



**AGECS**

**The Association of Graduates  
in Early Childhood Studies**

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**AUDAX**

*(Latin) courageous, bold, daring*

**AUDAX 102 - Autumn 2021**

Journal of the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies

PO Box 12163, A'Beckett St, Melbourne VIC 8006

Mobile 0492 956 829

[info@agecs.org.au](mailto:info@agecs.org.au)



**Welcome** to the Autumn edition of AUDAX and to this Vice President's report. Our President, Alannah Dore, is currently on well-earned leave and I am happy to write this report to share with you all what your Association has been up to, so far, this year.

As we all continue to deal with the health and social circumstances that Covid 19 has deemed necessary, the AGECS has continued to offer service to the Early Childhood Community through virtual forums, presentations and workshops. The AGECS Council has continued to hold meetings through online forums, and this has enabled some members who live outside of Melbourne to join the team. We would like to re-welcome Bridie Raban to the Council; Bridie joins us from Mildura. Bridie is a past president of the Association and was the original holder of the position of Mooroolbeek Chair, at Melbourne University, Graduate School of Education.

The beginning of this year has been a busy one with much behind the scenes work being completed, including the exciting re-launch of the AGECS Facebook page. The new page was launched on February 13<sup>th</sup> and we hope that many of you have already checked this out and are enjoying the posts and news. We are also excited to have a new AGECS website, that is much more user friendly, and will have a range of valuable resources and information available. Other behind the scenes work for the AGECS has included the development of policies and procedures that ensure the organisation continues to operate well into the future as an ethical and transparent organisation.

'The Fellowship Program for Leadership and Change' Grants closing date has been extended until May 31<sup>st</sup> due to the many disruptions caused by the Covid pandemic. I would urge you to consider applying or promoting this amazing opportunity to colleagues. As a previous recipient, I can tell you from personal experience, how great it is to be funded to learn more about your area of interest and then share your learnings with the early childhood community. To support applicants further a grant writing workshop was offered on April 12<sup>th</sup>. This very practical

and useful workshop was kindly presented by Dr. Coral Campbell.

We have held three online events in the first part of this year and would like to thank all those who worked hard to prepare and present and to those who attend these events. As always, our fantastic Office Administrator and Events Coordinator, Liz Potter and Alex Heard played a huge part in making these events successful. We continue to feel very appreciative of their hard work, commitment and dedication to their important roles.

Feb 17<sup>th</sup> Bush and Beach Kinder Professional Development, Presented by Coral Campbell and Chris Speldewinde

Feb 23<sup>rd</sup> February Forum – Discussing 'Superiority in Early Childhood' with Dr Red Ruby Scarlet, Carolyn Lunt and Kim Browne

April 12<sup>th</sup> Grant writing workshop with Coral Campbell for potential applicants of 'The Fellowship Program for Leadership and Change' Grants

Our Reconciliation Action Plan Sub-committee members have continued to meet and we are pleased to report that we are in the final stages of developing this vital, initial document, which will guide and lead us in our interactions and collaborations with our indigenous colleagues and community members. The committee are finalising the details of this, whilst a text only draft submission has gone to Reconciliation Australia. We look forward to sharing more information as we move into the next stage of our planning with you all.

The AGECS council continue to be amazed at the work of working Educators out in the field. It has been a busy time managing School Readiness Funding, language programs, the role out of funded three year old kindergarten, work force surveys on top of your usual workloads during a pandemic. We hope that we can continue to provide you with professional development and support as you all navigate the remainder of this year.

***Sarah O'Donnell – Vice President***

***The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) meets in Carlton on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people. Our mission statement recognises that quality early childhood settings enhance learning and developmental achievements for all children, with the most significant impact being on outcomes for children experiencing vulnerability. In keeping with this, we acknowledge the dispossession of the Wurundjeri peoples and other Aboriginal Victorians due to the impact of colonisation.***

## AGECS Activities.....

- **The Annual General Meeting**  
November 7<sup>th</sup> 2020

Another first for AGECS, with our AGM carried out via Zoom!

A resounding success.

The AGM was preceded with a presentation by Dr Red Ruby Scarlet, on the topic of:

### **Exploring the Places and Spaces of Educators in the 'New Normal'.**



**Dr Ruby Red** is an activist, early childhood teacher-researcher, consultant, speaker, artist and academic. Red has 25 years experience in early education, and is passionate about Creative, imaginative,

inclusive practices – especially those that promote anti-bias, high quality art practices, respect for Aboriginal cultures and social justice.

The presentation gave us much food for thought as we were still in the midst of navigating ECE through the pandemic and the future for 2021 was very much unknown. We came away with Dr Ruby Red's perspective and a different lens for us to use in our adaptation of Covid rules in the playground and beyond.

**The actual AGM** was well organised and the election of members was again straightforward, with enough nominations to form a 2021 Council.

A motion was passed to form a Steering Committee to review the Constitution and members were invited to join.

- **First Virtual Forum for 2021**

Another opportunity to hear from Dr Red Ruby Scarlet, alongside Kim Browne and Carolyn Lunt to discuss the question,

### ***'Does superiority exist in early childhood?'***

A few technical issues, but it went well with lively discussions and some questions to take back to our workplaces.

In the early childhood field, educators commonly adopt an anti-bias/multicultural curriculum to address such issues with young children. Is this true?

- **The Fellowship for Leadership and Change**

The program timeline has been extended for applications this year from February 28<sup>th</sup> to May 31<sup>st</sup>. As travel was not at all possible last year and overseas travel currently is still not an option, the 2020 applicants who were successful in receiving a Fellowship, have the opportunity to carry it over until 2022.

Domestic travel is now possible, so we encourage all of you to consider applying for a grant to pursue further learning in something you are passionate about to make effective change in your work and that of the ECE sector.

There are many opportunities within Victoria and other states for you to visit, to participate in and to learn from. Look at regional areas for enriched cultural experiences, leadership styles and programs that reflect their own communities.

Included in this edition of AUDAX is the article written by Sarah Denholm, a Fellowship recipient from 2019.

Sarah was the most recent successful recipient to travel overseas for her learning and development through the Fellowship.



## Exploring cultural competency and inclusion:

### Re-imagining ways of welcome and partnership with families. By Sarah Denholm

My name is Sarah Denholm and I work as the Director of Ruyton Early Learning, at Ruyton Girls' School in Melbourne. Ruyton Early Learning is an approved Long Day Care centre, welcoming children aged 3 to 5 years for term time and holiday programmes.



Our Early Learning Centre has been on a journey in recent years, exploring the educational project of Reggio Emilia and subsequently, influenced by many of the principles and practices of the approach. We are also influenced by inquiry-based learning, nature pedagogy and more recently, the work of Harvard's Project Zero and Cultures of Thinking.

Over time, as a team we have become more attuned to the concept of 'teacher as researcher' and are discovering what that means to us. For us, it meant we were starting to notice and observe more, ask questions and begin to take action to research to improve our practice. In 2018, we started to notice more about our demographic of children and families- observing that we were welcoming an increasing number of children and parents from a multitude of backgrounds and cultures, who sometimes spoke English as an additional language or had little or no English. Many of our children were speaking Mandarin, Cantonese and other languages. We noticed more and more grandparents were providing care for their grandchildren, often being charged with

the important role of drop off or collection and sometimes the main caregiver while busy families travelled for work. We also observed that our ways of written and verbal communication sometimes had challenges.

These observations and more led to some 'burning questions' for us as a centre- what is our role here? What impacts might this have on student wellbeing? How do we welcome better? How do we ensure we are including all? What other ways can we collaborate and include? How do we have authentic parent partnerships? How do we promote and develop of the cultural competencies of our children? How can we weave culture, heritage and values into our programme, ensuring this works alongside and with our other pedagogical influences such as those from Reggio Emilia? How can we get the perspective of families on this?

These questions and more led me to research ways to explore this within and outside our context and that's when I decided to apply for an AGECS Fellowship Programme for Leadership and Change grant to support my research. My research questions focussed on cultural competency and inclusion: re-imagining ways of welcome and partnership with families. Fortunately, I was successful in my application, and then use the grant to travel to Asia to visit Schools and Early Learning Centres to research how they welcomed and worked with families from many different cultures. I selected schools and centres that were similar to us in context; either known to be influenced by the work and research from Reggio Emilia; having an inquiry-based learning and teaching programme; had a focus on global citizenship; and being a K-12 School.

In early 2019 I travelled to Japan and Singapore to visit the following schools: American School in Japan; Eton House, Tokyo; United World College (East Campus), Singapore; Singapore American School, Singapore; and Blue House International School,

Singapore. I approached each school setting, arranging my own study tour and itinerary and was so privileged and fortunate to be accepted and welcomed into each of these settings for large lengths of time.



During my site visits to these settings, I met with school leaders, teachers, children and parents. I observed learning environments, read documentation, joined in lessons and experiences and also shared stories of our own practice in Australia. I listened. I asked my questions, then had more questions and more wonderings. People asked me questions and we dialogued, debated and discussed. At night I would explore the culture of the cities I visited, immersing myself in the sights, sounds, smells and food. I would listen to the languages spoken around me, try to communicate in different ways and navigate my way around, often relying on pictures, landmarks and non-verbal ways of communication. All of this contributed to my cultural experience and therefore my research and learning.

There was a lot I observed and connected with in my time away, and much I found out about how each setting operated. I observed schools investigating equity around access of communications had their parent communications translated into other languages by volunteers and were exploring the use of language translation software. Some schools were fortunate to have staff who spoke many of the languages parents and children did, as well as others who invested in staff learning simple greetings and key phrases and used them on a daily basis. Many

places offered parent social functions and events throughout the year as a key piece for welcoming and connecting parents to each other and the school. One centre had a parent buddy programme, where all new parents were assigned a welcome buddy to support their family with transition to their school (and usually with a parent who spoke the same language/s). A couple of settings had recently employed a parent liaison officer to act as a primary person in the communication between parents and school.

The schools I visited offered extensive specialist and extracurricular programmes, including language and cultural classes to either build on your own skills or learn new ones. There was evidence of student agency and choice in this on most parts too. School entry ways displayed values and philosophies and reflected their culture, diversity and global citizenship through the choices made around what to display and how. I repeatedly observed the importance schools placed on the environment, aesthetics, documentation, how visible the child was in every space and how they all endeavoured to make the learning visible (online and onsite). One school commented on the importance of video and photo in documentation, as not everyone can read the documentation in English. Other centres had documentation translated into Mandarin, Japanese and English.



The feeling of welcome you received when crossing the entry threshold of many of these settings was an absolute highlight for me- as a visitor, with no connection to these settings, I somehow received such a rich sense of welcome and felt immediately I belonged here on that particular day. Every person

greeted me with a warm smile, offered tea or refreshments, seemed eager to engage and was so willing to gift me valuable amounts of time to share their stories and insights in their very busy school day. This sense of welcome was of particular interest to me, as a newcomer to this school, in a place I had not visited and stood with me for some time.

Schools seemed to share similar challenges, such as navigating parent expectations with a diverse demographic; supporting young children who were bilingual or trilingual; understanding and including the diverse array cultures of families and staff; and engaging parents who had busy personal and professional lives in an often transient environment. And interestingly, when asking my questions, I got a sense that everyone is still learning and evolving and there is still a sense of unknown and desire to know and do more in this space of cultural inclusion and working with families in authentic ways.

When I returned to Australia, I shared some of my experience and subsequent thinking around this and what this means with colleagues. From the information gathered during my study tour, these are some of the things that stood out to me to support development of parent and family partnerships; employing a parent liaison/support officer or cultural co-ordination support role; consider communications with families- are these being understood by all and how can we improve this; specialist programmes and language offerings- how do schools select appropriate languages to offer and how often is this reviewed; how can staff professional learning incorporate language and culture more frequently; how do we connect and support grandparents and other family members; how can we include more video, QR codes and exploring other ways to share and make learning visible; how regularly do centres offer drop in parent catch ups and informal Q&A times; how do we re-imagine the ways of welcome. Some centres and schools may be well and truly on the path, but for others these ideas may be new or relevant in time.

From this experience, time we have introduced some new initiatives at our centre and are working on some ideas for the future, including; regular staff professional learning with our senior school Mandarin teacher to learn Chinese greetings and words and understand more about Chinese culture as well as

English language learners; we re-imagined our ways of welcome, focussing on research projects with children to develop ways of inclusiveness and welcome for all; introducing more multi-media communication and documentation including more regular use of QR codes, audio and video communication with families; offering of a translator/interpreter when possible during prospective tours, family meetings; re-imagining our parent information evening to have more of a focus on parent participation and belonging.



Throughout my time visiting these schools, through my listening, observing and questioning, I found out a lot about the identity and culture of each setting. I also learnt about how they welcome children, families and staff from many different cultures and backgrounds, how they support language development, how they welcome and include and how they too, were in a constant journey of seeking to improve their cultural awareness and ways of working in partnership with families. I wish to acknowledge and thank each setting for welcoming me so warmly and for being so open in sharing their pedagogy and practice. I would also like to thank AGECS for the opportunity to research and learn and would encourage other educators and leaders with 'burning questions' to apply for future grants to enable their centre to research and learn too. At Ruyton Early Learning we look forward to continuing our work around cultural competency, inclusion, ways of welcome and working in partnership with families.

**Sarah Denholm**

## ***Letters from our Members.....***

### **COVID Times for the Preschool Field Officers**

As Lockdown due to COVID-19 arrived in 2020, PSFO's from Uniting were told to work from home like the rest of the world. An interesting and foreign concept as our major work is done out in the field, capacity building teachers. As a team we had many phone calls and Zoom meetings to discuss how we were going to provide a service that would best support our teachers. We also learnt about new technology which had its challenges.

Our work became phone consultations with teachers and parents, Zoom meetings, weekly emails to teachers providing relevant information to keep teachers updated on what was happening in the Early Childhood Field, constant check-in's with individual teachers to make sure they were OK, information about online PD's for teachers and parents, materials to send out to families and sharing information on how other teachers were presenting their program for the children. Zoom meetings also gave our team an opportunity to check in and support each other. An emphasis on personal self-care was an intertwining thread when contacting our Early Childhood community, as dealing with change on a personal level as well as professional level can be a challenge, particularly as the familiar was morphing constantly into the new and unfamiliar.

Transition and change can make us feel unsure and vulnerable.

As the restrictions began to ease in term 4, we were then able to return to visit some children, who required an essential visit, all the while meeting COVID safe requirements. It was heartening to observe the creativity, innovation, resilience, and persistence of our Early Childhood Educators who themselves were navigating a new way of service delivery. We as PSFO's, encouraged our Early Childhood Educators to share ideas with each other to help lightened the load for all.

Building relationships with children, families and early childhood staff always underpins all that we do, hence returning to field work once again has been both a joy and a pleasure.

**Sally Schultze**  
**Wendy Twining**  
**Kathleen Hornsby**  
PSFO's for Uniting

[unitingvictas.org.au](http://unitingvictas.org.au)



**Hi AGECS members,**

I am a member of AGECS, and have recently found books, magazines, several newsletters, Mooroolbeek Annuals, and programmes of Musicals, from the early to mid 70's...  
They brought back great memories....

I moved to Balnarring about 12 years ago, and taught at Somers Preschool from 2008- 2016, establishing a "Bush Kinder" at Coolart Wetlands in 2012.  
This came after being inspired by Doug Fargher at EEEEC conference, and later visiting Forest Schools in Denmark.

Bush Kinder is a perfect place for Indigenous Learning and Culture, and we were fortunate to have an Indigenous Early Childhood Teacher as part of the team.

Upon "retirement", I still worked as a CRT, and became more involved with the Early Childhood Outdoor Learning Network (ECOLN) - Training – "Can't get the 'Bush' and outdoor Learning out of the girl!" Working with great people, like Karen Anderson, Doug and Lisa Coxon.

Regards  
**Julie Georgiou**, Graduate S.C.V (I.E.C.D)1976

## *Recognition of our Members.....*



### **\*The Hart Awards**

Dr Sue Atkinson Lopez was delighted to receive by post a **HART Award** (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) On behalf of AAPEC (Action on Aboriginal Perspectives in Early Childhood), for the Possum Skin Pedagogy Guide. This consists of a beautifully hand decorated and mounted clap stick by Aunty Vicki Clark (Mutti Mutti) and a framed certificate acknowledging 'work driving systemic change' in the schools and early childhood category.

**Annette Sax** (Yarn Strong Sista) and **Denise Rundle** (FKA) were the principal presenters of the training. <https://fka.org.au/stakeholders/aapec>

**About the artist:** - Vicki Clark is a Mutthi Mutthi Wemba Wemba woman who has dedicated decades of her life to increasing understanding of Aboriginal spirituality and defending the rights of Aboriginal people to express this spirituality in its many forms. She developed curriculum materials about Aboriginal perspectives, spirituality and history for schools so that Aboriginal children could feel culturally safe and therefore begin to thrive within classrooms. Additionally she believed that educating non-Aboriginal children about Aboriginal perspectives was the most effective way of breaking down racist beliefs

and behaviour in the wider community. Vicki believes children take their learning home to the family and that is where changes happen. <https://www.aboriginalvictoria.vic.gov.au/vicki-clark>

**2020 Winner of the HART award for Early Years Category: Balnarring Pre School**

*Balnarring Pre-school Living and Learning with Country Pedagogy and Practice.*

**The HART awards** recognise local governments and community organisations/groups that are Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together. Nominations should be initiatives that demonstrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Aboriginal people working together, and initiatives that have contributed to strengthening relationships, respect and understanding while demonstrating a commitment to Aboriginal self-determination.

**\*Note: Your organisation can also nominate for these awards. Next round of applications close the end of March 2022.**

***STOP PRESS for Members:* EEEA Award will be back dated to October 2020, with pay rises and improved conditions. VECTEA to follow. Find out if you are covered under these new Agreements!**

## News from the Field of ECE.....

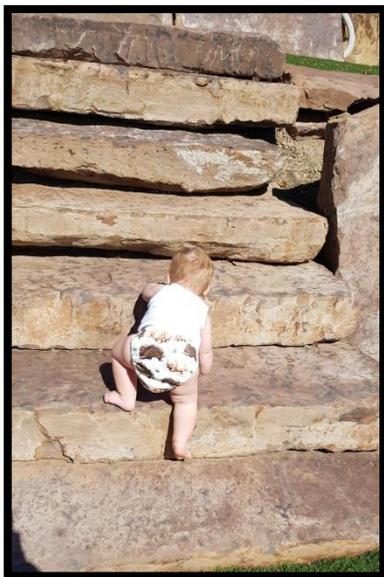


**Get Active Victoria** is free to join and gives you access to a huge resource of tips and tools for being more physically active. You won't need any fancy gear and expensive equipment to try our guided videos or activity ideas. An early learning team gives kids and their carers the opportunity to be part of something special.

It's an awesome way of increasing the motivation to move more – you're more likely to stay accountable to a goal when it's shared.

Get Active Victoria has heaps of activities for early learning teams to try out, and things for people to do at home as well.

An educator can start a team for their class, or their entire centre.



**Babies need to be active too.**

[www.getactive.vic.gov.au/teams/early-learning-centre/](http://www.getactive.vic.gov.au/teams/early-learning-centre/)

## • Safety of children with a disability

**Child Safe Standards-All children are vulnerable** but some children need special care and protection to ensure they are safe – children with a disability have an increased risk of being abused. It is unlawful to discriminate against children with a disability and like all children; children with a disability have the right to participate in decision-making that affects them.

In Victoria, mandatory child safe standards have been introduced to help protect children from abuse in organisations. In complying with the standards, organisations must promote the safety of children with a disability.

It is your responsibility to uphold the legal and human rights of children with a disability to ensure they are safe when in your care.

Children with a disability are more vulnerable to harm. This can be due to:

- social isolation
- low levels of expectation held about their capacity to identify and report concerns
- communication difficulties
- personal care needs requiring the involvement of different people and various levels of supervision
- signs of abuse being viewed as being related to the child's disability.

Each child is different and will experience their disability and the world differently – it is important not to stereotype or make assumptions. It can be hard for a child with a disability to make themselves heard or understood.

### ***What you can do to help keep children with a disability safe in your organisation:***

- Teach children about their bodies and their safety
- Enable and facilitate independence with dressing and toileting and personal care where possible.
  - Communicate directly with children with a disability about how safe they feel.
- Be inclusive and collaborative with families.
- Raise awareness about abuse and ways to seek help. Make sure children with a disability know who they can go to if they feel unsafe – make sure these processes take into account the child's developmental level and communication requirements.
- If children have communication difficulties, organisational procedure must ensure vigilance in identifying indicators or warning signs. Listen to children, no matter how they communicate their thoughts.

[ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-safety-children](http://ccyp.vic.gov.au/assets/resources/tipsheet-safety-children)

## General Articles of Interest.....

### • ***Moving beyond pink and blue?***



**The Age newspaper** (April 2021) reports that while fashion designer Anderson loves “mini me” dressing – he wanted to move away from labels around “boys” and “girls” clothing in the latest collection. “Children are massive sponges that take in huge amounts of information quicker than we think,” he says. “It’s important we are neutral in terms of how we tackle children’s wear because ultimately it has a huge effect.”

Historically, babies and children of all genders dressed similarly until about the 1950s. A specific example of this can be seen in an old trade publication from 1918. According to Smithsonian, the magazine *Earnshaw’s Infants’ Department* noted “The generally accepted rule is pink for the boys, and blue for the girls”. Theories to explain this have varied over the years, but it’s generally believed that blue was associated with the Virgin Mary, hence its more feminine connotations, while pink was linked to red, which was seen as a strong and masculine colour.

It is thought the genderfication of children’s clothing intensified in the 1980s, coinciding with more widespread pre-natal testing that included gender determination.

Ask any expecting parent, and the pink and blue stereotypes begin almost as soon as the mother returns a positive pregnancy test. And while unisex clothing has been a growing trend in adult fashion for several years, children’s wear has been slower to catch up.

Anderson thinks fashion is in a “tumble dryer moment” that will force many legacy brands to tackle longstanding taboos. And he isn’t the only designer trying to shake up attitudes to children’s wear.

Randi Kjaer Pedersen, designer, says there has been a shift in kids wear towards neutral colours. But it’s not only on matters of colour where stereotypes play out in children’s wear. Most retailers have “girls” and “boys” sections.

Not home grown parenting and babies’ website *The Memo*, whose collection of clothing is free of gender tags. Co-founder Phoebe Simmonds says it was a deliberate decision, born from the already overwhelming experience of imminent parenthood and the pressure surrounding gender.

“Our approach is to sell timeless items in neutral tones.”

Alana Tiller says making gender neutral kids’ clothes also supports the sustainability argument. Just this week, she removed gender tagging on her brand’s website eight months after bowing to pressure to install it, mainly to optimise search-engine results.

“We’re not born to wear one colour or another or one thing or another, so we just try to make it as neutral as possible,” she says.

“It’s something you don’t want to make political but sustainability is a nice way to frame it as well. Kids’ clothes, because [children] grow so fast, should be passed on. And making them gender-neutral is also a nice way to look after the environment.”

**Lily Ames, from AEU**, says “prescriptive gender roles and stereotypes can inhibit children’s self-expression. She cites a recent study from Cardiff University that showed boys who were allowed to play with dolls developed the region of the brain associated with empathy, as it encouraged them to think about other people and how they might interact with others. These moments of discussion and discovery can be so powerful in disrupting harmful gender stereotypes.

Early childhood Educators are in a prime position to circumvent the ‘only for boys’ and ‘only for girls’ and have meaningful discussions with children in their play and using stories and puppet play to support children to see each other as people defined by who they are, not by ‘what they are’.



↳ ***Girl or boy?***

## • *Seeds of Learning*

*'For the child...it is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow'.*

Rachel Carson

“Heart-centred teaching is about so much more than helping children learn facts. If we think of facts as the seeds of future wisdom, then it is the educator’s job to provide optimal conditions for healthy growth. The perfect growing conditions happen when each child is given the emotional support he or she needs – the emotional equivalent of sunshine, rain, and nutrient-rich soil that is just right for his or her particular seeds.”

“Child development theorists, researchers, and educators have long known that play is one of children's most valuable resources, vital to their social, emotional, and cognitive growth. Through play children make sense of the world around them and work through new experiences, ideas, and feelings. But in recent years, a host of social forces and trends — the influence of media, commercialism, fast-paced family life, academic pressures in schools — have been eroding healthy play, robbing children of this valuable resource for optimal growth and learning.” Now, more than ever, children need to be able to learn in the emotionally supportive environment that play provides.

Nancy Carlson-Paige emphasizes the importance of educators creating an environment in which play gives children a strong foundation for learning, the emotional and mental readiness to learn, and the social and emotional skills they need for success in school and in life.



In constructive play, such as block building, children frequently engage in tasks requiring relational reasoning, such as sorting blocks and combining blocks to create new shapes or structures (Hanline, Milton, & Phelps, 2009). Unfortunately, the time allotted for free-play activities that involve symbolic and relational reasoning has declined in recent years.

[www.Childcareexchange.com](http://www.Childcareexchange.com)

## • *Inclusive Education*



The old adage, “it takes a village to raise a child”, rings true particularly for communities that accommodate a range of diverse students and include individuals who are differently able.

In recent times, supporting children of differing abilities has sometimes been relegated to education support staff, specialist teachers and parents.

Although these individuals are keen to assist children holistically, rather than in an excluded environment, they cannot accomplish this on their own. They need the action and support of the village.

Inclusivity is a basic human right. Accommodating diversity prepares children for a life of successful inclusion. Having children with disabilities within mainstream rooms creates an inclusive setting that then logically steps into a more inclusive community, reducing discrimination and fostering acceptance. Being different is a fundamental element of life, and inclusive education instils this essential acceptance of difference into all children. Every child should find their place within their community, where belonging is nurtured and identity is developed, safely and without risk. In these positive environments, friendships and relationships will flourish, regardless of ability, improving the overall quality of life for children and teachers who interact in inclusive communities.

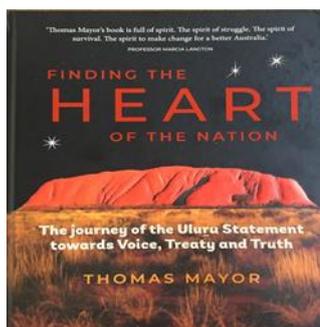
In this thriving village, Educators and parents are likely to work effectively together to provide for and accommodate diversity to celebrate the varied skills of all learners.

Educational centres are microcosms of our wider society. They help each child to find their place in the world. Children with disabilities are contributing members and will transition to advancing and enriching our societies. They, too, will hold jobs, marry and propagate our species.

Arguably, creating inclusive communities is a challenge. However, drawing on the head, heart and hands philosophy, is likely to reap far-reaching rewards.

***Dr Pearl Subban and Professor Umesh Sharma,  
Monash University.***

## Books for Educators .....



“The First Nations of Australia are truly generous with culture. Across Indigenous Australia, there is so much on offer to see, touch, learn, embrace and feel. You can go on a journey as I did. Start now. Don’t

wait. Go and find the heart of the nation!” **Thomas Mayor.**

‘You will hear us tonight and we will be singing to our ancestors, who are your ancestors too.

We will be singing to them to remind them that we are here, maintaining our connection to them,

for their appreciation. And we do this not just for us, but for all of us.’

**Djawa Unupingu**



Professor Welby Ings is a ‘disobedient thinker’. An internationally renowned speaker and educational reformer, he sees productive disobedience as behaviour that pushes our thinking and action into new and unconsidered realms. Specifically, he questions our anxious micromanaging of

thought and our preoccupation with tick box assessment. In 2017, his best-selling book *Disobedient Teaching* became influential in the reconceptualisation of New Zealand education.

Professor Ings believes that scholarship is by its very nature, creative. He sees creativity as part of normal human thought.

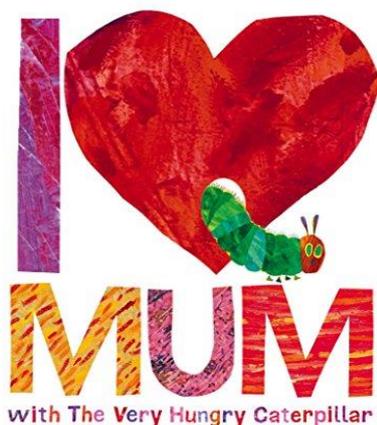
**-Welby Ings will be speaking at the May conference on Outdoor Learning Conference alongside Nikki Buchan.**

### I Love you

**Mum...** you lift me up... and hold me close... even when I'm snappy... that's why I love you, Mum! This book lets you join The Very Hungry Caterpillar for a celebration of love and all the ways to tell your mum how much you care.

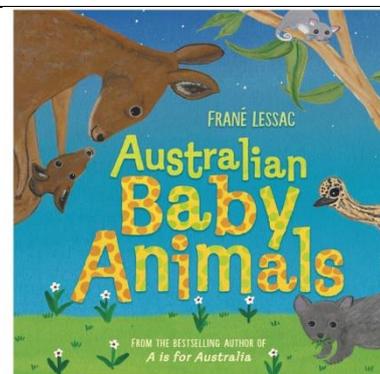
It also features artwork of animal mums and babies - from giraffes and crocodiles to bears and penguins.

**Written by Eric Carle**



A classic showcase of Australian baby animals and their families for very young children. With one animal baby featured on each double page spread, this colourful introduction to iconic Australian creatures groups them according to their baby names: joeys, hatchlings, fry, chicks, puggles, pups and platypups. The animals cover the full gamut of family groups: from marsupials to monotremes and reptiles to birds, Each baby animal is described by one line of text.

**Written by Frane Lessac**



## Television and Movies.....

### **Old peoples home for 4 year olds**

ABC TV, Tuesdays

2<sup>nd</sup> series

A group of older adults living alone, join a group of lively 4-year-olds in an intergenerational play school for learning, connection and friendship.

Intergenerational social experiences, covering Fear, Happiness, Sadness, Excitement, Hopes and Dreams.



### **Call the Midwife series 9- iview**

The medics and midwives of Nonnatus House are entering a bold and innovative era. They face unexpected challenges as the population shifts, rules change, and old diseases come back to haunt them. A look at impoverished lives of England in the 60's.



## Apps for parents to use too.....

### **The Learning Potential**

app provides you with practical tips and information to help you support your child's learning, from the early year's right through to the end of high school.

The app has hundreds of articles on all aspects of your child's learning and development, such as play, reading, starting school, working with teachers, talking about school, homework, reports, holidays



Developed free by the Australian Education and Training Department



There are many activities to do such as crafts to make in the Play School activity room (with off line simple instructions) and games to play with Giggle and Hoot and Bananas in Pyjamas. In addition, there is a fire engine station that needs cleaning and a car workshop where children can decorate their own cars and watch them drive through the village.

ABC KIDS play is a colourful and interactive play area in a village setting for young children.

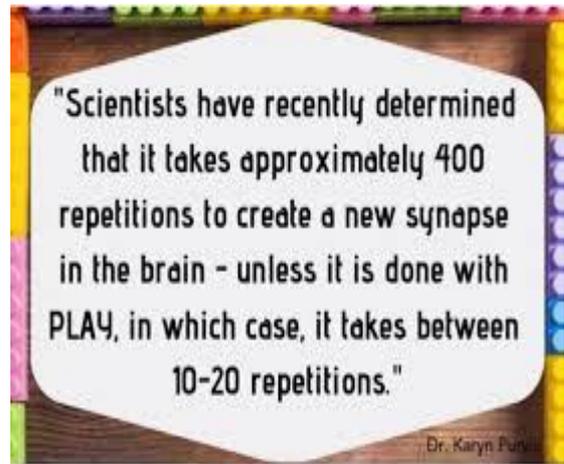
### **Children's Karaoke mobile app**

Selected Karaoke songs are also available on a free smartphone app! Now you can sing with your child in the car, on holidays, waiting at the dentist or under the blanket on a rainy day. App for IOS and Android.



<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/baby-karaoke>

## Noticeboard Ideas.....

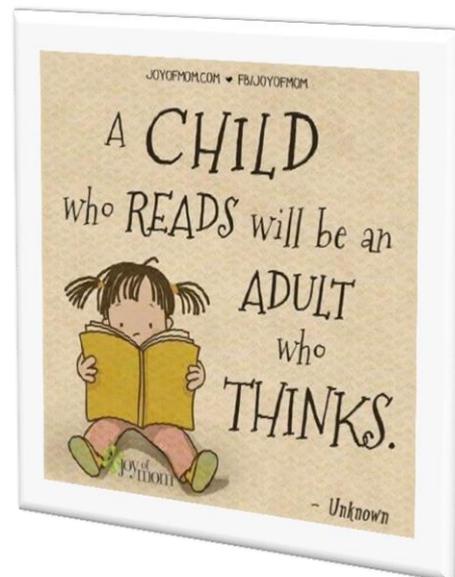


Process driven art	vs.	Product driven art
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• materials laid out on table</li> <li>• children are able to create whatever they would like.</li> <li>• children are allowed to leave art overnight and finish the next day if they choose to.</li> <li>• when a child is done, they are asked "what did you make?"</li> </ul> <p><b>What children learn:</b></p> <p>Creativity Language/Vocabulary Problem Solving Motor Planning</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• materials laid out on table</li> <li>• most materials are already prepped</li> <li>• adult tells children what to create</li> <li>• adult tells children how to create it</li> <li>• all of the children's artwork looks the same when complete.</li> <li>• when a child is done, they are told "this is a ____."</li> </ul> <p><b>What children learn:</b></p> <p>Adult knows best Follow Directions</p> <p>@EasyPreschoolActivities</p>

**14 things children need more of...**

@conscious.parents

- Unstructured play
- Sunlight
- Nature
- Hugs
- Freedom to explore
- Play time with parents
- Laughter
- Simplicity
- Belief in their goodness
- Daily rhythms and rituals
- A calm environment
- Compassion
- A shoulder to cry on
- Expressed gratitude for who they are



## ***Educator Team Discussion Ideas.....***



“Use your words” seems to be the slogan for preschoolers these days. Do we want children to use their words? Of course! We need to show children *how to use their words*; we **need to teach them the words to use**.

When we tell children to “use their words,” we are assuming they are choosing not to. We are assuming that they have mastered the ability to pause, make a plan, and know what to say in that situation. Moreover, we are assuming they are totally in control when in fact, when we are stressed, our “thinking brain” goes out the window. Not getting a toy may seem insignificant, but situations like that can be highly stressful for a little one. Add to that the frustration of not being able to communicate and we have perfect storm. We can make life a little easier for them by **giving them the language and coaching them through the moment**.

**Model the language:** Instead of telling children to “Use your words,” model the words you want them to use. Using language that is **specific and simple, tell them what to say**. For example, “Can I have it when you’re done?” These end up becoming teaching

moments and children will start to internalize the language for solving problems.

**Say it for them how they would say it:** Learning language is a process. A little one may not have the words yet to ask. Or they may know what to say, but they could be too stressed to come up with the words in that moment. If a child is getting upset because they want something, instead of saying, “Use your words,” model for them what to say how they would say it (ex: “I want water,” “I want my toy, etc.”)

**Model problem-solving:** When we show children how we pause and evaluate possible solutions, we are *showing them* how we work through problems. Next time you’re at the grocery store and realize they are out of something you need, model your problem-solving strategy out loud. For example, you could say, “They are all out of spiral noodles. That’s okay...We can use spaghetti noodles instead!” These “think alouds” show children that we all encounter problems and we can work through them.

**Name the emotion:** Giving language to big emotions can help calm children and process what they are experiencing.

## What is happening around us in 2021.....



Melbourne Museum, Sciencework, Zoos and Immigration Museum have all re opened for families and Children's groups to visit. See the Bugs Alive program, the Dinosaur Walk, the Forest walk and other exhibits for all ages.

Every Thursday		<p><b>Rhyme Time in the Park.</b> At Wyndham Park, Werribee.  <a href="https://www.eventbrite.com.au/.../rhyme-time-in-the-park...">https://www.eventbrite.com.au/.../rhyme-time-in-the-park...</a></p>
Now until May 23	<p><b>Imaginaria: Walk through Experience</b> at The District Docklands. Uses light, sound, sculpture and scent to create an immersive play experience for both adult and child. Ticketed event.  <a href="http://Onlymelbourne.com/imaginaria">Onlymelbourne.com/imaginaria</a></p>	
April 16 to Dec 31		<p><b>Chinatown Melbourne Market</b>- Resumes every Friday and Saturday 4pm to 10pm.          Heffernan Lane will have dumplings, rice, noodles, cakes and souvenir stalls.</p>
April 30 to May 2	<p><b>Melbourne Latin Festival.</b> The family and kids hub includes face painting, maraca making workshops using recycling materials, poetry, puppeteers and magic shows.          Kings Domain, Linlithgow Ave Melb.</p>	
May 1 & 2	<p><b>Moreland</b> City Council</p>	<p><b>Glenroy Festival and Fawkner Festa for families.</b>  <a href="https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/festivals-and-major-events/fawkner-festa/">https://www.moreland.vic.gov.au/events-recreation/festivals-and-major-events/fawkner-festa/</a></p>
May 19 10.30am		<p><b>Storytime</b> – Free event where children from all over Australia will gather to hear astronauts from the International Space Station read <b>'Give me some space'</b>. At 5 libraries in Melb.  <a href="https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/libraries/whats-on/childrens-programs/Pages/national-simultaneous-storytime.aspx">https://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/libraries/whats-on/childrens-programs/Pages/national-simultaneous-storytime.aspx</a></p>
May 26 to June 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>RISING Festival</b> is a surge of art, music, performance and ceremony in the CBD.                  Suitable for guests who have challenges with learning, communication, understanding and behaviour                  Suitable for guests with a vision impairment, with a hearing impairment, from mild hearing loss to profoundly deaf and who depend on the use of a wheelchair in a seated position at all times</li> </ul>	
May 27 to June 3		<p><b>National Reconciliation Week- MORE THAN A WORD. RECONCILIATION TAKES ACTION</b>  <a href="http://nrw.reconciliation.org.au">nrw.reconciliation.org.au</a></p>
June 21 to July 9	<p><b>The Aboriginal Art Summit</b> will explore visual, performing, digital and creative arts in the context of educational and community settings. <a href="http://aborignalecc.com">aborignalecc.com</a></p>	
July 26 to July 30		<p><b>Early Learning Matters Week</b>- early childhood educators, parents, carers and community leaders around Australia will come together to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of early learning.  <a href="http://earlylearningmatters.org.au">earlylearningmatters.org.au</a></p>

## Resources for Educators....

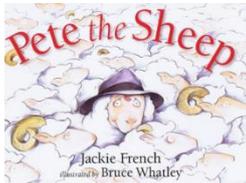


Wyndham Council website has online rhyme time, story time and baby time resources and offer heaps of Utube clips in all languages from Amharic to Vietnamese.

'Head, shoulders, knees and toes' in Hindi, Mandarin, Dutch etc.

'If you're happy and you know it' in Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Russian etc.

<https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/libraries/early-years/elibrary/kids-elibrary>



The Wyndham cultural centre offers events for children like 'Pete the Sheep' told by performers playing the characters and story.  
<https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/whats-on/pete-sheep>



**Resources for Families and Educators-**  
covering Identity, Wellbeing,  
Communication for ages 0 – school age.

'Babies talk without words', 'Babies love music', 'Follow the beat', 'How to build children's literacy skills', 'Memory games', 'Science works at home' 'A backyard obstacle course' and many other ideas.



[Knox.vic.gov.au/learnathome](https://www.knox.vic.gov.au/learnathome)

### Alfresco Learning



This is a great activity for children to identify the parts of a flower involved in flower reproduction and much more memorable than labelling a diagram on paper! Get hands on and provide a learning experience with nature that children will remember!



This activity enables children to be able to visualise fractions in a different way to help them with their understanding of exactly what fractions actually are.

<https://alfrescolearning.co.uk/our-services/planning-hub/>

### The Curiosity Approach

Using an overhead projector with children. (Try buying one on ebay).



Creative areas should be so much more than offering painting and colouring activities. Reggio talks about the 100 languages of children. Provide spaces for children to get creative in different ways, letting them use their 100 languages whether it be with light and shadow, sand, colour, music, paint; inside and outside.

[curiosity approach Network](https://www.curiosityapproach.com/)

## Obituaries

We take time to remember all passed Early Childhood Educators.

**Miss Elspeth Pyper** was Director of Malvern Memorial Kindergarten from 1953 to 1993 when she retired. It is believed that Elspeth currently holds the title of the 'longest continuously serving Kindergarten Director in Victoria'.

**Mrs. Doris Melville.**



**Gwyneth Pearson** was an active member of the Graduates Association.

**Rita Lesley Giblin** was born in the Alexandra Hospital in Hobart on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 1925. The family lived in Hobart before moving to Melbourne in 1931 and settled into Brighton. Rita attended Rosbercan Girls Grammar School before entering Melbourne Girls Grammar School in 1940. She was a bright student and talented sportswoman who excelled in tennis and netball. When she finished High School, she went onto Early Childhood studies at the Kindergarten Training College in Mooroolbeek, Kew and graduated in 1945 to become one of the first kindergarten teachers in Melbourne. Rita was involved in organising Graduates reunions right up until 2010 where she hosted the last function they had at her home. She remained involved in Kindergarten Teaching as a member of the Council of the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood studies.

Rita married Peter Freeman an ENT Surgeon in 1950 and they had a long and wonderful 65 year marriage until Peter passed away in 2015.

Rita was a talented and passionate artist who specialised in miniature paintings and exhibited at numerous local and international numerous events. She was instrumental in forming the Victorian Chapter of the Australian Miniature Society in 1992 and was President for 4 years.

And she loved her sport and was a member at Royal Melbourne Golf Club for many years and played tennis up until her late 60's.

Rita leaves behind 4 children, 11 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren who will all sorely miss her.

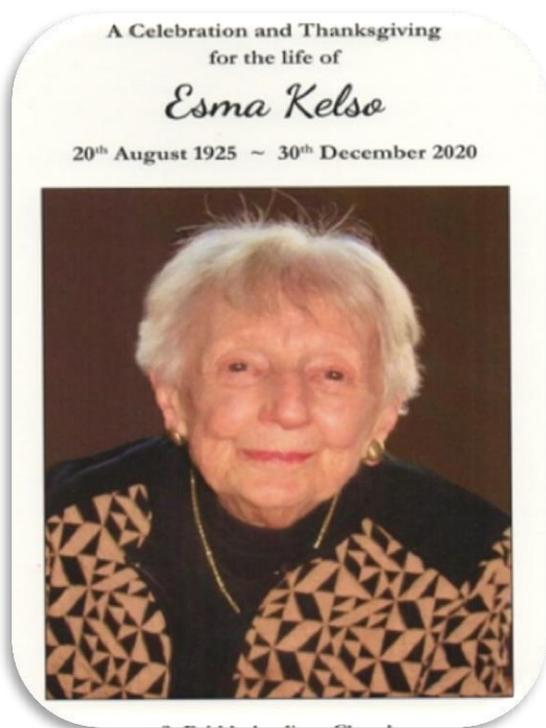
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Over **Heather Low's** long life she supported both financially and by action, many charities and causes. She recognised that with her privilege came obligations: in Australia of equality, respect and justice was at the foundations of her beliefs.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service was the recipient of donations because it serves and reaches out to remote and indigenous Communities. Heather was an active member of AGECS for many years.





**Esma Kelso** grew up in Burnley and attended MacRobertson Girls High. After leaving school, she attended the Kindergarten Training College in Kew. Esma then commenced a long, successful and influential career in ECE.

Esma worked virtually fulltime while supporting her family in postings such as at Allambie and Preshill. In retirement, she remained active at the local St Dunstons Kindergarten.

Esma's greatest contribution was through various leadership positions. She was appointed president of the FKA in 1978. This was a period of significant change in how Kindergartens operated, along with broader social changes in the rise of immigration. She was able to influence government policy and one example was the establishment of the Multicultural Resource Centre, for delivery of services to children from migrant backgrounds.

Another example was at the Forest Hill centre which provided emergency and holiday care for preschool children. Her tireless work there in the 1970's ensured that it received appropriate support and funding to continue its excellent work.

Esma also worked as a Teacher of English to Turkish migrants living in Government housing, providing support and friendship to Iranian asylum seekers and supporting Meals on Wheels. Esma lived a rich and fully-lived life well into her 90's.

### **Margaret Gowans (Cove)**

Passed away on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021.

Margaret graduated from Kindergarten Teachers College in 1949.

Margaret was President of The Graduates Association in 1970 – 1975. She was a competent and diligent president over this time.

In 1976, Margaret organised the preparation and printing of the '**History of the Forest Hill Kindergarten**', one of the two Kindergartens the Graduates (AGECS) owned. The other was Warrawong Kindergarten.

Margaret was also Editor of AUDAX during her time on Council of AGECS.

*This tribute was provided by Wendy Symes.*

### **Patricia Findlay**

passed away in 2017.

Patricia worked in a forward and inward facing public relations role at Melbourne University, Early Childhood studies. She made lifelong friends at Melbourne University; in particular Lorraine, who spoke fondly of Pat at Patricia's celebration of life.

Patricia was involved in ground breaking clinical trials at the Walter and Eliza Institute of Medical Research. Her love of history took her to the ruins of Ephesus and Temples of Abu Simbel. Patricia was a supporter of classical music and a regular at the Melbourne Arts Centre. Patricia will be deeply missed by her wide circle of friends and especially by her daughter, Leanne.

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## 2021 AUDAX

We are providing AUDAX as an electronic Journal to our members.  
For those members who have supplied an email address to us, AUDAX will be sent to that address in 2021.  
If you prefer to receive a hard copy instead, you will need to email us at [info@agecs.org.au](mailto:info@agecs.org.au)

### 2021 Council Members

Alannah Dore  
Maree Wiggins  
Avril McHugh  
Sue Emmett  
Sophie Patitsas  
Sandra McCarthy  
Sarah O'Donnell  
Dorothy Connop  
Gillian Shelley  
Nichola Marriott  
Wendy Grenfell

Administration officer:

**Liz Potter**

Events Coordinator:

**Alex Heard**

### AGECS Members – Where are you?

Moved house? Changed email address?

Login to the website at [www.agecs.org.au](http://www.agecs.org.au) to update your details, or email us, or call 0492 956 829 and leave a message.

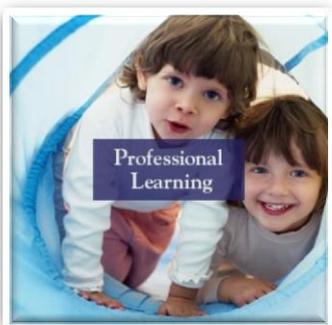
**Full membership once only fee: \$50.00**  
**No annual fee**

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies is a membership-based, not-for-profit organisation providing professional development and networking opportunities for their members.

AGECS members work, or have worked, in the field of Early Childhood education and care and /or they have significantly contributed to the field in other ways.

The Association has a 98 year history of philanthropic work, which continues through its establishment of the

**Foundation of Graduates of Early Childhood Studies.**



### History of the Association

The history of the Association goes back to 1922 when the principal of the Melbourne Kindergarten Training College, Kew, Miss Mary Gutteridge encouraged the students to form the Past Students Association (PSA). Its aim was *“to bring together graduates for the purpose of fellowship, to maintain links with, and to contribute to, the College and to explore ways of establishing a home where deprived children enrolled in the Free Kindergartens could spend a holiday and have their health restored.”*

Join AGECS via the website: [www.agecs.org.au](http://www.agecs.org.au)

Please send correspondence and articles for inclusion to:

PO Box 12163, A'Beckett Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 or email to [info@agecs.org.au](mailto:info@agecs.org.au)

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in AUDAX do not necessarily reflect the policies of the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies. Articles are published to provide a forum to share news and provide opportunities for discussion.

