Welcome to this issue of *Every Child*, with its focus on pedagogy …

Pedagogy is about children and their rights as capable, competent, learning members of our communities. It is a reciprocal relationship, with the concept of pedagogy being about our role as early childhood professionals in both contributing to children’s learning and wellbeing, and also in ourselves learning from children. In this issue’s Guest Statement, Rhonda Livingstone talks about pedagogy as being a reflection on practice and professional decision making on ways to support children’s learning, development and wellbeing.

Pedagogy is supported and enabled by government policies and funding that assist educators to reflect on the why and how of their work, in order to improve the care and learning opportunities provided for and with children. Australia is a signatory to the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, and our policy framework reflects these rights for children that underpin early childhood pedagogy and practice.

It is vital that commitments initially made through the Council of Australian Governments’ *National Quality Agenda* are continued and strengthened—for example, continued funding for at least 15 hours per week of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in the year before school, continued support for a well-qualified workforce, and continued support for the states and territories to monitor and quality-assess ECEC provision.

This edition of *Every Child* brings some excellent examples of pedagogy in action. Bernadette Hayes tells us about her school’s responsive approach to supporting children who have experienced trauma. Coral Campbell and Chris Speldewinde give examples of educators who followed children’s interest in science, learning with and alongside the children. Melissa Griffiths and Sandie Wong write about how a parent collaborated with educators and children to develop an artwork recreating *The Rainbow Serpent* Dreamtime story, with children now sharing what the artwork means and building their families’ knowledge and understanding of reconciliation.

Recently I asked some children what was important to them about their experiences in ECEC, and whether I could write them down for other adults:

‘My teacher, Emma, is kind to me, she always listens to me’, explained Chloe, aged three.

‘I like being outside. I don’t like it when we have to come in and sit down at the table. But we always have to come in’, claimed William, aged four.

Chi, aged two, sang ‘heads and shoulders, knees and toes’, then ‘eyes and ears and mouth and nose’.

She smiled and pointed to her educator’s eyes, gently touching her ears. I noticed the educator give her a bigger smile and a gentle hug. Chi stretched her arms around her teacher, smiled again, clasped her hands, then moved away and proceeded to sing the rhyme to a doll in the home corner, holding the doll carefully and pretending to listen to her response.

If I were to reflect on the views expressed by Chloe, William and Chi, I would be thinking about:

- ways that the dignity, understanding and wishes of these individual children were affirmed (or not) in the context of their relationships with educators
- what this might mean for a caring, nurturing early childhood professional
- actions, behaviours and attitudes of the educators that may need to be strengthened or changed to support children’s learning, development and wellbeing.

This is pedagogy. It is the caring, intentional, continually refined practice of educators. As Rhonda Livingstone states, it is an art and a science.

Every child has the right to such an education, focused on learning and underpinned by a strong sense of safety, identity and nurturing.

*Jackie Brien*
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