This issue brings with it the anticipation of a federal election and the need for all of us as advocates for young children to seek out and ‘talk up’ the significance of early learning to anyone who crosses our paths—the students and educators we work with, families, our local and not-so-local politicians, friends and community members.

With a three-year election cycle it is imperative that these conversations are continuous. Samantha Page, CEO of Early Childhood Australia, in her article on the latest campaign ‘Early Learning: Everyone Benefits’ explains how we must shift our thinking and convey messages that investing in quality early learning increases the nation’s prosperity, contributes to our wellbeing as a society and in turn will contribute to all children receiving the early education that is their right.

The guest statement from Anne Hollonds, the Director of the Australian Institute of Family Studies, asks us to think more broadly and wrap health, education and social policy around families and children in a holistic way. The E4Kids study as well reminds us to think differently about program provision to ensure those children that need services the most have access to high-quality programs. It is fitting we have a tribute to Tonia Godhard AM in this issue as she has been a champion for many years around the impact of government policy on outcomes for young children.

Chris Steel’s article will encourage us all to look hard at the AEDC data and see how each community in Australia fares across five key learning areas. This reflection will provide the impetus to become proactive in our work with families, make intentional decisions and focus on how each program can improve outcomes for young children.

Kaye van Nieuwkuyk gives us a glimpse into the joys and challenges of working in remote communities and urges us to do better for our vulnerable families. Meni Tsambouniaris gives us practical solutions and insights into working with and alongside refugee families.

Lorraine Fordham shares with us the power of a carefully crafted nutrition program in developing the health of vulnerable children.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) paper discusses the significance of and planned rollout for all Australian children to learn a language in addition to English from Foundation to Year 10. Starting from a young age gives them a head start and an edge in their future participation in our linguistically and culturally diverse world. In addition, the Australian Government is currently trialling the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program in 41 early learning services nationally, with talk of a broader rollout.

Narrabundah Early Childhood School in the ACT shares with readers the positive gains for children and families as they have introduced play-based learning and bush schools into the curriculum. Kate Turner, from The Hutchins School, shares with readers the research and success she has been part of in developing empathy in kindergarten boys.

Daniel Donahoo asks us to remember we are in the midst of a technological revolution and find ways to see screens or technology not as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for children, but rather another tool to engage with children and support their learning and development.

This edition, with its varied and diverse content, has something for everyone involved in and interested in the care and education of young children...”

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Judy Radich
Co-Editor