



# *EDUCATING YOUNG CHILDREN*

*Learning and teaching in the early childhood years*

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who work with them.



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## ***From the President***

***Kim Walters - ECTA President***

Now, more than ever before, early childhood is on the agenda. I know that as early childhood educators we are all extremely busy people. I strongly believe, however, this is our window of opportunity to influence the future face of early childhood in this country. It is time to make the time to get involved.

With a state election next year, how we act now will have a major influence on resourcing for the early years of schooling across Queensland. Prep-Aide time is once more on the agenda. ECTA has distributed a media release welcoming the Liberal National Party's (LNP) commitment to delivering full-time teacher aides in Queensland Prep classrooms (Sunday Mail 12 October 2008) and calling on Premier Bligh to declare her government's stance on teacher aide time in Prep for 2009 and beyond. The media release stated 'that a full-time teacher aide is an absolute necessity to support teachers working in Prep classrooms and all multi-age classrooms with Prep children enrolled'. 'An active, enquiry-based curriculum, like the one we have in Queensland, is central to good early childhood teaching Prep – Year 3 and it requires significant adult support.' Make the time to meet with or write to your local member and opposition party now.

Currently, there are two new national initiatives being developed which will impact on early childhood educators across Australia. Firstly, new national curriculums are being developed by the National Curriculum Board for History, Maths, English and Science for use in Prep to Year 12 classrooms.

During October, ECTA funded my attendance at the National Curriculum Forums for Science, Maths, History and English held in Melbourne. It is vital that all early childhood educators get involved in the development of each of these curriculums. We must act now if we hope to influence the scope and sequence of the



national curriculum. The national curriculum will be compulsory from Prep to Year 10 across Australia. The curriculums will be trialled in selected schools across Australia before being adopted in 2011. Once adopted, the Old Essential Learning for those key learning areas will be replaced by the new national curriculums. This will affect you if you are teaching in any of the years Prep to Year 12.

I encourage you to go to the National Curriculum Board website and register your interest in this process. They will inform you via email when updates are added to the site or when you can respond to papers. The updated advice papers, following submission now being taken and gathered at the forums, should be posted in early November and feedback will be sought until February. The curriculum writers will then begin the process of drafting the national curriculums. Register your interest at <http://www.ncb.org.au/consultation/subscribe/subscribe.html>.

I felt the primary and early childhood field was not highly represented at the forums.

At the forum I made it clear to the board and delegates during group discussions that ECTA felt it was vital that early childhood educators be consulted during the writing process.

The Shape of the National Curriculum – a Proposal for Discussion <http://www.ncb.org.au> gives an over arching guideline for the curriculums. This paper informed the writing of the advice papers used to stimulate discussions during the forums. Feedback on the Shaping the National Curriculum document closes at end of Term 4.

***Now, more than ever before,  
early childhood is on the  
agenda.***





It should be noted that the first year of schooling looks different across Australia with each state and territory having various levels of formal learning in the first year of school. These different pedagogical approaches and age ranges effect expectations and may have a major influence on the mandated knowledge to be taught and the ways in which it is taught for each subject in Prep. This may in turn place more strain on the time available for the negotiated curriculum. The advice papers are calling for explicit teaching of knowledge from Prep up. While teaching content is part of our programs, we need to remain focused on how we teach young children and how we monitor and assess their learning.

How the national curriculum looks may have major implications for early childhood in Queensland.

This an opportunity for the National Curriculum Board to respond to research that has long told us the benefits of a play-based environment in the early years of schooling. The first year of schooling should be a time when children settle into the school environment, setting foundations for positive behaviours, a joy and excitement for learning, a sense of belonging and high engagement.

Secondly, the Early Years Curriculum Framework currently being developed by Charles Sturt University as part of the federal government's election commitment to early childhood education and care across the country will guide early childhood educators in developing quality early childhood programs and inform parents, families and the early childhood workforce about the importance of young children's learning. This framework will directly effect those working with children in years before schooling as it will set out the broad parameters, principles and outcomes required to support and enhance children's learning from birth to five years of age as well as their transition to school. I encourage all ECTA members to stay informed and become involved. For further details go to <http://www.office.mychild.gov.au/>

Kim Walters

*The first year of schooling should be a time when children settle into the school environment, setting foundations for positive behaviours, a joy and excitement for learning, a sense of belonging and high engagement.*

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## ***From the Editorial Panel***

***Angela Drysdale***



In this journal, the articles have touched on learning in its many different manifestations but there is a common thread – relationships. Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the Reggio Emilia philosophy, believes relationships in the educational setting include not only the relationships

both within and between groups of children, teachers and families, but within the context of a continuing dialogue with the local community. It also involves recognising the importance of our relationships with the physical environment and its ability to support social relationships. Balancing such diverse relationships may seem a Herculean task, yet we, as educational professionals, manage this span on a daily basis.

Danielle Stiff's article reflects how this philosophy can be put into action as she shares a learning experience, *Seeds of Growth*. This experience highlights the relationship of the child with both the adult and the materials in the environment.

Interestingly, the way in which concrete materials are used in *Seeds of Growth* supports beliefs espoused by Anne Baker in her article on Maths tools. Anne cautions teachers not to offer and thereby limit materials, but instead make all materials available for children to use in their own way.

Similarly, the photo story on page twelve reflects the relationships the children have with materials and on page sixteen this photo story tells a story of relationships between the adult and the child. They say "a picture tells a thousand words" and if you want to know more about how to make the most of your photos in the classroom, be sure to read Kim Walters step by step guide.

Louis Bradfield's article *Putting the child back into 'play'!* Is it the child's story? *The Maridahdi Way!* provides a framework for dialogue and renewed reflection. Louis explores relationships through

a lens of mutual understanding - challenging educators to move from any position of power they have over children to a paradigm of equality, mutual respect, listening and deeper understanding.

Central to all relationships is a healthy social and emotional wellbeing. Liz de Plater, in the first of a two part article, describes the SEEDS framework, designed for teachers and families to plant the seeds for early childhood mental health. This framework deserves exploration for its simplicity and adaptability.

As an ECTA member and a reader of this journal, we all acknowledge and value the importance of being a life long learner. Will Jones and Angela Le Mare both reflect on the learning journeys they have taken. Angela continues her story from Journal 2 and Will tells her story about embracing the culture of each of her students and encouraging them to do the same, in turn creating the intimate relationship of a class family.

Both Libby Gaedtke and Liz Springall also share their recent learning journeys. Each of their learning experiences was made possible through financial assistance from ECTA.

On the wider scale, colourful community relationships are highlighted by Marilyn Roberts' account of a storytelling tour of the bush and coastal regions. Interestingly, Marilyn's story also serves to demonstrate the successful relationship ECA and ECTA have with early childhood communities.

And so our relationship balance comes full circle, but if you wish for more insight to the Reggio philosophy, Reggio Emilia "visits" the International Perspectives section of the journal. It has been six months since Lisa Palethorpe visited this renowned centre of learning and now, inspired by what she saw and the dialogues she engaged in, she is making plans with C&K to develop "Centres of Innovation".

We hope you enjoy your final journal for 2008.

Angela

On behalf of the editorial panel

## *Teaching in the twentieth century*

*Angela Le Mare*



Angela Le Mare was an early childhood classroom teacher for about twenty years, both in the UK and in Queensland. During the 1970s she worked, mainly with young children, in special education. In the mid-1980s, she started working in teacher training and also wrote educational materials for the Curriculum Corporation (Canberra) and for DRUG ARM (in Brisbane). In 1991, she moved into child care training (distance education mode) with TAFE and worked in this field for fifteen years. She is now mostly retired but does some editing. For the last four years she has been a marker with the 3579 National Assessment Program for Literacy and Numeracy, (previously the Queensland Years 3, 5 and 7 Literacy and Numeracy Testing). One of her current projects is writing about her teaching life. In this edition Angela continues her story by sharing her experiences in East Anglia.

### *Part 2 East Anglia*

After teaching for a year in my home town of Reading, I was married and I went to live in a tiny village in East Anglia called Soham. In 1964, it was a peaceful, rural village with a traditional grammar school and a village college. Soham Village College, which still exists, was and is a go-ahead institution, a focal point of the village, being a school by day and a centre for the community in the evenings. Sadly, if the name 'Soham' rings a bell, it is probably not because of its educational institutions but for the horrifying murder of two ten-year-old girls in 2002. The Village College was, in fact, the workplace of the caretaker who was later convicted of the murders.

I had accepted a teaching post in the tiny city of Ely, known as The Isle of Ely, which rose like a small island above the low-lying fens, its magnificent cathedral being a landmark for miles in every direction. Recently, the cathedral was used as one of the settings for the movie *Elizabeth: the Golden Age*.

Ely was an eight-kilometre drive from Soham along a country road which only passed through one hamlet, a place called Stuntney. Apparently, it was recorded in the 1901 Census that thirteen families lived in Stuntney and they all shared the same surname. Maybe not too surprising, then, that I was told of a local guidebook that stated Soham was well-known for its neat gardens, plums and incest.

My school was called St Audrey's after a famous English fair that came each year to Ely in medieval times. Incidentally, I learned that the wares, particularly lace, that were offered for sale at the fair deteriorated in quality over the years and gave rise to the word 'tawdry' – a corruption of St Audrey. (Trivia for the day!) The school buildings were surrounded by extensive lawns and there was a maypole. It is the only school I have ever known that had a maypole. As May approached, the children would learn several dances and each child, holding a coloured ribbon attached to the top of the central pole, would weave in and out to plait a design round the maypole. It was a very pretty tradition.

This newly built infants school was already bursting at the seams and there was a desperate shortage of teachers. Shortly after I arrived, a local vicar's wife, this being her only qualification, was asked to join the staff. She was thought to be 'intelligent and of good character' and was indeed a lovely person ... but, along with some of the other 'nice ladies' on the staff, not a trained teacher.

I had a class of forty-five six-year-olds. The room was very crowded; several children had to move their desks and chairs every time I needed to get something from one of the two, spacious walk-in cupboards. Teaching such a big class was a challenge but somehow we managed. The children progressed well and we had fun.



***I had a class of forty-five six-year-olds. The room was very crowded; several children had to move their desks and chairs every time I needed to get something from one of the two, spacious walk-in cupboards.***

The school principal – the headmistress – had decided I had a knack for handling ‘difficult’ children so she put a few additional children into my class. Apparently, some of the ladies had been very shocked to hear children using swearwords. Great feedback for a child who was trying to seek attention! Later on, I had cause to wonder about this use of expletives. I was teaching the words and melody of a simple Christmas carol:

*There was a cow, went out to plough  
On Chrissimas day, On Chrissimas Day,  
There was a cow, went out to plough  
On Chrissimas Day in the morning.*

*There was a sheep went out to reap etc*

The children loved the carol and wanted to make up some more verses. All started well with ‘pig’ and ‘dig’. ‘What about duck?’ one child said. I watched nervously as the forty-five six-year-olds – including the supposed swearers – frowned, sighed, scratched their heads and muttered ‘There was a duck went out to ...’. Eventually, they gave up. No one could think of a rhyme for ‘duck’.

I enjoyed working at the school but there was one aspect I found difficult. At one o’clock each day, all the staff members were expected to go to the staffroom for a formal sit-down lunch. I tried to avoid this at first but, if I was not there at the appointed hour, I would receive a summons. I was uncomfortable with the local gossip that formed so much of the basis of the

lunchtime conversation but, being new, and also the youngest person on the staff, there was little I could do about it except to listen as nice ladies with saintly expressions and pursed lips added their contributions.

One holy lady of a certain age usually outdid the others. ‘That Joseph Murphett in Year One, he’s never a Murphett. There’ve been nine Murphetts through this school so I know a Murphett when I see one. And you know,’ (meaningful pause) ‘that Joseph looks just like my milkman and Mrs. Murphett’s husband’s a long distance truck driver and I leave my money on the step.’ Or, referring to a married teacher in the upper primary school who, she said, was having an extra-marital affair with her neighbour: ‘The cheek of him! He always parks his bicycle outside MY house. I have to go out and move it so it’s outside her front gate.’

After a time, I was offered a promotion in the school as ‘the third in command’. As the head teacher suffered regularly from severe asthma attacks, this meant I frequently acted as the deputy head only answerable to ‘She who knew a Murphett when she saw one’. However, this all came to an end after two years when my husband was offered a very good job in the northeast of England.

I had taught in my home town and in rural East Anglia. Now I was to be plunged into the northeast of England where there was such a strong regional accent that it took me two weeks before I understood a word of what anyone was saying.

Do you have a question or comment that you would like to pass onto Angela?

Or perhaps you have your own story of teaching to tell.

The Editorial Panel would welcome any responses to journal articles or your own original contributions.

Please forward your comments, questions or stories to:

ECTA  
P.O. Box 1029  
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## **Liz Springall**

### ***C&K Pioneer Kindergarten***



Liz Springall has been a director of C&K Pioneer Kindergarten in Mackay for ten years. She joined C&K after working in the Independent system for seven years. Prior to immigrating to Australia, Liz trained at the University of Warwick in UK and taught Infants (Preschool) in UK. Liz has also spent a number of years teaching Nursery in Tanzania, East Africa at The International School of Tanganyika and living in Germany with the British Forces Education System.

Liz is an ECTA 2008 conference funding recipient.

I was delighted when I received the email confirming that I had been awarded ECTA funding for the 2008 conference! I had applied just before the holidays, more for wishful thinking, as I thought they must receive hundreds of applicants. I had often considered attending the conference but the mortgage and having put three children through university ... usual story !!!

In the regions we are often denied the quality of speakers available in Brisbane. The prohibitive costs of bringing them here would make conferences far too expensive when we don't have the delegate numbers. So it was wonderful to have the opportunity to come to Brisbane. The number attending the conference took me by surprise!

After struggling a bit to book accommodation (I don't know Brisbane well and worried I might end up two hours distance from the venue!) I arrived at the venue and was immediately impressed by John Paul College. A perfect venue, in a lovely environment.

Evidence of detailed organisation was everywhere the catering was superb. (I LOVED the endless hot chocolate in the chilly Brisbane climate!!!)

The Keynote Speaker John Joseph was inspiring!!! Having taught for over 30 years it's wonderful to find an area that is so new to me and fascinating! I was totally absorbed in his research of the "Four Worlds" in which we exist and have taken his work back to my colleagues. His research made such sense and I am intrigued to find out more.

Dr Kylie Smith's workshop on Child Participation in the Curriculum held particular interest for me as, at our centre, we have embraced the C&K's

***Having taught for over 30 years it's wonderful to find an area that is so new to me and fascinating!***

"Building Waterfalls" curriculum wholeheartedly and the children's participation is central to everything we do and every decision we make. Dr Smith's point, that we must ask the children's permission before we record what they are doing and saying, was very interesting. We are always so busy making our notes and taking our photos. I have made a point to ask permission since then.

My last workshop was with Dr Louise Porter on Parent Collaboration. This gave food for thought. Reflecting on my notes from the workshop, I find there are so many quotes to consider: "The goal of discipline is considerateness not compliance" and "Behaviour is driven internally not controlled externally" "The problem is not the dancers, it's the dance". We role-played to work out ways we could seek parents' support and reach solutions together rather than "report" transgressions.

I wasn't fortunate enough to win one of the many giveaways at the cheese and wine function (though lots of people were) but I still enjoyed my cheese and bubbly!

Congratulations to the committee on a very, very well-organised event. Thank you so much for the opportunity to attend. I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. (The only downside of the trip was the lonely motel room on the Saturday evening! Next time I will organise something social!)

## ***Putting the child back into 'play'! Is it the child's story? The Maridahdi Way!***

***Louis Bradfield, Principal - Maridahdi Early Childhood Community School***



2008 marks twenty years of Louis's involvement with the Maridahdi Community. Originally, he was Director of the community kindergarten and now he is teaching principal of Maridahdi Early Childhood Community School.

He has spent 25 years reflecting on a way of teaching that best supports children as thinkers and learners. During this period, he has had opportunities to 'think out loud', 'to share his story'... as a lecturer, tutor and consultant.

In 2002 Louis was a National recipient of a NEiTA (National Excellence in Teaching Award) for his 'passionate' dedication and contribution to early childhood education. In 2003 he received a Centenary Medal for Distinguished Service to Education.

In his other life ... he is a parent of three amazing young adults, is a fitness fanatic and a successful artist!!

### *The Maridahdi story....*

*The vibrant learning community that is now Maridahdi began life as a community kindergarten in 1976. Today it caters for 75 children from Pre-Prep to Year 3 in three multi-age classrooms; each room has a teacher and teacher's aide.*

*The name 'Maridahdi' is a Swahili word, meaning to embellish, to enhance; it conveys the school's focus on allowing children to be what they are, and the role of educators to facilitate self-discovery rather than to impose their own view of what should be.*

*Louis Bradfield has been Principal since 1989 and is currently teacher of the Year 2/3 group. In this article, he discusses what he calls 'the bastardisation of play'. He contrasts the popular construct of the 'play-based curriculum' with what play – and learning – genuinely look like to a child.*

After many years justifying the importance of play, and proclaiming the alleged benefits of the 'play-based curriculum', early childhood experts have managed to drive play far from its origins. They have shifted play away from the child's agenda and made it their own. This 'new age' construction has taken the child out of play.

Much in early years curriculum now reveals a surprisingly limited understanding of children and their play. Many adults themselves have lost their ability to play, to be lost in thought; how can they visualise what it should look like for children?

### *And then write it into a curriculum?*

This article does not attempt to hold on to some mystical or romantic view of play or childhood. Rather, it seeks to challenge the so-called 'experts' with a framework for renewed reflection and discussion.

Currently, across a wide range of early years settings, teachers and parents - the experts - are diligently observing play, eagerly awaiting the sign, the signal to pounce. The pressure is on to capture 'the teachable moment', 'to extend', 'to scaffold', 'to ask the right question', 'to intervene' and 'make it right'. The silent message to the child is that the expert knows best!

Though the intention is admirable and supposedly in the best interests of the child, such intrusion is often misguided and always insulting to children.

Maridahdi is about repositioning the child as the expert. To do this, we use four elements: the culture of learning, time, space and materials.

### ***The culture of learning***

Our classroom culture derives from the understandings that permeate the learning space. It is important that all people involved in the learning space understand the key elements of this culture and how it should look and feel. The key elements are learning, expectations,

# Teacher Stories

relationships, thinking out loud, silent messages and the role of adults.

Learning: what does it look like? Mistakenly, there is a belief that learning should be fun. Children must be challenged if learning is to take place. To challenge is to move from the known to the unknown. To let children sit with the unknown is difficult for adults. Adults immediately want to rescue, to make it right.

*Moving away from ... control, themes, colouring-in, work sheets, work books, repeated use of set plans, dictatorship, traditional views of what constitutes learning, busy work, attachment to the overt proofs of early literacy and numeracy, valuing limited ways of thinking ...*

*Moving towards ... the unplanned, the unexplained, the unexpected, child-initiated, a culture that sends powerful messages to children about who they are, their power, negotiated curriculum, new understandings of what constitutes learning ...*



*"A reflection of the culture of learning that is Maridahdi. What does learning look like?"*

The child must have ownership if it is to be called 'play'. If it doesn't have a direct connection to the child, if the agenda is not theirs, if adults have hijacked an idea, it is not play. Adults have bastardised play. Early years experts need to stop hiding their own agendas behind play. Their agendas need to be made explicit. The inclusion of play in the curriculum should not be about making learning outcomes more palatable to the child.

Expectation is crucial to a culture of learning that supports children as thinkers and learners. A 'one size fits all' approach does not apply; it is about matching the expectation to the child. It is about honouring the individual child for what they bring to any learning environment. Crucial to this is the need for an existing relationship. Expectations are built on what is known about the child.

*Moving away from ... 'one size fits all', formal assessment, observations with little relevance, rankings that marginalise and destroy relationships with self and children's support network, developmentalism, adult control, early childhood rhetoric, hype ...*

*Moving towards ... critical self reflection, documentation that tells a story, a clarity and depth of understanding reflected in our work with children and adults ...*



*"A story told with a multitude of coloured felt pens ... an army, a battle!!"*

Relationships are crucial to the learning culture at Maridahdi. Relationships are about mutual understanding; this immediately calls into question any position of power traditionally held by any adult. Misunderstandings abound about what this relationship looks like. This culture requires the relationship to move well beyond an exchange of pleasantries. The adult's role in the creation of this culture needs to be redefined.

*Moving away from ... what comes with traditional roles and titles, assumed authority, labels with*



# Teacher Stories

*attached judgement, talking down to children, false and insulting assumptions based on age, gender, class or culture, keeping parents at arms length ...*

*Moving towards ... equality, mutual respect, listen to support and connect, deeper understanding, meaningful conversation, family involvement that reflects community ...*



*"Connectedness ... lost in time!"*

Thinking out loud supports and acknowledges multiple ways of thinking and knowing. This learning culture gives everyone a voice. Repeated opportunities exist for children to think out loud, presenting increased learning opportunities for other members of the community. Peer co-construction of learning is a key element to this learning culture.

Silent messages refer to the unspoken. Adults need to make their expectations and intentions explicit. 'Shooting straight' limits the silent messages received by children. Positive

reinforcement, a more traditional approach, manipulates those who won't by rewarding those who do.

*Moving away from ... praise, blame, rewards, 'bribery and corruption', children seeking external affirmation, assumed roles (adult/child), compliance and pliability as preferred personality traits ...*

*Moving towards ... sense of self, children building an awareness of adult agendas, making their own agendas explicit, reflection as a tool for children to believe in themselves and their ability ...*

## **Time**

Time needs to be continual, uninterrupted and free flowing. Those working within the learning environment must have the time to be consumed by thought or at least have the opportunity to have a thought. These blocks of time allow for participants to be lost, be uncertain, unsure of the direction they are going. Without being lost, how do you ever get the chance to find your way, to ask the question?

*Moving away from ... greeting time, inside time, outside time, story time, morning tea time, rigid timetabling ...*

*Moving towards ... uninterrupted times, flexibility ...*



*"The learning space should reflect children's agendas."*



# Teacher Stories

## **Space**

Ownership again is the key to the provision of space. Children must be able to access the available space and make it their own. The removal of limitations opens children to the possibilities. Children need a space to play, space to think and a space to be challenged. The inclusion, storage and arrangement of materials is a key challenge for adults.

*Moving away from ... home corner, block corner, dress ups, adult control of space, spaces loaded with adult agendas ...*

*Moving towards ... open spaces allowing for a multitude of possibilities, space design that supports flexibility, large work spaces ...*



*"The Maridahdi landscape of learning ... the image invites the reader to reflect on the use of space and materials."*

## **Materials**

Materials within early years settings are so loaded with adult intention that opportunities for thought are limited. Materials offered within the learning space must provide endless and repeated opportunities to perform many functions and roles.

Materials and equipment presented must not immediately invade and hijack the thought processes of participants. They need to be flexible, pliable and recyclable to allow for

the multitude of ideas and possibilities that children will explore in such a space.

*Moving away from ... brightly coloured collage materials, playdough, cookie cutters, plastic manipulative toys, the habitual inclusion of traditional early childhood equipment and material, gimmicky art, table activities ...*

*Moving towards ... natural and recyclable materials, equipment and materials that present children with unlimited possibilities, a match between 'said and done' ...*

The culture of learning, the freedom from rigid timetabling, the fluid arrangement of space and materials: the message at Maridahdi is that there are 1001 possibilities, not just one privileged way.

***Expectation is crucial to a culture of learning that supports children as thinkers and learners. A 'one size fits all' approach does not apply; it is about matching the expectation to the child. It is about honouring the individual child for what they bring to any learning environment.***

## Prep

### *Many different levels of learning*

*In Prep, in Term 4, the children are at many different levels of learning. Here are some of the experiences that the children have chosen to investigate at St Margaret's Primary School.*



I am playing Arthur's maths games.



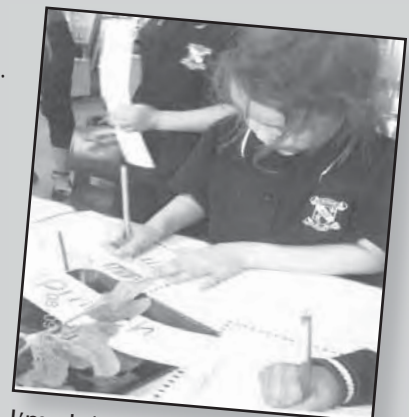
I am looking for words in this word search. I like learning about words because then I know when to write and how to write them.



I am finding letters in this sand and I'm trying to spell words.



I am looking for sight words. I like word searches. Sight words help me read better. Daddy can't believe I can read chapter books.



I'm doing my drawing about vegetables and fruit. I learned about the peas inside the beans.

# Teacher Stories



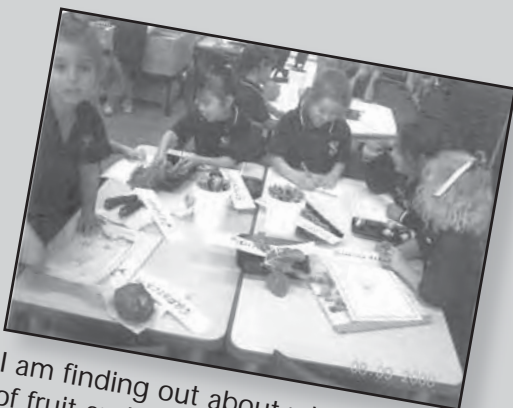
Monaita, Jacqueline and Sophia are helping me put on a puppet show. It's about being mixed up.



I am decorating my magic mirror. When you look into it you have to say a magic word. Mine's a secret.



I am making a bird's nest and I stuck sticks in it so the birds would think it was an actual bird's nest. I'm going to put it in my garden. It will need a softer bedding.



I am finding out about which parts of fruit and vegetables we eat.



We were making a magic rock. If you touch it you can make a wish. We're using magic chalk.

This is our fairy rock – you have to say a secret password – the rock is magic then.



## ***Beyond cultural diversity ...***

***Will Jones***



**Will Jones** – is the C&K Early Childhood Education and Care Consultant for the Cape Gulf and Torres Strait. Will has over 30 years of teaching and lecturing experience across the whole spectrum of Early Childhood Education and Care in Far North Queensland. She remains committed to, and passionate about, quality; current, evidence-based, educational practice; and teaching that is not compromised by an ever-changing socio/political context. To this end, Will's passion remains enabling teachers, carers, managers and families to honour behaviour guidance rather than mere behaviour management. Will believes strongly in leading by serving and therefore is equally passionate about quality teacher education and training.

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*"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation, where they will be not judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character."* Martin Luther King

I graduated from Teachers College in 1975. It was a time when practising teachers still taught 'student' teachers with heart as well as evidence-based practice. Their 'coalface' knowledge of tried and true strategies, empowered the graduate, with the ability to teach and guide in the real world of children, parents and community.

It was a nanosecond before the invention of the 'sticker generation'. It was a time when manners, kindness and listening were the cornerstones of civilisation. It was a time when kindness was not a weakness ... before the 'you're just sucking up generation'. It was a time when one did something generous without thinking 'what's in it for me ... ?

It was a time when 'inter-independence' was of equal importance with 'independence'. It was a time when one was given respect until one lost it, not the other way round. It was a time when parents, by and large, had faith in their school, their teachers and education. It was a time when to 'growl' a child with abiding affection and respect, was not equated with destroying their happiness or their self esteem.

In this time, my husband, Rob and I were sent to Far North Queensland to do our 'country service'. In the 1970s 'Jones' was a foreign name in this multicultural, rural town that boasted many

cultures and faiths, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Australians, Italian and Greek Australians, Indian and Pakistani Australians, Hindu and Muslim Australians, as well as a myriad of Christian faiths including Assembly of God, Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and lastly, but not leastly, me, a Jewish Australian.

In December with my very first class, I remember fondly having 'Grandmother' and 'Grandfather' written across the black board in at least 7 different languages. It was a time when Christmas was still a legitimate cultural festival, its homily, explored at school (including projects on how many different ways nations celebrated). Teachers, unashamedly, still explored the 'gift of time and service' with children, when delaying gratification was still 'kosher'.

In my second year of teaching, I was transferred to a rural hamlet. It was here my philosophy and mission for teaching was born.

### ***My class, 'our family' each year.***

I need to be connected to the people I work and journey with. It is my spiritual and intellectual nuance. In 1977 I needed to bring my Year Ones, Twos and Three's together as a group, not just for ease of teaching but to 'be' and grow our character together. As a Jewish Australian, growing up in a political family, not leaving one's character to chance, meant discourse and discipline, born out of guidance. This remained the cornerstone of our family faith and upbringing.



***As a Jewish Australian, growing up in a political family, not leaving one's character to chance, meant discourse and discipline, born out of guidance. This remained the cornerstone of our family faith and upbringing.***

Our family aspires to become global citizens, to work for peace and justice embodied with social beneficence.

One lazy, hot summer afternoon, I was reading the 'Ugly Duckling' to my class. We were discussing the moral of the story and its relevance to our own lives. Suddenly a mum who was also a colleague arrived. At the end of the day, as the children left for home, my fellow colleague informed me, 'These are the 1970s. We don't moralise any more lest it offends!'

Like all 'good' early childhood teachers who are conscious of the truism '*Don't chase after a boy [or girl], a bus or an educational idea ... because another one will be along in 20 mins*', I smiled sweetly and kept on keeping on, teaching with the best evidence-based practise I knew. That one's character was essential to how one would experience, travel and in some cases survive this world. That the qualities of character, courage, resilience, integrity, empathy, respect and peacefulness are needed so that when life throws a curve, one is able to turn potential experiences into 'tools and not weapons'.

Our class 'family' embraced the year as a real family. There were boundaries and responsibilities (rather than rules). There was a conscious strategy to move children from a mere behaviour

management response to taking responsibility through behaviour guidance that explored qualities of character as the end result, including the now popular 'behaviour script' books.

There were routines, rituals and celebrations that took into account every faith and culture in our room. Although we had Hindus, Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses in our class 'family', we managed to respect everyone during the school's cultural celebrations of Easter, Anzac Day, Remembrance Day, Christmas and birthdays – by every child having their own, respected space around the room to 'paint' the picture and dialogue of each family's rituals, celebrations and traditions.

Children brought family photos and artefacts to contribute to their space, that would make a class of 2008 with 'bio boards' as described by Margie Carter and Deb Curtis in *The Visionary Director*, proud.

#### ***'Back to the future'***

So it came to pass that in 1999, I found myself transferred from a rural preschool to a Year 2 class in a tough school. I was told by a colleague, that my quaint ethos of being a 'class family' for a year may be better viewed as being a 'team' as many children were from dysfunctional, disenfranchised, violent, unhappy homes.

Not one to throw the 'baby out with the bath water' intellectually or spiritually, I reasoned that our class may learn that 'family' in another context meant being trustworthy, respectful, joyous, courageous and peaceful.

The culture of our '99 family was as before, in my earliest days of teaching, everyone having their own respected 'family' album, around the room that grew and was added to at the relevant and right time. Yet it was here that cultural diversity grew beyond our ethnic differences to encompass a broader view of 'culture' to include our abiding, inclusive practices encompassing leadership and responsibility. The playground was tough; bullying was an issue across all the grades. Transience and poverty were also in the mix.

Our class 'family' looked out for their class 'brothers and sisters' in the playground. If they couldn't negotiate for someone to be left alone, not bullied,

# Teacher Stories

they knew to come and find me or the teacher on duty. It was our powerful 'not negotiable'...

We had families donate their old school uniforms so that the transient children could fit in. It was one less thing to separate them from the 'gang'. To void the culture of the 'outcast', our class family photo album remained to have a spare page with the caption, 'Always room for one more ...' along with a piece of elastic, for 'Love may stretch and grow'.

In 2000, tragedy struck and one of our little class mates, unexpectedly passed away, (that journey is a whole other article in itself). Suffice to say, our class journeyed the qualities of character that embodied social beneficence, courage, integrity, resilience forgiveness and peace.

## **Beyond cultural diversity ...**

*How do children and parents have a voice in the 'culture' of routines, rituals and celebrations within your 'class'?*

*How do you honour the 'culture' of parents as 'first and lifelong teachers'?*

*What is your 'culture' of transitions?*

*What is your 'culture' of inclusive practices?*

*What is your 'culture' of leadership?*

*What is the 'culture' family in your class?*

*How does the 'culture' of your class 'family' include the lonely, the afraid, the disenfranchised, the sick, the poor, the hungry ...?*

**'Though we are many we are one'**

## **References:**

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Carter, M & Curtis, D. 2006, *The Visionary Director: A Handbook for dreaming, organizing and improvising in your center*, Redleaf Press, U.S.A.



*Learning together at Tingalpa and District Kindergarten*



## ***Under 8's regional tour***

***Marilyn Roberts***



Early Childhood Australia, Qld Branch and ECTA, support a tour of regional centres organised as part of Under Eights' Week. The tour visits a number of early childhood facilities (eg kindergartens, child care services and schools) during Under Eights' Week. The content of the tour activity reflects the theme for the week and is appropriate for the early childhood age group of the audiences.

The purpose of the Regional Tour is to promote quality early childhood activities; highlight the needs of young children from birth to eight years; increase public awareness of the importance

of the early childhood years; increase awareness of issues concerning young children and arouse public awareness of the range of early childhood services within the community.

The tour for 2008 was conducted by Marilyn Roberts, a well respected storyteller. In this article Marilyn shares her journey.

To see both your beginning and end in one sweeping glance is possible at one particular bend in the Drummond Range. From the railway carriage out to Longreach there was one spot where I could see both the head of the train and the end of the train in one sweep. It was the only time in this year's Under 8's Storytelling Tour, both physically and emotionally, I could take in the beginning and the end.

Throughout my time on the tour I was always looking forward to my next session; getting

***In five days I covered over 700km, storytelling at schools with only ten children to schools with hundreds and to 'Picnics in the Park' with three or more combined groups.***

to the next class and the next school and the next town; performing; doing a write-up in the evening; then looking forward again to the next day. Altogether I told to approximately 976 children, 50-60 parents and teachers at 16 venues over 28 sessions, in classrooms, activities rooms and out on verandahs (inclement weather stopped outside activities). In five days I covered over 700km, storytelling at schools with only ten children to schools with hundreds and to 'Picnics in the Park' with three or more combined groups.

Now I am back at home, the only way I can think to look back at the trip is with this notion of what's ahead, what's behind. To look to the most western and most eastern sessions, my first and one of my last schools, as embodying a sense of what Under 8's is about.

St Pat's at Winton and Keppel Sands State Schools were the two smallest schools I visited in my time away. St Pat's, although it had the air of a school that had seen better days and, like the town, seemed to be in decline, displayed a great sense of fellowship and companionship combined with a very real sense of love and hope. In many ways this was part of the message I hoped to reflect on my trip - that as individuals, even small





individuals we could make a difference in caring for others and caring for the environment in a very real way. It seems I wasn't the only one that considered empowering our children with a sense of hope for the future, as Sisters from the local order were there to give out badges to the children who had decided to participate in the Mini Vinnies, a new venture for the Catholic Church.

This first session was delightful, not only for the lovely children and caring staff but also for the inclusiveness. Like many of the schools I went to, the local kindergarten was included in this session (sometimes I even got extra mums and their bubs). I love this type of reaction from schools and this first session set a lovely tone for the rest of the trip. Thanks Dominique and Winton for making my stay so memorable.

At Keppel Sands the teachers were concerned that the illness of a couple of their young children might cause me to cancel. Instead, I told stories to the entire school and, just as well, as the junior school that afternoon consisted of ONE child!

The advantage to having such a small session was that I was able to talk to a couple of the individual children about their experiences of the floods earlier in the year. As heavy rain was predicted in the area in the next few days, I hope these conversations were opportune.

So many teachers worked behind the scenes, setting up for me, arranging stops at other schools in the areas, and even working their Under 8's day around my visit. I am indebted to their assistance. Sorry I could never stop around long enough to say so.

***My favourite place to tell stories throughout my trip was in classrooms, sitting surrounded by children's work, getting a glimpse into their world and families.***



My favourite place to tell stories throughout my trip was in classrooms, sitting surrounded by children's work, getting a glimpse into their world and families. The schools where the work was brightest were also the schools where I got my warmest welcomes.

Some schools stand out in my mind for their colour – Longreach State School foyer was delightful, so was the welcome; Emerald School for its wonderful classroom of children's work, especially my storytelling chair and the poster I mention below.

Some stand out for their gardens and settings – Cawarral State School for its brilliant gardens and pathways and so beautifully clean environment; Our Lady of Lourdes at Longreach had a delightful outdoor chapel that really took my fancy (their staff were also very supportive); Emu Park was lovely to behold, a large group but very responsive kids.

Some are remembered for their welcome – the children of Coowonga State School with their call "the storyteller's here" (It sounded so exciting even I turned around to look for this delightful figure); Farnborough State School who quickly changed all their plans around to fit me in (seems my planning wasn't quite so perfect after all); Emerald North whose children and staff refused to let me eat alone and entertained me so well in the staff room. (I had three young students insisting that I would be more comfortable with the teachers – they were delightful and so polite.)

Some stand out for their generosity and helpfulness – St Pat's at Winton and Winton State School were just so efficient in all their dealings; Winton State School even gave me a





pen to thank me – I think I should have been giving them one. Longreach Kindy extended their invitation to everybody. It was great to have extra children and parents and they were so helpful in making sure I got the bits I left behind. At Keppel Sands they didn't want me to go.

Some schools stand out for their exuberance – at both Emerald State School and the combined schools celebration at Yeppoon State School, parents, teachers and children enthusiastically joined in all the fun and joy that so represents Under 8's Week.

Some schools stand out because they were so very different. The School of the Air children came on air in the afternoon just to hear me. It took me some time to get used to how I should respond to these children and to change from a very visual performance to a more vocal presentation. Imagine having all your children wanting an answer at once and, instead of raising their hands, they said their names to get attention. I think I came across as rather dimwitted. For the life of me I could not pick the difference between Ethan and Sam. Poor kids. I got them wrong every time. But I did discover a fellow lover of Pamela Allen in our chat afterwards.

Each school stood out for the wonderful way they all worked together to make a great Under 8's Week

### *City vs. country*

The difference between city and country struck me most forcibly when I saw the poster in one Year One classroom where the children listed their nighttime activities. Included with 'brushing teeth' and 'do homework' was the more prosaic 'night packing'. But the nighttime activity that

really took my fancy was 'goin' pigin'. Wonder what the teacher thought when she heard that one.

I used the city vs. country in my programme to great advantage in getting maximum participation from children, particularly in singing Der Galumph. I taught a version I had seen at a Brisbane kindergarten some time ago. In this version when you get to the part of singing "We all know frogs go ..." I added in a very limp-wristed "But Darling...s".

The children then tried to beat the way the woozy Brisbane kids would sing it.

Classes were in bush settings, up country roads, in small settlements and suburban coastal suburbs. Wherever I went, though, the children and teachers were a true delight. I thoroughly enjoyed my tour. Everywhere I was met with great enthusiasm and joyfulness and I can only thank that wonderful team behind the Under 8's Coordinating Committee and their sponsors who made this all possible.

***Classes were in bush settings, up country roads, in small settlements and suburban coastal suburbs. Wherever I went, though, the children and teachers were a true delight.***

## ***Negotiating the curriculum: seeds of growth***

***Danielle Stiff – C&K curriculum co-ordinator***

As educators at C&K services continue along their journey with *Building waterfalls – a curriculum framework for adults and children*, they continue to create their own understanding of who the child is as a learner. *Building waterfalls* has been inspired by Indigenous educational philosophies that acknowledge everywhere as a learning place and everyone as having a role in educating our children (C&K 2006, p 6).

*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.

*Building waterfalls* encourages learning through play and extending the interests of children, but how is this done? Marilyn Beale, director of C&K Gundoo Mirra Community Kindergarten, shares one example.

***We connect with, make meaning of, and build upon what we know when we participate in and negotiate experiences that are based upon shared interests and initiatives.***

Erika started to collect Leopard tree seeds in a small bucket. Before long, Maheen came to help. Soon all the other children started collecting seeds too, reaching through the fence, filling buckets, pouring from one bucket to another. They looked for the smallest, longest and most peculiar shapes. The adults supported this by asking:

- How do the seeds feel?
- Where do you think they come from?
- How does the tree trunk feel?
- How do the seeds feel to touch?
- What sound do they make when the bucket is shaken?
- Whether the buckets are full or half full, which ones are heavier, lighter, lightest?

The children excitedly put the buckets of seeds on the science table.



Erika had three buckets of seeds which she had collected over two weeks. She was asked:

- What can you do with them?
- How many are there?
- If you lined them up, how long a line would you make?

Erika proceeded to line them up. She used all three buckets of seeds and the line stretched from one end of the kindy to the other, and a third of the way back.



It was time to catch the bus, so the teacher suggested that Erika measure the line of seeds with a piece of wool. Then she happily left knowing she could continue the following day.

The next day the teacher asked Erika how else she could measure the line of seeds. If she stepped out the length, how many steps would there be? The teacher showed her how to step heel to toe and Erika stepped out 102 steps.

The teacher asked Erika if the teacher's feet were bigger or smaller. She asked if there would be

# Partnerships



more or less steps than Erika. She didn't know, so the teacher stepped out the steps: there were 65. Erika was fascinated.

The children then lay end to end to measure the line of seeds. How many children would it take to measure the line?



This initiated an interest for Kyran, who wanted to see who was taller so ...



Kyran enjoyed lining the seeds on paper and counting them. He was trying to write the number when Maheen came up and showed him how to write it.



Erika started sharing the pods and listening intently, guessing how many seeds were in each pod, before using a hammer to smash them open and count

the seeds. She recorded her guess and the actual number. Some of the boys also joined in and put safety goggles on before smashing the seed pods.



As a result of measuring and counting the seeds, Corban and Lionel were interested in measuring other things in the environment, including the fence.

They worked together using the tape measure and taking turns recording the measurements on the clipboard.



The teacher helped to identify the numbers on the tape measure and record them. The teacher also showed them how to use the calculator to add the numbers together.

As a result of the children's interest in the seeds and measuring, the teacher brought bean seeds, cotton wool and lids to kindy and asked if the children wanted to see what would happen if they put the seeds on the wet cotton wool. Each day they had a look to see what was happening, they decided that they would need to record the growth of the seeds and created books to store this information.

For more information about C&K and *Building waterfalls* go to [www.candk.asn.au](http://www.candk.asn.au)



## ***Knock Knock – A workshop with Sue Southey***

***Libby Gaedtke***

Hervey Bay ECTA members and friends were treated to an afternoon of singing and movement when Sue Southey came to town. Sue is a well-known early years music consultant, and we were able to invite her along to Hervey Bay with financial help from ECTA. Thanks to our colleagues at USQ Wide Bay Campus, we had a very successful afternoon session in wonderful facilities. It's always refreshing to attend professional learning sessions and, on this occasion, we were alongside early years colleagues, secondary teachers, university lecturers and university students studying early childhood!

In true early childhood fashion the theory (or serious talk) took a short while, with Sue outlining the importance of multi-sensory learning. She views music as brain food, a shared form of communication, as well as being a connection to others. Then it was straight into the action! Sue demonstrated how the music could be adapted to different age groups, and introduced us to some terrific equipment and resources to enhance our music programs. Particularly popular was the rainbow ring, along with the parachute, lycra, shakers and clapsticks.

A highlight was having the time to explore the music and resources. With the introduction of the Early Years Curriculum and full time Prep, it was a timely reminder of the importance of

facilitating a quality music program in our centres. Allowing for creativity of movement, sharing ideas, incorporating gross motor skills and the enjoyment of music were all experienced during the afternoon. After the workshop Sue promptly followed up as promised with emails of our shared ideas, and teacher's notes to use with the CDs we'd all purchased enthusiastically.

My own Prep class is certainly enjoying the benefits from my personal experiences at the workshop! Being fortunate to be part of a P-12 campus, I was able to commission our secondary design technology department to produce a class set of child-size clap sticks, which have been in frequent use along with our "Knock Knock" CD.

We look forward to inviting Sue back to Hervey Bay to do a follow-up workshop in 2009 and, in the meantime, we're happily singing and moving to the beat!

*Libby Gaedtke is Secretary of the Hervey Bay ECTA Group.*





## ***Water: Learn it for life!***

***Water sustainability education program for teachers and students  
An initiative of the Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Water  
Kim Brown***

Kim Brown works as a teacher and a curriculum consultant. Formally trained as an Early Childhood teacher, Kim has gained diverse experience in a variety of schools, centres and educational settings. She believes play and learning should be strongly intertwined and that hands-on inquiry-based learning is one of the most powerful vehicles for engaging students. She was involved in writing the *Water: Learn it for life!* materials for Prep to Year One and the Whizzy Waterwise song, as well as co-authoring the *Whizzy's Incredible Journeys-Pick-a-Path* book.

Kim is a regular presenter of workshops on inquiry-based learning and also presents workshops on the new *Water: Learn it for life!* curriculum materials.

*Water is essential for life! ... The world's water resources are our lifeline for survival, and for sustainable development in the 21st century. Together, we must manage them better. (Kofi A. Annan, 2005)*

As early childhood educators, we have an urgent responsibility to educate and engage young children and their families to appreciate how precious water is. Leading by example in the sustainable use of water in our own classrooms and homes will foster new attitudes and behaviours in our students, their families and the community.

How can I introduce a Waterwise unit into my classroom?

Children learn most effectively when they are emotionally and personally involved in the curriculum. Whether I am at home with my young daughters (aged four and two, which incidentally are the perfect ages to learn about the half flush on the loo) or teaching in the classroom, I see teachable moments everywhere, which naturally flow into discussion, investigation and experiments with water and water conservation. Some examples include:

Filling water bottles—Where else can we use leftover water from our drinking bottles?

Brushing teeth—Is the tap left dripping?

Dripping tap—What is happening to all that water? Who should we tell?

Flushing the toilet—Why are there two buttons? Which one should I use?

When it's raining—Why is it important? How can we save the rainwater?

Observing a water tank or other structure, e.g. pipes or bores—What are they for and why are they important?



*Students discuss how to dispose of left over water from their water bottles.*

### **A precious gift from Whizzy**

To introduce young children to Whizzy and help them learn a very special lesson about what is 'precious', prepare this special surprise. Wrap an old box (I used a shoe box) with blue or water theme wrapping paper and ribbons. Attach a card on the top of the box with a message from Whizzy telling the children to please enjoy this very, very 'precious' gift, because it is one of the most amazing things on Earth and without it humans, plants and animals can't live. Inside the box place a sealed bottle of water.

# Feature Articles

When the children are out of the room, leave it in a prominent place for them to discover when they enter. Before opening the present, encourage children to predict what it might be, and prompt them to read the card. Children will often predict that the box contains, 'diamonds', 'gold', 'jewellery' or 'money'. They have a genuine sense of wonder when the box is opened and the bottle of water is revealed and, as such, is a powerful 'teachable moment' for the beginning of an exploration into water.

This activity and the necessary resources are described in detail in 'Lesson 1.1: A precious gift from Whizzy', Page 9 of *Water: Learn It for Life! Prep to Year One*.



*Young learners captivated by Whizzy's gift.*

What teaching and learning strategies are most powerful for water education?

*Thumpitty, bumpitty splat!*

*"Weeeeeee," laughed Whizzy, then ... Whizzy tumbled down the hill, swam through the dam, chugged through the treatment plant, whooshed up into the tank, swirled through the underground pipes, raced up the little pipes through the side of the house ... and out of the tap! (Oxenham, Stephens and Brown, 2008)*

As I read these pages with my young children their minds and imaginations were captivated. As we watched Whizzy tumble out of the tap and into the bathroom sink of the unsuspecting family, they are hooked into learning about this critical issue without knowing it. As an early childhood teacher, I love using *Whizzy's Incredible Journeys* as the foundation for water education

because it naturally leads my young learners to explore water through follow-on activities such as story maps, dramatisations, soundscapes, science experiments (into water properties, forms, sources, and uses), water play, water cycle exploration and most excitingly, Whizzy's Waterwise song.



*Whizzy's incredible journeys captivate young learners.*

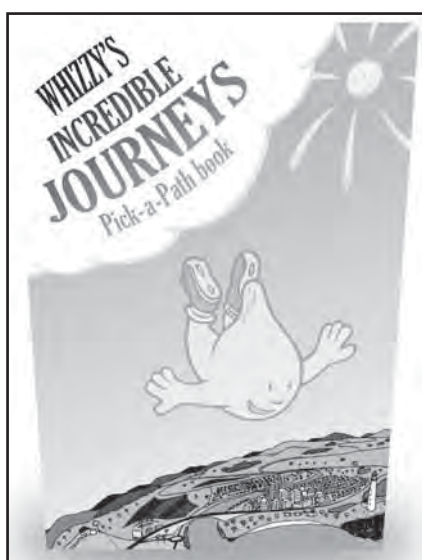
Young children have an innate sense of wonder and excitement about the world in which they live. The *Water: Learn it for life!* program invites teachers, carers, children and their families on a learning journey into Waterwise behaviours by developing an understanding of how precious and unique water is. The materials encompass fun, hands-on learning activities planned around current Education Queensland curriculum initiatives. It incorporates planning around *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* (Queensland Studies Authority, 2006) and *Essential Learnings* (Queensland Studies Authority, 2008). Content falls primarily within Science and Studies of the Society and the Environment, but also provides opportunities to link to the English and Arts Essential Learnings. The lesson plans and activities incorporate quality assessment tasks which can be used for reporting to parents and building student portfolios.

Through songs, stories, drama, music, classroom routines, play, scientific investigations and literacy experiences, young learners build a relationship with the imaginary character Whizzy. This relationship helps them develop a rich understanding of why water is so special and how we can use it wisely.

# Feature Articles



Children's drawings that represent their understanding of Waterwise behaviours



Whizzy's Incredible Journeys – Pick-a-Path book.

Practical ideas for teaching and learning in water education

Ideas taken from *Water: Learn it for life!* curriculum materials for Prep to Year Three, organised in the inquiry style 5E's model (Bybee, 1997) which is used throughout the units as a planning and teaching framework.

Engage—Read *Whizzy's Incredible Journeys* and open Whizzy's gift. Use senses to explore water in three forms (ice, liquid, vapour)

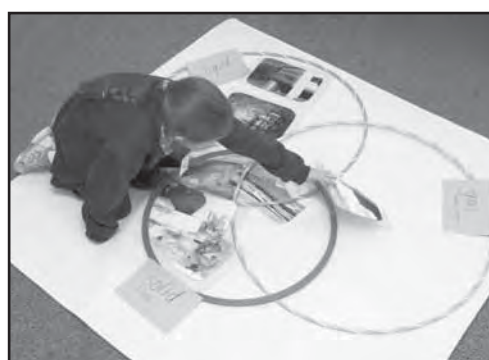
Explore—Go on a 'water walk' around the school, kindergarten, childcare centre or home. Investigate water and how it is used, accessed and wasted. Explore with a puppet what would happen if there was no water today. Students model rainfall and observe water falling on a range of surfaces.

Explain—My Water Story: students can role-play then create a storyboard to represent a water journey. Build a triple Venn diagram to sort out pictures of water forms, and then make H<sub>2</sub>O water hats to represent their understanding of water in ice, liquid and gas.

Elaborate—Students investigate others' water use by interviewing a guest speaker. Students create experiments, posters, paintings and a charade to build their understanding of water uses and Waterwise behaviours.

Evaluate—Use Whizzy's box and sentence starters to reflect on learning. Display posters in a community venue.

Celebrate learning—Invite parents, other classes, the principal and local community members into the learning environment to share students' songs, PowerPoints, science experiments, paintings, posters, plays and videos from their Waterwise learning journey.



Students sort Whizzy picture talk cards into a triple Venn diagram.

Sample ideas taken from *Water: Learn it for life!* curriculum materials for early years classrooms, organised into five contexts for learning and development (Early Years Curriculum Guidelines, 2006)



# Feature Articles

Play—water trough experiences, water experiments at the science table, or role-play equipment for jobs that use water (hairdresser, plumber, nursery owner, gardener, etc).

Focused teaching and learning—identifying clouds, using picture talk cards and water websites, and understanding how a tap works. Other activities include reading *Whizzy's Incredible Journeys –pick-a-path* book, discussing Whizzy's picture talk cards and Whizzy's water saving tips poster.

Investigations—water music, water balloon activities, absorption experiment, 'how many drops can fit on a coin?' and floating and sinking investigations.

Routines and transitions—wiping and cleaning tables, watering vegetable gardens, bubblers and toilets can be incorporated in activities where we use water and discuss how we can save water.

Real life situations—Cooking, meet a water expert, daily water for pets, living water display and 'tap watch'.



*Students conduct a water investigation.*

How can I teach Waterwise strategies if I don't know them myself?

A precious ten litres of water rushes down the sink if the tap is left running while we brush our teeth for two to three minutes. In an average Queensland home of four people brushing their teeth twice a day, that's approximately two and a half wheelie bins of wasted water a week.

The *Water: Learn it for life!* material includes vital information for educators, parents and community leaders relating to the water cycle,

water sources, reducing water consumption, water reuse, and the science of water. This is all available in the 'Background Information for Teachers' component of the curriculum resource.

The *Water: Learn it for life!* website hosts additional online water education resources in the 'Resource bank' for teachers, including lessons, posters, Whizzy's song, *Whizzy's Incredible Journeys–Pick-a-Path* book follow up activities, ideas, fact sheets, and links to other water websites.



Many additional resources are available online at [www.nrw.qld.gov.au/waterwise/education](http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/waterwise/education)

## Conclusion

If it is true that young children can be the catalysts for change, then the need for strong leadership and education about sustainable water resource management is unprecedented. My hope is that this quality resource will support and equip early childhood teachers to motivate and inspire children and their families to be wise water resource managers now and for the future.

All the *Water: Learn it for life!* program resources mentioned in this article can be accessed via the web site: [www.nrw.qld.gov.au/waterwise/education](http://www.nrw.qld.gov.au/waterwise/education)

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## ***Sowing the seeds – of healthy social and emotional wellbeing***

***Liz de Plater – Southern Population Health Services, Population Health Queensland***

*This is the first of two articles detailing the Queensland Health Social and Emotional Early Development Strategy (SEEDS) initiative. The first article offers an insight into how the SEEDS Mental Health Promotion Framework and resources were developed. The second article, which will appear in next year's EYC journal, will provide some information and examples of how the SEEDS Framework was and can be implemented within early childhood education and care settings.*

*The following article first appeared in Auseinetter, produced by the Australian Network for Promotion, Prevention, and Early Intervention for Mental Health, Issue 31, August, 2008: [www.auseinnet.com](http://www.auseinnet.com)*

### ***Introduction***

Parents and staff in the early years sector are using their 'head, heart and hands' to learn, love and live well. This has come about as people explore the use of the *Social and Emotional Early Development Strategy (SEEDS)* – 'head, heart and hands' mental health promotion framework which aims to enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of infants, children, parents and staff. The framework was developed by Queensland Health's Southern Area Population Health Services in collaboration with parents and staff in child care centres, and with professionals in the early years sector.

### ***SEEDS framework***

The SEEDS framework (head, heart and hands) proposes that the social and emotional wellbeing of children, staff, parents and families, and the wider community develops through nurturing and valuing relationships. Just as there is 'no health without mental health' – there is no social and emotional wellbeing without the heart. The heart is the key to quality relationships. Life experiences shape your values and who you become (heart) and those experiences influence what knowledge (head) you take in, and how you apply your skills (hands) in practice. The framework provides caregivers with a way to reflect on their own combination of knowledge

(head), values (heart) and skills (hands) and how their particular combination supports the social and emotional wellbeing of the children and adults in their lives.

### ***Background***

The SEEDS project is grounded in an expanding evidence base in biological and social sciences which attests to the significant benefits of investment in early childhood mental health. The importance of early development, particularly early attachment experiences, brain development and emotional development has been well documented over decades of independent research in economics, neuroscience and developmental psychology (Farrell & Travers, 2005; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Tsiantis, Smith, Dragonis & Cox, 2000; Heckman, 2000; McCain & Mustard, 1999; Mustard, 2006). A recent review of interventions to promote evidence in early childhood recommended adoption of centre-based programs that focus on building capacity through professional development (Armstrong et al., 2007).

*Within Southern Area Population Health Services, a mental health resource audit conducted by an earlier Queensland Health project (Promoting Health in Early Childhood Environments, 2002-05)*

***The SEEDS project is grounded in an expanding evidence base in biological and social sciences which attests to the significant benefits of investment in early childhood mental health.***

## SEEDS mental health promotion framework

Social and Emotional Early Development Strategy

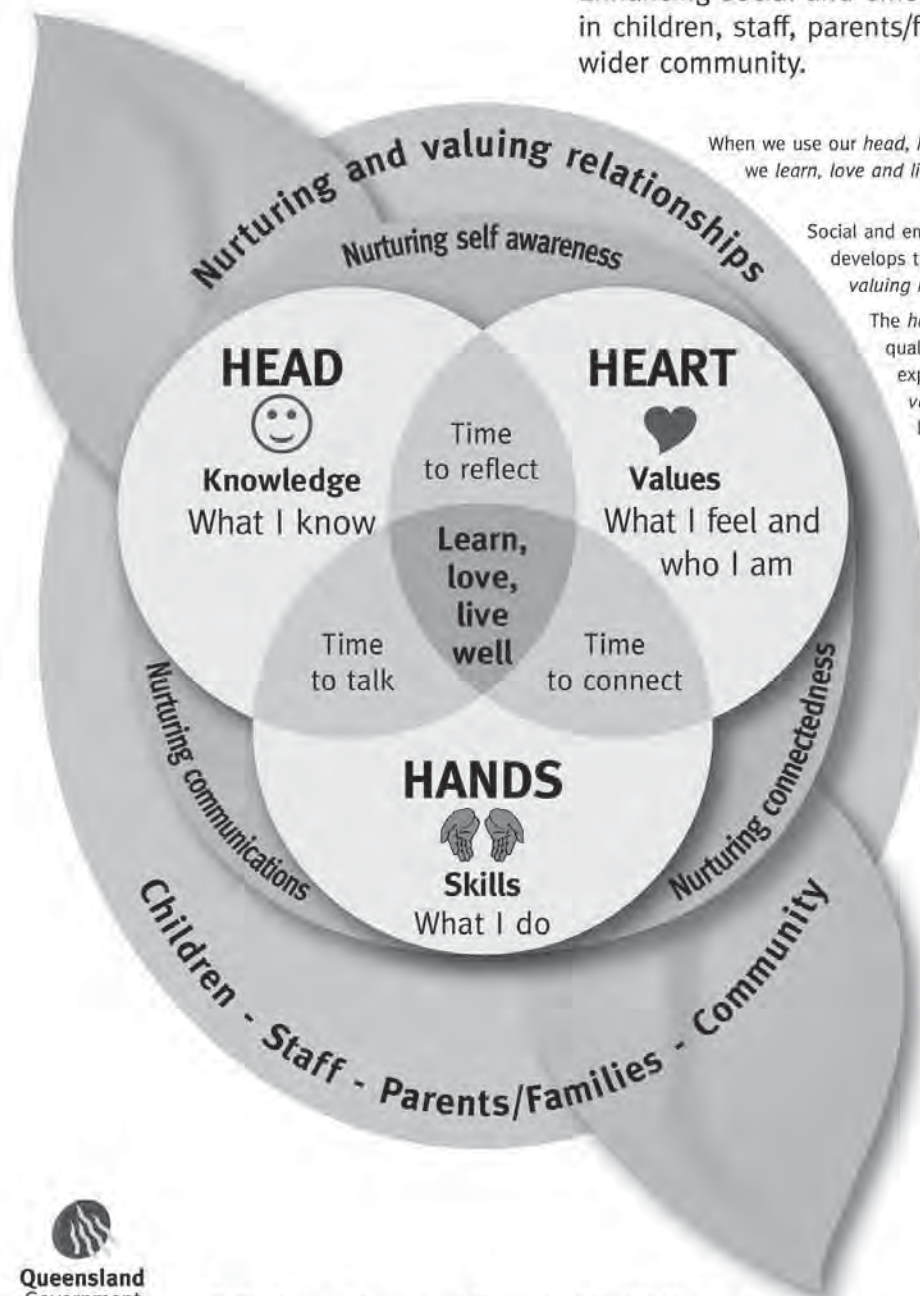
Enhancing social and emotional well-being in children, staff, parents/families and the wider community.

When we use our *head, heart and hands* wisely, we learn, love and live well.

Social and emotional well-being develops through *nurturing and valuing relationships*.

The *heart* is the key to quality relationships – life experiences shape your *values* and who you become ... and filter what *knowledge* you take in and ... how you use your *skills* in your practice.

Give yourself *time* to talk, to reflect and to connect ... this *nurtures* communication, self awareness and connectedness to enhance social and emotional well-being.





# Feature Articles

found child care centres had few mental health resources and the understanding of mental health by staff was restricted to the concept of mental illness. Available programs were not holistic and did not simultaneously address the mental health needs of staff, children, families and communities. The SEEDS project was funded to develop, and pilot, an evidence-based comprehensive mental health promotion framework for child care services to enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of children, their parents and staff.

While best practice knowledge is widely available in the early childhood education and care sector, there are circumstances which can create barriers to providing the consistent, warm, responsive caregiving that young children need. These circumstances include: high staff turnover, high numbers of inexperienced, under-qualified staff; and a focus on operational tasks. However, within these circumstances there are also many opportunities for the early childhood professional to be a significant attachment figure and to provide the sort of care that makes a difference in children's lives.

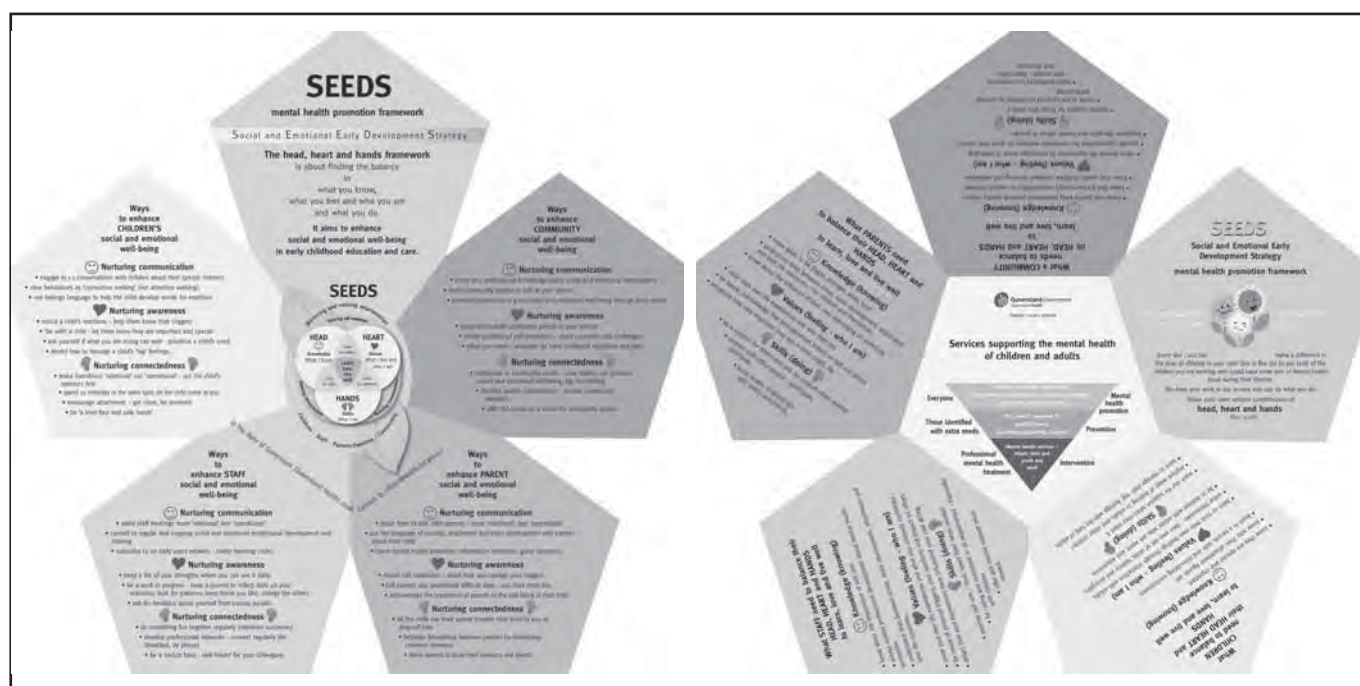
## What we did

The SEEDS framework was developed collaboratively with parents and staff of child

care centres. Following a needs assessment phase during April 2006 to early 2007, staff and parents from 15 child care centres were invited to attend a series of three workshops during 2007.

Child care centres were encouraged to include a parent and were offered a subsidy for two staff from each centre to attend all three workshops. The workshops presented information on attachment and early brain development and

*The time to talk was valuable in the process because it gave participants opportunities to engage with others and come to an understanding of how the information presented could be applied in caring for children.*



included time for participants to talk using the Griffith University 'Circles of Change' process. The time to talk was valuable in the process because it gave participants opportunities to engage with others and come to an understanding of how the information presented could be applied in caring for children. In between workshops the project team visited the child care centres and recorded the strategies that were being implemented. At the next workshop all strategies were shared and became part of the shared knowledge. All the strategies in the SEEDS 'flower' (see below) came from the participants of the three workshops.

Throughout the project evaluation was built in and significant partnerships were fostered by an active and diverse steering committee. Membership included Professional Support Coordinators Queensland (PSCQ), TAFE, Creche and Kindergarten Association, Indigenous Professional Support Unit (IPSU), Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS), Department of Communities and Griffith University.

### *The resources*

The A3-size SEEDS mental health promotion framework poster proposes that social and emotional wellbeing develops through nurturing and valuing relationships. It provides a way for caregivers to reflect on how they can increase their awareness of the importance of the impact of early life experiences on later life outcomes (specifically the connection between attachment relationships and early brain development) and how they can enhance the social and emotional wellbeing of the children and adults in their lives.

The SEEDS project has used a gardening metaphor throughout the life of the project to highlight the importance of nurturing the social and emotional wellbeing of young children and their caregivers (parents and child care staff). This started with the motto: 'All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the SEEDS of today'. This metaphor is continued by developing a SEEDS 'packet' which contains useful websites, some key messages, implications for care giving and a short description of the head, heart and hands framework.

The packet includes a SEEDS 'flower' and a resource CD. The flower uses simple language to outline what children need to balance their

head, heart and hands to learn, love and live well. In addition, it provides practical suggestions for nurturing communications, self awareness and connectedness to enhance children's, parents', staff and community social and emotional wellbeing. The CD contains the resources used during the project, and provides 'free use' copyright (Queensland Health) to encourage the incorporation of the framework's head, heart and hands language into core practice.

### *Results and feedback to date*

'Children don't see us as 'caregivers' who have certificates and diplomas, etc. They see us as someone to build a relationship, to trust and care for them. We are their 'secure base' their 'safe haven', just as their parents are when they are with them. We have an extremely important role in these children's lives. Especially emotionally!' (Child care centre staff)

The SEEDS framework, based on the key competencies of 'head, heart and hands', the processes of 'time to talk, reflect and connect', and the strategies of nurturing communications, self awareness and connectedness as a way of enhancing social and emotional wellbeing, has been favourably received within the early childhood education and care sector. Preliminary findings suggest:

### *Sowing the SEEDS of Healthy Social and Emotional Wellbeing*

- The SEEDS approach of providing content and a process for implementing change can increase parents' and professionals' awareness about

***Children don't see us as 'caregivers' who have certificates and diplomas, etc. They see us as someone to build a relationship, to trust and care for them.***



# Feature Articles

the need to promote universal positive mental health for children and adults in the early childhood education and care sector;

- Increased awareness has led to reflection on caregiving practices and policies; and
- The inclusion of parents has strengthened partnerships within the centres and within families.

'Looking around the centre now, I see a lot of 'hands' working, always something to do, a routine to meet, a timeline of events. Caregivers could take a moment off the busy schedule and be aware of being more emotionally available to the children.' (Child care centre staff)

The partnerships that were developed through the process of the SEEDS project have created numerous opportunities for the framework and concepts to be integrated into practice. Professional Support Coordinators Queensland (a training organisation which provides professional development for staff of early years services) is developing a training DVD and a series of professional seminars which will incorporate the SEEDS framework and materials. TAFE is exploring the use of the materials for online student services and there is interest in the framework from other organisations focused on child safety and wellbeing.

Some comments received by parents who have experienced the SEEDS approach include:

*'I have a much better appreciation for the job of child care staff.'*

*'I am more aware of spending time with my child – preparing them for things that we are doing ... talk about what is going to happen.'*

*'I am aware of my child's attachment figures in child care and always pass him to this person.'*

*'I have made our family schedule less busy so we could all have down time.'*

*'I talked to my husband about things I learned. It has helped my son form a better attachment with his dad.'*

## More information

The SEEDS framework and associated resources have been distributed for trial to selected children's services and other key stakeholders.

Feedback on the materials continues to be sought by Southern Population Health Services for further development of the resources and support materials. Key SEEDS concepts such as attachment, brain development, social and emotional development are integral components of Queensland Health's broader *Healthy bodies healthy minds* (2nd edition) health promoting early childhood approach, which assists services to adopt health promotion processes and best practice. Refer to [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au) for more information.

*For more information and access to framework and resources contact:*

Kerry Bidwell, Area Coordinator, Mental Health Promotion, Southern Area Population Health Services, Queensland Health. Tel: (07) 3000 9104

Cathie Gillan, Senior Project Officer, Mental Health Promotion, Population Health Services, Queensland Health. Tel: (07) 3237 1543

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- Armstrong R, Waters E, Davis E, Harper C, & Priest N 2007, *The Development of Evidence-Based Recommendations to Support Policy and Practice (Executive Summary)*. Brisbane: Queensland Health.
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- Heckman J 2000, *Invest in the very young*. In: J. Heckman. *Fostering Human Capital*. Chicago, Illinois: Ounce of Prevention Fund and University of Chicago, Harris School of Public Policy Studies.
- McCain M & Mustard F 1999, *Reversing the Real Brain Drain: Early years study: Final report*. Ontario: Ontario Children's Secretariat. [wwwFOUNDERS.NET/](http://wwwFOUNDERS.NET/)
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## ***Working with digital pictures***

***Kim Walters***

Digital cameras have given educators an innovative tool to capture the life and learning within their early childhood centres. Capturing the moment and being able to share it immediately, or very soon after the event, has allowed educators to enhance the learning of the children and the communication between parents, children and educators. Educators can now have at their finger tips all the equipment required to create professional quantity resources.

Children's engagement is high when interacting with resources educators have created from pictures and/or sound and movie recordings of familiar environments, objects or characters. Children relate to the familiar pictures and recordings captured, affixing new knowledge to past memories which leads to maximized learning. Parents eagerly seek out documentation produced and gain insight into their child's and the group's stories of learning within the early childhood setting.

***Children's engagement is high when interacting with resources educators have created from pictures and/or sound and movie recordings of familiar environments, objects or characters.***

During the past five years Australia has seen a massive reduction in the price of digital cameras and associated equipment. It is now possible for an early childhood setting to purchase a digital camera, printer, laminator and binder for under \$600. Five years ago I noted during a conference presentation that 10% of the early childhood

educators present had access to a digital camera. In 2008 this figure has jumped to nearly 100%. Price is no longer a major disincentive for educators to use digital technologies.

Skill level and confidence in using digital technologies to their full potential still remains an issue for many early childhood educators. The ECTA mentoring project which ran during 2006 demonstrated the benefits of having a colleague giving hands-on support. Participants noted that they were visual or kinaesthetic learners and, being supported whilst actually using the technology, lead to high skill development. I encourage you to seek out a digitally confident colleague and ask for support.

Mentoring which supports your personal goals and is carried out in your own specific setting at your own pace is not always available. As an alternative I recommend the *Step by Step* publication which will take you slowly through the processes required to insert and adjust digital pictures to create engaging documentation and resources for your setting. For digital portfolios, that is those viewed on the computer screen, portfolio systems such as *Digital Power*, *Sharing the Journey* and *Prep Digital Folio Systems* provide a ready to go system that is specifically designed for your early childhood setting. All these resources along with personal training for individuals or groups are available through the *Digital Preschool* website [www.digitalpreschool.com.au](http://www.digitalpreschool.com.au).

The following information will be helpful to those beginning their journey into the digital age it has been adapted from the *Technical Help* section of *Sharing the Journey* resource.

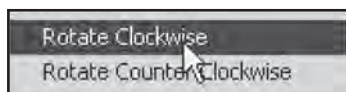
### ***Rotating pictures***

Rotate digital pictures immediately after downloading them. They will then be of the correct orientation for the slideshow and for inserting into *Microsoft Word* documents or *PowerPoint* presentations. To rotate pictures:

1. Select one or more pictures.
2. Right click over one of the selected pictures.

# Feature Articles

3. Select Rotate Clockwise or Rotate Counter Clockwise.



## Selecting pictures


1. Open the storage folder that contains the digital pictures.
  - Select all the pictures by holding the *CTRL* key down as you press the *A* key (*CTRL+A*).
  - Select a group of pictures by holding the *Shift* key down as you click onto the first and last picture of the group.
  - Select one or more specific pictures by holding the *CTRL* key down as you click onto the pictures you want.

## Moving pictures into folders

Once your pictures are downloaded you may wish to sort them into various folders. Folders may contain collections from a special event or project or you may have a folder for each child as is in the *Sharing the Journey* digital portfolio system.

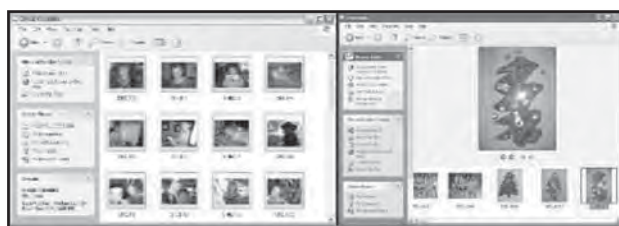
- Use the *Move selected files* feature on the left pane. You will need to locate and select the destination folder from the list of folders on your hard drive.
- Use the *Drag and Drop* method.

## Drag and Drop method

1. Close all opened programs and folders.
2. Open the storage folder that contains the pictures to be moved.
3. Click the *Views* icon and set the folder to *Film* (XP) or *Large* (Vista) view so that it is easier to identify the children in each image. 
4. Open the folder that contains the various folders you want to sort the pictures into.
5. Click the *Views* icon and set the folder to *Medium* view (Vista) or *Thumbnail* view (XP).
6. So that you can see both windows on the screen, as in the illustration below, move and resize the folders manually or right click over

the *Taskbar*. Select *Tile Vertically* (XP) or *Show Windows Side by Side* (Vista).

7. Select the pictures to be moved.
8. Move them to the selected folder using the following method.
9. *Drag and drop* the pictures into the destination folder (release mouse when the folder is outlined in blue).



## Copying pictures into folders

Pictures which you wish to go into several folders should be copied and pasted into the desired folders.

Select the pictures then use one of the following methods to copy them to several folders.

- Use the *Copy selected files* feature on the left pane. You will need to locate and select the destination folder from the list of folders on your hard drive.
- Use the *Copy* and *Paste* features of *Windows*.

## Copying

Select the files to be copied then:

- a. Use *CTRL+C* (hover over one of the selected files then hold the *CTRL* key down as you click the *C* key).
- b. Right click over the selected files and select *Copy*.
- c. Click the *Copy* icon on the *Standard* toolbar.

## Pasting

Open the destination folder then:

- a. Use *CTRL+V*
- b. Right click and select *Paste*.
- a. Click the *Paste* icon on the *Standard* toolbar.

## Size of digital pictures

The size of digital pictures can be a significant problem for those working on a network or computer with limited storage space. Large pictures also take longer to insert into documents or presentations. You can change the size of the picture taken by your camera or reduce the picture size once you have downloaded it to your computer.

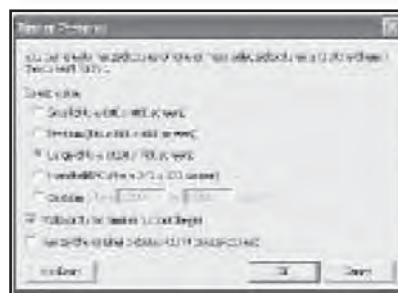
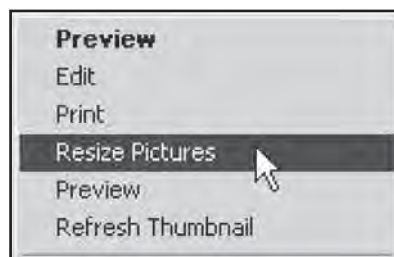
Each camera has its own picture quality setting options for size and quality. Read the documentation that came with the camera to find the *Function Settings* or *Main Menu*. Levels of size are often set at *Best*, *Better*, *Good* or *Large*, *Medium* or *Small*. Levels of quality may be set at *Superfine*, *Fine* or *Normal*. The larger the size and finer the quality the more pixels the pictures will have. As a rule of thumb 1600 x 1200 pixels is more than ample.

To reduce pictures once downloaded, those using the *Vista* operating system can download *Picasa* from [www.picasa.com](http://www.picasa.com) and use its *Export* button to reduce the picture size.

Luckily for those using the *Windows XP* operating system, *Microsoft* has developed an excellent program to resize pictures called the *Image Resizer* which maybe downloaded from <http://www.Microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/powertoys/xppowertoys.mspx>

### Using the Microsoft Image Resizer Toy

1. Open the folder that contains your pictures.
2. Select a picture or a group of pictures.
3. Right click over the picture/s and select *Resize Pictures*.
4. Select *Large* then click the *Advanced* button.
5. Choose to: *Make pictures smaller but not larger*.
6. If you want to replace the original with the resized one, tick *Resize the original pictures (don't create copies)*.
7. If you want to keep the original, leave this box un-ticked.
8. The new file will be called '*original name*' (*Large*).



The original picture was 3.17 MB the new picture is only 91.5 KB.

Both are clear and printable to A5.



### References and recommended resources

Digital Preschool: [www.digitalpreschool.com.au](http://www.digitalpreschool.com.au) Phone: 0418157280

Walters K 2005, *Digital Documentation – 101 photo ready Word documents*, Digital Preschool: Gympie.

Walters K 2006, *Capture the Moment: Using digital photography in early childhood settings*, Early Childhood Australia (ECA): [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au)

Walters K 2007, *Step by Step – Digital Picture Insertion for Beginners (for use with Microsoft Word 2000/XP/2003)*, Digital Preschool: Gympie.

Walters K 2007, *Prep Digital Folio Systems*, Digital Preschool: Gympie.

Walters K 2008, *Step by Step – Digital Picture Insertion for Beginners (for use with Microsoft Word 2007)*, Digital Preschool: Gympie.

Walters K 2008, *Digital Power - Documenting using the Curriculum Framework, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn*, Digital Preschool: Gympie.



## ***Pictures as maths tools***

***Ann Baker***



Ann Baker is author and educational consultant in mathematics and thinking skills. She was early childhood trained but has taught at all levels including tertiary. Ann's main research over the past five years has focussed on the role of a well-planned numeracy block and the development of a strong foundation for number sense. She is gaining evidence to show that all children can engage comfortably with number and develop a deep understanding of number and number sense. [ann@naturalmaths.com.au](mailto:ann@naturalmaths.com.au)

Maths picture books provide many problem-solving opportunities. The beauty of the books is that they engage students visually and fire their imagination. Although they are fiction, they provide situations that the students can project themselves into and engage with. There are many excellent maths picture books that inspire young children to mathematise and to represent their thinking through pictures and through materials. However, before exploring these books and children's responses to them, I want to raise a few contentious issues with which you may well disagree.

- Concrete materials are often not the best tools for students to explore mathematical ideas.
- Showing students what to do with tools, how to manipulate them assumes that they have the same structures and understandings in their heads as we do and often they do not.
- Asking students to pretend that a block represents something creates a hurdle that excludes some students from engaging with a particular mathematical situation.
- Showing or telling the student how to approach a problem and what materials to use is actually denying them the opportunity to think and plan for themselves.
- Mathematics is a creative activity and there is not a 'one size fits all' approach to it.

Teachers often ask me about the role of hands-on materials. Generally, I almost never say to students

to use a particular material, unless of course the problem presented is actually about that particular manipulable. I do usually say that there are materials available for use so that the students know that they can use them if they want to.

### ***Where materials can fail***

The following true story will go some way to explaining my point and to highlighting the issues above. I was doing a demonstrations lesson in a Year Two class. I had read *One is a Snail, Ten is a Crab*, a counting book based on combining the feet of various creatures (snail, person, dog, insect, spider and crab) to show particular numbers of feet. I had asked the class what combination of creatures would make 47 feet. This is one of my favourite place value activities because we can 'see' the students' thought processes. Some use the crabs to make 40 and then make the remaining 7 by combining the other creatures whereas some laboriously count by 1s, others will make rainbow pairs to ten and yet others will count on in various ways maybe using numbers without pictures. One little girl was happily and painstakingly drawing crabs and adding the extra creatures when one of the teachers watching decided to be helpful and grabbed a tray full of paddle pop sticks. She went over to the girl and told her it would be quicker to make bundles of 10 and pretend they were the crab's feet. The girl began to count out 10s and bundle them together when finally the teacher said:

*'Now count all the feet.'*

The girl counted the paddle pop sticks in the bundles by 1s. This led to the teacher helpfully demonstrating the process of counting in 10s. Torn between the two models the girl was now left in a strange place. What she had been doing had made sense to her but she could see that it was not valued by the teacher. She clearly did not make the links between what she had been shown and told, to 'pretend these are the feet', and what she had been doing, drawing the actual feet. I went over and asked how many feet she had drawn so far and she promptly counted the crabs by 10s and began counting on. I asked her if she wanted an extra challenge and she said yes. The challenge was to make 47 again but this time with no crabs included. After a moment or two she drew spiders and people in pairs to make ten. Clearly she has a good understanding of place value but in her way, not the teacher's way. She was happy again, engaging with the realism that the problem had for her, not the teacher's version of it.

***Clearly she has a good understanding of place value but in her way, not the teacher's way. She was happy again, engaging with the realism that the problem had for her, not the teacher's version of it.***

#### ***Where pictures can succeed***

Recently in Prep class I was fascinated as many of the children wandered around with clipboards making and following each others' maps. After reading Rosie's Walk and making Rosie's walk and variations of it in the sand pit, the children had begun to spontaneously draw their own maps. Over a period of days the maps began to become more and more representational and sophisticated. The teacher had watched and encouraged and joined in following the maps and

then one day she showed the children a map of their part of the school. She said she had a few spares if anyone wanted them. They all did and began inventing hide-and-seek activities with routes made on them. They did not however see the maps as the 'right' way to represent and were soon innovating on them and including features of them in their own maps. The significant feature here is that the teacher did not undermine or undervalue the student interpretations. Rather, she encouraged them. Following on from Rosie's walk, other mapping picture books were shared over a period of days while the interest was high and these included *Going on a Lion Hunt*, *Bears in the Night*, *Changes Changes* and *1 Hunter*. This scenario shows how tools can be offered and integrated by the children in their own way, not imposed upon them.

***The significant feature here is that the teacher did not undermine or undervalue the student interpretations. Rather, she encouraged them.***

#### ***What if a child cannot draw?***

What if a child cannot draw their way into a problem. Should they then be directed to concrete materials you might well ask? Still the answer is: only if they want to and only if you let them work out what to do with them. Use of KidPix can enable students to use the stamp facility to solve problems pictorially and quickly too.

#### ***Books for mathematising***

Allen P 1983, *Bertie and the Bear*, Penguin

Allen P 1988, *A Lion in the Night*, Penguin

Allen P 2006, *Where's the Gold?* Penguin

Berenstein S and J 1971, *Bears in the Night*, Collins

Hutchins P 2006, *Rosie's Walk*, Aladdin

Hutchins P 1987, *Changes*, Aladdin

Sayre AP and J 2003, *One is a Snail, Ten is a Crab*, Walker books

## Musical games as a thinking tool

**Sue Southey**



Sue Southey is a PrePrep teacher in a C&K community kindergarten in Springwood, south of Brisbane. Sue is a consultant with various organisations on early childhood music. She presents workshops for early childhood professionals on music with young children and edits an e-newsletter called "Mostly Music". She is currently doing a series of workshops in Brisbane and regional areas of Queensland based on Crackle & Pop, and Knock Knock, the two CDs she co-wrote as a member of the Forte's Jungle Music Team.

Play, such as building, construction, visual arts, and role play, are the foundation of early childhood programs. We use these forms of play to capture children's curiosity, engender socialization, stimulate thinking skills and problem-solving, and provide a platform for children to express their creativity.

Music, however, is an under-utilized form of play in early childhood. It is commonly used for cultural awareness, aesthetic appreciation, and classroom management (transition games), but not necessarily to engage children's thinking and creativity.

Music, more than any other art form, is accessible to a wide range of ages and capabilities. It is not reliant on language or visual skills, but taps into auditory and kinaesthetic modes of learning. Music has the capacity to incorporate all children regardless of their special needs and capabilities, it is therefore ideal for engaging all children.

The challenge for early childhood professionals is to select musical experiences that allow children to use their own ideas to express their creativity, in the same way that we provide materials and scaffolding for children to engage in visual arts. Simple songs and rhymes can provide a structure for games that allow children to input their own ideas to create new responses.



The following activities are ones that illustrate the style of teaching to which I am referring. These musical activities are part of a PrePrep

programme in a community kindergarten. They will work equally as well with younger or older children in a variety of early childhood settings.

### Aiken Drum

#### Aiken Drum

Traditional

There was a man lived in the moon, lived in the moon, lived in the moon, there was a man lived in the moon, and his name was Ai - ken

Chorus  
Drum. And he played up - on his la - dle, his la - dle, his la - dle, he played up - on his la - dle, and his name was Ai - ken Drum.

This is a favourite PrePrep song; repeated many times, on each occasion creating a new representation of Aiken Drum. The humour of this song becomes more apparent to the children when visual props are used, in this case plastic food to create Aiken Drum. On each verse a child was chosen to select the next body part for us to sing about; "and his tummy/legs/head.. was made of pizza/bananas ...". The children enjoyed the silliness of this song as they created more and more ridiculous "Aiken Drums". In the future we will try substituting plastic shapes for food items. Older children could extend the creativity of this song by drawing the shapes as the song is sung. This simple structure allows children to input their ideas to create a new person each time, encouraging them to think, predict and experiment.

An ability to sing is useful, but not essential for music activities with children. Humpty Dumpty has a melody with large variations in pitch which makes it challenging for young children (and teachers) to sing.



However, it works perfectly well as a rhyme. Rhymes allow children to experience beat, rhythm, rhyme and form and require no ability to sing on pitch!

## Humpty Dumpty

Over a period of several weeks, the children had fun developing ideas around the Humpty Dumpty rhyme. Initially, we chanted the rhyme using egg shakers to keep the beat. The children suggested various body parts to become Humpty's wall, for example; heads, shoulders, backs, knees etc. The part the children enjoyed most was letting the eggs to fall to the ground on "*had a great fall*". I cued this with a cymbal crash, initially sounded by me, but later by individual children. At this stage we had created a simple game that was ready to be expanded and developed.



I made a wall using a strip of masking tape on the carpet. Small groups of children had turns at choosing ways to stand on the wall. The group said the rhyme as the children balanced and fell to the ground on the cymbal crash. Initially, they chose simple ways to stand (one foot, on their knees, backwards) but with experience chose complicated and

interesting positions (e.g. one foot and one elbow on the ground).

I added a further challenge by asking "If Humpty wanted to get to the other end of the wall, how could he move?" The rhyme then became "*Humpty Dumpty moved on the wall...*" Chaos ensued as children tried rolling, hopping, walking backwards, tiptoeing along the wall.

In this way a very simple and familiar rhyme became a platform for engaging children's thinking. It sustained the children's interest over several music sessions. It allowed them to feel the beat, experience the rhythm of the words, gain body and spatial awareness, listen for cues, work with others and most importantly, generate and try out ideas.

## Baby O

### Baby O

Traditional

*A refrain*

*B verse*

Baby O is traditional song that I have adapted slightly to make it useable as a game. It has a simple refrain (chorus) that remains the same and a verse that is adapted to incorporate the children's ideas.

Initially, I taught it as a simple action song using Beanie Toys®, or beanbags as babies. When the children were familiar with the song I challenged them to think about new ways to get our babies to sleep. I encouraged the children to think about body parts that we could balance the babies on. We reworded the lyrics of the verse to suit the children's suggested actions, for example "*Put him on our knee-ee-o*". This song challenged the children to place their bodies in different ways so that they could balance their babies without falling. There were many and varied possibilities, often hilarious to watch, as the children tried them out.

Other possibilities ensued as the children investigated throwing and catching the babies, passing them on to a friend around the circle or tossing them from hand to hand.

Our next plan is to put the babies onto a parachute or Lycra, where the babies can be tossed, rocked, jiggled, waved up and down. The possibilities are restricted only by the children's imagination. In addition, because music is a creative art, reality does not need to interfere. Just because you would not really do this to babies, doesn't mean that you can't do it in a music session!

Therefore, music in the form of simple rhymes and songs, can provide games that engage children in thinking skills, co-operation and as a platform for ideas and creativity. An ability to sing is not essential, but an enthusiasm to experiment, think creatively and have fun are!

## Young children's social behaviour ... taught not caught

**Dr. Margaret Carter**



Margaret works in private practice as a behaviour change specialist, based in Brisbane. She works with families, children's service staff, kindergartens, care and education systems, government departments, community organizations, mental health practitioners and therapists. Margaret's work is always contemporary and relevant, designed in response to needs, circumstances and specific situations. Margaret is a qualified teacher and has worked as a preschool teacher, special education consultant and guidance counsellor. She works as a consultant, mentor, teacher, social coach, program designer, facilitator, presenter and mediator, and is the author of seven books. Margaret is a passionate advocate of inclusion and inclusive education. She has co-authored two social understanding curriculum texts for children 3 – 10 years of age and is the co-author of *The Five Faces of Parenting* program, a dynamic and unique program designed to make a positive difference in the lives of families.

When we think about children developing their skills and competencies in social behaviour, we need to seriously reflect on where we position ourselves as adults – as controllers of child social behaviour or as teachers of child social behaviour. Is social behaviour 'caught' or is it intentionally 'taught'? Are schools and early years services about controlling children OR are they about teaching and learning – to know, to do, to be whole as lifelong learners, and to be together with others living and learning peacefully and productively?

According to William Glasser – author of *Reality Therapy and Choice Theory* - social behaviour is learnt and can be taught. Dr Glasser advocates that:

- behaviours are purposeful and are directed to the satisfaction of five genetically driven basic life needs – survival, connectedness, recognition, freedom, fun
- behaviours are total and are made up of four components – thinking, doing, feeling and physiology
- almost all behaviours are chosen
- we have no choice except to behave
- when all the behaviours we have chosen in the past fail, we create new behaviours
- behaviours are our best attempt at the time to satisfy one or more of our basic needs
- when our past behaviours cease to be effective, we create new behaviours
- our own behaviour is all we can control
- all we can give another person is information.

This approach to behaviour growth and development is a paradigm shift from the more traditional, authoritarian approaches adopted over the centuries. It is one of adult as teacher and facilitator of social learning, not lecturer and instructor, concentrating on empowering rather than disempowering children. Such an approach moves away from an environment of fear, punishment, failure and external control to an environment of trust and respect.

This paradigm shift acknowledges children as natural learners, competent beings who need to be given the opportunity to learn social behaviours naturally through active engagement in the social world.

As Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952) proclaimed, action is born of the child. It is not imposed by adults onto the child. The adults' role, therefore, is to serve the child, determining what each child needs to grow and develop socially and emotionally. Their role is to guide and to coach children as they develop social understanding, social competence and self-responsibility.

*The educator's job is to facilitate the natural process of learning.* (Maria Montessori)

Children learn social behaviour so they can develop as social beings. Throughout this learning process, children develop responsibility for their behaviour choices.

When children are in social groups it is imperative that baseline behaviours for the group to live and learn together are identified. These behaviours are minimum level social behaviours ... they are so basic that they are needed for social harmony and

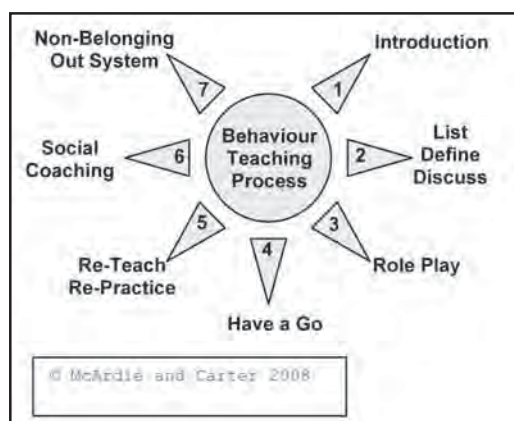
# Feature Articles

productivity. Remember to always adapt behaviour expectations appropriate to your context and to the developmental and cultural needs of the children.

Examples of baseline behaviours include: Kind Words/Gentle Hands and Feet/Move Carefully/ Listen, Think, Do.

Once baseline behaviours are nominated, it is important to develop a shared understanding among adults and children of what the expectation means in real terms ... what children would be thinking, doing, feeling and not thinking, doing, feeling if they were demonstrating this expectation etc.

Articulating this shared understanding is the springboard from which the behaviour teaching unfolds. The behaviour teaching process, as outlined in the following diagram, has seven focal points.



Howard Gardner's multiple intelligence framework adds value to the coaching component of the behaviour teaching process. This framework names the spectrum of intelligences individuals possess: musical; body-kinesthetic; logical-mathematical; linguistic; spatial; interpersonal; intrapersonal; naturalist – and, as such, provides different entry points for children to develop social mastery.

As Maria Montessori acknowledged:

*Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavour always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.*

Children developing social behaviour competencies, will make mistakes. These social mistakes provide opportunities for many lessons on how to do things differently. If you let these mistakes go unnoticed or do not deal with them

directly, you deprive children of valuable learning.

- Emphasize what the child can do next time. 'Mistakes happen. How can you hold the plate so you don't spill the food?'
- Separate the deed from the doer. 'I love you. I do not like what you are doing right now.'
- Give the child another chance. 'We take turns on the swing ... Let's try again ...'
- Ask questions. 'What happened when ... What did you learn from that? What else can you do?'
- Model for the child what to do. 'Watch how I put the blocks away. Each block goes in a special place. See? That way all the blocks get packed away.'

Social behaviour is not caught, it has to be intentionally taught. Cater for individual differences, learning styles, temperaments, personalities, and acquisition rates. Give assistance with learning when /as children require. Monitor each child's behaviour closely and when inappropriate behaviour is happening, follow through with social consequences. Always address misbehaviour with beneficence, compassion, justice, wisdom and respect.

Refrain from making a 'do as I say and not as I do' environment. This breeds 'little ownership-lots of resentment' between children and adults. Invest time in teaching children appropriate ways of behaving and adapting to their environment. The rewards children reap will far outweigh the time invested.

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## ***A reflection on Reggio and our own backyard!***

***Lisa Palethorpe***

The city of Reggio Emilia is considered a global leader in early childhood education with a capacity for good communication and listening. It has a sense of history, knowledge of community, values and attitudes. Historically and currently, the community of Reggio is proactive on behalf of children and value human resources. They have successfully developed a shared vision, set of values that promotes collegial and collaborative relationships and a commitment to change. They continue to dialogue because, as Sergio Spaggiari explains:

*"In an educational community, conversation must be the glue that holds things together ... If I give you an idea, and you give me an idea, we each have two ideas. Dialogue and exchange enrich people. We need a pedagogy of listening. The first part of listening is crediting the other person with something to say. Children are so seldom listened to because we don't credit them with interesting ideas. We have to take up a listening attitude with other people; we need to listen to others as well as to ourselves."*

***In an educational community, conversation must be the glue that holds things together ... If I give you an idea, and you give me an idea, we each have two ideas.***

This comment has stirred my own reflections. I am very grateful to have been supported to go on the April 2008 Reggio Emilia Study Tour with esteemed colleagues from C&K: Dr Noelene (Mc Bride) (Board member), Jan Cullen and Margaret Sears (C&K staff). During the study tour we

listened, listened and listened but we also had the opportunity to dialogue or simply "chat".

The experience was certainly life changing for me ...

*"Was it the Italian wine ... Italian food or the Italian men ... "*

All jokes aside, it was life changing because of the opportunity to have rich dialogue with others. It has been six months since our return and I need to question *"When else in our busy days do we get the luxury to visit other educational environments to question and consider and to have trusting professional exchanges?"* Dialogue is quintessential to the success of Reggio, yet something so simple is so out of reach for most educators.

Reggio Emilia values the importance of listening and questioning not only with children but with knowledgeable adults. The role of the Pedagogista in Reggio is acknowledged as being pivotal in maintaining the coherence and quality of the educational program of Reggio. The Pedagogista works with small clusters of early childhood services as their educational manager. The person meets weekly with staff and supports and leads each team to really look, listen and question - to really know the child and to look at curriculum in depth.

I needed to ask myself why does this happen in Italy and not in Queensland? C&K is fortunate enough to have early childhood consultancy staff (ECECC) who are identified by C&K teachers as being critical factors in supporting and influencing quality outcomes from children. The study tour has allowed for a comparison of current C&K systems and the opportunities to explore future possibilities. It is not about embracing Reggio but working out what works well and why and what scope those systems have in our culture and context.

In 2009, C&K will embark on a trial to be called "Centres of Innovation". We will employ an ECECC (funded by C&K) to work alongside

# International Perspectives

seven services solely focusing on the curriculum. Staff will be provided with the opportunity for weekly dialogue (pupil free) with this consultant to discuss and reflect together on what is occurring and future possibilities. We hope this rich engagement in professional exchange will support these teachers reach new heights of quality standards and get to know the children and families to a greater level. We also intend to employ environmental coordinators for each of these services who will essentially be an outdoor teacher. An additional educator to work outside with children and adults will support the full exploration of the outdoor environment and support future generations in connecting with nature and learning about the importance of sustainability. C&K kindergartens have always celebrated and honoured the outdoors through our magnificent playgrounds. We hope to continue this throughout all of our services as well as expand our focus in this area. The outdoors and sport is essentially the Australian culture, it ties with our traditional past and reconnects children to nature. We hope that by providing additional staff and resources we will see the outdoors explored to its full capacity.

***We hope this rich engagement in professional exchange will support these teachers reach new heights of quality standards and get to know the children and families to a greater level.***

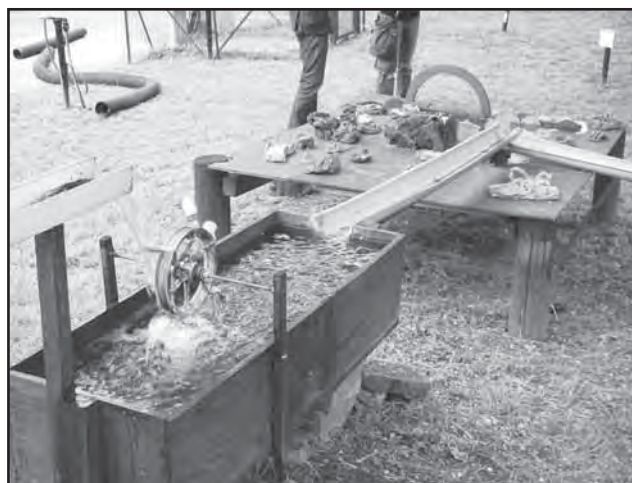
In Reggio, the image of children as competent and capable of constructing knowledge is omnipresent within the buildings and schools, as well as in listening to the teachers, pedagogistas and atelieristas (art technician). While the theories of social constructivism that underpin Reggio are central to the practice and dialogue, any comments about Reggio must take into account

challenges of "transferability" of programs and policies, or the over-simplification of ideas about the possibility of transferring policy and practice from one country to another. While Reggio cannot be replicated because, among other things, it is based on values that came from Italian political and cultural experiences, Italian attitudes to art, music, food, family and children, it demonstrates, above all, that the struggle for "quality" early education is worth fighting for over years.

For me, Reggio is a valuable experience. It is rich in dialogue and provides an opportunity to stimulate ideas that we can translate into our culture.

Valuing our own backyard has become an obsession. Just like in Reggio, there are some C&K services who are providing and collaborating with and alongside children in some highly innovative and responsive ways. We have state-of-the-art programs that are world leaders, yet many of us scuttle off to Reggio to explore the Italian ways when there are essentially some great things happening in our own backyard. We must learn and celebrate these and encourage and influence others.

Lisa Palethorpe is General Manager – Early Childhood Education and Care, C&K.



**"The Amusement Park For Birds"** When children are supported by engaged teachers and experts, anything is possible!

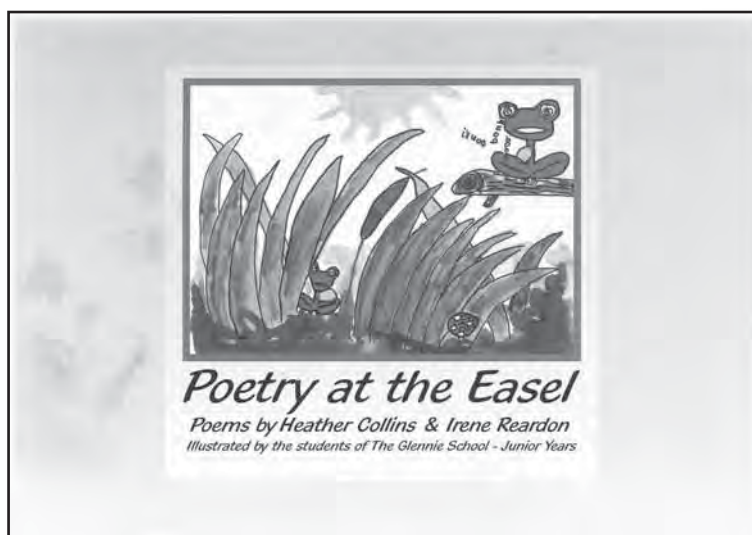
# Book Reviews

Title: Poetry at the Easel

Authors: Heather Collins and Irene Reardon

Illustrated by: the students of The Glennie School - Junior Years

Reviewed by: 3K - St Margaret's AGS



Round and round the words go  
Filling up the page  
Along with illustrations  
By Glennie students of a young age.

With an outdoor theme  
That'll make you beam  
And seem as though you're there  
The illustrations are so beautiful  
They'll make you stop and stare.

Hannah Lane Year 3 2008

*Poetry at the Easel* is a book full of beautiful poems written by Heather Collins and Irene Reardon. To accompany these poems, there are

matching illustrations by the students of the Glennie Junior School.

These marvellous poems are mainly based around an outdoor theme that includes animals, weather, imaginary creatures and seasons. The poems are written using rhymes, expressive and descriptive language and interesting ideas and facts.

The illustrations are made with coloured paper, shading techniques, pencils, crayons, pens, paint, a leaf technique and water colours. They are bright, colourful, and attract the reader's attention.

*Poetry at the Easel* is a spectacular book filled with wonderful, creative poems that will inspire the reader to perhaps write their own poetry.



3K - St Margaret's AGS

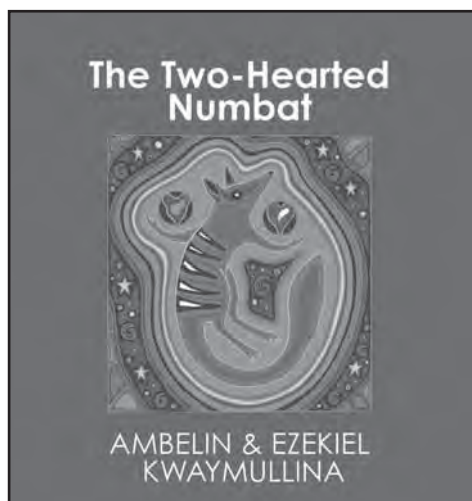


## Title: The Two-Hearted Numbat

Authors and Illustrators: Ameblin and Ezekiel Kwaymullina  
Published by: Fremantle Press ISBN: 978 1 921 361 23 4

RRP: \$26.95

Reviewed by: Kate West



This gorgeous picture book, written by two West Australian indigenous authors, tells the story of Numbat. Numbat has two hearts – a gentle heart made of feather, and a strong heart made of stone. His feather heart makes him soft and caring, well-liked by others, but always tired from helping others and having nothing left for himself. His stone heart makes him strong and powerful, but too tough to accept help from others. No-one likes Numbat of the Stone Heart. In the story, Numbat feels that he has to decide which heart is his true heart, and so he sets out on a journey of discovery to find out. On the way, he learns about himself, and how to become both strong and caring.

The simple message of this story is well-delivered, accompanied by bright illustrations which bring the book to life. It is an excellent book for children of all ages, and would complement any school or home library. It would be especially useful in

teaching and learning about roles and expectations, caring for yourself and others, Australian animals or indigenous stories. Teaching notes are available for this book from [www.fremantlepress.com.au](http://www.fremantlepress.com.au). I recommend this book to all readers.

## Title: Up Downs

Author: Michelle M. Neumann  
ISBN: 978 1 876 451 80 6

Illustrator: Kay Forster  
RRP: \$29.95

Reviewed by: Roslyn Heywood



Written as a tool for parents by a parent with qualifications in primary and secondary teaching, *Up Downs* is a brightly illustrated and well presented Australian book. Michelle Neumann's own children inspired the publication. The book places intrinsic value on the family and sees children as special and unique.

The stated purpose of *Up Downs* is to introduce a range of early literacy concepts in a fun way. Its theoretical base is purported to be that of using multiple intelligences, which the author tries to integrate throughout the book.

The vibrant illustrations by experienced children's illustrator Kaye Forster possess a uniqueness and breath-taking freshness of appeal to any age.

The book is available from Finch Publishing. To contact them for further information email: [info@finch.com.au](mailto:info@finch.com.au) website: [www.finch.com.au](http://www.finch.com.au)

## ECTA Guidelines for writers

The ECTA journal committee welcomes articles and ideas for possible inclusion in the journal.

One of the journal's strengths is in the variety and individuality of contributions. These style guidelines should help you to prepare your contribution in the ECTA 'style'.

### Style

We like to maintain a uniformity of approach within the journal. Here are some examples of the preferred 'house' style.

- Use Australian spelling in preference to American.
- Write numbers up to twelve as words; figures are used for numbers 13 upwards. (For example: one, eleven, 18, 200.) Exceptions are where numbers appear in a table, list or refer to a measure. (For example: Anne was seven years old when she walked 5 kilometres to school.)
- Use the following examples to help you write dates and times:  
15 February 2006, 1900s.  
She left at 7.25 am in order to catch the seven-forty train.
- Usually, you would write amounts of money in numerals. (For example: 20c or \$0.20, \$120 and \$88.15.) Words may be used in approximations such as 'he made millions of dollars'.
- Use italics for titles. For example: *The Australian* rather than 'The Australian'.
- Aim for a style that is free of jargon or slang (unless this is relevant to your contribution).
- Don't assume that your audience has prior knowledge of your topic. For example, it is possible your readers will not be familiar with an acronym that you use every day. You should use the full reference the first time, followed by the acronym in brackets as shown here: Early Childhood Teachers' Association (ECTA).

### Referencing

If your contribution concludes with a list of references, you should check these carefully as the editor may only pick obvious typographical errors. A search on Google usually brings up any reference you do not have to hand.

Maybe you need help with referencing. If so, you should find the *Style manual for authors, editors and printers* (6<sup>th</sup> edn) very helpful. The editor uses this manual and also the *Macquarie Dictionary*. This is the preferred style for the ECTA Journal.

Example of referencing for a book: O'Hagan M 2001, *Early Years Practitioner*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, Harcourt: London.

Example of referencing for 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.

### 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 . .')
- 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.

### Length of contribution

- 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](mailto:info@ecta.org.au)

Photographs may be submitted digitally – minimum 3 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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