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Editorial policy

The material published in the journal will aim to be inclusive of children in Australia wherever they live, regardless of race, gender, class, culture and disability. The journal will not publish material which runs counter to the wellbeing and equality of all children and their families, and those who work with them.



Contents

Editorial

From the President	2
From the Editorial panel	4

The Prep Year

Toward continuity - it's everybody's business	6
Preparatory perspectives: Are our children being short changed?	8

Teacher Stories

The Queensland State Preschool Initiative 1972-2006: Developing professionalism in the 80s	9
"Moths are beautiful too"	13

Teacher Profile

Roslyn Heywood	15
Jasmine Richards	15

Partnerships

"I didn't know there was an Air Force base in Charleville ..." - A profile of RAFS	16
SEEDS: social and emotional early development strategy	19

Feature Articles

Staying true to our principles	21
Using sophisticated picture books and process drama to engage early years students with the critical strand	25
Anxiety in early childhood	31
Culturally inclusive practice	34
Contemporary approach to behaviour teaching and learning for children across the learning years	36
Pats on the back and food for thought	39
An Australian First - children and families set to benefit from new early childhood curriculum	42

International Perspectives

Update on Ann	44
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Book Reviews

Offbeat	45
Pearlie and Jasper	45
CLUBS: A Lolly Leopold Story	46
ECTA would like to thank	47

From the President

NETWORKING

Again, it was great to see so many people at the ECTA Conference this year. We had nearly 500 delegates and 40 Trade Displays. ECTA's Mission Statement is "Networking for Early Childhood Professionals" and it is this networking aspect that I would like to focus on in my report. I would like us to reflect on the 33 years of State Preschool Education and look forward to the new chapter of Prep. I know that every ECTA member is not necessarily from that particular sector but I am sure that we have all been involved or affected by it in some way. As I looked around me at the conference, I saw many who were involved in State Preschool Education for many years. I'm sure those people would consider that, during the evolution of preschool over the last 33 years there have been as many highs and lows as there will be with Prep.

When I was a 20 year old graduate in 1975, I really had very little experience in preschools. My last year at Mt Gravatt Teachers College saw about 25 students placed in a few specialised units in early childhood. This was as a response to the government's introduction of free preschool education. There were very few preschools for us to do our prac and we had to go in pairs. My first prac placement was at a newly opened preschool at Mansfield with Jeanette O'Shea (who went on to become a founding member of ECTA and a subsequent Life Member). She was originally a primary teacher who had completed the first conversion course for preschool teachers. She was an inspirational Early Childhood teacher. This always made me aware, as a prac supervisor later on when working in universities and TAFEs, of the importance of role models. I think we had a total of six weeks prac in two preschools before venturing out on our own.

The first term of 1975 saw me placed in Gatton and again with a very inspirational teacher – Nancy, who had been the C&K teacher there before opening the preschool. Incidentally, her daughter Libby is now very involved in the active Hervey Bay ECTA Regional Group. There were not enough preschools open for the number of graduates so many of us were placed as supernumerary teachers in areas close to where we would eventually open other centres.

In second term I was sent to Crows Nest (about 30 minutes from Toowoomba) to set up and open the



preschool there. The school was a "Hightop" - Years 1-10. The principal made it very clear from the start that he and the town had asked for Years 11-12 and "had gotten a preschool instead". The preschool was not ready to be opened for another month, so I was placed in the high school staff room as that was the only place that I could have a desk and access to a phone. I was never invited to a staff meeting or introduced to the Years 1-3 teachers, although of course I did introduce myself. I did,

however, have the opportunity to visit a couple of other preschools that had full day programs as I had never seen one. When the month was up, the preschool was still not completely painted and we did not have half of our equipment – including beds. However, the principal insisted that the preschool open. My teacher-aide and the parents who lived in the town were very supportive and we struggled through with makeshift equipment. However, after about three months, I was ready to resign as the principal was being so obstructive and I still did not have all of the equipment. The thing that saw me through was joining a group of Toowoomba preschool teachers who met together on a regular basis. It was these networking sessions that allowed me, as a 20 year old, to talk through my issues with experienced and not so experienced teachers. This group then went on to become an ECTA Regional Group over the next few years. I was discouraged from having any contact with the teachers at my own school and, personally, I think this was a very isolating feature for teachers of preschool at that time.

Many teachers would have stories like this wherever they have worked. I suppose the point of this story is to highlight the fact that there will be some Prep teachers in similar positions when they start up a new Prep class and that everything takes time to evolve and changes are inevitable. As one of the slides said on the presentation displayed at the conference – "Prep is building on the strong tradition of Preschool". The positive feature of Prep, as I see it, is the fact that Early Childhood Education is again a main focus of attention. I see strong networks of Prep teachers already establishing. We also have a great play-based curriculum and I commend the QSA for implementing such a consultative process when developing this. However, we must still remember that we need to be constantly assessing the use of teacher-aide time, support of children with special

needs and resourcing to enable Prep teachers to effectively implement this curriculum. ECTA is committed to supporting Early Childhood Professional networks wherever they form or however they form (eg email lists) and we feel that this is especially important during this time of change which will ultimately affect everyone in Early Childhood, not just Prep teachers.

THANK YOU TO JOHN PAUL COLLEGE AND CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

I would like to thank all of the people who made the 2006 Annual ECTA Conference such a success. The staff at JPC (especially Kate Mitchell) has been extremely supportive this year and communicated with the Conference Committee on a regular basis to ensure that all parts of the conference came smoothly together. I am sure that those who attend the conference would agree that the venue has some of the best facilities available in Brisbane. I would also like to thank my Co-convenor, Robbie Leikvold, for her support over the year. Robbie and I had some big shoes to fill when the previous Convenor, Pam Fulmer, moved out of Brisbane in 2004. I think we have now in 2006 been able to finally delegate more of our responsibilities to the other Conference Committee members as we become more familiar with the roles. I would also like to thank the Conference Committee members who have been helping for many years and to the five new people who joined us this year for their support and ideas. As we prepare to evaluate the 2006 Conference and make preparations for the one in 2007, I would invite other ECTA members to join our team. Simply contact the ECTA office to express your interest. Also, a special thank you to David, Lorelei and Michelle who make up the ECTA Secretariat. They do most of the administrative functions related to the conference and without their support we would not be able to manage.

THANK YOU TO THE 2006 PRESENTERS

Obviously a conference would be nothing without its presenters. We were very lucky this year to be able to collaborate with three early childhood organisations and, with the support of Pademelon Press, to bring out from the USA, Dr Sue Bredekamp. Sue gave a very interesting and inspirational Keynote Address and Masterclass while acknowledging the challenges which all early childhood professionals face during these times of constant change and accountability. Everyone gave very positive feedback about Ian Lillico's presentation about Boys in Education and delegates were inspired by the continuous enthusiasm of Phil and Susie Splitter. We had 20 other high quality Workshop and Lunch time presenters who were also just as interesting and

informative. My thanks go to everyone who presented and who gave up so much of their time and effort to make such a significant contribution.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership this year was awarded to Pam Fulmer. Pam worked as an Early Childhood teacher in NSW before moving to Queensland. She taught at the Ballymore C&K centre for about 20 years from 1983. She has been an ECTA Member virtually since then. She was also Treasurer and Conference Convenor for many years and still is actively involved in the conference even though she now lives in Maryborough. Pam was always an advocate for young children and their families and well respected by her peers. Pam is an extremely well deserving recipient of this award. Congratulations Pam!

ECTA CONFERENCE SUPPORT RECIPIENTS for 2006 -

This year we were able to offer six ECTA members financial support to come to the conference.

1. Jasmine Richards - Doomadgee State School
2. Kathy Byrne - Sacred Heart Yeppoon
3. Carleen de Jong - Freshwater State Preschool
4. Julie McLaughlin - Sacred Heart Yeppoon
5. Roslyn Heywood - Theodore Early Childhood Centre
6. Liz Fallon - Kin Kora State Preschool

ECTA WEBSITE - Members Only Section

This year we launched the new look ECTA website. At the conference we showed delegates a new Members Only Section that has just been activated. This section will contain the Power Point Slides of various presenters throughout the year, the EYC Journal and various other items that will only be available to ECTA members. It is password protected so if you haven't received your username and password by email please contact us. I would especially like to thank our Web-Weaver, Gail Halliwell, and the other web committee members, Kim Walters, Bronwyn MacGregor and Shae Comonos who have spent so much of their time in getting this new website up and running.

PHOTO COMPETITION

This revamped competition is now closing on 1st September 2006 with a Hewlett Packard Laser Printer AND a one year ECTA Membership as first Prize. Details and entry forms are available on the ECTA website www.ecta.org.au



Toni Michael - ECTA President

From the Editorial Panel

ECTA 2006 Conference Overview

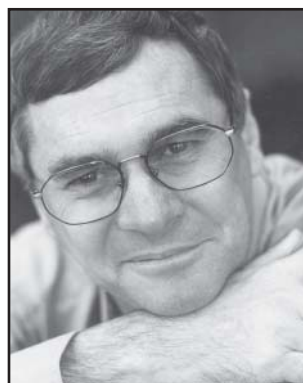
Dr Sue Bredekamp kicked off another successful ECTA conference at John Paul College, Daisy Hill Brisbane on the 24th of June. Conference delegates were treated to a number of dynamic presenters who spoke on a broad range of topics, from *Anxiety In Early Childhood* to *Using Clay In The Early Childhood Environment*.

Some of the highlights of this year's conference were the extensive trade fair, excellent new rooms (somewhat warmer than last year!) and musical interludes performed by the talented musical duo "The Splitters". Susie and Phil had the delegates rockin' in their seats early in the day, with an ECTA song sung to the tune of "Down Town". The Splitters also made a musical appearance for the fun round-up of the day at the C&K sponsored wine and cheese. Speaking of sponsors, the major sponsor of this year's conference was QIEC Super and Mediasphere - BroadLEARN Early Learning was the Platinum sponsor. Other sponsors included the Qld Department of Communities, EDSCO Education Supply Company, Sloan and Kemp Consultants and i.on my school by Thoughtware. ECTA also sponsored some regional members to attend this year's conference, and their journal contributions will be included in this and future journals.



Dr Sue Bredekamp

Dr Sue Bredekamp's keynote address was the warm-up to her Master Class discussion on the role of the early childhood practitioner in children's play, and children's play in literacy development. She highlighted the place of phonemic awareness in an adult/child blended approach to



Ian Lillico

developmentally appropriate literacy practices. Former school principal and father of three sons, Ian Lillico, engaged his audience through a practical approach to young boys and their education. Ian's address highlighted the way in which boys think about their gender and

how boys are influenced by their social peers. His presentation outlined the impact that the environment (including their social status and academic success), the school and the family have on their positive self concept and achievements.

If you felt like getting your hands dirty, Rebecca Lennon's workshop on using clay in the early childhood environment offered the opportunity to discover some basic hand-building techniques and provided some valuable strategies for using clay in the classroom. Another hands-on workshop was presented by Education Queensland's Gary Davey. This workshop gave effective strategies for engaging children through flexible pathways to learning. Some of these strategies showcased how to create an effective and engaging early childhood environment in the early years through a negotiated curriculum and play-based activities. Allowing children to have input into the planning process and also identifying behaviour and personality types strengthens this process.

Two workshops, *Habits of the Mind* and *The Importance of Auditory Processing Skills in the Early Years* gave an insight into some emerging topics in early education. Both of these workshops provided detailed handouts on strategies to enrich and augment children's learning in relation to these areas.

Some of the highlights of this year's conference were the extensive trade fair, excellent new rooms (somewhat warmer than last year!) and musical interludes performed by the talented musical duo "The Splitters"

Lunchtime was not only a time for eating delicious food and stretching your legs, it was also a time for building networks and maxing your credit card at the trade fair. This year's conference had an abundance of trade displays and goodies to purchase. With shopping over, the lunch time programme offered a choice of a Preparatory Year update, a networking discussion for teacher aides and assistants, an update from the Queensland College of Teachers on the requirements for registration in 2007 or a

tongue-in-cheek 'I'm not stressed, I always look like this' musical session with Phil Splitter.

With full Bunnings bags, and notepads crammed with new ideas and strategies, weary delegates wrapped up the day with a full bodied red and the chance to win one of many prizes donated by the generous trade display businesses. The C&K sponsored wine and cheese gave people a last minute opportunity to speak with the conference presenters and farewell each other. For those of you who were unable to attend, we hope you enjoy the journal contributions made by conference presenters.

This year's conference will be hard to better, but the band of tireless conference committee volunteers is already reviewing and planning next year's big event. If you would like to join the conference committee, please contact ECTA on 07 3211 4260 or email: info@ecta.org.au

Letter to the editor:

Thank you for the sponsorship allowing me the opportunity to attend the Annual ECTA conference in Brisbane on the first weekend of the June/July holidays.

It has been a good few years since I last had the opportunity to attend this wonderful event. Four children and 600km makes attendance not as easy as it once was.

However, thanks to the wonderful ECTA committee my flight was subsidized allowing me to travel down and attend.

An ECTA conference is not just about excellent professional development, great displays, or free goodies, but the wonderful friends made over many years.

I walked through the door, located my name badge and lanyard and as I was attaching the two, heard a voice beside me asking where she could find her lanyard. I know that voice I thought, and yes, there was Di who I went through College with (some 20+ years ago), what a lovely way to start a great day.

Sue Bredekamp affirmed my beliefs and confirmed the research that I am currently exploring as a Prep Facilitator.

The workshops, as always allowed time for discussion and reflection.

The food was warming (the soup hit the spot on such a cool day) and the people just as warm.

The day provided many opportunities to catch up with many fellow teachers whom I have enjoyed time with over my teaching career but who have moved on and away from Gladstone (my home). As I was told once - everybody has worked or lived in Gladstone at some stage in their life!

The day ended beautifully with some delicious wine and cheese (thank you C&K) and I even got to take home a prize (thank you Junior Bees)

Once again, thank you ECTA for the wonderful opportunity to attend this great day out.

Liz Fallon
Kin Kora State Preschool

Towards continuity - it's everybody's business

***Mark Cooper and Naveen Lim -
Early Phase of Learning - Curriculum Strategy Branch***

Over the last four years the early childhood community has engaged in robust discussion about a range of issues associated with the implementation of the preparatory year. The single facet that has remained central to these discussions has been the early childhood sector's passionate belief in maintaining a focus on the needs and interests of children. The preparatory year is a major change initiative reaching across all levels of the community; families, prior to school services; and operations of schools.

Debate around the preparatory year has had a positive impact on the early childhood sector. Parents have been engaged in discussions and have clarified their thoughts about the qualities, practices and philosophy inherent in early childhood programs. An informed community is a wise consumer of services. Prior to school, services have focused on establishing their place on the education pathway. Services have considered and communicated the attributes that make them distinctive, again promoting a more informed community. In schools, attention has focused on curriculum change, procedural management and community engagement. What is evident across all contexts is that the preparatory year can serve as a catalyst for promoting early years philosophy, reinforcing common messages about teaching and learning for young children and building stronger connections between services to promote consistent educational pathways for children and their families. In essence this means advocacy for continuity of learning for children; the building on prior learning to assist acquisition of new knowledge; and development of skills and capabilities that see children well placed to accommodate change as they move between settings and/or year levels.

As early childhood professionals, we are well aware of the need to build continuities between

An informed community is a wise consumer of services.

students' prior experiences and their future learning. How can we realistically achieve this if we only focus on what our service/sector/year level provides without looking at what comes before and after our time with the child? In order to maximise continuity, shared dialogue is required across settings.

Continuity across settings

Strategies to foster continuity require time to become embedded in our everyday practice and rely on open, direct communication. Perceptions formed from afar are often incorrect, leading to discontinuities. The development of networks with other professionals in our local area is an ideal way to commence discussions and plan for continuity.

In these networks it is worthwhile taking the time individually and with colleagues to consider the following:

- What is the focus of my service/setting?
- What are my priorities for children and families?
- What is continuity and how can it be achieved?
- What relationships can be developed to assist in this ongoing process?
- How can we build shared understandings about children?
- What strategies exist that already align our curriculum and teaching practices and what else could we do?
- How do our existing management processes and operational structures support the continuity process?

Developing positive relations between pre-Prep providers and P-3 teachers is an essential place to start the professional dialogue. The road to continuity starts with building strong foundations and connections within your immediate early childhood community. While



The Prep Year

we may all acknowledge this as important, it requires someone to take the initiative and make contact, not once but often. Some questions to consider as starting points for developing positive relationships include:

- Do I invite my local child care provider and community kindergarten to specific staff or community discussions or information sessions?
- Do I invite staff from the local school to parent meetings about starting school?
- Do we make parent information about our services (brochures etc.) available at each setting?

The road to continuity starts with building strong foundations and connections within your immediate early childhood community.

Continuity within school settings

As a school-based provision embedded in all aspects of school activity, successful implementation of the preparatory year requires school personnel to reflect on their current teaching philosophies, teaching strategies, management processes and operational structures as they relate to the key components of the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines (EYCG). The challenge for schools is to analyse the outcomes of these reflections, identify commonalities, map these against the EYCG and plan for alignment of curriculum, teaching, assessment and procedures across the early years of school. This alignment would certainly create smoother transitions for students across year levels and promote a consistent message about teaching and learning in the early years.

Recognition is given to the fact that real change occurs as a result of sustained and focused discussion, inspired leadership and commitment to attaining shared goals. Real change takes time. Words are worthless unless they are matched by corresponding actions. In the early years we talk about "I do this" because "I believe ..."

Schools in which discussions about moving towards greater continuity have commenced

have considered and employed some of the following strategies:

- Engage with the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines, look for commonalities in practice and identify areas for future learning and professional development.
- Share with the community, including other early phase providers, the key components of the effective early years curriculum, discussed shared perspectives and differences.
- Ensure staff can provide current, accurate and consistent information about early phase and prep implementation to the community. This involves the identification, adoption and articulation of the schools beliefs and approaches to teaching and learning.
- Recognise diversity in terms of ability, attitudes, learning styles, interests, family structure and cultural practices.
- Form an Early Phase of Learning committee to review and reflect on school pedagogies and blend the EYCG into their practices
- Use curriculum coordination time to promote continuity and philosophically consistent planning by teachers.
- Decide on operational structures to cater for the individual needs of children and deliver the intent of the EYCG through a process of community consultation.

Continuity, therefore, is everybody's business at a local and government level. When children enter any setting, whether it be playgroup, child care setting, kindergarten, Prep or Year One, they do so with a wide range of attitudes, values, skills and knowledge. This obliges us locally to examine our pedagogies in light of their suitability for engaging all children in the lifelong challenges and joys of learning. We recognise that maximising continuity between and among the various aspects and sources of a child's learning over time is an important principle to be observed if we are to maximise each child's engagement in his or her learning.

Key stakeholders also need to take accountability to make sure that contemporary, consistent messages are delivered to early childhood professionals including pre-service teachers. That way, teachers can deliver reflective and responsive practices that support the continuity process.

Preparatory perspectives: Are our children being short changed?

Reprinted with kind permission from 'Talking Point' ECA

Why are some Queensland Prep classes without sandpits and outdoor play equipment? Why are the learning resources and physical environments being watered down? Why are teacher aide times reduced from 30 hours to 15 hours? In fact, it seems that progressively, the budget and resourcing for prep classes have fallen far below that of State preschools! This educational reform seems linked to goals of fiscal restraint more than to improving the quality of education. In fact, by looking at the table below, you can see that children will now be experiencing basic quality environments, compared with the previous, high quality environments. One serious consequence of this may be that teachers resort to commercial learning kits that promote teacher-directed activity as opposed to child initiated learning.

At a glance, some of the changes that will impact on children are:

	Until 2007 State Preschools (4-5 year olds) had	Preparatory classes (4.5-5.5 year olds) 2007 should have
Indoor Learning Environment	4.09 sq metres per child of unencumbered space with additional areas of the room for learning centres	3 sq metres per child with no additional space
Toilets	2-3 child sized toilets within room with partitions	No toilets; use of nearest block and "buddy" system
Resources - Interactions with adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 30 hours of Teacher Aide time * Maximum of two aides to work part-time * Replaced same day if absent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 15 hours of Teacher Aide time * Different people can make up allocation * Not replaced for 2 days if absent
Physical resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Shared between 50 preschool children * Sandpit * Playground climbing equipment * Carpentry table, water trough, plank frames, planks, nets, balls, sandpit toys, etc. for perceptual motor program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Shared between up to 200 prep children * No allocation for sandpit * No allocation for playground climbing frame * No allocation for physical skill equipment

The Queensland State Preschool Initiative 1972-2006: Developing professionalism in the 80s

Dr Rosemary Perry

Dr Rosemary Perry has had extensive experience in early childhood education, as a teacher, researcher, administrator, lecturer, consultant and writer. Her most recent book is *Teaching Practice for Early Childhood* published by Routledge Falmer.

"I don't know what yous are doin' ... but it must be all right ... 'cause my fella can't wait to get here ... and he doesn't stop talking about yous at home"

I overheard a Dad saying this to the preschool teacher as he dropped his son off at preschool one morning in the early 1980s. It came to mind as I sat down to write this article — a sequel to Gail Halliwell's memories of the flurry of excitement surrounding the establishment of state preschool education (See *Educating Young Children* Issue 1, 2006). I'm sure that Dad would be surprised that his common sense observation is still being recalled. It has stayed in my mind because it so succinctly encapsulated the two questions teachers were asking themselves at that time "How do we best explain what it is that preschool teachers 'do'?" and "How do we know whether what we are doing is all right?"

Believe it or not, at the time such questions evoked much discussion and enthusiastic debate. The discussion paper *Some beliefs about learning and development* (Department of Education, 1981 which became known as 'the little brown book'), attempted to crystallise these commonly held beliefs and served to promote further discussion of the practices that flowed from them. Remember, this was at a time before preschool curriculum documents existed and a school 'curriculum' was more often linked with subjects and syllabuses than with creating conditions for effective learning. It was an exciting time of professional growth and development.

In this article I'd like to share some of my memories of that era – when I worked with teachers as their Regional Preschool Officer, firstly in the South West and North West Regions and then in Brisbane North, from 1976 to 1990.

***This was at a time before
preschool curriculum documents
existed and a school 'curriculum'
was more often linked with
subjects and syllabuses than with
creating conditions for effective
learning***

By 1982, a decade after the start of the initiative, many preschool practices associated with the role of teacher aides, learning environments, and the play-based nature of curriculum were becoming 'bedded' down. There was also less angst as 'the critics' came to appreciate that learning was occurring as children moved around freely, chose the activities they would play with and became involved in creating and problem solving. I well remember the warm feeling that came with a somewhat grudging endorsement given by a primary school inspector after spending the morning at a preschool. He said, "When I got over the shock of the 'untidiness', I looked at what the children and teacher were actually doing. There was a lot of structure and organization really ... and the teacher was interacting with the children in ways that did seem to be extending their thinking."

After the fiery initiation many preschool teachers had experienced as preschools were established in the 1970s, we had become quite skilled at justifying and defending early childhood practices. It would have been easy to keep implementing 'tried and true' practices and bringing out the general 'learning through

After the fiery initiation many preschool teachers had experienced as preschools were established in the 1970s, we had become quite skilled at justifying and defending early childhood practices

play' type statements to justify them. This did not happen however, and it's interesting to look for reasons. Perhaps it was because of the professional support available or because teachers' own enthusiasm and motivation led them to explore teaching issues. It may well have been a combination of both! It certainly was a time when there was a commitment to professional development - the type of professional development that encouraged teachers to question, seek new knowledge and reflect critically on their practices. It was available to all preschool teachers throughout the State and took a variety of forms.

Advisory teacher service: Each region had a team of advisory teachers (ATs) whose role it was to visit preschool teachers in their centres and support them individually in ways determined by the individual teacher. ATs were not there to facilitate a specific Departmental initiative but rather to assist teachers to achieve the stated goals of preschool education in individual ways. This meant ATs could be called on to 'team teach' with a teacher as they explored new strategies; help set up a room in ways that offered new learning spaces; attend parent meetings when 'sticky' issues were foreshadowed; or be a general sounding board as teachers sought to refine practices or clarify their thinking on teaching issues. The relationship teachers had with their AT was the key to the success of the service and to the building of trust and openness that facilitated professional growth.

ATs were not consultants – they were not seen as having all the answers, nor did they 'report' on the teacher. Neither was an AT position seen as a means of promotion. ATs were generally

accepted as colleagues, effective teachers with good communication skills who spent three years as an AT then took up another teaching position with children. Most ATs felt they gained far more than they gave from their experience and continued their teaching careers refreshed and enthusiastic, with many new skills and ideas to utilise. It was a popular and effective means of professional renewal and enrichment.

Links Magazine: *Links* began its life as a Newsletter published three times a year by the Preschool Branch and was sent to all preschool teachers with copies to associated primary schools. The Contents page of *Links* No. 3. 1974 illustrates its purpose and nature:

Editorial – on meeting the present and future needs of children

Feature articles – an Overview of the Report of the Australian Preschool Committee and an article written by a teacher on Developing Mathematical Concepts;

Notes and Jottings – included reports on the preschool-theatre pilot scheme (the forerunner of KITE); a parent participation evening in a preschool; and the establishment of a resource library of slides and films for use at parent meetings.

Round up of Ideas – ideas for creating a toy library for families; ideas for science experiments.

In Response to Questions – how to request sandpit refills and how to apply for sick leave

New Things – a range of Australian hand and finger puppets was featured

From the Journals – summaries of recent research

Links was a mix of professional articles, frequently written by teachers sharing their experiences, information of new initiatives being taken by the Branch, as well as practical advice. Given the large intake of preschool teachers new to the Department, it also offered advice in relation to bureaucratic processes. There is no doubt that *Links* contributed to the strong sense of 'we are in this together', palpable at the time, and sent a clear message to teachers that they were a vital and valued

part of the Preschool Branch (later the Division). The newsletter type format gradually evolved into the glossier *Links Magazine* that became a popular professional journal with national and international subscribers before its demise in the early 1990s.

One Day Conferences: These Conferences, organised at a Regional level, were held on one day of each term with preschools in an area being closed for the day so teachers could attend. (Were these the fore-runner of pupil free days?) The Conferences were often held in a preschool and, with the parent group doing the catering, morning teas and lunches, became quite a tradition! Given the professional isolation felt by many preschool teachers at the time, these days were valuable in offering opportunities to off-load frustrations, share problems as well as gain new insights. Initially organised by Regional Preschool Officers and advisory teachers, over time volunteer teacher committees became the organisers, deciding on workshop topics and seeking out interesting leaders. Invited guest speakers (many from outside the Education field) gave of their time gratis and made for many memorable sessions covering a wide range of topics. For example I recall a leading Brisbane architect opening up many new possibilities for designing learning environments, and a well known wild life expert revealing and discussing the habits of some 'exhibits' he encouraged from their sacks, to the consternation of some in the audience! Children's moral development, and ways of helping children work through conflict situations, was another particular topic that had a marked influence on teachers' thinking and practices and spawned ongoing workshops and discussions.

an ever-expanding circle of influence and networks

Early Childhood Resource Centres: The practice of teachers sharing their understandings, skills and resources with colleagues was given a huge fillip during the 1980s with the establishment of *Early Childhood Resource Centres* (ECRCs). Again the form of these varied with the needs of each Region. In larger metropolitan Regions, ECRCs

supported network/interest groups, provided a venue for meetings, and housed a library of reference materials and teacher made resources. They soon became dynamic 'hubs' supporting the on-going exploration of teaching topics. For instance, an initial puppet making workshop led to further workshops in which teachers shared their experience of 'using' puppets with children and explored the types of learning that could be facilitated through their use. These workshop resources were then incorporated in the ECRCs library, displayed at the Centre and resource booklets produced. Word spread – primary teachers wanted to participate in such workshops; student teachers visiting the ECRC wanted to join and access the resources; some parents came; teachers dropped in to laminate posters and pictures and chat over coffee – and so there was an ever-expanding circle of influence and networks, and a growing wealth of current practical resources. The collection of big books, felt stories, maths games, ideas for physical activities, posters for parent displays, as well as research journals, texts and other reference materials relating to the needs and interests of teachers just kept expanding. The collegial element and the excitement of sharing and developing new knowledge together were also very motivating.

ideas were welcomed and thoughtfully considered, perceived problems were brought into the open, acknowledged and solutions sought

Teachers as researchers: Given this framework of professional support, many teachers became active 'researchers' within their own Centres and in the process learnt more about children, their teaching and themselves. The Queensland Preschool Curriculum Project which resulted in the "Understanding children" series both supported and captured some of the 'thinking' being done by teachers at that time. Some of that thinking illustrated in *The Diary of a Preschool Teacher* (Thomas 1984) is still

resonating with, and challenging, teachers and student teachers today. For example in thinking about the type of Centre she wants to create Thomas writes in the beginning of her diary:

I want preschool to be a place where...

Children can work in a 'real' climate - real in the sense that their ideas and thoughts may be constructively criticised, but their efforts of doing and thinking will always be valued.

Looking back on that period during the 1980s, it could be said that teachers also worked in a 'real' climate - real in the sense that ideas were welcomed and thoughtfully considered, perceived problems were brought into the open, acknowledged and solutions sought. Above all, teachers were valued. As one teacher recently put it:

"I felt really enthusiastic being a preschool teacher in the 1980s. I wanted to learn more, try out new ideas. Looking back on those years I think I was so motivated because I felt 'valued' ... and because I felt valued I was able to show the children and families at my Centre that they were valued too."

Many things in education have changed since the 1980s as a result of changing cultural and economic worldviews. The discourse now is very different. Broad vision statements have replaced individual teachers' more personalised statements of goals based on considered beliefs, personal teaching experience and developing knowledge. Curriculum documents guide content and practices and the rhetoric focuses attention on outcomes, bench marks and accountability rather than individual children's needs, interests and development.

This reflection is not the time or place to debate the merits or otherwise of these changes so I shall restrain myself (with some difficulty!!). It is, rather, an opportunity to look back on what 'was' in the context of that time, and draw attention to the values that underpinned professional development activities during the 1980s. I believe it was these values that contributed to the significant

growth and respect for the early childhood profession. It is interesting that the Quote to Note in *Links* No.5, 1988 summarises these so succinctly:

... it is the fusing of three values in a profession which gains other people's respect. First, the value placed upon systematic knowledge and the intellect: knowing. Second, the value placed upon skill and trained capacity: doing. And third, the value placed upon setting this conjoint knowledge and skill to work in the service of others: helping. It is the fusion of these three - knowing, doing, helping - that gains the respect of the community.

Davis McCaughey, *Piecing Together a Shared Vision*, 1987 Boyer Lectures, ABC Press.

As I talk with early childhood teachers today on the verge of the Prep era, I hear different types of questions being asked. For instance, "How can we offer play-based curriculum in such small spaces, without a full time aide and with limited resources?" Hopefully such legitimate questions will be acknowledged just as the teachers' questions in the early days of the preschool initiative were acknowledged, and support given to finding solutions. State preschool education in Queensland has a strong record in terms of the professionalism of early childhood teachers. It is hoped that similar values and visions will underpin future professional development so that peoples' respect for the early childhood profession continues to be justified.

References

Tainton, J & Graham, O (1981) *A Discussion Paper – Some beliefs about learning and development*, Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education.

Thomas, S (1985) *The Diary of a Preschool Teacher*, Brisbane: Queensland Department of Education.

Many things in education have changed since the 1980s as a result of changing cultural and economic worldviews

Teacher Stories

“Moths are beautiful too”

Thanks to the staff, children and families of Maryborough Childcare Centre for giving permission to use this Moth project.



SEIZE THE MOMENT!

“What comes out of the cocoon?”

“Beautiful butterflies”...

“What else do you think might come out of a cocoon?”

“Moths - but they are just brown and yucky - not beautiful like butterflies”...



The children and carer look at moths both in books and the “real thing” and talk about colours, shapes, textures ... They mix up paints in the “beautiful” colours of the moths.



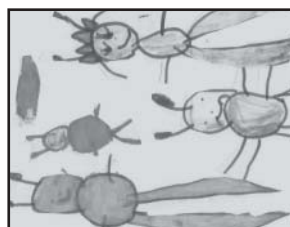
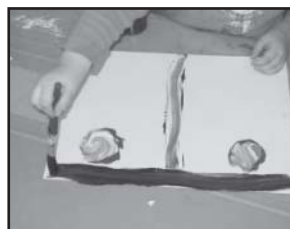
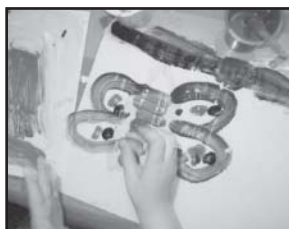
CHALLENGING THE IDEA THAT MOTHS ARE JUST “BROWN AND YUCKY”



Teacher Stories



The children excitedly use visual arts medium to explore moths and caterpillars and expand to bugs, spiders ...
The following are a few examples of their work.



A few of the children's ideas about moths

"Moths come out at night time".

"Moths and butterflies lay eggs on leaves".

"Moths have wings like butterflies; they are the same on both sides".

"The moths have grubs at our house - they are on the ceiling".

"The caterpillar crawls into the 'racoon' and after two weeks the moths come out of the 'racoon'".

"Moths caterpillars like to eat lettuce".

"Moths are not butterflies".

"They like the dark".

"They have patterns that look like eyes".

"They do have eyes, they are little".

"They don't have blue, I like blue".

"They look the same on each side - people are like that too".

"Moths are like caterpillars but I like them more than caterpillars".

"We had a moth inside my home and mummy and daddy tried to get it out. They don't like moths but I do".

"We had a moth in our car once. I don't know if it got out".

"I like moths because they scare mum and dad".

"They were once caterpillars, like butterflies, but they aren't butterflies, they are moths and I like moths".

"I like to watch moths fly at night in the kitchen".

Conference support for regional and remote members

Roslyn Heywood

Roslyn Heywood works at the Theodore Early Childhood Centre, and received ECTA regional and remote member sponsorship to this year's annual conference. Theodore, Central Queensland is home for Roslyn. Within this small historically rural town you will find diverse contexts: gold and coal mining personnel and their families, farming, professional and business communities, and the winter caravan population, which is welcomed every year.

The latter have been largely responsible for keeping the large outdoor grassed area of the Theodore Early Childhood Centre green this winter. T.E.C.C is a limited hours Centre which officially opened in October 2005. The centre teaches and cares for children ranging from six months to five years. Roslyn spends her hours here teaching kindergarten and directing and



playing. The latest learning curve embraced by the centre was to resource children with additional needs in the limited hours centre. This is a challenge in a small town, where the flying doctor is on call! Theodore's regional involvement with ECTA has been very short. Membership began early in 2006 after some internet searching as the needs for networking and professional development arose. A network with the

Gladstone branch of ECTA has been established - "Thank you Gladstone!" Roslyn enjoyed the 2006 Conference and the access to the resources garnered from it is ongoing. In addition to offering her article *Learning to learn*, Roslyn extends an invitation to ECTA members - if you wish to visit Theodore - do pop in for a cuppa and say "Hello!"

Jasmine Richards



25 year old Jasmine Richards also received support from ECTA to attend the 2006 annual ECTA conference. Jasmine's home town is Proserpine, which is just inland from the glorious Whitsunday Islands. After graduating from Central Queensland University at the end of 2004 and receiving a rating 1 for her final teaching prac Jasmine was prepared to go and teach anywhere in the State. For Jasmine, "anywhere" turned out to be Doomadgee, an Aboriginal community in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Jasmine is now in her second year of teaching Prep at Doomadgee State School and loves every minute of it!



“I didn’t know there was an Air Force base in Charleville ...” A profile of RAFS

Davida Melksham

Davida Melksham has worked as a Field Coordinator for nine years, based firstly in Mt Isa then in Charleville. She has since been seconded into the role of Communications Officer for Frontier Services and, although not working as directly with children, is more than happy to share the experiences of Early Childhood Educators in isolation.

Picture this if you will ...

It’s August 2001, my first day in a new town, having transferred to take up a job with Remote Area Families’ Service (RAFS) in Charleville, South West Queensland. I am standing at the Food for Less checkout when a customer in front turns to make small talk.

“So you’re new in town then?” (It’s not really a question, as everyone knows everyone, in a town of 4000 people.)

“Yes,” I respond, “I’ve just moved to town to take up a new job.”

“So where are you working?” she questions.

“I am the new Field Coordinator at RAFS.” A puzzled look comes my way. “I didn’t know we had an Air Force base here in Charleville.”

After explaining that I was, in fact, employed by RAFS and not the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), I spent a few minutes attempting to explain what it was that RAFS did.

Over the years, I have found explaining RAFS is not the sort of conversation you can have with any success in the checkout line. In spite of that, I shall now try to do so in 1200 words!

To grasp the concept of RAFS, an understanding of how it came into being is necessary. At the time of writing, there are five Remote Area Families’ Service teams. In 1979 the Queensland Country Women’s Association (QCWA) initiated a scheme. At that time, many rural women who were geographically isolated, not only from child care, but also early childhood activities of any kind, not to mention resources, felt ignored. The general feeling was that their choice to live in remote areas and raise families, should not preclude their children



from having similar opportunities as their urban counterparts. In the ensuing years, establishing the needs of families, and the search for a sustainable model, led to Frontier Services creating the prototype upon which today’s teams are based.

In 1984 the first RAFS service, based in Mt Isa began. Despite constantly evolving to suit emergent needs, the model used then, is still the basis for the teams that operate today. Its success in pioneering an innovative service responsive to the needs of families who were predominantly unable to access mainstream services for their children and families, led to the establishment of two more services based in Longreach and Charleville in 1986. The three teams are funded by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA). The success and growth of the existing three services led to the establishment of North Queensland and Emerald RAFS in 1997 and 1999 respectively. These two teams are funded by the Queensland Government Department of Communities. Additional funds are committed to all teams by Frontier Services

Partnerships

to allow for innovative mobile service provision. Between them the five teams cover an area of, in excess of one million square kilometres – a fairly big “centre”, “Kindergarten” or “classroom”!

So that’s where the services are, and how they came about, but what is it that they actually do?



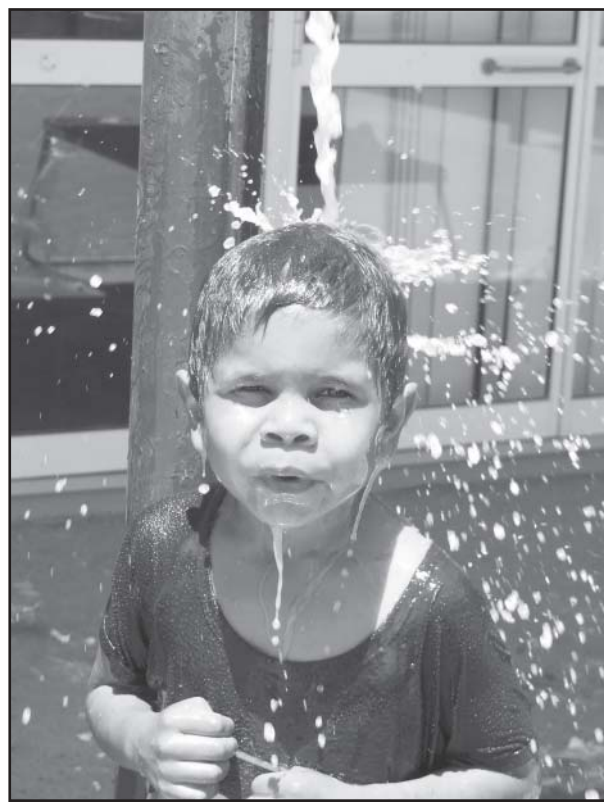
The services are directed towards families with children 0-12 years of age, most particularly those children in the early childhood years. Teams provide social interaction for parents and children with others at similar stages and ages; access to early childhood developmental activities; and the opportunity for children below school age; and their parents, to experience and understand the importance of learning through play. They also enable parents to have access to the facilities, resources, advice and support, that are available to the majority of Australian families in order to enhance parenting education and skill development.

RAFS aims to ...

- bridge the communication gap between urban and rural living
- provide support to parents raising children in isolation
- encourage group activities for young children and their parents
- assist families with resources, information and skills not readily available to those living in remote areas (Jones J 2006).

Like so many rural areas in Australia, outback Queensland has only a small population dispersed across a vast area. Trying to meet the needs of the people who live there, and not just sustain life, but to nurture and grow community is a challenge that Frontier Services relishes. The most practical way of meeting these needs is by offering a mobile service.

Two full-time Field Coordinators and a half-time Resource Officer staff each team. Staff are responsible for the delivery and management on a daily basis of this unique mobile Early Childhood service. There is an expectation that the Coordinators spend 60% of their year undertaking field trips in order to achieve RAFS aim of ensuring at least three points of contact annually. The standing joke within RAFS circles, is that field staff spend more time with their travelling partners than with their life partners and, although a throw-away line, it is very true. Living out of a suitcase and so closely with your work-mate is often considered piquant by those who have not experienced the joy that accompanies the once-in-a-lifetime experience of travelling the Outback doing this work.



Many reading this will raise the salient point of how three points of contact a year could possibly make a difference. In fact, it is something new staff coming from a mainstream background constantly grapple with.

For Nadine Fatnowna and her family, there is no doubt it makes a difference. Dine, 31, and her partner Darren, and three children Jesse, 1, Eboni, 2, and Matthew, 6, live on 'Womanooka', a cattle station 190 kilometres (two hours drive) from Eromanga. She is 290 kilometres (three hours drive) from the nearest Child Health Nurse, Doctor, Kindergarten or State School. Matthew is enrolled through the School of Distance Education in Tibooburra, 310 kilometres away (four hours drive). Her family are very supportive and although always "only at the other end of the phone", live in Mackay 1542 kilometres away (seventeen hours drive). I smile when she knows EXACTLY how far it is. "We try and see them at least twice a year," she tells me with a little sadness, "But I knew that when I chose to work out here," she adds resolutely. I met Dine shortly after I moved to become part of the RAFS team here in Charleville in 2001. At the time she was cooking on an even more remote station – 'Durrie', 90 kilometres from Birdsville. She was

at the time a sole parent. She, and a very young Matthew travelled for two hours on a rough gravel back-road to the property where RAFS were holding a play session. She took an unpaid day off from her job as a Station Cook to attend.

If this sounds very different from what might happen in a metropolitan area, it's because it is! The children's needs are the same, but the access to service differs greatly. Often there is not a choice of service – RAFS is the only service operating in many rural areas. Dine is pragmatic about it. "Of course it would be great if we could have more access. You wouldn't knock it back. The thing with RAFS is that you come with more than a degree. It's that you have a genuine love for the lifestyle out here. You accept us for who we are, encourage us, and sometimes you challenge us, and we all need that sometimes. And I don't just mean the children," she adds.

Have I ever wondered if RAFS is as satisfying as to being an RAAF pilot, or wanted to swap places? Not for a single moment!

References

Jones J 2006, 'Frontier Services Remote Area Families' Service' Pamphlet June 2006, Australia

Student Membership Category Information

Individual Student Membership (no voting rights)

To encourage students to become and continue as ECTA members, the Early Childhood Teachers' Association is offering full time Early Childhood students FREE membership.

Free Membership benefits include:

- Substantially reduced Annual Conference and Workshop costs (limited spaces available).
- Opportunity to access professional development throughout the State using Videolinq technology.
- Representation on your behalf in a range of issues and government initiatives affecting Early Childhood Professionals in Queensland.
- The opportunity to apply for \$500 sponsorship to attend the ECTA annual conference.
- Regular e-newsletters.
- Face to face networking through regional groups.
- The opportunity to join a regional group in your area - ECTA financially supports professional

learning experiences initiated by regional groups.

- Access to up-to-date information about events and news on the ECTA website.
- Access to professional support from your early childhood peers.
- First year graduate membership at a reduced cost of two thirds of the current Individual rate at the time of joining.
- AND coming soon: a Student/Beginning Early Childhood Teachers Email Discussion List.

For \$30 receive:

- Three *Educating Young Children* journals produced right here in Queensland by and for Early Childhood Professionals.

Or for \$50 receive:

- Three *Educating Young Children* journals and
- Approximately five DVDs of Professional Learning such as conference keynotes, videolinqs and workshops.

ECTA memberships are tax deductible. Membership is current from January 1 to December 31.

Membership should be paid by 15 March if you wish to receive full yearly benefits.

For application form go to our website or email info@ecta.org.au

SEEDS: Social and Emotional Early Development Strategy (Formerly: Little Minds Matter)

Julie Appleton



SEEDS is an initiative of Queensland Health's Southern Area Population Health Service (SAPHS) and aims to develop a comprehensive mental health promotion program to enhance social and emotional wellbeing in the

early childhood sector. The program will include interventions to build attachment and security, self esteem, and skills to promote communication and positive interactions. It will be piloted and evaluated in early childhood services.

The importance of early social and emotional development

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in Australia and overseas about the importance of the early years for subsequent health, development and wellbeing throughout the life cycle. The importance of early development, and particularly early social and emotional development, is a critical factor in long term outcomes for children as there is increasing evidence of continuities and connections between child and adult mental health. A reduction in the level of problems can be achieved by promoting positive child development before the emergence of difficulties. The roots of later healthy emotional and behavioural functioning lie in the earliest relationships that infants and toddlers have with their primary caregivers. These relationships set the scene for children to effectively learn critical skills such as regulating and perceiving emotions. The quality of nurturing and nourishment in the early years has far-reaching effects.

The quality of nurturing and nourishment in the early years has far-reaching effects

What has already been done?

Over the past three years, the Promoting Health in Early Childhood Environments (PHECE) project has trialled the suitability of a health promotion process in child care centres. A major component of the PHECE project examined the role of mental health promotion in early childhood environments. After conducting a mental health resource audit of selected child care centres, it was evident that centres had few resources to support social and emotional wellbeing, and their understanding of mental health was often restricted to the concept of mental illness. As one strategy to increase knowledge and skills in mental health promotion, a mental health promotion resource list (*Mind You*) was developed. *Mind You* was well received and highly valued in the sector.

the child care sector is in great need of support in promoting social and emotional wellbeing

Findings from the PHECE project revealed that the child care sector is in great need of support in promoting social and emotional wellbeing. While there is plenty of information that outlines why we should work with young children, there are very few resources that detail how this should be done. Programs that provide specific strategies about how to work with children in the early years, commonly focus on a particular aspect of skill development, for example, problem solving and social skill development. These programs are not holistic and do not address the mental health needs of staff, children, families and communities simultaneously.

In the course of the PHECE project, it became apparent that there were health promotion resources available for the early childhood sector on a variety of health related issues, for example, sun safety, nutrition, oral health and personal

safety. Most of these resources are well accepted by the sector and frequently used with children. However, for mental health promotion, there is no identified program that provides a framework and associated activities to build resilience in children.

The PHECE project undertook some exploratory research in late 2004 investigating how pre-school children understand and verbalise emotion. Although there was great variation in children's emotional competence, four and five year old children did, in general, seem to be able to identify common emotions such as happy, sad, angry and frightened. This work illustrates that children do have a capacity to understand emotion but there is great potential for using specific strategies for enhancing their emotional competence.

The concept of a comprehensive program to promote social and emotional wellbeing in early childhood has emerged as a key direction for the future

What is proposed for the future?

The concept of a comprehensive program to promote social and emotional wellbeing in early childhood has emerged as a key direction for the future. Although the primary target group for the SEEDS initiative will be children, engaging and up-skilling child care staff in the implementation of the program will be a critical success factor. Child care centres have indicated that such a program would be of enormous benefit to them.

It is envisaged that the program will consist of support materials, depending on the identified needs. Some possible inclusions are:

- background information about the early years and the impact on social and emotional wellbeing
- introduction to health promotion and strategies for implementation in early childhood services

- policies for supporting social and emotional wellbeing
- strategies for promoting social and emotional wellbeing in young children, including a number of tools to develop emotional competence
- activities for children that build confidence and a sense of being unique
- autonomy in making choices and problem solving
- secure relationships with children and adults
- self motivation to explore and try new experiences
- the ability to cope with change
- activities that are appropriate for small groups of children who are struggling with self esteem
- how to approach a new child
- strategies to improve staff wellbeing
- strategies for effective communication with families
- promoting links with community agencies and resources.

Steps proposed in project implementation:

2006

- formation of a Reference Group to advise and support the project
- assessment of the needs of child care centre communities to support social and emotional wellbeing
- development of a draft program to support services

2007

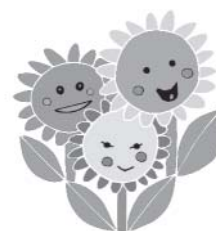
- trial of the draft program in child care centres, with support from SAPHs
- evaluation of the trial

2008

- development of the final program.

For further information contact Julie Appleton, Project Officer, West Moreton Population Health Unit, Queensland Health, Ph: 07 3810 1500

Email: julie_appleton@health.qld.gov.au



Staying true to our principles

Sue Bredekamp, Ph.D.



Dr Sue Bredekamp is the famous author of *“Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs”* (1997).

She has written many books since then, including *“Play and school readiness”* (2004) and has just recently co-authored the book *“Where Bright Futures Begin”* (2005).

Sue is currently Director of Research for the Council of Early Childhood Professional Recognition, Washington, DC and Senior Program Advisor for RISE Learning Solutions, Cincinnati, Ohio.

With changes to the early years of schooling, the emphasis on a uniform curriculum framework, and the increased demand for accountability, early childhood professionals and teacher educators confront new challenges as well as opportunities. The keynote address presented key findings of research on effective early childhood curriculum and teaching and described ways the curriculum can be implemented to become more effective, while also preserving the fundamental values of the culture of early childhood education, including emphasis on the whole child and play.

In countries throughout the world, the early childhood context is changing rapidly, presenting new challenges for early childhood professionals. These changes reflect widespread recognition of the lasting benefits of high quality programs, particularly for children growing up in impoverished circumstances (for research, see www.nieer.org). Trends include: 1) movement toward universal voluntary programs for 4's and even 3's; 2) greater involvement by public schools (and Ministries of Education) as part of the EC delivery system; 3) increased demand for highly qualified teachers for young children; 4) greater emphasis on early learning standards, curriculum, and outcomes; and 5) increased demand for accountability.

Many early childhood professionals resist or react negatively to these trends because they perceive threats to some of the profession's core values. Among these fundamental values of the field are: 1) valuing the whole child - a child development point of view; 2) the value of play for learning and development; 3) importance of relationships and sense of community; 4) valuing and teaching each child as an individual; 5) respecting linguistic and cultural diversity; and 6) promoting relationships with families.

At the same time, the last few decades have seen a considerable increase in the knowledge base about what kinds of developmental and learning outcomes predict later success in school and life (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns 2001). Current research also provides a great deal of information about effective curriculum and teaching practices (Neuman & Dickinson 2001; Dickinson & Tabors 2001). The challenge for early childhood educators at all levels is to ensure that our practices reflect this current knowledge while also staying true to our principles and core values — a challenge but also an opportunity. Meeting this challenge will require greater agreement in the field about what constitutes effective curriculum and teaching strategies.

Curriculum is a written plan that describes the goals for children's learning and development, and the experiences, materials, and teaching strategies that are used to help children achieve those goals. Traditionally, the field has been ambivalent if not hostile about curriculum. “Prescribed” curriculum or “scripted” curriculum is anathema to early educators, and as a result, confusion tends to reign in practice. Fearing bad practice, we have often warned teachers against curriculum, telling them what not to do, but failing to tell them what to do instead. In the United States, for decades,

one of the prevailing phrases was, “Curriculum is what happens”. This phrase actually was the title of a book published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1977. Unfortunately, no one remembered that the book had a subtitle: Planning is the Key! With little emphasis on planning and less clarity about what children should be learning, the emphasis in early childhood until recently has been on the processes of teaching and learning rather than the content of the curriculum. Some people have continued to mistakenly think that NAEYC’s position statement on developmentally appropriate practice is a curriculum but it most assuredly is not.

Curriculum today goes beyond process to address both what to teach (the content to be learned) and when, with attention to the important sequences of development and learning, and on discipline-based knowledge about how abilities build on prior learning. For example, early childhood mathematics researchers provide guidance for which skills, concepts, and knowledge are the most foundational for later learning (NCTM & NAEYC 2002). Likewise, early literacy research identifies predictors that don’t guarantee later success in reading but certainly increase its likelihood (Neuman & Dickinson 2001). Planning curriculum based on these sources of information, as well as children’s predictable interests and abilities, ensures that it will be developmentally appropriate - that is, challenging and achievable for most children in the age range for which it’s intended (Copple & Bredekamp 2006; Bredekamp & Copple 1997).

To ensure that early childhood programs are effective and children reach their potential, curriculum should be planned and implemented based on several core principles (see Figure 1) (NAEYC/NAECS/SDE 2003; Bredekamp & Pikulski 2005). The implications of each of these principles are described briefly.

Overview of Principles of Effective Early Childhood Curriculum

- Comprehensive
- Integrated (meaning-centered)
- Balanced (investigation and focused, intentional teaching)
- Developmentally appropriate

- Recognizes and capitalizes on diversity
- Differentiates and individualizes instruction based on ongoing assessment
- Research and theory based
- Standards and learning outcomes based (reflecting important content of the disciplines)
- Respects and enhances family involvement
- Promotes teacher professional development

Comprehensive curriculum meets the needs of the whole child. It addresses all areas of development and learning: language and literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, social and emotional development, and physical development, and is culturally rich and reflective of the diversity of children and families served. Comprehensive curriculum reflects our knowledge that, “cognitive, social-emotional, and motor development are complementary, mutually supportive areas of growth, all requiring active attention in the preschool years (Bowman et al. 2001).

Integrated curriculum in which content and learning experiences are organized around bigger ideas or topics is effective because young children are meaning-makers. They need first-hand experience and context to make sense of their learning. Integrating learning around projects (which are an essential part, but not all of the curriculum) or science, math or social studies topics of study develops children’s background knowledge and vocabulary (key predictors of reading success). Perhaps, most importantly, integrated curriculum is based on developing and extending children’s interests during the early years when attention and self-regulation are developing abilities.

Balanced curriculum reflects the understanding that children learn valued content through both investigation and focused, intentional teaching. In a large-scale longitudinal study in England that included approximately 3000 children (Sylva et al 2004), the most effective preschools were found to provide both teacher-initiated group work including small group pre-planned experiences, and freely chosen yet potentially instructive play activities supported by teachers.

Similar results were found in a longitudinal study in the US (Dickinson & Tabors 2001) in which



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children were observed at home and in preschool at ages three and four and followed into school. That study found that children benefit from both well-organized group times and free choice times, but the benefits vary by the learning opportunity and teaching behavior in each setting. During group times, teacher explanatory talk and cognitively challenging vocabulary relates to children's kindergarten and first grade scores. During play times, children benefit when teachers engage in one-to-one conversations and when they have opportunities to talk with peers. The study also provides scientific support for the value of play. The research found consistent links between kindergarten measures and the total numbers of words and the variety of words that children used during free play. Across all three years, ages three to five, they found associations between the amount of time children engaged in pretending and their performance on outcome measures.

Another key principle of effective curriculum is that it be developmentally appropriate. The words 'developmentally appropriate' are so laden with baggage and misunderstandings, that their definition in this context is required. Knowledge of children's typical development and learning trajectories is useful in curriculum planning because it enables three predictions: when children generally reach certain developmental accomplishments; what children can do and understand within age ranges; and what content will be of interest as well as challenging and achievable for most children. After all, curriculum planning is essentially a prediction that gets modified and adapted during implementation based on assessment of individual children.

Two other key dimensions of child development knowledge are individual and cultural variation, each of which must be considered in curriculum planning and implementation. Ongoing assessment of children's capabilities helps teachers determine when, where, and how to provide individual assistance to children, and to provide adequate scaffolding - the appropriate amount and kind of support that helps children move to a new level of ability or understanding.

Capitalizing on children's cultural and linguistic diversity is necessary to engage and build on children's existing understandings, that is, to help children make sense of new learning in

relation to what they already know and can do. Of course, supporting children's cultural identity and competencies is key to supporting their overall development.

New knowledge challenges the field to ensure that the content of the early childhood curriculum reflects current research and also reflects those early learning standards and outcomes that are not only developmentally appropriate but also predictive of later school and life success. These include early literacy skills: phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, concepts of print, listening comprehension, vocabulary and world knowledge, but also motivation to become a reader and writer (Neuman & Dickinson 2001). Key social-emotional accomplishments include social skills and self-regulation, both of which are successfully developed through engagement in socio-dramatic play (Bodrova & Leong 2003; Bredekamp 2004). Mathematics skills such as number and operations, measurement, and beginning geometry are also key foundational abilities. These skills are evident in children's play such as their block building or using manipulative toys but they require adults to lend the experience the language of math for the play to become educationally effective (Seo & Ginsburg 2004; NAEYC & NCTM 2002).

Many early childhood educators reject standards-based curriculum because they think it will lead to standardization of teaching practices (which they assume will be bad practices). However, along with research about content, we also have research about effective teaching strategies such as interactive book reading in small groups, decontextualized talk in one-to-one conversations, dialogic reading questioning strategies, and sociodramatic play that are congruent with early childhood core values (Whitehurst & Lonigan 2001). In *Eager to Learn: Educating our Preschoolers* (2001) a prestigious panel of scientists addressed the question, how should teaching be done in preschool?

Research indicates that many strategies can work. Good teachers acknowledge and encourage children's efforts, model and demonstrate, create challenges and support children in extending their capabilities, and provide specific directions and instruction. All of these strategies can be used in the context of play and structured activities.



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We know that there are significant differences in children's vocabulary and other important skills at school entry based on family socioeconomic status (Hart & Risley 1995). Much of this important development and learning takes place "on our watch" and we as early childhood educators have tremendous opportunity to influence it for the good. It is our ethical responsibility to apply the knowledge base and engage in research-based curriculum and teaching practices that we know will benefit children.

Families matter. Families serve as key informants about their children's competencies in other contexts, and also as partners in the program. To implement individually, culturally, and linguistically appropriate curriculum is not possible without family involvement.

Most important, teachers matter. Curriculum is a research-based plan that describes learning experiences and teaching strategies related to children's acquiring important learning outcomes. To be effective, teachers must assess individual children's learning and development, and adapt curriculum (including schedule and grouping) and their teaching strategies and interactions with children to help them make continued progress. To achieve these goals, teacher education needs to prepare early childhood teachers to work with curriculum and curriculum frameworks, to understand important sequences of curriculum content (as well as development), and to use assessment information to adapt curriculum and teaching.

In early childhood curriculum today, what is important is both content, what children are learning, and process, when and how they are learning. Both content and process need greater attention if children are to benefit from early childhood programs - the most important early childhood values of all.

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Using sophisticated picture books and process drama to engage early years students with the critical strand

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This paper examines how sophisticated picture book resources and process drama strategies enable early years students to demonstrate their learning outcomes within the Critical Strand of the Queensland English Syllabus: Open Trial (QSA, 2005). In the introductory section, sophisticated picture book resources and process drama strategies are defined and their strengths as resources and strategies in early years classrooms are highlighted. The paper then overviews the three strands and each of their three substrands of the Queensland English Syllabus: Open Trial (QSA, 2005) document. In addition, specific Foundation Level and Levels One and Two core learning outcomes from the Critical Strand are identified. Finally, a range of process drama activities, based on the popular Anthony Browne (1996) text 'Piggybook', are outlined, and their articulation with specific core learning outcomes are made known.

Picture books as sophisticated resources

There has been an infusion of sophisticated picture books for early years students in the past decade. One of my favourite authors and illustrators is Anthony Browne. The sophistication in Browne's work lies with the way his messages cannot be understood and enjoyed by engaging with the written text only. The illustrations must be understood and their meanings integrated with understandings of the written text. Sophisticated picture books are fundamentally different from 'illustrated texts', that is literary or non-literary texts with illustrations that accompany the written text (Lynch-Brown and Tomlinson, 1999).

Graham (2000) suggests that picture book resources are 'simple vehicles' and useful as an entry point before students engage with more complex texts. Miller (1998) also suggests that picture books can be used as an introduction to topics, to activate students' background knowledge and to stimulate curiosity about

subject matter. Whilst sharing the intended platitudes for these resources, I steer clear of labelling them as 'simple vehicles' or categorising them as resources for 'introductory' activities alone.

To fully explore these resources, and to take students into the Critical Strand of the English Syllabus: Open Trial (QSA, 2005), teachers need to offer carefully scaffolded instruction that prepares students for multimodal text interpretation and re-construction. I put forward process drama as both a useful and engaging strategy for such purposes.

Process drama as a strategy

In 1995 Heller (1995, p. 13) made the claim that drama activities help transform school from a place where teachers tell students what to think to a place where teachers help them experience thinking. Howell and Heap (2005, p. 59) describe process drama as a form of 'applied theatre' in which students, together with the teacher, take on roles to make meaning for themselves. Process drama provides a range of activities that are essentially improvised in nature, and takes its form from the dramatic action, re-action and inter-action of the students within a learning episode (Howell and Heap, 2005, pp. 59-60). Process drama is a means of making an otherwise abstract or unknown concept more concrete, accessible and relevant (Manna, 1996). Process drama is a medium whereby students can empathise with an experience in order to make sense of it. Such strategies permit students to enter different roles, explore the thoughts behind the action, and thus better appreciate the lived experience of a range of others. Benefits of these strategies include: making connections between students' lived experiences and those in the text under investigation; developing skills at inferring; moving beyond 'visualising' to becoming; and

developing a deep understanding or empathy for participants from the target text (Clyde, 2003). When students are involved in process drama, they not only understand more about the complexities of the events, they also forge stronger emotional connections to the content (Galda and West, 1995).

So what Foundation Level and Level One and Two core learning outcomes might the integration of sophisticated picture book resources and process drama strategies allow students to demonstrate? The following section previews the English Syllabus: Open Trial (QSA, 2005) and focuses on specific core learning outcomes from the identified levels of the Critical Strand.

The English Syllabus: Open Trial (QSA, 2005)

In its current draft, the English syllabus has three strands that each have core learning outcomes in the three substrands.

To clarify, the three strands are:

- **Cultural strand:** focuses on making meaning in contexts. Students need to know that cultural contexts and social situations influence how texts are made and interpreted.
- **Operational strand:** focuses on using language systems. Students need to know that specific texts are selected for particular cultural contexts and social situations.
- **Critical strand:** focuses on evaluating and reconstructing meanings in texts. Students need to know that the values and practices of groups influence the construction and interpretation of texts.

Each strand makes an equally important contribution to English as a key learning area. The strands are interrelated and maintain the holistic nature of English (QSA, 2005, p. 7). Each strand is further sub-divided into three substrands. The three substrands of each strand are:

- **Speaking and listening substrand:** focuses on students interpreting and constructing spoken

and multimodal texts for a range of purposes.

- **Reading and viewing substrand:** focuses on students interpreting written, visual and multimodal texts that have been constructed for a range of purposes.

- **Writing and shaping substrand:** focuses on students constructing written, visual and multimodal texts to represent people, places, things, events and concepts for a variety of purposes.

Thus there are nine core learning outcomes at each level. The Foundation Level and Level One and Two learning outcomes will be focused on in this paper. Students operating at the Foundation Level are students who demonstrate a level of understanding before that of Level One. Typically, students are demonstrating Level One outcomes by the middle of Year Two and Level Two outcomes by the end of Year Three. This paper will focus on the core learning outcomes from the Critical Strand only. It is appropriate to focus more deeply on a single strand for the purposes of better understanding its content and articulation into practice whilst still acknowledging the interrelationship between the Cultural, Operational and Critical Strands. The table below details the possible core learning outcomes that may be demonstrated by students as they participate in the range of activities outlined in the next section of this paper. Outcomes are coded by using the strand code abbreviation, the level of the outcome and then a substrand code. Specifically 'Cr' is the abbreviation for the Critical Strand, 'F', '1' or '2' are the levels, and '.1' is used to represent the Speaking and Listening substrand, '.2' for Reading and Viewing, and '.3' for Writing and Shaping. By way of example, Cr F.1 refers to Critical Strand, Foundation level, speaking and listening substrand.

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Substrands →	Speaking & Listening	Reading & Viewing	Writing & Shaping
Foundation Level Outcomes	Cr F.1 When speaking & listening, students can change their own volume & tone of voice, facial expressions and/or body language to create an effect.	CR F.2 When reading & viewing students identify similarities between visual representation of people, places & things, & familiar people, places & things.	
Level One Outcomes	Cr 1.1 When speaking, students experiment with different ways of representing people, places, events & things drawn from own experiences or from other texts by changing volume, facial expressions, gestures & sound effects. When listening, students identify possible reasons for clearly defined variations used to represent people, places, events & things including volume, facial expressions, gestures & sound effects.	Cr 1.2 When reading & viewing, students identify similarities between own experiences & representations of people, places, events & things in texts & refer to choice of: salient colour & size of image; repeated elements in an image, background or setting; simple font choices; & simple facial expressions.	Cr 1.3 When shaping, students identify the ways they have represented people, places, events & things through choice of typical facial expressions & body movements.
Level Two Outcomes	Cr 2.1 When speaking, students select particular people, words or phrases, body language & facial expressions, clearly defined variations in choice & sound effects to change the way people, places, events & things are represented. When listening, students discuss possible reasons for differences in the descriptive words or phrases, clearly defined body language, facial expressions, voice or sound effects used to represent people, places, events & things.	Cr 2.2 When reading & viewing, students identify similarities & differences in representations of people, places, events & things explaining choice of linked noun & verb groups, dominant objects or images, typical facial expressions & body movements. When reading & viewing, students suggest alternative ways of representing people, places, events & things.	Cr 2.3 When shaping, students identify dominant objects, images, typical facial expressions & body movements.

The Process drama activities

I'm going to use the sophisticated picture book *Piggybook*, written and illustrated by Anthony Browne, but you can select any suitable text and alter the activities accordingly. *Piggybook* is a story about Mr Piggot and his two sons who behave like pigs - until Mrs Piggot finally walks out. Left to fend for themselves, the male Piggots undergo some curious changes! The pictures are highly appealing and the everyday setting of the story allows the students to participate in some interesting discussions. Choose your stories carefully as not all texts are

suitable for all students. For example, some students may be experiencing domestic unrest and a story about mum leaving home may not be a sensitive choice.

These activities were designed to be undertaken over a number of episodes so students would have time to reflect upon each activity, either orally, visually or in written form. The picture book is not shared until introductory activities are completed. This is because students should be able to bring in their personal or vicarious experiences of the content before being exposed to the text.

Activity One: Descriptions

- Ask the students to think about their mother. How would they describe their mother? What does their mother look like? How does their mother behave? What does their mother smell like? What sorts of things does their mother do?
- Ask the students to think of the one word that best describes their mother. Go around the group and ask each child to nominate their one word. Repeat nominations, but this time encourage students to use an action and expressive voice as they give their nomination. **Cr F.1, Cr 1.1, Cr 2.1**
- These individual gestural and verbal interpretations can be photographed and scribed for a display. Discuss similarities and differences of interpretations. **Cr F.2, Cr 1.2, Cr 2.2**
- Once students have finalised their verbal nomination and the action that accompanies it, get the students to line up and 'perform' their representation as a 'Mexican Wave'.
- Repeat for 'Father' and then again for 'children'.

Activity Two: Clay Sculptures

- Working in groups of two, one child becomes a lump of clay and the other becomes a sculptor. The sculptor sculpts the lump of clay into a Mother statue. It might be more appropriate to get the sculptor to either give instructions or demonstrations rather than physically touching their lump of clay. Take photos of statues & scribe the students' descriptive vocabulary. Discuss similarities and differences of interpretations. **Cr F.2, Cr 1.2, Cr 2.2**
- Swap roles so both students get a go at sculpting a Mother statue.
- Repeat for Father and Child statues.

Activity Three: Transformations

- Split the students into thirds. Groups two and three form a circle on the carpet while group one stands in the middle.
- Instructions for the group in the middle: Students form the Mother statue that they crafted. Teacher counts to ten (very slowly) & students transform themselves into the Father statue, and through another ten seconds, transform into the child pose.
- Repeat for group two and then group three.
- However, surprise group three. After they have become the child statue, tell them they have one more transformation to go ... Ask them to become a pig statue. Photograph these new creations and discuss similarities and differences of interpretation. Ask students why they might have different representations. **Cr F.2, Cr 1.2, Cr 2.2**



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Activity Four: Introduction to the Text

- Show cover. What do you think this book might be about? Who do you think these people are? What are they doing on the lady's back? Who do you think the man is? What sort of person might he be? Who are the children?
- Discuss title, author, publisher, title page and/or dedication page.
- Encourage the students to listen to the book in its entirety. This builds meaning-making resources. Avoid adding to the meaning in your own words or eliciting students' interpretations at this stage.
- Read the book again, and this time, talk about the story and pictures as appropriate. Ask the students: What do you think of that? Do you do that? Why did that happen? What do you notice about the pictures on this page? Why has the illustrator drawn the pictures like that? Why did the author select this word to describe the people, events or places? **Cr F.2, Cr 1.2, Cr 2.2**
- For students operating at Level Two learning outcomes, discuss the noun and verb groups used for each family member. **Cr 2.2**

Activity Five: Frozen Photographs

- Set up working groups. Students to decide on one scene from the text that is particularly meaningful. Create a freeze frame of that scene. (Students can be characters, furniture, cat, bus stop sign etc.)
- Get each group to 'present' their freeze frame to the rest of the class. Count the students in by saying '3, 2, 1 & freeze'. Tell students to remain frozen for up to a minute. Use the 'tap-in' technique to bring individual characters or props to life. **Cr F.1, Cr 1.1, Cr 2.1**
- Photograph each freeze frame, both as a medium long shot and as close ups. Encourage students to use angle and focus strategically. Alter image using a program like PaintShop Pro or add in speech bubbles using PowerPoint.
- Students to identify the ways they have represented the Piggot family through their choice of typical facial expressions and body movements. **Cr 1.3, Cr 2.3**

Activity Six: Conscious Alley

- Raise a dilemma from the story (e.g. Mum leaving the family). Tell the students you are taking on the role of Mrs Piggot. Use simple props (e.g. apron, kitchen gloves & a scarf) to help students to accept that you are in character. Ask the students to think about the advice or comment they would like to make to Mrs Piggot. Set up two sides of an alleyway: those that agree Mrs Piggot did the right thing by leaving her family; and those who believed Mrs Piggot had no justifiable reason for leaving the family. Students have to select the option they most believe in and form a line with those who selected the same option. The two lines face each other to form an alleyway.
- Mrs Piggot walks down the alleyway. Participants on each side of the alleyway take turns to convince Mrs Piggot their viewpoint is right. Participants may raise new ideas or contest ideas previously presented. You are not aiming to have all students believe in the same point of view. The purpose of the activity is to encourage the students to listen to the beliefs of others and debate with each other in a socially acceptable way. You can encourage such behaviour by reinforcing, 'That's an idea we haven't thought of yet. Maybe we need to think about that idea too.' 'Ok, some of us might agree with that.' 'OK, your ideas are interesting.' **Cr F.1, Cr 1.1, Cr 2.1**

Activity Seven: Hot Seats

- Students take on a role of one of the four main characters (Mum, Dad and two Piggot children). Provide a range of simple props to assist children to get into role (e.g. blazer & remote control for Mr Piggot; domestic utensils for Mrs Piggot; school tie and bag for Piggot boys). Rest of the class asks questions of the Piggot family members. Encourage students in role to use clearly defined body language, facial expressions, voice and sound effects to represent their character. **Cr F.1, Cr 1.1**
- This is useful for exploring character profile, students' comprehension or their differing opinions.
- Students to identify the ways they have represented the Piggot family through their choice of typical facial expressions and body movements. **Cr 1.3, Cr 2.3**

Activity Eight: Writing and/or Shaping an Alternative Ending

- What do you think happens next? Discuss. Reform into freeze frame groups and depict your new ending as a frozen image. Repeat as per instructions given above (Activity Five).
- Students either write or prepare a visual representation of their ending. Take digital photos and alter images using a program like PaintShop Pro or add in speech bubbles using PowerPoint.
- Students to identify the ways they have represented the Piggot family through their choice of typical facial expressions and body movements. **Cr 1.3, Cr 2.3**
- For students operating at Level Two learning outcomes and completing the writing extension, discuss the noun and verb groups used for each family member. **Cr 2.3**

Conclusion

The process drama activities detailed above provide a principled foundation for literacy development that is purposefully differentiated for students working at different learning outcome levels of the Open Trial English Syllabus (QSA, 2005). In doing so, it also offers students full engagement with the critical strand of the speaking and listening, reading and viewing, and writing and shaping sub-strands. The students are learning about their own experiences and perspectives by drawing on their individual lived experiences as well as learning about the experiences and perspective of others through multimodal text interpretation and re-construction. This allows all students to make a clear personal connection to the content of study, as well as enhancing their ability to make inferences and consider other viewpoints. The strength of the activities are the way that students are encouraged to tap into all relevant resources and combine personal experiences and the differing viewpoints of others to construct deeper understandings of how texts work and also of the content of study.

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Anxiety in Early childhood

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Her research interests are in behavioural and emotional problems in children and adolescents. Her recent work has included research into anxiety prevention and intervention as well as the effects of bullying and especially cyber bullying in schools.

What Is Anxiety?

A simple definition of anxiety is a response to threat. Anxiety can also be thought of as a three-part system made up of cognition, behaviour, and physiological responses. The cognitions of anxiety are worry, maladaptive thoughts, cognitive distortions, misinterpretation and catastrophising. The behaviours of anxiety are escape, avoidance, hypervigilance, compulsive mannerisms and deficits in attention, performance and control. The bodily symptoms, or physiological responses, are patterns of visceral and somatic activation such as elevated heart rate and blood pressure, sweating and generalized muscle tension.

Although anxiety disorders have been shown to be one of the most common psychological disorders of childhood, aggressive, acting-out children are more often referred for treatment. This continues to be the case even though anxious distress in children affects both social adjustment and academic performance and has a widespread interference in most areas of their lives. As well, it has been demonstrated that many children with anxiety disorders continue to experience debilitating anxiety as adults.

When does anxiety become a real problem?

Everybody experiences some form of anxiety at some time in their life. However, when the symptoms become intense and distressing and



interfere with normal living, then the anxiety is classified as a disorder. There is some theoretical controversy as to whether anxiety experienced in a disorder is inherently different from everyday anxiety. However, it is probably likely that anxiety is on a continuum with extremes only being the severity of the symptoms and the distress and avoidance it causes.

How do anxiety problems affect children?

It has been shown that excessive anxiety has negative effects in many areas of children's lives. Many children with an anxiety disorder have impaired social relationships. Anxious children who fear negative evaluation often are too shy or timid or sometimes too bossy to interact with peers successfully. This often leads to exclusion and loneliness.

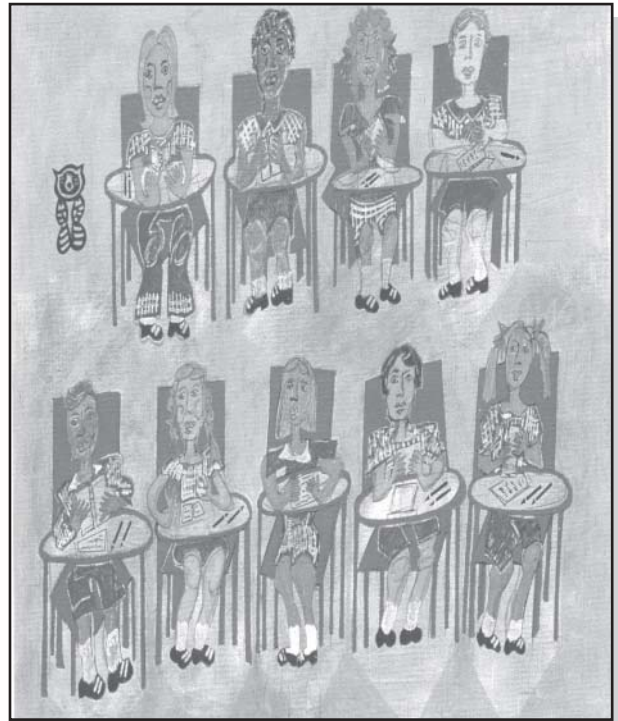
Excessive anxiety also impairs academic performance. Worrying about making mistakes reduces risk taking which means less learning and more learned helplessness. Excessive anxiety in children can be disruptive to family life when parents cannot leave the child with anyone else. It is also a source of potential conflict between parents about how to handle their child's fears and it causes difficulties in family functioning, especially if the child refuses to go to school.

As well as social and academic difficulties children with excessive anxiety are distressed. It is not pleasant to feel scared, to be unable to do what you want to, and to worry constantly.

What are the signs and symptoms to watch for in school?

Signs and symptoms of child anxiety vary in severity and duration and sometimes look different from adults' signs and symptoms. Children with excessive anxiety may have difficulty getting along with others, suffer from low self esteem and try desperately not to let anyone know how frightened and worried they are. Some signs to be aware of are:

- * avoidance behaviours
- * procrastination
- * perfectionism
- * overly conformist
- * hypersensitivity to criticism
- * poor social skills



- * unsure of self
- * shy and retiring
- * upset over changes in routine
- * requires constant reassurance
- * worries a lot
- * scared of leaving parent or facing new situations
- * cries easily
- * frequent physical complaints, such as headaches and stomach aches.

How can teachers help?

Teachers are in a special position to help anxious children and, very importantly, to work towards prevention and early intervention of excessive anxiety. The first way, is to establish a classroom climate conducive to confident learning and the second is to directly teach about how to handle fears and worries through the use of many media such as books, puppets and play.

Ten tips for teachers dealing with anxious children

Tip 1 - Provide routines

Providing routines within the classroom is usually second nature to teachers. Anxious children rely on routines to an even greater extent than non-



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anxious children to make sense out of a world full of imagined threats. However, a well-ordered classroom still requires flexibility and excitement. And anxious children need encouragement to cope with change.

Tip 2 - Model the making of mistakes

We all make mistakes in the classroom but it is how we handle them that is important. Anxious children fear making any mistake in front of others. One way to help is to consciously make mistakes in front of the children. If there is any derision about a child making a mistake, use the opportunity to stop the lesson and again deal sensitively with reinforcing the message that this is a 'have-a-go' classroom and mistakes are OK. This encourages risk taking in learning in all areas of academia as well as in emotional growth and can prevent excessive anxiety from fear of failure and fear of negative evaluation in the classroom.

Tip 3 - Reward effort

Teachers traditionally reward achievement and every now and again reward effort. Anxious children often won't try in case they fail. They can't start writing because they don't want to spoil the white page. They procrastinate and won't start the project for fear of failing and not producing a perfect result. Rewarding for effort is vital for these children.

Tip 4 - Provide social support

One of the best protective factors against developing emotional problems is social support. Social support can be provided by connecting children with their peers or to supportive adults.

Tip 5 - Talk to kids about fears and worries

As you know, anxious children are easily embarrassed by their anxiety. They don't disclose easily even when they want help. Therefore, teachers need to start talking about fears and worries. Some people think that if they talk about fears and worries, this will increase anxious kids' apprehensions and also make non-anxious children anxious. This is not the case. Talking about fears and worries does not increase anxiety in kids.

Tip 6 - Use descriptive reassurance

Instead of saying "Don't worry" and phrases such as "It will be alright" which anxious children

(and adults) find of no use, it is better to use descriptive reassurance.

Describe the reassurance in terms the child can understand, not just a superficial statement which glosses over a child's concern and doesn't teach coping strategies.

Tip 7 - Plan selective ignoring

Just as one uses planned selective ignoring to extinguish other undesirable behaviours such as calling out in class, so this strategy is applicable to behaviours such as whingeing and whining. Even if the undesirable behaviour is caused by anxiety and not defiance, it still needs to be controlled.

Tip 8 - Assist with anxious kids' plans

Graded exposure is usually the method of choice to help a child (or adult) to overcome a fear. Sometimes working with other professionals, you could be asked to monitor some aspects of a child's behaviour or to work out educationally how they can be supported. For example, a child with test anxiety might be allowed to have extra time to complete tests.

Tip 9 - Be reflective

Being a reflective teacher will decrease your anxiety as well as the children's. Reflecting on your classroom practice in a positive way promotes effective teaching and positive emotional outcomes for students. Are the students willing to take risks, especially academically? Are there some students who are pessimists, who exhibit learned helplessness? Are there some who cannot ask for help? Are your students encouraged to ask questions? Is your classroom ordered yet exciting; safe yet stimulating?

Tip 10 - Take care of yourself

If you are stressed then you're not going to set a good model for coping with anxiety. If you are anxious then that can be good in one way, you will understand your anxious kids – but you need to model great coping strategies. If your anxiety is out of control then perhaps some professional help is in order.

Culturally Inclusive Practice

Marilyn Casey

Marilyn's teaching experience includes; preschool, primary education, early childhood vocational teaching and professional development training. Marilyn was the Project Manager for a training resource to proactively respond to the effects of racism and to support equitable access to children's services for families and children of diverse backgrounds. This resource has sold nationally and internationally to children's services, tertiary institutions and government agencies.

Marilyn is committed to supporting personal and professional development and to creating inclusive working and learning environments. She strives to utilize her significant expertise in training and management to support the on-going development of the early childhood sector.

How do we challenge our own biases and develop skills to equip children to live in a diverse society? How do we create inclusive environments and curriculum that reflect the diversity of our children, families and communities?

When considering how early childhood educators can best equip children to become valued, respected and contributing members of society we may need to ask ourselves some serious questions. Are programming decisions based on our own values and beliefs systems or do we observe and plan for children from a sociocultural context? How is information used to best meet the needs of the individual child? Do we plan the programme to fit the child as opposed to how the child will fit the programme?

Whether having a culturally diverse background puts a child at risk of becoming a contributing member of society depends upon the reaction of the wider society (Garcia Coll and Magnuson, 2000).

If one views parenting practices, beliefs and values that are different from one's own as a source of developmental risk for the child to become a contributing member of society and, if care and educational programmes attempt to re-socialise culturally different children, might this not be the developmental risk for children from culturally diverse backgrounds? With this in mind it would

follow that the importance of defining one's own culture and reflecting on how it influences one's interactions with difference, would be an important first step in developing culturally inclusive practice.

It is natural human behaviour to want to categorise things. It makes thinking and talking about the world easier. However, biases often arise because we tend to group people according to physical or behavioural differences. When we group people this way, it makes it much more likely that we will begin to stereotype and not view people as individuals (Cannon 1999). Considering and including differing points of view is challenging and one needs to consider it is not only the professional who is grappling with these challenges but also the families themselves. Families will be working through the issues of raising children in a new culture. Therefore, early childhood educators who are willing to open their minds to looking at more than one way of doing things have begun the next step of the journey.

Differences between parental and professional views of what is best for a child occur between people of similar backgrounds. However, it is more likely to occur between those with different cultural views on developmental goals for children and how these are to be achieved.

Culture prescribes how and when a baby is fed, as well as where, when and with whom they

sleep. It affects the response to an infant's cry and toddlers temper tantrums. It sets the rules for discipline and expectations for developmental attainments. It affects what parents worry about and when they begin to become concerned. It influences how illness is treated and disability is perceived. It affects the views of how children learn and establishes the roles for parents, siblings, extended family and community. (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000)

Considering that culture strongly influences child rearing practices, age-related expectations and the kinds of achievements that are valued by parents for their children, how do we create culturally inclusive environments and a curriculum that will provide positive outcomes for all children and equip them to live in a diverse society?

Observing, listening to and interacting with children are the most accurate ways to learn about a child's interests, strengths and learning styles. This needs to go hand-in-hand with regular and meaningful exchange of information with parents. Meaningful information exchange with culturally diverse parents begins with genuine relationship building. According to Garcia Coll and Magnuson (2000) the extent to which parents and community members encounter doors that are opened by those who are willing to listen, and are able to provide them with information for making informed choices about their children, will no doubt reduce the risk of cultural misunderstandings and mismatch.

Practicing flexibility to include individual needs of families for their children is an important part of culturally inclusive practice. It does not mean that one must withhold the benefits of one's own training and experience but it will best provide positive outcomes for children if the professional can listen to the concerns of families, share matters and support them in decision making for their children in a non-threatening manner (Sherman, Shaw, Daily and Oku 2000).

Continuing evaluation and reflection on all aspects of your programme, asking parents and children for feedback, and observing interactions between families and their children will increase your ability to understand the cultural context of each child and how to provide programmes that meet their individual needs. Speaking openly and positively about different ways of doing things, and encouraging children and families to do the same, will no doubt have a positive effect on equipping all children to live in a diverse society.

Developing culturally inclusive practice is not based on a fixed set of skills but rather on on-going reflective processes that require increased knowledge in building collaborative relationships with people who do not share a common background (Lynch and Hanson 2004).

Observing, listening to and interacting with children are the most accurate ways to learn about a child's interests, strengths and learning styles

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Contemporary approach to behaviour teaching and learning for children across the learning years

Dr. Margie Carter

Margaret offers custom solutions to unusual behavioural patterns. In these situations Margaret designs a program to suit the specific requirement, including holistic elements that surround the problem.

Conflict Resolution...

For those in conflict: programmes to teach conflict resolution skills and techniques to children and adults in order to help them to understand and resolve conflicts - for individuals, small groups, whole organisations and whole schools For those who manage the conflict: mediation, pastoral care and conflict resolution curricula.

Bullying Behaviours...

Bullying and being bullied are closely related, and victims of bullies are often bullies elsewhere in their lives, and vice-versa. Margaret's bullying programmes help children to understand both sides of the bullying transaction, regardless of which behaviour has prompted the intervention. Because bullying is difficult to identify from a distance - either at home, in the classroom or in the playground Margaret also works with the child's parents, carers and teachers to help them respond to bullying behaviours.

Inclusion and Inclusive Education...

Margaret has a range of programmes to help create and sustain more inclusive classrooms and communities. She works at all levels - from individual children or classes to entire centres, schools and school systems.

Feel free to contact Dr Margaret Carter to find out how she can help you, your child, your centre or your school: Phone: (07) 32521655 / 0414 790 083 Email: carterma@netspace.com.au

Choice Theory - developed by William Glasser M.D. - is a contemporary way of understanding why and how children behave the way they do. It is a biological theory of human behaviour quite the opposite of external control psychology (behaviour modification). Choice Theory maintains that everything we do is to satisfy powerful forces within ourselves and that nothing we do is caused by what happens outside ourselves. We are driven by our genes to satisfy five basic life needs – survival and safety, love and belonging, freedom and choice, enjoyment and fun, recognition and competence. According to William Glasser, we choose our behaviours to satisfy these basic life needs, so choice not chance determines our destiny.

According to Choice Theory all our behaviour is our best attempt at the time to meet these five genetic needs and we always choose to do what is most satisfying to us at the time. Preventing misbehaviour is simply a matter of ensuring that choosing appropriate behaviour makes logical sense when viewed from a needs-satisfaction perspective.

Our behaviour is motivated by the difference between what we want at the time and what we have. We experience pleasure when we meet our

needs and frustration when our needs are unsatisfied. The only individual we can control is ourselves. We may persuade and influence others, but we cannot control them. We will never be influential with others unless we have a strong relationship with them, a relationship based on trust, trustworthiness, respect and empowerment.

Behaviour management is to be based on protective, nurturing, encouraging and educational relationships between you and the children in your care (Rodd 1996).

Glasser maintains that behaviour is learnt and can be taught and it is this paradigm of behaviour teaching and learning that has application to all of us working with children. Behaviour expectations need to be taught to children rather than told to children. Our challenge is to teach children behaviours that are appropriate to the teaching and learning environment, and to support them in learning to make safe and appropriate behaviour choices within this environment.

Mistakes in behaviour are viewed from a non-blame, non-coercive position. Social mistakes are regarded as necessary parts of learning and form the springboard



Feature Articles

for social coaching and scaffolding. We need to set children up to be master learners of behaviours rather than mystery learners wondering what the behaviour expectation is today – is it the same as yesterday? If kind words were the behaviour expectation yesterday then kind words are the expectation today.

Behaviour teaching and learning takes the mystery out of behaviour by explicitly teaching children what behaviour is okay and what behaviour is not okay for the group setting.

Often, when children are living together in a social group, we need to identify baseline behaviours, minimum level social behaviours needed to live successfully in a social group. These behaviours are so basic that they are needed for social harmony and productivity. Examples of baseline behaviours may include: Kind Words/Gentle Hands, Gentle Feet/Hats On, Play Today/Stay Safe, Play Safe. Naturally, you would adapt behaviour expectations appropriate to your context and to the developmental and cultural needs of the children.

Once you have decided on the baseline behaviours for your group/center you need to develop a shared understanding among all staff of what the expectation looks and sounds like and what the children would be doing, feeling, thinking etc. and not doing, feeling, thinking etc. if they were demonstrating this expectation.

When the adults are clear about what the behaviour expectation means, the next step is to formulate a teaching and learning approach to teach these expectations to children. Direct teaching and opportunities to create new behaviours will form the foundation of this approach. Parameters of this approach include the following: What's not okay is not okay; we must teach otherwise. What you teach is what you get. Where you teach it is where you get it. Behaviour teaching and learning is planned within the social context where it belongs. Mistakes in behaviour signal points of teaching and learning. Consequences are major teachers of behaviour. The ability to generalize behaviours is valued rather than one setting skill mastery.

An excellent process to teach children social behaviours is one developed by Walker (1980) and adapted by McArdle (2005), McArdle and Carter (2006). An outline of this process using the behaviour expectation *Kind Words* follows:

1. Introduce the behaviour expectation *Kind Words* to the children at a time when everyone is calm and relaxed. Talk about the purpose for saying *Kind Words* when talking with each other, why it is

necessary to talk with each other using *Kind Words*, and what it means when we say the phrase *Kind Words*. You may use puppets, songs, and story book visuals as support material to introduce the *Kind Word* behaviour expectation.

2. Discuss with the children what the behaviour expectation *Kind Words* looks, sounds, feels like – describe and define it from the perspective of the giver and the receiver. Invite the children to name what *Kind Words* would sound, look and feel like if they were and were not being used etc. You may also want to talk about what people may be thinking if they were saying *Kind Words* rather than unkind words. You may record children's responses and at a later date use these responses to create a visual book titled '*Our Kind Words Story Book*'.

3. Model and Role-play the behaviour expectation *Kind Words* with the children. Adults and/or children can perform the role-plays. Nominate the exact social scenario that the children will roleplay. If using *Kind Words* is a problem when the children are lining up together, then this will be the role-play scenario that will be used.

This teaching process is ongoing and needs to be consistently operating as part of your daily program. Regularly conduct behaviour expectation audits to determine:

- the necessity for and purpose of the expectation
- the appropriateness of the expectation – developmentally and culturally
- the teaching and re-teaching of the expectation
- the effectiveness of the expectation
- staff support and implementation of the expectation
- community commitment to and ownership of the expectation
- how reflective the expectation is of the principles, beliefs and values of the community
- the alignment of the expectation with the rights and responsibilities charter of the community
- whether the expectation sets individuals up as master learners of behaviour.

Refrain from making a 'do as I say and not as I do' social environment. This breeds 'little ownership and lots of resentment' between children and staff members. WALK YOUR TALK.

Part of the behaviour teaching process is the social consequence system – teaching children that by choosing behaviours, they are choosing the

consequences associated with these behaviours. The focus of this teaching is for the child to think about their behaviour choices. When the child has made a social mistake and chosen inappropriate behaviours, the child's job is to (1) think about behaviours chosen and (2) reflect on more appropriate behaviours when faced with the same or similar situation. The adult's role is to coach the child in these alternative behaviours as he/she re-enters back into the social group.

4. Have a go at practicing the behaviour expectation *Kind Words* in the social context. Make sure you promote generalization. Take your cue from the role play –if the role play focused on *Kind Words* during lining up then teach it prior to lining up and invite the children to now 'Have a go' practicing saying *Kind Words* when actually lining up. Behaviour-specific feedback at this point is critical (e.g. 'I liked the ways you used your kind words' or 'Saying kind words is a sign of being a friend' or 'Staying calm and using kind words wasn't easy to do but you did it. Well done') The ultimate goal of this social teaching process is achieving learning that endures.

5. Re-teach and re-practice the behaviour expectation *Kind Words* as necessary. This re-teaching emphasizes the fact that *Kind Words* is very important, so important that time will be put aside to set every child up to be successful in learning to use *Kind Words*. Ensure that you allow for individual differences in learning styles, skill levels and acquisition rates.

6. Provide social coaching and scaffolding to bridge the gap between what is known and what can be known. Some children will require no coaching, others may require limited coaching, and some children may benefit from intensive one on one and/or small group coaching.

Every problem they face urges them to evaluate themselves and their efforts, to discover new concepts and to invent new strategies. Problem solving involves change – moving from one idea to another. By this process children usually invent a new solution to a problem (Thornton 1995).

According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003), this transfer of new knowledge, skills and capabilities is more likely to occur under the following conditions:

- **Association:** When the individual can associate the new information with something they already know.
- **Similarity:** When the information is similar to material the individual already knows and fits into logical framework.

- **Degree of original learning:** If the amount of original learning and knowledge is high, it is more likely that the new learning will transfer.

- **Critical attribute element:** When the information contains elements that are critical or beneficial to the individual, learning is more likely to transfer.

- **Organizational culture:** New behaviour is more successfully learned if the organizational culture supports it.

- **Opportunity:** There must be opportunities to perform the new learning.

- **Minimal delay:** There is minimal delay between acquisition and actual use of the new behaviour.

- **Support:** New learning is more successful if individuals receive support.

Consider the existence of these conditions within your early years context. Do they happen regularly, intermittently, seldom or not at all? If we want children to develop responsibility for their behaviour choices it is imperative as early years educators that we provide instructional factors and environmental systems such as those outlined above.

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Pats on the back and food for thought – parents, teachers and expectations of early childhood education

Desley Jones

As teachers in early childhood settings, we are constantly faced with a variety of decisions to make, relating to every aspect of our role. Some of the most essential decisions we will make will be in regard to how we communicate with and develop meaningful relationships with parents.

Parents arrive at our centres with their own beliefs and expectations about what early childhood education should look like and what it should offer their child. These expectations are based on their own experiences, societal messages, experiences of other parents with whom they have contact and advice from any number of family members.

What happens, though, when the expectations that parents hold are in marked contrast with the educator's philosophy and expectations of how they can best support the development of young children? Or when educators make assumptions, perhaps erroneously, about what they think parents' expectations of early education are?

We all know, and adhere to, the mantra that children's learning and development are supported when home and school work together but just how easy is this to achieve? And how can we begin to tackle it when there are discrepancies between perceptions of expectations on both sides of the relationship.

Unfortunately, I am going to begin this workshop with more questions than I necessarily have answers for – except to say that decision making remains one of our key priorities.

In approaching the task of developing relationships and communication with parents, I believe that teachers are faced with a range of issues to consider and to revisit continuously. Some issues we will make decisions about quickly and easily, with seemingly little need to ponder on. Others will see us ruminate on and

revisit often with decisions wavering as our experience grows, our knowledge of children changes and the needs of individual groups of children, and parents, are assessed.

ISSUES TEACHERS FACE:

- When we make curriculum decisions (e.g. what our play-based learning will look like) whose reaction do we consider first? Children's, parents, other teachers?
- Who are we planning for? Whose needs are we trying to meet?
- How do we advocate for children and play when parents' expectations differ from our philosophy?
- How do we maintain the "child's agenda" while addressing concerns and expectations that parents have? Or that we think they have?
- In wanting to keep parents "on side" do we compromise what we know about how young children learn? Whose needs are we meeting then?
- How do we include parents in curriculum decision making while preserving our philosophical approach?
- How do we create a sense of community rather than an "Us and Them" attitude?
- How do we maintain our confidence in ourselves as decision makers and in children as learners?
- When we send information home how do we judge how it is interpreted? Can this information be misinterpreted or add to misunderstanding?
- How do we ensure that static displays or written information that is sent home is interpreted in terms of the meaningful activity of children rather than trivialized as

being “cute”, or over-analyzed to provide proof of learning?

- What are parents’ REAL needs? Is it proof of their child’s learning or is it reassurance, acceptance of themselves and understanding?
- When and how do we recharge our own batteries? When do we “switch off” from the families at work?
- When do we say “I’ve done as much as I can. This is no longer my problem”?
- How often do our efforts to attend to the needs of communicating with parents, or others, distract us from our primary focus of interacting with children? Where should our priorities lie?

In considering these issues I would like to share the principles for communicating with parents, that guide myself and my colleagues at our centre:

1. As Early Childhood Educators, we believe we have a vital role to play in building community knowledge about the importance, and the authenticity, of young children’s play and thinking.
2. We acknowledge that we have professional knowledge and experience to share and we

are prepared to take on the responsibility to do that.

3. We believe that all members of our community – children, parents and staff – should feel valued and accepted.
4. We consider that it is our responsibility to build meaningful relationships with all members of our community.
5. We believe that the most effective way to build these relationships with parents is through face-to-face communication.

As we work to build a relationship with each of the families at our centre our emphasis lies on giving both children and adults a sense of being appreciated and valued – pats on the back. This is so important for parents as it tells them that we value their efforts as parents, their concern for their child, their human need to feel appreciated for who they are.

At the same time we do not shy away from introducing food for thought even if this places us in the position of having to account for our decisions as educators, or realizing that others may initially feel disappointed with what they see as being quite different from what they expected of an early childhood centre. Great relationships are often built through the ensuing conversations.

Principles for communicating with parents

BELIEVE IN WHAT YOU DO

BEGIN COMMUNICATING FROM FIRST MEETING

BUILD A RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH PARENT

SHOW YOU ARE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN AND VALUE THEIR CHILD

LISTEN TO PARENTS

AVOID JUDGING PARENTS

HELP PARENTS MAKE THE MATCH

EXPLAIN CURRICULUM DECISIONS TO PARENTS

COMMUNICATE IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

DON’T BE DEFENSIVE

BE FAIR TO YOURSELF

Practical ideas for communicating face-to-face with parents

Person-to-person communication as much as possible - open, reassuring, non-defensive, friendly

Open afternoon for children and parents

Orientation night for parents - what to expect - use slides or videos

Daily Greetings for each Parent - all staff members have a role here. We all include a positive comment about their child's day

One-to-one interviews - times must be scheduled for these. Evenings allow time to talk to dads

To clarify parents' expectations/beliefs:

1. **Questionnaires for parents** - observations of, and goals for, children - a good way to stimulate discussion

2. **Group discussions regarding expectations**

- Fairy Godmother (Marketing Play by R. Milne)
- Characteristics of preschooler/school starter (or pre-prep/prep starter)

Social evenings:

Parent Dinners
Coffee Evenings
Movie Nights
Wine Nights
Book Fairs

Evenings of conversation

- building support networks for parents
- parents setting agenda/addressing their issues of concern

Information evenings -

Play nights

School Readiness

Aspects of Curriculum e.g. Literacy in the play-based program

Guest speakers

- who support your philosophy and can address parents' concerns e.g. Behaviour Management, Relaxation

Responses to use to clarify parents' ideas:

- Tell me why you feel/think that
- How are you feeling about ...
- What do you think you'd like to see
- Why do you feel that is important

Responses to use to support curriculum decisions:

- I know many people think ... but in fact ...
- As ECEs we believe ...
- Research shows ...
- I know some places do ... but we don't because we believe ...
- It may not be what you expected but ...

Parents arrive at our centres with their own beliefs and expectations about what early childhood education should look like and what it should offer their child. What happens, though, when the expectations that parents hold are in marked contrast with the educator's philosophy and expectations of how they can best support the development of young children?

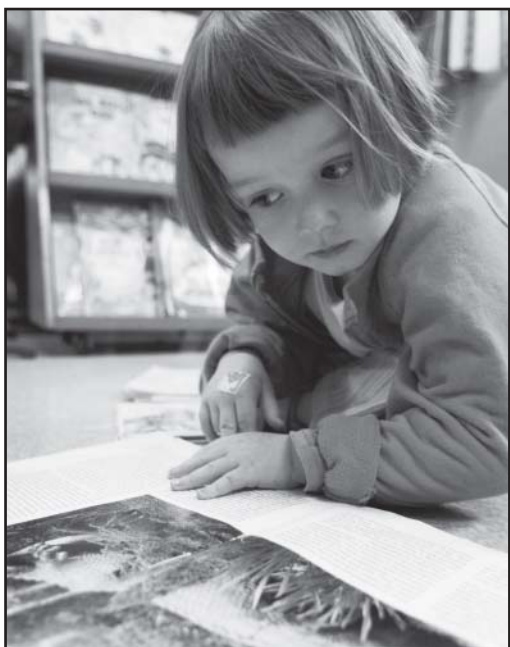


An Australian First - children and families set to benefit from new early childhood curriculum

Leading Queensland early childhood services provider C&K has published Australia's first collaborative birth to school age curriculum, entitled *Building waterfalls*.

After more than two years of extensive research, community consultation with leading early childhood practitioners, key stakeholders, parents and children, this invaluable publication is now available for early childhood educators and parents.

C&K curriculum project officer Lynne Moore said *Building waterfalls* was different to other early childhood curriculums in that it was created by and for educators, parents and children.



"Children do not learn in isolation. It is a collaborative process. *Building waterfalls* acknowledges the important role adults - educators and parents - other children and the physical environment play in children's learning," Ms Moore said.

"*Building waterfalls* acknowledges children as competent and capable learners, and the significant role adults play in optimising and enhancing children's living and learning

experiences. Adults and children share responsibility for the learning process through interaction, negotiation and collaboration," she said.

"As this state's oldest and largest community based early childhood association, we were able to draw on our 100 years of early childhood experience and practice. We are proud to have developed this first ever community based curriculum project in Australia.

"We have combined the philosophy of C&K, which is that children learn through exploring, investigating, problem solving and negotiating, as well as contemporary international early childhood research and practice," Ms Moore said.

"International studies have proven that children learn and thrive in a warm, caring play based environment that includes parents in the learning process. For this reason we have intentionally used the term 'curriculum framework' to reflect the learning possibilities and potentials inherent in each individual environment. "

The inspiration for, and the name, *Building waterfalls* came from five-year-old Blake Shackley who attended a C&K affiliated centre in 2004. When Blake was asked what he liked best about coming to preschool, his answer was quick and certain: "*Building waterfalls*".

"The metaphor: *building waterfalls*, provides a powerful and symbolic provocation for our thinking and a reminder of the capabilities of children - their strength, optimism, spontaneity and possibility.

"Water provokes thoughts of movement, change, power, flow, creativity, potential, renewal and freedom - of journeys with beginnings and yet to be discovered possibilities," Ms Moore said.

For more information please contact C&K curriculum project officer Lynne Moore, ph: 3552 5306, 0418199 914.

Building waterfalls is available for sale for \$43.95 plus postage. To order a copy contact Linda Wilkinson on (07) 3552 5301, email: l.wilkinson@candk.asn.au or visit C&K's website at: www.candk.asn.au



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5 YEARS	7.77
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SINCE INCEPTION (1989)	9.65

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YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE PDS BEFORE MAKING A DECISION ABOUT BECOMING A MEMBER.

Update on Ann

*USQ Wide Bay Early Childhood Lecturer teaching in China
by Leonie Mitchell*



Ann has reached Zhongdian in the Northern Republic of China and is already teaching preschool children English at the Eastern Tibetan Language Institute through the Australian Volunteers International program.



Ann has reported that Zhongdian is cold but very beautiful. Walking down its streets is very interesting due to the ethnic diversity of people, including: Naxi, Tibetan, Han Chinese, Yi and the odd westerner. With the different ethnic groups dressed in traditional clothing the streets are very colourful.

The town is nearly as big as Hervey

Bay, with lots of main streets, a number of big supermarkets and huge shopping areas containing traditional clothing, household goods, and even some brand name items.



There are very expensive restaurants (by Chinese standards) or you can buy dinner from a street stall for about \$1. Ann has eaten in a variety of places and found all the food fantastic, but she has not had time to explore the whole town yet.

Ann has found the preschool children very shy but wonderful to work with. They are very keen to learn and enjoy having fun too.

Ann has a great assistant called Xiao Yang to help with her classes. Xiao Yang speaks both Chinese and English.

Ann's school lacks picture books with very simple English for Pre-schoolers. If you are able to help Ann and her children by donating a book, a collection box is located in A Block of the University in front of Lindy Austin's office (A129). Alternatively, contact Lindy on 4120 6188 or austinl@usq.edu.au Your contributions would be gratefully appreciated.

Title: Offbeat

Author - Marlane Ainsworth

Fremantle Arts Centre Press 2006

ISBN - 1 92073 165 2

Reviewed by: Lyn Hunt

Illustrated by - Andrew Allingham

RRP: \$14.95

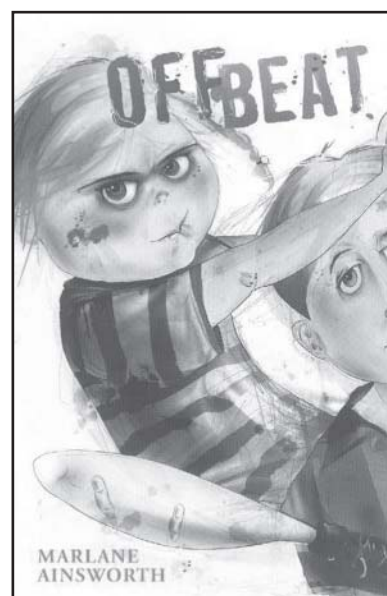
Traditional gender stereotypes are challenged in this quirky little book about two friends who have very different interests and priorities.

The much loved Australian pastimes of sport and music are challenged head to head, with a footy loving school girl at odds with her music loving, male pal.

With appeal to both boys and girls, this funny little book will have readers with smiles on their faces and laughter in their hearts as battles are fought and lost and compromises are made.

Classified as Junior Fiction this book is suited for middle to late primary readers or easily able to be read by adults to younger children in the early years of schooling.

A fun read for both adults and children alike.



Title: Pearlie and Jasper

Author - Wendy Harmer

Random House Australia 2006

ISBN: 1 74166 011 4

Reviewed by: Lyn Hunt

Illustrated by - Mike Zarb and Gypsy Taylor

RRP: \$12.95

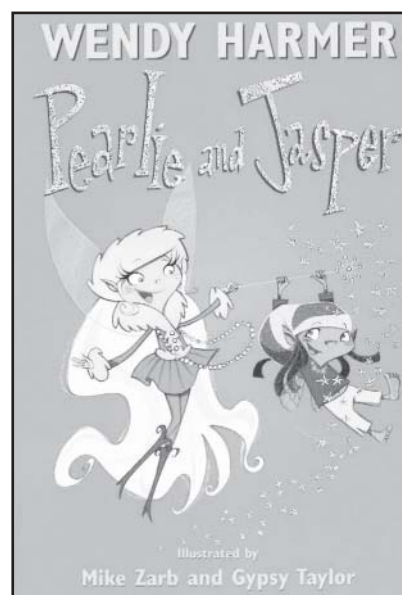
Pearlie and Jasper is the latest offering from Wendy Harmer, who is better known to some as a comedian of some note.

The fifth in the best selling Pearlie series revolves around the theme of friendship, difference and care for the environment. It is suited to all in the preschool age group, but it is particularly suited to new and emerging readers.

This delightful story is of an elf called Jasper who loses his home to progress when a road is built. It features a little intrigue, a touch of adventure, a dash of the scary and a whole lot of happiness as all ends well with Jasper finding a new place to live.

The fun illustrations by Mike Zarb and Gypsy Taylor are both whimsical and amusing and fit easily against swirling backgrounds suggesting magic and movement.

A lovely entertaining story which will both enchant and charm.



Title: **CLUBS: A Lolly Leopold Story**

**Author - Kate De Goldi
Allen and Unwin**

ISBN: 1 74114 891 X

Reviewed by: Gary Davey

Illustrated by - Jacqui Colley

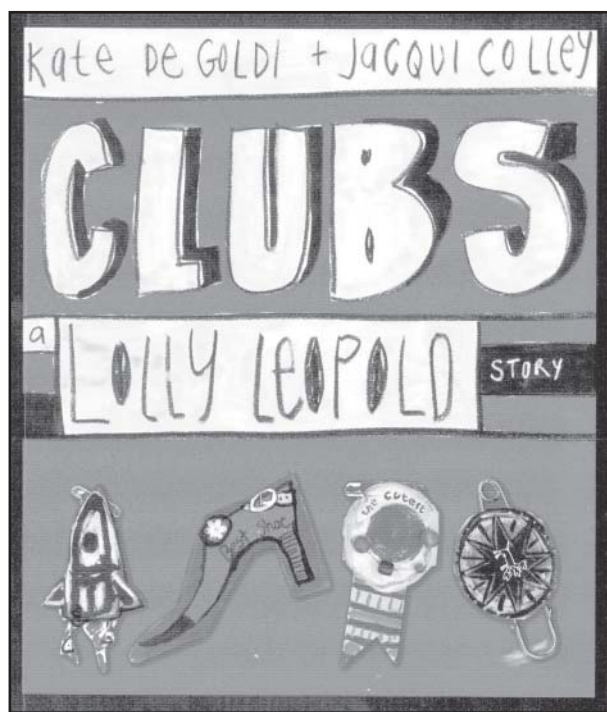
RRP: \$14.95

This is a cleverly written story about the toils and tribulations of a primary school. A primary school, similar to those that we recall from our own childhood and primary schools that are scattered around the country today. A beautiful and witty illustrated tale, Clubs combines the inventiveness of homemade illustrations with an intriguing story line that captivates and mesmerises the audience. The story follows the adventures of Lolly Leopold. Lolly has a cat named Laughing Stock and the two of them set off on an adventure to find a place where they both belong together. The search for inclusion sees them not qualify for membership of the Kitten Club, The Harry Potter Club excludes them on the grounds that they are girls and Lolly finds the Lego Club just way too violent for a refined girl like herself. So Lolly and Laughing Stock's journey begins through a myriad of events and situations describing perfectly the tough, complicated world of primary school.

The wonderful homemade illustrations and text takes the children on an exciting journey using its sly humour and visual jokes. Both of these appealing to a child and adult audience. I found myself laughing out loud as I read the story to my class.

Winner of Book of the year and Picture Book of the Year in the New Zealand Post Awards 2005, Clubs is based on the authors own experience during primary school. You can see that De Goldi has used her childhood experiences to plot and plan the characters and carefully write new scenes for them to live and play in.

Considering the nature of the illustrations and content of the storyline, Clubs is appropriate for a wide range of early childhood classes. Adults will also enjoy this journey and will make then pause, examine, reflect and discuss their own early childhood experiences and adventures.





ECTA would like to thank the following traders for their contribution to the 2006 conference

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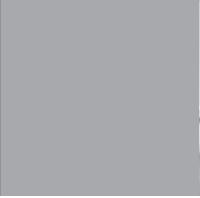
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Guidelines for contributors

The ECTA journal committee welcomes all contributions and ideas for possible inclusion in the journal. These guidelines should help you to prepare your contribution.

Style

In order to maintain a uniformity of approach within the journal, the *Macquarie Dictionary* and the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (6th edn) are preferred as the bases for reference. Australian spelling is used in preference to American.

- All numbers up to twelve should be written as words; figures are used for numbers 13 upwards (e.g. one, eleven, 18, 200). Exceptions are where numbers appear in a table, list or refer to a measure (e.g. Anne was seven years old when she walked 5 kilometres to school).
- Examples of dates and times: 15 February 2006, 1900s.
If very few numbers are included in the article: She left at ten o'clock. If precision is required: She left at 7.25 am in order to catch the seven-forty train.
- Money is usually written as numerals (e.g. 20c or \$0.15, \$120 and \$88.15) but words may be used in approximations such as 'he made millions of dollars'.
- Titles should be in italics e.g. *The Australian* rather than 'The Australian'.

Language

Your submission should be written in a style that is jargon-free, easy to read and without the assumption that your audience has any prior knowledge of your topic. If you use an acronym, include the full reference the first time e.g. Early Childhood Teachers Association (ECTA).

Avoid stereotypical, sexist, ageist or racist language. An internet search for 'The Language of Disability' will assist you in this specific area (e.g. 'uses a wheelchair' instead of 'wheelchair bound').

Specific terminology

We are presently compiling a standardised list of frequently used terms.

Examples are:

- day care (rather than daycare or day-care)
- child care (rather than childcare or child-care)
- preschool (rather than pre-school)
- the Preparatory Year or Prep (rather than prep)
- Year One, Year Two/Three (words rather than numbers)
- 'the staff members are' (instead of the awkward singular noun 'the staff is . .')
- programme (rather than program, unless the latter is correct in the specific context)
- five-year-olds (i.e. age with hyphens)

The journal committee reserves the right to undertake some minimal editing or rewriting in order to maintain conformity of 'house style'. If an article is provisionally accepted, but fairly major changes are required, we will contact you to discuss this.

Referencing

Ensure you include references where relevant. The preferred ECTA Journal style is that used in the *Style Manual*.

Example from a book: O'Hagan M 2001, *Early Years Practitioner*, 4th edn, Harcourt: London.

Example from a journal: Bredekamp S (2006), 'Staying true to our principles', *Educating Young Children*, Vol 12 No. 2, Spring 2006, Australia.

Direct quotations within your article should be in italics and referenced with name of author and the source.

Length of contribution (maximum)

- Feature Article: 1200 words
- Book review: 300 words
- Regular article: 650 words

Form of submission

Your contribution should be submitted via email to info@ecta.org.au

Photographs may be submitted digitally – minimum three megapixels on the highest resolution. Art works should be scanned. Photographs require a release agreement. A hard copy should also be included. Author release forms must be signed and a hard copy forwarded to ECTA GPO Box 3254 Brisbane 4001.

Where original artwork or material has been submitted it will be returned at the contributor's request. All contributors will be sent a copy of the journal.

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