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- Courage, honesty and openness
- Collaboration and diversity
- Justice
- Social inclusion of children

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THE UPCOMING CHILD CARE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: DON'T GET CAUGHT BEHIND



The Commonwealth Government is committed to introducing a new childcare management system, the CCMS, which will require all services to submit their Child Care Benefit (CCB) reports online.

The Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA) has announced that:

'The Australian Government has invested over \$73 million to develop a National Child Care Management System (CCMS) to provide the best information on child care supply and usage data that has ever been available across Australia.

'CCMS will be implemented progressively across child care services from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2009. CCMS will support child care services to implement streamlined administrative processes and reduce red tape.'

You can read more about the Government's commitment to the CCMS at www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/childcare/ccms.htm.

Early Childhood Australia encourages all services to take an active approach to this new system: those not currently online need to get online now; and those already online can take this opportunity to improve their practices.

Early Childhood Australia has developed the very helpful *Use online technologies successfully: A workbook for children's services and other small businesses*. Throughout this guidebook, Derek Newman, ECA's in-house online guru, leads readers through a practical, step-by-step approach to using online solutions in the provision of children's services.

Early Childhood Australia urges all services to get ahead of the CCMS requirements—which will be coming into effect over the coming months—and begin to explore the benefits of online technologies.

Margaret Young

Margaret Young
ECA National President



Further information: General questions on the CCMS can be directed to FaCSIA. Phone **1800 050 021** or email ccms@facsia.gov.au.

Don't get caught behind – Order now!



Use online technologies successfully: A workbook for children's services and other small businesses is available from ECA for \$27.95 (inc p&h).
Phone **1800 356 900 (freecall)** or order online:
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/pub36

Read more
on page 3.

ECA WRITES TO COAG

Early Childhood Australia recently wrote to the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) regarding their decision to place early childhood high on their agenda.

National President Margaret Young has congratulated ‘their understanding of the importance of early childhood experiences by increased investment in early childhood programs.’

Ms Young referred to recent research to highlight key areas in which investment will lead to the improvement of early childhood delivery in Australia.

Extract from Early Childhood Australia’s recent letter to COAG:

ECA wishes to provide proposals for areas of state, territory and Commonwealth government investment that will have the greatest positive impact for young children.

ECA understands the long-term importance of early experiences for the future success and life choices of young children. The research that underpins this position is summarised in a recent impressive article by Ellen Galinsky, *The economic benefits of high-quality early childhood programs: What makes the difference?*

The following priority areas for investment in children’s services are drivers for ensuring quality outcomes for all young children:

1. Ensuring that children have the benefit of early childhood trained teachers in whatever service they are attending. Providing children with well-educated and trained staff, whose levels of compensation and working conditions result in low staff turnover.
2. Providing adequate levels of staff to reduce group sizes and improve staff–child ratios.

To ensure a healthy start to life, infants and young children need to form strong attachments to adults who can provide them with the required stability and stimulation. The current levels of staff–child ratios and group size are inadequate to ensure that children are receiving the best start in children’s services.

All children deserve high-quality experiences that require high levels of investment, with higher investments for some children, and ECA believes that these measures would have the greatest impact on outcomes for children. We urge COAG to consider the research evidence and provide adequate and ongoing levels of investment in the areas that will have the greatest impact on children in the here and now and throughout their lives.

The full letter to COAG is available online at: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/coag07

DRAFT QUALITY ASSURANCE STANDARDS: ECA RESPONSE



Early Childhood Australia has made a formal submission to FaCSIA regarding the draft standards for the proposed integrated Child Care Quality Assurance system.

The ECA submission does not focus on the detail of the draft standards, as ECA members are participating actively—at state/territory ECA Branches or in conjunction with other groups around Australia—in the development of responses which will focus on the detail of the draft standards.

Extract from:

Integrated Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA) Draft Standards for Discussion: Early Childhood Australia Response

The national Board of Early Childhood Australia shares the concern that will be raised in many ECA Branch submissions that the standards, as circulated, are too generic and so fail to reflect adequately:

- the differences between children of different ages; and
- the differences between the various service types.

As well as this, ECA supports the proposition that the standards as circulated situate the principle of inclusion as something separate from, rather than integral to, the everyday work of every service, as it should be.

For more information on the draft standards, visit www.nccac.gov.au/integrated_ccqa.html.

ECA believes that the drivers for the integration of the current quality-assurance systems should be:

- streamlining the system to improve the quality and integrity of the system itself; and
- efficiencies which will deliver savings in the administration and operation of the current systems of quality assurance. ECA believes that savings should be redirected to the administration and operation of the quality improvement component of the new system.

These two drivers should also be equally weighted.

However, there is considerable concern in the sector, given the nature of the draft standards, that the key driver for this process is the generation of savings in the administration and operations of the three current systems. There is little evidence of a commitment to the building of a new system which will actually contribute to improving quality in services on the ground.

Read the full submission from ECA at: www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/ccqa_submission

UPCOMING CCMS: DON'T GET CAUGHT BEHIND

Order now! See page 1 for details.

HOW TO CREATE A WEBSITE FOR YOUR SERVICE

Extract from Derek Newman's guidebook

Use online technologies successfully: A workbook for children's services and other small businesses



Do you have well-written material for your website?

Website usability studies suggest that readers of website pages 'scan' the page rather than study each and every word. This research says that 'chunking' text into small blocks with obvious headings is better than having a long, single page of continuous text. You can also use bullet points to break up long blocks of text.

Choose your website 'voice'. Are you going to sound serious, fun, excited or academic? Write material for your website in a consistent 'voice'.

Have you developed a clear statement of purpose?

It is important to have a very clear idea of what you want to achieve with your website. A clear statement of purpose will help you stay on track. It is easy to get distracted by the bells and whistles of website technology. For example, your statement of purpose might look like this:

My website will:

- Market my service to potential families
- Provide information such as updated policies to enrolled parents
- Educate parents about how the service operates (philosophies and activities)
- Be able to be viewed by a wide range of people including those with old browsers and slow Internet connections

Have you asked your families for feedback about your website?

Regularly ask parents with access to the Internet to have a look at your website, especially if you have made recent changes or updates.

Asking for feedback from your target audience (and acting on that feedback) will ensure that your website is fulfilling its purpose.

Show parents your website statement of purpose and ask them if your message is clear.

Do you regularly update your website?

Keep the content of your website fresh and up to date. You don't have to update the website every day, but making a change every week or two will keep visitors coming back. Try to foster a sense of community around your website, give lots of examples of how your staff, parents and children interact – include regular photos, examples of children's work, changes to times and menus, board and committee minutes, thoughts from the director.

Think about investing in a scanner which will enable you to include examples of children's work on your website. You will need to ask parents' permission to include photos and examples of work. Make sure all ages get a go at 'being on the web'.



NEED TO BOOST YOUR SUPER?



HESTA members are making the most of boosting their super through the Federal Government's co-contribution scheme.

In 2005/2006, more than 20,000 HESTA members made a voluntary contribution to their account to secure their slice of free money from the co-contribution scheme.

HESTA CEO Anne-Marie Corboy says she is delighted HESTA members have taken the opportunity to boost their super account balances.

'It is particularly significant because 85% of our members are women and women often have lower account balances than men due to lower wages and time spent out of the workforce.

'We are extremely pleased of our members for taking advantage of the Government co-contribution scheme and giving their super a boost.'

Here's a summary of how the Government co-contribution works:

The Federal Government provides a co-contribution of up to \$1.50 for each \$1 of after-tax contributions.

The maximum annual co-contribution of \$1,500 applies to incomes of \$28,000 or less a year. It is reduced by five cents for each dollar of income over \$28,000, cutting out at \$58,000. 'Income' is assessable income and reportable fringe benefits.

For example, if you are eligible, earn \$27,000 a year and contribute an extra \$300 to your super from your after-tax income, then the Government will contribute a further \$450 to your super. If you make a \$1,000 contribution, then the Government will contribute \$1,500. Salary sacrifice contributions do not attract a co-contribution.

The minimum co-contribution the Government will pay is \$20 and the Australian Tax Office (ATO) is responsible for administering the scheme.

How do you claim a co-contribution?

You don't have to do anything except make after-tax contributions to your super by 30 June and lodge a tax return (you don't have to fill anything out on your return regarding the co-contribution or making extra contributions). Your super fund will notify the ATO about your personal contributions and the ATO will decide if you are eligible using this information and details of your income from your tax return. To qualify, you must be under age 71 at 30 June. If you are eligible, the co-contribution will be paid directly into your super account, usually by the December after the end of the financial year or later assessment of your tax return.

Any co-contribution amount must generally remain in your super account until at least your preservation age.

Visit www.ato.gov.au/super to find out about eligibility for the co-contribution. Remember, the ATO will decide if you are eligible, not your super fund.

How do you make extra contributions to your super?

- Your employer can deduct after-tax contributions from your pay (ask your payroll officer)
- You can have regular payments transferred from your bank account to your super account using direct debit (ask your super fund about this option)
- You can add to your super whenever you have a little extra, such as your tax refund

Remember though, the contributions must reach your fund by 30 June.

Would you like more information?

You can call the ATO about co-contributions on 13 10 20 or visit www.ato.gov.au

If you would like an idea of how making after-tax contributions, the co-contribution and salary sacrifice may affect your income now and your super contributions, HESTA's salary sacrifice/co-contributions calculator at www.hesta.com.au may help.

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.

MASSIVE ECA BOOK SALE

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Books from just \$2.95 (inc. p&h)



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