

# Enriching the lives of children

by building resilience in early childhood



**A new year provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the time that has passed and to make plans to harness opportunities for the future; it is a time to foster new hopes and promises for peace and tolerance. A new year will always bring new challenges for families, communities and for education.**

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This year already, the unsettled nature of the world, particularly in conflict-affected states such as Syria, Afghanistan and Nigeria, has caught our attention. It goes without saying that, at the very least, children in conflict zones miss out on a childhood—and too often they experience much worse. Such situations make us reflect on the importance of a safe, secure and harmonious environment for children more than ever—an environment where children know that their rights are upheld and respected and that their lives are enriched.

This issue of *Every Child* focuses on supporting children's rights, through advocacy in early childhood and building resilience. Claire Hammerton's article highlights the plight of children in detention in Australia—these children and their families have often fled war-torn countries only to find themselves in detention or in other traumatic conditions in the country where they seek refuge.

Nicole Parker reminds us that 'every child has rights, no matter what their age, where they live or what they believe', and looks at ways for us to promote children's rights and active participation in early childhood

services. Geraldine Atkinson examines recommendations set out by the United Nations in relation to supporting the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia, highlighting the notion that key opportunities to support vulnerable children and families are found in early childhood education and care.

Ian Alchin reports on the 'Global leaders for young children' project. A project that works to build early childhood education leadership in communities where ensuring children's rights and healthy outcomes is challenging, including regions in crisis. Emma King highlights the importance of supporting young children's rights and the need to collectively aim to better advocate for and support globally agreed standards for children.

Finally, Jessica Brown writes about efforts to support families injured by the Syrian conflict. She asks us to think about; what this means for me? What can I do with this information? And is knowledge enough? She goes on to remind us that 'the atrocities occurring in Syria, although a great distance away, do have a "direct" impact in many Australian homes, especially those with family connections in areas of the Middle East.'

**Alison Elliott**