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Hanging up the Every Child hat

I wear many ‘hats’ in my busy professional life and the *Every Child* Editor’s ‘hat’ has been the one that has offered, perhaps, the best opportunities to explore the world of education and care and to support professional colleagues.

For some 20 years I have had a special and privileged role in working with people around the country to share news, developments and information about early childhood education and care through the pages of *Every Child*. And while governments, policies, managing departments and stakeholders seem to be in a constant state of flux, the central messages around quality education and care have been remarkably consistent. The fundamentals of early childhood education—creating a rich context and a strong foundation for children’s development and learning—haven’t changed. And what families want for their children remains the same—a nurturing environment that provides the best opportunities for happiness and success. The key goals for early childhood educators of partnering with families and other community agencies to enhance opportunities for children’s development and learning are as strong as ever and at the heart of my views in shaping what we include in *Every Child*.

As we move into 2016, opportunities for most children and families are better than ever before although closing the ‘gaps’ in health and education outcomes for children

and families from the most economically vulnerable and/or isolated families is an ongoing challenge. The *National Quality Framework* sits within a whole raft of family and child support programs that are funded by governments and others, and of course, by us as parents and taxpayers. So we all have a stake in children’s wellbeing and everyone wants to feel satisfied that money is spent wisely and that education and care programs are effective—for every child.

Amid all the changes in education and care policy and the shifting rhetoric around early childhood pedagogy, we need to be confident that each individual child, as well as those included in the clouds of data that aggregate to form ‘evidence’, have opportunities to access quality early childhood services and that individual families can be supported through challenging times.

As I conclude my last term as Editor of *Every Child* it’s important to say what a pleasure it has been to visit so many early childhood services, schools and agencies right around the country. In terms of writing, which we academics do all the time, writing for *Every Child* has definitely been the most enjoyable and probably the most influential. Whenever I am at an early childhood service or function, there is always someone who says ‘I know your face’ from *Every Child* and I just loved the story about X or the issue on Y. It is very rewarding to know that our work is genuinely valued, appreciated and used in a practical, everyday sense to support professional roles and to ‘make a difference’.

In this issue of *Every Child*, as we focus on the fundamental dimensions of quality in early childhood, we are doing so through the lens of ‘creativity’. Several writers highlight ways in which children’s

imagination and creativity inform their meaning-making and how educators can support children to visualise and imagine ideas and then transform them into visible products or actions—both indoors and out. Contributors Julie Wren, Gai Lindsay, Anne Shinkfield, Judy Radich and Kaila Weingarten each provide unique insights into dimensions of creativity and how it can be fostered in early childhood contexts; Ros Littlelyke reminds us that ‘creativity’ doesn’t happen in isolation from families or solely within an early childhood service. She says that communities, parents and educators must come together with ‘a shared understanding of the fundamental importance of encouraging children to think creatively’.

It has been a pleasure to edit *Every Child* for such a long time and to meet and work with so many wonderful early childhood professionals and writers in every corner of the country—and beyond. A new editor will commence in 2016.

Professor Alison Elliott

On behalf of the ECA team, we would like to thank Alison for her extraordinary efforts on the ECA Publications Committee and as the Editor of *Every Child* magazine. Over the past 20 years, Alison has guided *Every Child* through changing developments in the early childhood sector and we appreciate the passion and dedication she has brought to the role. Thank you, Alison.

Sam Page—ECA CEO