

ECA Board Meeting Report Canberra, November 2008

At the final Board meeting for 2008, the President, Margaret Young, reported that she and Pam Cahir, the CEO, had attended the Northern Territory Children's Services Conference in Darwin in November, where Margaret was a keynote speaker.

Pam and Margaret have continued to work on the Early Childhood Reform Agenda. They have made submissions and provided off the record briefings, maintained regular contact with DEEWR, State/Territory Departments in some instances, the Parliamentary Secretary and her advisors and with other sector people involved in the work to move forward each of the Government's policy commitments. They have also participated in a range of symposiums and meetings and continued ongoing cooperation and work with the LHMU around the workforce strategy.

Pam Cahir reported on the problems experienced with ECA's IT system on 23 October. The system was down for some time and recovery of the material lost is still in progress. A review of the system will be held once the problem is fixed and will include a detailed risk management strategy.

ECA's office at Watson is being reclaimed by the Majura Primary School whose enrolments have increased. They will need full use of the building from the beginning of 2010. New premises are being sought.

ECA has two major projects in progress:

- The development of advanced teaching standards for early childhood teachers of children aged between 3 and 8 years. Branches will have a role in convening 2 consultation forums on the standards.

These forums will be held between 7th June and 31st July, 2009 and the branch needs to inform National Office of the dates and locations of the forums for posting on the ECA website.

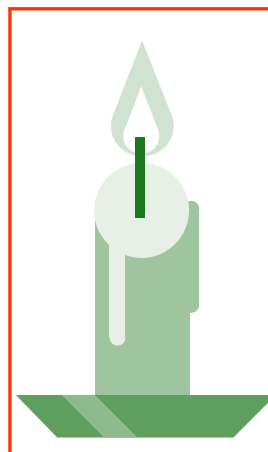
- In partnership with the Centre for Community Child Health, a project for the development of resources to support the implementation of the Commonwealth's Physical Activity and Nutrition Guidelines in early childhood services.

A major in-house administrative review of the recent conference has commenced and a report of that review, which will provide significant input into the review of the ECA conference guidelines, will take place early in 2009. Surveys requesting feedback are to go out to all who participated in the 2008 conference shortly.

The much-quoted ECA policy on child:staff ratios is about to be updated. It will be available on the ECA website when this work is completed.

A retreat for board members will be held on March 12-13, 2009 in Launceston, Tasmania.

Christy Ward
SA National Board Member



*ECA SA Branch executive
wish you all a safe and
peaceful holiday season
and look forward to a
busy 2009 in our
continuing work together
for young children*

A new resource is launched



Assessing for Learning and Development in the Early Years using Observation Scales: REFLECT, RESPECT, RELATE is a resource designed as a self-paced package to support educators of children from birth to age 8.

In September 2008, Professor Ferre Laevers from the University of Leuven launched this South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services resource package.

The package includes a set of scales for critically examining the interactions that take place between adults and children, educators' pedagogy, children's wellbeing and children's involvement. The Observation Scales have proved valuable for critiquing and informing practice through self reflection and inquiry, ideally in collaboration with others.

The ***REFLECT, RESPECT, RELATE*** resource consists of:

- **A resource book** with introductory materials, background readings and support materials and four modules for becoming familiar with and for using each scale through an inquiry approach.

- **DVDs** with presentations, interviews, an introduction to each variable and examples for scaling
- **CD** with support materials including observation scales and examples of practice

All South Australian childcare centres, DECS supported preschools and DECS schools with Junior Primary classes have received information with a voucher for redeeming one free ***REFLECT RESPECT RELATE*** resource package per site.

Background

In 2003, a South Australian joint research study between the University of South Australia and the Department of Education and Children's Services (supported by an Australian Research Council grant) identified four variables of curriculum quality and used a set of observation scales to assess changes in curriculum quality correlated with the introduction and implementation of the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) framework in childcare centres.

From 2004 to 2008 the use of the scales has been a key feature of DECS early years projects involving networks of educators from childcare, preschool and school settings. These projects have supported reflective practice and improved environments for young children.

Additional information is available through the resources section of the Early Years website

www.earlyyears.sa.edu.au

***Taking children to the movies?
Hiring DVDs or videos?***



Before you do, check out
Young Media Australia's
Know Before You Go
free movie review service

**YMA Helpline 1800 700 357
www.youngmedia.org.au**



Remember the Early Childhood Australia website

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

for the latest news in early childhood

Newly arrived families in child care: the web of support

The 8th Biennial National Conference of Early Childhood Intervention Australia (ECIA) was held in Sydney in mid-October.

As part of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program (IPSP) strand of the conference Elspeth Murchland (Inclusive Directions - South) and Lori Hay (Warradale Community Children's Centre – Parkholme Campus) presented a paper on *Newly arrived families in child care: the web of support*. The presentation explored the issues around the formation of the SAFICC (Supporting African Families in Child Care) Forum in Adelaide in 2007.

Over several meetings the SAFICC forums have responded to the challenges experienced by child care staff in forming partnerships with newly arrived African families by

- exploring strategies, and aspects of programs, which are working well
- ascertaining what the challenges are, for both child care staff and families
- engaging speakers from key agencies such as Centrelink, TAFE English Language Services, Dept of Education and Children's Services, African Communities Council of SA, and Migrant Health Service to explain their strand of "the web of support"

The forum has helped to build strong links between the web of agencies supporting newly arrived families, including child care services, by clarifying roles and systems and providing key contacts. These new links have brought positive outcomes for families, child care providers and other agencies.



Lori's presentation focused on the challenges faced at the Warradale Community Children's Centre in providing an inclusive child care service to newly arrived families.

The child care service has extensive experience in responding to the needs of the local community and providing a welcoming multicultural environment (eg. all halal foods in response to large numbers of families practicing the Muslim faith) but the newly arrived families of African origin presented a new set of challenges - overcoming language barriers, settling in many newly arrived children at the one time, sleeping and eating arrangements and helping families navigate the complex system of Centrelink, Dept of Immigration and Citizenship funding, and English Language Services requirements.

Lori described the SAFICC forum as supporting staff and families of Warradale Community Children's Centre to learn together, laugh together, support each other and trust each other.



Through SAFICC involvement the capacity of all services to work with newly arrived families, regardless of their country of origin, and maintain an inclusive program for all families in their care has been enhanced.

Kathy Gadsden
Inclusion Support Facilitator

Pictures on this page show SAFICC in action

The NIFTeY 2009 Conference

**Getting it together for Australia's children
What role for parent/child centres?**

Venue: Olympic Park, Melbourne

February 15 – 17, 2009



The conference will explore the following themes:

- What is the Focus of Parent-Child Centres?
- Research and Evaluation of Parent-Child Centres
- The Workforce in Parent-Child Centres
- The Governance Model for Parent-Child Centres

<http://niftey.cyh.com/webpages/conferences/conferenceframe.htm>

**11th NZ Early Childhood
Research Conference**

**22 -23 January 2009
Wellington, New Zealand**

To be held at the Museum Building at the Massey University campus in Wellington

The purpose of the conference is to provide a helpful and stimulating forum for researchers to present, and for participants to learn about, the latest research, research methodology, and theory in the early years of childhood (0 – 8)

A fantastic opportunity to meet people whose names you know and to build your professional network

For more information and registration:

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

Managing media in early childhood - New resources from Young Media Australia

Following the successful completion of several projects, new YMA resources are available for parents of children under seven and for use by professionals who work with them.



Fright free Fight-free Viewing

A short DVD and accompanying booklet about the impact of violent media on children under the age of seven. Practical tips for reducing the impact of violent media. Includes the YMA list of 200 non-violent media titles for under seven year olds. Currently available in South Australia only from local public libraries, schools, kindergartens, child care centres or community centres.

Healthy Viewing for Healthy Eating

A short DVD and accompanying booklet about the impact of food advertising on children under the age of seven. Practical tips for reducing the impact of food advertising on children's eating preferences. Limited copies are currently available in South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania.



TV & Your Child.

An attractive and easy to read concertina brochure and poster with a simple message about possible impacts on very young children of watching: violence on TV, too many food ads, scary movies, too much TV, of having a TV in their bedroom. Includes practical suggestions for parents.

We are currently looking for funding for reprints of all of these resources so that they can be made more widely available. If you can help with this, or would like to know the best way for you to get copies, contact Pamela Wright on helpline@youngmedia.org.au.