains TAFE and the Circle of Security approach helps students to understand secure attachment and how they as educators can develop their attachment relationships with the children in their care.

Attending this workshop with Kent Hoffman has encouraged us to apply this approach not only in areas such as social and emotional development and caring for babies, but also in behaviour guidance and in developing behaviour change plans for children with challenging behaviours. Students are also taught how to use the COS to reflect on their role in supporting children and becoming attuned to recognising children's cues.

As we continue to integrate Professor Ferre Laevers' concepts of involvement and well-being into our teaching it is becoming more obvious how well this fits with the Circle of Security approach.

Louise Cornelius
Coordinator/Lecturer
TAFESA Gilles Plains Campus



Book Review:

Insights: Behind early childhood pedagogical documentation

Edited by Alma Fleet, Catherine Patterson & Janet Robertson
Pademelon Press, 2006

This is an exciting new book from three well-known colleagues from Macquarie University in Sydney. They bring together stories of early childhood practice from contributors in Australia, New Zealand and North America to explore the complexities of documenting our work with children. It is designed both to help students and newcomers to early childhood education and to provide more experienced practitioners with ideas for reflection, particularly in relation to social justice issues and pedagogical decision-making..

The book is substantial—over 350 pages. After a comprehensive introductory chapter by the editors, the book is divided into five sections: *First principles*, *Beginnings*, *Engaging the hard questions*, *Looking deeper, seeing more* and *Pulling together, reaching out*. Each of these sections has several chapters by early childhood professionals describing features of their practice followed by commentaries from a number of well known figures acting as what may be seen as ‘critical friends’. The commentators include Margie Carter, Deb Curtis, Margaret Clyde and Anne Stonehouse and the editors describe their contributions as highlighting “the slippery and complex positions that teachers take in constructing curriculum” (p xxii)

Working within a postmodernist framework which accepts multiple perspectives, the editors highlight the complex issues which arise when working with young children and, in doing so, often raise more questions than they answer. In the foreword, Rebecca New remarks on the humility displayed by authors who, despite their obvious knowledge and experience, are prepared to admit that there is so much more to learn about children. Those readers who are willing to be similarly reflective about their work will find *Insights* both challenging and inspiring.

Caroline Donald

Parenting Imperatives 11 2nd National Parenting Conference Adelaide Convention Centre 25 – 27 May 2006

New Perspectives New Directions New Connections

This is a conference for professionals who support parents and parenting – Social Workers, Nurses, Doctors, Teachers, Psychologists, Child Care Workers. The program includes leading international and Australian research and keynote speakers.

For program details and registration go to the Child and Youth Health website www.cyh.com and click on 2006 Parenting Imperatives 11

Are you interested in attending the Parenting Imperatives 11 Conference on Saturday 27th May? ECA SA Branch will sponsor 2 individual members to attend in return for a brief report for the next branch newsletter. Send an email to Italia Parletta by 15th May to express your interest.

italia.parletta@tafesa.edu.au