



Educating Young Children

Learning and teaching in the
early childhood years

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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 to our second full colour edition of *Educating Young Children for 2011*.

Our membership numbers continue to grow with 820 members from all sectors within early childhood education and care currently registered with ECTA.

Members work in various roles such as family daycare/home care providers and coordinators, long day care assistants, group leaders and providers, approved kindergarten assistants and teachers, prep and lower primary assistants and teachers, along with tertiary educators, students and those with an interest in early childhood.

On behalf of all ECTA members I would like to congratulate my Conference Committee colleagues on the success of our 36th ECTA Annual Conference. This year the usually heavy workload was compounded by the need to seek out a new venue. This delayed work on the website, brochure and general planning but the committee, as always, pulled together and excelled in the planning and delivery of this year's conference. We have had extremely positive feedback on the new venue and the conference overall. ECTA was very pleased to note that this year, 85% of conference delegates were ECTA Members (Individual, Student, Concessional or Organisational member staff).

Thank you to those who took the time to respond to the evaluation online after the conference. Congratulations to ECTA member Christine Foster from Goomeri State School who won a complimentary 2012 conference registration for submitting her evaluation form online. It is very pleasing for the Conference Committee, who work so hard throughout the year, and are already planning next year's conference, to read such glowing reviews.

Each evaluation form is read by all on the Conference Committee and used as a valuable tool to work towards improving this professional development experience for delegates.

Once again delegates who signed in for each of their registered workshops, received their certificate automatically via email in the week following the conference. Please make sure that you pay your ECTA membership fee well before the end of February next year and keep ECTA informed of changes to your email address to receive the special 'members only' email to register for the conference in early March next year. Only those who have paid their membership before the end of February will be able to register online three weeks before registration opens to the public. *Next year as paper copies of brochures will not be created we will post all information on the ECTA Conference website and keep you informed via email.*

This year, ECTA sponsored five individual ECTA members living in regional and remote areas to attend the conference. Sponsorship included up to \$500 in travel and accommodation plus refund of the conference registration fee. The lucky recipients were selected by remote status and information included on their application forms. Individual members sponsored this year were Bev Gwynne (Mossman), Liz Smith (Weipa), Angela Bulmer (Gordonvale), Rebecca Zigterman (Dirranbandi) and Kerri Groves (Rockhampton half sponsorship). All sponsored delegates were eager to spread the word about the benefits of applying for sponsorship in their local areas. They have each pledged to share knowledge gained at the conference to other early childhood educators within their work place and/or local area.

I would like to thank the Open Learning Institute for their continued support and sponsorship of the Videolinq network, enabling ECTA to provide high quality speakers to our members regardless of where they are geographically. Please remember to log into the members only secure area of our website to view streamed recordings of all videolinqs since May 2009. The secure area is also full of conference and other relevant PD materials. As videolinqs are limited to 14 sites, ECTA Groups are given priority. Logan has been added to our videolinq sites this year as they now have an ECTA Group in the area.

ECTA once again sponsored two office bearers from each ECTA group to attend the conference. Sponsorship included conference registration and accommodation and a travel allowance. The new Townsville ECTA Group office bearers are already looking to book flights for next year's conference which will be held on Saturday 23 June 2012 at Sheldon Conference and Entertainment Centre, Taylor Road, Sheldon.

ECTA Group Office Bearers and ECTA Committee Members enjoyed a meal together on the Friday night before this year's conference.

ECTA has become increasingly concerned about reports from our members of directives to use inappropriate pedagogies in our Prep classrooms. In turn, this is resulting in the reduction of time Prep children are involved in active enquiry based learning and initiating and undertaking investigations around topics of their own interest. We are very concerned that in some Prep classrooms children are given little or no opportunity to engage in play in all its forms. This 'raising of the bar' has also begun to affect the pedagogies used in kindergarten and childcare services.

Education Queensland and Queensland Studies Authority both strongly support the continued use of the *Early Years Curriculum Guideline* and the philosophies and pedagogies it is based on. They continue to stress play in all its forms as an important context for learning in the early years, especially in the prep school year. We believe this change is a result of pressures placed on school administrators to increase Naplan scores in conjunction with a focus on academic outcomes. We also believe that the narrow content focus and higher expectations of the Australian Curriculum result in a move

away from holistic approaches to teaching and learning. Alongside this content focus is a misunderstanding at a school level of what 'play' looks like in a Prep classroom and a lack of understanding of the many benefits of play in all its forms. The Commonwealth and Queensland State Government have both acknowledged the importance of attendance in an approved kindergarten program prior to school. An approved kindergarten program is delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher using an approved curriculum. The Prep trials clearly showed children who attended a kindergarten program prior to prep had better outcomes in their Prep year. This data has led to increased funding for the establishment of extra kindergarten services across our state through the Queensland Government's Flying Start strategy and funding for a range of approved kindergarten program providers including long day care services as part of the Australian Government's universal access strategy. The acknowledgement that qualified early childhood teachers are key to better outcomes in the early years has also led to the Australian Government changing regulations for childcare centres to



Child Care Connect
early childhood information directory

www.childcareconnection.com.au

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

- ✓ Build your Centre an Online Profile
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include early childhood trained teachers as educational leaders.

ECTA is concerned about reports from members that in many regional towns across Queensland access to and participation in approved kindergarten programs is far below the state average of 32% of Prep children. There remain a significant number of children who haven't or can't attend an approved kindergarten program prior to enrolling in Prep. Many members report they have percentages as low as 0% and many with below 2%. Percentages are improving, but it is expected that these pockets of low availability and access to approved kindergarten programs will continue for many years. ECTA believes these ratios MUST be taken into consideration when developing curriculum for Prep classrooms. It is vital that the foundations of learning are established for all children before more formal learning is introduced. The Australian Curriculum outlines content but we MUST hold strong to our early childhood philosophy and find pedagogy that maintains this philosophy whilst meeting required outcomes. Let's maintain our integrity as early childhood educators!

For those working in Prep classrooms, I encourage you to find out what percentage of children in your class have attended an approved kindergarten program then make sure these children are provided opportunities and time to develop the foundations of learning before introducing more formal concepts of reading, writing, maths etc. Use the data from your classroom to 'justify an emphasis on flexible learning environments, which allow children to use all five senses to construct deep



Pictured are Michelle Watson (Cooloolo), Margaret Thwaite (Cairns), Marion Sillett (Cooloolo), Deb Hancock (Gladstone), Lisa Cooper (ECTA Treasurer), Kim Walters (ECTA President), Lynne Ireland (Cairns), Liz Fallon (Gladstone), Leonie Mitchell (Hervey Bay), Libby Gaedtke (ECTA Groups Coordinator) and Romayne Boniface (Hervey Bay).

understandings through their sensory pathways. Emphasize the importance of active enquiry based learning when showing planning to administrators and families. Highlight the many and varied opportunities provided for child and teacher initiated learning, with opportunities for choice and solving of own problems etc. Children need time to question, investigate, solve problems and develop relationships. By solving problems through active learning experiences including play children drive the development of multiple sensing pathways in the brain. Brain development in the early years sets the patterns for behaviour learning as well as physical and mental health later on.' adapted from the *Early Phase of Learning Poster set from DETA* <http://www.quebeacss.eq.edu.au/EarlyPhaseOfLearning.pdf>

ECTA philosophy states

We believe:

- in the importance of active, enquiry based learning nurtured through early childhood teaching pedagogy
- that children learn best when children and adults share responsibility for learning and decision-making
- in a commitment to early childhood learning environments reflecting the rights of children and families to be active participants in the learning process
- that teaching and learning should be characterised by opportunities for children to engage in play in all its forms. This includes children initiating and undertaking investigations around topics of their own interest
- that diverse social, cultural and learning needs of all children should be respected.

We believe the best way to encourage appropriate pedagogies in the early years is by advocating and educating parents, teachers, principals and school leaders in the benefits of active enquiry based learning, play being one of its main forms in the early years.

To this end we held a strategic planning day on 23 July where we gathered suggestions from members and Committee to promote appropriate practice. I encourage all ECTA members to send suggestions to ECTA about how we can best achieve our goals.

Kim



From the editorial panel

Lynne Moore

We have a bumper edition of *Educating Young Children* in store for you. Thanks to an inspiring keynote address and a lively collection of master class and workshop presentations from the ECTA conference, this issue sparkles. We begin with a colourful photographic record of this extraordinary professional development experience. For those unable to attend we hope it captures some of the highlights.

With each issue of *Educating Young Children* we are humbled by the remarkable educators who on a daily basis provide the highest quality education and care for Queensland's children.

In this issue we interview Sharon Boyce, recipient of the 2008 Human Rights Award for Individuals for work in disability and diversity awareness. Using an electric wheelchair for much of the past thirty years, readers will be inspired by Sharon's passion for 'real' inclusive teaching practices in our schools and centres.

Being a culturally competent educator is something Will Jones, C&K's Curriculum Early Childhood Advisor in the Cape Gulf and Far North Queensland, knows a lot about. In this edition's 'conversation' Will reminds us of the critical importance culture plays in developing children's sense of belonging, being and becoming.

In 'environments' we continue our focus on sustainable practices with a visit to C&K QUT Kelvin Grove Child Care Centre where Annabel Park and her 'green thumbs' have been implementing a recycling and worm scrap program through the free educational programs on offer at Brisbane City Council.

In 'partnerships' the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care provide an update on the

National Quality Framework and Libby Gaedtke catches up with our newest ECTA regional group.

We are extremely proud to reproduce for you Julie Gale's highly entertaining keynote address. Julie's forthright presentation will raise your awareness about the sexualisation of young children and the 'shrinking of childhood'. We hope it will challenge you to take a stance, 'speak out' and create change.

From Finnish psychiatrist and author Ben Furman we are pleased to introduce Kids' Skills - a solution focused approach to managing children's behaviour. In this thought-provoking article Ben describes one approach for working with children and their families in a respectful, cooperative, and creative way.

In 'digging deeper' Anne Grant, Kathy Eichman and Jenni Muche present a deeply honest and personal account that will have you trying new things, reflecting and opening a dialogue with your fellow educators and community. Kathryn Yarrow and Sharmila Nezovic will tantalise you with their approaches to music and movement. While Melinda Miller's article about embedding Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum, is a timely reminder of this crucial professional obligation.

Our last feature, from Anne Pearson, documents one teacher's personal journey to embrace the National Curriculum without compromise to pedagogically sound practice. In such times of change a challenge we cannot lose sight of.

Finally, Mathilda and our fabulous team of reviewers bring a wonderful selection of new fiction and non-fiction resources for children and educators. Please enjoy ...

ECTA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Lisa Cooper and Kim Walters

The 36th Early Childhood Teachers' Association (ECTA) Annual Conference was held on Saturday 25 June, 2011 at our new venue (Sheldon College) in Brisbane. The Conference was well attended by over 550 delegates from Southern, Central and Northern Queensland and Interstate.

Great feedback was received such as the following from delegate Ashleigh Cuthbert 'The venue was lovely! The food was divine and the stalls were set out with easy access to and from ... plus LOTS OF FREEBEES! Very nice and useful. Overall, the day was FANTASTIC!'

The ECTA Conference Committee worked tirelessly over the past twelve months to provide a professional development opportunity which was informative, practical and enriching. Many delegates gave thanks to the hard work of the ECTA Conference Committee. Tracey Town noted in her feedback 'Well done to all those hard working people involved in such a huge task of organising such a great event'.

Thanks for a job well done.



Kim Walters (ECTA President) welcomes delegates to the 36th Annual ECTA Conference.



ECTA delegates look forward to a day of professional development as they listen to Kim Walters (ECTA President) open the days events.



Mel Peace, representing platinum conference sponsor MTA (Modern Teaching Aids), outlined the extensive range in the MTA catalogues for delegates before introducing Julie Gale the Keynote speaker.



Robbie Leikvold from the Conference Committee presented Julie with a gift basket in appreciation for her presentation.



Julie Gale's keynote address 'The Sexualisation of Young Children and Teens' was extremely thought provoking. It opened ones eyes to what the children we are teaching are possibly being exposed to. The outfit she wore throughout the presentation supported the message she was giving. Julie inspired us all to take action and fight against this very disturbing trend.

Sponsorship provided businesses with an opportunity to share up to date resources and to support, at varying levels, professional development for early childhood professionals.

Delegates enjoyed shopping at the vast array of the trade displays on arrival and during morning tea and lunch.



MTA (Modern Teaching Aids), ECTA conference Platinum Sponsor, Scott Young sharing resources in a catalogue with delegates.



Flower and Hart Lawyers, ECTA conference Gold Sponsor, Melody Martin, Tracey Jessie and Elizabeth Manwaring at their stand ready to talk with delegates.



Hart Sport, conference Supporting Sponsor, Xavier Levy displaying resources for delegates.



JJ Stranan of Global Oz Kids, conference Supporting Sponsor, enjoyed showcasing her multicultural mats.



Delegates wander around the trade displays during lunch break.



The catering provided by Sheldon College offered delegates a delicious 'home baked style' morning tea and hot buffet lunch. The comforts of the air conditioned facilities were appreciated by delegates.



Lisa Singleton, Leanne Sandhu, Julie Thomas, Dianne Kay, Nicole Leonti and Heidi Hansen enjoyed the wonderful catering.



Sandy McLay and Suzanne Purcell chat together while enjoying the delicious morning tea.

Teacher Stories

Delegates were able to choose two workshop/master class presentations to attend from the 24 offered. Workshops are practical and relevant.



Beth Hansen and Dale Brennan explore the digital story book.



Allison Borland and Lynda Rifai's workshop "How can digital tools value add to what I already do in the classroom" showcased a wide variety of digital tools to enhance learning. Julie Thomas and Gaylyn Goodall explore learning by using the digital microscope.



Felicity Day's workshop "Circle Time For Social Emotional Learning" – **Feedback from delegate Debra Skuthorp** 'Excellent - practical and very well presented with active participation – can't wait to implement the ideas.'

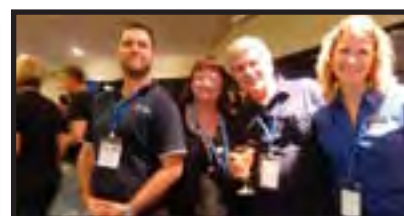
Feedback from this session – delegate Kerry Martyn commented - 'Excellent. Very hands on and practical. Experienced using things I have never seen before.'



Sue Southey (ECTA Vice President – Logan ECTA Group Coordinator) enjoyed a morning tea chat with Rebecca Trimble-Roles (Conference Committee Secretary).



Each year traders generously donate prizes for the wine and cheese. Douglas Fussell (from the Book Garden) who retires this year after 46 years in the industry assists Conference Committee members Kerri Smith, Bev Egan and Chris Cook with the drawing of the prizes.



MTA (Modern Teaching Aids), ECTA conference Platinum Sponsors, Scott Young, Alan Soper and Mel Peace relax at the wine and cheese with ECTA President Kim Walters.



Gympie early childhood educators Hannah Millard, Michelle Watson, Rachel Alexander, Kim Walters, Marion Sillett and Joanne Stoddart celebrate the days success at the wine and cheese with Helen Wilkie (Tai Chi workshop presenter) and Kerri Groves (Rockhampton sponsored delegate),



Sue Southey (ECTA Vice President) networks with committee members of the newly formed Logan Regional Group.



(in the background) Kim Walters (ECTA President) catches up with Joanne Stoddart at the ECTA stand, while Lisa Cooper (ECTA Treasurer) attends to a delegate completing a membership form.



Melindi Robertson and Ashwini Shenoy take a moment to network at the conference.



Sponsored Regional Officer Bearers from Cairns (Margaret Thwaite and Lynne Ireland) discuss the conference with Helen Beaumont (chair of the Bayside Brisbane ECTA Group) and Kim Walters (ECTA President)



Delegates who are separated by long distances enjoy the chance to network with like minded professionals. Liz Smith (from Weipa) reflects on the conference with Lisa Cooper the morning after (ECTA Treasurer)



Creating and exploring practical solutions for equity and inclusion in the early years

An interview with Sharon Boyce

Sharon Boyce works part-time in early childhood teacher education at the University of Southern Queensland and with students across Toowoomba and the Darling Downs who have learning difficulties. Sharon is also doing her PHD exploring inclusion at UQ. Together with Dr Michael Furtado, Sharon runs an educational consultancy *Discovering DisAbility & Diversity*, which has as its major focus the promotion of inclusive practices. Sharon has lived in Toowoomba, Southern Queensland, all of her life. She lives most of her life in an electric wheelchair, as she contracted Rheumatoid Arthritis when she was eleven years old. She has used the wheelchair for the past thirty years. Sharon has not allowed her disability to stop her from doing what she wants. She works on a radio show reviewing movies and loves swimming at least twice a week. She loves painting and exhibiting her acrylic abstracts and is a curated artist. She has written and published an educational resource folder called *Another Day in the Life of Sharon Boyce – A person with a physical disability*, a children's adventure story, *Discovery at Paradise Island*, dealing with physical disability in the family, and has just released it as an audio book for people with vision issues. She won the Queensland Disability Action Week Award in 2003 for this and her work with children. Sharon also won the 2008 Human Rights award for Individuals for her work with community in disability and diversity awareness. EYC talks to Sharon about practical solutions for equity and inclusion in the early years.

Can you tell us about the Discovering DisAbility and Diversity early childhood professional development program?

The Discovering DisAbility and Diversity program is designed especially for early childhood educators who work in schools or in the childcare industry. The focus of the program is to create an awareness of inclusion and to celebrate diversity. It also aims to equip educators with practical solutions they can use in their schools and centres every day. It is about having fun, learning about disability and exploring strategies that can bring out the best possibilities for all children. It is a mobile program. We bring the program to your school in your region. This makes it more personal and real.

The program is based on each participant's personal experience and their perceptions and reactions to the activities that are explored in the session. It is not about being told how you should react. It is about personal change through real understanding. We are often told in words about what a disability is and how we need to plan for this in the classroom. However, often this is not particularly helpful and we are left feeling helpless. What this awareness

program does is simulate what the disability is through a series of activities. Participants can feel the struggle and then create solutions that help support an inclusive classroom environment.

What makes the program so unique?

The program is entirely unique in its approach, as it takes the participants on a journey of experience and self-reflection. It is entirely 'hands on' and experiential. In other words, we simulate a wide variety of key disability areas. The participants get to feel what it is like to have Autistic Spectrum Disorder or Asperger's Syndrome. We ask participants to attempt challenges while experiencing a variety of vision, hearing, perceptual, reading and speech language issues. We have about ten key physical and hidden disabilities that participants are exposed to in each session.

We have heard about the Autism challenge. Can you tell us what it involves?

The Autism challenge is one of our most life-altering activities. It creates an experience of an overload to all of a person's senses. Every sound from a regular classroom is amplified and fed

through loud headphones. Participants wear large awkward gloves that make manipulation of small counters on a game board almost impossible. The participants have to wear coloured glasses that alter their visual senses and we also expose the group to some overpowering smells. Within these constraints the group then has to play a game with altered instructions also being fed through their headphones. After this experience participants consider how they felt and reacted to the experience. Through this process they reflect on their pedagogy and curriculum to create a more inclusive environment for a child or children with Autism. Reactions to this process are the basis for vigorous and life-changing discussions. I've had school principals throw the headphones on the ground and walk or even run away saying 'I don't know how children survive in our school'. The actual process is long-term and requires a genuine desire for self-awareness and personal change to support children and promote early intervention practices.

Can you tell us why you set up the program?

I wanted people to see behind the disability and discover the real person. As a person who was not born with a disability, but as someone who contracted Juvenile Chronic Arthritis at age twelve and is now entirely confined to an electric wheelchair, I could see how we needed knowledge to create change and break down barriers. The early years are critical in shaping a child's future actions and I believe this is where we need to start the process of education.

We look at exploring and understanding the way children learn. We have discussions around practical issues relating to the Early Years Learning Framework and Early Years Curriculum Guidelines to create practical solutions and look at adjustments that can be made to run an effective early years curriculum. The program is about linking disability and diversity issues and early childhood policy across the spectrum of life.

What do participants gain from the program?

The program breaks down barriers and creates awareness and inclusive communities. It was developed so that the fear and lack of understanding about disability could be overcome. By celebrating the gifts that the

young children bring to their communities we see children who are different rather than the focus being on deficiency.

Discovering DisAbility and Diversity aims to help create educators who have a real understanding of how and why children operate the way they do. Participants experience the key disability areas that can impact on their everyday lives. It is about building partnerships and teams with peers and parents and experts and specialists who can help with support and knowledge-sharing. It is about establishing flexible learning environments and creating contexts for learning and development.

You also run specific early childhood awareness sessions for children aged 3-6?

Yes - these sessions expose children to disability and difference and challenge them to use a variety of different tools to explore their lives. We get children to try using and manoeuvring small manual wheelchairs in their own setting. They try one-handed fishing with magnetic fish. We also encourage them to try doing everyday tasks, like opening their lunchbox, with the other hand. We get the children to participate in some blindfolded simulations and encourage them to try using a white cane. The children's reactions to the experiences and my own disability never cease to amaze me and the level of sharing and questions often challenge me more than the sessions with adults. Children are real and unaffected and in most cases are already living the principles of real inclusion.

Can we learn from children?

I believe we could learn to break down barriers even better if we followed children's examples and just asked real questions with the intent to learn. Children have no hidden agenda. They just want to know how it is and why!!! As adults we are sometimes too scared to ask. We are worried we may offend someone or ask something that is deemed inappropriate or politically incorrect. This can often create more problems than we realise. As educators we need to create conversations and encourage real discussion of inclusive practices to support the development of real inclusive teaching practices in our schools and centres.

If you are interested in finding out more about Sharon's story or to book a program for your staff or students you can check out the website at www.discoveringdisability.com.au or email boyces@usq.edu.au or phone her on 0417 708 945.

Queensland's all abilities playgrounds — enabling participation in play

Karen Staal

All abilities playgrounds are now opening across Queensland, enabling children with and without a disability to enjoy fun and challenging play together, side-by-side.

The new play spaces are being created by local governments in collaboration with the Department of Communities, local communities and industry specialists, as part of the *Queensland All Abilities Playground Project – enabling participation in play*.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that all children, including those with a disability, have equal access to playgrounds so they can learn, grow and develop during play.

The government's Queensland All Abilities Playground Project — enabling participation in play — recognises the pivotal role that play has in the lives of young Queenslanders.

All abilities playgrounds are places where children of all ages and abilities can experience fun and challenging play alongside their friends and family members.

These recreational spaces use a range of natural and built environments to encourage different types of play, such as active, exploratory and



Places for children of all ages and abilities.

social play, and apply innovative approaches in design to break down barriers for children with a disability.

All abilities playgrounds are now open at Broadbeach, Edmonton, Landsborough, Mackay, Mossman, Mount Isa, Normanton, Pinalba, Texas, Thuringowa and Yeppoon, with playgrounds at Ayr, Blackwater, Capalaba, New Mapoon, Gympie and Logan Central set to open soon.

For further information, including profiles on each of the playgrounds, visit www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability



Fun and challenging play.

Being culturally competent

The *Early Years Learning Framework* reminds us that cultural competence in early childhood settings is important if we are to make a difference in the lives of children and families. It is the intent of the Framework that we all strengthen our cultural competence. At the heart of cultural competence is the ability to interact respectfully, constructively and positively with children, families, staff and community. This includes educators recognising and promoting the critical importance culture plays in developing children's sense of belonging, being and becoming. (*Educators Guide to the Early Years Learning Framework, 2010, 21*)

Will Jones, C&K's Curriculum Early Childhood Advisor in the Cape Gulf and Far North Queensland, reflects on the meaning of being a culturally competent educator.

We show we value diverse cultures when we ...

Have in our environments the imagery of 'family' and of our 'belonging', our 'being' and our 'becoming'.

From the first day of term we begin preparing our environment to share our belonging with and alongside children and their families ... this includes room/'class' photo albums with pictures of our children and all our staff [including the cooks, the housekeepers, the cleaners, the groundskeepers etc.] as well as the Committee or Parent Advisory Group. Each family photo page may have anecdotes of our 'Being' and 'Belonging' as a family; our celebrations and rituals; our holidays; our daily routines and our memories of times together that grow over the year.

From this immediate imagery, comes imagery through multicultural resources in our rooms and 'classes'. This is not to be tokenistic. Whether or not we have a multicultural context, it is legitimate to bring the world beyond into the 'being' of the children's current world, thereby growing their general knowledge about the world to which they 'belong' and of which they are global citizens in the 21st century.

Educators who are culturally competent respect multiple cultural ways of knowing, seeing and living, celebrate the benefits of diversity and have an ability to understand and honour differences.

Early Years Learning Framework, 2009, 16.

Family photos in frames around the room together with posters and books strategically placed with ambience and authenticity are a

statement that we all belong and all have a place ... we are all valued in our unique way.

Celebrating events and rituals that are important to the diverse ethnic groups we may have represented in our room, not only values them but supports all children's ways of knowing and being.

Imagery of our First Nation People (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples) is especially important in our 'class' family's 'Being'. Again, this is not tokenistic, but rather acknowledging that we are part of one Nation, made from many diverse cultures, each joining our wider 'Australian' 'Belonging'. This imagery reflects both traditional and contemporary posters, puzzles and artwork.

We build each child's cultural identity by ...

From the first day, we acknowledge the child's parents and family as their child's 'first and life-long teachers'. This is a truism no matter what the child's faith or ethnicity. 'Culture', in this sense of identity, does not preclude children and families from 'western' or non-Indigenous society and family. Every family across the world and within our community has its own 'cultural' identity in terms of beliefs and values; family ties and family rituals and celebrations; the way family members enjoy and make time and space to be together; and the way parents have a vision and aspirations for their children and the next generations.

Therefore, in building a child's cultural identity, we need, as parents before birth and as teachers from the time they come to us, to build and sustain 'Belonging' through real and abiding love, peace, affection, joy and health.

In real terms this is as simple as the way we genuinely acknowledge the child and their family on arrival every single day. It is in the way we greet and engage in genuine and reciprocal conversation (even if it is with body language and gesture for those children and families who are not fluent in English). It is how we take the time to farewell each child and their family every day, with more than just 'Goodbye' but a genuine connecting before the day is over.

In this way, cross culturally, we have as teaching teams established a ritual, a routine that demonstrates the value of everyone in our Nursery/Toddler/Kindy/Pre Prep 'Family'.

In a play-filled learning environment supporting cultural diversity you would see ...

Each child's 'Belonging' evident in the imagery in the environment, and valued through photos, the child's voice in documentation and posters and books that relate to the diverse range of children in the room.

Multicultural resources move from being 'tokenistic' and one dimensional and become real avenues for exploring the world for children only when children have the opportunity through play, conversation, discussion and active research [which may involve technology] to unpack them with respect to the intent of the artist; or the history of the artifacts.

Crucially, as part of 'Belonging', whether or not Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are identified in our service, each centre needs to acknowledge our First Nation Peoples. Both traditional and contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander society can be explored, as can any other culture, through unpacking our 'traditional ways of knowing and being'.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander picture books, resources and artifacts are just as pertinent and relevant as any other cultural resources in our rooms. The Australian Aboriginal Traditional Language map may sit alongside our

contemporary Australian map and celebration of NAIDOC Week needs to be mandatory.

From this, children have a historical, pictorial image of Australians and where we have come to.

We build relationships with culturally diverse families when we ...

Genuinely value families as part of our Centre 'Belonging' through our daily communication both face-to-face and with and alongside the voice of their children. This may be the child's photos, or anecdotes or artifacts they have collected as part of their 'belonging' for the day or the week.

By building and sustaining relationships we find a universal language to communicate with families when they first arrive. We research and do our homework with respect to what needs and aspirations, routines and rituals and celebrations may be important to our families. However, in building relationships we do not make assumptions about our research. Rather, we genuinely engage with each family as unique to determine a common ground that will support their child's 'belonging, being and becoming' in our service.

A crucial element is the partnership between parents and families as their child's first and lifelong teachers – and ourselves in our professional role. It is by genuine and reciprocal dialogue and rich conversations that we come to understand who our families are; what they believe in [not religion but what they believe and value in early childhood education] and where they are going [their aspirations for their child]. In building this relationship we share also our own 'Belonging' both as people and as their child's teacher.

We are challenged/stimulated by ...

the words 'tokenism' and 'tokenistic' and the word 'cultural'. Sometimes it is hard to understand that 'culture' does not solely mean ethnicity or creed. Literature, drama, technology and the Arts are also part of our cultural belonging. Therefore, we may all enjoy the same types of movies and books, but be ethnically and culturally diverse.

What is pertinent to remember is that, if we do not value our children and respect our children as 'global citizens of the 21st Century', then we deny them an aspect of their 'belonging'.

Providing children with the opportunities to explore their world beyond their parochial present and social-cultural context, empowers them to develop qualities of respect, courage, empathy, compassion, resilience and integrity. It is being able to walk in the shoes of others, that we understand our own reality but are not limited by it.

An experience or moment I remember ...

A few years ago I was asked by a teaching colleague in the 'Remote' to come and photograph December break-up day Corroborree, which remains a tradition and rite of passage for the Kindergarten children who are transitioning on to Prep.

The little ones had practiced for weeks with their 'Uncle', a respected Elder who had been teaching these little ones dance for over 25 years. He was proud and strong just as the little ones were growing to be in the footsteps of their Elders.

Finally, the big day came. The whole Community was assembled.

The feast was ready; the traditional cake with all the children's names stood in the shade of the 'she-oaks'. The sigh of them could be heard in the waiting silence of the beginning.

Uncle began with the beat, the clap sticks and the ancient song, called the little ones into the present. Each one took their turn with the 'Shake a Leg', then the time came for the smallest to come forward. He had practiced so hard and was so excited, but now the crowd was huge and the excitement palpable. The little one froze. Uncle kept the rhythm going as he slowly moved towards the little one, not taking his eyes off the clap sticks and singing the deep song of belonging. He knelt before the little one and spoke softly, respectfully and knowingly.

'Courage my son for your grandfather and father are watching.' The little one moved towards Uncle following the heart of the rhythm and the spirit of the song.

Such joy, for himself and his family and his community as the little one's 'Shake a Leg' joined his brothers and his ancestors among the sigh of the 'she-oaks' in the country of his people.

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Incorporating sustainable practices in early childhood settings

Incorporating sustainability into learning promotes children's understanding about their responsibility to care for the environment. When embedded in daily routines and practices it fosters in children an appreciation of the natural environment, develops environmental awareness and provides a platform for ongoing environmental education. Education for sustainability supports children to become socially responsible and show respect for the environment. Through sustainable practices children learn to design and implement actions that can contribute to a more sustainable future. In this Issue of *Educating Young Children* we explore the sustainability programs on offer through Brisbane City Council through the eyes of C&K QUT Kelvin Grove Child Care Centre.

Did you know Brisbane City Council offers free interactive programs that aim to help young children learn more about reducing waste? The innovative *Rethink Your Rubbish Education Program* offers entertaining sessions on waste and resource management. Children learn how to reduce, reuse and recycle resources through



Mad about worms.

hands-on games and activities. The popular activities include the hands-on exploration of the worms and worm farm.

This free-of-charge waste education program is offered to kindergarten and school groups as part of Council's commitment to reduce waste.



Hands-on games and activities.

Sessions generally run for 30 to 45 minutes and are able to be adapted to the needs and interests of particular groups.

Sessions

The sessions offered include *It's NOT a load of rubbish*, *Mad about worms* and *Nude food*.



Interactive programs.

It's NOT a load of rubbish

is a general presentation about waste and the ways to minimise waste through reducing, reusing and recycling. It also includes an exploration of a working worm farm where children are given the opportunity to hold worms to examine more closely. As part of this session, and the *Mad about worms* session, kindergartens are eligible to receive a free worm farm from Council, which can be set up as part of the presentation.

Mad about worms focuses on organic waste and worm farms. Two friendly worm puppets called Dug and Chewie introduce children to the different parts of a worm's body and let them in on some interesting worm facts.

Nude food helps children learn more about lunch without waste and ways to create a healthy, rubbish-free lunch. Characters including Dimmy Witless, Daisy Flutterbudget and Gloria Green demonstrate in a fun way what should and should not go into a nude food lunchbox.

The *Rethink Your Rubbish Program* has already received a huge amount of positive feedback



Exploring worms.

from schools and kindergartens that have participated. Newly inspired recycling warriors, as some mothers have called them, are following up at home by encouraging their families to reduce and recycle their waste. These children are encouraging their parents to say 'no' to plastic bags, to pack rubbish-free lunches and to set up compost bins and worm farms in the backyard. This feedback clearly highlights the success of the program in promoting the waste minimisation message. Children understand the need to rethink and reduce their rubbish and are becoming the new ambassadors for positive waste behaviour change.

Schools and kindergartens are in a powerful position to lead by example and pass on learning to students' families, and because of this Brisbane City Council is happy to assist schools and kindergartens in developing waste management plans for their centres. As an added incentive, Brisbane City Council offers free recycling bins and collection for any Brisbane schools that have a waste management plan in place and already have an existing waste collection service with Council.



Ambassadors for positive change.

Other educational opportunities

Council has a Towards Zero Waste Education Centre

at the Rochedale landfill site which provides another great educational opportunity for schools. Students can watch first hand at just what does end up in our landfill, how much rubbish there is and how that rubbish is managed. Visits to the Education Centre are free and include a presentation on waste minimisation, followed by a tour of the landfill. Bookings are essential.



Recycling warriors.

Fast facts for teachers

The average Australian student throws away one to two pieces of rubbish at morning tea and two to three pieces of rubbish at lunch every day. Over the course of a week that means one class throws away more than 500 pieces of rubbish a week and if you extend that to the 350-odd schools in Brisbane that is more than 3,500,000 pieces of rubbish in a week, and that's just lunch waste.

Waste is not just a load of rubbish, it's a wonderful resource.

To have a session at your school

For more information contact your local Education Officer via 3403 8888 or email direct to cb-educationofficer@brisbane.qld.gov.au



More worms.



Green thumbs!

Annabel Park at C&K QUT Kelvin Grove Child Care Centre

In late February we were visited by Jean from the Brisbane City Council's 'Rethink your rubbish' program. Jean's presentation included information about rubbish and recycling, how to pack a rubbish-free lunch and a hands-on exploration of a worm farm. We learnt all about what worms look like, what they like to eat and how they produce 'worm juice', which is an excellent garden fertiliser. We were lucky enough to be able to keep our worm farm and have been collecting our fruit and vegetable scraps everyday to feed our worms. Our worms seem very happy in their farm and have produced lots of worm juice.

Our vegetable patch has been a bit neglected of late and the abundance of worm juice provided a perfect opportunity to rejuvenate it. We started by turning the soil and mixing through some worm juice. We then made a list of fruits and vegetables we wanted to grow and purchased some seeds and seedlings. We read the instructions together before taking turns planting and once we'd finished the children made signs for each type of plant. So far we are growing carrots, cauliflower, lettuce, celery, strawberries and beans and we are looking forward to harvesting them in the coming weeks and months.



Annabel and Lily tend the garden.

In addition to our worm farm and gardening project we have also started to recycle in our room. Many of the children were already aware of what items can and can't be recycled and have been very enthusiastic

about recycling their food and drink containers, paper and cardboard.

Learning outcomes/Links to the curriculum:

The 'Rethink your rubbish' program has provided a fantastic opportunity for the children to begin talking about the importance of looking after our environment. Through thinking about recycling and participating in the gardening process the children are learning to care for and show respect for the environment. They are using their senses to explore, discover, enjoy and reflect on the living world (*Building Waterfalls: Connecting* – we are connected to natural and built environments/ *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF): Learning Outcome 2: children are connected with and contribute to their world.)

Extending the learning:

We will continue to investigate strategies we can put in place to help protect our environment. We will continue our recycling and worm scrap program and maintain our vegetable patch. We hope that in a couple of months' time we will be able to harvest our vegetables. We will search through recipe books to find yummy ways to use our fruit and vegetables and cook up a feast to share with our friends!



Our new garden – an extension of the worm farm project.

National Quality Framework update

Office for Early Childhood Education and Care

Significant milestones have been reached in recent months as the early childhood education and care sector prepares for the introduction of the National Quality Framework (NQF) from 1 January 2012.

Long day care, family day care, outside school hours care and kindergarten services will be required to meet new qualification and staffing requirements and be assessed against a new National Quality Standard, aimed at improving the quality of education and care for children.

In March and April this year the Australian and Queensland Governments held a wide-ranging consultation on the draft Regulations for the NQF.

More than 1300 people across Queensland attended consultation sessions with hundreds of written responses received. These responses are currently being analysed and later in 2011 the final National Regulations will be released along with supporting guidelines for services.

Queensland is also preparing to adopt the National Law in spring 2011, for commencement on 1 January 2012. This follows host jurisdiction, Victoria, passing the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* last October, paving the way for states and territories to enact their own legislation to adopt the National Law.

35 Queensland services completed a trial of the NQF assessment and rating process and the assessment instrument, Quality Improvement



Quality early childhood education and care.



New qualification and staffing requirements.

Plan and Guide are now being refined in line with the feedback from both the trials and the national consultation sessions.

Additional work is being undertaken to ensure all relevant services transition into the NQF in a seamless fashion. This work is based on the following principles and advice will be given to services once the process has been finalised:

- existing licensed operators will automatically be taken to be Approved Providers.
- existing licensed services will automatically be taken to be Approved Services and will be granted a prescribed provisional rating until they are formally assessed and rated.
- persons who are the equivalent of Certified Supervisors will be taken to be Certified Supervisors from 1 January 2012 without having to undergo an additional fit and proper test.
- all service and provider approvals and supervisor certificates for the above will be issued by the Regulatory Authority by 30 June 2012.

The Australian Government is finalising a strategy to ensure the sector is prepared for the implementation of the NQF. In the interim, a resources page has been created on the Department of Education and Training's website to provide a central location for key information about the NQF. Visit <http://deta.qld.gov.au/earlychildhood/office/national/resources.html> for more information. The national fact sheets link includes further information about the approvals process mentioned above.



From the regions

Libby Gaedtke

Libby is the Prep teacher at Xavier Catholic College, Hervey Bay and co-ordinator of ECTA regional groups.

The joys of living in regional Queensland are many and varied. Many of us enjoy a beach lifestyle on the coast, others live inland and yet others are educators in more remote settings which also have their big pluses. Becoming part of these regional communities brings with it many wonderful opportunities, from invitations to dinner with families, being shown the countryside by the locals (I'll never forget my first invitation to lamb-docking out at Inglewood!) and the sharing of local produce.

One of the 'down sides' of living away from larger metropolitan cities can be a lack of collegial contact and professional development opportunities. Even within these larger city settings, access to networking opportunities is highly valued and much sought after. ECTA is highly supportive of facilitating groups around Queensland, to assist with providing support for those of us in the Early Childhood sector.

It is with great delight that ECTA welcomes the addition of our new ECTA Logan Group to our growing list of groups around the state! The following dialogue is a recent interview with Sue Southey, organizer and chairperson. Sue is co-director at Springwood Community Kindergarten, currently seconded to the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care.

Libby: So, Sue, what prompted you to start the ECTA Logan Group?

Sue: For many years a group of us in the Logan region have got together as part of the C&K network of kindergartens. However, many of these educators are now part of other organisations and we wanted a chance to keep our wonderful colleagues in touch with each other. An ECTA regional group seemed the ideal solution. It also gave us the chance

to invite other early childhood professionals in other sectors to join us. Some of us have been teaching in the area since the early 1980s, and know there are lots of great early childhood people out there doing good things. This allows us to hear about what they do; their successes and their challenges.

Libby: What was the first step you took to get this new group underway?

Sue: Word of mouth got us started, but ENews also put people in touch. We now have a list of more than thirty educators who are interested. Some people are already ECTA members but

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non-ECTA members are also very welcome. We just want to build a group of enthusiastic early childhood educators.

Libby: How have you found the response from local early years educators?

Sue: The response has been great! Last term we had our first meeting at John Paul College. Twenty four people turned up to hear Khim Chandler, a behavioural optometrist. It was exciting to have people there from all the different sectors: long day care, early primary, state and independent schools, kindergartens, staff from TAFE, very experienced educators and graduates! ECTA provides some funding for regional groups to help with professional development so we have plans to do more workshops and start a lending library. It is not all serious though. There is going to be lots of coffee and a few wines involved!

Libby: What are the advantages of formalizing your group through ECTA? For example,

ECTA provides professional, legal and financial support to Group Executives providing meetings, workshops and other forms of networking among local members.

Sue: To be able to access funding for PD is a big advantage. We can then provide quality professional development for our colleagues.

Libby: Finally, what are your goals as ECTA Logan Group?

Sue: To be a cohesive group that advocates for play-based learning, and quality early years education, across all sectors.

Sue can be contacted at sue@ecta.org.au, and of course information about ECTA Groups can be found at the ECTA website, www.ecta.org.au. If you are interested in finding out more about facilitating and setting up a Group in your area, please email me at libby@ecta.org.au for more information. It's also with great excitement that we welcome our new ECTA Townsville Group.



The ladies from the Logan Group at a breakfast planning meeting



Sexualisation of children and young teens

Julie Gale

Julie is the founder of Kids Free 2B Kids. She is also a comedy writer and performer and has performed her one woman shows at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Julie has been raising public, corporate and political awareness about the sexualisation of children since February 2007. She has generated great media interest about the issue and has appeared on television, radio and in newspaper articles throughout Australia and internationally. Julie's work instigated changes to the children's advertising codes and she also helped to instigate the 2008 senate inquiry into the sexualisation of children in the contemporary media environment. She received a 2009 National Leadership Achievement Award from the Centre for Leadership for Women, and is named in the 2011 Australian Who's Who of Women.

The release of the reports *Corporate Paedophilia* and *Letting Children be Children* by the Australia Institute in 2006, instigated nationwide discussions about the issue of sexualisation. In the early days there were some suggestions that the issue was a 'moral panic' but it is now recognised by child development professionals, and increasing research, and as an issue of mental health and wellbeing.

Sexualisation can be defined into two broad categories.

1. Direct Sexualisation – How children are portrayed or posed in advertising.
2. Indirect Sexualisation – What children are exposed to in their environment, including advertising intended for an adult audience.

The American Psychological Association taskforce on the sexualisation of girls (2007) defines it as:

A person's value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other characteristics. A person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness with being sexy. A person is sexually objectified - that is, made into a thing for others' sexual use, rather than seen as a person with the capacity for independent action and decision making.

Sexualisation has been linked to an increase in anxiety, depression, eating disorders, body image issues, lower academic performance, and sexual activity at earlier ages.

According to Dr Joe Tucci, CEO Australian Childhood Foundation, and Professor Chris Goddard, Director Child Abuse Research Australia, Monash University, the preponderance of sexualised messages is contributing to an increase in the number of children who are engaging in problem sexual behaviour with other children. The Australian Childhood Foundation has pioneered therapeutic programs for children as young as seven years old who engage in problem sexual behaviour with other children. (Staiger et al, 2005).

Whilst the problem behaviour of a significant proportion of these children can be traced back to histories of abuse, neglect and disruption, it is Tucci and Goddard's (2008) clinical experience that approximately 20% of this population of children have evolved this behaviour without prior experiences to trauma.

In these circumstances, a contributing factor to the genesis of problem sexual behaviour is the increasing volume of sexualised imagery and themes available in popular culture and accessible to children. Without access to explanatory

frameworks for understanding these themes, children can engage in behaviour which enables them to test often distorted beliefs about sexuality. In doing so, they harm other children and complicate their own developmental trajectories.

I started Kids Free 2B Kids in Feb 2007 because I had become increasingly concerned by what my kids were exposed to. It is one thing to 'turn off' the TV or to be mindful about what kids are exposed to in the home environment – but in the public arena, kids are literally bombarded with adult concepts of sex and sexuality (and increasingly violent imagery) without having the maturity to understand or unpack those messages. Children are being involuntarily exposed, and often it is before they have started to understand, or ask questions about their own naturally emerging sexuality. The advertising industry is self regulated. It has a voluntary code of ethics and there are no strong penalties for advertisers who don't comply. It's a reactionary system and relies on public complaint. Therefore, nothing will be done about a billboard if no-one complains. Complaints are assessed by the Advertising Standards Board (ASB). Billboards are not screened or vetted before they go into the public arena.

When I started campaigning, it became obvious that most people did not know how, or where to complain, felt powerless and believed that their complaint would not make a difference. The ASB (similarly to broadcasters) deduced that low numbers of complaints meant there was no problem. Kids Free 2B Kids encourages the community to speak out, make formal complaints and to understand that this is a powerful tool in helping to create change.

In recent years the numbers of complaints have increased and recent internal research by the ASB showed that they were out of touch with community standards. (No surprises there!) The ASB has also started to acknowledge that some images do contribute to the sexualisation of children. It must be said, however, that the ASB has never consulted with relevant child development professionals when deliberating on complaints relevant to the impacts on children.

Many of the sexualised images in the public arena would not be acceptable in a workplace

because of sexual harassment laws, but those laws do not apply in the public space.

Kids Free 2B Kids helped to instigate the 2008 senate inquiry into the sexualisation of children. Since then, the recommendations have been largely ignored and there has been no evidence of proactive responsibility from industry. Three years later we are still waiting for the 18 month review!

Recommendation 1 (of 13)

1.12 The committee considers that the inappropriate sexualisation of children in Australia is of increasing concern. While noting the complexity of defining clear boundaries around this issue, the committee believes that preventing the premature sexualisation of children is a significant cultural challenge. This is a community responsibility which demands action by society. In particular, the onus is on broadcasters, publishers, advertisers, retailers and manufacturers to take account of these community concerns.

1.13 Noting this heightened concern, the committee believes that this issue should be followed up and therefore recommends that the steps taken to address it by industry bodies and others should be further considered by the Senate in 18 months time.

The recent UK Report of an Independent Review of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood - Letting Children be Children - leaves the Australian Governments action on this issue in its wake. The UK report acknowledges that parents need and want support to assist them in raising their children in a society that is wallpapered with sexualised imagery.

Speaking out by Kids Free 2B Kids and other groups such as Collective Shout has instigated a lot of change in recent years. There is a groundswell of people from all sectors of the community voicing concern and wanting to see change including parents, child advocates, educators, child development professionals and some politicians. Through collective action we have consistently held industry to account – but this is reactionary action and is ultimately unrelenting and exhausting. As long as industry remains self-regulated, there will no focus or

Feature Articles

commitment to the mental health and well-being of young people. Dollars always come first!

No previous generation of children has had to deal with such continued exposure to adult content. From outdoor advertising, porn magazines at kids eye levels, sexualised music video clips, inappropriate content in prime children's viewing hours on TV and Radio, sexualised fashion aimed at young teens, mini-me adult clothing marketed to the very young, young girls magazines ... the list goes on.

Our government would do well to pay heed to the concerns of leading child/adolescent psychiatrists and psychologists. Children are being impacted. A Federal Children's Commissioner with some clout and an independent body to oversee children's interests in the media would be a good start.

But first ... a good look at the recommendations from the UK report would point our Government back in the right direction.

Anyone interested in learning more can access research and other information on the Kids Free 2B Kids website and you can join Facebook to keep up with the latest. <http://www.kf2bk.com/>

By speaking out we can all help to create the change children deserve.

What we allow is what we approve.

(Dr Glen Cupit Senior Lecturer in Child Development, University of South Australia.)

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Tracey Jessie heads the Employment and Industrial Relations Law practice at Flower and Hart.

Prior to joining the firm, Tracey was employed in the education sector and was a school principal for nine years. This 'on the job' experience allows Tracey to understand the unique personal, practical and commercial interests of the education sector. She also understands the importance of delivering high quality, commercially astute advice in a timely, efficient and cost effective manner.

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For more information, please contact Tracey Jessie on 3233 1264 or tracey.jessie@flowerandhart.com.au

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Kids' Skills – an innovative and playful way to help children overcome problems

***Ben Furman, MD, psychiatrist
Helsinki Brief Therapy Institute, Finland***

Based in Finland, Ben Furman is a psychiatrist, psychotherapist, author and trainer of solution-focused approaches specialising in the areas of children's behaviours and workplace relationships. Ben's presentations are thought-provoking and entertaining, leaving delegates with the inspiration and skills to make the shift to focussing on solutions rather than problems.

Problems are but skills that have not been acquired yet.

One of the important functions of any society is to deal with the behavioral problems and other difficulties of its children and youth. In the Western world in recent years, children's problems have increasingly been medicalised, that is, conceptualized as medical disorders to be diagnosed by the medical profession and treated, most commonly, with psychoactive medication and other expert-driven interventions.

The downside of medicalisation includes not only the side effects and other risks of medicines but also the 'de-empowerment' of children, parents, teachers and other people working with children at the grassroots level; long waiting lists for getting help to troubled children; and the total powerlessness of the social network in situations where the medical model fails to live up to its promises.

Psychotherapy is an alternative to medication. It has proven effective but it is not without drawbacks either. Compared to medication, conventional psychotherapy is expensive and cumbersome. The training of psychotherapists requires years of study and heavy investment. Therapists can be hard to find and, once found, children are often expected to see their therapists regularly for long periods of time while their families are expected to fit the

therapy hours into their busy schedules and arrange the transportation. Another drawback of conventional psychotherapy is that in case it takes a long time to produce results – which is not uncommon – the parents and other adults caring for the child are rendered helpless while they are waiting for the effects of the professional intervention to materialize.

It is apparent that there is a need for something to complement the classical answers of psychotherapy and psychopharmacology: a model of intervention that can help the child and his or her immediate network to become capable of solving the problem with a minimum of expert involvement.

What is Kids' Skills?

In the '90s I started to work as supervisor for the staff of a preschool in Helsinki, Finland, caring for children with special needs, most with one or more psychiatric diagnosis such as ADHD, Asperger's syndrome, ODD, or pervasive developmental disorder. Together with the special education teachers of this preschool, I set out to develop a model for helping these children that would not only be effective and practical but also appealing to children and their families alike.

Inspired by the therapeutic ideas of Milton H. Erickson and solution-focused, cognitive and narrative therapies, our cooperation led to the development of a practical course of action

that we dubbed Kids' Skills and that has since become known and popular in a number of other countries around the world. Kids' Skills is a step-by-step procedure to help children aged three to twelve to overcome emotional and behavioural problems with the help of their family, friends and other people close to them. It is founded on the simple and pragmatic idea that, in most cases, children's problems can be re-conceptualized as lack of, or weakness of, a specific skill. Accordingly, if the child acquires the missing or weakly-developed skill, the problem will recede.

When problems are seen in this way, not as symptoms of underlying psychopathology or family dysfunction – the way most of us have been taught to think in our respective professional academies – but as indicators of lack of specific skills, true and genuine cooperation with children and their families becomes possible. Kids' Skills is not about curing disturbed children but about coaching children to solve their own problems through learning crucial skills with the support of their natural social network.

The advantages of Kids' Skills

In addition to being brief and economic, one of the foremost advantages of Kids' Skills is that it fosters cooperation with children. Inasmuch as children tend to dislike dealing with problems, they have a natural leaning towards developing skills, particularly when the learning is carried out in a way that is fun and rewarding for the child and allows the child to feel in charge of the process. Kids' Skills also favours cooperation with the child's parents by regarding them first and foremost as partners, willing and capable of supporting their children to learn skills.

Kids' Skills may at first sight appear as yet another behavioural modification technique intended to change child behaviour through a reward and reinforcement but, at closer look, it becomes apparent that the approach is geared not only towards changing the child but influencing the entire psychological ecosystem around the child. It is, essentially, a socially-oriented intervention that engages the social network of the child in a new, more optimistic way of viewing the children's problems and advocates a constructive and cooperative way of dealing with them.

The procedure

The first step in Kids' Skills is to find an agreement with the child about a skill to learn that would help the child to overcome his or her problem. Once such a skill has been identified, you ask the child to give the skill a name in order to ensure that the child takes ownership of the skill and becomes committed to learning it. Then you build motivation by discussing with the child the various benefits of the skill.

The basis for the work has been laid when the skill to learn has been identified, it has been given a name and the child is aware of its benefits. Only then you start to gear the conversation towards the question of how the child should practice the skill on a daily basis at home, at school or wherever appropriate. However, before taking up that question, you should continue to build the child's motivation by asking the child to pick an animal (or any other character) to function as his magic supporter; by engaging the child in making plans about how to celebrate when the child has learned the skill; and by building confidence through letting the child know why people who know him well believe that he will be able to learn the skill.

When the motivation building steps described above – choosing a power creature, planning the celebration and building confidence, have been taken care of – it is time to figure out some ways for the child to practice the skill with the support of family, friends and, of course, the power creature. After all, one does not acquire skills just by talking about them. An important part of designing a programme for practicing the skill is talking about how to deal with setbacks, or 'forgetting the skill' as is called in the language of Kids' Skills.

In general, Kids' Skills is a straightforward and simple step-by-step approach but one of its steps, the first step of finding a skill to learn, can be tricky. This is because children often have several problems rather than one and because it is not always apparent what skill a child with a given problem should learn in order to overcome the problem. In addition, it is important to reach a consensus about the skill to be learned in order for the child to want to learn it and the social network to be motivated to support the child in learning it.

The following case, reported by Raija Väisänen, a speech therapist from Finland (in *Kids' Skills in Action*, St Luke's Innovative Resources, Bendigo 2010) offers an illustration of the process.

Jesse was a five-year-old boy with autistic features and delayed speech development who Raija was seeing regularly in speech therapy. Jesse's additional problem was that he was extremely picky with food at home as well as at preschool. Due to his restricted diet, Jesse suffered from constipation and consequently of refusal to go on the potty because defecation was so hurtful to him. At preschool the situation had become so bad that Jesse refused to come to the table during lunch. Instead he would go hiding, for example, behind a door, for the entire duration of lunch and would only come out after the lunch was over and the children were returning to their play. He was suffering from stomach pains and he was often grumpy due to hunger.

Raija coached the staff of the preschool to deal with the eating problem by slicing it up into smaller steps. The first step was to get Jesse to practise laying the table with the other children. This worked well and Jesse received lots of praise for his behaviour. The next step was for him to learn to sit with the other children around the lunch table without having to eat anything, then to take some food onto the plate. In this way, step by step, Jesse made progress until he started to eat with the others. Alongside with what was going on at preschool Raija was coaching the parents whose main concern was that Jesse refused to sit on the potty and instead defecated into his trousers or onto the floor behind a large plant in the living room. It was not difficult for the parents to define the skill they wanted Jesse to learn: to defecate into the potty.

Raija asked Jesse's parents to explain to Jesse why they thought it was important for him to learn the skill of doing his poop into the potty. They explained that it would make them happy and it would make Jesse's tummy pain go away. Jesse wanted to have his parents, his grandma and Raija as his supporters. The name of the skill was

"Poop-King", a word that was inspired by Bionicle Lego-characters that Jesse was particularly fond of. Not surprisingly, Jesse's power creature was a Bionicle and the reward he wanted was for his mom to take him to buy a new Bionicle.

'Potty training' consisted of regularly practicing, in mom's presence, sitting on the potty. During these exercises mom always gave him positive feedback, regardless of whether or not he succeeded in producing anything into the potty. Raija acted as a supporter for Jesse.

'Guess what? I did my poop in the potty this morning!' Jesse said one day to Raija when he came to his speech therapy lesson.

'Wow, you are really learning quickly,' responded Raija, 'and I have heard from your mom that you have started to tell her when you need to go. I think it is a sign that you will soon be able to go to toilet every time you need to go.'

Before long, Jesse surprised Raija by coming to his speech therapy lesson with a new Bionicle in his hand. 'I got this because now I can poop to the toilet!' he said with a proud smile on his face.

Jesse was so proud of his newly acquired skill that he wanted to teach it to his two-year-old cousin. 'Look, you can also get one of these if you learn to use the potty,' he had one day been overheard explaining to her while showing her his new Bionicle.

Kids' Skills works best when children themselves come up with ideas about what skills they want to learn, but in many cases the wish for the child to learn a particular skill comes from parents, from teachers or other adults caring for the child. When this is the case, it is important to make sure that the child agrees to the proposal and takes ownership of learning the skill.

When an agreement about a skill to learn has been reached with the child and their family a good part of the work is already done. What remains is to ensure that the child is motivated to learn the skill, that the child enjoys the support of his or her social network, and that there is a workable plan for the child to practice the skill.

Interestingly, adults often struggle if they are asked to come up with a name for a skill, but for children naming skills tends to come naturally.

When learning skills children need to be supported by their social network: their parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, teachers etc. A good way to ensure support from the network is to allow the child to tell who they want to ask to support them and to make sure the supporters include not only adults but also other children such as peers or siblings. The supporters can support the child in many ways, for example, by affirming that the skill is an important one to learn, by showing interest in the child's progress, by offering practical ideas about how to learn the skill, by helping the child to remember the skill, and, not the least, by celebrating with the child when the child has acquired the skill.

Conclusion

Kids' Skills is a simple and straightforward method for working with children which can be used by professionals working with children with minimal training. In recent years I have been approached through emails and at conferences by numerous professionals from around the world who have become inspired by Kids' Skills and have wanted to share their enthusiasm and positive experiences with me. Scientific evidence of the effectiveness of Kids' Skills is still to be awaited but a wealth of anecdotal reports from professionals representing diverse occupations such as teachers, school counsellors, social workers, psychologists, family and child therapists, and some from parents who have used the approach with their own children, suggest that that Kids' Skills works well in many countries around the world – at least when administered in a way that adheres to its underlying tenet of respect for the child and collaborating with the child's natural social network.

Kids' Skills is suitable for a wide range of problems. It can be used to help children overcome trivial problems – say learning to give up the pacifier, to ride a bicycle, or to eat nicely – but the procedure works just as well for problems that are conventionally seen as serious. It has been used successfully, for example, to

deal with temper tantrums, soiling, depression, phobias, eating disturbances, and the various symptoms of disorders such as ADHD, autism, and Asperger's Syndrome. One can say that Kids' Skills is suitable whenever there is a problem that can be solved – or ameliorated – by the child learning a specific skill.

If you decide to try to use this approach you should first (1) tell the child about Kids' Skills and to allow them to become interested in it. Once the initial interest has been established, you can (2) move on to figuring out – together with the child – what skill they would benefit from learning. (3) Discuss the benefits of the skill and ask the child to give the skill a name. (4) Let the child pick a power creature to inspire their imagination and (5) list the persons they want to ask to be their supporters. Invite the child (6) to make a plan about how to celebrate learning the skill, (7) build confidence by letting the child hear why people who know them believe that they can learn the skill and let the child be on the driver's seat when you finally start (8) to make plans on how the child shall practice the skill. Remember also to (9) prepare for setbacks before launching the project by asking the child about how they wish to be reminded by their supporters of their skill if and when they forget the skill or fall back to the old behaviour. As the child sets out to learn their skill, your task is to be their coach and to assist them in building cooperation with the child's network. When there is consensus that the child has learned the skill, it is time to (10) organize the planned celebration and to make sure all the child's supporters are acknowledged for their contribution. To reinforce the skill, whenever possible, (11) allow the child to teach his skill to someone else and be prepared to go through the steps again to help the child learn another skill.

And, finally, keep in mind that despite the manualised structure and the detailed instructions, Kids' Skills is not, in essence, intended to be a 'method' or 'procedure' to be followed rigorously but rather a proposal for one possible set of guidelines that can help us work with children and their families in a respectful, cooperative, and creative way.

More information about Kids' Skills is available on the website www.kidsskills.org

Digging Deeper

Anne Grant, Kathy Eichmann and Jenni Muche



Kathy Eichmann (teaching assistant), Anne Grant (teacher) and Jenni Muche (artist in residence).

Anne Grant has worked in Primary and Secondary Education, as director in long day care and kindergarten. She also has worked, and continues to work extensively in professional theatre and the arts. Anne is inspired by the schools and philosophy of Reggio Emilia in Italy and the natural environmental education movements of Europe. She currently teaches in a C&K centre in Paddington.

Kathy Eichmann brings a wealth of experience in child care, both as an assistant and a group leader and also as a family day carer for 13

years. She is a wonderful photographer and is largely responsible for the vital photographic and video documentation of the programme. Kathy is particularly interested in sustainability and the outdoors as an educational stimulus. She is a teacher assistant at C&K Paddington

Jenni Muche has worked for more than 20 years with children 0 – 5 years. Her deep and abiding interest in all things natural and a sustained practice of recycling, reusing and repairing, long before it became fashionable, has broadened into solid creative practice over the years. She now considers herself a natural fibre artist, exhibiting and selling work from time to time.

With an invitation to present at the ECTA conference agreed to, and feeling the pressure to produce the goods for a journal article deadline fast approaching, we gathered for what we thought would be a fairly straightforward exercise. Being human, there is a tendency to procrastinate but we knuckled down to alleviate the pressure and put our thoughts together.

In that process, we reaffirmed the principles by which we teach – that of collaboration. Not always agreeing in detail but coming to a shared understanding.

Getting down to the essentials of sustainability and how it has both inspired and guided our changes (in practices, materials, decision making and personal interactions), will be the essence of this article. We are not experts – we are learners – but we recognize that the processes of digging deeper have enriched the programme we offer, our own lives and the families we work with. We also recognize as we dig deeper that there are others who have felt, thought and acted with

that same purpose and that fellowship buoys us. The learning we have witnessed has encouraged us to take risks, research, learn new skills and open our minds and hearts to new and further possibilities.

Work that permeates your entire life and demands your energy and heart returns great treasures.

www.ecoliteracy.org

What we present is our story, one concrete example which may inspire others to begin their own.

As always, we look to our shared vision and our centre philosophy as a touchstone. The stated values of our philosophy are reflected in our actions.

Key principles are:

- the role of the interested adult (as a facilitator, observer, participant, role model for learning)

- collaborative decision making (possibly the most important element is to have a group consciousness)
- the value for children of authentic learning experiences generating real understandings (experiential learning as an active process)
- the capacity of the child and their 'funds of knowledge' and skills
- acknowledgement that our processes are evolving and there is a role for the intentional
- magic happens.

Quick fixes are an oxymoron. If leaders would learn anything from the past many years, it's that there are no quick fixes. For most organizations, meaningful change is at least a three to five-year process. Margaret Wheatley (2011).

Perhaps this article is timely – recently we were asked where we had purchased our 'natural resources'. To be sustainable in the fullest sense is to be nested in an interdisciplinary approach and an understanding of relationships at all levels. We consume energy and resources, which we transform, recycle, or discharge into the systems that surround us.

Being informed and conscious of the bigger picture, we make decisions about who, what, where, why and how we source what we use. We do not jump on bandwagons or buy into advertising. Too many catalogues feature 'green' products with a sustainable label to sell their product.

We are suspicious of bags of shells in uniform sizes that are available – we need to know our products, simplify, settle for less and be creative. Rather, we focus on imaginative and diverse ways of using the same materials and treat nature's finds and discarded materials as treasures to be shared and reused. Light box work, ephemeral art, drawing in the dirt, reworking clay and spontaneous opportunities are all examples of this in action.

Creativity ... more often than not, comes about from the interaction of different disciplinary ways of looking at things.

Sir Ken Robinson. www.ted.com

Providing opportunities to explore adult means of fixing, applying or reconfiguring, opens up the possibilities of using tools such as drills, hot glue guns, hammers and nails. Given support, assistance, respect and trust, a child can move an abstract idea, step by step into the reality of three dimensions. This is powerful and very satisfying.



We have loudly self-proclaimed a 'first right of refusal' to our centre community to build up a body of resources and a culture of possibility. 'First right of refusal' means even if something is ugly, old or unwanted we will consider it. Over time a change of consciousness has evolved out of such simple practices. This change reverberates through our centre curriculum, fills our shelves, involves the community, guides discussions and is inherently long-term and far-reaching.

From little things big things grow.

Paul Kelly. www.paulkelly.com

In this way the seeds of the future are being planted. This process of selecting materials opens an inquiry into sustainable choices for us all.

In the push to get on board and produce results quickly, it's easy to bypass people – staff, children and parents. Implementing changes and rethinking to allow for an evolving



awareness takes time. Co-operation and real understanding are essential for success. It's necessary to keep revisiting goals and the shared understanding you are collectively pursuing.

We see ourselves embedded firmly in a wider community so we investigate and network with local citizens, businesses, like-minded agencies, other educational organizations and government. Working together and investing time and energy with community, we can affect the shape of our future social, physical and economic environments.



Place-based learning takes us all into the community and natural environment and also deeper into ourselves. It also brings the community to us and is a step toward equity and respect of diversity. By raising the awareness of how our centre is placed in its surrounding community, we help create a mental and emotional map of where we belong. Indigenous communities are very tied to their 'place'. They have a sense of their local place in its wholeness. This is another proposed focus for our centre community and we have initiated Out of Gate walks to explore and bring information back to share.

Properly cultivated and validated by interested adults, engagement with nature can mature into ecological literacy and eventually into more purposeful lives. Edward O. Wilson writes of 'biophilia', a natural affinity humans have with nature.

Children can find the magic in trees, water, animals, landscapes, and their own places. What a natural, practical springboard for sustainability.

If we want children to flourish, to become truly empowered, then let us allow them to owe the earth before we ask them to save it.

Sobel 2005

Feature Articles

Loving a place often begins with knowing it well.

http://green-changemakers.blogspot.com/2010_01_01_archive.html

With this love/affinity come opportunities for connection, respect, appreciation, memory, trust, wonder, discovery and magic.

Water is H₂O, hydrogen two parts, oxygen one, but there is also a third thing that makes it water and nobody knows what it is."

D.H. Lawrence www.freewebs.com/chris-summerville/environmentaleducation.htm

It is this intangible 'something' and the curiosity to pursue it that creates a synergy that is more than the sum of its elements. Learning that occurs is active, tangible, relevant and apparently often spontaneous to the moment. It is tied on many levels to the interests and needs of those engaged in it.

Projects are one consequence of this engagement and flow into other disciplines or can be cross-disciplined. Children's and the

interested adults' responses define and shape their learning. After having time to explore, they identify questions to pursue – concepts and understandings are articulated in their expressive output. This is what we try and tap into, to nurture and support with responsive materials, technical skills and techniques. In our experience children want to learn in order to apply their knowledge to solving real problems.

None of this could have happened without the will or the want of those involved. A top down approach is not applicable in an area that requires a personal response. Like these children we are learning new ways of managing relationships – giving up control and being flexible. We have to make decisions about programming, budgets and priorities on a daily basis, like all communities.

We invite you to begin to try things, reflect on how they feel. Open a dialogue with your fellow educators and community. Ask the children what they think. The *Early Years Learning Framework* (EYLF) talks of the 'funds of knowledge' that children possess. Explore them as it is the cooperation of children that is essential for a sustainable community.

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Twenty Terrific Musical Treats for Toddlers

Kathryn Yarrow

Kathryn is an early childhood music specialist, passionate about young children having the opportunity to experience music education from birth. Kathryn has taught 'do-re-mi' classes for over ten years and sees the difference music makes in young lives and their families each day.

She teaches eleven classes a week from her home studio in Carindale and weekly classes in each room of a local childcare centre – over 100 children. As well, she finds time to teach private piano students. Kathryn is the Queensland contact person for do-re-mi – part of the co-ordinating team for our state. She has led workshops for KMEIA (Kodály Music Education Institute Aust.) and professional development sessions for early childhood teachers in a childcare setting. Kathryn is married to Paul, has two gorgeous children and a dog.

A quick scan of newspapers, magazines, television programs and commercials provides even a casual observer with the clear message that good nutrition is important for the health and wellbeing of children. There are many different trained professionals to help parents with questions they may have and to assist them in setting up good nutrition.

What about music 'nutrition' or education for young children?

When is the best time for parents to introduce music to children ?

How do teachers working with young children give a 'nutritious' musical programme to those in their care?

I believe, as many other educators such as Zoltan Kodály did, that the best time for young children to experience music education is from birth. Kodály believed that only the best is good enough for a child and so the best music should be chosen for them. He said:

After all, food is more carefully chosen for an infant than for an adult. Musical nourishment which is 'rich in vitamins' is essential for children. (1929)

What would a music programme or session which is 'nutritious' look like?

World class music educator John Feierabend sets these goals for the children in his music programme.

- ♪ Be tuneful
- ♪ Be beat-ful
- ♪ Be artful

Be Tuneful

We all have a voice – it is our first instrument. Studies show the benefits of singing to young children and this topic was in the news again recently with a book about to be released in the U.K: *The Genius of Natural Childhood* by Sally Goddard Blythe. She writes:

Singing traditional songs and nursery rhymes to babies and infants before they learn to speak, is an essential precursor to later educational success and emotional wellbeing.

For those of us who don't have 'trained' voices, we can still be great role models for children with our voices.

Children's vocal chords are still developing and therefore children benefit from singing at a higher pitch than most adults might prefer.

Children need to be singing within the range of middle C to Treble C on a piano.

If a child only hears a lower range they tend to become 'droners'.

Tools of the trade:

🎵 Tuned chime bars to get your starting note and help stay in tune

🎵 Tuning fork or pitch pipe – gives your starting note.

Children benefit from singing which is unaccompanied as they can hear the melody clearly without the distraction of a busy background – which often happens in most children's commercial CDs.

🎵 Keeping the beat

The beat is the basic underlying pulse of music – like our heartbeat. Beat is not to be confused with the pattern of words or syllables of speech – rhythm.

In an interesting article – *Timing in Child Development* (Kuhlman & Schweinhart 2011) the authors state:

a child's timing – ability to feel and express steady beat – is fundamental to both movement and music, affecting both sports skills and musical performance, as well as speech-flow and performance of timed motor tasks.



Young children first need help to externalise this steady beat and carers, teachers and parents can simply tap the child's knees or shoulders/ back/hand or foot while a song is being sung.

Through using a variety of songs, rhymes and movement activities, children experience the beat, which becomes internalised – ready to be drawn upon when needed.

🎵 Be Artful

What is 'being artful'? It is being moved by beautiful music: a child or person who can respond to the expressiveness in music. John Feierabend encourages all who work with young children to offer them 'hushed wonder' – the subtle verses, the sensational – which is everywhere else for them in their world. He says:

popularised children's music is ear candy. It provides a temporary rush but lacks long term nutritional value. (1992)

When 'ear candy' is all children listen to, they are de-sensitised to TUNE.

Choosing 'nutritious' musical treats for our children

What is good quality literature/repertoire?

- It appeals both to adults and to children. (If it appeals only to children it could be childish. If it appeals to me it could be child like – using imagination etc.)
- Music which has a sense of wonder, make-believe and fantasy.
- It is still 'delicious' after many repetitions.

Choose the very best literature – which is artful – for the children

Kathryn's Top 20 – musical treats for toddlers

(r = rhyme)

(Bounces)

1. Ride a little horsey (r)
2. Walk Old Joe (r)
3. Jack be nimble (r)
4. Penny in the water (r) adapted to song 'Fishy in the water' Kodály

(Tickles/Touching)

5. Round & round the garden (r)
6. Rain is falling down
7. Slowly slowly ... creeps garden snail (r)
8. Shoe a little horse (r)

(Finger Play)

9. Here is the beehive
10. This little cow (r)
11. Ten Galloping horses (r)
12. Five cheeky monkeys (r)

(Actions/Movement)

13. Trot trot trot
14. High stepping horses
15. Bell horses
16. See saw
17. A ram sam sam

(Dramatic Play)

18. Jack in a box as quiet as mouse (r)
19. Two old tortoises (r)
20. The little mice are creeping

Using music throughout the day

In a childcare/Kindy setting, there are many opportunities throughout the day to interact with the children in your care using music.

For example:

- a bounce can be used to settle a child separating from their parent or when they

are sitting with the teacher. Bounces are also lots of fun!

- A tapping or tickle rhyme can be used during nappy changing time.
- A calming song involving touch can help settle and soothe a sad or tired child. For example: Rain is falling down
- Transition songs/rhymes – getting ready for the bathroom/going to lunch/packing 'stuff' away.
- Give your best – children will respond to this with love and enthusiasm that matches your own. They are worth it!

For more information visit:

www.kodaly.org.au

www.do-re-mi.com.au

www.kathrynsmusicroom.com

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GRANDANCE – creative movement for unfit people

Sharmila Nezovic

Sharmila Nezovic is an artist with nearly 30 years experience working creatively with communities – specifically in the areas of cultural development and Community Education. She is frequently sought after as a dynamic facilitator. Her skills are: painting and drawing, singing, dance, performance and experimental theatre production. These adapt well to classroom and to community projects. For the past nine years, Sharmila has been employed in Public Programs at Queensland Museum, South Bank, developing and presenting fun learning programs, fusing the arts with science, especially for children under eight years of age – and their carers.

GRANDANCE is an accessible adaptation of a wonderful choreographic piece for community dance, originally devised in the '70s by the influential, US experimental, contemporary dancer-choreographer, Deborah Hay.

Her premise around dance is that 'the whole body ... is ... [our] teacher ... thus assuming ... [a] cellular intelligence ...' Her approach is about encouraging 'a willingness to stretch beyond ... imaginative boundaries'. And, she even proclaims that participants may 'make an exacting effort to explore different states of consciousness'. This is all about the building of exciting, heightened kinaesthetic awareness.

The process

Hay's GRANDANCE design basically comprises a series or list of 18-Steps, or 'cosmic' instructions, which encourage a sense of the personal embodiment of movement, as well as stimulating the mind to be more expansive during moving. In other words, it is a most creative journey. GRANDANCE works in layers, covering emotional, conceptual and physical motivators. For example, *Step18. Flowing Together (consider walking is bowing)*, plays with how we usually think of walking in an everyday, pedestrian sense, and opens up an internal movement dialogue to include 'attitude' and 'posture' triggers, regardless of if you've ever learned dance before, or not! Her concepts give great scope for the Facilitator/Instructor to elaborate and interpret as well as to the person/s carrying out those moves.

Hay's layering within the GRANDANCE process is thoroughly meditated and deliberate. We notice this in the way its guidance is not only for individuals to explore by themselves in solo reverie, but how it also employs an interesting and varied choreographic 'floor plan' built-in, creating collaborative support for enjoyable group awareness. For instance, while we might be exploring what it feels like to be motionless, like a rock (*Step 14. Rock Dance*) possibly with our eyes closed, we are also instructed to do this Step by 'Go[ing] to the edge of the area', that is somewhere around the perimeter of the space ... thereby dispersing all the 'dancers'; while at other times, we are instructed to '...converge on the centre. Radiating as stars ...' (*Step10. Star Walk*) draws the group into the middle of the space, with eyes open in soft focus, possibly heading for an interactive huddle! GRANDANCE has a strong internal rhythm of its own, so it does not even require musical accompaniment, though music of course, is a wonderful optional enhancement. By the end of this vibrant workshop-experience, we can ultimately feel, simply, like we have been *dancing with the moon and skipping with the stars ...*

As an early years learning stimulus

Here we have an ideal approach to opening participants up to a deepening awareness of physicality. It is not merely some exercise-regime to music. It is definitely *not* about learning dance steps, nor is it even an encouragement to some spontaneous random moving-response to music.

It is, however, about having a safe opportunity to explore our own sense of movement, guided by an imaginative set of visualizations, structured improvisations if you will, which enable the doer to be creative with mind-body flow, by getting truly activated, both through space and with each other in a group - no matter what age or levels of fitness we may have!

GRANDANCE caters especially to carers and teachers of early learners by complementing the *Early Years Learning Framework*.

It is fundamentally about being playful: with time, with our own ideas, with our moving bodies, with awareness of each other – and so much more ...

It allows for many interpretations of each Step or instruction, along the way. It is a springboard on which to cultivate personalised classroom dance-play activities afterwards. It's about searching for, sensing and discovering the literacy within symbolic gesture and the endless body shapes possible inside a movement, thereby exploring the intelligence of the dance experience.

Via participation, we encounter a richer connection with the goals of 'belonging, being and becoming'. 'Belonging' to our class or group, 'being' in the moment of the movement and 'becoming' a dynamic creative movement explorer and collaborator.

As we embody the dance, our awareness of space and shapes, grows. Our understanding of the joy of expression may blossom and the fun of doing it with others increases our feeling of mutual support.

Summary

GRANDANCE is a wonderful and original vehicle for introducing creative movement to young people of all ages and at all levels of dance experience. It is joyous and layered in such a way that it maintains interest for a diverse range of experiences. Its 18-Steps can be explored in either a single session or over 18 sessions (or in any other configuration of choice).

The goal is to not only take the stigma out of leading our children in creative movement sessions but it is about bringing adult participants into the learning zone that our own children could experience, as well.

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www.deborahhay.com/

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Embedding Indigenous Perspectives in the Early Childhood Curriculum

Melinda Miller

Melinda Miller is a lecturer in the School of Early Childhood at QUT. Her research, teaching and publication interests include culture studies, Indigenous studies, sustainability education and professional development for early childhood educators

Early childhood curriculum frameworks place strong emphasis on the need for educators to build cultural competence. In the Australian context, a key component of this work relates to competencies with acknowledging and responding to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities. Despite emphasis on the importance of this work, the how and why of embedding Indigenous perspectives continues to raise concerns for many non-Indigenous educators. Educators may question their approach, knowledge base, and the right to teach about cultural ways of being, knowing and that are different to their own perspectives (see Lampert, 2005).

It is recognised that non-Indigenous educators cannot be experts on Indigenous Australia (Lampert, 2005), although they can demonstrate preparedness to understand and value cultural diversity. When doing so, educators access and make use of appropriate resources, design inclusive curricula, and engage the support and expertise of others including families and members of the local Indigenous community. Educator preparedness also relates to deep knowledge of how a person's own cultural background influences their thinking and practices, and shapes how they view and respond to people from cultural backgrounds different from their own.

Evaluating approaches to embedding Indigenous perspectives

As the majority of educators in Australia are non-Indigenous, ongoing discussion and

critique of attempts to embed Indigenous perspectives is imperative. In my work in non-Indigenous child care services, I have noted the different ways educators make attempts to embed Indigenous perspectives in practice. Differences in this work can be seen in the ways educators:

- assemble and use resources including books, posters and dolls
- give recognition to Indigenous sovereignty and
- form genuine working relationships with Indigenous people.

In line with broader approaches to Reconciliation (see BurrIDGE, 2009), educators' work is often reflective of practical, symbolic or substantive approaches to embedding Indigenous perspectives. The table on the following page outlines some examples of practice that align with these three approaches. It provides a useful framework for educators to use when considering the prevalence of particular practices within their service, as well as ways to develop their work further.

When used in combination, these three approaches to embedding Indigenous perspectives can result in effective practices. A practical approach provides visual cues to families and visitors that Indigenous perspectives are a key part of the daily curriculum. Practices aligned with a symbolic approach give recognition to Indigenous sovereignty and can provoke educators to rethink what they

Different approaches to embedding Indigenous perspectives in practice

Approach	Examples of practice
Practical	Inclusion of puzzles, posters, books, dolls, artwork and images representing Indigenous peoples and cultures Atypical curriculum activities such as painting boomerangs and didgeridoos, dot paintings and outdoor cultural games
Symbolic	Display of an Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag in the reception area <i>Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners</i> spoken as part of the curriculum and at key events Map of Aboriginal Australia on display and used within curriculum activities
Substantive	The development of working relationships with Indigenous people and organisations in the local community Procedures that invite the participation of Indigenous people in decision-making processes Remuneration offered for the expertise of Indigenous people The development of a workforce strategy to employ Indigenous child care professionals within the service

understand about historical and contemporary circumstances for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia. A substantive approach makes space for Indigenous self-representation, meaning Indigenous people can represent themselves in ways in which they want people to 'know' about and relate to them (Chalmers, 2005). While there are benefits to all three approaches, there are also cautions about how the work of embedding Indigenous perspectives is framed and understood, as outlined here.

Practical

- When used in isolation, a practical approach can be tokenistic. Resources and experiences that are reflective of Indigenous peoples and cultures should be core to the curriculum, rather than being 'add-ons' or one-off activities. Experiences focussed on music, art and dance provide important avenues for exploration, but shouldn't be used in place of rich discussion about diversities within and across Indigenous groups, and broader issues.
- Some resources may show stereotypical or negative images of Indigenous peoples

and cultures. Consider if there is a balance of more traditional and contemporary images available in the classroom. Monitor 'teacher-talk' and the ways children talk about and make use of the resources available to them.

Symbolic

- Consider if there is ongoing discussion about the purpose of displaying symbols of Indigenous sovereignty, including an Aboriginal flag and Torres Strait Islander flag, and map of Aboriginal Australia. What do educators, families and children understand about these symbols? Beyond imagery, how does the service demonstrate acknowledgement and support of Indigenous sovereignty? Are symbols used in place of the presence of Indigenous people?

Substantive

- How are potential interactions between non-Indigenous and Indigenous people framed? Who will benefit most from these interactions? How can interactions promote reciprocal benefits?

- What is it that you are asking Indigenous people to do? Do you have preconceived ideas about how they will represent themselves and participate within service activities? Consider how the service will remunerate Indigenous visitors for their time and expertise.

Common questions

Alongside attempts to embed Indigenous perspectives in practice, educators must continue to evaluate the purpose they attach to this work. Questions about why services should focus specifically on Indigenous perspectives and how this benefits white children are common. Such questions provide insight into educator knowledge and reflect a need to attach meaning and purpose to one's work. The following questions (Q) and responses (R) provide examples of typical communication with (fellow) non-Indigenous educators in research and at professional development events:

Q: *We live in a multicultural country. Why do I need to focus on Indigenous perspectives?*

R: Indigenous peoples have histories in Australia dating back some 60,000 years. Indigenous people are recognised as the first Australians, meaning they have sovereignty rights to the country we now know as Australia. Consider that, from an Indigenous perspective, everyone who arrived after 1788 might be regarded as ethnic (Goodnow & Lawrence, 2008). Because of the unique relationship of Indigenous people to Australia, Indigenous perspectives should be present within the curriculum at all times. Services should then respond to the different ethnicities of children attending a service at any given time.

Q: *We don't have any Indigenous children attending our centre. Is it necessary here when all of our children are white?*

R: For Anglo-Australian children, explorations of Indigenous perspectives are crucial. From a young age, children develop strong ideas about their own identity and the identities of others. White children are rarely confronted by negative or stereotypical images of themselves in classrooms based on their culture, but discrimination affects everyone. As Derman-Sparks and Ramsey (2006, p. 1) explain, 'a false sense of racial superiority is damaging, causes

isolation, and ill-prepares children to function in a diverse society.'

Q: *I'm afraid I'll do or say something offensive, so I just don't make it a focus.*

R: Fear of causing offense is a common reason for inaction. It is accepted generally that doing *something* (of value) is better than doing *nothing*. When educators make attempts to embed Indigenous perspective, they create a base from which to improve and refine practice. The key to this work is commitment to ongoing reflection and critique of one's thinking and practices.

Conclusion

Providing evidence of attempts to embed Indigenous perspectives is becoming a professional imperative. Non-Indigenous educators have a pivotal role in this work given they make up the majority of the teaching force in Australia. Preparedness for responding to cultural diversity can present challenges for non-Indigenous services and educators but, when this work is done well through commitment and ongoing evaluation, there are clear benefits for non-Indigenous and Indigenous children, families and community.

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Playing with the Australian Curriculum in Prep

Anne Pearson

Anne Pearson has taught in Queensland since 1986. She has experience in country and city schools and is currently working at Kelvin Grove State College, in partnership with QUT, as a demonstration Prep teacher. This year Anne is experimenting with the National Curriculum in Prep - aiming to maintain an early years philosophy and continue to use the Project Approach while modifying the content to the new standards expected by the National Curriculum. This is one class's attempt to continue to play and learn.

The journey towards the implementation of *The Australian Curriculum* has continued throughout 2011 and early years professionals are 'waiting in the chaotic place of unknowing' (Somerville, 2008). We need to make the most of the time provided by this journey as a period of reflection and an opportunity to modify our knowledge and beliefs to accommodate the expectations placed on us by the new curriculum.

Firstly, we need to focus on what hasn't changed and what we already know. Queensland Prep teachers are provided with five key components through *The Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* (EYCG) that are used for curriculum decision-making in the early phase of learning:

- understanding children
- building partnerships
- establishing flexible learning environments
- creating contexts for learning and development
- exploring what children learn.

Teachers still plan in relation to the first four key components, however *exploring what children learn* (QSA, 2006) is now modified by the content provided by the *Australian Curriculum*. (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2010) The 'what to teach' in Mathematics, English, Science and History are now derived from our *Australian Curriculum*. The other four key components are still essential for curriculum decision making.

As Prep teachers in Queensland we are in an enviable position where we are provided with

five contexts for learning in our *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* (QSA, 2006), that respect and value play as one of the contexts. In *The Shape of the Australian Curriculum* the authors state:

The Australian Curriculum makes clear to teachers what is to be taught. It also makes clear to students what they should learn and the quality of learning expected of them.

Schools are able to decide how best to deliver the curriculum, drawing on integrated approaches where appropriate and using pedagogical approaches that account for students' needs, interests and the school and community context. School authorities will be able to offer curriculum beyond that specified in the Australian Curriculum. (ACARA, 2010)

This also provides us with the pedagogical support to continue to do what we as Early Years Professionals do best – foster positive learning experiences through play. This is the key to providing the best opportunities to support our Prep children in their first year of school.

In a perfect world our children would



Positive learning experiences through play.

have unlimited time and opportunities to play. They would explore their environments with supportive adults who help them in their journey and provide opportunities for all aspects of their development to prosper.

However, the reality in our classrooms is that our children arrive with 25 different Pre-prep experiences and 25 different stages of development. As professional early years Prep teachers, we have the knowledge and the expertise to make choices to best support these children in the short time we have them in our classes. My journey towards implementing the *Australian Curriculum* is about making choices and trusting the knowledge that I have developed over nearly 30 years studying and working in Early Childhood Education.

My Journey

We began the year as a Prep team planning via email, meetings and Skype to develop our focus and shared understandings of where we planned to head during the year. We were a new team so needed to establish ourselves as a team and develop understandings of our shared and individual pedagogical belief systems. We planned the English, Mathematics, Science and History sections of our program using the *Australian Curriculum* (Draft) to guide the content decisions we made. The other areas were planned as individual class teachers using the EYCGs and the information we obtained about each child through our initial parent teacher interviews held in the last week of the school holidays and the first few weeks of school.

Over the last few years I have found *The Project Approach* (Chard, 1997) a pedagogy which best fits my philosophy of early childhood learners and approach to learning and teaching. This approach is a way to encourage children to pose questions, and increase their awareness of the world around them. The children are encouraged to inquire about their interests, and the topics that we need to, or want to, explore in class. It allows us to become joint learners and makes the learning more exciting and more meaningful for all. *The Project Approach* also provides opportunities for integration and cross-curricular learning, greatly enhancing opportunities for children's needs to be met and for the different learning styles to be supported.

I decided to spend time helping the children get to know one another in class and to build relationships with each other as a class group through a Project 'All about me'. We set up our classroom with traditional areas of home corner, blocks and construction, puzzles, book corner, science display area, collage area, drawing trolley, maths and literacy areas, and a large group area with a mat. The children were gradually introduced to the rules and expectations of how to use each area, and we worked through a structured but flexible timetable, allowing the children time to become accustomed to their new environment and build relationships.

The English focus has been guided by the *Australian Curriculum*, the children and our knowledge of how best to support the children through



Plan and play.

phonological awareness activities (based on *A Sound Way* (Reilly, 2009) and Pat Edgar's workshops (www.patedgar.com)) and lots of stories about children, families and friendship. Writing was introduced through the use of 'Visual Diaries' and within our 'Plan and Play' time.

The Numeracy focus has been guided by the *Australian Curriculum*, the children and our knowledge of how to best support the children through real life maths, games and focused teaching opportunities provided through whole group, small group and 'Plan and Play' time.

Science led us to the topic for our second project, negotiated with the children and supported by an AVAPet experience, provided by RSPCA, vets, and wild life carers.



The vet surgery.

The children had developed new friendships by this time and were able to jointly plan a veterinarian surgery, a pet shop and wild



Opportunities to play.

life carers' homes where they could explore their knowledge and understandings of pets and animals needs. We supported the children through focused teaching sessions about pets, animal needs

and people who work with animals, as well as stories and books about the same topics.

We undertook focused analysis of children's stages of development in literacy and numeracy, and plan for oral language activities that provide opportunities for the children to develop and display their understandings of speaking to a group. These observations and assessment times provided vital information on how to best support our diverse group. Strategies were developed from these assessment tasks to support the children during plan and play sessions, as well as during focused teaching times.

My class still looks like and feels like a child-centred class. The children are given opportunities to play such as those listed below:-

Types of educational play (QSA, 2006)

Socio-dramatic	Children setting up and running a flower shop
Fantasy	Children creating props for space adventures
Exploratory	Exploring the properties of new manipulative or construction materials; looking through magnifier/lenses to see how they work and the effect they have
Manipulative	Doing puzzles, making necklaces or constructions
Physical	Running, hopping, skipping, climbing, moving through obstacle courses
Games with rules	Playing board and card games; outdoor games; child-created games with rules

The play occurs during the day, within all curriculum areas and time slots. By using and reflecting on the different types of play, I can ensure the children are engaged in meaningful

and purposeful learning experiences. It's important to remember there are many types of play, each type as important or useful

as the other. Early years professionals know play can support children's learning through developing thinking and problem-solving skills; extending oral language capabilities; practicing and learning literacy and numeracy skills; and developing imagination and creativity; as well as nurturing their personal identities. (QSA, 2006) A balanced program contains a variety of types of play and allows time for the children to engage and learn through this powerful medium.

Knowing that I am supported by both Education Queensland's policies and by ACARA I aim to continue along my journey from 'waiting in the chaotic place of unknowing' (Somerville, 2008) to a reassured, confident Prep classroom teacher. In my classroom the new content prescribed by the *Australian National Curriculum* can continue to be presented through pedagogically sound practice provided by my knowledge developed through many years of professional development and learning and through the *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines* which still frame our teaching practices in Queensland.

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Exploratory play.



Mathilda Element

As this issue goes to print, educators across the early childhood sector are gearing up for an annual celebration of stories and book. Yes, folks, it's that time again – Book Week is upon us from August 20th to 26th! I see banners being painted, teachers raiding dress-up chests for favourite book character costumes, librarians arranging cosy displays in reading nooks across the state. Most importantly, I see children delighting in the pleasure of a good book, shared with a friend, teacher or loved one. It gives me great delight to see a review in this issue of one of the Children's Book Council of Australia Short-listed Books for Early Childhood in 2011, *The Tall Man and the Twelve Babies*. This follows on from another short-listed book, *Noni the Pony* by Alison Lester, which was reviewed in our previous journal this year. We are fortunate also to have a balanced, practical and wise mix of reviews including non-fiction for children, teacher resources for educators and more great fiction as well. Thanks to all our reviewers who are including these resources in their classroom – it's a delight to hear the reactions and responses from children.

Title: Prep – A Class Act

**Developing Confidence and
Self Esteem through the
Performing Arts.**

Author: Valerie Warwick

Illustrator: Kate Jones

Photographer: Anthony McClean

Published By: Playtime Productions

ISBN: 978-0-95798000-9-9

RRP: \$55.00

Reviewed by: Julie Meara

Reading this book reminded me how important the performing arts are. Using it made me kick myself for forgetting.

The author and editor Valerie Warwick has an extensive background in drama. She has written many scripts and countless other dramatic works but most importantly she works with children. The activities in *Prep - A Class Act* leap off the page as being 'tried and true.' Very few of the activities require anything more than space and children. As a relief teacher I have used several warm-up activities with prep classes. Each stood alone as a lesson – and, honestly, what the children did could stand alone on stage – delightful!

Prep and kindy teachers and will love *Prep - A Class Act* but they should be sure to share it with the Year One and Two teachers – because those classes will have fun too – and also need to develop their oral language skills, which go hand in hand with success in literacy.

My only disappointment with this book was that it really didn't start until page 14. At 64 sparsely printed pages, it is not a long book and 14 pages of support for the book from Noni Hazlehurst and educators was disproportionate. How I would have loved 14 more pages of these wonderful drama exercises to enhance: improvisations, articulation, role-play, expressing attitude, creative movement, presentation, communication and performances!

This is NOT, thank goodness, a book about polishing performance, it is about playing, acting, having fun ... all the while developing awesome oral language skills, confidence and self-esteem (and ticking boxes for Early Years Learning Statements, which are helpfully cross-referenced in each chapter for teacher planning. Thank you Valerie!).

Prep - A Class Act is available is from www.playtimeproductions.com.au



**Title: Sustainability Series: Saving Water
Growing Things
Minibeasts
Reduce, Reuse and Recycle**

Author: Liz Flaherty
Published By: Pearson Australia
ISBN: 978-1-4425-2692-1, 978-1-4425-2689-1,
978-1-4425-2691-4, 978-1-4425-2690-7
RRP: \$29.95 each
Reviewed by: Helen Langdon

The Sustainability series is a set of four informative texts suitable for use with primary school age children. These texts aim to enhance a child's understanding of the need to be environmentally friendly. They assist the reader in finding practical ways to work towards a better future for our planet.

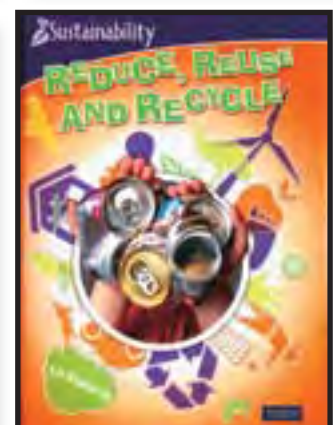
The Sustainability series texts are an excellent, independent research resource for the upper primary grades. They cover current Australian content and offer links to useful websites for further exploration of each topic. The texts could also be used as a teacher reference to enhance your own knowledge. With adult support, they can also be accessed by younger children.

I explored the texts with my Prep class, who became very interested in finding out about:

- the water cycle
- how to save water at home and at school.
- reusing things for a different purpose
- making new things from plastic e.g. boat sails, and carpet
- becoming active can recyclers
- discovering minibeasts in our school environment.

As a class we looked at small sections of content at a time, delving into each book a number of times throughout the whole term, as we discovered more about looking after the world. We expressed our knowledge at the end of the term by making a large art piece of the world and how we could work together to make it a better place.

The colour photographs and the real-life, practical examples from Australian Schools engaged the children and stimulated interesting class discussions. Pearson has also produced an electronic version of the texts for use on an Interactive Whiteboard with the whole class.



Title: Bear Flies High

Author: Michael Rosen
Illustrator: Adrian Reynolds
Published By: Bloomsbury Paperbacks
ISBN: 978 0 7475 979664
RRP: \$15.99
Reviewed by: Anne Pearson

'I'm a bear on a beach.

On a beach?

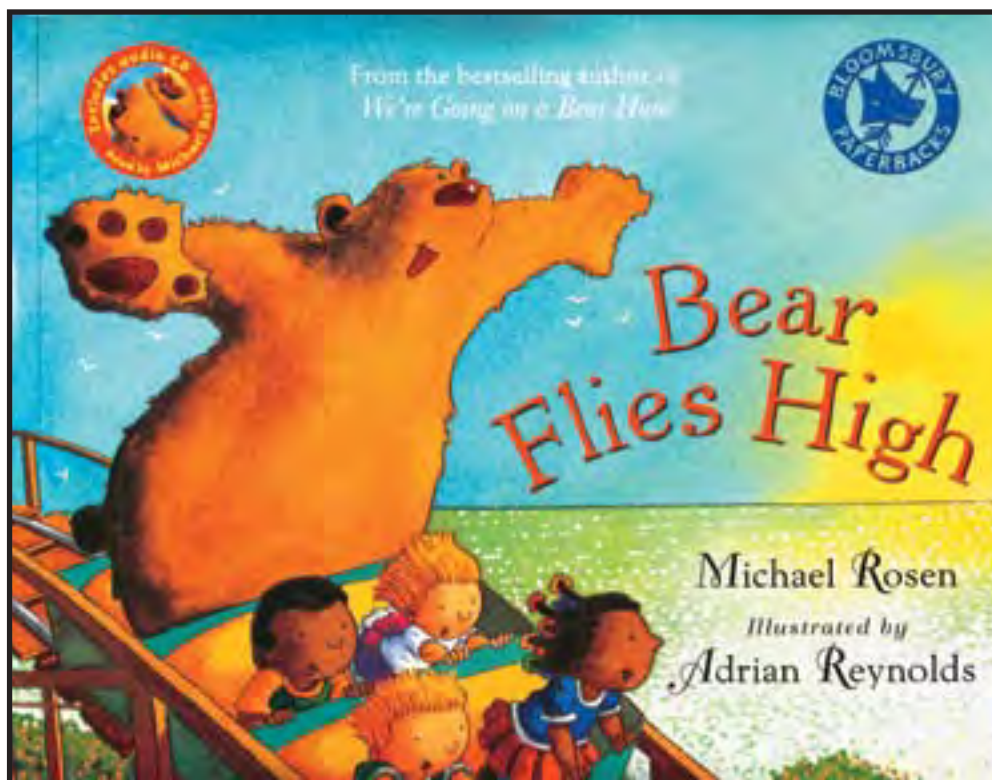
On a beach.'

And so begins a lovely tale of a bear and his friends and their excursion to a fair ground to help him fulfill his dreams!

Written by Michael Rosen (author of *We're going on a Bear Hunt*) this beautifully illustrated picture book is fun to read aloud to children up to eight years old. The format of the repetitive text gives opportunities for the children's imagination to wander and imagine they are following along the bear's journey. If you're going to the EKKA (or local Show) this would be a great read before you go. I wonder if the bear will meet you there?

For teachers, the book gives opportunities to talk about how we can support our friends to achieve their goals, and promote peer support. It also provides opportunities to focus on concepts of print as part of a shared reading lesson.

The book also contains a CD recording of the story read by Michael Rosen! This is a wonderful follow-up to a shared reading, especially because it's the author's voice we're hearing! A great listening post book, and a recommended purchase for parents and teachers.



**Title: Window on the World: At School
Colour
Water, Water!
Hello Daddy!**

Author: Paul Harrison
Illustrator: Various
Published By: Evans Publishing Group (UK)
ISBN: 9781840895971
RRP: \$29.95
Reviewed by: Anne Pearson

This is a beautifully presented series of four books that use photos from around the world to illustrate relationships and concepts for under six-year-olds.

These books would be suitable for teachers to use as picture stimulus or for young children to compare through discussion the concepts examined.

However, something is lost in the translation of the books into English. The language used is not a good model and doesn't always make sense.

The children in my Prep class enjoyed the pictures and comparing the children in the photos to themselves and their lives. Beautiful discussions developed from the colourful photos with little reference to the text itself.

I would make use of this series if it was in the library but wouldn't race out to buy them.



Title: The Tall Man and the twelve babies

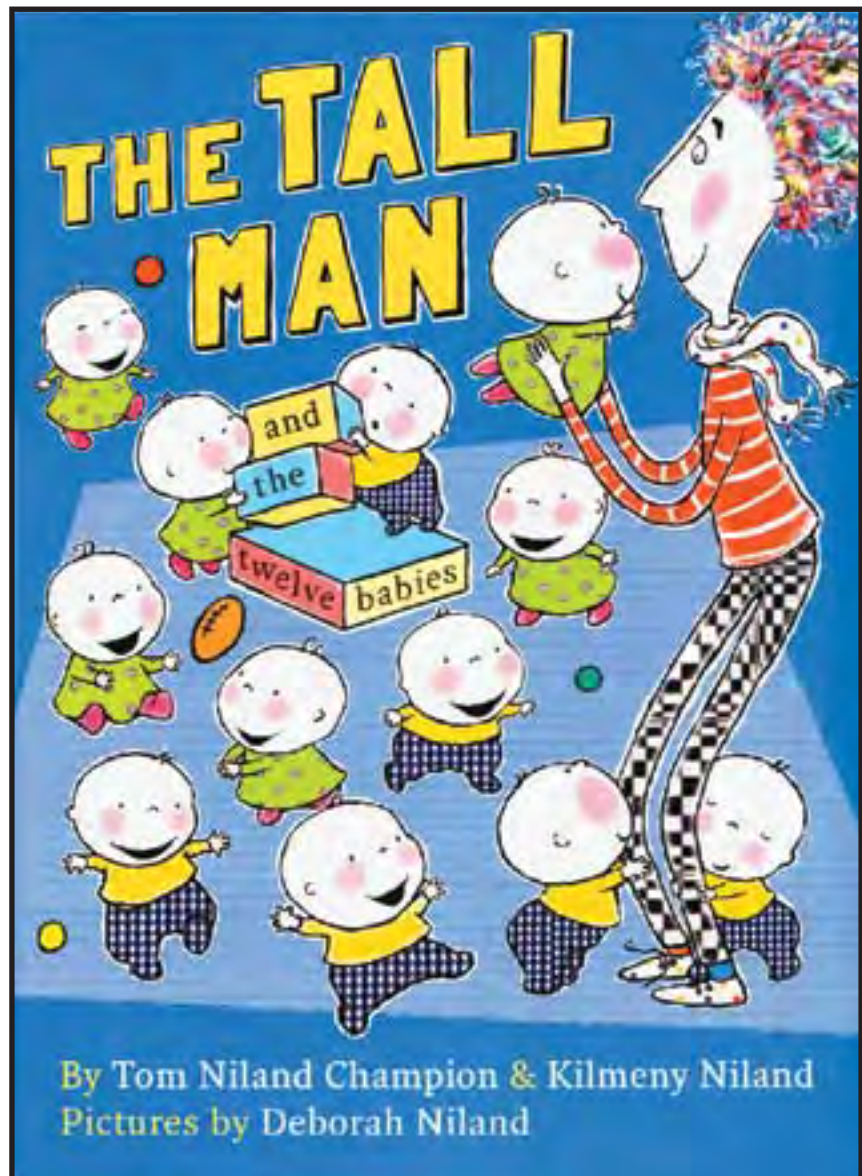
Author: Tom Niland Champion & Kilmeny Niland
Illustrator: Deborah Niland
Published by: Allen & Unwin
ISBN: 978 1 74237 115 3
RRP: \$24.99
Reviewed by: Kim Mostyn

This is a very funny picture book about a very tall man with twelve babies in a very tiny apartment. Each of the six boys is called Alistair, while each of the six girls is called Charlene. One day the wind blows the door shut and he can't get back in. The Charlenes are on one side and the Alistairs are on the other side.

The very tall man has to think of a way to get back inside the apartment. This story, written by Tom Niland Champion and his mother, Kilmeny Niland, challenges children to use their problem-solving skills. How will the tall man get back inside? Children like to express their ideas, and the story lends itself easily to a group discussion.

He is so tall that he gets stuck in the middle of the cat flap and calls on the babies to pull him out. Deborah Niland's pictures are so clear. It is easy to see the facial expressions of the characters in the story. This story encourages children to think about actions, feelings and solutions to problems. Children can also count the number of babies, to find that one baby is missing.

My students loved seeing the faces on the babies and laughed when the man popped through the flap. Can a tall man really fit through a cat flap? Can small babies help the tall man? Will he ever go through the cat flap again? Or will he put the key in his pocket? The illustrations support the text, giving the book so much appeal.



Title: **Doing Early Childhood Research: International perspectives on theory and practice - 2nd Ed**

Author: **Glenda Mac Naughton, Sharne A Rolfe & Iram Siraj-Blatchford**

Illustrator: **n/a**

Published by: **Allen & Unwin**

ISBN: **978 1 74237 069 9**

RRP: **\$49.99**

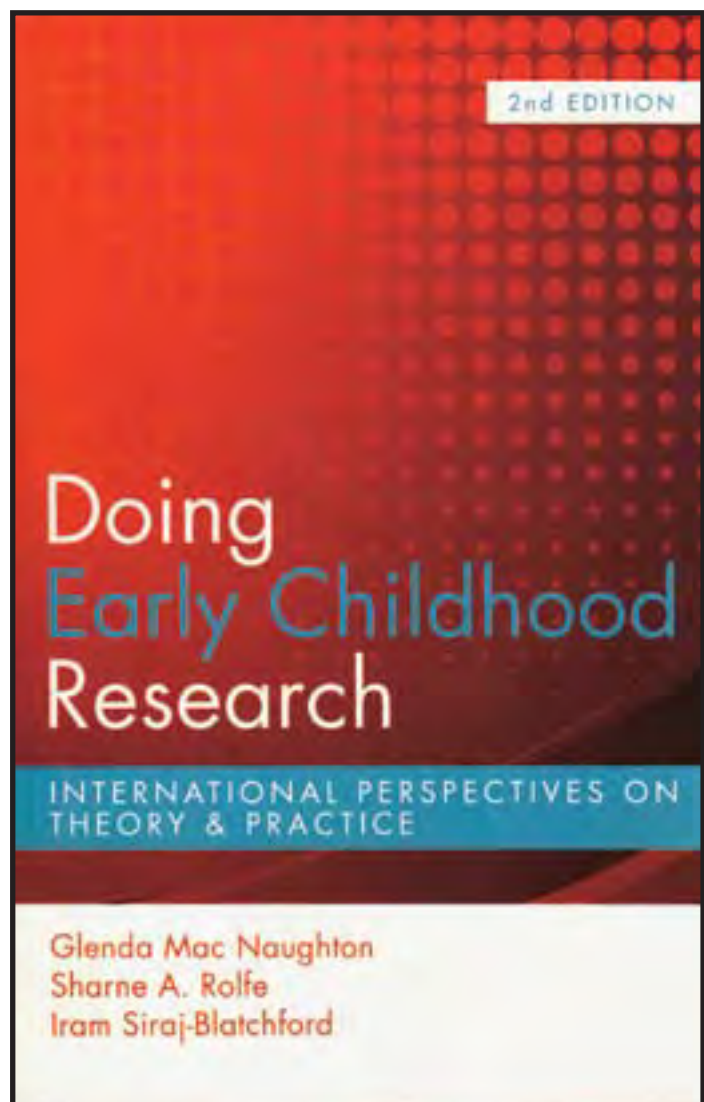
Reviewed by: **Sandra Taylor**

Research is about uncovering and enabling the emergence of new understandings, insights and knowledge (Rolfe & Mac Naughton, 2010:3).

This book provides an introduction to the practice of research within the early childhood field; the diverse methods by which this may be accomplished and the specific guidelines which must be adhered to. As early childhood professionals this should be of great interest to us, whether it be so that we may conduct independent research initiatives to drive our own practice or simply so that we may better understand what lies behind the decisions that guide our industry.

This book is divided into three parts which essentially divides your journey into the background of research, how to plan your own research and, finally, how to facilitate the process. The chapters within each part are penned by a variety of contributors and I found this to be interesting because each provided a different insight – from the beginner through to the seasoned professional. Each chapter is summarised, suggested further readings are listed and questions are provided for personal reflection. I found the questions useful as they really helped me to focus upon the issues at hand and guide me through the thought processes required to be a successful researcher. Most of the chapters are illustrated with case studies and examples to help gain improved understanding. Key terminology is highlighted throughout the body of the text and a glossary of these important terms is provided at the end of the book.

A great deal of this textbook is heavy-going, but, considering the topic being dealt with, it needs to be. As a research novice, I felt that the book provided a comprehensive introduction and feel that I would be able to follow the basics with some confidence when using this book as a guide.



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.

