For most of us, there have been many different pathways and motivations which have led us to our current work. Some may have thought it would be ‘fun to play with babies all day’ (although they soon realise it is also very hard work which requires a great depth of intentional thinking and reflection). Some may have considered that the sector would always provide job opportunities (and in many cases, it does). Some may have been motivated by a deep sense of social justice, stemming from an acknowledgement of the rights and agency of every young child. Others may have simply wanted to experience ‘… its magic and its joy’ as expressed by Dame Quentin Bryce in her guest statement.

In whatever way we have arrived at the current point in our working lives, there is still much journeying ahead.

A key message underlying the Early Learning, Everyone Benefits campaign is the need for each and every early childhood professional to be able to articulate the importance of high-quality, nurturing, responsive, early learning for every child. This includes the research evidence and universal human rights framework underpinning the focus on the benefits of early learning, and what this means or ‘looks like’ in everyday practice. A further key message is that, when we consider the right to high-quality learning opportunities for children, this is about ensuring commitment and equity in opportunities for all children, not simply those who may challenge us the least, or who experience nurturing, loving homes, secure and well-resourced communities and highly qualified staff.

This edition of Every Child presents an array of material for us to consider, reflect on and learn from. Judy Radich gives an overview of how early learning settings may amplify children’s learning and development. Articles from Jo Goodwin and Melinda Miller, Denise Proud and Alison Evans challenge us to consider meaningful Reconciliation, and Jessica Brown highlights the impact of Syrian children’s experiences. Several practical articles support our understanding of strategies for improvement in specific contexts, for example, Margaret Robson Kett outlines very useful tips for reading with children, Bridget Isichei describes her service’s journey in transforming their setting and we hear from Emma Grant about her experiences in bird watching with young children.

If you enjoy reading Every Child, I would encourage you to also take a look at the Australasian Journal of Early Childhood (AJEC)—its research and commentaries may assist in articulating the foundations for early childhood practice and the importance of early learning. For example, ECA’s recent June issue of AJEC includes some excellent research articles on inclusive practice, such as ‘Embracing everybody’ from Mackenzie, Cologon and Fenech and ‘One of the kids’ from Blackmore, Aylward and Grace, describing the aspirations of parents of a child with a disability.

I encourage you to read and reflect on your own personal journey of professional motivation and work in early childhood education and care, and consider how this may support your understanding and articulation of the benefits of early learning for all children. As Co-Editor of Every Child, this is a journey which is both an honour and a privilege.

Jackie Brien
Co-editor

‘… there is still much journeying ahead.’