

Transition and collaboration

In this issue, we welcome His Excellency the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd) as Patron of Early Childhood Australia. We look forward to the involvement of His Excellency the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia with ECA throughout his tenure.



The Governor-General has had a very distinguished career as Chief of the Defence Force, former Australian of the Year and as leader of the Operation Recovery Taskforce following North Queensland's severe tropical Cyclone Larry. At this time he led a team which supported government departments to respond to the temporary closure of 156 schools and to send approximately 50 additional child safety staff to support around 70 affected children who needed to be placed in out-of-home care. Key learnings from *The final report of the Operation Recovery Taskforce* highlighted the imperative for strong leadership for government departments, community agencies and the wider community to work together to address both the disaster-affected physical environment and the individual psychological impact for families—an important message for early childhood educators and professionals who work with families everywhere. This message is reflected in the *National Quality Standard* which recognises children's health, safety and wellbeing as paramount and promotes collaborative partnerships between families and communities. As professionals working with infants and young children, we do not work in isolation. Our work in promoting the best interests of young children is most effective when we can understand, collaborate and positively

impact on the broader structures within which we work—families, communities, government departments and policies.

This issue of *Every Child* has a focus on transition to school. Sue Dockett and Kay Margetts provide insight into evidence-based approaches which support young children transitioning to school. Sue Farmer and Carole Piper give excellent strategies, particularly for supporting young children with disabilities and their families. A thoughtful discussion about what high-quality educational provision looks like in the early years of school is provided by Jenny Jay, Marianne Knaus and Sandra Hesterman.

Transition to school does not occur at a single point in time. Rather, it is an interactive process involving the child, family, early childhood professionals and educators in both early childhood and school settings. Transition is a period of opportunity and possibility. There is opportunity, for sharing of knowledge and information to support the child's needs as they transition to school, and there is possibility, to provide support and continuity as the child moves on in their learning journey. Victoria has some useful expectations, processes and tools. The *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework* applies to children from birth to eight years across educational settings.

The Transition Learning and Development Statement summarises a child's strengths, identifies their interests and indicates what support may assist the child to settle into a new learning environment. It is an opportunity for the child's voice and self-reflection, views of the parent and knowledge of the educator to be shared with the school. (See www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/transition.aspx for further information.)

Finally, I encourage you to consider the potential impact of our collaborative advocacy and collective action to serve the best interests of young children. Early Childhood Australia has a positive influence and enormous reach across our nation and we can all encourage increased membership. Individually and together we can promote and enhance high-quality education and care for young children.

Jackie Brien

ECA is seeking expressions of interest for the position of Chair of our Publications Committee.

For a full position description and application details go to www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eoi_pc_chair/