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Editorial policy

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



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From the President

Kim Walters - ECTA President

Welcome to the second edition of *Educating Young Children* for 2009.

At our recent ECTA Early Childhood Conference it was my absolute pleasure to award Toni Michael her well deserved ECTA Life Membership. Toni Michael held the position of President, Vice President or Past President of the Early Childhood Teachers' Association consecutively for 13 years, having only retired from the State Coordinating Committee last year.



working in a range of settings with a professional learning focus.

Toni donated so much time and energy to ECTA, taking a "hands on" role being on the coordinating, journal and conference committees simultaneously. Through Toni's leadership, many of ECTA's practices and procedures were developed and streamlined. It was said 'Toni should be a Super Life Member' and I believe all that know her would agree.

Toni was President from 1997 – 2000 and again in 2005 & 2006. Between these times she was Vice President for four years. To my great relief, when I took over the role of President, Toni remained on the State Coordinating Committee for a further two years as Past President. During this time Toni also became a founding member of the Joint Council of Qld Teacher Associations (JCQTA) and later became President of this organisation. Her role in the JCQTA raised the profile of ECTA through state and national advocacy. Through Toni's skill in networking with other professional associations and organisations, ECTA now works collaboratively with other entities such as C&K, Gowrie and universities on a range of professional development experiences. This mammoth commitment to Early Childhood continues as Toni coordinated the 2009 ECTA Conference.

Toni can be credited for taking ECTA from a relatively minor organisation to one of the largest, if not the largest, state teacher association in the country currently with 689 members. Toni steered ECTA to look more strategically at how it could show support for and value its members and other professionals working in ECEC. Toni brought with her experience gained from



Congratulations to Toni and her team for a magnificent effort in facilitating the 2009 ECTA Annual Conference which has been applauded by delegates, traders and presenters alike. It is exciting for the coordinating committee to read the glowing evaluations being submitted from delegates who attended. This year the conference went online for conference registrations and from all accounts this was greeted positively by delegates. EYC readers will be inspired and motivated, as were the delegates at the conference, by the array of papers submitted by the presenters which will appear in this and future editions of the journal.

ECTA continues to advocate for its members. We recently sent a submission to the review of award coverage for employees in Early Childhood Education. The outcomes of the award review will affect our members working in pre-prep and childcare sectors. You can read ECTA's response on the website. We are also contributing to the drafting of Early Childhood Advanced Teaching Standards being facilitated by Early Childhood Australia (ECA).

ECTA congratulates Tysha Gillies who was the recipient of the ECTA award for high achievement by an Early Childhood Student at the USQ Toowoomba presentations night.



Dr Karen Noble Associate Dean (Learning and Teaching.) presenting the award to Tysha Gillies

Tysha received an ECTA membership. Tysha completed the Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) program with a GPA of 6.78.

Congratulations go to the Gladstone and Cairns regional groups who both

received funding to help with the facilitation of professional development initiatives in their area. We look forward to reading reports on the success of their events in the next edition of EYC.

This year Libby Gaedtke, co-ordinator of the Hervey Bay Regional Group, has taken on the additional role of Regional Groups Coordinator. If you would like help with your regional activities, or you would like to establish a regional group in your area, please contact Libby via email at herveybayrg@ecta.org.au. We have provided each regional group with generic email accounts. You can find the new contact details on the regional group section of our website.

Kim

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From the Editorial Panel

Sue Webster

As I rugged up and jumped in my car early on June 27 I could not quite believe a year had gone by since my last journey to the ECTA Conference. I always put in my forms and choose my workshops with glee but as the holidays grow closer and the days get colder I begin to rethink my decision to spend the first day of my holidays with a lot of other like-minded crazy teachers. But then I arrive at John Paul College walk into the Coleman Centre and remember why I am happy to leave my family sleeping at home and join the ECTA Conference.

I am always astounded by how well organised (the emails were fantastic leading up to the day as well) the conference is and how much work a small but dedicated band of people can get done.

I grabbed my cup of tea to warm my hands, had a chat and took a seat.

I was thrilled to witness Toni Michael receive her well deserved Life Members award for her many years of tireless effort supporting children and staff in early education settings. Congratulations Toni.

Dr Loretta Giorcelli was fantastic. She began by paying homage to the fact that so many – nearly 500 early childhood professionals – had turned up to expand their minds and we certainly were not disappointed. My mind whirled with comparisons and ideas to help with the certain few who were challenging me this year.

Dr Giorcelli answered questions and shed light on why specific behaviours were manifesting themselves in some of my darlings. I was inspired and moved to tears and laughter in



the hour and a half. I learnt much about resilience and how to support it in my classroom. I cannot wait until journal three (3) to receive a permanent record of this fabulous address.

After morning tea and some networking – great to catch up with old and new friends - we headed off to our next experience. I was lucky enough to attend Laurie Kelly's workshop discussing how to excite children to learn. I learnt how to improve my own memory and thus how to help instil information permanently in the minds of

those I teach through using all of their senses.

We broke for some more food - as normal it was warm and delicious - and the chatting and catching up continued. The afternoon bought even more workshops of which I heard many fabulous reports.

The problem with the conference is that you cannot get to enough of the fantastic workshops BUT that is the joy of receiving the journal over the next year and reading about all the great workshops that you were not able to attend.

In Journal two (2) for 2009, Andrew Clark will further our understanding about the use of contemporary art in educating our children-both in the classroom and with visits/excursions to the gallery.

Dr Jennifer Cartmel will help develop our knowledge of operational administration as it applies to Care Outside School Hours.

Kerry Hanson's article 'Making Talking Books' discusses the use of SwitchIt Maker 2, Boardmaker Plus and Clicker 5 and will give you some practical ideas for use in the classroom.

Robert Pratt, as a fellow Early Childhood Educator, encourages us to think about the use of recycling and veggie gardens in the early years and addressing environmental issues and sustainability within education.

Celia Dodds and Deb Brydon, both practising teachers with high interest in music, help us to think about the importance of music in education. Particularly how to enhance future musical development and its relationship to intellectual, social and emotional benefits.

Judy Hartnett as a current lecturer in Mathematics at QUT, discusses the use of inquiry to promote thinking and working mathematically with young children. This is very beneficial in today's education where application of knowledge is seen as more important than having knowledge alone.

Dr Allison Waters gives us some useful insight into understanding anxiety in young children as well as some facts on anxiety and how psychologists treat it.

Dr Anna Bower, as a Behaviour Guidance Consultant, is able to enrich our knowledge in the use of natural and logical consequences to promote responsibility

We will also share in the achievements and celebrations of children in early childhood settings across Queensland. This includes

Junction Park State School's celebration of Harmony Day (a truly lovely experience for performers and audience), the raising of over \$12,000 by C&K children and families with a 'Go Green Day' for the bushfire victims and share in the trip to Reggio Emilia with Lynelle and Valerie.

We will continue to be enriched by ideas from Karen Georgi about literacy in kindy and pre-primary and Judy McManus shares her ideas about the use of interactive whiteboards in prep.

We have started a new interest area by showing you a Queensland classroom/ environment to help spark ideas and reaffirm your already fabulous ones.

The media reviews cover hot tips for cool kids ... maths development, self esteem activities for young children and critical first steps to behaviour management.

As well as a review on a babies view of what they need and want.

It is always difficult to decide which articles should go into a journal and which should be held over until the next time. We hope you find our choices interesting and exciting, with more to come in the next edition. Enjoy.

The problem with the conference is that you cannot get to enough of the fantastic workshops BUT that is the joy of receiving the journal over the next year and reading about all the great workshops that you were not able to attend.

Teacher Stories

The 2009 ECTA State Conference photo diary 27th June 2009

Bronwyn MacGregor



With a friendly wave, Toni Michael and the ECTA Conference Committee welcome delegates to the 2009



The Coleman Centre was soon buzzing with the sound of early childhood professionals networking.



Ingrid and Sue were on hand at the ECTA stand to assist members with their enquiries and of course ... register new members.

DELEGATES INCLUDED ...



Suzanne Johns, Jenny Green and Wendy Dunstan



Tracie Darnell, Tracey Durey and Larissa Robson



Co-convenor Robbie Leikvold, Elizabeth King and Susan Parker

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Teacher Stories



Presenter Dr Brenda Abbey rolled in with Robyn Lane (Sunnybank C&K).



Volunteers like QUT Grad Dip Ed Early Years Student, John Nash, were very helpful.



Sandy Vizgaudis and Dianna Markovits



As delegates Linda Boyle (Whitsunday C&K), Kelly Todd, Amy Carlson (Proserpine C&K) and others took their seats, ECTA President Kim Walters opened the conference.



Toni Michael's outstanding contributions to ECTA were acknowledged, and ECTA President Kim presented her with the ECTA Life Membership Award.



Toni Michael (right) joins Carole Wild (centre) as a life member, while new member and presenter Liz De Plater (left) reconnects with Carole, who was once her children's kindy teacher.



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Teacher Stories



With a Keynote Address by Dr Loretta Giorcelli, four master classes and 28 workshops on offer, the 470 conference delegates were treated to ECTA's usual high standard of professional development.

I ASKED DELEGATES ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS THEY ATTENDED ...



Kylie Adam, Lisa-Marie Caldecutt, Janelle Borgges (Lowood C&K)

"Dr. G was so inspirational and I liked the practical examples she gave."
 "Musical Beginnings by Deb Brydon/Celia Dodds gave us great practical ideas for music time with an emphasis on using your own voice."
 "Rob Pratt's workshop on Pathways to Sustainability went from Global Warming to talking about recycling, worm farms, ideas for use with the children and ways to educate parents as well."



Hellen Meland (Ashgrove Memorial C&K) found that *It's question time* with Karyn Johns was aimed at children at a higher level than her 3.5 years olds, but Karyn's concept of the four levels of questioning was something useful she could take to a Kindy level.



Sharon Lawson, Sarah Bailey (Waterford State School)

"We have returned to the ECTA conference after a long time of not attending. It was well organised, the food was great, Keynote was excellent and the presenters were good. We attended the workshop on *Anxiety Disorders* by Dr Allison Waters in the morning. It was very informative, particularly for teachers in Logan. We attended the *Munch, Crunch, Zoom & Roar* music workshop by Mark Carthew in the afternoon."

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Teacher Stories



AS ALWAYS, THE CONFERENCE WAS A GREAT TIME FOR NETWORKING ...

*Susan Parker (Boonah District C&K),
Anne Bourne (Hyde Rd, Yeronga C&K),
Maryann Munnings (All Saints SS, Boonah),
Elizabeth King (Boonah District C&K)*



*Sandy Vizgaudis,
Melindi Robertson
and Bron Clemesha*



Angela and friend



Kerry Lucy, Debbie, Kris Bishop, Leanne Hunter, Donna Vale



Lisa Singleton, Claire Duffield, Kathy McLennan and friends

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Teacher Stories

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Kaylene Mulcahy and Gai Underwood



Nicole Chenoweth and friend

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Teacher Stories

THIS YEAR WE DID THE LUNCH TIME SESSION IN 'BOLLYWOOD' STYLE ...



... AND, AS ALWAYS, THE DAY ENDED WITH THE PRIZE DRAWS DURING WINE AND CHEESE.

As the crowd gathers for the prize draw, Helen Bearmont (Coolnwynpin Prep) and Sharon Lambert, Susan Crowe and Kerri Schefe (Manly SS) sit back to enjoy a glass of wine.



With GREAT prizes on offer, these five ladies were one of 20 who won a parachute donated by HART Sport. Judy Cunningham (Acacia Ridge ECDP) won the Doll donated by Kurrajong Aboriginal Products.



LOOKING FORWARD TO DOING IT ALL AGAIN WITH YOU IN 2010!



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Celebrating Harmony Day 2009

Thousands of people across all the states of Australia celebrated Harmony Day on March 21st this year to the theme of *Everybody Belongs*. Harmony Day was instigated in 1999 and was established by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship to also coincide with the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Harmony Day recognises and celebrates the cohesive and inclusive nature of our nation and promotes the benefits of cultural diversity. The key messages include community participation, inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. There is no limit to the range of events or activities that can be organised by schools, communities, businesses or local



Teacher Stories



government. There is no funding available for Harmony Day events but it is supported with the provision of free promotional products.

This year Junction Park State School celebrated Harmony Day by staging a community concert. Children and adults of the school practised for weeks with the help of school staff and parents. The whole school and community came together for an hour and a half one fine and sunny afternoon. Dancing, singing and wonderful performances from small and large groups of children and adults was the order of the afternoon. It was a wonderful sharing of the thoughts and actions included in the theme *Everybody Belongs*.

Children of all ages performed Irish and Egyptian dancing as well as Rap and Bop dancing. There was a large senior choir as well as a group of four girls singing beautiful songs. Next came

a fabulous performance of highly decorated Year Ones who sang about being flowers in the world's garden. This was followed by a spirited presentation of New Zealand poi twirling performed by the school crossing guard – Pauline. The concert finished with 500 people of all ages and cultures joining hands and singing *We Are One – We Are Australian*. It was a fabulous concert and one thoroughly enjoyed by all those who attended.

Start thinking now about how you, your school or community can celebrate Harmony Day in 2010. It will be on March 21st with the theme of *We Can Make It Happen*.

Early in 2010 visit <http://www.harmony.gov.au> to download new graphics, view and order products (such as badges, stickers and tattoos) and register your interest and plans. You too can make it happen!



Interactive whiteboards and Prep

Judy McManus

Judy teaches Prep at Sacred Heart in Yeppoon. She is a member of the Fitzroy ECTA Regional group and is one of five sponsored teachers who attended the ECTA conference in 2009. This is Judy's story.

I would like to thank ECTA for providing me with financial support to attend the recent ECTA Conference at St John Paul College. It is attending events such as these that remind us of two very important things as early childhood professionals. One, we never stop learning and secondly, the support, guidance and affirmation we provide each other is crucial in maintaining and enhancing early childhood programs.

It is also after attending such conferences that one can feel both overwhelmed and inspired about implementing all the wonderful ideas that we have experienced. The passion with which Jill Kearney enthused for the inclusion of science in the classroom was extraordinary. As someone who doesn't feel confident with scientific knowledge, I am now more confident to explore with the children the many scientific wonders on offer.

After attending *Eureka's! Beakers and Seekers* and realizing that being an early childhood professional is just as much about 'challenging' yourself as the children, I sought inspiration for my article.

This year I was lucky (I can truly say that now) to have an interactive whiteboard installed in my Prep room. At first I wondered what I could do with this 'thing'. How could I incorporate it into my educational program in a meaningful way? I don't profess to have all the answers and it is still very much a work in progress. However, I have challenged myself to make this piece of equipment as open-ended and useful as the wooden blocks, art resources and play corner.

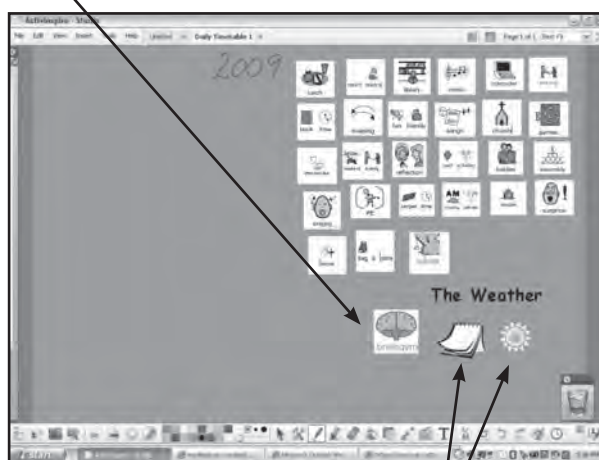
So I would like to share with you all some of its uses (although I am sure I have many more to unearth).

Daily Routine

I created a flipchart using writing with symbols depicting pictures of our various activities e.g.

carpet time, library, book time, inside time etc. Also on this page are three links

1. to our 'braingym' song



2. a calendar flipchart (we count the days, cross off the current day and read any significant messages e.g. birthdays, sports days etc)



3. World Wide Web link to a weather chart and special person of the day (link <http://www.ictgames.com/dateChart.html>).

This flipchart, within a 15 - 20 minute carpet time, allows me to provide the children with a variety of learning experiences: oral language, music and movement, counting, number recognition, tracking skills, left to right awareness, months and day names, letter and word awareness, rhyme (the days of the week song sung to the 'Adams family') and repetitive word recognition. There are also multiple opportunities for visual reading and viewing. The link site also provides an opportunity to build self-perception and confidence as the children nominate the 'special person' (often themselves) and state the reason why.

A hand-drawn sketch of Indiana Jones, wearing his signature fedora and holding a whip. Below him is a collection bag with a checkmark next to it. To the right, there is a diamond-shaped object labeled 'diamond' and a skull labeled 'skull'. A map is also drawn, showing a wavy line and an 'x' mark. The text 'Indiana Jones' is written at the top. The sketch is on a white background with a black border.

A teachers observation of literacy in the kindergarten and pre-primary setting

Karen Sternberg-Georgi

Karen is a casual Lecturer and external tutor in Early Childhood Education at Murdoch University, Perth.

My philosophy of literacy education is best described as eclectic. I provide developmentally appropriate experiences, based on children's interests and scaffolded by peers and teachers.

My aim is to provide fun, interactive and hands on literacy experiences through play, teaching children many strategies to enable them to become strategic readers and writers. As stated by Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett and Farmer (2008, p 103) play is, "a great opportunity for children to find and solve problems" therefore creating their own entry and exit points to thinking.

An exceptional literacy program will include ongoing teacher and child reflection and monitoring at regular intervals. It will include speaking, writing, listening, viewing and thinking, using modeled, guided, and independent and shared reading and writing practices. The teacher needs to use explicit and implicit instruction and facilitation as well as active planned and spontaneous use of resources. Also literacy experiences should be provided in whole group, small group and individual contexts, using a balance of teaching styles in all settings. As cited in the education syllabus K-3 (2008 p 12) "Through well scaffolded, fully developed play, children use language to organize ideas and use skills that underline literacy-telling, narrating and describing - and children's vocabulary, letter recognition and phonological awareness are increased."

NAEYC (2004) suggest that, curriculum builds on prior learning experiences and therefore the child's competencies and learning needs. It is important to use, modeled, guided, independent and shared literacy processes that start with the child in mind and through play.

Oral Language

It is important not to adopt a single approach in the Kindergarten and pre-primary area. Children

need to engage in meaningful conversation, not just news or show and tell. Discussions should focus on what is happening at school, at home and in the community. There should be opportunities for incursions, dramatic play and many explorations, for example placing shells and literature on a stand outside. Teachers need to give thought to a child's socio-cultural context or background. As Fleer and Robins (2003), cited in Arthur et al, (2008, p 268) note, "this assists educators to really understand children's learning and to plan experiences that are contextually responsive and that support learning".

Phonetic awareness

When in the emergent phase of phonetic awareness, children need to hear the letter name in the introduction and then the sound. As Hill (2006 p 20) asserts, "being able to hear language, perceive differences in meaning and articulate language is crucially important to learning to read and write". Children also need to know what an upper-case or big letter and lowercase or little letter looks like in a text or the environment. Most children will have heard letter names and sounds from Sesame Street and Hi-five along with rote alphabet songs well before school starts. Meaningful first words eg; mum, dad, dog need to be displayed with photos in the classroom environment.

A bank of words, used in drama, literature and outside play can be written down and built up for display. Children need to be able to glide in and out of contexts for meaningful learning to occur. As stated by Hill (2006 p 232) "Children learn to problem solve by cross-checking using several information sources". An eclectic approach provides and caters for individual differences in a classroom situation.

Emergent writing

Including a writing corner with choices will encourage exploration of a range of implements and cater for individual differences. This also

encourages a positive disposition and esteem and love of writing.

Children need to be able to negotiate and make a mess - finger-paint, cutting and exploring texture before or with writing. As stated by Williams (1998 p 39) "the neural connections between visual, auditory and written communication are made through a multi-sensory approach in which messages are relayed to the brain in four ways, hearing a sound, seeing it and saying it while writing it".

Reading and writing processes need to be introduced through play in a meaningful way - for instance, providing notebooks and paper shapes in the block corner for planning and mapping or brainstorming signs and lists for use in dramatic play. Children need squiggle boards, paper and whiteboards as well as a variety of home-made books and writing implements to excite them. If it is a child's birthday then party invitations and a list can be made and used in the classroom. As stated by Vygotsky (1978) cited Connell (1985: p 27), "writing should be meaningful for children. An intrinsic need should be aroused in them, and that writing should be incorporated into the task that is necessary and relevant for life".

Conclusion

It is imperative the school has a strategic program where teachers and parents are involved in a

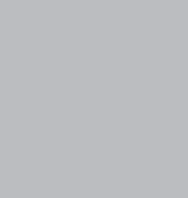
collaborative decision making process in regard to their child's needs. "The more home and school literacy practices are complimentary, the more children are to succeed" (Education Syllabus 2008 p11). This is achieved by involving families in setting goals, information sessions, meetings, classroom modeling, and communication books for updates and reflections.

A whole school approach combined with classroom and individual programs ensures proactive and meaningful teaching and learning and improves whole school and individual literacy levels.

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An exceptional literacy program will include ongoing teacher and child reflection and monitoring at regular intervals and include speaking, writing, listening, viewing and thinking, using modeled, guided, and independent and shared reading and writing practices.



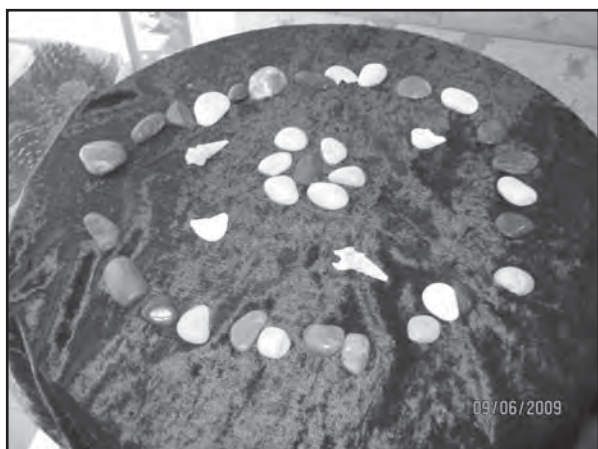
Welcome to a new feature in our journal. Each issue we will feature an early childhood environment. For those who are far away or too time poor to visit other settings this may provide new insights. It will also help to reinvigorate our minds, refresh our ideas and consolidate our own learning. In this Issue Sue Webster visits Seven Hills State School.

Seven Hills Prep Classroom Visit

Sue Webster



Colour and visual stimulus.



Aesthetically-pleasing interest areas.

I was lucky enough to visit the classroom of Lynelle Whittaker at Seven Hills State School in the South of Brisbane at the end of Term Two. I have viewed Lynelle's classroom on previous occasions when she has generously opened it for professional development sessions.

I am always interested to see how Lynelle structures her classroom as the school has (by choice) formed a number of Prep/Year One multi-age classes. Lynelle teaches in a purpose-built

building and integrates her curriculum and ages effectively. Lynelle has also recently returned from a Study Tour visiting Centres and Preschools in Reggio Emilia in Italy.

There are many eye-catching areas in Lynelle's classroom including the lovely arrangement of furniture (donated by families as a response to a call out at the school community), the use of aesthetically-pleasing interest areas, as well as the use of colour and visual stimulus.



Eye-catching environments.



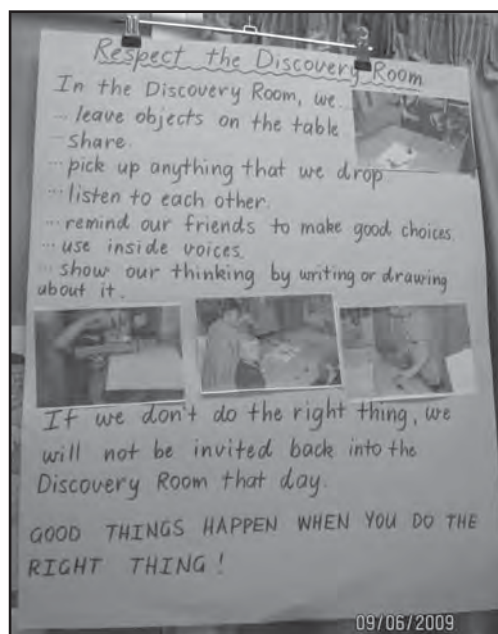
Furniture donated by families.



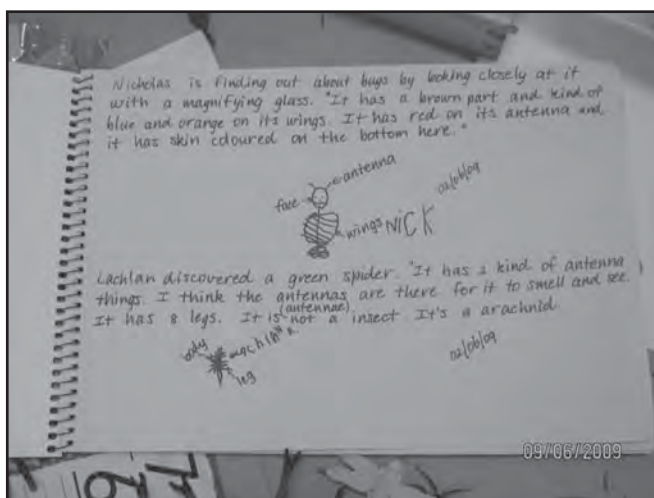
Discovery room



Light box and magnifying glasses stimulate thinking.



Room guidelines.



Written investigations.

I was very interested to see that Lynelle and Valerie (teaching counterpart in the fabulous-looking connecting room) had used the space usually given to the teacher's office to make a Discovery Room. This involved a large table and chairs with many interesting items: a light box, magnifying glass, a discovery room thinking book and trays of interesting items. The walls

were hung with room guidelines and written investigations. The shelves were filled with containers of interesting items and lab coats. There was also a computer with Internet access and shelves of books.

Children are encouraged to hypothesise, investigate and record their findings and discoveries.

Thanks for the visit Lynelle. I wanted to stay and 'play'. No wonder that the children at Seven Hills all have big smiles on their faces!!!

Educating Young Children speaks with Anne Reddell, Executive Director, Regulation and Services, Office for Early Childhood Education and Care about the COAG Early Childhood Reform Agenda and the role of the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care.

Can you tell us about the role of the new Office for Early Childhood Education and Care?

The establishment of a new Office for Early Childhood Education and Care was announced in September 2008 to lead delivery of the Government's commitment to providing all Queensland children with access to quality early childhood education and care as part of the plan for Queensland - *Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland*. The Office was formally established on 1 January 2009 bringing together early education and child care under the one government agency for the first time.

The Office is hosted by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and is responsible for delivering national and state early childhood reform initiatives. There are three main areas of the Office – Policy and Performance, Strategic Initiatives and Regulation and Services. Under the *Child Care Act 2002* we licence more than 2500 services, including approximately 1460 Long Day Care centres, 350 Kindergartens, 85 Family Day Care schemes, 55 Limited Hours Care programs and 600 School Aged Care Programs.

What is the National Reform Agenda?

The Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) vision is that children are born healthy, and have access to the support, education and care throughout early childhood that equips them for life and learning, delivered in a way that actively engages parents, and meets the workforce participation needs of parents. To achieve this, COAG targets include:

1. universal access to early learning for all four year olds by 2013
2. ensuring all Indigenous four-year-olds in remote Indigenous communities have access to a quality early childhood education program by 2013
3. halving the gap in mortality rates for Indigenous children under five years within a decade.

What does this mean for Queensland?

Of the approximately 53,000 Queensland children who were four years of age in 2007, 29% accessed a quality early education and care service delivered by a qualified teacher through community kindergartens, the *Bound for Success* initiative in discrete indigenous communities and some long day care centres. Approximately 12,000 children did not attend any centre-based education or care service. Delivering universal access to kindergarten in Queensland will mean all children will have access to a high quality early education program in the year prior to Prep by mid 2013.

How will COAG achieve these commitments for children?

The Australian Government will introduce a National Quality Framework. This Framework will include new national quality standards for early childhood education and care; a quality rating system that will help inform parents about the quality of care, and encourage continuous improvement; a streamlined licensing, regulatory and accreditation system and development of an Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

COAG's broader commitments include a National Early Childhood Development Strategy; Indigenous Early Childhood Reforms (including nine Indigenous Child and Family Centres) and a National Early Years Workforce Strategy.

Can you tell us more about the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)?

The EYLF seeks to help parents and professionals achieve the best learning and developmental outcomes for children. It will provide direction in relation to quality early childhood education and care services for children and support the universal access initiative being progressed jointly between the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

Where will it be implemented?

The EYLF will be implemented in child care centres (long day care, occasional care and limited hours

care), community kindergartens, family day care homes and pre-Prep programs, including the pre-Prep programs offered through the Queensland Government's *Bound for Success* initiative.

Why is the EYLF important?

The EYLF draws on international evidence that early childhood is a vital period in children's learning and development. Learning in the early years provides a foundation for future success in learning; develops the capacity of our future workforce and contributes to our society's cohesion and ability to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

When will the EYLF be available?

It's available now. COAG endorsed the implementation of the EYLF on 2 July 2009.

Are there enough qualified early childhood teachers to implement the Framework?

A targeted National Early Years Workforce Strategy will attract, recruit and retain a diverse workforce and equip that workforce with the skills and knowledge needed to implement the Framework and other reform initiatives. The workforce strategy will focus on regional, remote and Indigenous issues. Nationally, TAFE fees on up to 8,000 child care diplomas and advanced diplomas will be removed and additional university places for early childhood teachers will be created (500 places in 2009; 1,500 by 2012). HECS – HELP debts will be reduced for Early Childhood teachers who work in regional and remote areas, Indigenous communities and areas of high disadvantage.

How will Queensland implement the National Reform Agenda?

Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland has given priority to establish an additional 240 kindergarten services by 2014 in areas of greatest need. As part of this target eight new kindergarten services will open in 2010 and 12 more in 2011. Queensland is also working with the Australian Government to support child care centres to employ early childhood teachers to deliver kindergarten programs as part of their service. The Queensland Government is also considering innovative service delivery models to meet the needs of specific or remote rural groups. The Queensland Government will work on curriculum development and workforce

initiatives to ensure the quality of Queensland's early learning programs. A program to raise community awareness on the importance of early childhood education will also be undertaken.

How will universal access to early childhood education be delivered in Queensland?

Universal access to early learning in Queensland will mean all 3½ to 4 ½ year old children will have access to a kindergarten program in the year prior to Prep by mid 2013. The kindergarten program will be delivered by a four-year early childhood teacher or registered teacher with an early childhood qualification for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year, across a diversity of settings, that meets the needs of families and is affordable. As a transitional arrangement during 2009 to 2013, some services may provide a kindergarten program for between 13.5-15 hours per week.

Can you tell us the key priorities for the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care?

The Office is focussed on rolling out universal access to a kindergarten program by mid 2013; developing a Queensland early childhood development strategy; progressing a review of the *Child Care Act 2002* and preparing services for the implementation of new national quality standards.

... and the opportunities?

The Queensland Government is making the single largest investment in early childhood education in the state's history. Never before has there been such a strong focus on early childhood education in Queensland. The alignment of 'care' with early childhood education and education generally is a significant development that presents exciting new opportunities including building on existing services to meet community needs; achieving greater integration of early childhood services and professional recognition for the workforce. The Office's consultative approach in driving the state early childhood reform agenda will help strengthen partnerships with members of the early childhood education and care sector and other key stakeholders.

For more information about key early childhood education and care initiatives, please go to www.deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/



Contemporary art for contemporary kids

Andrew Clark - Queensland Art Gallery

The Queensland Art Gallery's exhibitions and programs for children are nationally renowned. At the Children's Art Centre, we believe that encouraging the creative potential of every child is part of our core business. Through interactive opportunities, the Gallery creates a welcoming environment for children aged 0-8 years. Resources for early childhood audiences are developed to assist educators to provide meaningful Gallery visits for young children. Focusing on the Gallery's Collection, the resources build on young children's interests, prior knowledge and experiences to stimulate their curiosity about art.

'Children have the right to rest, play and enjoy art and culture.' Article 31, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child

For more than a decade, the Queensland Art Gallery has been testing ways of reaching out to new audiences for our exhibitions and public programs. Facing the perceived challenge that contemporary art museums appeal to only a restricted demographic, we regularly witness positive proof to the contrary, with many of our contemporary art exhibitions attracting literally hundreds of thousands of visitors. Attendance figures show that more than half a million children have attended the Gallery's specialist programs since their inception in 1998, and over 100 artists have taken part in the children's programs including artist projects, collaborative events, exhibitions and workshops.

What distinguishes the Queensland Art Gallery in this area is the series of major exhibitions and activities developed explicitly for children and families, and the scale of the children's programs that form an integral part of our 'blockbuster' exhibitions, such as the recent *'Picasso & his collection'* and the current *'Contemporary Australia: Optimism'* exhibitions. In this way, exhibitions and programs for children and families are central to the business of the Gallery, a core element of what we do, and of the kind of art museum we aspire to be. For us, these exhibitions would be unthinkable without the substantial component that specifically addresses children and families. This component is conceived as a fundamental element that drives the curatorial development of each exhibition.

The first real proof that we had touched only the tip of an iceberg came with the inaugural Kids' APT in 1999, the first time a major children's program was developed in tandem with one of our

'blockbuster' exhibitions. Another major milestone took place with the 2003 exhibition *'Colour: Contemporary Art for Kids'*. The success of smaller exhibitions led us to present children's exhibitions annually over summer on a major scale. The children's exhibition space shifted from the wings of the smaller gallery spaces to centre stage — the largest temporary exhibition space in the Gallery.

Collaboration with contemporary artists to create interactive kids' projects is a key strategy of the children's exhibition programs. Around 113 local, national and international artists have been involved in recent years. These collaborations are approached in the same way that we approach all commissions from artists — the projects the artists develop are linked to the ideas and concepts with which they are concerned in their 'mainstream' work. Given that a lot of works in these exhibitions are acquired for the Gallery's permanent collection, we do not compromise on our choices — the work has to stand up in any of our general-audience exhibitions as well. Collaborating artists willingly accept that their project should be in keeping with their art practice, and generally leap at the opportunity to develop their ideas into a visual or interactive form to engage young minds.

For example, the Kids' APT in 2006 had the largest number of commissioned artist projects to date. Tsuyoshi Ozawa's *Everyone likes someone as you like someone*, which not only



Children in Tsuyoshi Ozawa's *Everyone likes someone as you like someone* part of Kids' APT5.

Partnerships



Children enjoying Emily Floyd's *Permaculture* crossed with feminist science fiction and video works by Tony Schwensen in '*Contemporary Australia: Optimism*'.



Children making *Unseen superheroes of the working world* with Arlene TextaQueen as part of the '*Kids: Contemporary Australia*' Summer Festival, January 2009.



Visitors reading the labels specially designed for children at the '*Fifth Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*'.



Children creating their own landscapes in Kathy Temin's '*Arrange your own trees*' in the Children's Art Centre.

with Warhol's innovative ideas and diverse art practice. The Warhol exhibition also challenged us to acknowledge — in a way suitable for children — some of the more transgressive aspects of Warhol's work, including performances by local musicians to reflect the influence of music on his life and work.

In mid 2008, to coincide with the '*Picasso & his collection*' exhibition, a children's exhibition and activities were developed. *Yo Picasso Kids* included two important portraits that Picasso painted of his son Paulo, complemented by art-making activities introducing children to the artist.

Activities to encompass high school students visiting during the Picasso exhibition were also developed. Downstairs in the Contemporary Media Lounge, young people could sample contemporary media through live-streamed TV, music, video, catalogues, journals and magazines from across Europe, just as Picasso's contemporary society and media inspired him and the artists of his generation; and I ♥ art history, a lecture series presented by art historians, curators, artists and Gallery staff on key themes and works in '*Picasso & his collection*', was developed for this audience. Close to 2500 students took part in the lecture series, including over 700 regional students, and over 40 000 children in total attended GoMA during '*Picasso & his collection*'.

In pursuing the range of exhibitions, festivals, programs and activities described here, the Gallery is demonstrating its firm belief that encouraging children's creative potential and valuing their experiences as art museum visitors are essential to our mission: we are overturning the idea of the museum as inward-looking and inanimate, as a place that engages with art only when it is still.

For queries about the Children's Art Centre please contact: **Project Officer (Children's Art Centre and Youth) Tel: +61 (0) 7 3840 7012**

provided a space for children to physically let loose within the otherwise relatively formal environment of the Gallery, also involved an activity in which children wrote or drew pictures of their 'favourite' person and exchanged these for similar drawings previously done by Japanese children. The work turned the most iconic Japanese scene — a snow-capped Mount Fuji — into a futon mountain that children could easily scale and jump over. Pakistan-based Afghani miniature painter, Khadim Ali, was commissioned to make '*The Bamiyan Drawing Project*', for which the artist travelled back to Afghanistan to Bamiyan — the place where the Taliban destroyed the monumental ancient Buddha sculptures — to undertake workshops with local school children including, for the first time, young girls. The resulting display of more than 50 framed pencil drawings by Bamiyan school children offered young viewers insights into the very different realities of daily life for Afghani children.

Summer 2007–08 saw the creation of *The Silver Factory: Andy Warhol for Kids* at GoMA, its name drawn from Warhol's own New York studio in the 1960s. Children's creativity was encouraged through a range of hands-on activities developed by the Children's Art Centre to engage children

Kindy philanthropists raise thousands for bushfire victims

Who would have thought wearing green could make such a difference to hundreds of children? Last month, C&K centres held a *Go Green Day* to raise funds for kindergartens destroyed in Victoria's bushfires.

C&K children and families embraced the day and raised more than \$12,000, which will go to their Victorian sister organisation, Kindergarten Parents Victoria (KPV), and the families affected by the bushfires.

C&K chief executive officer, Barrie Elvish, said he was overwhelmed by the response and the support shown to those in need.

"This worthwhile day will not only make a significant difference to the Victorian communities affected by the bushfires, but it also gave the children an opportunity to show they, as individuals, can make a difference," Mr Elvish said.

"They were able to demonstrate qualities of empathy and generosity, and show that they can be proactive members of the community."

In addition to wearing green garments, other verdant inspired activities ranged from planting

trees, making green jelly, green face painting, green play dough sculptures, and eating green vegetables.

Mr Elvish said the colour green was significant because it symbolised re-growth and new life for all those affected by the bushfires.

KPV chief executive officer Meredith Carter said C&K's efforts were a fabulous response to the crisis in Victoria.

"It is heartening to know that interstate early childhood communities are coming together to support the centres in need," Ms Carter said.

The four KPV centres destroyed in the fires were: Marysville Kindergarten, Kinglake Kindergarten, Flowerdale Kindergarten and Kinglake Early Learning Centre.

On *Go Green for a Day* C&K communities, children and staff were encouraged to make a small donation and wear green clothing or something green to support this cause.

All donations will be sent to KPV to help them rebuild and re-resource the four centres that were lost in the fires.



Verdant adventures ... C&K Carbrook Community Kindergarten was one of many C&K kindies and childcare centres both engaging in green activities and donning green attire to raise money for the kindies destroyed in the Victorian bushfires.

The children of Hervey Bay's St James Kindergarten went green in March but it had nothing to do with St Patrick's Day. The kindy children wore green to symbolise re-growth and new life while raising funds to help the Victorian kindergartens affected by the recent bushfires.



Pictured in their greenery (back left to right) are Libby, Jhairah, Cailey, Ava, (front) teacher Miss Laura and Summer.



Coral Coast Kindergarten



Pioneer Pre-School and Kindergarten



Outside School Hours Care and schools

Dr Jennifer Cartmel

School of Human Services and Social Work, Griffith University

Jennifer Cartmel lectures in the area of Child and Family Studies. Jennifer has worked in a wide range of children's services as well as teaching practitioners. She has taught in preschools and primary schools including the hospital school, and worked in outside school hours and vacation care programs. In 2007 she was presented with a national Carrick Award for Higher Education Teaching for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning for the innovative strategy "Circles of Change". This strategy enhanced the field education experience for practitioners undertaking practica in child care settings and human service organisations.

Her research interests include the role of practicum in undergraduate and postgraduate courses and the many facets of outside school hours care services. She has presented at local, national and international conferences.

In Australia limited research has been conducted into Outside School Hours Care services, as emphasis has generally been placed on examining care provision for children below school age. Yet increasing numbers of women involved in the labour force rely on the services to care for their children. At present there is little understanding of the complexities, both of purpose and operational administration, that apply to care outside school hours.

In Queensland, like other Australian states, the majority of Outside School Hours Care services are sited within school grounds, and provide recreation, play and leisure-based programmes

before and after school and during vacations for children aged from 5 to 12 years.

My study examined two Outside School Hours Care services attached to primary schools in the heavily urbanised area south of the capital city of Queensland. One service was housed in a purpose-built facility in the grounds of a state education authority school and catered for 65 children; the other was co-located in school classrooms and catered for 140 children. Each service provided care before and after school, and in the vacations. Each service programme was staffed according to Queensland Child Care Regulations.

At the time the research was conducted the services were licensed by the Department of Communities and managed separately from the schools. However ... the Government's care and education ministries for children have recently been combined into one department, and any impact this may have on Outside School Hours Care services is still unknown. The research was conducted at a time of critical change for the operation and administration of these services, with mandatory standards and quality assurance processes being introduced and with services looking to respond to the childcare needs expressed by parents with school-age children.





Over 18 months of critical ethnographic research, techniques such as participant observations and semi-structured interviews were used to explore what is below the surface of social existence in these Outside School Hours Care settings. Then the interactions between the stakeholders, particularly the Coordinators and school Principals were analysed.

The analysis identified distorted communication between the Coordinators and Principals that prevented the Outside School Hours Care services developing a solid and stable relationship within the school community. The Principals executed control over the care programme, despite not being involved in its direct management on a daily basis, commanding authority over many strategic decisions, including the availability of space, selection and retention of staff, finance, and interactions with parents and the wider community. These issues, coupled with not acknowledging the



professional status of Outside School Hours Care staff, were linked to wider concerns in the sector regarding workforce shortages and the lack of policies governing the provision of care. As a consequence, Outside School Hours Care Coordinators and services tended to be treated as outsiders by the school community, which hinders the positive outcomes for a service that is intended to support children and families.


Based on these findings, seven recommendations were proposed for Outside School Hours Care services within Queensland schools, that have applications for all stakeholders including policy makers, educationalists and community development planners:

- A definition of Outside School Hours Care services is needed that includes integrated policy provision for children's services, including issues of quality.
- Public policies that legitimise Outside School Hours Care should be developed, from economic policies associated with increasing workforce participation to social policies supporting children's wellbeing and protection.
- More research is needed into issues impacting on the sector, including workforce issues of morale, recruitment and retention; children's experiences of Outside School Hours Care; and the role of the service as a communication conduit between parents and teachers.
- Specific permanent venues for Outside School Hours Care services should be designated as a physical symbol of the identity and legitimacy of the sector. Stability also makes a service easier to operate.
- All stakeholders should acquire more knowledge about the relationship of Outside School Hours Care with children's lives, to build a holistic picture of the child's life rather than distinct 'school' and 'care' experiences.
- Better training for Coordinators and staff, with the option of specialising in schooling and Out of School Hours Care services. Coordinators and staff should be required to attain educational qualifications, and be remunerated accordingly.
- Open-mindedness is needed to think differently about programmes and contexts for children,


making school sites 'places of childhood' where children spend time developing knowledge and citizenship skills. The pedagogue model, blending traditional roles such as teacher, health educator, nurse and sporting coach with Outside School Hours Care responsibilities, could create full-time, sustainable employment within the school setting.

There are many challenges facing the Outside School Hours Care sector including a lack of definition. This has been highlighted in recent times as the Outside School Hours Care sector

strives to find its place in the Early Years Agenda of both the State and Commonwealth governments. Outside School Hours Care has been loosely attached to the early childhood sector through the common thread of care work. The challenge for the sector is that some see it as 'home-like' while others see it as a professional activity. Outside School Hours Care needs an identity in its own right so its contribution to children's lives is not trivialised. This issue reflects the history of out of school care and will further challenge the relationship between schools and Outside School Hours Care services.



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Making talking books

Kerry Hanson



Kerry was drawn to the area of inclusive learning technologies because she believes that learning in today's society is made up of more than just academics. Kerry is passionate about the application of learning technologies for ALL students, not only for academics, but for supporting the "WHOLE child". She is strongly focussed on early intervention and solid foundations for learning for all students. She started her professional career as a Director in Childcare Centres before purchasing and managing her own centre. From there she moved into Special Education and learned about

assistive technologies to support children with special needs, learning difficulties and all children who encounter barriers to accessing learning. Spending time back in mainstream early childhood classrooms, she was concerned to discover that many mainstream teachers were not aware of the support software available.

In this technological age, children are enjoying, and are intrinsically motivated by, talking books. There are a lot of such books available on the internet, although to access these books requires the time to search for them. Teachers should also be aware of the limited flexibility of the content and the tools provided for the children.

By using software specific for book making, you have the flexibility of creating useable resources to enhance your units of work, plus you can provide children with the tools important to their learning when interacting with these books.

In this article, I will review three software packages ideal for creating talking books.

SwitchIt Maker 2

Probably the most user-friendly in its simple construction of a talking book is SwitchIt Maker 2. The program takes you through step by step to creating an activity. SwitchIt Maker 2 provides you with five coloured folders in which you can save work, this is particularly helpful when wanting to save unit work together. The colours are also a great visual cue to help students find their work in future. The SwitchIt Maker 2 CD provides a library of pictures for use within the program. You can also import images that you would like to use by browsing to the pictures you want.

The easy steps that you work through to create a book are:

1. Naming your activity and choosing which folder to store it in.
2. Choosing from four layout styles – choose from picture only, writing only or picture with text below or above.
3. Add image or video.
4. Adding text, you can use your keyboard or the onscreen keyboard within the program.
5. Add sound – you can add a sound file or use a microphone for voice recording. There is no option for digitised voice.
6. Add a special effect. This is where you can choose your desired transition for moving between the pages. You have six options to choose from.

You are then able to play these resources using the free player that is available on the disk or downloadable free from one of the below sites. This makes your talking books accessible for use both within the program and then also at home.

Resources

www.switchitmaker2.com

www.inclusive.co.uk

www.spectronicsinoz.com/products/switchit-maker-2

www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/subject/ict/software/switch2.htm



Feature Articles

Clicker 5

Clicker 5 is probably the most comprehensive of the programs when it comes to making talking books. It allows children differentiated levels of support for creating talking books. It provides templates for bookmaking and gives you options of creating books with landscape pictures, portrait pictures, customising your own pages or providing word and picture options for children to choose their own text and picture placement throughout the book.

Clicker 5 has both an edit mode for creating the book and a run mode for which you can use the book. Each book can have various editing tools built into them to allow the children to change or expand upon the book. Clicker 5 comes with a limited picture library and can be programmed to find and include picture prompts for identified words. Clicker 5's defaults allow the children to choose whether they need the support of having the book read to them or not, by the appearance of the speaker button on the screen. Once children press the speaker button, it then disables other functions until the text has been read in entirety.

Clicker 5 enables the use of sound files, microphone input and digitised voice. As well as the limited picture library, photos and movies can also be imported easily into the program. The books can be printed but, unfortunately, there is no provision for stories to be played on computers without full copies of the program. There is provision for this program to be used in many other aspects of your program including word banks, labelling, sentence building, classifying and sequencing as well as access to LearningGrids.com for sharing grids.

Resources

www.cricksoft.com
www.LearningGrids.com/ANZ
www.clickerpedia.com.au
www.spectronicsinoz.com

Boardmaker Plus

Boardmaker Plus is the most flexible platform for you to create your talking books. Boardmaker Plus is part of the Boardmaker software family and allows for the inclusion of voice, animation and video.

Boardmaker Plus allows you to utilize all the great desktop publishing tools within the Boardmaker family to format your book. You will have access to over 4500 child-friendly images, both standard and free-form buttons, standard text tools and the provision for symbol-supported text, as well as many drawing tools.

With Boardmaker Plus you will make your pages by adding buttons, text, and symbol. You will then assign actions based on the nine available settings: basics, messages, board change, text and cursor, message files, settings, variables, quick actions and cool stuff. These settings will allow you to have the book read aloud either after the children activate the page or when the page is turned. You can also use digitised voice, sound files or microphone recording.

Boardmaker Plus also allows for professional sharing through the site AdaptedLearning.com. This site sets search parameters to help you search for the subjects that you are looking for, as well as featuring the latest offerings and activity of the month. The program also comes with interactive sample boards and has various templates built in to provide you with a starting point.

Activities made in Boardmaker Plus are not able to be played on machines without either the full version of Boardmaker Plus or the new Boardmaker Plus Player that has been released by Mayer-Johnson.

Resources

www.mayerjohnson.com
AdaptedLearning.com
www.spectronicsinoz.com
www.pacer.org/stc/pubs/SDPro-MPLUSbooktutorial.pdf

In this technological age, children are enjoying and are intrinsically motivated by talking books.

Education for sustainability in the early years: beyond recycling and veggie gardens

Robert Pratt



Robert is an Early Childhood Educator. He has worked in a variety of Early Childhood settings in Australia and overseas for over 16 years. Throughout his life Robert has enjoyed a love and appreciation for the environment. He feels fortunate that he has the opportunity to incorporate his passion for the environment with his work in Early Childhood Education. For the eleven years until 2008 he worked at Brisbane's Campus Kindergarten where he developed and coordinated many of the centre's sustainability initiatives. Robert works collaboratively with children, teachers and the community to embed sustainability ideals, concepts and actions into everyday life. In 2008 he received an Excellence by a Teacher Highly Commended award at

the Australian Government National Awards for Quality Schooling. Robert is presently focusing his attentions on sharing his Education for Sustainability experiences through conference presentations and education publications. [This article is a snap shot from Chapter 4 - *Practical possibilities and pedagogical approaches for early childhood education for sustainability* by Robert Pratt in a forthcoming publication, *Young Children and the Environment: Creating Sustainable Change through Early Education* by Julie Davis (Ed.)]

While the current economic crisis affecting the world has taken some of the limelight from environmental and sustainability issues in the media, global warming and associated issues such as climate change remain critical – evidenced by recent events in Australia such as the bushfires in Victoria and extreme rain events in Queensland.

For several decades now there has been a gradually rising level of interest in addressing environmental issues through education. Early childhood educators are increasingly developing and implementing programs with an environmental focus. Traditionally, these programs have focused on children's relationships and interactions with nature (education *in* the environment). More recently, projects such as recycling and water and energy conservation have become more apparent (education *about* the environment). A truly effective Education for Sustainability (EfS) program must, however, address issues beyond this typical environmental realm. A holistic approach to EfS will engage children in experiences that empower them as active citizens and powerful agents of change (education *for* the environment). Such a holistic approach will give consideration not only to ecological sustainability but also to social, economic and political sustainability. (Fien, 2004; UNESCO, 2006)

This article will briefly discuss some of these possibilities and explore strategies for initiating and maintaining an EfS program (Sustaining Sustainability).

Early Childhood Education for Sustainability

Life in the 21st century is presenting humanity with many challenges including economic recession, food shortages, poverty, global warming and ethnic and religious conflict. I believe, however, that children as young as 3 or 4 years (possibly even younger) already possess significant amounts of knowledge and understanding about such issues. Equipped with further knowledge, skills and support, children can develop the resilience and the capacity to deal with these challenges, rather than being frightened by such issues. I believe that educators are doing children (and humanity) an injustice if they try to shelter young children or 'bubble wrap' them to 'protect' them from such challenges. The following provides a model and some examples of how such challenges may be addressed through early childhood education for sustainability (ECEfS).

ECEfS encompasses three broad elements; all are interconnected and of equal importance (see *Image 1*):

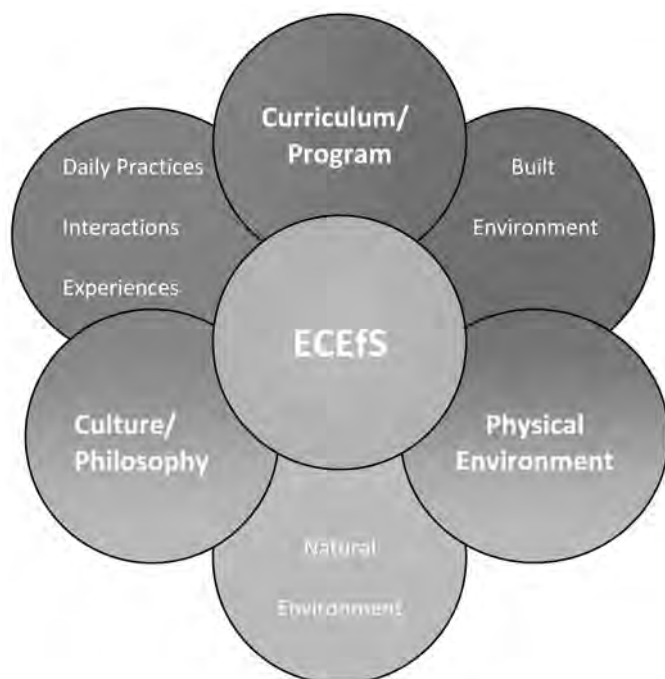


Image 1: A Model of Early Childhood Education for Sustainability

This model illustrates the importance of the three central elements of ECEfS as they may be implemented in an early childhood setting. These are the physical environment, the curriculum/program and the culture/philosophy of the service.

- 1. The physical environment** - both built and natural. To ensure a service's sustainable operation and to promote modelling of sustainable practice, buildings should incorporate elements of sustainable design including water tanks, solar energy, and grey water treatment. Outdoor playspaces should aim to be as natural as possible providing opportunities for children to immerse themselves in the richness of nature.
- 2. The curriculum/program** - EfS curriculum content must be fully integrated into the program. Practices promoting sustainable living need to become an everyday part of our lives. Children must have opportunities to connect with nature, learn about our environment, our impact upon it and develop the skills to act to improve our environment. Daily practices could include maintaining an

organic fruit and vegetable garden, recycling, re-using and reducing waste, composting and worm farming.

- 3. Philosophy/Culture** - Early Childhood services must aim to promote a culture of sustainability whereby all members of the community (children, teachers and families) become ecologically-, socially-, economically- and politically-aware citizens. (Fein, 2005) A philosophy or culture that recognises and values the inputs of all community members - and one that recognises children as citizens of the present and embraces active citizenship - is critical. Core values must include equity in all respects: between generations, between humans as individuals or communities, and between the human and non-human species that inhabit this planet.

The questions below may be used by early childhood educators when considering their own teaching philosophy and approach to EfS.

Do you believe?-

Everyone and everything on earth should be treated with respect?

Women and men are equal?

Every child should have access to education?

Everyone should have access to health care?

Everyone should have access to clean water and clean air?

We should all live in a world free of persecution and conflict regardless of religion, culture, or ethnicity?

We should consider the needs of future generations?

These are all elements of Sustainability

The following documentation shares an example of children participating as active citizens in an environment that values their input and ideas and empowers them as agents of change. It also highlights the fact that children already have some knowledge and understanding of issues such as global warming and are capable of contributing not only in a dialogue on the subject but also in offering real solutions:

Kindy Perspectives on Global Warming

Using the newspaper article (right, from the *Courier Mail*, 2008) as a provocation, Robert (teacher) introduced the topic of global warming to the Kindy friends. They shared their knowledge, thoughts and ideas:



James M: *The Earth is getting a bit hot.*

James B: *One day everything on Earth might be dead because of pollution.*

Amitai: *The Earth is getting too hot.*

Kai: *You have to stop burning fires.*

Aidan: *Cars make pollution.*

Robert (teacher): *So what could we do to help?*

James M: *Catch a bus.*

Baylen: *Go on a sail boat.*

James B: *Sail boats do use petrol when they are going places they can't sail.*

Baylen: *Buses also use petrol.*

Robert (teacher): *Do you think a bus full of people coming to kindy or all those same people in lots of cars would make more pollution.*

Everyone: *The cars!*

Dylan: *When people burn pollution people get hot.*

Laura: *When the Earth gets hot it actually breaks up.*

Natahlia: *The sun gets closer and closer and the animals will die.*

As the children shared their individual thoughts and ideas, together they began to construct knowledge and a deeper understanding of the topic. It was at this point that the 'big ideas' really began to develop:

James B: *The trees are dying but they're holding the Earth together, but if the trees die the Earth will die and people will die. We could make a chemical reaction thing inside a car to keep pollution inside so pollution doesn't get out. A chemical reaction inside would make pressure to make a turbine go and make the wheels turn and you could do it in boats also. We have to learn how to make a chemical reaction that doesn't make pollution though.*

Sarah: *How about putting something cold in it so it doesn't burn?*

James B: *You can't use cold otherwise you couldn't get a chemical reaction.*

Amitai: *You could use a kayak to paddle and not make pollution – where there is water.*

Laura: *We shouldn't cut down too many trees.*

Robert (teacher): *If we cut down too many trees they won't be able to do their job soaking up all the carbon dioxide and cleaning the air.*

Baylen: *Trees keep our environment safe 'cause they suck up all the hot dirty air into their bodies, turn it into cool clean air and move it back out into the environment.*



The following day, the topic of global warming came up again at group time:

Aidan proudly explained that he caught a bus to kindy instead of driving today. (Aidan's mum had explained earlier that Aidan had spoken to her the previous night and shared his thoughts about global warming – suggesting they could catch a bus to kindy.)

Robert (teacher) asked, "What else could we do?"

James B: We could write to the government of the world.

A conversation followed discussing what the government was, what it did and who the leader of the Australian Government was.

James M eventually said, "Kevin Rudd"

The kindy friends then went on to compose the following letter to Australia's Prime Minister:

Dear Prime Minister,

We are the Kindy A team from Campus Kindy in Brisbane. We are 3, 4 and 5 years old. We are worried about global warming and pollution. There is too much carbon dioxide and the Earth is getting hotter.

We need to make no more pollution. Maybe we could catch a bus, ride a bike or we could make a chemical reaction car with no pollution. We need to plant more trees.

Can you help us solve this problem? What else can we do?

Love from the Kindy A friends at Campus Kindy

Several weeks later the children received a supportive response from the Prime Minister. Their voices had been heard on a national level!

Feeling empowered by such recognition, the kindy children went on to organise the planting of 200 native plants as part of a Campus Kindy community project. One of the children decided he would like to write an 'Earth Anthem' sharing his feelings about the Earth. With the support of community members with musical knowledge,

the 'Earth Anthem' was composed, learnt by the rest of the class, and eventually performed at the end of year concert.

The Earth Anthem (by James Brunton)

Giraffes, fish, lady-beetles, butterflies and birds.

It's our home we all live here, all the creatures of the Earth.

FOOD, ENERGY, WATER, TREES

Enough forever and ever.

We must all be nice and we must not fight and look after each other, look after each other.

FOOD, ENERGY, WATER, TREES

Enough forever and ever.

We must all be nice and we must not fight and look after each other, look after each other.

LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER!

Sustaining Sustainability

The possibilities for Education for Sustainability are limitless. With so many possibilities, combined with the countless other responsibilities of early childhood educators, and the ever present pressure to 'do something for the environment', it can feel overwhelming to begin the process of addressing sustainability issues in your early childhood setting. Therefore, I have developed the following suggestions based on my experiences as an early childhood educator for sustainability. These provide early childhood educators with a set of strategies to make 'sustaining sustainability' more achievable and to 'spread the load'.

- Establish a *Sustainability Committee* to coordinate all EfS initiatives and strategic planning. The committee could include parents, children and staff.
- Develop a Sustainability Action Plan – detailing and prioritising your services goals and actions for sustainability.
- Compile and use Sustainability Checklists
- Conduct an Environmental Audit – energy, water and use of chemicals, cleaning practices, waste management and resource management
- Calculate the centre's ecological or carbon footprint

- Review the service's policies pertaining to sustainability i.e. Natural Environment, Cleaning, Waste Management Policies, etc.
- Take small steps initially - one goal at a time!
- Celebrate every success
- See challenges as opportunities to learn
- Access funding to support the program
- Maximise opportunities to engage in EfS research with educational institutions and other relevant bodies
- Establish and maintain networks with other like-minded organisations, services and professional bodies.
- Provide ongoing professional development and information sessions for all staff members and families. These sessions must explore the relationships between the services culture/philosophy and EfS concepts.
- Review the early childhood educational resources available and prioritise the use of those that support sustainability.
- Visit a range of websites for education and information.
- Visit early childhood services already implementing sustainable practices to learn from them.
- Advocate and lobby government and non-government organisations at all levels to support early childhood education for sustainability with research, pre-service and in-service training and resources.

For further information and details on environmental checklists, environmental audits, ecological footprint calculators, websites,

professional organisations etc. please contact Robert at: ecefss@gmail.com

This article has briefly explored some of the educational and practical possibilities that early childhood educators can consider when developing and implementing Education for Sustainability. Actioning any of these possibilities will make small steps that contribute towards a more sustainable future. They also provide opportunities for children to develop a greater understanding of their role in ensuring such a goal is achieved. However, for an Education for Sustainability program to reach its full potential, there must be a shift in the way in which children are presently taught. No longer will it be acceptable for children to remain passive recipients of knowledge as adults make decisions for them about their learning. Children must be actively engaged in the learning process, safe in a democratic environment where they can share ideas and contribute to decision-making processes. In such an environment, children will develop a sense of agency to 'make a difference'. They will be taking their first steps, and feeling empowered, as active and knowledgeable citizens for now and for a sustainable future.

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Children must have opportunities to connect with nature, learn about our environment, our impact upon it and develop the skills to act to improve our environment.

Isn't music just for fun? – exploring the importance of music education in early childhood

Celia Dodds and Deb Brydon



Deb Brydon is a music teacher currently working two days a week at Forest Lake State School and one day a week at Griffith University. Originally a primary classroom teacher, she has taught preschool, prep and primary school music for ten years in both Charters Towers and Brisbane as well as “do re mi - music for children” classes. She also teaches Classroom Music at Griffith University to undergraduate education students, has been on the KMEIA Qld committee for five years and is a regular music education workshop presenter. Deb has a particular interest in Early Childhood Music and expresses this daily in her interactions with her own children (aged four and one).



Celia Dodds has been a primary classroom teacher since 1989 and always had a keen interest in music and Music Education. For many years, she assisted with the choirs at her school (both conducting and accompanying). After an introduction to the Kodaly-based approach in her pre-service training, Celia undertook further studies in Kodaly-based Music Education. In order to deepen her understanding of students with special needs, Celia completed a Master of Education (Special Needs). Celia has three young children and currently works part-time, teaching nine classes from Prep-Year 2 as well as conducting a Junior Choral group. She thoroughly enjoys sharing her love of music-making with little people.

Making music in Early Childhood is not only about developing the musician but is also about launching a musical journey that will continue through life. Research strongly suggests that the levels of ongoing engagement in music into adult years are greatly enhanced when a person's first musical experiences are positive. The Hungarian music educator, Zoltán Kodály stated in 1941 that:

If we do not implant in children the fine seed of music in infancy, in vain we will try to do so later. (1982:35)

The importance of early music education cannot be overstated. This early music education does, however, need to be informed by research and appropriate to the child's musical and physical development. The concepts of beat, rhythm, inner hearing, comparatives, timbre and in-tune singing are the foundations of musical learning. Without these strong foundations it is much harder to develop future musical skills.

John Feierabend (1999) discusses the studies by Edwin Gordon who assessed the musical aptitude of students aged from five to nine years. Without quality music instruction, the musical aptitude of these students decreased each year. It also

appears from Gordon's studies that musical aptitude remains unchanged from nine years of age, no matter how much instruction is given:

The level of developmental music aptitude a student acquires by age nine stabilises and remains the same throughout life (1999:44)

Lois Choksy (1988) more specifically describes the skills that underpin the acquisition of musical literacy in later years:

If children can sing well, step the beat accurately, clap rhythms, apply dynamic and tempo judgments to their songs and show where sounds are higher and where lower, and if, in addition, they have a repertory of some thirty songs, then the symbolic learning – the musical reading and writing – will progress rapidly in the following years from this solid foundation. (1988:30)

In her book *Endangered Minds: Why Children Don't Think and What We Can do About It*, Jane Healy (1990) supports the importance of nurturing developing neurological networks during the early years of life.

As we learn to use our minds, we process information through certain conditioning.

Stimulating musical intelligence appropriately from the earliest experiences is necessary if the pathways are to be built to understand musical phenomena from a musical perspective. If the musical mind is engaged in early stimulation through such activities as hearing and responding to music through singing and movement and playing by ear, then we stimulate musical intelligence.

Music and child development

As children grow, they develop intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. Music supports this development in the following ways:

Physical Benefits

- Gross and fine motor skills
- Become aware of whole body
- Physical contact with others
- Begin development of co-ordination skills

Intellectual Benefits

- Follow instructions, sequencing, patterning
- Expand the memory and aid concentration
- Improve listening skills and problem-solving (eg choosing a partner)
- Interpreting what they see and hear

Emotional/Social Benefits

- Work in groups
- Cooperate with others
- Develop turn-taking skills
- Experience success and enjoyment
- Circles provide a safe environment
- Stimulate imagination

The Goals of Music in the Early Years

Music is critical in the Early Years, and serves to:

- arouse the child's sensitivity and interest by exposing him/her to beautiful music
- help each child develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially through music
- prepare each child for more formal musical instruction in the areas of singing, rhythm and critical listening.

These three areas of singing, rhythm and critical listening have their own specific goals, which are

useful to consider when incorporating music into your Early Years programme.

Singing

- Learning a variety of songs and rhymes to build the child's ability and confidence to sing with friends and alone
- Gradually developing the ability to sing in tune

Beat and Rhythm

- To feel the even pulsation of songs (beat) and rhymes and express it physically with gross and, later, fine motor actions
- To begin to understand the rhythm of words, phrases, rhymes and songs

Critical Listening

- To begin to aurally discriminate between high and low sounds, fast and slow tempo and loud and soft performance
- To begin to recognise timbre (different sound) in voices and instruments
- To investigate inner hearing (thinking in sound)

It is vital that there are effective Music programmes and experiences in early childhood settings. The children's musical, physical, intellectual and social development depends upon it.

This article is based on the "Teaching Notes" from *Musical Beginnings: Songs and Rhymes for Early Childhood* (2009), a professional development resource (DVD and CD package) produced by the Kodály Music Education Institute of Australia (Qld Branch). For further information contact: www.kmeiaqueensland.com.au

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Using inquiry to promote thinking and working mathematically with young children

Judy Hartnett – Queensland University of Technology



Judy Hartnett is currently a lecturer in Mathematics Education at QUT. She worked for the previous eleven years supporting Brisbane Catholic Education teachers to improve mathematics learning outcomes in their students. She has presented workshops on many topics relating to mathematics education across all phases of schooling. She has a passion for getting students to think to engage in mathematical concepts - especially relating to mental computation strategies.

Young children are naturally curious and like asking questions. However the development of classroom learning experience based around formal inquiries and investigations, particularly when they relate to mathematics, is often left until students are beyond the early years. Mathematics as a key learning area is considered by some to be too difficult for young children to explore as they have only limited skills and experiences. This article outlines some ideas for the development of mathematical inquiry based learning with young children.

The need for people to think and to understand and use their understandings is greater today than it has been in the past. Application of knowledge is seen as more important than having the knowledge alone. In mathematics focus has long been on the development of the understanding of content more than on the associated processes. Recent syllabus documents have included focus on working mathematically (Department of Education, 1987), thinking, reasoning and working mathematically (Queensland Studies Authority, 2004) and to focus on ways of working (Queensland Studies Authority, 2007). These documents encouraged teachers to develop activities and investigations for their students which challenged them to think and use mathematics. Askew (1999) stated that "mathematical tasks that seem to develop pupils' understandings are ones that challenge them to solve problems rather than work through routine exercises" (p.5).

Children in their first few years of school have had only limited formal education and have only had a limited exposure to the skills and concepts of the key learning area of Mathematics. However, they have a natural curiosity and when they are engaged in finding the answer to an interesting

question they will think about and use the knowledge they have to seek answers. We should not be afraid to ask open questions of young children and can be pleasantly surprised by the sophistication of their responses.

An experience from a Year One classroom illustrates this. The focus of the task was to investigate the students' data collection skills. The learning context in the classroom related to pets and a small pet shop and veterinary clinic had been assembled at the back of the classroom. Instead of asking how many students had dogs or cats as pets which would likely invoke a counting response, the question was phrased more openly as "I would like to find out something about the pets of people in this room. Could you ask some of the people in this room about pets for me? You will need to write down what you learn so you can tell me later. You might like to draw pictures to help you remember, or use words or numbers, whatever will help you." This way, the data collection approach would be evident as well as the result. The students were each given a clipboard to help them to record but also to help them feel like official data gatherers. They were left to complete the task by asking at least five people about their pets.

The result of this use of an open question was a greater variety of data recording methods as well as a wide range of responses. Figure 1 shows a student response where the type of animal is recorded using pictures and it is reasonably clear that one response was for cat and the other animal which has not been labelled has recorded two responses. The question asked here was most likely "What pet do you have?" Figure 2 shows a student recording of responses as ticks and crosses received because a different question had been asked,

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most likely "Do you have a pet?" These work samples show that by asking young children an open question, as long as they understand enough about what is being asked, they will respond in the way that makes most sense to them. These varied responses provide a classroom teacher with much more scope for assessment, as well as for further class discussions and other activities.



Figure 1: data collection sample 1



Figure 2: Data collection sample 2

At the end of this lesson the class was gathered on the carpet and we attempted to share what had been learned about pets. Of course, this was not particularly successful as the different data collection methods and different recording formats did not allow for ease of comparison. The students suggested, after several attempts to collate the data, that maybe we should ask again but this time all ask the same question. What a great idea, and what a valuable lesson about data collection from such a wise group of young children.

By asking open questions and allowing a little confusion in a classroom, deep learning of big mathematical ideas can be possible. Teachers just need to think of questions like these. The questions do not need to be complex. A rule of thumb for the value of a good question can simply be whether that question will require the asking of other questions before it can be answered. The more subsequent questions the deeper the original question is. Some examples of other open questions suitable for mathematics learning in early years classrooms are listed in Figure 3.

These questions can come from a number of sources. The list of suggestions below provides starting points for the development of open questions that can be used in the classroom.

Can a short container hold more than a tall container?
Which of these balls is the bounciest?
How much older are our brothers and sisters than us?
What else in this room has about the same mass as one of your shoes?
How many dots would you need to make a standard die?

Figure 3: Examples of open questions for early years mathematics

1. Start with a maths concept or topic from a curriculum document *e.g. representing numbers 1-100*. **Question:** How many numbers from 1-100 can you find in this magazine?
2. Start with a real life event *e.g. children's birthdays*. **Question:** On which day of the week do most people in this room have their birthdays this year?
3. Start with a connected unit of work *e.g. Healthy eating*. **Question:** How healthy is a typical Yr 2 lunch today?
4. Start with a piece of literature *e.g. One is a snail, ten is a crab* by April Pulley Sayre. **Question:** If one is a snail, two is a person.... What could 12 be?
5. Start with a photo *e.g. digital camera image*. **Question:** let the students decide on a mathematical question to match a picture they take outside the classroom.

These open questions provide learning opportunities but also assessment opportunities as it will be through engagement with questions like these that children will show what they understand about the related mathematics. The students will be engaged and the teacher will be too.

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Understanding anxiety in young children

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Dr Waters is Senior Lecturer in Clinical Psychology at Griffith University and the Director of the Griffith "Take Action Program" a cognitive-behavioural assessment and treatment program for children with anxiety disorders through which over 250 children have received treatment. Dr Waters is a registered clinical psychologist who is committed to evidence-based practice and has published over 37 book chapters and journal articles on childhood anxiety disorders. Her research in this area has specifically focused upon the treatment of anxiety problems in very young children and highlights the importance of working closely with parents and family in the successful treatment of these disorders. She is also examining the effectiveness of interventions for preventing and off-setting

anxiety problems in children when delivered in the school setting. Dr Waters regularly presents her research at scientific conferences, and frequently provides training workshops and writes invited essays on childhood anxiety disorders for various community groups and local schools. She also maintains a small private practice in addition to her academic role at Griffith University.

Chelsea is a five-year-old girl commencing Prep. Her teachers and parents are concerned because Chelsea cries, throws tantrums and complains of feeling sick before attending school. Chelsea is currently attending half days only due to the distress she is experiencing. She will not speak to teachers or classmates, make eye contact or join in activities. Currently, her father returns to school at lunch-time to sit with Chelsea while she eats lunch. Chelsea's parents described her as an "irritable" infant who became easily distressed in unfamiliar situations. They had previously attempted placing her in formal child care at three and four years of age and on both occasions, withdrew her from care after a few days due to Chelsea's distress. They described Chelsea as "relaxed and outgoing" at home and in the company of familiar people. However, Chelsea has had little opportunity for interaction with others outside the immediate family as they have not made new friends since moving to the area three years ago and most of their extended family was living abroad. Moreover, her parents described themselves as "quiet people" who prefer to keep to themselves. Her parents are struggling with Chelsea's distress and are considering home schooling. Her teachers are warm and friendly and try to reward Chelsea with praise and stickers when she stays calm.

Chelsea also receives two individual classes each day with a support teacher to prevent her from becoming overwhelmed. However, her teachers and parents acknowledge that this level of support is unsustainable and that Chelsea's behaviour needs to change.

Facts about anxiety in children

Some degree of anxiety and nervousness is a perfectly normal part of children's emotional development. However, for approximately 10-15% of children, anxiety may be so intense or persistent, as in Chelsea's case above, that they are unable to do things other children their age are capable of. In these cases, an anxiety disorder diagnosis and treatment are often warranted. What is particularly concerning is that children with anxiety disorders who go untreated are more likely to develop later psychological problems, including anxiety, depression, substance use problems, eating disorders and behaviour problems. They are also more likely to have poor social skills, to be liked less by others, and to under-achieve academically.

The origins of childhood anxiety involve a complex interplay of biological factors and experiences learned from within the child's environment, several of which are highlighted in Chelsea's case above. Biological factors generally

include a reactive or emotional temperament apparent during infancy and beyond, genetics (anxiety seems to run in families), and the child's thinking style (greater likelihood of interpreting things as scary and dangerous). Learning factors include traumatic events, watching others who are anxious, reduced opportunity for exposure to a range of situations, rewarding anxious behaviour (e.g. giving hugs when a child is anxious; allowing avoidance), and the information children receive from key others in their lives. The extent to which these factors are present in a child's life will influence the degree of anxiety experienced.

Often, certain types of anxiety problems will emerge in conjunction with key developmental stages. For example, separation anxiety tends to become apparent between 3-6 years of age in conjunction with primary separation processes, such as entering child care or commencing school. Specific phobias, such as fear of water or heights, tend to emerge during middle childhood when children are more physically capable and interacting to a greater extent with the physical environment. Social phobia tends to emerge later in childhood (10-12 years) when children's social networks begin to expand, whereas panic disorder onsets in adolescence. Generalised anxiety disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder are other forms of anxiety problems often diagnosed during childhood.

How do Psychologists treat childhood anxiety?

Numerous studies have now shown that childhood anxiety can be successfully treated with cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT for anxiety problems addresses the following essential components:

- Psycho-education (i.e. provides an understanding of the nature, causes and treatment of childhood anxiety);
- Somatic management of physiological symptoms (i.e. deep, diaphragmatic breathing; muscle relaxation);
- Cognitive restructuring (i.e. identifying and challenging anxious thoughts);
- Exposure to anxiety-provoking situations (i.e. using a graduated approach, children learn to manage anxiety in real or imagined anxiety-provoking situations);

- Problem solving (i.e. children generate and test a variety of active coping methods);
- Parent anxiety management (i.e. teaching parents how to manage their child's anxious behaviour and in some cases, their own anxiety); and
- Relapse prevention (i.e. promoting generalisation and maintenance of treatment gains).

Medication options

Anxious children can be referred to a number of health professionals if medical treatment is required. Moreover, many children who have other psychological problems in addition to anxiety may be taking other medications and should be under the care of a GP, paediatrician, or child psychiatrist. Nevertheless, research shows that anti-anxiety medication is more effective when used in conjunction with the child and family learning anxiety management strategies. There may also be significant side-effects from some medications that make psychological approaches to treatment particularly important to consider.

What can early childhood teachers do to help?

As anxiety problems can manifest very early in development, early childhood teachers can play an important role in (a) helping ensure anxious children are identified early so formal assessment and treatment can be received, and (b) creating learning environments that promote the development of courageous, non-fearful behaviour.

Early warning signs of anxiety include:

1. somatic symptoms (e.g. diarrhoea, muscle tension, stomach aches, headaches)
2. tiredness usually due to trouble falling or staying asleep
3. attempts to avoid or withdraw from certain situations or stimuli that make them anxious
4. excessive distress in response to situations that make them anxious
5. irritability, restlessness or being "on edge"
6. excessive worrying and asking a lot of "what if...." questions
7. excessive reassurance seeking
8. difficulty concentrating on tasks at hand.

Early childhood teachers can assist by doing the following:

1. Being aware of the signs and symptoms of anxiety and raising these with parents and/or school guidance counsellors, as appropriate.
2. Promoting a positive "you can do it" attitude across the entire classroom. Utilise visual aids, class mottos and reward systems for positive "give it a go" behaviours.
3. Modelling and showing children how you deal with and work through challenging tasks and situations yourself.
4. Helping anxious children break down anxiety-provoking situations into small steps so they gradually achieve success, rather than allowing them to avoid these situations.
5. Using a calm, quiet voice and avoiding placing anxious children in the "spotlight" until they have mastered their anxiety.
6. Encouraging anxious children to focus on the task at hand, and the various behaviours needed to complete the task, rather than on the emotions they are experiencing.
7. Fostering good relationships with parents. Often parents of anxious children are anxious themselves and children pick up on this. Model a calm, confident manner with parents, encourage them to leave quickly and confidently if separations are a problem and to avoid the use of excessive reassurance, both verbally and nonverbally. Attend to the child's distress and quickly engage them in liked activities.
8. For children starting Prep or a new school year, encourage parents to have their child meet other children who are also starting school. Where possible, meet with the child and parents yourself before the school year starts and/or promote an online community where parents and children can get to know one another.

How to find out more information

If you would like more information, please contact Dr Allison Waters (a.waters@griffith.edu.au), School of Psychology, Griffith University.

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Natural and logical consequences: A method of discipline that promotes responsibility

Dr Anna Bower

Behaviour Guidance Consultant



Dr Anna Bower is a practising Child and Family Therapist and an experienced Parent Educator. She has been a University Lecturer, teaching and researching in Early Childhood, Family Development and Communication. She holds a Master Degree qualification in psychology of counselling. Dr Bower has worked extensively with parents and professionals, both individually and in groups. She has presented professional workshops for a wide range of organisations to promote enhanced understanding of children. Dr Bower is passionate about supporting adults in diverse situations through assisting them to acquire the necessary skills they need to guide young children through their increasingly complex social environments. She believes

that, in every setting, it is the quality of positive interactions with children that shapes future generations.

For too long, adults have passed on a form of disciplining children from generation to generation that is based on the Reward-and-Punishment principle. This principle is deeply ingrained in both parents and teachers. When children misbehave or disobey, that means when they don't behave as the adults expect them to behave, they are punished. This system has many disadvantages:

- It makes adults responsible for children's behaviour.
- It prevents children from learning to make their own decisions and adopting rules for effective behaviour.
- It suggests that acceptable behaviour is expected only in the presence of authority figures.
- It invites resistance, anger and revenge by forcing children to conform.

Punishment

Punishment and reward are behaviourist principles. They emanate from the extensive early research into human behaviour of B F Skinner (1974), by means of testing hypotheses in a laboratory with rats. Results were extrapolated to human beings. Yes, children and rats are both mammals, but we have moved away from applying Skinner's research to young humans, today's children.

More appropriate theories and practices that address the guiding of children's behaviours are proposed. They are distinctly different from the behaviourist approach and favour of a more democratic style as discussed by Adlerian theorists such as Dreikurs (1995), Dinkmeyer & McKay (1972), Balson (1994) and Bower (2008). This literature identifies a method that is authoritative,

which means democratic, but is distinctly different from authoritarian, an approach that describes behaviourist practices.

By using a democratic approach to guiding children's behaviour we acknowledge that the child is an active participant in the process of solving a difficulty. When we use punishment to resolve difficulties, we send a message to children that, because we are superior, we have the power to force negative actions onto them. By using punishment we actively take responsibility for the child's behaviour and use arbitrary punishment that is often not directly related to the offending behaviour.

An example may be the child does not follow instructions about putting away play material. The punishment would be to sit by himself "and think about it". In this approach the adult takes full responsibility for the child's action, and it is more than likely that the behaviour re-occurs many times. The child is not learning from this response to his actions.

Consequences

A more appropriate response that describes the *Consequence* approach to an action would be that the child is told that, because there is still equipment to be packed away, he or she is invited to join the group when the job is done. If the child resists, the instruction is repeated like a 'broken record' using the same wording, without emotions of anger and resentment until the task is completed. In this approach it is the child under the adult's guidance, who has to fix the situation and take responsibility for his/her action. If the child has always experienced punishment in the past, it is likely that there will be some initial

resistance. But without emotional involvement and consistency from the adult, it is highly likely that the child will eventually follow instructions.

It is important that, once the child has complied with the instructions, adults don't make the child lose face with statements such as: "see, you can do it if you want to" or worse, sarcasm, such as: "look who has been able to do as told?" Such inappropriate remarks in front of others are likely to cause strong resentment and re-offending behaviour. At this point the notion of *Encouragement* becomes of importance.

Natural Consequences

Just to make things a bit more complicated, there are two types of consequences, natural and logical consequences. Natural consequences occur in the natural environment and are those that children learn fast, provided that adults let them experience the consequences of their actions and decisions. The natural consequence of not eating food is being hungry (provided that the adult does not provide alternative food). The natural consequence of not wearing appropriate clothing is being hot or cold. Children directly experience the natural consequence of their actions.

Logical Consequences

Logical consequences result from children experiencing the reality of their social world. They are appropriate for attention-seeking behaviour. Instead of the adult taking responsibility for the behaviour and punishment, the child is provided with a choice, such as: "you decided to hit Sammy because he doesn't want to share his game with you. You can either tell Sammy how you feel or you can walk away and play with someone else. Which are you going to choose?" Note that the adult in this situation is not taking responsibility for the fight, but assisting the child to make choices and resolve the issue him/herself. Providing children with logical choices is a very effective tool. It has the advantage of not having to punish, teaching the child to become independent and respecting the child's decision by resolving the situation in a non-confrontational way.

Encouragement

The companion to using consequences is *Encouragement*. Instead of the old fashioned 'good-boy-good girl' routine, children respond to encouragement with improved behaviour. An encouragement message could be: "I really like the decision you have made. That was great. It made everyone happy". Or:

"I am proud of you Johnny. You have tried hard to not to throw sand this morning. Well done!"

It is important that when children do the right thing we comment on their behaviour. Children become used to negative feedback instead of encouragement. Another form of encouragement is the term *"Catching the Kid being Good"*.

Encouragement is based on sound communication with children and is one of the most important skills for improving the relationship between adults and children. The main focus is on the assets and strengths of children and assists to build up self esteem and self confidence. Using encouragement effectively will require adults using appropriate communication styles. Instead of controlling children's behaviours through lecturing, bribing and warning, adults need to adopt a more conversational style and providing children with the opportunity to make decisions. Poor decisions are not necessarily 'bad'. They may serve as illustrations of how the decision did not produce the expected positive result.

Because most adults have never experienced this form of positive communication by their parents or teachers during their own childhood, they have learnt the controlling type of adult talk. But take heart. It is never too late to change one's ways, and those adults who become proficient in being 'encouragers' gain increased satisfaction from their work with children.

Changing one's ways is, however, not an easy task. It is best achieved together with fellow professionals, by sharing and discussing successes and difficulties. This represents a form of peer learning and is far more enjoyable than learning in isolation and 'chomping at the bit' alone. It is also essential that peers encourage each other when they observe others being competent and successful by acknowledging their success.

There are a number of publications available that aim to assist early childhood professionals in a practical way on their path of change. For more in-depth information you may wish to consider *Hot Tips for Cool Kids* by this author.

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Our Italian experience

Valerie Rogers and Lynelle Whittaker

As the recipients of the Gateway Learning Community 2009 Pat Purcell Bursary, we participated in the Australian Study Tour which visited Reggio Emilia in April. We were two of 400 educators to learn about the Reggio Experience and to visit Infant-Toddler Centres and Preschools.

Since 1964 Reggio Emilia has become one of the most important early childhood experiences in the world. We learnt that Reggio is a body of pedagogical practice underpinned by the cultural values of community and the broader social context.

We listened to Carla Rinaldi (who is a pedagogical consultant and President of Reggio Children) speak about the pedagogy of listening and how the value of listening is profoundly important for building a sense of identity.

We have been inspired to implement new ideas and develop our skills in providing opportunities and experiences to enable us to listen, really listen, to what our children are saying to us and to each other.

The value that the Reggio schools place on documenting children's thinking with the notion of publishing, has provided us with inspiration and purpose for listening, noticing, and recording. The goal to share and publish, truly values children's learning beyond the classroom walls. In addition it promotes collaboration between staff and deepens the experience for all.

Our staff and parents have shown a keen interest in our learning journey which has lead to discussion and planning of some social and cultural projects within our school community leading up to our Jubilee year at Seven Hills State School.

It was a wonderful experience and professionally enriching.



Title: Hot Tips for Cool Kids: Practical Ways to Guide Young Children's Behaviours

Author: Anna Bower with Rosemary Perry

Published by: Child Behaviour Solutions

ISBN: 978 0 980 540 30 7

RRP: \$45.95

Reviewed by: Sue Leigh



Early Childhood expert Rosemary Perry, in conjunction with child therapist Anna Bower, has given us yet another must-have early childhood text. Clear a space on your shelves because *Hot Tips for Cool Kids* is essential reading for any practicing or studying teacher. Perry and Bower approach behaviour with insight, explaining why children behave in certain ways and what we can do to help them overcome these behaviours. The book does not get bogged down in the theoretical, rather it provides current and relevant practical solutions for the EC teacher. Theoretically though, the book draws on Adlerian Psychology to come up with teaching solutions. *Hot Tips*, while helpful for all EC settings, focuses mainly on a Kindergarten environment, or play-based setting. A ready-reference section in the rear of the book gives specific tips for dealing with behaviours like biting, bullying and separation anxiety. Perry and Bower clearly show how our approach to children

can have positive results. As a beginning Kindergarten teacher, I found this book extremely useful, particularly the content on communication, most especially communicating with parents and carers. While the book is aimed at teachers, it could also be useful for parents in a home environment. Certainly it has content that could be related to parents in either a newsletter or other format. Essential reading.

Title: Foundation Blocks - Mathematical Development

Author: Rebecca Taylor

Published by: Curriculum Corporation, Australia, 2006

ISBN: 1 86366 786 5

RRP: \$35.95

Reviewed by: Tanya Dawson



With exciting hands-on activities and links to real-life contexts, *Mathematical Development* is an excellent resource for teachers working with children aged three to six years. All activities in this book are play-based and many address more than one mathematical skill at a time.

This curriculum resource is a major time saver for busy teachers with ready-to-go lesson plans which include focus questions, extension work and references to 'Essential Learnings'. The resources needed for each lesson are also clearly listed in the margin allowing teachers to plan ahead. Most resources are items regularly found in early childhood classrooms.

The activities are divided into 16 real-life topics that often arise naturally in early childhood programs. Therefore, they can be easily integrated into any program or adapted to fit a range of other topics being investigated. These topics

include animals, colours, families, food and shopping, travel and transport, myself, people who help us, seasons, shapes and toys.

Lastly, each lesson includes a 'Links to Home' section to reinforce learning and foster positive teacher-parent-child partnerships. Ideal for teachers of Pre-Prep and Prep classes.

Available from: Curriculum Corporation (www.curriculum.edu.au)

Title: Ready-to-Use SELF-ESTEEM Activities for Young Children

Author: Jean R. Feldman, Ph.D.

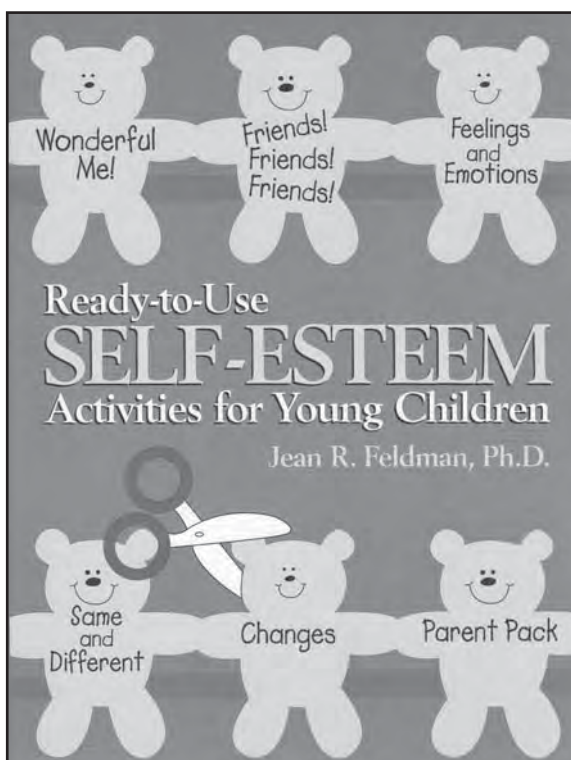
Illustrator: Rebecca Feldman Foster

Published by: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint, San Francisco 1997

ISBN: 0 87628 886 7

RRP: \$39.95

Reviewed by: Penney Taylor



As a classroom teacher, I believe it is a top priority to establish a positive emotional environment within the classroom. Teachers do this by, firstly, encouraging a sense of belonging within the class. Secondly, we actively work to ensure that each child feels appreciated for who they are, and that finally, children value each other's special qualities. When children have a good feeling about themselves and others, they are more likely to approach learning tasks in an open and positive way.

Self-Esteem Activities for Young Children is a recipe book of ideas and activities to help the teacher of primary school children to do just this. Experienced teachers will find some old favourites, as well as some refreshing new ideas. A parent pack section that involves families in activities and strategies that both communicates to, and encourages families to support classroom learning is a useful addition.

The activities in this book are very usefully organized into different sections: *Wonderful Me*, *Friends*, *Friends*, *Friends*, *Feelings and Emotions*, *Same and Different* (accepting diversity), *Changes* and the aforementioned *Parent Pack*. As an Early Childhood educator, I found the suggestions particularly relevant to the early years

of school, but found that some demonstrations of outcomes need to be adapted to the literacy skills of Prep or Year One students. Middle school children would easily be able to complete any of the tasks. My young children have completed some of the projects with their older Buddies with great success.

I found myself sticky-noting page after page of practical and do-able activities for various scenarios for the class. The book is easy-to-use, readily implemented without a lot of time-consuming preparation and I have achieved positive outcomes. A great addition to any primary teacher's resource library.

Title: Critical First Steps: Behaviour management in the early years

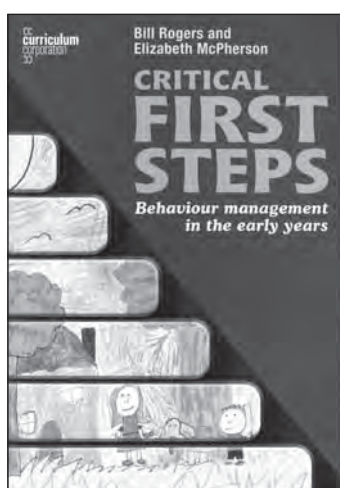
Author: Bill Rogers and Elizabeth McPherson

Published by: Curriculum Corporation

ISBN: 978 174 200 308 5

RRP: \$42.00

Reviewed by: Amy Barber



This book offers practical advice for behaviour management, specifically targeted to early years classrooms. Teachers will find simple, practicable suggestions to establish classroom rules and routines and to support students in managing their behaviour. They will also find strategies for approaching particular behaviours which are often encountered in early years classrooms and for building positive partnerships with parents.

The photographic behaviour management agreement is something that I have had great success with in my classroom. By taking photos of the children following the rules they are being reminded of, it personalises the reminder, and also gives them a chance to practice. I found it particularly useful at mat time, when my class consistently needed reminders. The visual cues helped to settle the children without me having to use my voice at all.

The information is easy to access, combining straightforward examples, samples of appropriate ways to approach situations, and a theoretical backing. Ideas from the book can be used to reflect on and enhance an existing classroom management plan, or help to design and establish a new program for beginning teachers or those who are new to teaching the early years.

Teachers will find simple, practicable suggestions to establish classroom rules and routines and to support students in managing their behaviour. They will also find strategies for approaching particular behaviours which are often encountered in early years classrooms and for building positive partnerships with parents.

Title: To be delighted in! What we want and need: a baby's view.

Author: Neil Alcorn

Illustrator: Abigail King

RRP: \$20.00

Reviewed by: Bronwyn MacGregor



"Delight and be 'in the moment' with your baby whenever you can." What beautiful advice to all parents of new babies, be it baby number one, two or the last of many for the family. This is how Neil Alcorn's book begins ... and it just gets better. Written from the child's perspective, this book is an attachment-focused insight into the innate ways that infants attempt to build relationships with their parents in the first three to six months of life. It reveals just how competent yet vulnerable a baby is as the text cleverly interweaves a baby's first capacities in social, emotional, cognitive, communication and physical development into the story of the child as it perceives and responds to its parents.

As you read through this neat and colourful little 30-page book, you will notice that common worries or questions that newborns have are discussed; How will my parents read my signals and cues? How will they help me to settle? Or know when I am tired or hungry? The notion of "spoiling" the baby is also expelled. While the simple, sketched illustrations are appropriate, they somehow detract a little from the beauty of the text and leave less to be 'delighted in'. Perhaps the intent of these simple depictions

of parent and baby is to leave the reader free to imagine their own child at the breast, gazing, grimacing, crying or communicating.

This is not a 'how to' book of parenting, it is a journey of love and learning that describes the delicate dance between parent and baby in learning to live "outside Mum". Written by a dad, the book ensures that Dads are not forgotten in this journey and they are invited along from page six when baby says, *"Dad, if you don't have a lot of time, then make our time good quality time."*

If you are looking for a gift to give someone about to have a baby, what greater gift could you give them than a book that reminds them that all their baby wants is *"... to be loved, delighted in, and enjoyed, and connected to you ..."* What a great reminder to all parents no matter how old their child.

If you would like to buy a copy of this book please contact: tobedelightedin@hotmail.com

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 (6th 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*, 4th 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

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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