



Our values

- The rights of children
- Leadership, excellence and respect
- Courage, honesty and openness
- Collaboration and diversity
- Justice
- Social inclusion of children

Early Childhood Australia: caring for children with you

At the centre >>>

Open a new world of communication for children!

Capture the moment: Using digital photography in early childhood settings by Kim Walters



Creatively involving children with digital photography.

\$14.95 (2006, 24pp)
ECA Code: RIP0604

In the home >>>

Fact: Parents worry about their children's behaviour



Solve discipline problems – and more! – in a positive way.

Everyday learning about children's behaviour by Pam Linke

\$14.95 (2006, 28pp)
ECA Code: LAH0604

Order now

1800 356 900 (freecall) or
email eca@earlychildhood.org.au

Order safely and securely online:
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au

Welcome to all ECA members and readers!



As I have mentioned before, many of my priorities as President reflect the ongoing focus areas of the organisation: endorsing and promoting high-quality service for children's wellbeing; highlighting clear issues for the next federal election; and promoting the reviewed ECA *Code of Ethics*.

The ECA Board has also committed to strengthening our work for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families; addressing the effect of global warming for children's future wellbeing; and focusing on leadership development.

Many of these focus areas have found a platform in this issue of *Voice*. The organisation-wide commitment to Indigenous issues for children and families is exemplified by Victoria Branch's recent initiatives. Barbara Fisher, project officer at Victoria Branch, highlights some of the notable aspects of this fine work.

We hope that the revised *Code of Ethics* will be embraced by the field, and that it inspires us all to uphold the values we admire, such as professionalism, leadership and commitment. In this issue of *Voice*, Catharine Hydon, member of the Code of Ethics working party, directs our attention to the important ways in which the Code helps us in our individual work, as well as strengthening the field as a *profession*.

The *Code of Ethics* is a groundbreaking document for the field; and many other great early childhood initiatives and research are touched upon in a brief overview on page three.

Our field does great work – and it does us good to remind ourselves of this, and to celebrate quality practice wherever it occurs. Best wishes for a wonderful 2007!

Margaret Young

Margaret Young
ECA National President



THE BEGINNING OF A JOURNEY

Early Childhood Australia – Victoria Branch, Indigenous Project 2005–06

In recognition of the appalling statistics of the health, education and welfare of Indigenous children in Australia, Early Childhood Australia reconfirmed our commitment towards indigenous Australians at the ECA National Council meeting in September 2004.

Each branch was challenged to turn this commitment into action, and work in the forthcoming years to improve the life chances of Indigenous children and their families. The Victoria Branch took up this challenge—developing an Indigenous project and employing a part-time project officer to work with the branch committee.

The first challenge was to decide on the scope of the project and, with very limited resources, how best to focus it

to ensure that it had an impact on the branch membership. It became very clear that we all had much to learn about the Indigenous experience, history and culture in this country; and that we had very little understanding of the positive gains that have been made in the reconciliation process, especially as it related to young children. We did not have a good grasp of where and how to start. However, we knew that we wanted to focus on positive stories



to counteract the largely negative press that Indigenous issues attract.

It was decided that we would develop a series of four articles that would be published in the quarterly branch newsletter, and that we would develop an Indigenous section on the ECA Victoria Branch website to incorporate this material and associated resources. We also developed our welcome statement, used at formal branch occasions, acknowledging the prior occupation of the land and the Victoria Branch's commitment to reconciliation.

The decision to start by informing ourselves was deliberate, and undertaken in recognition that the process of reconciliation began through knowledge. The project worker was engaged to do the research, identify resources and initiatives, write the articles with a mentor, and bring the information to the committee for discussion.

The series of articles

The first article written by the project worker addressed the background and aims of the project, and provided introductory material on the scope of the disadvantage that faces Indigenous children and their families. The second article looked back on the history and culture of Victorian Aborigines and on the impact of European settlement on Indigenous experience. The focus of the third article was on the successful strategies that had been developed in three different Indigenous projects operating in Victoria. The fourth article examined Indigenous educational disadvantage as documented in the Western Australian Aboriginal Child Health Survey; it explored alternative policy strategies suggested by that report as well as examples from Canada's Aboriginal Head Start program. Each article contributed to our deeper understanding of Indigenous children and their families.

The ECA Victoria Branch Indigenous project

This case study, set at Yappera, a multi-function children's service in Thornbury, is an example of a current project in Victoria.

This is the first year of a 30-month project funded under the Stronger Families and Communities Strategy of the Commonwealth Government. The aim is to increase the level of parents' involvement in their children's education to encourage school attendance, to motivate them to encourage their children to perform, to help them develop strategies and skills to engage with the education system, and to become active in their children's learning.

The project has involved actively engaging with parents through a range of recognition strategies, social and other activities including their 25-year anniversary; working with staff to encourage them to work more actively with parents and working in different ways with the children. The outcomes so far have been the development of a program where room staff now provide an introduction to their group of parents about the program, its aims, their expectations of parents regarding attendance, bringing lunch (in the kinder room), recognising the child's achievements, arriving on time and so on. Lots of encouragement was provided by the project worker, as staff were initially challenged by the different approach—they now have the confidence to repeat and build on this activity.

The 2006 program has contained lots of nutritional content, a healthy exercise program, and cooking and preparing simple food. Staff are finding that children are going home and giving their parents nutritional information that they are learning at the centre.

In working with the children a more focused program has been developed for 2007: each term will have a different theme, after initially ensuring that children have hearing, dental and eye-checks and, where appropriate, are referred for therapy.

So what has the ECA Victoria Branch learned from its Indigenous project?

There are four key insights that have particular resonance:

1. *It is shameful* that, in 2006, the **life chances** of Indigenous children are so significantly less than their non-Indigenous counterparts. The circumstances facing Australia's Indigenous children as they grow up in rural, remote and urban areas require urgent attention. It is a matter of children's rights, it is a matter of social justice, and it lies at the heart of true reconciliation with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.
2. The life chances of Indigenous children in Australia is **early childhood business**. There is no excuse for early childhood professionals *not* to know about the implications for their work.
3. We largely know what **strategies**, initiatives, programs and projects reap positive outcomes for Indigenous children, their families and communities. We also know what hampers those initiatives, what detracts from building stronger families and prevents children from 'growing up strong'.
4. We know that there are many, many **people** in communities from Alice Springs to Thornbury who are working with young children and their families to shift probabilities, to enhance lives, to build better futures and to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children. These stories should be heard in the process of true reconciliation.

These statements may not appear to immediately change things for Indigenous children, but they are powerful none the less. If we accept these statements as fact, they give us the renewed energy to advocate for our Indigenous children and celebrate when we know lives are changed for the better.



We will know that reconciliation is underway when every early childhood professional can speak with confidence about what they know about Indigenous children and how they can make a difference.

Barbara Fisher

Project Worker
Early Childhood Australia – Victoria Branch

The four articles, references and resources can be found on the Indigenous section of the ECA Victoria Branch website. The Victoria Branch Committee worked on future Indigenous strategies at their planning day in January 2007.



FROM THE FIELD: ALL THE LATEST RESEARCH AND GROUND-LEVEL INITIATIVES

There is so much innovative work going on in our field – but in our busy lives, it can sometimes pass us by.

Remember to take time-out to reflect on your own practice – and be inspired by the amazing work going on in the early childhood field.

Here is a selection of the exciting topics covered in the latest *Every Child* magazine and *Australian Journal of Early Childhood* (AJEC):

- A small study of the childcare experiences of lesbian mothers (AJEC)
- An explanation of climate change and what we can do about it (Every Child)
- An examination of different organisational structures – and the affect on leadership (AJEC)
- Step-by-step guides to smart water-use and recycling in services (Every Child)
- How storytelling can strengthen curriculum for teacher educators (AJEC)
- What the Great Barrier Reef can teach us (Every Child)
- Looking back on children in detention in Australia (AJEC)
- The ethics of zoos and services adopting animals (Every Child)



Every Child magazine
Vol. 13 No. 1 2007

\$14.95 (inc. p&h)
Code: EC0701



Australian Journal of Early Childhood
Vol. 32 No. 1 2007

\$18.95 (inc. p&h)
Code: AJEC0701

Sound interesting? It is!

Read more: Sample articles and abstracts are available online:

www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au.

To order, phone **1800 356 900** (freecall) or email eca@earlychildhood.org.au.

Is it time to advance your education education?

Your career in education is an important journey that influences and enriches the lives of so many of your students. The QUT Master of Learning Innovation is the next step in developing your expertise. It can also prepare you for a move into another role in the education sector if that is your ambition. QUT's Master of Learning Innovation is now more accessible, with **Commonwealth supported places** (formerly HECS) available, and the option to do your course online. For complete information visit mli.qut.edu.au or phone the Faculty of Education on (07) 3138 3947.

qut.com

bcm:qued 035 CRICOS no.00213J

a university for the **real world**[®]



ARE YOU LOSING THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS?



You could be losing money right now and not even know it. If you have more than one super account, you may be paying unnecessary fees that you're not even aware of. Those fees could be draining away your hard-earned savings.

Say you have money in another super fund and are charged \$200 in fees each year. In only five years you'll pay out \$1000 ... and in 30 years you'll have paid a whopping \$6000.

Here's a simple way you can stop losing money

Fortunately, in most cases, there's a simple fix. It's called 'consolidating your accounts' or 'rolling over your super'. If you have more than one super account, rolling your money all in to one account could save you thousands.

By transferring all your funds into one account you only pay one set of fees. And those savings can build on themselves with compound interest (interest on interest).

Act now

Just complete the simple form which can be downloaded from www.hesta.com.au or call 1800 813 327. Take some time to consider your decision, while it's fresh in your mind and before you forget. The sooner HESTA receives your form, the sooner they can begin combining your accounts. Every day could be costing you money!

Before you transfer your super:

1. Check the exit fees charged by your other fund(s). Some funds will charge an exit fee which means you may not benefit from the transfer.
2. Review your death and disability insurance. Generally when you leave a fund the insurance cover is cancelled. Also review any other member advantages offered through your old fund.
3. Remember that it's important to consider your own circumstances when consolidating your super funds because it may not be the right choice for you. You may wish to consider seeking financial advice before making a decision.

This information is about HESTA Super Fund Reg. No. R1004489 and has been produced on behalf of H.E.S.T. Australia Limited ACN 006 818 695 AFSL No. 235249 RSE L0000109. It is of a general nature. It does not take into account your objectives, financial situation or specific needs so you should look at your own financial position and requirements before making a decision. You may wish to consult an adviser when doing this. Contact HESTA on 1800 813 327 for more information about fees and costs and a copy of the Fund's Product Disclosure Statement which should be considered when making a decision about HESTA.

WHY ABIDE BY THE ECA CODE OF ETHICS?

Five excellent reasons for consulting the ECA Code of Ethics, from Catharine Hydon

1. All respected professions have codes of ethics – our Code confirms our status as a profession.
2. Forming and sustaining relationships is central to our work in early childhood education. The *Code of Ethics* reminds us of the importance of these relationships.
3. The lives of children and their families are complex – our Code helps to determine how we might act to support them.
4. Being a part of global community challenges how and what we should present to children – our Code highlights the critical issues that should inform these choices.
5. Working with families and children requires complex, ethical decision-making. The *Code of Ethics* provides a framework and guidance for these decisions.



The ECA *Code of Ethics* has now been revised and redesigned. It is available online: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/code or phone **1800 356 900** (freecall) for your free copy.

ECA POLICY REVIEW

Early Childhood Australia is committed to an ongoing process of review in order to ensure that we provide quality, relevant, and timely information to our members.

As part of this work, the ECA National Council has commissioned a working party to review the current range of ECA policies. The working party, made up of members from all state/territory branches, will assess each policy according to their relevance, their usefulness to members, and their capacity to assist in effective advocacy for young children.

The ECA policies to be reviewed:

- Breastfeeding
- Care of Infants
- Child Care – Work Related/Work Based
- Children and the Mass Media
- Children of Asylum Seekers
- Cultural Diversity
- Gender Equity
- Guidelines for Consulting with Children
- Inclusion of Children
- Information Technology and Children
- Integrated Services
- Language and Literacy
- Physical Environments for Centre-Based Early Childhood Services
- Professional Development, Training and Support of Early Childhood Personnel

The National Council working party intends to reduce the number of policies—grouping related items and removing those that are out of date. It is important to note that the new documents will be rewritten as position statements.

Branches were invited to consider the review of the current policies and the recommendations made by the working party and Executive. The working party is currently developing a suite of strong position statements designed to support our members and strengthen our advocacy.

The position statements will be reflective of the vision of the organisation and our mandate to be a voice for children.

If you would like to know more about the ECA policy review process, contact your local branch or email eca@earlychildhood.org.au.