



Educating Young Children

Learning and teaching in the
early childhood years

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EYC disclaimer

The opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the ECTA Inc. or the editorial panel.

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.

Registered Teachers - Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements

Registered teachers are advised to note the Queensland College of Teachers endorsed position on professional reading, accessing online resources and viewing video-streamed materials as contributing to their CPD requirements for renewal of teacher registration. The endorsed position can be viewed on the ECTA website www.ecta.org.au from the *Educating Young Children* link.

Online access to journal

Educating Young Children is also available online via EBSCOhost and Informit databases.

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From the President

Kim Walters

Welcome everyone to the first edition of *Educating Young Children* for 2011. This full colour journal marks a milestone for this publication. The additional costs of the colour journal have been offset by commission from the copyright council and online sales of the journal. It is pleasing to see many universities and TAFE institutions using articles from current and past *Educating Young Children* journals as part of the course content.

I would like to congratulate Lynne Moore and her team for producing once again an excellent collection of articles from across the sector in this journal. Lynne, on behalf of all ECTA members who will enjoy this wonderful journal, I would like to say, 'Thank you. Please accept our first full colour issue as a personal celebration of your work. We all appreciate the huge workload that accompanies the publication of each issue. Your passion and commitment to the journal are outstanding, without your tireless work bringing this publication together it simply would not be of such a high standard.'

The ECTA Coordinating Committee would like to express our sincere hope that all members and their families who were affected by the recent flooding and cyclones across Queensland are safe, and we hope that you have been able to take the first steps toward recovering from any loss you may have incurred. I ask members to email me directly at kim@ecta.org.au with ideas on how we might best support members who were affected.

ECTA is co-funding the *Under Eight's Tour of the Lockyer Valley* with ECA in the hope of

bringing joy and recovery to this area that was hit so hard during the recent flooding. Information about Under Eight's can be found on the Queensland branch page of the www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au website.

Registrations opened for our 36th ECTA Annual Conference on 1 March for 2011 financial members only. 260 members registered for the conference in the first two weeks. Members were given three weeks to register before registrations opened to the public. This is a major member benefit along with the \$85 conference registration discount. Members MUST be financial as at 1 March to receive the early invitation to register. Registration renewals are sent in November each year. All information is available on the Conference website. Click the 36th ECTA Annual Conference button on the ECTA website to access the Conference website. Registrations opened to the public online via the Conference website on 1 April.

This year we are excited to move to our new air-conditioned venue Sheldon Sport & Entertainment Centre, Taylor Road, Sheldon. Sheldon is near Cleveland. The conference website has online location information and directions to the venue site. Members were emailed links to this information in the Secretariat eNEWS: Conference Update 3. This year the conference offers 37 high quality relevant Workshop/Masterclasses. The conference will showcase 28 traders displaying goods and services at exhibition trade stands in the Sheldon Sport & Entertainment Centre.

Profits from our 2010 conference make it possible for the State Coordinating Committee

to support regional groups by funding a Laurie Kelly tour which will include Cairns, Gladstone, Hervey Bay and Cooloola ECTA Groups. Laurie presented Master classes at the 2009 ECTA Annual Conference which received excellent reviews and feedback.

The State Coordinating Committee has assigned priority to supporting ECTA Groups in 2011. We are keen to know how we can best support our existing Groups and how we can help establish Groups in your area. Please contact Libby Gaedtke, our ECTA Groups Coordinator, at libby@ecta.org.au for more information. Logan Brisbane is forming an ECTA Group this year; all interested should contact sue@ecta.org.au.

ECTA continues to represent its members with representation on the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Learning Area Reference Committee (LARC). The new Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline has been published and is available online. I encourage all members working in kindergarten (pre-Prep) or childcare centres to download the document from <http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au>

The Australian Curriculum English, Maths, Science and History is now available online at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au>. The English, Maths and Science Curriculum will begin implementation across Queensland in 2012 with History rolling out in 2013. We are pleased to welcome Robert Randall, General Manager, Curriculum, at the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) to 36th ECTA Annual Conference. Robert will explore the Australian Curriculum for Prep to Year 3 learning areas of English, mathematics, science and history and will provide attendees a demonstration of the pilot project: Australian Curriculum Connect. Australian Curriculum Connect will provide educators with a worldwide online resource bank linked directly to each learning outcome within the curriculum.

Members were sent a link to a National Quality Framework Feedback form in the March eNEWS. The form contained pertinent questions around the National Quality Framework proposals. This feedback from members was used to formulate the ECTA submission to the National Quality Framework.

We are pleased to include a DVD of two of the master classes from our 2010 conference with this journal. *Strategies for guiding children with aggressive behaviours including ODD* by Tony Attwood and *Bullying – is it relevant in EC? What can we do about it?* by Pam Linke.

Members are also reminded that we have a growing bank of streamed videolinq recordings 1.45 hours each in our Members Only Secure Area of the website. Please read the QCoT statement at the front of this journal regarding viewing of DVDs and streamed recordings for your CPD requirements for teacher registration.

Please enjoy reading our first *Educating Young Children* journal for 2011.

I encourage you to email ECTA your feedback and suggestions or submit your own article. Style guides and information are available on the ECTA website.

Kim



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Child Care Connect is a website developed to connect Child Care Service Providers, Workers & Parents, allowing the following:

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From the editorial panel

Lynne Moore

Times are changing in early childhood education and care and *Educating Young Children* is changing along with them. We are very proud to offer you this first full color version of our journal. Please enjoy.

In this issue of *Educating Young Children* we honour the children, families and educators of our flood and cyclone ravaged communities. Gemma Brockie's graphic story about the day '*my kindy was under water*' is a stark reminder of the resilience of children and the strength of community in times of natural disaster. Please contact Gemma to offer your assistance.

Meanwhile the children from Northgate early childhood centre provide an insight into children's knowledge of their world as they explore rainbows, raindrops and floods through their everyday play.

Our first 'conversations' for the year are with Jan Cullen and Sally Yin. Jan is C&K's Child and Family Support Project Manager and Sally is the centre manager at AEIOU, Toowoomba. Their reflections on 'working with diverse learners', are sure to provoke your thinking.

In February copies of the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline were distributed to all kindergartens in Queensland. This guideline provides specific advice to teachers of children in their kindergarten year. In this journal we are fortunate to have Sandra Grant from the Queensland Studies Authority provide a detailed overview of the guideline and the materials available to support understanding. A must read for all kindergarten teachers.

Once again we bring you a range of feature articles penned by early childhood educators working across a range of contexts. Regular contributors Leanne Hunter and Lisa Sonter 'wonder why' as they explore science and technology in an emergent curriculum. Louis Bradfield returns with a provocative sequel to the 'Bastardisation of Play' that is sure to ignite, invite and excite.

Editorial panel member Archana Sinh takes a fun look at numeracy in the early years, and Karyn Johns provides a wealth of resources to support language and literacy. You will find both articles useful in supporting Outcome 5 of the Early Years Learning Framework: Children are effective communicators.

Vanessa Miell and Lorna Wilson will take you on an inspirational journey into the Woodford Early Childhood Development Program. Full of practical advice, this article is essential for educators working with children with special needs and their families.

Our final feature, from Speech Pathologist Bronwyn Sutton, reviews the value of Social Stories as a tool for supporting children's social interactions.

In 'International Perspectives' I get a chance to share my visit to Reggio Emilia with you and finally Mathilda has sourced, once again, a great range of texts for review. In this issue our reviewers are Melindi Robertson from C&K Mt Gravatt and Sandra Taylor from Pelican's Nest Early Learning Centre in Caloundra. The children in both of these centres are now enjoying these books in their libraries.

Until next time ...

The EYC editorial team

Queensland flooding – one centre's story

Gemma Brockie

Gemma Brockie is Co-Director of Chelmer-Graceville Kindergarten

The *Educating Young Children* team would like to send our thoughts and best wishes to all readers, their families and communities affected by the recent floods and cyclone in Queensland. In this environments feature EYC team member Mathilda Element speaks with Gemma Brockie, co-director of Chelmer-Graceville Kindergarten, about the spirit of community.

Where is your centre located?

Our Kindergarten is Chelmer-Graceville Kindergarten. We are a C&K Affiliate. At the time of the flooding we resided at 40 Acacia Ave, Graceville. Our building and the gardens were inundated by flood waters during the January floods in Brisbane.

How did the floods affect your centre?

As we are sure most people would understand, in a Kindergarten the vast majority of resources are housed low to the ground so that children can have access to them. On the eve of the flood many of the staff members and Kindergarten families were hastily packing

'My (toy) traffic lights floated away in the flood.'

their own houses. Fortunately, one committee member and some other members of the public were able to lift our books to higher shelves and remove the Kindergarten computer. Everything else was flooded. It was not possible to open to the children for the start of the school year. Due to delays in the insurance payout and removal of asbestos, we have not been able to commence building until March 7th. We will be now on schedule to return to the site for Term 2.

What was the response of the community in your centre?

The initial days after the flooding were overwhelming for many families as they faced the prospect of a massive cleanup of their own homes. Those who were not flooded themselves were busily helping neighbours, friends and family.

Fortunately, at the Kindergarten, we received a great deal of practical help from the public, past

and current families and staff. We were also very grateful to the teams of volunteers who came from near and far to assist with the clean up. Some had travelled from the Sunshine and Gold Coast just wanting to help.

We were faced with the loss of more than \$60,000 of resources, huge internal repairs and a flooded outdoor area. The prospect of starting the new school year in eleven days

'Our house went under.'

was not looking promising. Fortunately, the C&K Board Members arranged for us to be accommodated at Yelangi C&K in Indooroopilly. This has provided some much needed stability to the Chelmer-Graceville Kindergarten children and their families. We will be forever grateful to Alison (Yelangi C&K Director) and her team for sharing the building and resources with us.

What did you need to do as teacher-directors to get your centre back on track?

The initial days directly after the flood involved contacting the Health Department and acting on the advice given to ensure that we were following OH&S guidelines with flood-affected items and premises. This meant that many things that were touched by flood waters

'We're living upstairs now.'

needed to be thrown out. We then salvaged items we would take with us to the alternative site and tried to prepare for the school year ahead. We borrowed tables and chairs and some furniture from other kindergartens to ensure we had what we needed to start the term.

We are very fortunate to have an active committee and parent body who came in during the weekend prior to school starting to set up the kindergarten.

What could other teachers do to help you out?

Our Kindergarten was well-resourced so we have lost a great deal of items, especially wooden things like blocks, easels, puzzles,

storage, climbing frames, furniture etc. If any centres have anything they can spare we would greatly appreciate them contacting us. More information on what we need is available at <http://chelmergraceville.candk.asn.au/Home.aspx>, or we can be contacted via email at cgkindy@aapt.net.au or phone 3379 3228.

'I'm here because my Kindy went under.'

Children are so resilient. Those who have been directly affected by the flood in their own homes occasionally share their experience. "My (toy) traffic lights floated away in the flood" and "Our house went under" and "We're living upstairs now." On the first day of Kindergarten one child put up his hand and said "I'm here because my Kindy went under." Lots of hands shot up in the air – "My kindy was flooded too" and "My kindy was under water." No amount of explaining could help them to understand that they were all supposed to be at the same kindergarten. They must have thought they were all refugees from different kindergartens.

There are those moments of heavy down-pours or cloudy skies where parents have reported

'My kindy was flooded too.'

their children are concerned. Some are worried they won't be able to get back across the river from Indooroopilly to Graceville because the river will be flooded. Others are worried that there will be more flooding. Ultimately though, the children are coping well with the tumultuous start to the school year. We

'My kindy was under water.'

as educators will keep a close eye on them throughout the school year. Although the flood waters have receded, and the cleanup is done, the process of rebuilding and recovering will take a very long time.

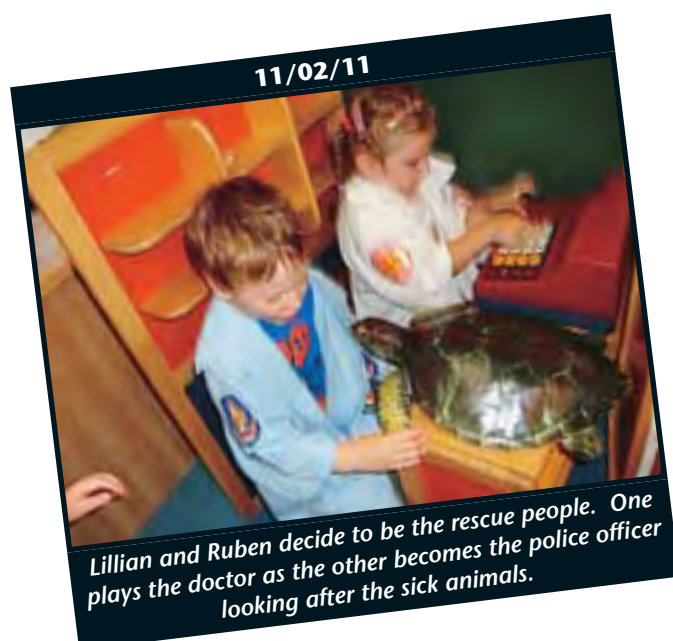
Not-for-profit organisations struggling to rebuild and recover from the floods can register for assistance through "Join Forces" <http://www.qldreconstruction.org.au/joining-forces>



Rainbows, raindrops and floods

Northgate early childhood centre

While exploring colours and rainbows the children's conversation drifted to rain, clouds and wind. There were opinions that raindrops made rainbows and that water went in the sky and in the clouds. There was also an idea that raindrops held the colours in them. For some children, however, their interest turned to floods and building boats. This is their learning journey:



The children spent over three weeks revisiting floods, boats and sick animals in their dramatic play. While some children verbalised their experiences, others listened or represented their thoughts in their art. Over the following weeks, discussion about rain has mingled with rainbows and raindrops.

When asked where the rainbows came from, the children agreed that after the rains stopped

rainbows came. When I challenged their thinking by asking how the rainbow got its colours, there was a strongly supported opinion that the raindrops held all the colours, or the colours were in the sky.

I couldn't have explained this natural phenomenon any better myself, nor the symbolic implications of a rainbow after a storm.

Archana Sinh



This is a rainbow made by Jayte, with clouds on top.

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Group discussion on 3rd February about floods

Archana: All these animals are having a ride in the boat.

Kayla: No, they have to come because there are floods.

Krystal: They are sick and we have to look after them.

Archana: Where did the floods come from?

Lillijana: Floods come from raining.

Amy: At night when I was asleep it was raining.

Tom C: When it was Saturday and I was asleep the flood came to our house.

Archana: What did you do then?

Tom C: I stayed in the house.

Lillian: We had floods in our house too. But we cleaned it up. We swept it all up and I helped.

Krystal: When I was awake Cody and Kara and mum, then at my house it was flooded. The beds flooded, then I cleaned it all up.

Lillijana: On the news it said people's houses were flooding. And old people had flooding in their house.

Kayla: When the floods came in at my Mummy's house we got sandbags. And we put them near the door. Sandbags stopped the floods. And there was two dresses on the floor of my friend's house. And the floods got them.

Working with diverse learners

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) reminds us that there are many ways of living, being and knowing. All children deserve to have their abilities and strengths acknowledged and valued and to be provided with opportunities that maximise their potential. This requires educators to respect and work with each child's unique qualities and abilities.

Working with diverse learners means educators value children's different capacities and abilities. They respond to children's expertise, and the strategies used by children with additional needs to negotiate their everyday lives.

The environments they create support all children's learning. They are vibrant and flexible spaces responsive to the interests and abilities of each child. They cater for different learning capacities and learning styles. (EYLF, 2009)

In this issue of *Educating Young Children* we explore working with diverse learners with Jan Cullen and Sally Yin.

Jan Cullen

Jan Cullen is C&K's Child and Family Support Project Manager. C&K is a community-based early childhood association with over 400 centres and child-related services for families with young children. For over a century C&K has promoted the interests of young children and their families.

We show we value diverse learners when we ...

acknowledge who we are as a person and a learner and bring that to the learning environment ... the kindergarten, the child care centre, the family day care home. Then we should be open to the fact that there are many different ways of knowing and being that are unlike our own that need to sit side by side for children and families to truly feel that the kindergarten is a reflection of their community. It is very hard when you have been brought up by your own family, and educated in one particular way, in a culture that is special to you (be that mainstream culture or another), to acknowledge that for other people there is another way of being and therefore another truth that is just as valid as your own. As a professional educator your knowledge is vital to the learning environment. However, if you fail to recognise the diversity of learners and experience then you and the children's experiences are poorer for it.

We build on each child's strengths by ...

viewing all children as children FIRST. Not as "my little Downs" child or the child with

Autism or the child from the refugee family – but simply as a CHILD. I believe there is no greater compliment to a family of a child with a disability than to treat their child as a child first, as their day-to-day life is often a very different world from that of yours or mine. If you start with the child, and take the label off, you will be amazed at what you can see are their strengths.

In a play-filled learning environment for diverse learners you would see ...

children and adults who all have a sense of belonging despite their individual diversity. A sense of belonging comes through a variety of different ways. It comes from being greeted and being welcomed as part of the kindy family. It comes from having your identity recognized within the centre, through the materials that you present on the walls, the words that you speak or your body language and the books that you read. It comes from the food that you present and the events that you hold. It comes from the collaboration that you have with the parents and the community at large. Most importantly, it comes from the relationships that are established between the children and the children and the adults in the environment. It comes from the role modeling that the children observe in the partnerships that are set up between the children and the adults. It comes from how the learning environment is designed in all its different and differing facets.

We are challenged/stimulated by ...

children thinking creatively and beyond our wildest expectations. Children challenging all

our expectations. Children that take baby steps which in reality are giant steps. A curriculum that sets no boundaries so that children can fly. Teachers' professional knowledge about children which they always underestimate and undervalue. Truly listening to children and acting like an archeologist to collect the traces of their learning.

We are partners with families when we ...

see them as parents first with a "no fault" clause. The right to be illogical and irrational about their child as that is their role. It is their role to be their child's advocate because, if they don't, who will. To walk beside them as they parent, to consult with them as the early childhood professional while they parent their child, to take responsibility for our role and allowing them to take responsibility for their role as the child's lifelong parent and advocate.

An experience or moment I remember ...

I do remember one or two not very well-handled interactions with parents that drive me to succeed in forming stronger partnerships with parents. With children there are many experiences that are memorable. However, I think what is universal to us all, as early childhood educators, are the moments that we connect with children when our eyes sparkle, joy takes hold of our faces and there is unbridled laughter and smiles. When learning becomes spontaneous because each of us has connected in a meaningful way with an element of the curriculum that has significance to us in our daily lives.

Sally Yin

Hi, I'm Sally Yin and I have more than twenty years experience in education. I have been the centre manager and teacher at AEIOU, Rhonda Greensill Centre, Toowoomba for the past eighteen months. The AEIOU Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation and Queensland's only part-time and full-time early education program for children aged two-and-a-half to five-and-a-half years who have been diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). We offer an early intervention program for these children. Our children are supported by facilitators and staff from the disciplines of speech pathology, occupational therapy and early childhood teaching. There is a high ratio of staff to children and this enables us to design a program that caters to the individual needs of the children in our care and to prepare them for their transition to the next stage in their education.

We show we value diverse learners when we ...

take time to talk with families and carers about the children in their care. We talk about the strengths and needs of the child, their interests, their likes and their dislikes. We observe, interact with and seek to engage the interest and enjoyment of the children and then, as a team of therapists, teachers and learning facilitators, we design a program that fosters their strengths and interests and seeks to promote their development in the areas of their specific needs. The program we offer uses a play-based approach, embedding activities that develop language and communication, social skills, and active learning processes in a variety of play situations.

We build on each child's strengths by ...

providing them with opportunities to display their strengths and by providing positive feedback for their achievements. Families and carers are advised of new skills developed so that they too can encourage and delight in their children's successes. We provide opportunities for the children to extend their ability in the areas of their strengths to promote their feelings of self-worth and personal satisfaction.

In a play-filled learning environment for diverse learners you would see ...

that the children are engaged in a wide variety of activities that incorporate times of structured play and learning as well as opportunities to make choices, engage in discovery and enjoy free play and personal expression. Within this environment it would be seen that the children are developing skills that will enhance their ability to adapt to and participate in their next stage of learning.

We are challenged/stimulated by ...

the range of diversity that we are presented with and the wealth of support and training available to assist staff and families in providing the highest possible level of care for the children.

An experience or moment I remember ...

the tears in a parent's eyes when her little boy, who is just learning to engage with others and who had no language at the time, looked her in the eyes and said "Mummy" with recognition for the very first time.

The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline

Sandra Grant

Sandra Grant is Senior Project Officer, P-10 Curriculum Resource Branch, Queensland Studies Authority

The Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline (QKLG) has been developed as part of a broader State government strategy to provide universal access to quality kindergarten services for Queensland children in the year prior to Prep. The guideline builds on the *Early Years Learning Framework* for Australia (EYLF) and provides specific advice to support teachers to strengthen kindergarten children's sense of belonging, being and becoming. It values the role of early years educators, parents and families in children's early education. The guideline reflects the research that shows, when qualified teachers work with educators, the quality of interactions is enhanced as are outcomes for children (Siraj-Blatchford I; Sylva, K; Muttock, S; Gilden, R; Bell, D, 2002). The QKLG also meets legislative guidelines for funded kindergarten programs within Queensland and, because it is based on the EYLF, it guides curriculum decision-making for the National Quality Standard.



Universal access – a Queensland priority

In 2008, the McMeniman report *Early Childhood Education and Care* identified that approximately 30% of Queensland kindergarten-aged children do not access kindergarten programs. A snapshot from *Towards Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland* shows that 53,000 children are of kindergarten age in Queensland. This includes:

- 12,000 children who attend kindergarten with a qualified teacher
- 29,000 children who attend child care centres -10% with a qualified teacher
- 12,000 children cared for by family members or some form of family day care service.

The Queensland government is therefore working towards universal-provision of kindergarten programs led by qualified teachers as a priority. *The Queensland kindergarten learning guideline* and a companion document, *The Continuum of learning and development* were developed in 2010 in response to this priority.

In addition, the Queensland government has developed a kindergarten funding scheme to provide financial support for child care centres who employ a qualified early years teacher and use an approved kindergarten guideline.

Trial and consultation

A draft guideline was trialed during 2010, in 27 kindergartens throughout Queensland

in contexts that include long day care, Community kindergartens, Early Childhood Education Centres in non-state schools and Education Queensland (pre-Prep) sites.

The QKLG was developed collaboratively by the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care (OECEC) and the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA). The final version of the QKLG was informed by consultations with:

- stakeholders via state wide forums
- a technical reference group
- focus groups of teachers including kindergarten, prep and special educators.

The *Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline* is available online at www.qsa.qld.edu.au.

Aligning state and national vision and priorities

The *EYLF* describes an inclusive vision that 'all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life' and a vision of children's learning, characterised by belonging, being and becoming. The pedagogical

perspectives and principles outlined in the QKLG assist teachers to implement programs that align with this vision.

The perspectives outlined in the guideline reflect the overarching view that interactions between children and adults shape learning. The perspectives are described in terms of interconnected images of:

- engaged learning and teaching
- the engaged child
- the engaged parent
- the engaged teacher.

The principles outlined in the *QKLG* promote continuity in children's learning by integrating the principles and practices identified in the *EYLF* and linking these to the principles that guide practice in P–3 contexts in Queensland. These principles focus teachers' attention on the underlying factors that promote children's sense of belonging, being and becoming and guide teachers' decision-making in the kindergarten setting.

Table 1: Principles underpinning the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline

High expectations and equity	Children achieve when all partners hold high expectations and promote equity and success for all.
Respect for diversity	Respecting and responding to diversity, including social and cultural experiences, geographic location, abilities and needs — promotes children's connectedness.
Holistic learning	Children's learning is holistic; that is, children learn and develop in interconnected ways.
Respectful relationships	Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships provide strong foundations for children's learning and development.
Continuity in learning	Continuity and connectedness between children's past, present and future are essential for smooth transitions and success in life and learning.
Shared decision making	Effective decision making involves active engagement with partners, including engaging children in making choices and parents, families and communities in sharing understandings, expectations, and priorities.
Intentional teaching	Intentional teaching extends children's thinking and builds deep understanding. Intentional teaching occurs in emergent and planned experiences.
Reflective practice	Engagement in ongoing reflective practice helps teachers to build understanding and examine assumptions and practices for improvement.

Teachers' decision-making practice

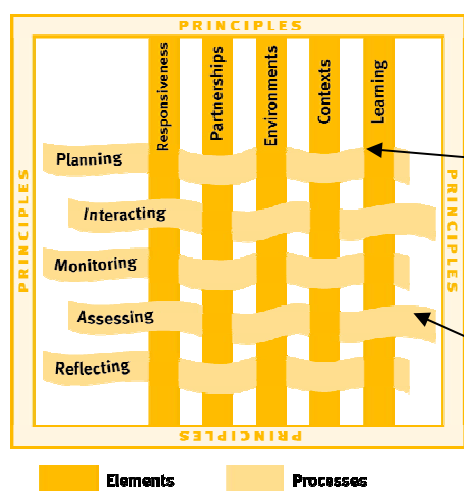
In the QKLG, effective and inclusive decision making recognises and embraces:

- the intentions of children, as well as the teacher
- the capability and potential of all children, irrespective of diverse circumstances and abilities
- the hopes and expectations that families hold for their children
- the perspectives and priorities of educators, families, children and other professionals.

In the QKLG, a weaving analogy is used to highlight the integrated, dynamic and embedded nature of teachers' decision-making practice. Careful attention to the five key elements helps teachers to create rich educational experiences that spark children's interests and enthusiasm for learning. When combined with decision-making processes, the key elements assist teachers to develop a dynamic and responsive kindergarten program.

Diagram 1 illustrates how each process is applied as teachers attend to each element.

Diagram 1: Teachers' decision making - an integrated practice



Elements:

- *responsiveness* to children
- building inclusive *partnerships*
- creating inclusive learning *environments*
- developing learning *contexts* – play, real-life engagements, routines and transitions
- promoting children's *learning and development*

Processes:

- *planning* and organising for learning
- *interacting* and co-constructing learning
- *monitoring* and documenting children's learning
- *assessing* children's learning
- *reflecting* on learning and practice

Intentional teaching and the contexts for learning

It is not enough for teachers simply to set up the learning environment, provide time for play and assume that learning will occur. Teachers and other educators need to interact purposefully to extend children's thinking, challenge their ideas and expand their interests. Teachers build on children's emerging ideas, interests and introduce ideas to support children to investigate and discover new possibilities. Teachers also embed intentional teaching practices in the decisions they make as they plan and organise the physical learning environment, and engage with children in the contexts of play, real-life engagements and routines and transitions.

These contexts best suit the learning and development needs of young children — with play as the dominant context in the kindergarten program. They provide opportunities to strengthen children's wellbeing, sense of identity and also pride in their cultural heritage by building connections to people, place and language.

These learning contexts of play, real-life engagements and routines and transitions enable:

- children to use their skills and understandings as capable learners
- children to have ownership of learning (locus of control/agency)
- links to be readily built to children's interests, knowledge and family and community experiences.

The contexts for learning also provide opportunities for children to make choices about their learning experiences, to support learning associated with the learning and development areas and to build positive dispositions.

Promoting learning and development

The QKLG identifies five learning and development areas, which describe the breadth of knowledge, skills and dispositions that children explore during the Kindergarten Year within a holistic learning program. Each of the learning and development areas identifies key

focuses for learning and provides intentional teaching ideas to support learning. In addition, teachers work with family, community and other partners to negotiate learning and development priorities. Teachers use the learning and development areas to plan opportunities to engage children in integrated learning through play, real-life engagements, routines and transitions.

Table 2 demonstrates how the learning and development promoted through the QKLG shares strong links with the EYLF outcomes for learning.

Table 2: Aligning EYLF outcomes with QKLG learning and development areas

EYLF outcome	QKLG learning and development areas	Key focuses
Strong sense of identity	Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sense of security and trust • independence and perseverance • confident self-identity
Connected with and contributing to their world	Connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive relationships with others • respect for diversity • respect for environments
Strong sense of wellbeing	Wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • autonomy and wellbeing • care and concern; positive interactions • health and safety • physical wellbeing
Confident and involved learner	Active learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • positive dispositions and approaches toward learning • confidence and involvement in learning • being imaginative and creative • exploring tools, technologies and ICTs
Effective communicator	Communicating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring and expanding ways to use language • exploring literacy in personally meaningful ways • exploring numeracy in personally meaningful ways

Promoting continuity

A key focus for the guideline, is promoting continuity of learning and development, which involves teachers using their understandings about children's past, present and future learning to inform their ongoing decisions. Promoting continuity involves teachers mapping children's learning and development along a continuum, and sharing information about children's learning progress with partners. To support teachers to promote continuity, a companion document to the guideline, the

Continua of learning and development, was developed. This document is a professional resource that helps teachers assess and reflect on evidence of children's learning progress and plan ways to promote continuity of children's learning development.

The continua are described using three phases — emerging, exploring and extending. Each phase is differentiated by the child's level of familiarity with the learning situation and level of support the child required to demonstrate learning (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Continua phases



Each learning and development area has a single continuum with the exception of communicating which has a separate continuum for language, early literacy and early numeracy. The continua also include collections of teacher-contributed descriptions of observable behaviours. The descriptions support teachers to make judgments about learning that are consistent with those of other teachers (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Guide to the continua of learning and development

Making consistent judgments

Collections of teacher-contributed descriptions of observable behaviours are provided as a resource to help teachers confirm that their judgments are consistent with judgments made by other teachers. Teachers use the collections of descriptions for each phase rather than individual descriptions to make broad judgments about children's learning.

Note: Teachers are encouraged to add their own descriptions of observable behaviours based on their observations and conversations with colleagues.

Making consistent judgments

Use the following teacher-contributed descriptions of observable behaviours to help make consistent judgments. The examples of observable behaviours demonstrate behaviours normally seen with the children.

Emerging	Exploring	Extending
Building a sense of security and trust – examples The child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accepts or tolerates familiar adults (e.g. is comfortable in the room when adults are with them) may display some anxiety initially in new settings (e.g. teacher's room) and accept that a teacher will be with them (e.g. looking at the teacher) separates, usually and willingly, with a professional play area or activity of choice with support, usually, from familiar teachers responds positively to a new environment, e.g. looks to be safe and comfortable in a new room, is confident and happy to be separated from a familiar teacher in a new setting with support, looks and reacts happily, e.g. looks, smiles, waves, and says hello with prompts, looks and responds well to a teacher's request, e.g. follows and moves when asked to go to a new room, or to a new room accepts, usually, and responds to a teacher's request 	The child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accepts or tolerates a new environment (e.g. looks, smiles, waves, and says hello) separates, usually and willingly, with a professional play area or activity of choice with support, usually, from familiar teachers responds positively to a new environment, e.g. looks to be safe and comfortable in a new room, is confident and happy to be separated from a familiar teacher in a new setting with support, looks and reacts happily, e.g. looks, smiles, waves, and says hello with prompts, looks and responds well to a teacher's request, e.g. follows and moves when asked to go to a new room, or to a new room accepts, usually, and responds to a teacher's request 	The child: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accepts or tolerates a new environment (e.g. looks, smiles, waves, and says hello) separates, usually and willingly, with a professional play area or activity of choice with support, usually, from familiar teachers responds positively to a new environment, e.g. looks to be safe and comfortable in a new room, is confident and happy to be separated from a familiar teacher in a new setting with support, looks and reacts happily, e.g. looks, smiles, waves, and says hello with prompts, looks and responds well to a teacher's request, e.g. follows and moves when asked to go to a new room, or to a new room accepts, usually, and responds to a teacher's request

To promote continuity, partners also share understandings about children's learning and the learning programs provided in different settings. Information is shared between children, parents, carers and teachers and with relevant support personnel or other partners on entry into the kindergarten program and informally and formally throughout the year. Towards the end of the year, a transition statement is created to build a shared and accurate picture of the child's learning. Together, teachers, parents

and other partners collaborate to create a summary of a child's learning. The summary is recognised as a "snapshot in time" and focuses on communicating about children's motivations, strengths and higher-order skills, understandings and learning dispositions. A printed copy of the transition statement should be made available to parents for their own records. Parents may choose to pass a copy of the transition statement on to the school during discussions on entry into the Preparatory Year.

Implementing the QKLG

Implementing the guideline involves early years educators adopting a team approach as they focus on promoting continuity of learning, from home and early learning settings, into the kindergarten year and as children move into Preparatory settings. It also involves developing a shared understanding of effective pedagogical approaches including the important role adults play in children's learning. Developing a team approach in kindergarten settings requires teams to identify alignments between principles, practices and key messages described in the EYLF and QKLG.

Professional networking and professional development opportunities are important during the implementation of new curriculum initiatives. One way to support implementation of the guideline is to encourage staff to explore the online professional development materials at

www.qsa.qld.edu.au. Some materials have been published on the site and additional materials will be published throughout 2011.

Online Professional Development materials

The QKLG online professional development materials include a series of modules and resources catering for self-paced professional learning. Materials include readings, professional tasks, PowerPoint presentations (for teacher use) and audiovisual resources. The modules are designed to assist teachers to develop deeper understanding of the guideline, critically examine current practices and explore possibilities for professional growth. Completing the modules and professional practice tasks will support teams to meet the National Quality Standard and teachers to address the professional standards for Queensland Teachers (teacher registration or renewal of registration).

Online support materials	Module
Getting started: Engaging with the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline	Module 1
Knowing children, their families and communities	Module 2
Planning – emergent curriculum and intentional teaching	Module 3
Observing children – to inform decisions and intentional teaching	Module 4
Promoting continuity (continuum of learning and sharing information) Reflective practice	Module 5

Conclusion

Implementing new curriculum frameworks is challenging. Kindergarten teams will need support from service leaders so that they have the time and space to engage in professional development and team discussions. In addition, service leaders need to promote a culture of openness and a willingness to reconsider and reframe existing centre policies and practices to enable teachers and educators to align their practices with the EYLF vision and advice in the QKLG.

As teams begin to explore the QKLG, it is important to consider:

- How can we implement a quality kindergarten program, within our service, to promote children's, parents' and staff members' sense of belonging, being and becoming?
- How can we support parents and families to understand the kindergarten program and how it links to children's prior, current and future learning?
- How can we most effectively support a kindergarten teacher to lead a team within our service context to improve the quality of interactions and pedagogy so that all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life?

Note: The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care distributed copies of the *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline* and the companion document *The Continuum of learning and development* throughout February 2011 for kindergarten teachers in funded services.

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Figures

Figure 1. Queensland Studies Authority, (2010), *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline*. (The State of Queensland), p.8.

Figure 2. Queensland Studies Authority, (2010), *Continua of learning and development, Queensland kindergarten learning guideline companion* (The State of Queensland), p.2.

Figure 3. Queensland Studies Authority, (2010), *Continua of learning and development, Queensland kindergarten learning guideline companion* (The State of Queensland), p.4.

Diagrams

Diagram 1. Queensland Studies Authority, (2010), *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline* (The State of Queensland), p.8.

Tables

Table 1. Queensland Studies Authority, (2010), *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline* (The State of Queensland), p.6.

Table 2. Queensland Studies Authority, (2010), *Queensland kindergarten learning guideline* (The State of Queensland), pp.32-33.

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Wondering why?

Exploring scientific thinking in an emergent co-constructed curriculum

Leanne Hunter and Lisa Sonter



Leanne Hunter and Lisa Sonter are early childhood teachers with many years experience in a variety of early childhood settings. They offer educators practical strategies, information and support in order to enhance learning environments which empower teachers and children. They are both recipients of Community Merit Awards (National Excellence in Teaching Awards) for Leadership and Innovation in Early Childhood Teaching Methods

Science is a way of knowing and finding out about other living things, the world we live in and ourselves. Science raises the question “I wonder why ...?”

Technology is about the application of science and it involves thinking about a problem and working out how to solve it. Technology relates to tools, machinery, problem solving and how things work. Technology raises the question ‘How ...?’ (Young & Elliott, 2003, p.9)

Consider the elements of science that young children might explore: the animal and plant world; natural environment; earth (geology, night and day); space; properties of materials (sorting, classifying); changes to materials; how things work (machines, electricity). Many of these content areas can be explored in the everyday experiences children engage in.

Look at an everyday object or experience and ask yourself: where is the science in this?

We can capitalize on children’s curiosity. A key role of teachers is to scaffold children’s learning. What is the impact if teachers feel insecure or inadequate with anything to do with science?

Albert Einstein once said play is the best form of research. It is now widely recognised that children learn through play. All children seem to have a natural curiosity to actively explore, ask

questions, make connections, and understand themselves and their world. Adults can act as role models to support children’s explorations. However, for this to occur, it is important to listen, observe, ask questions, supply interesting and relevant materials and relay a positive attitude about the value of science. Science is all around us and it is up to us to identify the science in everyday life. (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009).

Open-ended materials and conversations, listening and talking together about possibilities, form the basis of scientific learning through play. What’s of interest to children? How do we find out? What could we do?

Adults have a significant role to play as mentors and supporters when children explore, investigate, experiment and ask questions. Adults listen, observe, ask questions supply interesting and informative materials, set the stage for inviting ways and express positive attitudes about the value of science (Young & Elliott, 2003, p. 10).

Fleer and Cahill (2001, p. 2) warn that what is *significant to children may well be different from what is significant to adults. The interest children show in topics chosen by adults is significantly less than their interest in topics identified by children themselves.*

The use of an interactive approach allows us to find out what children think and encourage them to ask questions. What do we know? What do we want to find out? How can we do this? (Fleer & Cahill, 2001; Young & Elliott, 2003).

Children ask questions relevant to them. Teachers can reword their thoughts into questions. When we display their questions, this helps children see that a range of views about the same thing is possible. Teachers do not need all the answers. We can model learning dispositions when we learn alongside children.

So what is the educator's role?

The role of the educator is to:

- *monitor interest*
- *record ideas and questions*
- *facilitate investigations (suggest a range of ways of investigating)*
- *scribe their findings*
- *organize sharing sessions* (Fleer & Cahill, 2001 p. 15).

Is it only science if we're scaffolding information? *It is the early childhood educator's challenge to bring the scientific and technological realities of the world into the realms of a child's understanding in a meaningful way* (Young & Elliott, 2003, p. 15). Questions become important. Use open-ended questions e.g. Why do you think...? I wonder...? What could happen if...? Sometimes more direct questioning may be needed to gain insight into children's understandings. Be aware of children's experiences, family culture and attitude to children asking questions.

How do we encourage children to ask questions?

We should:

- create an atmosphere – our responses inform children. Build relationships

with children which encourage conversations.

- list questions children and adults are investigating
- allow time for children to ask questions
- use an interactive approach (placing children's interests central to planning)
- model asking questions to clarify understanding and prompt further thinking.

What about scientific language? Be mindful of the competence of children. However, modeling the use of scientific language helps set science in the everyday – not just as an isolated science activity. Consider the use of the words such as *explore, investigate, hypothesise (wondering plus working out possibilities), potentials, possibilities, curiosity, reflect, observe and listen*. We can make links in children's play and learning to these scientific terms. Using correct terminology (soap flakes dissolve, not disappear; water evaporates, it doesn't change into air; electricity is conducted, it doesn't flow; magnets attract, not stick) provides foundation for construction of sound scientific concepts.

Does the environment allow for possibilities ... where curiosity, wonder, thinking, problem solving, well-being and involvement are cornerstones for learning?

Provide time for children to explore. Celebrate the wonder of science in the everyday, each day!

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The Arts

Identifying elements of the arts that present children with the best opportunities to tell their stories



Louis Bradfield

2010 marked 22 years of Louis's involvement with the Maridahdi Community in Toowoomba. Originally, Director of the community kindergarten, he is now principal of Maridahdi Early Childhood Community School. Louis has spent 27 years reflecting on a way of teaching that best supports children as thinkers and learners. During this period, he has had opportunities to 'think out loud', 'to share his story'... as a lecturer, tutor and consultant. In 2002 Louis was a National recipient of a NEiTA (National Excellence in Teaching Award) for his 'passionate' dedication and contribution to early childhood education. In 2003 he received a Centenary Medal for Distinguished Service to Education. In his other life ... he is a parent of three amazing young adults, is a fitness fanatic and a successful artist!!

This discussion follows on from the thoughts presented in *The Bastardisation of Play* featured in *Educating Young Children* in 2010. In this discussion Louis draws on his experiences at Maridahdi and the theories of the French philosophers Deleuze and Guattarri. The ideas presented apply to both early childhood and the primary years of schooling.

Liselott Olsson (2009) shows both theoretically and in practice, how conditions and the horizons of early childhood education can be extended instead of reduced and subtracted, and how learning can run wild rather than being tamed.

At Maridahdi we are exploring thinking that clears the way for elements of the arts to support and enable children's 'learning to run wild'! It is about allowing children to access the materials and techniques that best support them in telling their stories.

The use of the words 'play' and 'the arts' are avoided when discussing the program offered to children at Maridahdi. The concern is that these words bring with them historical perspectives that are not relevant to Maridahdi and the role it plays in empowering children.

Maridahdi is about offering children repeated and continual opportunities to think. To support understanding of this work, discussion will focus on the following:

1. The arts
2. Elements of the arts
3. Adult-imposed routines

4. Illusions of choice

5. Thought.

These elements combine potentially to present children with unlimited possibilities. Olsson (2009:38) states that in order for there to be a shift from the current position, 'adults need no longer look at children as objects for their own interventions, but instead take the position of learning from the children and being willing to experiment together with them'.

Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy presents a thought with the peculiar role of creating itself as it goes on. (Olsson 2009: 25)

1. The arts

The arts bring such richness and colour to our world. Unfortunately for children, it's often

the adult interpretations of the arts that have transferred to educational settings in such 'scary' and 'bastardised' forms. The classic example is the mass production of repeatable but forgettable festive trinkets at annual celebrations such as Christmas, Easter and on



Rubin talking about his drawing

“Cars.”

“The elevator takes you to the cars.”

“The cars are the same type of cars but look different.”

Within the drawing is a long curved black and orange section that he points to.

“That is a force field fire.”

Moving his finger back across the page he points to a circular wheel with triangular shapes drawn onto the spikes.

“There is the grinder. If something....if a rock falls in it, it grinds it up.”

Mothers and Fathers Day. Opportunities for individual expression are non-existent.

At Maridahdi our belief in children is supported by:-

The child being positioned as the expert: the artist is traditionally positioned as the expert. This positioning has created fear in educators, who often avoid the arts or restrict them in order to insure measurable and controllable outcomes. *Maridahdi creates a milieu that supports and encourages experimentation and risk taking.*

A belief that creativity is accessible by all: creativity is no longer viewed as something belonging or attached to a select few. ‘Creativity privileged’: the message is that only those who

‘have it’ can ‘share it’. *Maridahdi celebrates the creativity in us all and invites both adults and children to explore their own potential.*

The endless possibilities: society rarely celebrates the possibilities, because of its narrow focus on what should be. *Maridahdi is about supporting children in mobilising so many possibilities.*

The arts: removal of adult agendas clears the way for children to access the arts without adult intrusion. *Maridahdi encourages children to identify and work with elements of the arts to tell their story.*

‘The look’ is about children: Maridahdi challenges the contrasting ‘looks’ in educational settings. Spaces for children invite extremes, from the pages of ‘House and Garden’ to landscapes reflecting ‘detention centres’.



Mobilising many possibilities.

Maridahdi believes spaces for children should reflect an ownership by children; a shared space for adults and children; a workshop vibe that invites possibilities.

2. The elements

Elements are the materials and techniques within the arts, easily accessed and explored by children and used to tell their stories. At Maridahdi we focus on allowing children to identify and use the elements of the arts that best support them in telling their story. The elements are the resources and techniques within the arts that give children immediate and unconditional access.

Maridahdi is about providing continual and repeated opportunities for children to draw, to paint, to dramatise, to tell, to make, to move, to create, to construct, to do, to model, to take risks, to experiment, and to explore. It is about children building their own knowledge of materials and the multitude of ways they can be used to bring their stories to life.



A workshop vibe that invites possibilities.

Gaining mastery over the materials is essential and to do so they need to find the resources and techniques that work best for them.

Deleusse, with inspiration from Nietzsche, saw thought as a matter of creation that takes place when the mind is provoked by an encounter with the unknown or the unfamiliar, forcing us to think. (Olsson, 2009)

Maridahdi is about the organisation of time, space and materials around elements of the arts that provoke encounters.

3. Adult-imposed routines

Removing the restrictions placed on children with the use of routines around time and space. Time and space is continually compartmentalised and restricted in educational



Providing continual and repeated opportunities.

settings. Ancient regimes, routines and traditions bring with them a history of education that continues to limit and stifle children's thinking. Maridahdi negotiates the organization of time and space with children. Encounters with time, space, materials, self and peers present untapped possibilities for thought.

4. Illusions of choice

Creating spaces for children that offer real choice.

Choice for children is actually an illusion ... through the use of materials and experiences, adults actually control the choices that surround children and the capacity for follow-through when choices are made. (Canella, 1997:121)

Feature Articles

Adult agendas dominate spaces for children, restrictions imposed through the provision of resources, and the use of time and space. Spaces on the surface that seem to offer so much for children in reality offer them little. Materials that on contact do little to invite, ignite or excite. The historical and controlling nature of routines and materials restrict and limit, and the message is about reduction not



Learning environments that invite children to think.

expansion, limitations rather possibilities.

Creating environments for children needs to be about so much more than control. Choice needs to be more than tokenistic.

5. Thought

Creating learning environments that invite children to think.

Educational programs for children have the potential to offer so much. Encounters for children can be continual with the provision of time, space and materials void of adult agendas.

We must ensure that what we present to children ignites, invites and excites!

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Having fun with numeracy in the early years

Archana Sinh

Archana is an educationalist who has been involved with education and learning for more than 20 years. Some of her experiences include teaching art in primary schools in India and PNG; working as a training officer in Children's Services and a director and teacher in early childhood services in Melbourne and Sydney. More recently, Archana is a relief teacher for Education Queensland and at the time of writing this article was working as a Kindergarten teacher at Logan Child Care Centre. This centre is a pilot for providing the government-funded kindergarten program. Archana's interest in education is diverse and, in that capacity, she has begun providing professional development.

Numeracy can mean different things to different people. For early childhood educators it can be confronting, especially as it is not defined or expressed in any definite form for this sector of care and education. For the purpose of my article I take numeracy to mean the use of mathematical language and thinking. Thomson et al (2005) discuss numeracy as a key part of early childhood education, critical to later numeracy success. They also suggest that many children have 'well-developed numeracy skills before they start formal education' and that early numeracy involves skills beyond the numbers. Young children think and apply many of the concepts of numeracy in their everyday play.

Children are surrounded by the language of numeracy from birth. This might include the date of their birth, their age, the number of candles on their cake. Later, these simple understandings take the form of which toy to buy from the shops? What happens at shops? How many jelly beans in the jar? and other everyday experiences. In this article I share some fun ways to explore numeracy in the early years.

Everyday numeracy experiences

There are many ways to include the language of numeracy in everyday play situations. In outdoor play many of us say 'Let's jump five times then take two steps and turn' or we play the *hokey pokey* using our left and our right hands/feet in and out. In stories we use *Three Little Pigs* or *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* to count the days and what he ate. In songs and at transition we sing *Three Jelly Fish* or there were *Nine in the Bed* and many other such songs. Other resources that you might already use include puzzles, beads, and blocks that can be grouped according to colour, size, similarity, dissimilarity and shape. Natural resources like seeds, beans, shells and such material are useful for sorting, comparing, looking at shapes, colour and size.

Everyday experience 1

The children were lying down in the sandpit and covering each other with sand. We brought out some large sheets of paper and helped children trace around each other. They looked at the shape of the head and commented on

This article supports Outcome 5 of the *Early Years Learning Framework*
Children are effective communicators



Dominoes



Natural material like seeds and cones



Making circles and squares using different shaped wooden blocks

limbs, hand and feet as well. There was a lot of discussion about how the head was round and the limbs were long.

Everyday experience 2

At group time the children were talking about circles in the room. One child said, 'The moon is a circle.' Another quickly got up to say, 'No, it is a square,' making a square shape with his hands. I looked at him and said, 'That is a great square you have made. Is that what the moon looks like?' He said with a smile, 'It can sometimes.' At this point another child made a diamond shape with his fingers. Children playing in the block corner decided to make a circle using different blocks. The children then took turns in showing different shapes that they could make using these blocks.

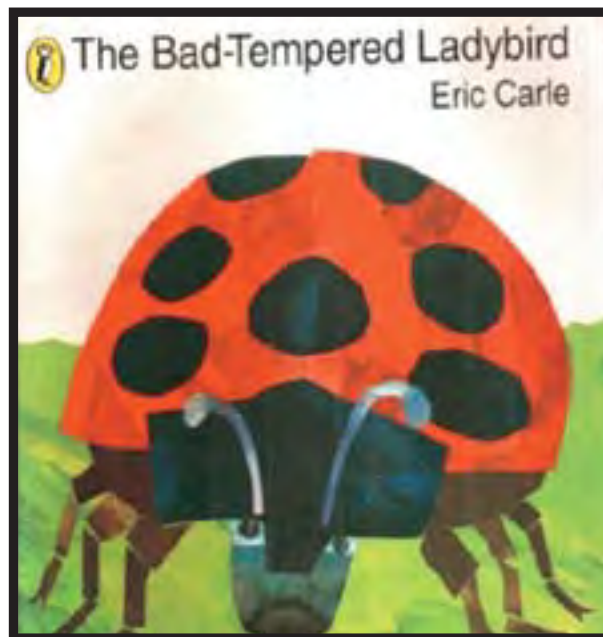
Everyday experience 3

One child had made a picture of pink stripes. We extended this learning by looking at some books that discussed spots and stripes.

Everyday experience 4

In the past few weeks the children have developed an interest in shopping. This originated from the home corner where someone felt the need to go to the shops. The children decided they needed trolleys and products to purchase.

After some discussion we realized that we would need to set up a shop. We brought in some trolleys. But this was a problem as there were only four trolleys. So it was agreed by the children to wait while one person became the trolley person like at the real shops. Meanwhile, we set about the task of setting up the shop, an



area was negotiated and some rules established. These included staying on the carpet with the trolley and taking turns with trolleys and the register. Two children sat at the register while others put the products on display on the tables.

Another problem cropped up in the form of money! All the money was with the people at the register and the children with the trolleys needed some too. I asked the children where could they get the money from and they simply replied that they could get it from the shops. The play went on with children taking notes and coins and picking up different products while they shopped. I asked a different group of children about where could they get money and the reply was once again that they could get money from the shops.

Over the next few weeks there was a growing interest in the shopping area. New rules were made to solve the problem of one trolley having all the products while the others were left with one or two items. The rule the children agreed to was to take three items at a time in the trolley. This added complexity with the need to stop to count the number of items in each other's trolleys. Some children counted up to nine items. All the while, money was being taken from the people at the register and thrown in the trolleys along with the shopping. However, some children figured out that they need not carry the money but could use a credit card instead. So they swiped the credit card and said 'Here, I have paid you,' at

the register. Money value or the word 'dollars' was not mentioned but it was understood that there was an exchange of transaction while purchasing from shops. Our shop continued to evolve as children added small cardboard cartons for shelving and a sign saying 'Convenience Store'.

Money sharing was still a problem as was storing it after playing. We sat at Group Time before lunch and explored the money and discussed how we could best store the coins. We sorted these out in denominations. Children started doing this by matching the colour. Then some children saw the number '5' written on some and sorted



Money after being sorted

these in one pile, there was some confusion with \$50 but we helped sort that out by saying these were different. Our journey is still continuing. So far the children have shown their knowledge of financial literacy - what we do with money, how we shop, and the need to exchange while purchasing i.e. if you do not pay money as in cash then you have to pay using a card. There is also an early awareness of number skills with limited counting 1 to 1. Sorting occurs while setting up displays and packing away.

The learning journey so far

In summary, through everyday experiences, the children have explored shapes through body tracing and wooden blocks; numbers in counting shopping items, trolleys and (for a few children) money denomination, and songs such as *Five Little Monkeys*. Money itself was understood to have value in buying things. A few children discussed money denomination as in dollar value. This was done not while shopping but while packing the money away. Problem-solving has been considerable

throughout this play. Lastly, categorizing was visible in bingo games and also in the set-up of the shops. There are many ways to experience early numeracy in everyday play situations.

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Talk it up – oral language skills in the early years

Karyn Johns

Karyn Johns is a Speech Language Pathologist who has worked with children and families for over 20 years. She graduated in WA and has worked for a number of health and education agencies in SA, ACT and QLD, including Education Queensland for ten years. Karyn is a partner in a thriving private practice (S.P.E.E.C.H Pty Ltd) on the coast. This business currently provides services to children in 4 private schools, as well as clinical services in their rooms in Coomera. Karyn is passionate about sharing information and strategies with families, teachers and early childhood professionals that will support language, literacy and social skills development. Karyn has two children - aged 14 and ten years. They have taught her an incredible amount and probably have had the most important and significant impact on the work she does and the advice she provides to others.

Talking about policy

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) elevates 'effective communication' as an essential learning outcome for early years services to work towards. This statement embraces one of the most obvious and best understood expectations for caring for a young child. Currently the early childhood sector is immersed in a range of terms, concepts and 'jargonistic' messages that at times marginalise and even confuse the range of professionals (including parents) who are all concerned with positive developmental outcomes. This paper describes examples of tools and resources that support the pedagogy and assessment for learning principles that underpin this outcome.

Communication is central to social-emotional wellbeing, thus speech and language development is a cornerstone for successful outcomes later in life. (http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/pages/PDF/Beitchman-BrownlieANGxp_rev.pdf). This area of development also underpins some of the other

learning outcomes in the EYLF as well as other early childhood curricula (e.g. Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline) However, speech and language competency does not progress normally for a growing number of children and research shows that these children are at greater risk for later problems than children who do not have communication impairments.

Talking about research

Current brain studies (see reference list for some weblinks) are highlighting the importance of the early years, particularly 0-3 years, as the critical window period for brain connections for communication skills to develop. Yet our current level of understanding about the pathways for language development and long term outcomes are still emerging. Longitudinal studies, in both Melbourne and Perth, have identified that almost half of the late talkers at age two years old have "caught up" at age four years old. However, later literacy measures reveal residual problems for learning that may be connected to those

This article supports Outcome 5 of the *Early Years Learning Framework*
Children are effective communicators

difficulties in the early years (i.e. detecting sounds or developing vocabulary). Thus, support for children and adolescents who have language impairment (or a history of language delays) is particularly important not just in the early years but also in the “school” context.

A range of longitudinal studies have been highlighting increasing concerns about the incidence rate for language and subsequent literacy delays.

The Australian Early Developmental Index (AEDI) is a population measure of Australian children’s development. The data, now emerging for communities across Australia, consistently shows that the domains of development connected to communication development are the most vulnerable for children in their first year of schooling. This points the arrow for attention and intervention directly on the early years. However, these settings are typically struggling with the capacity to access speech language pathologists for support. Therefore, ready access to tools and resources that can support early childhood professionals in this area is important.

Talking about resources

In response to the information arising from research and population studies, a number of Government funded services and programs are emerging, particularly in communities identified as vulnerable or in need of services. The Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children (C4C) Initiative, auspiced by Lifeline Community Care, <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/families/progserv/communitieschildren> commenced in 2004 and is now in the second round of funding (extended to 2012). One of the major strategies or program areas has been in the area of communication skills for children, by providing resources and support for parents and staff in early childhood settings. Two major programs under the *Successful Learners Strategy* have been developed:

- Ready Set Learn
- Read and Grow

These programs and their resources have emerged from the interactions, requests and “niggles” expressed by parents and early childhood professionals. Speech Language Pathologists (SLP’s) and Early Childhood Professionals (ECP’s) have worked alongside parents and early childhood professionals, in child care centres, playgroup hubs, and have also participated in forums and training events. The partnership and collaborative approach has been critical in the process of verifying that the tools are useful, as well as offering hands-on mentoring, modeling and demonstration of the ideas and materials.

Ready Set Learn - a Resource CD

- Quick Speech and Language Screener (*assessment for learning*)
- Talk and Play cards (*play based, open-ended questions, intentional teaching; scaffolding*)
- Listening Lucy (*active listening, visual scaffold*)
- Ideas for celebrating emergence of early words (*connecting with parents*)

Read and Grow - an interactive story telling program

Originally designed to support community facilitators in a playgroup setting, this program is now delivered in all Gold Coast City Council library branches as their Storytelling program. Four critical language development strategies are embedded in the program framework. This program is also being trialed in a child care centre context to support staff in their delivery of engaging and effective group times.

These resources have drawn heavily from the Hanen Centre (www.hanen.org), which is a well respected and utilized not-for-profit research centre in Canada whose mission is to support language, social and literacy skills through enhancing adult-child interaction. They promote a number of easy to remember strategies e.g.

- OWL - observe wait and listen
- Be face-to-face
- Add language to play

- Strive for Five - this strategy challenges us to engage in a conversation with a young child for five consecutive 'turns' (without creating a question-answer situation)

See Makin (2009) for reflections on how *conversations do matter* and the connection to Learning Outcome 5 from the EYLF.

Talking about connections

How do these resources support early childhood professionals to implement the EYLF and other curricula or frameworks e.g. Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guideline?

A curriculum or framework refers to all the things that children may experience that have been planned or unplanned but with a structure or point of reference that supports staff to reflect on their practice and respond to the needs of children and families in their 'care' (Goodfellow, 2009).

The tools listed above will support:

- an understanding of communication development
- delivering activities with language development in mind
- discussion with parents about their child's progress.

The application of these tools and resources will be driven by the early childhood professionals perspective on the teaching and learning process. They support a number of the teaching practices from the EYLF but don't prescribe a philosophy or specific theoretical framework e.g.

- scaffolding
- responsiveness
- intentional teaching
- visual learning environments (props and visual tools)
- play-based learning environments
- monitoring development.

Speech Language Pathologists are excited at the recognition in documents like the EYLF that communication skills are a critical early years learning outcome.

However, with workforce limitations, such as the limitations in the availability of SLP's, we need to find ways to provide sustainable and meaningful ways of collaborating that will support children and families achieve positive outcomes. Our experience in the Northern Gold Coast Communities for Children C4C project has been that these tools support staff and facilitate ongoing dialogue between agencies.

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- Growing up in Australia - Longitudinal Study of 10,000 Australian children (commenced in 2004) www.aifs.gov.au/growingup/
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- University of Oregon Brain Development Lab - useful links to video footage and appropriate for parents to view www.changingbrains.org
- A comprehensive web resource providing accessible information and resources about brain development, brain fitness and links to current research www.brainconnection.positscience.com
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Inclusive education practises – supporting students with special needs in the Prep year



Vanessa Miell

Vanessa Miell and Lorna Wilson

Vanessa Miell and Lorna Wilson are qualified Early Childhood Teachers with additional qualifications and extensive experience in Special Education and Autism Spectrum Disorders. Vanessa and Lorna have worked in the special education field for many years in a range of educational environments. They have a particular interest in Early Intervention programs for

children and families with special needs and both currently work for Education Queensland at Waterford State School's Early Childhood Development Program. Their common focus is facilitating inclusive education for young students with special needs in mainstream Prep classrooms.



Lorna Wilson

Waterford Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) is located south of Brisbane between Beenleigh and Logan City. Our program operates as part of the Special Education Program of Waterford State School. The ECDP is managed by the Head of Special Education Services (HOSES) within the school and is staffed by a team of teachers and teacher aides with specific qualifications and experience in special education and early intervention.

Waterford ECDP offers early intervention programs for children with identified "Special Needs" from six weeks to Year One of schooling. Depending on the children's age, they are enrolled in a number of group sessions per week. Prep-age students are enrolled on a full-time basis.

Waterford State School offers a range of possible participation options for Prep-aged students dependent on their individual needs, development, functioning and parent preferences. These include:

- full-time attendance in mainstream Prep class with full-time Special Ed teacher and/or teacher aide (Prep Special Ed teacher responsible for IEP, general planning and support)
- slow transition to full-time attendance in mainstream Prep class with special

education teacher/teacher aide support (ECDP teacher responsible for IEP, general planning and guidance of TA)

- shared placement between ECDP and mainstream Prep class (ECDP teacher responsible for IEP, general planning and transitioning)
- attendance at ECDP with ECDP teacher and teacher aide with supported visits to Prep class as early stages of transition.

Early Childhood Development Programs and Services support Education Queensland's policies regarding inclusive education and the ethos of every child's 'right to an education'.

Seven Key Principles that form the basis of our approach to our ECDP:

1. preparation for formal schooling
2. the provision of planned education from the earliest possible age with ongoing review of the child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) and support requirements
3. active involvement of parents/carers and family in the education process is preferred with effective programs and services being built on collaboration between families and professionals

4. a multidisciplinary team approach to program delivery
5. a coordinated approach to program delivery working in collaboration with other agencies and/or organisations that may be supporting the family
6. the need to develop and maintain a variety of educational options for the child
7. building skills that maximise the opportunities for the child to interact with their same-aged peers without a disability (Department of Education, Training and the Arts, 2007)

In order to build the pathways to an effective and successful education you need to know as much as you can about the child:

- find out about the student's background and history
- find out about the student's 'disability' e.g. label or no label
- what are their individual needs e.g. How does the student's disability impact upon them?
- what specific issues need addressing e.g. toileting, alternative communication, medical?
- what are the parents' expectations/aspirations for their child?

Education Queensland has identified categories of disability that act as an entry point for ECDP enrolment. These are:

Intellectual Impairment

- delayed development, limited capacity for learning, poor concentration, adaptive delays, behavioural difficulties, speech and language delays

Speech-Language Impairment

- delayed comprehension, delayed speech production, concentration and attention difficulties, behavioural difficulties

Autism Spectrum Disorders

- communication disorders, social delays, rigid behaviours, disengagement, tantrums, language disorders, sensory sensitivities

Physical Impairment

- significantly impaired physical functioning, need for specific equipment to facilitate participation, long-term difficulties, emotional and social difficulties

Hearing Impairment

- significant impairment to auditory functioning, need for specialised resources, sign language, social and emotional difficulties, access and participation

Global Developmental Delay

- behavioural difficulties, social delays, language delays, fine motor problems, delayed concept development, delayed gross motor skills, immaturity

Visual Impairment

- significant impairment to sight, need for specialised resources, social and emotional difficulties, access and participation

At Waterford ECDP we believe the 'Keys to Success' are flexibility, common goals and communication.

Flexibility

- flexibility of environments
- flexibility of programs
- flexibility of staffing

The ECDP and Prep staff members cross over roles to ensure all staff have a good working knowledge of the environment and the individual students. Daily liaison between all staff ensures current and appropriate communication occurs and ensures changes to routines are catered for. A flexible approach and commitment by all staff to provide for individual student needs promotes positive outcomes.

Common goals

- consistency with goals and outcomes
- connectedness, adaptability, transparency
- collaborative 'vision'

Everybody needs to be on the same page with agreed expectations by the team for each child. Staff need to consider the nitty-gritty i.e. What are the expectations for sitting?, When is it OK for the child to be removed?, How much of an activity does the child have to complete? All staff aim to work in close liaison to plan, implement and develop programs for all students. A collaborative team approach helps to facilitate success for our Prep students. Individual Education Plans are the foundation for a consistent and agreed approach for all team members including parents.

Communication

- liaison between all Special Education Program (SEP) staff
- liaison between SEP staff and mainstream staff
- strong advocacy by Heads of Special Education Services with school administration
- liaison between SEP staff and parents

Parents of children with disabilities often need a higher degree of 'maintenance'. Staff need to consider confidentiality for each family. How is information passed on? What is the protocol for staff-to-staff liaison/ communication? How do staff share information with each other? How do staff keep records of the basics i.e. toileting, eating? What is the format for staff meetings?

Not only is effective communication within the ECDP and school critical but so is the professional liaison with supporting agencies, such as:

- EQ supports e.g. ECDP, Special Education Program for Years One to Seven, Occupational Therapist, Speech Pathologist, Physiotherapist
- Montrose
- Cerebral Palsy League
- Autism Queensland
- Family and Early Childhood Services, Department Of Child Health & Safety, Disability Support Queensland, Disability Services Support Unit.

Students with disabilities entering a mainstream Prep classroom often require specific support strategies to meet their needs. Possible specialised supports can include:

- transition programs for all students entering Prep the following year begin in Term three
- each student has a Transition Book that provides simple information about the environment, their new teachers, school activities and routines with photos and simple language in a story format
- each student has visual supports individually created to cater for their needs i.e. Boardmaker timetables, picture schedules, behaviour charts, cue cards
- each student has augmentative communication devices and/or programs implemented to cater for their needs.

Often specific resources and equipment are used to cater for the student's individual needs

- computer programs e.g. Boardmaker
- Makaton Signing
- use of augmentative communication equipment e.g. Voice Output Devices
- specialised equipment e.g. slope boards, modified scissors, pencil grips etc.

Students with special needs require a thoughtful approach to their day-to-day management. The following basic management strategies, with a focus on positive behavioural support, are the most effective tools for maintaining a happy and calm classroom.

- **Be confident.** Show the child you are in control of the situation and mean what you say.
- **Stay calm, cool and collected.** The child will unintentionally mimic your levels of emotion or stress.
- **Reduce your language.** No more than five words at a time! The child needs simple, clear directions in short sentences to understand. Emphasise key words. Be cautious of rephrasing as this can often add to the confusion. Each rephrase requires additional processing.
- **Provide positive verbal reinforcement for appropriate behaviours.** This helps the child to understand the 'good' things they are doing and their appropriate behaviour the attention it deserves.
- **Ensure you have the child's attention.** You may need to get down to the child's physical level, say their name firmly, have them stop what they are doing, gently touch them or ask them to look at you. (N.B. Many children will not be able to initiate or sustain eye contact. If this is the case do not insist that they look at you.)
- **Reduce your focus or tactically ignore negative and inappropriate behaviours where possible.** It will be unsuccessful to continually give attention to the child's inappropriate behaviours. This does not help the child to understand what it is they should be doing. Specific behavioural issues can be managed separately.
- **Plan for Success.** Be organised and know what it is you want to achieve. Organise the environment to minimise potential distractions or unnecessary interference.

- **Structure break times.** Provide structured and regular breaks for the child to refocus, de-stress, relax and switch-off. Use break times as part of the child's regular routine after concentrated work times or activities the child finds challenging. A break time is like a pressure valve release. Regular release of the pressure is often successful in preventing a 'big blow out'.
- **Use rewards.** Rewards should be motivating to the individual child. Offering a reward for appropriate behaviour or completion of less preferred tasks helps the child to understand the 'give and take' nature of social interactions. It is easier for the child to be successful if there is a reason for it.
- **Avoid discussions or arguments.** Clearly state your expectations for the child and do not be enticed into a verbal or physical confrontation. Reduce your demands if necessary but ensure you have made the decision to do so, not the child.
- **Be consistent.** A consistent approach helps the child to understand you and your expectations. A consistent environment and approach allows the child to experience success.
- **Give choices.** Offering the child a choice from a limited number of appropriate options allows them to feel that they are in control. They will be more likely to comply with your wishes.
- **Use visual cues.** Visual information is easier for the child to understand. Auditory information is transient, it's said and then it's gone. Perhaps it was heard by the child, perhaps it wasn't. Visual information in the form of a written word, a picture or a symbol can remain stagnant i.e. It can be contacted to the child's desk, held by the child, stuck to whiteboard. Visual information can be referred to by the child without the interference of another person.
- **Teach the child alternatives.** Replace inappropriate behaviours with more acceptable alternatives. The child may not know a better way of getting their message across or meeting their needs.
- **Be aware, challenge your thinking and perceptions.** Ask yourself questions: 'What is the purpose of the child's behaviour?', 'Why

is he behaving this way?', 'What is happening from the child's point of view?', 'How am I feeling about the child's behaviour?', 'Did I contribute to the child's response?', 'Can I deal with this situation right now?', 'Do I need more support or information?'...

- **Be kind to yourself.** Working with a child with special needs is never easy. Focus on the successes no matter how seemingly minimal. There's no need to dwell on things that didn't work out.

The positive management strategies outlined will generally work to keep most children's behaviour 'manageable'. There are always exceptions to the rules however! Children with more challenging behaviours need specific and planned behaviour management support, consistently applied by all staff working with the child. Development of a 'Behaviour Support Plan' focusing specifically on a particular behaviour that is of concern e.g. aggression, non-compliance helps to ensure consistency across all staff and environments.

What our parent's have to say...

'... their work with him and helpful advice to ourselves on many different aspects of Liam's development have shown in his continued progress ...' (Karen N)

'... exceptional in teaching skills, patient beyond belief, friendly, caring, understanding, knowledgeable and fun ... I would drive any distance to send my child to this unit to be with these people ...' (Karen H)

'... Timmothy has benefited greatly from the various services offered ...' (John C)

'... I would highly recommend the school and the program to other parents ...' (Christine R)

'... they have always been there to help me see the light at the end of the tunnel ...' (Naomi L)

'... the teachers ... went above and beyond their duties in their attempts to help not only our son, but our family ...' (Nicole D)

'... has been instrumental in helping my son move from an uncontrollable toddler with no verbal or social skills to a happy young Prep student who has friends ...' (Nicole D)

Waterford Early Childhood Development Program OR

Wonderful, Efficient, Caring, Dedicated People



Social Stories™

Bronwyn Sutton

Bronwyn Sutton has 20 years experience as a Speech Pathologist working exclusively in early childhood and educational settings. Bronwyn obtained a Bachelor of Speech Pathology degree in 1986 and completed a Graduate Diploma of Education in 1994. Bronwyn is completing her Masters Degree

in Special Education with majors in both Autism and Early Intervention. Bronwyn has developed an innovative home-based program called *Naturalistic Interventions for Communication in Early Childhood* (NICE). This is a family-focused program empowering parents to improve their child's language and social communication skills during 'teachable moments' in everyday activities.

What are Social Stories™?

Social Stories are brief, individualized short stories that describe a social situation and provide specific written cues using visual supports (picture, diagrams, symbols) and text. Social Stories were developed in 1991 by Dr Carol Gray (Gray & Garand, 1993). They teach the child not only what to do, but how to understand social cues and the perspectives of others. Early childhood teachers are skilled at explaining the 'who, where, what, when' of an event. A Social Story goes further and explains 'why' to the child.

Who are Social Stories for?

Social Stories were originally designed for children on the autism spectrum. However, the visual mode of Social Stories would suit the visual learning style of many children. Most children have already been 'told' about the event. However, a Social Story is presented in a visual rather than an auditory-verbal format. Social stories have been written on computers to engage children who are visual learners or those who enjoy technology (More, 2008).

Why use Social Stories™?

Social interactions with peers are important for developing friendships and are an important medium for learning language and cognitive skills (Batchelor & Taylor, 2005). Social stories help children who have difficulty interpreting

social cues to internalise the appropriate behaviours needed to interact socially (Sansoti, Powell-Smith, & Kincaid, 2004). Social stories have been shown to teach the social skills of sharing, taking turn and talking to peers (Barry & Burlew, 2004).

In early childhood settings, children need to transition between outdoor time, mat time, indoor time and mealtimes. Social Stories can have wide ranging transition purposes at home and socially (Ivey, Heflin, & Alberto, 2004).

Guidelines for creating a Social Story

Social stories should allow the child to feel that they are in the situation. They should be written in the present tense using the child's name or 'I'. Positive language is used to guide the actions of the child e.g. instead of 'I will not yell at my sister', say 'I will use my calm voice'.

How do you write a Social Story™?

Many teachers write a story outlining a list of activities a child must do. This is not a Social Story but a schedule. Social Stories follow a specifically defined style and format. They describe what the event looks, feels and smells like from the child's perspective.

There are six sentence types which can be included in a Social Story:

Descriptive	Are factual statements. They give the background or introduction to the story.
Perspective	Describe the thoughts, feelings, emotions, beliefs and opinions of the people in the story.
Directive	Gently guide the behaviour of the child. They detail the positive goals such as what the child should do or say in the situation.
Affirmative	Reassure the child, stress an important point or reference to a rule. They reflect a shared opinion, not an individual opinion. E.g. Putting your hand up before talking to the teacher means that everyone has a turn to talk.
Cooperative	Identify what others will do to assist. E.g. My art teacher can help me with my painting
Control	Are usually written by the child. They identify a personal strategy. The child reviews the story and adds a control sentence. E.g. I will try and sit still (directive) just like a statue of a horse (child's interest).

Example of Social Stories

My teacher talks to other children.

Mrs King teaches me and all the children in my class (Perspective). Sometimes Mrs King is busy talking to the other children. Sometimes Mrs King is busy doing her work (Perspective). It is really hard to wait for Mrs King (Perspective). But it is better if I wait and put up my hand (Directive). Mrs King helps me know when to talk (Cooperative). She says 'Yes Harry' and then I can say 'Excuse me Mrs King' and I can talk. (Directive) Putting your hand up before talking to the teacher means that everyone has a turn to talk (Affirmative).

Harrison shares his toys.

Harrison likes to play next to other children at Kindergarten (Descriptive). Other children like to play with toys too (Perspective). Harrison finishes his turn (Directive). He gives to toy to the other children (Directive). Harrison is happy as he knows that sharing is caring (Affirmative).

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Glimpses of Reggio

Lynne Moore

Hello, I am curriculum coordinator at C&K preschooling professionals. Each year C&K invest significantly in the professional development of their staff. In October 2010, as part of this commitment, I was fortunate to attend an in-depth study week to experience the infant toddler centres of Reggio Emilia. The study week was attended by 90 delegates from around the world. These snippets from my notes will, I hope, provide a small glimpse into this unique educational project as it applies to children 0-3years.



Reggio Emilia, Italy

The early childhood programs of Reggio Emilia are a 'pedagogical experiment' that has involved the whole community over 40 years. A system of systems and interconnections embedded within the municipality – every part of the system contributes and everyone is a player – children, parents and educators.

In Reggio, children are valued as citizens of the community. The image of the child is one with enormous potential and rights. Their education is promoted through the development of all of their languages: expressive, communicative, symbolic, cognitive, ethical, metaphorical, logical, imaginative and relational.

Here, the educators have dared to think about children as having a scientific way of thinking – a child that perseveres and tenaciously realizes their ideas - the child as a competent human being. For children every day is new and surprising. By their nature they are unknown beings.



A place of peace



The whole 'nido' is open to the children

The nido (nest)

The magic of the 'nido' is inherent in the desire to build spaces for children 0-3yrs as places of peace where children are educated in peace. To create 'small communities' – children, adults, families – all involved in the process of growth and research through everyday real work with children.

Space in the 'nido' is arranged to welcome adults and to support and sustain their expectations for their children. There is great importance in the relationship between children, teachers and families. The environment is suited to the people who inhabit it – a place of pleasure.

The whole 'nido' is open to the children. Children are allowed to take risks – to measure themselves. Adults support children to get to 'know' materials so the danger in the materials disappears. Adults work with families so they understand how the centre views children and the materials. All adults share in the education of children. Meetings with families are in groups.

Each 'nidi' has a central area - piazza (metaphorical of Italian Piazza) and small interior courtyards or winter gardens. Transparency is achieved through the use of glass to look out, connect people across spaces, break down isolation of the space and connect with the outside neighborhood.

The centre is a whole - a fabric of relationships woven together by educators who:

1. hold together the organisation of the day
2. construct a day that has a sense of evolution and development
3. work with uncertainty and improvisation.

At the same time they bring together a cohesive group of adults and children. Some things are planned that are concrete and practical e.g. the use of time, where the adults will be and the use of space. There is also a part of the day that is immaterial and can't be planned. Very small children have very sensitive relationships with the objects, materials and world around them. They enact the unexpected and to do so desire time – long/lengthy times.

Becoming a group every day

Each day is viewed through the child – their confidence and belonging - the importance of reciprocity and exchange and the power of early relationships. There is belief that children desire in their everyday lives to find structure and organisation that is reassuring for their wellbeing and pleasure.



Each day is viewed through the child



Nothing happens by chance

The children amplify and transform their relationships and construct the identity of the group – as they reach out to know and grow together. The adult creates the dynamic. Partnership between home and centre is embedded in the environment. The educators speak of a language of intuition in the relationship, knowing when to go slow, when to go quickly, when to be spontaneous – responding to children in the moment.

The environment does not preclude an opportunity from which children can choose. Adults require the ability to wait for relationships between children to evolve. They allow themselves to be guided by their intuitions and sensibilities and by the spontaneity in their actions.

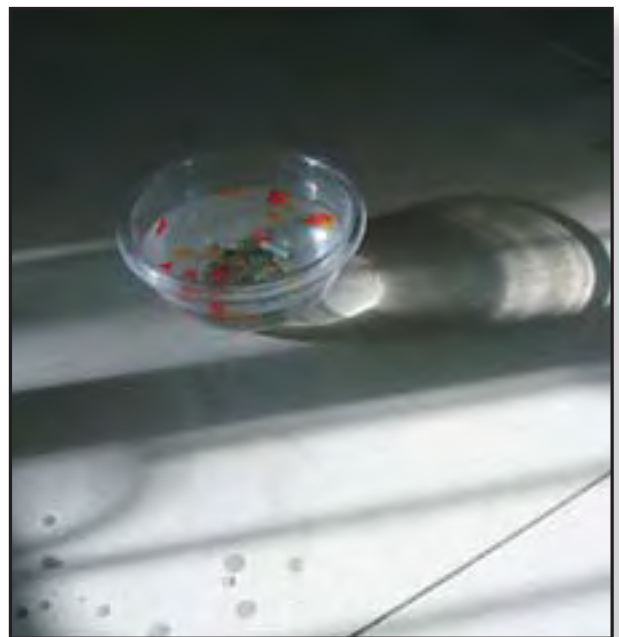
In Reggio adults predispose themselves to seeing, learning and capturing the possibilities offered by children.

The adults will have already imagined possibilities in the environment. They have worked together and have discussed what might happen. Nothing happens by chance, there is strict organisation. But not rigid structures or frameworks that are stronger than the child. The adult stands by the side of children and sometimes behind them.

In the adult's mind there is a great sense of intentionality that makes it possible to find the threads of meaning which each child will use to make sense of the relationships they are building at that moment.

The intention is that of constructing pathways of relations - to create situations which favour the possibility of forming relationships. Trying to imagine the best resource for that child at that moment – it could be a resource, another child or the educator themselves.

The children, in a harmonious way, come together. At this age it is believed the dyadic relationship is particularly favourable for their learning - making it possible for child to build self-esteem, combined with the desire to express themselves and communicate with others. To have links and bonds with others - to become, be and act as a group.



Uninteresting objects become interesting when used in relationship with other things

The tenacious quality of children's research into the world around them mirrored a way of working for adults.

A child who is capable of building hypotheses equals the qualities of the educator working by their side - an adult also capable of building hypotheses, producing many attempts and activating many possibilities.

Educators amplify the discoveries of children. They notice their curiosities – they notice what they notice. Teachers research together with children, always beginning with a question.

Uninteresting objects become interesting when used in relationship with other things. Teachers wear a 'lens' for seeing new opportunities. Adults work with the materials to see their potential and the possible ways children might use them. This helps them to see the unexpected ways in which materials can be transformed, used and presented.

Professional development belongs to the educational practice of the educator and is dependent on the curiosity of the individual. A diffused pedagogical system based on the principle of collegiality encourages educators to work in teams and listen to different points of view. They are part of a network of colleagues who make suggestions and provide constructive criticisms with the goal to find common shared values.

It is believed that a plurality of points of view leads to plurality of opportunity to better understand children.

Sometimes we invest in good things

In Reggio they dared to think differently about children and their education - and have found a way for education to have 'strategic value' – nationally and internationally.

Through 'Reggio Children' – International Centre for the Defense and Promotion of the Rights and Potential of all Children – the 'Reggio approach' is sustained and promoted through professional development, consultancy,



Attention to detail

seminars, study meetings in Italy and abroad and publication of books and audio-visual materials.

Their education is an experiment deeply rooted in the historical, social and cultural roots of the city of Reggio Emilia. Everywhere you see the culture of the wider community – the Art, the attention to detail, the dialogue, the relationships, the history, the light, color, serenity and the slow - the everyday of the life of the children, families and educators.

The educational project of Reggio Emilia reminds us that we must look forward to the future with a sense of possibility - to be capable of producing innovation ... and the ability to see beyond the horizon ...

You don't need to go to faraway places, just need to look at your own with different eyes.

Title: Noni the Pony

Author & Illustrator: Alison Lester

Published by: Allen & Unwin 2010

ISBN: 9781741758887

RRP: \$24.99

Reviewed by: Melindi Robertson (Director, C&K Mt Gravatt Kindergarten)

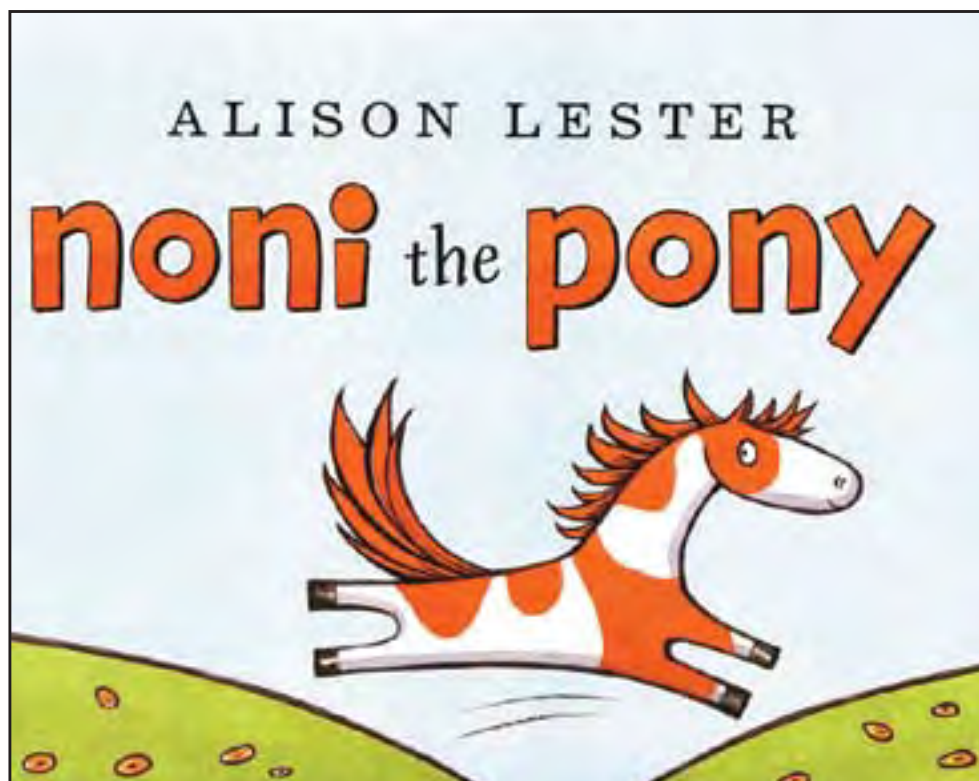
This picture book is appropriate for the 0-5 age range and would particularly appeal to 2-3 year old children. Noni the Pony is always a gentle and kind friend to Dave Dog and Coco the Cat, and this kindness is returned in full by her friends when she becomes scared of imaginary monsters in the trees.

The rhyming words in the text 'prancing and dancing, racing and chasing' (among others) reflect Noni's happy bounciness. The clear uncluttered illustrations complement the text and I like the use of a more vibrant colour plus white to highlight the characters against a more muted background. At times, one of the main characters will be separated from the others on double facing pages but they are always still strongly connected by their eyes.

My group of three-year-olds enjoyed the alliterative names of Coco the Cat and Dave Dog, with other comments being 'I think it's cool; I like Noni coz she helps her friends, she's really nice' – showing recognition of the pro-social message of this book. They were also quick to spot the three smiling monsters in the trees.

Different media have been used in the illustrations and they provided a stimulus to some children in our class to experiment using a combination of paints, crayon and painted paper collage in their artwork.

Alison Lester's childhood was spent with horses on a farm by the sea and these memories are reflected in this simple but engaging picture book. This book would be useful when encouraging social awareness and consideration of others' feelings at the beginning of the pre-Prep year.



Title: Making the Most of Reclaimed and Natural Materials

Authors: Linda Thornton & Pat Brunton

Photographs by: Linda Thornton & Pat Brunton

Published by: Featherstone Education/ A&C Black Publishers Ltd, London

ISBN: 9781906029777

RRP: \$49.99

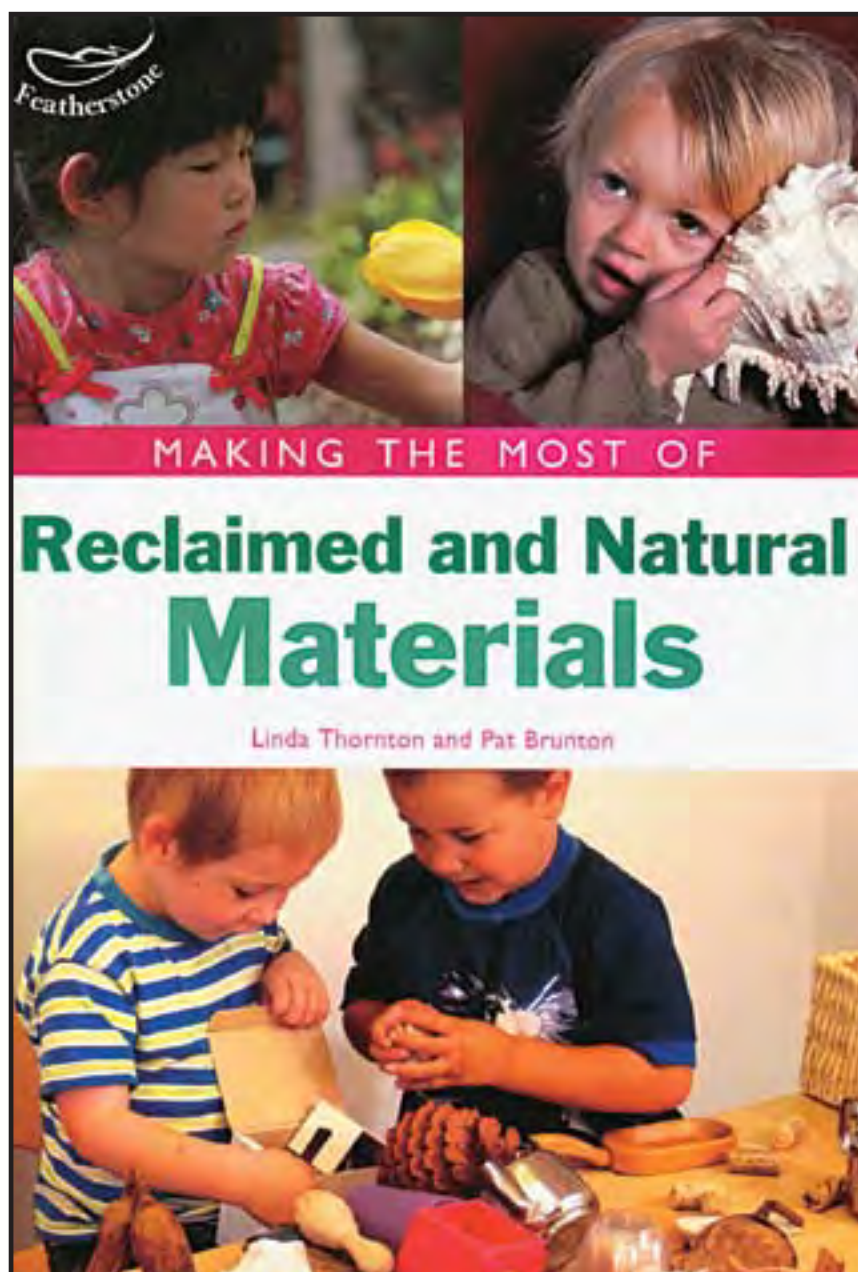
Reviewed by: Melindi Robertson (Director, C&K Mt Gravatt Kindergarten)

This book is a teacher's curriculum resource book aimed at any professional working in the early education and care field. While it is published in London and refers to the Early Years Foundation Stages (EYFS) in Britain, it can be 'translated' to the Australian context of EYLF.

The focus is on using recycled and natural materials with children and relates these to the six learning areas of EYFS. A variety of scenarios indicates the relevant linking principles and elements, describe the possible learning and development involved and make suggestions for starting points and further follow-up. The teacher's role is described as being one of thoughtful presentation of these materials, documentation of the learning involved and reflection on potential extensions.

The authors are strongly influenced by the work at Reggio Emilia and this is apparent in their many, beautiful, colour, supporting photographs.

It is hoped that many of us in Australia already incorporate reclaimed, recycled and natural materials in our teaching environments. Although books on a similar theme in an Australian context already exist, this book is useful for provoking extra ideas in our practice.



Title: How Frogmouth Found her Home

Author: Ambelin Kwaymullina

Illustrator: Ambelin Kwaymullina

Published by: Fremantle Press

ISBN: 978 1921 696 015 (hard cover)

978 1921 696 45 9 (eBook)

RRP: \$24.95

Reviewed by: Sandra Taylor, Pelican's Nest Early Learning Centre, Caloundra

Ambelin Kwaymullina is the daughter of acclaimed author and artist Sally Morgan and hails from the Bailgu and Njamal peoples of the Pilbara region of Western Australia. Ambelin has followed in her mother's creative footsteps and has created several of her own beautifully told and illustrated tales including *The Two-Hearted Numbat*, *Crow and the Waterhole* and *Caterpillar and Butterfly* (which was reviewed by Amy Lanchester in *Educating Young Children*, Vol 16 (2) 2010).

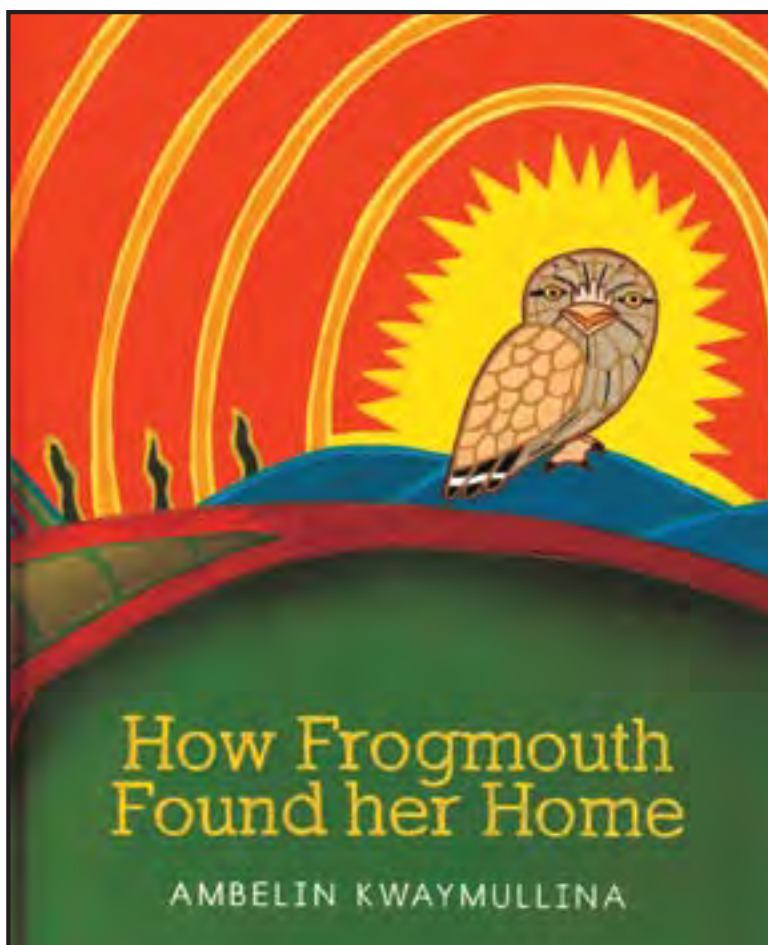
The story follows Frogmouth as she decides to find an alternative to living in the trees as she was told to do. On her journey she encounters a number of native Australian wildlife and samples their lifestyles, helping them to understand their needs as she struggles to work out her own. Eventually she discovers her purpose as guardian of the animals during the night-time and finds her home as moon's companion, becoming 'the first star'.

I think this book is best suited to the 3 – 7 age group. The younger children will appreciate the humour as Frogmouth tries to live like the other animals and the simple, bright illustrations will hold

their interest. The older children will appreciate the many themes the book deals with, including kindness and compassion towards others, individual self-esteem as we find our place in the world, and perseverance and resilience in the face of adversity. I believe it would serve as an excellent catalyst for discussion and inspire many cross-curricula experiences.

The pictures are bright and engaging, created in gouache using vibrant purples, blues and greens combined with the earthy tones of ochre and chocolate. This 'old versus new' approach is evident also in the pictorial style with the smooth, stylised animal shapes highlighted by traditional repetitive patterns and lines. For older children this would make an excellent study in modern indigenous art as it moves away from the traditional stereotypes and provides inspiration for discussion and experimentation with different styles.

For more information see www.fremantlepress.com.au



Title: Watch it Grow series: A Bean's Life, An Apple's Life, A Bee's Life, A Frog's Life, A Butterfly's Life

Author: Nancy Dickmann
Illustrator: Varied stock photographs
Publisher: Raintree (UK)
ISBN: 978 0 431 19533 9 (Frog)
978 0 431 19538 4 (Bean)
978 0 431 19539 1 (Apple)
978 0 431 19535 3 (Butterfly)
978 0 431 19536 0 (Bee)
RRP: \$18.95 (each)
Reviewed by: Sandra Taylor (Pelican's Nest Early Learning Centre, Caloundra)

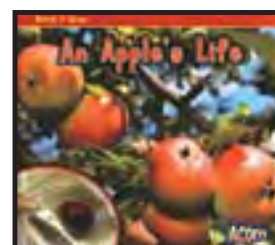
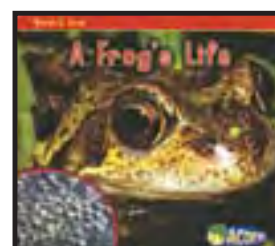
The Acorn: Watch it Grow series by Nancy Dickmann consists of five hard-cover titles detailing the life cycle of a bean, frog, butterfly, bee and apple. There are five additional titles available to complete the set. Their emphasis is upon the natural cycle of life for these different plant and animal species. The titles all have a similar, predictable format with repetitive text which serves to further reinforce the similarities all living plants and animals have with one another, in so far as their basic needs to survive and reproduce.

The text is bold and uncomplicated and introduces some factual terms and concepts without being overwhelming to the young reader. The books are an excellent introduction to the non-fiction genre with brief chapters, a contents page, glossary, bold page numbers, informative photographic images and clearly labelled illustrations. The photographs support the text extremely well, giving the reader a unique visual as well as matching the information provided. Though not originating from Australia, the photographs are relatively generic and the themes are still relevant to Australian children. The photographs give the children an honest and unique view of the subject and stimulate further discussion.

The books are aimed at the 5 - 7 age group but are suitable to be shared with the younger reader as well, due to the attractive format and the simple topics dealt with. The books are an excellent way to answer some of those tricky questions that our young friends have and I believe adults will enjoy the experience of sharing these books just as much as the children.

Though a relatively new series (2010), I found it easy to locate the titles online on a number of international and Australian websites including angusrobertson.com.au, emporiumbooks.com.au and boomerangbooks.com.au.

A most impressive series of books.



Guidelines for writers

The EYC editorial panel 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 EYC '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).
- Advertorial should not be included.

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 20 Hilton Road, Gympie, Qld. 4570. 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.

