



AGECS

The Association of Graduates
in Early Childhood Studies

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Audax

(Latin) courageous, bold, daring

Audax 85 –Spring/Summer 2012

Journal of the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies
PO Box 12163, Franklin Street, Melbourne VIC 8006

Council Members 2012

President: Judy Dunn

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Wendy Grenfell

Avril McHugh

Kay Margetts (Assoc Prof)

Anne-Marie Morrissey (PhD)

Sophie Patitsas

Sarah Rakich

Maree Wiggins



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

Recently I had cause to delve deep into my, not so young brain, to find examples of children's singing games, songs and finger plays. My Diploma students looked anxious when I said "for example you could sing..." A small pause ensued but then something unexpected happened! A treasure trove of songs was released. Songs I thought were long forgotten or archived so deeply in my brain that they could not be retrieved. How does this happen? Well, it starts of course with our own childhood experiences, and is enriched, I believe, by the often tedious process of gathering resources, firstly in our training days and then later, as practising educators. We compile mental databases that we value so highly that we never give them away. Throughout our careers we increase our resource 'kit' by, for example, reading early childhood newsletters and journals, attending workshops and conferences and we seem always to be on the lookout for ways to enhance our 'professional self' through the process of lifelong learning.

My students tell me that, already at trivia nights, they are the ones their friends look to for the answers to the nursery rhyme questions! Today the need to keep learning our craft is as important as ever. Journals such as AUDAX provide us with one of the ways we can be stimulated, challenged and informed as professionals.

Enjoy this Spring edition. Oh! and how does that song end? "A handsome prince came"

Judy Dunn
Retiring President 2012

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE OF MEETING

The President and Members of the Council of the
Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies

Request the pleasure of your company at the

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday **24 November** 2012 at 2.00 pm

BRUNSWICK TOWN HALL

233 Sydney Road, Brunswick (corner of Dawson Street)

RSVP

19 November 2012

Please email your [reply](#) to: admin@agecs.org.au

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

DUE: 19 November 2012

Complete and return [nomination form](#)

N.B. Nominations for Council must be originals and sent to

PO Box 12163, Franklin Street, Melbourne, VIC 8006

AGECS Highlight Event 3, 10/ 2012

Visit to 3 historic Kindergartens



Since joining the Graduates Association we have enjoyed conferences, outings and workshops but when an opportunity came to visit 'historic' centres we were delighted.

We were extremely thankful for the bus from the Gowrie as it snaked along Punt Road in the Saturday traffic to the first stop: Renown kindergarten in South Yarra.

The group was met by the past President who gave a summary of the history before taking us through the 2 buildings. In the oldest building most of the group was surprised to see a fireplace. The foyer held historical items, including the flag from the 'Renown' ship that brought the Duke of Windsor to Melbourne. We were informed the kindergarten also offered a 4 year old program in French which drew children from a wide area.

Leaving we ventured to Fitzroy for the next 2 visits.

At Rupert St. Kindergarten and Child Care the group was given a brief history by staff member, Dean. We were interested in the use of 'old' doors and windows from the, now closed, John Barnaby kindergarten when the building was converted for child care. Even the newly constructed kindergarten building had a matching colour scheme. In this building low

windows gave a child's view of the street. An outside area near the entrance featured foundations stones from John Barnaby kindergarten, Collingwood Mission Free Kindergarten and several local churches (now demolished).

The third centre, Annie Todd Kindergarten in Napier St., along with the nearby church has been sold.

Anne's particular interest lay here as her father had attended the Sunday School and Church and later her whole family came to annual reunions with supper in the kindergarten room.

The group were given a brief history by Helen the current teacher who talked of her sadness about moving to a purpose-built hub. 'Old buildings have character and soul' she said.

We were fortunate to have Margaret Walpole as part of the group, she spoke about the Uniting Church's role in both services..

We concluded the day in the park opposite the Gowrie, with a yummy afternoon tea, including spectacular cupcakes, and interesting conversations before going our separate ways.

Thank you to all for the organization.

Anne Bek and Sue Rewell (1969 graduates)



Margaret Walpole meeting up again with Dean, present staff at Rupert St.

THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK RATINGS.....

A member's account of her experience in September 2012

As I arrived at the Centre in the last week of second term 2012, I took a Department (DEECD) letter from the letterbox. "What do they want now!?" was the thought process as we had had a compliance visit earlier in the term and was this the official report? No! So no surprises for guessing what was in the letter – the centre had been chosen, conscripted, drawn the short straw and it was our notification in very official language that we were to undergo assessment through the NQS process. The QIP was due on 7th August and a quick mental calculation, my tip was that the assessment would be the last week of third term, probably the six hour session. I tipped correctly and our assessment day was in fact the last Tuesday of third term. Panic!!! The QIP had been completed by 30th April and I had had one consultation with our Management team to ensure the QIP was using correct terminology, no spelling errors or poor grammar etc., but now it was a reality, not something that may happen sometime later! There were many drafts to be made to the QIP before it was accepted as ready to be sent in. Likewise the centre philosophy under went several drafts to ensure best standard without changing its intentions.

A centre visit in July brought to light some likely perceived problems that we as staff addressed. A second support visit was very helpful as the problem areas were able to be discussed and worked through within all accepted parameters. A third visit from our EYC (Early Years Consultant) just before "A" day provided confirmation that the statements in our centre philosophy and the practice observed clearly matched. Discussion after the session where the EYC played devil's advocate and I was able to talk through the scenarios with little hesitation left me feeling absolutely ready for "A" day. The discovery that the training Assessors received was based on work from the Outcomes Project of which I had been a member reduced my anxiety as well.

Prior to coming, our Assessor rang to introduce herself and went out of her way to ensure we did receive the message and that we did talk before the day.

The day went like any other normal day – a disgruntled parent threatening to make a complaint; a critically injured baby possum brought in to us by a

family who did not know what to do or where to take the possum but knew we would have a phone number for a wildlife carer; and to top the day, rain which meant indoor only from just after lunch. As there were two Team Leaders from our approved provider present, extra help for some of our more disruptive children, who enjoyed one on one with an adult, meant very few hiccups with non co- operative behaviour at group times. We did have our normal chaos at home time.

While in the Centre, the assessor observed staff interacting with children and families; read every notice in the foyer; checked out all the pamphlets on display; read through my program book; looked at all displays in the playroom; spoke with both assistant educators and generally was inconspicuous throughout the day. I did have a brief conversation in a quiet moment as I was working quietly with one of the children but the conversation did not interrupt the program.

After all children and families had left, I sat down with the Assessor and one of our Team Leaders to fill in the gaps not observed. The Team Leaders were able to answer all the governance questions and I needed to explain how my programming worked and how I linked with the VEYLDF and EYLDF. I was also asked about Child Protection as were the other two educators; reporting to DEECD; links with the community ; leadership initiatives – articles written for Team newsletters; contributions to professional development at our staff meetings; initiatives undertaken with families within the Centre; transition to pre school and school programs and so on.

For me, the twelve week period was extremely stressful despite having attended several professional development sessions about preparing a QIP and dealing with my perceived expectations of what the QIP would look like and those perceptions of our Management team as we were not always on the same page. The session at the KPV Conference given by Professor Bridie Raban was extremely valuable as are the two complimentary books one edited by Bridie et al “Writing the QIP” and one by Kay Margets on programming with EYLDF. These are valuable resource tools for every service as part of the NQS process.

The practice visit with our EYC allayed fears and reduced much of the anxiety I was feeling and was able to approach the day calm and confident in what our service would be presenting for assessment.

We met NQS standard across all seven areas and even exceeded in several of the standards.

by *Shayne Collins*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.....

Hi,

I am unable to attend (*AGECS Political Correctness PD*) but would like to add my voice.

Just as we have seen a complete turnaround in regards to challenging/risk taking play in natural environments, I believe we will see a turnaround in some other ideas that are being promoted recently. I believe that it is OK to say "no", to tell a child that they need to wait, to have a set time for meals and to expect a child to say "please" and "thankyou". I also believe it is valuable for a child to learn that they will not always win, that sometimes they might make a mistake, that there are rules and consequences and that when someone else has a birthday they will not also receive a present. I believe in encouraging every child to achieve as much as they can and that others can acknowledge and take joy in that child's achievements. I believe that praise is good.

I also believe that instead of funding 15 hours per child that the money could be better spent supporting the existing sessions and drastically improving the current application process for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Services. Why do we have to paint the blackest possible picture of a child just to get them the additional support they need?

I praise (is that OK?) you for enabling people to attend this event and hope that some sense may come from the current madness.

Lynne Brady

And Another.....

ABOUT "CONNECTIONS" ~ Phyl Scott

Thank you to AUDAX for helping to make known a Website and new publication; they break new ground in supporting professional development in care and educational work. They are relevant to the Constitutional responsibilities of the AGECS ~ and that means of each of us as members ~ whether in current practice or not.

There are strong and valid reasons at present for maintaining some independent work on planning and evaluation issues.

Perpetuating and maintaining “professional ideals, traditions and standards” is a tough task these days. Unprecedented practical expansion; greatly reduced time in the professional components of Early Childhood Courses ~ and the heavy practical responsibilities of administrators and practitioners (both pre-school and tertiary) all shrink time and energy for the intellectual work that ensures a professional basis for practical change.

Protecting and strengthening a professional basis for planning and action does not just happen by talking about ideals ~ and saying that they matter. In fact, if asked exactly what those principles and standards are ~ and how you can tell if they are operating ~ it is not so easy to answer. So in widening the membership of AGECS, the Association has given itself a much more difficult task in meeting its responsibilities under the Constitution. The social changes comfortable for adults ~ and thought to facilitate general progress ~ can quickly reduce the thinking needed to protect and support children to the lowest common denominator of understanding.

How does Connections help? First, it recognizes that becoming able to use what we know about Human Development does not happen in lecture situations (designed for acquiring knowledge). It results from that knowledge being recalled and used in real situations ~ to become aware, to understand, to plan and to evaluate ~ and learn to “see” those key dimensions of situations which are not directly observable. Planned educational help of a very different kind is needed for this second half of professional progress ~ and a very different type of Reference material.

So Connections is not a book to be read, quoted, agreed or disagreed with and put on the Library shelf. It is like a Field Guide on birds or wildflowers ~ helpful in actual situations, when you have learned how to use it. It presents facts which increase awareness and appreciation of what is there and (often more importantly) what is not. It takes the scientific responsibility of making absolutely clear what ~ in reality ~ we are talking about!

Each Unit of Connections sets out a sequence of “Progressive Steps” which build part of the needed conceptual bridge between knowledge and action. “Concept Development Guidelines” and the author’s “Working Notes” provide tools for learning. “Check Points” allow evaluating one’s own progress.

Those who see their work as a matter of carrying out approved activities may wonder what all this is about. But any honest, objective look at the general

state of thinking (at an international level) makes it clear that any “education revolution” needs to start with adults. This is not intended as a smart remark! It is a simple fact ~ waiting to be noticed.

It would be exciting if experienced Early Childhood personnel (or any individuals interested, as parents or responsible citizens) made a little regular time ~ and had the courage ~ to join the author (through Connections) as co-learners, using the publications as a carefully planned sequence of learning, to be taken slowly, one step at a time. Small groups might meet to help each other understand (rather than discuss) the issues presented ~ and then to consider what these mean for their own particular setting for work. By opening their own thinking to serious review, in a non-judgmental and objective context, they would set a much-needed example; find some help with everyday work; enjoy some professional company ~ and, hopefully, have some fun in the process of making some big strides in their ability to help children.

Note: The Connections Series is a product of many years of research, planned personal learning and in-service work. Developed over 10 years as a personal effort, under several Australian research grants ~ and with the collaboration of Monash University Faculty of Education, The Australian Pre-school Association (now ECA), the

Gowrie Centres, ECE staff in Kgtn. Colleges and Advisers and senior teachers (who helped to try out initial drafts of some of the Guidelines) ~ it is now being continued, as long as possible, as a self-funded contribution ~ under the name of the Independent Research and In-Service Program: basic issues in planning care and education services.

(See Website for details of Author and contents of Connections; also pricing and options for buying these publications.)

Enquiries: Dr. P. Scott P.O. Box 8391 Armadale Vic. 3143

Email: ecedevel@bigpond.com

And Another.....

Comments heard at the 55th year Reunion 27/10/12

"Right we are here now at Darebin Parklands but what are all those young men doing in our spot?" "Oh it is Eid al-Adha and they are getting together to celebrate"

"Oh well, Beryl says we can go to her place in Northcote"

"That's great as it seems to be going to rain and the wind is nippy"

"Anyone know how many are coming?" "About 28 I think" (that Judy Mc an organiser)

Varied chit chat about travels, relocations and grandchildren

"Jo Low and Joyce Holland are in Spain, Wendy Richardson in Mexico and Mary Considine in Queensland. "

More chat and puzzling over some of the group who have disappeared- Elaine West, Lyn Murray More

"We remember Lois Kuhne who died in 2011 from cancer"

Delight in catching up with people not seen for 55 years

Delightful champagne was found and toasting one another we supplemented our humble healthy homemade lunches.

Next came a sharing of "confessions" - mostly from the early years of our teaching eg "taking most of the group on an excursion only to return and find one little poppet having a lovely play with all the equipment
ALL BY HERSELF. Horrors Oh Horrors "

"Thanks to Beryl (Blake), Judy (Mc Arthur) Barbara (Fotheringham) for organising the happy gathering"

"We had better not wait another 5 or 10 years for our next reunion as time is going fast"

Anon.



Notes from The Field of Parenting in The Early Years.....



About MyTime

MyTime groups provide support for mothers, fathers, [grandparents](#) and anyone caring for a child with a disability or chronic medical condition.

Each MyTime group is supported by two workers – a facilitator and a play helper.

MyTime groups provide a place to socialise, to discuss, to get information, and to support and be supported by other carers.

Facilitators work with group members, helping them get to know each other and learn more about the services and supports in their area. Members choose what they would like to discuss in their groups, with help from the facilitator. Depending on what the group wants to do, the facilitator might guide group activities or provide resources.

Play helpers keep children, including under school aged siblings, busy and active in activities such as singing, drawing, playing with toys, blocks or sand so members can spend time catching up with one another. Play helpers have skills in leading children's play activities. However, they may not be qualified child care workers.

[www. parentingrc.org.au](http://www.parentingrc.org.au)



The Big Move To School - when is the right time?.....

. [National Childcare Accreditation Council Inc.](#)

What is 'school readiness'?

You may start hearing the words 'school readiness' in relation to your child starting school. When considering whether your child is ready to start school, think about things such as your child's age, maturity, social and emotional skills, physical wellbeing and their ability to manage simple self-help tasks independently.

Compare what will be new or different about school to the early education setting your child may have already experienced. Some issues you might want to consider:

- The number of adults looking after your child may be smaller than in child care and group sizes will generally be larger
- The outdoor environment may be minimally supervised and unfenced
- Your child will be required to follow verbal instructions and school rules, and there may be a focus on formal educational experiences and routines
- Your child will often need to interact with children of varying ages, some of whom will be much older than them
- The children in your child's new class may be many months older or younger than your child
- Whether your child is likely to be one of the youngest in the class, has he/she developed the social skills to cope with this
- Whether your child will need to travel to school by bus or will they need to attend before and/or after school care.

Some of these issues may present challenges for individual children in the transition to school. These new experiences may be particularly difficult for children whose social and emotional skills still require a high level of adult support.

If your child already attends a child care service, consider talking to the child care professionals about their view of your child's readiness for school.

How can I make the move to school easier for my child?

Talk about school with your child

Talk to your child about what school will be like and what will happen during the school day. It may be helpful to talk to the school and possibly the teacher to find out what will happen in the classroom. For example do children have 'mat time', 'news time' or 'recess'? Do they watch television? Do they have library or sports days? It can also be helpful to share your own positive memories and experiences about school with your child.

However try to avoid giving your child overly high or unrealistic expectations about what school will be like, as a child's disappointment when the first day is not as expected may disrupt the settling process.

Visit the school

Many schools offer opportunities for visits to the school and classroom for incoming students. This can be a great way to help your child feel comfortable in the school environment. The more times your child can visit a school before they start, the better.

Practice school activities with your child

Allow your child to try on their school uniform and practice using a lunchbox and drink bottle. Introduce language such as 'play lunch' or 'recess' for snack time as this may help these new routines to become familiar.

Spend time with other children who are going to school with your child

Your child will feel more relaxed and comfortable if they can start school with children they already know. If your child is in child care it can be beneficial to find out which children will be going to the same school as your child and arrange for them to spend time with these children.

How can I help my child to settle into school?

Saying goodbye

Saying goodbye can often be the hardest part of the process. Plan for how

you will say 'goodbye' to your child when they first start school. This can be quite an emotional time but it is important to show your child that you feel happy and confident about leaving them at school. Saying a quick confident goodbye, may help them to feel secure and reassured. It is also important to remember that many children react emotionally to the initial separation before settling quite happily.

Label your child's possessions

Remember to label everything, including clothes, bags, lunch boxes, drink bottles and stationery. Along with saving money, this can reduce anxiety for children, families and school staff.

Talk with your child

Take time to ask your child about their day, and to find out if they are feeling happy and settled. If your child has trouble settling, it may be helpful to seek a meeting with your child's teacher. Remember teachers are there to help and want your child to feel settled as much as you do.

Avoid overloading your child

Coping with the school environment may leave your child feeling worn out. Encourage your child to have some quiet time and unwind after the school day.

How can the child care service help my child's transition to school?

Child care services can be extremely helpful in the transition process. Many child care services provide a range of 'transition to school experiences', such as:

- Arranging visits to local schools
- Reading stories about school
- Talking to children about schools and encouraging them to ask questions or voice their concerns
- Supporting children to develop their self-help and social skills.

Conclusion

When considering your child's school readiness it is important to think about their individual needs, skills and interests along with their social and emotional skills.

Once you decide that your child is ready for school, there are many valuable activities that may help them be prepared for school. Both parents and child care professionals can play a significant role in supporting each child's transition into school. Remember you're not alone and many families will be feeling the same emotions. If you have any questions regarding your child's transition to school you can contact an NCAC Child Care Advisor for support on 1300 136 554.

www.parentingaustralia.com.au



Why do children swear?

Young children often swear because they're exploring language. They might be testing a new word, perhaps to understand its meaning. They might also be trying to express a feeling such as frustration. Or they might simply be saying the word because it sounds funny or gets a reaction. Children might also be imitating others when they swear.

What to do: immediate action

The most effective way to deal with your child's swearing is to **ignore the swearing completely**. No talking, no eye contact. If the behaviour is attention seeking, this is often the best way to stop it.

Your reaction will influence whether your child swears again. **Staying calm is the key**. This will go a long way towards preventing further swearing.

If your child continues to swear, or you feel it's a good opportunity to teach her about swearing, try talking to her about her choice of words. For example, you could say, 'We don't use words that upset people'.

Preschoolers might not fully understand the words they use, but they can understand that swear words can hurt or offend others.

Should I explain what the word means?

Generally, toddlers and preschoolers don't need explanations of swear words. They are too young to understand some of the concepts associated with the more common swear words. It's enough just to say, 'That's not a nice word'.

Older children can benefit from a simple explanation, depending on the individual child. If you think your child might have some understanding of the meaning of the word, you can ask him what he thinks the word means.

www.raisingchildren.net.au



Parenting Australia

How much sun is enough for vitamin D?



Ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun is the best natural source of vitamin D but also the main cause of skin cancer. Vitamin D is essential for bone and muscle development and the prevention of osteoporosis. In Australia, we need to balance the risk of skin cancer from too much sun exposure with maintaining adequate vitamin D levels. So how

much sun is enough for vitamin D? This depends on a number of different factors including your location, the UV level, the time of day, skin type and lots more. From May to August, average UV levels in the southern parts of the country are generally low (below 3) so sun protection is not usually needed unless near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outdoors for extended periods.

For winter vitamin D in these regions, it is recommended people with fair to olive skin get about two to three hours of midday sun exposure to the face, arms and hands (or equivalent area of skin) across the week. People with naturally darker skin may require up to three to six times more sun exposure to help with their vitamin D levels.

From September to April in the southern parts of Australia, and all year around in the north, UV levels are 3 and above for much of each day, and sun protection is required. Most people should be able to get some vitamin D by exposing their face, arms and hands (or equivalent area of skin) to the sun for a few minutes mid-morning or mid-afternoon on most days of the week. Those with naturally darker skin may require up to three to six times more sun exposure to help with their vitamin D levels. Whenever UV levels reach 3 and above, sun protection is required.



The five SunSmart steps are:

- 1. Slip on a shirt and wear covering clothing (e.g. tops that cover the shoulders, chest and arms).*
- 2. Slop on SPF 30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and reapply it every two hours.*
- 3. Slap on a hat that protects the face, neck and ears such as a broad brimmed or bucket style hat. Baseball caps and visors do not offer enough protection.*
- 4. Seek shade whenever possible. Consider built or natural shade.*
- 5. Slide on some sunglasses if practical. Make sure they are labelled AS 1067 and cover as much of the eye area as possible.*

When the UV is below 3, get outside with the kids during lunch and encourage active play as physical activity assists the body's synthesis of vitamin D. The more skin exposed, the better, so after you've warmed up, take off the scarf and roll up the sleeves. ☑ Check out SunSmart's Vitamin D tracker available on the free smartphone app and on the SunSmart website to see if you are getting enough sun for vitamin D.

Remember that UV levels are higher in alpine regions and the snow can reflect up to 90% of the sun's harmful UV rays therefore sun protection is still required if you're heading to the slopes. Those concerned about vitamin D levels should visit their GP. Levels can be checked via a simple blood test and treated with supplements where required. To find out whether and when sun protection is required in your location, check the sun protection times daily – available from the Bureau of Meteorology and SunSmart websites, daily newspapers, or the free SunSmart smartphone app.

By- Jen Makin, www.parentingaustralia.com.au



Murdoch Children's Research Institute

Fragile X screening

Researchers from Murdoch Childrens Research Institute say Fragile X syndrome could be the first genetic disorder to be added to newborn screening in a decade. This is thanks to an early detection test which the researchers have shown works on blood spots collected from newborns that later developed Fragile X.

Newborn screening currently tests for 25 conditions.

The world-first Fragile X test for newborns, which analyses a DNA region that was previously thought to have no function, can both diagnose Fragile X syndrome and predict the severity of symptoms. Prior to this test, it has been difficult for doctors to diagnose Fragile X until the age of three years or older, particularly in girls. Importantly, early identification and intervention should increase the potential of children with Fragile X syndrome.

Fragile X Syndrome is the most common cause of inherited intellectual disability and the most common known genetic cause of autism. Every week in Australia one affected child is born with Fragile X full mutation and twelve children are born who are carriers of the faulty gene.

"The case for Fragile X to be included in newborn screening has been strengthened by evidence that early intervention with psychological and education therapies, and treatment with drugs can improve symptoms in affected children," David said.

The societal cost of providing healthcare services over the lifetime of one individual with Fragile X syndrome is estimated to be between \$350,000 and \$2.5 million. Its inclusion into the newborn screening program has the potential to reduce the incidence of Fragile X in the population through identification of at-risk families who would be provided with reproductive options, and could see a very significant reduction in healthcare costs for the condition.

Fragile X can be compared with Cystic Fibrosis, another genetic condition which is currently tested in newborn screening and identifies 25 affected individuals per 100,000 babies. Screening for CF aims to achieve an early diagnosis and earlier treatment of symptoms

The test was initially developed in February and is currently available via the Victorian Clinical Genetics Services which is based at Murdoch Childrens, to complement the existing Fragile X test.

Entertainment for Educators.....



At the Movies

BULLY

Bully presents evidence on a problem in schools that appears to be out of control. Filmmaker Lee Hirsh draws on his own experiences.

THE SAPHIRES

Adapted from a 2005 play by Tony Briggs, who wrote the screenplay with Keith Thompson, it is based on the real-life odyssey of Briggs's mother and three aunts from an outback Aboriginal mission to Vietnam, barely a year after a referendum gave citizenship rights to indigenous Australians.

MOONRISE KINGDOM

We see the Bishop children listening to a record on a plastic phonogram that explains for them how classical music works. The image is one of an unworldly innocence and sense of wonderment that these days, when kids of a comparable age have Smartphones and Ipad's as a matter of course, has long gone. Indeed, the story of Sam and Suzy's elopement, which occupies the first part of the film, is reminiscent of Enid Blyton's famous Secret Seven books, admittedly peppered with some wryly grown-up humour.



Books

Life Behind Glass – by Wendy Lawson. A personal account of Autism Spectrum Disorder. www.mugsy.org/wendy

1946 – First children's book award. **The Story of Karrawingi the Emu**
Written by Leslie Rees. (available through Abe.books.com)



1905-15.... to admire the illustrations of Winsor McCay, the cartoonist. There is a whole series to follow - fascinating.

Phone Apps

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Google earth



Evernote



ages and stages

T.V.

THE ENVIRONMENT CORNER — ABC NEWS MONDAY

The ABC's environment reporter Conor Duffy, takes a look at the latest green issues and stories affecting the planet

LIFE AT 7 – ABC 1-Series following a group of children from birth.

RED FERN NOW – ABC 1 Thursdays 8.30pm Set in Sydney.

What's on Around Us.....

-Play Australia is holding a seminar about outdoor play environments Nov 21 - 22

Westerfolds Park, Fitzsimons Lane, Templestowe, VIC

www.playaustralia.org.au

-From Sinta to Santa 3 Dec 2012

A Sinterklaas celebration of European Christmas traditions with stories, crafts and snacks.

Time: 4pm - 5.30pm

Where: North Fitzroy Library

-Early Years Exhibition and Conference - 2013

The Early Years Exhibition & Conference is set for Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th March 2013, Sydney. NSW and October 19th and 20th in Melbourne.

www.eyec.com.au

-Early Years in Education Society Conference, May 24th -25th, 2013

2013 Sustaining Best Practice (the challenge of the 21st century)
at Pan Pacific Hotel, Perth

www.eyes.org.au



Some useful Internet sites for recent news and research in the Field of Early Education.....

- **Exchange EveryDay.** <http://www.ccie.com/eed/>

Rhyme, Rhythm, and Repetition Oct, 2012.

. Mem Fox, author of popular children's books such as *Two Little Monkeys* and *Time for Bed*, will be the opening keynoter on November 7 at [NAEYC's Annual Conference](#) in Atlanta, Georgia. In an interview with NAEYC, Fox made these observations about children's books:

"Rhyme, rhythm, and repetition are incredibly important in books for small children. Repetition and rhythm probably even more than rhyme. All of those three elements are mesmerizing for a start. When children are born, they've been used to the mother's heartbeat in the womb. When they're born, they're rocked and cradled. There is the rhythm of life itself. There's rhythm in the nursery rhymes and songs that are sung to children very early on. And those rhythms and rhymes and repetitions morph into children's books, which are like a bridge from spoken language to the written language. The repetition, rhyme, and rhythm in written language then morphs into more normal language. It's like a stage of learning.

"I've said all of that as a writer, but I'm a teacher as well. As an educator, I know that if children cannot learn the skill of predicting what's going to come next in language, they can't learn to read. They have to know what's coming next in a sentence. They have to expect what's going to be the next word or the next phrase. Otherwise they might read a sentence as, 'He galloped away on his house.' He or she might not know that doesn't make sense. But a child who can read 'galloped' will know that it's going to be horse next and not house. The child can predict what it's going to be. So a child can predict the next word and then check it with the print."

Play Is Deep Learning Sept 2012

"Watch children at play and you might suddenly realize that they are not just frivolously wasting time or mucking about," notes Paul Bailey in his book, **Think of an Elephant** (London: Watkins Publishing, 2007). "Child's play is deep learning: a self-directed state of deep connectedness and personal engagement. It is also an enthusiastic and absorbing state of relaxed attention — healthy qualities often missing from adult life. Play is a creative learning exchange between mind, body, and circumstance into one integrated and healthy whole. Awash with symbols and mental imagery, children at play are learning in a way that can be wildly creative, insightful, and visionary....

"Research shows that the more animals play, the bigger their brains grow. Moreover, brain imaging techniques show that social play seems to rewire our brain, increasing the activity of connections between our brain cells. Play also helps develop our logical reasoning, our ability to learn, and our behavioural flexibility."

Apps for Preschoolers -- Yes or No? Aug, 2012

"Educational apps for very young children are a booming business... 72 percent of iTunes' top-selling 'education' apps are designed for preschoolers and elementary school children," writes Lisa Guernsey, in her **Slate** article, "[Can Your Preschooler Learn Anything From an iPad App?](#)"

Guernsey observed that while electronic games for young children are "flooding the market," research on the impact of these apps hasn't caught up yet. In her article, a number of initial experiments conducted by universities around the country, which had mixed results. In some research, learning on an iPad seemed to be as effective as learning in a classroom setting and more effective than watching a video. In others, the wow factor of all the bells and whistles on an iPad seemed to interfere with children's ability to recall a story — just as do some cardboard pop-up books [pointed out the researchers].

In reviewing scant research to date, Guernsey concluded:

"Child development specialists say that young children learn best when they are fully engaged and imbued with a feeling of control. They encourage parents to seek out more open-ended games and toys in which children could explore and create their own pace. Yet at the moment, not many apps are built with this approach in mind. A recent Australian study showed that only 2 percent of 'educational' apps in the iTunes Store allow for open-ended discovery and exploration."



• **Inspire magazine August 2012**

Employment Incentives for Early Childhood Educators aim to assist approved early childhood services to fill hard-to-staff positions.

In response to the growing demand for qualified early childhood professionals, Employment Incentives for Early Childhood Educators are available to help approved early childhood services to recruit early childhood teachers and diploma-qualified staff to positions that have been hard to fill. Due to its rural location, the Goulburn Region Preschool Association has in the past found it difficult to attract qualified staff to its 12 sessional kindergartens, located in the Hume region.

"We have teachers and co-workers who work in small services. Some teachers think it impossible to run a quality program for five children, I think it just takes the right teacher," says cluster manager Sue Brown.

"The isolation can be a problem for some people, and there is a perception that staff lack professional support. I think though, if you asked any of our teachers, they would say they are well supported, and have good opportunities for professional development.

For example, we have had well-recognised early childhood consultants such as Kathy Walker and Joy Ludway participating in our staff conferences."

The Goulburn Region Preschool Association was awarded employment incentives each valued at \$12,000 to attract qualified early childhood teachers to vacant positions at four services: Murchison Kindergarten and

Early Childhood Service, Nagambie Kindergarten and Early Childhood Service, Nathalia and District Preschool, and Tungamah Kindergarten and Early Childhood Service. As a result of the availability of the employment incentives, appointments have been made to three of these services. Another mature new graduate has accepted two part-time positions and is now teaching four days per week.

“We have only been able to offer part-time positions, and so it is very difficult to entice anyone to move locations. The employment incentive goes a long way in assisting with relocation costs. The Employment Incentives for Early Childhood Educators program is part of the Victorian Government’s commitment to ensuring that families have access to high-quality early childhood services that support the health, wellbeing and development of all children. The key to ensuring the delivery of high-quality services is maintaining an adequate supply of appropriately skilled and qualified professionals.



- **Inspire magazine, November 2012**

Excerpt from the article ‘Ebbs and Flows’, by Catherine Hydon

THE EBBS and flow of our lives start early. Children from infancy move through different parts of their day eating, sleeping and playing. As we get older our time evolves to include work and moulds to our individual contexts, but the ebbs and flows that make us human, remain. It’s these dimensions that provide a useful frame for educators as we explore program designs that

meet the need of children across longer hours, often through longer kindergarten sessions. Planning for these longer sessions has emerged as a particular challenge for some educators as they implement the 15 hours of kindergarten program for children in the year before starting formal schooling. The requirement that hours of attendance increase to 15 has seen the design of timetables that will, in a number of cases, see children at services for over seven hours a day. While this is nothing new for children, families and educators who have been part of long day services, educators who are used to shorter sessions find themselves needing to make a pedagogical shift. Seeing the program in terms of ebbs and flows makes this shift more possible and liberates our response from the logistics of timetables to broader considerations of children's participation. In this space educators can examine the theories, principles and practices that shape contemporary early childhood teaching and learning and if we dare, a good hard look at our historically established ways of working. Perhaps, in the spirit of reflective inquiry and collegiality, it is there that we should start as we consider how to effectively plan for longer program hours.

The nature of change is such that while necessary for our growth and development and often full of surprising opportunities it is simultaneously challenging to our ways of knowing and being. Change seen from the perspective of opportunity then provides an opportunity to ask reflective questions and carefully examine the practices, approaches and strategies we use. Each of us benefit when we take time to look for practices that have become entrenched or do not reflect the lived experience of children and families or of contemporary early childhood pedagogy.

Is it possible then, that the difficulty some of us have encountered in switching to longer hours actually lies in its challenge to the ways we have always done things, rather than seeing it as an opportunity to critically reflect and improve the nature of our practice in terms of learning. While this is not the specific case for everyone, the art of examining ways of knowing and being transform our professional practice. The place of routines in children's learning is a good example of how we might need to examine existing understandings. Many educators have in the past viewed routines as a process to be 'got through' rather than a rich learning opportunity. It was not until some of us first encountered a long day program that we witnessed what was possible from well thought out routines like mealtimes and hygiene procedures. Creating opportunities for small groups of children to join with educators to eat together not only supports children's language development

but also offers purposeful time to intentionally teach a myriad of things from healthy eating to managing social relationships.....

• **INDIGENOUS RESOURCES AND INFORMATION**

The Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC) has released a series of 12 Good Practice Fact Sheets, designed to give early childhood educators ideas for promoting, exploring and celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture whilst implementing the outcomes, principles and practices from the Early Years Learning Framework. SNAICC hopes that the fact sheets will be valuable to all early childhood services – both those with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and those without.

You can view and download a copy of the 12 Good Practice Fact Sheets at the following link: <http://www.snaicc.asn.au/news-events/fx-view-article.cfm?loadref=32&id=895>

Also.....Early Childhood:

Sisters Dreaming, Indigenous Resources

<http://sistersdreaming.com.au/>

SNAICC (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care)



Well worth a look.

• THE AGE NEWSPAPER

Bedtime Stories are Good for You by Paul Chai

When my son was about three years old, he started to prolong bedtime by asking for "a story with the mouth" when his picture books were finished: a made-up tale told while I sat at the end of his bed.

It turned out to be fun and, three years later, it's something of a tradition. I now have a second son, who is two, who joins in the ritual. For the statistically minded, this means that I have told somewhere over a thousand stories to my kids, which makes me the Barbara Cartland of bedtime storytelling. But just recently the well has run dry and, with my elder son at school, we've swapped my stories for reading a chapter of young kids' novels like *Beast Quest* and *Zac Power*.

I wondered about the three-year stint. Was telling fanciful fables on the end of my kids' beds any real use, or just a fun diversion? And should I keep it up for my younger son?

Poonkulali Govintharajah, psychologist from Kidpsych in Sydney's west, says that apart from just being good fun, telling stories to your kids stimulates the areas of the brain that control imagination, development, creativity and problem solving. "What we know from brain development research is that if you don't use it, you lose it, so when we stimulate this area with things like reading or storytelling we're triggering those neurons in the brain," says Govintharajah.

It also helps with exploring morals and values, assuming you are not re-engineering the classics so that Cinderella ends up selling a kidney to make ends meet. Melbourne-based child psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg agrees: "Your child has 100 billion brain cells and a trillion connections, but at five they're not all wired up. What we do know is that the neurons that

fire together early wire together, so what you are doing is creating this capacity."

But what about when my son asked for scary stories? I obliged with something I thought was PG but at one point he burst into tears, though he calmed down when assured that (spoiler alert) it would be a happy ending. "Give him that control back," Govintharajah says. "Tell him it's okay to be fearful, but that you can do something about it."



www.parentingstartshere.com photo.

VICTORIAN EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARDS -2012.

Outstanding Early Childhood Teacher Award went to:

**Lori Farchione-Zappia, Dawson Street Preschool,
Northern Metropolitan Region**

‘Webbing in Australia’



Lori Farchione-Zappia’s emerging projects evolved directly from the children in her group. She captured their voices, listening to their ideas and weaving their responses into curriculum webs. Ms Farchione-Zappia plans to attend a study tour of the Reggio Emilia school in Italy and hopes to share her journey and knowledge about webbing in Australia by writing a book to support educators to link programming formats to the Victorian Early Years Learning Development Framework and the National Early Years Learning Framework.

And Congratulations also to the Two Finalists:

Doug Fargher, Westgarth Kindergarten, Northern Metropolitan Region
‘Children’s Connection and Contribution to the World We Live In’

Ruth Wallbridge, Davis Street Kindergarten, Eastern Metropolitan Region
‘Bush Kinder’

THE EARLY YEARS AWARDS- 2012

Awarded in Children's week

Award category: Better access to child and family support, health services, schools and early education and care services

- Winner: [City of Greater Dandenong – Reaching Out](#)
- Highly Commended: [Ballarat Best Start – Connecting Schools and Communities](#)
- Minister's Award: [Maryborough District Health Service – Central Goldfields Conversation Companions Oral Language Project](#)

Award category: Improvements in parents' capacity, confidence and enjoyment of family life

- Winner: [CentaCare - Tarrengower Playgroup](#)
- Highly Commended: [Berry Street - Happening Families](#)
- Highly Commended: [Mission Australia - Aimin' High Teenage Mothers Program](#)

Award category: Communities that are more family and child friendly

- Winner: [South Gippsland Shire Council – Cook 'n' Book, Venus Bay Community Centre](#)
- Highly Commended: [Bubup Wilam for Early Learning Inc. – Bubup Wilam for Early Learning Inc.](#)



M e d i a R e l e a s e

S e p t e m b e r 2 0 1 2

The Chair of the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood, the Hon. Peter Collier MLC, today announced the release of the Early Years Workforce Strategy. The Strategy is an important document which sets out for the first time how all Governments will support the early childhood education and care workforce to gain the skills needed to continue to provide Australian Children with the best start to life.

It reflects a commitment by governments to address the immediate priorities for the early childhood education and care workforce, while at the same time working towards a broader long---term strategy with a focus on supporting more integrated ways of working across the early childhood development sector.

“We know that the first four years are an important stage in a child’s development and that high quality early education and care from skilled and competent educators is critical to ensure children get the most from their early years,” said Minister Collier.

The Strategy supports the workforce for al early childhood education and Care services including long day care, family day care and in home care, occasional Care and preschools, whether standalone operating within schools.

It is also relevant to outside school hours care and vacation care. “The release of the Early Years Workforce Strategy is further evidence of all Australian Governments’ commitment to ensuring that Australian children will continue to receive access to high quality care,” said Minister Collier.

The Strategy focuses on supporting the 2020 workforce vision as set out in the Council of Australian Government’s (COAG’s) National Early Childhood Development Strategy, that by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for both themselves and for the nation.

The Commonwealth and each state and territory government have Committed to developing their implementation plan which outlines the Steps that will be undertaken to support people to join the early education and care workforce and to get the qualifications and skills they need to support children from diverse backgrounds and with differing needs. Further information and copies of the Early Years Workforce Strategy and Implementation plans can be accessed on the Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations website,

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Pages/default.aspx>



OBITUARIES



Alison Floyd

Alison Taylor

Pamela St. John



Rest In Peace

2012 AUDAX

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