



AGECS | The Association of Graduates
in Early Childhood Studies

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Audax

(Latin) courageous, bold, daring

AUDAX 87 – Spring 2013

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

Council Members 2013

President: Maree Wiggins

Hon. Secretary: Kay Margetts (Assoc Prof)

Treasurer: Avril McHugh

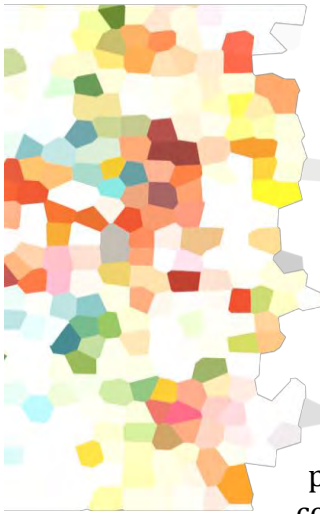
Wendy Grenfell

Ron Holmes

Sandra McCarthy

Anne-Marie Morrissey (PhD)

Sophie Patitsas



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

This year AGECS was proud to offer three forums to Early Childhood Educators, providing a panel of well – versed professionals who presented on topics that challenged our views which was evident in the audience

participation. Having the opportunity to converse on Early Childhood issues with

our peers provides a chance to explore ideas and to strengthen our relationship with children, co – workers and families.

AGECS is endeavoring to be the vanguard in promoting the best in Early Childhood professionals; we want to be on the journey with you. And next year we will again provide opportunities for Early Childhood Educators to attend further presentations that will evoke passion and resolve to be leaders in the Early Childhood profession.

Our Mission Statement

AGECS inspiring, respecting and challenging Early Childhood professionals

Principles

- **RESPECTING the past**
- **SUPPORTING the present**
- **LOOKING to the future**

AIMS

1. Service

- To provide specialized development opportunities that meet the needs of Early Childhood professionals and extend their knowledge, practices and expertise

- To provide networking opportunities to facilitate dialogue and fellowship
- To provide a well governed, well managed and sustainable key association to Early Childhood professionals

2. Community Development

- To advocate for Early Childhood Educators by providing leadership, excellence and respect for our profession
- To work in partnership with other stakeholders; to promote professional standards to ensure excellence and innovation in the development of Early Childhood Education and Care
- To provide a respectful place in the Early Childhood community for provocative and critically challenging dialogue

3. Processes for Collaboration

- To establish alliances with other organisations to leverage our vision
- To foster fellowship amongst graduates of Early Childhood and between different generations of graduates
- AGECS Council will build a working relationship that promotes informed and up to date knowledge and opinion on Early Childhood development

Objectives

- To maintain effective administration and delivery of services
- To ensure funds through strong financial management
- To provide well managed succession strategies for council members
- To provide well managed resources to perform administration tasks

- To provide information in different formats to promote excellence in Early Childhood
- To promote outcomes that recognise connections and dynamics in the Early Childhood profession
- To provide well managed resources to perform and implement strategies
- Council to be open and transparent to membership and stakeholders
- To establish contact with government departments and other stakeholders
- Accessibility to all Early Childhood Educators to resources and information

Strategies

- Increase membership to AGECS
- Increase membership to council
- Administrative support
- AUDAX
- Website
- Significant discount on professional development
- Contact with stakeholders
- Forums
- Fellowship
- Application of grants to Foundation
- Archives and information relating to MKTC
- Involvement in Alumni events

AGECS council consists of a small group of individuals who are committed to working together internally as a team to provide a high quality of service to our membership.

AGECS Highlight Event 4, 2013

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 **16 November** 2013 at 2.00 pm

**Bubup Wilam for Early Learning Centre: Aboriginal Children and
Family Centre**

76 Main Street, Thomastown

RSVP

11 November 2013

Please email your reply to: admin@agecs.org.au

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR COUNCIL

DUE: 11 November 2013

PRE-AGM MEMBERS TOUR OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INDIGENOUS AND NATURAL OUTDOOR PLAY SPACES

Bus departing 9.30am from Gowrie or drive yourself

Bus returning at 4.00pm to Gowrie following the AGM



SUGGESTION FROM THE EDITOR.....

Some Alumni journals contain a section of what members are up to in their professional or private lives. This is usually organised in year of graduation. It can be a great way to hear of your past student friends and what they may be doing now.

If you would like to share a brief note about yourself to be added to AUDAX, please email it to AGECS for inclusion in the next edition.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.....

Phyl Scott

From dreams to realities: sharing some serious thoughts on listening to the Graduates' Pod of the meeting on the organizational structures needed to "transform" ECE.

I share the dream of a united sector and voice speaking for all children. It was heartening to hear agreement on the need to insist on adequate Preparatory Courses and to protect the meaning of a teaching qualification; also the stress on the need to re-create work with children from their earliest years. (Hopefully, this will not be equated with capturing children in early childhood "schools", for most of their waking hours. Dick Smith ~ in his Magazine of Forbidden Ideas ~ has a point worth thought, in asking why we don't want free range children as well as free range chickens!)

I also share the growing awareness that something different is needed in order to increase professional, financial and public recognition of the Early Childhood field's contributions. But what is that "something"? I find it very revealing that we have to notice that we are boring ourselves, before ~ as a group ~ we may realize that we have, perhaps, been boring others for some time! This prompts one to ask what it is that we have to say with a united voice. Is it a demand for increased recognition (for adults) ~ or something which helps parents, politicians and the community to increase their awareness of the life which ~ collectively ~ we create for young children, in the context of an understanding of their age-related and individual needs? Will what is said help those teaching other age levels to understand the range of contributions which Early Childhood teachers have a unique opportunity to make? Any meaningful status is not given on demand;

it is a natural and legitimate consequence of being earned ~ in other people's eyes. If we simply re-state the importance of very early education ~ using the latest finding from research ~ THAT is boring. (Since when is the need for educational support from birth a new insight? Now we only know more about why it matters.)

Passion and courage are valuable ~ but they become a problem when they blind us to what is happening in the actual world ~ especially to the part of it for which we have professional responsibility. The great problem for the Early Childhood field is that organizational structures built on professional insights have been "transformed". They have been torn down and replaced with others based on administrative convenience, political power and personal opinion: also by a genuine concern for children and families, without sufficient understanding of teaching responsibilities. It is hard as adults and experienced teachers to look at our own educational progress. When someone in this Graduates' meeting says (with understood frustration!), "You know what you are doing as an educator, but the outside world just doesn't get it!" we need to ask "Why?"

Have we considered that we may be the reason ~ that perhaps we have not learned to think about our work sufficiently clearly to keep it all in mind, to communicate it effectively to others, or perhaps even to preserve its most important elements?

Later in the Graduates' meeting, someone sensibly asked, "How are we going to achieve our goal of a united sector with a united voice?" There was a sense of helplessness at this point. But just before the meeting ended, a few people made some hesitant but very honest comments. They recognized that, even in the group present, there was no united voice. They dared for a moment to stop just verbalizing ideals and believing in activities and looked instead at care and educational issues in the actual world, starting with themselves. In doing this, they took the most positive, significant and courageous step forward they could possibly have taken towards their goal of unity ~ but no-one (including the speakers themselves) appeared to recognize that. (Hence these notes to Audax.)

By having the courage to check out the difference between dreams (ideals) and realities, they opened up (momentarily) the space for exciting progress. But will that be made? What are the basic professional issues on which agreement is needed? What are the differences in understanding which prevent, currently, having a responsible, united professional voice ~ and how can they be reduced? For instance: some see "care" as a essential part of educational work; others see it as occurring automatically and better left

unmentioned, as in schools ~ since it seems to detract from being seen as an educator? The correct answer is not a matter of personal opinion or tradition; there is a professional (knowledge-based) answer and a responsibility to sort out the layers of confusion in current concepts of “care” and “education.”

So what are other members thinking should be transformed ~ and to what? It is important to keep in mind issues of equal educational opportunity and parents’ practical circumstances.

But might I suggest (on the basis of my own conceptual research and learning efforts over many years) that the “structures” which need “transforming” most are the intellectual structures, patterns of thinking in our own minds ~ and related professional jargon ~ which prevent us from thinking clearly about the substance of our work; from being able to synthesize and use more of our theoretical knowledge to help ourselves with it; from doing justice to it in communication with others; and from being able to accept, appreciate ~ and honestly differentiate ~ the nature of the contributions of all involved.

One of the very important contributions to the conversation at the Graduates’ meeting was the need for all Courses to teach students to respect children. Some were failing to do so.

Such respect grows with an increasing understanding of the many influences on human development; from the work of finding out how these are influencing particular individuals; and from working over time with those who express respect in their everyday interactions with human beings in general. However, that respect must come alive initially in the framework for planning and decision-making which sets the priorities for administrative and teaching decisions. This is where many deep differences in understanding originate.

My dream is that, as AGECS members:

- we will keep that foot in the door between ideals and realities ~ and direct a good deal of our passion for change to opening that door further and to facing the realities within the Association and in the ECE field generally. (It is in the gap between ideals and realities that educational work lies ~ and thus where the courage and passion are needed.)
- we will find the courage, some time and some official support to take up the challenge ~ of bringing our own thinking about care and educational work to a stronger professional level ~ one which warrants academic respect and helps in dealing with the actual world.

(Note. Just discussing these issues and sharing opinions only leads to more misunderstanding because the words we use mean such different things to different people ~ and so often everyone is partly right, but there is more to take account of. Some structured Reference material and learning efforts are needed.) And because dreams can easily become places to hide unless paired with the work which helps them come true ~ I will be continuing work on Unit 3 of Connections: the sequence of learning which helps to clarify professional purposes; to organize what we know; to set out the route from ideals to achievements in care and educational work; to make “the invisible work” of teachers easier to communicate; and to make it possible to see and enjoy professional progress. (See Website for more information on this publication.) With appreciation to those who had the skills and took the trouble to create the POD,
Phyllis M. Scott www.ecedevelopment.com ~ The Invisible Work.

Email: ecedevel@bigpond.com



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

• Parents warned about potential dangers of wheatbags

If you think it's a good idea to tuck your kids in bed with a wheat bag this winter, think again. Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) and NSW Fair Trading are urging parents not allow children to use wheat bags as bed warmers and take care when heating in the microwave.

FRNSW Commissioner Greg Mullins said that allowing children to sleep with wheat bags posed a fire safety risk.

"Firefighters have seen a number of fires caused by wheat bags that have started to smoulder after being heated in the microwave and placed under sheets and blankets.

"In a recent incident in Glen Innes, a woman heated two homemade wheatbags in the microwave, then placed them in her bed while she was in the shower. By the time she returned to the bedroom – in the time it took her to have shower – the bedroom was engulfed in flames and 80% of the house was lost in the fire. Had the wheat bag been placed in the bed of a sleeping child, the outcome could have been tragic."

Since January 2011, there have been 34 reported fires caused by wheat bags, although FRNSW suspects the number could be much higher.

Commissioner Mullins urged parents to ensure wheat bags were used safely.

"Wheat bags are designed to be used for aches and pains, and that's what they should be used for. Wheat bags can ignite, and are not designed to replace hot water bottles for warming beds."

"Look for wheat bags that are clearly labelled with instructions and follow those instructions. FRNSW recommends heating the wheat bag with a glass of water in the microwave – this will help prevent the wheat bag from drying out or overheating."

NSW Fair Trading Commissioner Rod Stowe said consumers needed to be aware of the dangers with wheat bags and in particular, plush toys containing wheat.

"These products are available nationally ranging in price from \$8 to \$20 and in child appealing characters, including a lady bug, cow, duck, tiger, pig, hippo, giraffe and puppy dog," he said.

"There are a number of companies importing such products and they are marketed for children and therefore this is a **risk** of them being given to children to take to bed to keep them warm. There is a real risk these products could be used contrary to the manufacturers' instructions."

Wheat bag safety tips

- Don't overheat the wheatbag by placing it in the microwave longer than specified by the manufacturer.
- Don't leave the wheatbag unsupervised in the microwave.
- Don't let anyone, particularly children or the elderly, sleep with a wheat bag.
- Don't use the wheat bag to warm your bed up, as it may spontaneously ignite.
- Don't reheat the wheatbag before it has properly cooled.
- A wheatbag should be cooled down on a non-combustible surface before storing.



www.parentingaustralia.com.au



- **Separation Anxiety**

Separation anxiety is when a child gets upset when separated from a parent or loved carer. For example, a young child may become distressed when left with a baby sitter, or when put to bed by herself. Separation anxiety is normal during early childhood. It usually starts at about six to eight months of age and lasts until about two and a half to four years of age. Sometimes it can last longer if the child has had any painful separations in the early years. Separation anxiety reflects the child's attempts to hold on to what is safe in a very scary world, and it will settle down as the child grows older and more confident.

What is separation anxiety?

Infants during the first few months of life become attached to their main carer or carers (usually their parents). This is because they learn that their carer can provide love, attention, comfort and nourishment.

A child generally starts worrying about being away from carers when they are old enough to know that they are a separate individual from their parents, that there are special people in their life who look after them, and when they can clearly recognise the difference between family members and strangers. Knowing that the special person(s) is near helps the child to feel safe as they take the first steps into a big and scary world.

When the child's special person is not there, the child becomes upset – often this brings the parent or carer back, and the child feels safe again.

If a pattern is established where the special person always comes back after small separations, the child eventually learns that the world is a safe place, and is able to be happy when the special people aren't there.

The separations need to be very short at first, because the child does not understand that their special person will be coming back. It takes a long time – years – for the child to feel safe when the special person is not there.

Bedtime

From about 6 months of age, children may get upset at bedtime, or even when the parent leaves the room – these are separations.

Children don't yet understand that their parents may still be close by when they cannot see them.

A child may try to follow the parent to keep her or him in sight, and can get very "clingy". It is best to comfort and resettle your baby than letting them cry.

This behaviour may get worse until the child is about fifteen to eighteen months old, and then gradually goes away as the child becomes more confident.

Staying with others

Babies can become attached to more than one special person, and this is healthy for them because they have more "safe" people to rely on.

However if there are a lot of people sharing the baby's care, this can be very difficult for the baby. A baby in day care, for example, will find it much less stressful to become attached to one or two carers only. Having many carers should be avoided.

Usually it takes until children are three or four years old for them to feel safe even for a short time when they are away from people they know and trust. This means that toddlers may often become distressed on separation from parents and carers when being dropped off at child care centres. However, this distress is often short-lived, and many children do thrive in the safe environment of a child care centre.

Children may be upset at the time that a parent leaves them, be relaxed and happy with the person caring for them, then upset again when the parent returns and they 'remember' that they were left. This is not 'manipulative' – it is normal child development, and shows that the child still does not feel really comfortable when the parent is not there, but is learning how to manage.

By the time children commence kindergarten (at around four years of age) or school (five or six years), they will be better able to manage an extended period of time without having a parent or special carer around, although some children will have difficulty with this even have at four or five years. Some young children do not show any distress on separation. This may be because they do feel safe (some are more easy-going than others; some have already learnt that they are safe and their parents will always come back), or it may be because they have learnt that getting upset does not bring their trusted person back, and they have given up.

Other times when children are likely to be anxious

Because very young children don't have an understanding of time and distance, even small separations can be frightening. Some separation times which may be stressful are:

- when a parent leaves the room
- if the mother is going to hospital to have a baby
- if the child goes to hospital
- when the parents go out at night.

What parents can do

All children have to learn to deal with separations. It is part of learning about life. If the first separations are managed well, it helps children with the separations they will have to deal with all through their lives.

Always make sure that your child will be safe and well looked after at the place where you are leaving them, so that you can feel confident in assuring them that they will be fine.

If possible, help them to get to know any new situation or carer while you are there. It can take some time to feel comfortable if they are very anxious – you may have to stay at child care or preschool until they feel safe to let you go.

If your baby or young child is going to child care, try to find a place where there will be only one or two people who will be the special carers and who will usually be there when your child is there.

If you can, stay with your child until they get to know the carer. If you show that you trust and like the carer, it will help your child to know that they are safe.

Always say goodbye, even if you have to go while they are upset. This builds trust. Sneaking out or trying to get away may make a child feel that you can't be trusted. Once you have said "goodbye" try not to drag out your departure as this is unlikely to be helpful.

When going out, try to leave the child with someone they know and trust.

Let them keep a comforter (dummy, teddy or blanket) if they have one.

Show that you understand their feelings, eg. "I know you wish I could stay. I wish I could stay with you too".

Let the child mind something of yours (such as a bag or keys) when you are not there.

Help them to know when you will be coming back. Tell them in ways they understand, eg. "after lunch".

Be reliable and always come back when you say you will. If for some reason you can't get back on time, let the carer know, so that she will be able to tell your child what has happened.

Have lots of little practice separations, eg, play Peek-a-Boo and Hide and Seek (and make sure to be easy to find!). This helps the child learn that you always come back.

Note: Sometimes when a child has been separated (eg. in childcare) and has seemed quite happy, the behaviour changes if the mother stays home with them again, eg. she leaves work to have another baby. The child may become clingy and seem to be going backwards. This is the child's way of working through the separation now that they have you there and feel safe. If the child is allowed to cling they will move forward again when ready. Pushing children away or expecting them to grow up more quickly than they are ready to doesn't help.

www.cyh.com



• **Family Break-up** www.cyh.com

When a family breaks up it is usually difficult for everyone. It is like a death which brings with it feelings of grief and loss. Most people need time to get used to the changes and each person's response can be very different.

Parents try to grapple with their own feelings while they make practical and very important decisions that will affect the whole family.

Splitting up may mean the end of a special relationship between two adults, but not the end of a relationship between a child and a parent. Children need the ongoing love and support of both parents. The best outcome for a child is usually reached when both parents share the responsibility and all the decisions that affect their child. This means making a shift from being partners to parenting partners (something more like business partners).

Although most parents want to do their best, many parents do not handle this well and some create more suffering for their children who are already in pain from the break-up. For many parents talking to each other is difficult, professional help may be needed. The way in which parents handle splitting up and especially any conflict, has an enormous effect on the way children cope with their lives.

The separation process

The separation process is similar to the process you go through when a loved one dies - it is the process of grief. This process is painful and can take a long time, even years, for some parents to come through. Although people experience it differently, most people go through:

- shock and denial - things are very confusing, and it is hard to believe (or perhaps you don't want to believe) that the separation is actually happening
- sadness - strong sense of loss, sometimes regret, sometimes guilt
- anger and blame - sometimes we blame ourselves or our partner or someone else (whether or not they actually had anything to do with the situation)
- resolution or moving forward - accepting the situation, making adjustments to life and getting on with it!
- How to tell the children
- Children have no say in their family breaking up, but usually are the ones most affected by it.
- Talk to them when they're together (if this is possible), so they hear the same message. This will save confusion.
- Take into account the age and level of understanding of each child.

How children cope with loss

Children don't show their pain and suffering all at once. They may seem to have got over it and then suddenly it reappears. Children, especially young ones, often don't have the words to express themselves clearly, so they can show their grief in different ways. Some may:

- become aggressive or 'naughty'
- withdraw
- become 'clingy'
- children who have been toilet-trained may start to wet or soil again
- have nightmares, or find it hard to go to sleep
- change their eating patterns
- try to be really good at school and at home, and because they appear to be coping, it's easy to think they are not suffering
- try to stand up for the parent who is being put down. Some try to protect the parent who seems the weaker
- show anger and hostility in play, with their toys, with brothers and sisters, with their friends or with you
- show problems in their behaviour and get punished, which makes them feel worse

Being aware of the sort of feelings your child is going through may help you to understand your child's behaviour. Most children are confused and fearful about what will happen. Some are ashamed. They might not say to you what is worrying them because they don't want to see you upset or angry.

Children's needs at different ages

All children need to feel loved by both parents. Parents need to think first of their children's needs before and above their own needs.

Children need to know that both parents will still be there to look after them and be involved in their lives. (This may not always be the case.)

- **Children: Birth to 2 years of age**

- are highly dependent on those who look after them
- will almost certainly be very physically and emotionally dependent on the parent who has done most of the day to day care; separation from that parent for any lengthy period can be very traumatic for the child
- Have a very different understanding of time from adults; several hours can seem an eternity; the night world can also be very different (and scary) for them

- can be extremely sensitive to conflict between their parents
- will often fret for the absent parent
- need short but frequent periods of contact. Overnight contact is often too stressful. When the contact parent has not previously been very involved with the child, it may be useful for the day to day parent to be present, at least at first. If this is too difficult, someone whom the child is comfortable with can help ease the situation.

- **Children 3-5 years:**

- are a little less dependent on their parents;
- usually have a basic understanding of what separation means;
- have more of a sense of time than younger children, but a short period of time still seems much longer than for adults
- often fret for the absent parent - things like photos and phone calls can be useful
- may cope with being away from their day to day parent overnight if they are well prepared; conflict between parents will make children less likely to cope with overnight contact
- are sensitive to one parent criticising the other, and may take it as criticism of themselves
- often imagine what they don't understand. They may talk about what they wish for as if it is true so you can't always take everything they say at face value . . . while not telling lies, they may in fact be telling their truth rather than your truth.

- **Children 6-8 years:**

- are more able to talk about their feelings
- often fantasise about getting their parents back together
- may try and look after their parents, both the parent they live with and the parent they visit, who is often seen as being all alone
- may blame themselves for the separation
- often express their feelings through behaviour problems, learning problems at school and physical symptoms like headaches and pains
- are usually comfortable with overnight visits, holidays of a week or so, and longer periods between visits, eg alternate weekends
- find overnight visits during the school week are often quite disruptive. They may feel that they don't know where they fit and what they are doing.



- **Why Large-Motor Play?**

September 6, 2013

*You are a child of the universe, no less than the trees
and the stars; you have a right to be here.*
-Desiderata

"In young children, motor experiences are essential to all aspects of development", wrote Jim Greenman in his classic design guidebook ***Take climbing***. It not only strengthens muscles and develops postural control, it also builds self-esteem and allows children to see and feel the world from different perspectives. Swinging and rocking force children to orient their in-motion perceptions to a constant world. Jumping causes children to learn that a constant — the ground — feels very different relative to the height of their falls. Hauling requires children to maintain balance while moving, and when they are unable to view their feet, to use a different perspective to avoid tripping. Motor activities constantly challenge children to integrate body, mind, and space. Children are scientists with their whole bodies.

"Large motor play has other values, particularly in a setting where one is very small, faces long days, and must fit into the schedules of adults and other children. It is in climbing, swinging, sliding, and so on that experiences of ecstasy, unbridled joy or power, concentrated tension, and wild physical abandon are most likely to occur. On the greyest of days, motor play affords children the opportunity for power and pleasure and emotional release."

Exchange EveryDay.

<http://www.ccie.com/eed/>



• **Family Routines**

Routines are how families organise themselves to get things done, spend time together and have fun. Every family has its own unique routines. Routines help family members know who should do what, when, in what order and how often.

For example, your family might have:

- daily routines for getting everyone ready in the morning, bath time, bedtime and mealtimes, greetings and goodbyes
- weekly routines for housework, like washing and cleaning
- other routines involving holidays and extended family get-togethers.

Family life might be more chaotic without some routine, but there's more to it than that. **Routines also let your children know what's important to your family.** Highly meaningful routines are sometimes called rituals. These can help strengthen your shared beliefs and values, and build a sense of belonging and cohesion in families.

Maintaining normal daily routines as much as possible can make it easier for children to deal with stressful events, such as the birth of a new child, a divorce, the illness or death of a family member, or a move to a new city or country.

Why routines are good for children

Some children like and need routine more than others. In general, though, routine has the following benefits for children:

- They can be a way of teaching younger children healthy habits, like brushing their teeth, getting some exercise, or washing their hands after using the toilet.
- An organised and predictable home environment helps children and young people feel safe and secure.
- Routines built around fun or spending time together strengthen relationships between parents and children. Reading a story together before bed or going for a special snack after soccer practice can become a special time for you and your children to share.

- Daily routines help set our body clocks. For example, bedtime routines help children's bodies 'know' when it's time to sleep. If your child needs to take medicine regularly, a routine for this will help make both of you less likely to forget.
- Having an important job to do in the family routine helps older children and teenagers develop a sense of responsibility.
- Routines help develop basic work skills and time management.
- Routines can help promote a feeling of safety in stressful situations or during difficult stages of development, such as puberty.
- When children reach **adolescence**, the familiarity of regular home routines can help them feel looked after. Predictable family routines can be a welcome relief from the changes they're experiencing.
- Routines for children with disabilities can be a big help. They can be even more important for children who find it hard to understand or cope with change.

Routines have health benefits, too; children in families with regular routines have fewer respiratory infections than those in routine-free homes. This might be because routines contribute to healthy habits like washing hands. Routines might also help reduce stress, which can suppress the immune system.

Why routines are good for parents

Routines take some effort to create. But once established, they have lots of benefits:

- They free up time for you to think about other things while you work.
- Regular and consistent routines can help you feel like you're doing a good job as a parent.
- When things are hectic, routines can help you feel more organised, which lowers stress.
- A routine will help you complete your daily tasks efficiently.
- As children get better at following a routine by themselves, you can give fewer instructions and nag less.

- Routines free you from having to constantly resolve disputes and make decisions. If Sunday night is pizza night, no-one needs to argue about what's for dinner.

Older children and teenagers might grow out of, or challenge, some routines. **Being flexible and adapting routines** as your children get older can help with this issue. For example, changing routines for teenagers could be linked to milestones, such as them getting their first part-time job.

Kinds of routines

The routines adopted by families are as diverse as families themselves. Here are some routines you might want to consider for your family.

Age group	You could have a routine for:
Toddlers and preschoolers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting ready in the morning • Going to bed at night • Regular 'play dates' • Eating meals • Regular play and talk times with a parent each day • Story time (book reading) • Quiet time each evening
School-age children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene and health – for example, brushing teeth and washing hands • Tidying up, looking after toys • Caring for pets • Regular 'play dates' • Pocket money, given at a regular time and day • Helping with the laundry • After-school activities • Chores – for example, setting the dinner table, packing away, unpacking the dishwasher • Hobbies or sport

Using routines to solve family problems

There's no rule about how many or what kind of routines you should have. What works well for one family might be too restrictive for another. It can also be easy to over-timetable life.

Raising Children Network

www.raisingchildren.net.au



- **Not all 'appy' children get best of educations**

The Sydney Morning Herald

In the expanding world of early childhood education and technology, not all apps are created equal.

Several Australian studies into preschoolers and tablet computers are under way and have found the devices can be an effective learning tool if used appropriately.

But the problem for parents is distinguishing between apps and overcoming their own natural concerns about children and technology.

Sandra Gattenhof, of the Queensland University of Technology, is studying how creative apps can boost literacy and numeracy skills in children from three preschools in lower socio-economic areas.

She believes children get the most benefit from a tablet when teachers and parents are involved. "Tablet technologies can be used to help conversations with children," Associate Professor Gattenhof said. "We're showing parents how to use these devices in the home as an educational device rather than a babysitter."

Jordy Kaufman, a senior research fellow at the Swinburne University of Technology who is researching the effects of tablet use in 140 three- to seven-year-olds, said there was conflicting information about technology and children.

"A lot of parents think it's this fantastic learning tool and other parents seem to think it's tantamount to child abuse," he said.

Dr Kaufman points out that many of the concerns around screen time are based on studies into passive television viewing rather than tablets, and the two are quite different.

"I don't like screen time as a concept," he said. "You can read a book on a screen or you can watch TV on it and then there is everything in between. There are games which have some educational value, games which have no educational value and games which are totally inappropriate for children." His research has found that tablet use in young children has no negative effects on executive function, which is the cognitive ability to exercise control and manage tasks such as planning and problem solving.

He has also found they can transfer the skills they have learnt on a tablet into the real world.

While parents have raised concerns about their children becoming "addicted" to devices, Dr Kaufman believes such fears may be unfounded.

"Parents have indicated that kids are showing addictive-like behaviours and show signs of withdrawal when you take the devices away," he said.

"So we're starting to look at whether that's something specific to screens or whether it's specific to any kind of toy they're very much engaged in."

Kristy Goodwin, director of Every Chance to Learn and lecturer at Macquarie University, said parents had been bombarded with educational apps in recent years. Her research has found that 72 per cent of educational apps are aimed at toddlers and preschoolers, with the majority of them rote learning apps.

"There is a temptation among some parents just to look for apps with rote learning because that's how they were taught," Dr Goodwin said. "But an iPad is not an ideal tool for rote learning.

"For that very young age group, they are much better off using apps which stimulate creative expression, language development and problem solving."

Laure Hislop, of KU Killara Park preschool, prefers apps that encourage creativity, and the preschool has two iPads for that purpose.

"The choice of apps is so important," she said. "There are some really good ones but I have seen ones which look like poker machines and there is no place for them in here."



- **PARENTING AUSTRALIA**

Indoor Portable Sandbox, children can enjoy all of the fun of playing in the sand, without the mess and cleanup!



↑ What does everyone think of these concepts? Does this fit the framework of children exploring the natural elements of sensory play? ↓ (Editor)



www.indoorsandbox.com www.parentingaustralia.com.au



INDIGENOUS RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

- *Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2013-2018*

Victorian Government
Aboriginal Affairs Report
2012



The Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2012 was tabled in Parliament on Thursday 21 March 2013 by the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Jeanette Powell. The report is the first annual Aboriginal affairs report released since the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2013 - 2018 and reports against the areas of strategic priority and the targets and measures set out in this framework.

The 2012 Report provides an important update in progress to close the gap in outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Victorians across a wide range of measures.

-  [Victorian Government Aboriginal Affairs Report 2012](#)

www.dpc.vic.gov.au

- *Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc*



VAEI has consistently advocated for accessible, high quality early childhood services that are culturally inclusive for Koorie families. We continue to monitor the progress of early childhood strategies and programs for Koorie families and provide government with policy advice about the needs of our communities.

VAEI recognises that early years services represent the first time that Koorie families are entrusting the care of their children outside of the family. Culturally inclusive services are more likely to attract Koorie families and provide a welcoming, positive experience in preparing Koorie children for school.

VAEI's continuing goal is to ensure that all Koorie families have access to early childhood services that are:

- accessible,
- culturally appropriate,
- responsive to the needs of Koorie children,
- provide a strong foundation for Koorie children to begin school.

VAEI's concept of "school ready" is a confident Koorie child who has gained the learning skills to enter primary school prepared. We also want Koorie children to be secure in and proud of their cultural identity

www.vaeai.org.au



Entertainment for Educators.....

At the Movies



• **What Maisie Knew**

an aging rock star and a contemporary art dealer are too self-involved even to notice their neglect and inadequacy as parents; their fight for Maisie is just another battle in an epic war of personalities. As they raise the stakes by taking on inappropriate new partners, the ex-nanny Margo and the much younger bartender Lincoln, the shuffling of Maisie from household to household becomes more and more callous, the consequences more and more troubling..

• **Ivan's Childhood**

The debut feature from the great Andrei Tarkovsky, *Ivan's Childhood* is an evocative, poetic journey through the shadows and shards of one boy's war-torn youth. Moving back and forth between the traumatic realities of WWII and the serene moments of family life before the conflict began, Tarkovsky's film remains one of the most jarring and unforgettable depictions of the impact of violence on children in wartime



•Hugo

Hugo tells the story of an orphan boy living a secret life in the walls of a Paris train station. With the help of an eccentric girl, he searches for the answer to a mystery linking the father he recently lost, the ill-tempered toy shop owner living

below him and a heart shaped lock, seemingly without a key. Based on Brian Selznick's award winning and imaginative New York Times bestseller.



The baby bomb

ABC2 / ABC4 Wednesdays (or iview)

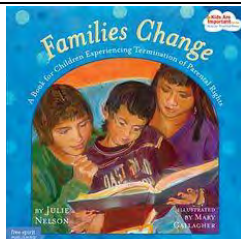
We continue to follow the real life dramas of three young couples and a single mum in their challenge as new parents. The pressure mounts this week with a bust up, a job offer, a pregnancy test and more sleepless nights.

Redesign my brain

ABC 1 Thursdays

Todd Sampson shows how he can redesign his brain to solve problems. Challenges our way of thinking from how we learnt to use our brain.

Books

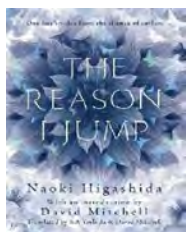


All families change over time. Sometimes a baby is born, or a grown-up gets married. And sometimes a child gets a new foster parent or a new adopted mom or dad. Children need to know that when this happens, it's not their fault. They need to understand that they can remember and value their birth family and love their new family, too.

Straightforward words and full-color illustrations offer hope and support for children facing or experiencing change.



Shreddies in my hair. I looked at Eddie. Eddie's looking at me. Big grin on his face. I knew he had done it. Last week he put pepper in the raisins. The yucky things your borther does, the annoying things your parents say, the funny things you feel. Michael Rosen knows all about YOU! Look inside and see if he's spotted your deepest, darkest secrets. A much-loved classic of family life from the brilliant Michael Rosen & Quentin Blake.



Written when Higashida was 13, this explains the often baffling behaviour of autistic children and shows the way they think and feel. Translated from the Japanese by David Mitchell, author of "Cloud Atlas", and his wife K.A. Yoshida, who have an autistic son.

Phone Apps

- ***Play School Art Maker***

Free - iPad only

Create pictures, animated movies and story slideshows using Big Ted, Humpty Dumpty, Jemima and the rest of the Play School toys, and even watch episodes of the TV show over wi-fi.



- ***Ice is Nice! All About the North and South Poles***



- iPhone/iPad

Hop aboard the SS Ice Chopper with the Cat in the Hat to learn about the science and geography of the poles and the animals that live there. Fairly complex topics are covered in a fun way with Seussian rhyme and music.

- **Pinterest:**

Pinterest has become a great place for teachers to share and save ideas for the centre. Set up your own account and start networking with coworkers and other educators to find that can improve your

amazing ideas and resources teaching.



What's on Around Us.....

- **UNICEF Day for Children October 23rd 2013**

Every child has **the right to an education** no matter where they live. Around the world, a staggering **57 million children didn't go to school**. This is almost three times the whole population of Australia.

- **everyRun 2013. Sunday 17th November, Burnley**

This fun run/walk raises money for Livewires, an educational support program for children living at the Collingwood Housing Estate.

www.everyrun.gofundraise.com.au

- **From Strength to Strength: *improving the care system for children and young people through participation*** will take place in Canberra, to coincide with the city's centenary, at the National Convention Centre over the weekend of 22 to 24 November. The conference will be open to all children and young people in care in Australia. The conference will also be open to and appealing for carers, government officials and those working in the sector.

www.strengthtostrength.com.au

- **2014 Child Aware Approaches Conference**

Melbourne on **31 March to 1 April**. This two-day conference will explore Child Aware Approaches, and provides an opportunity to share, discuss and learn about current research and innovative professional practice

www.familiesaustralia.org.au



Sustainability Stories.....

- ***The Clifton Child Care and Kindergarten*** Co-operative won the Yarra City council Education category for its green initiatives, including installation of solar panels and a water tank.



↑ *Plus a 100% compostable nappy system. Well done!*



also celebrate **International Mud Day.**

• ***Riddell Road Preschool, Wantirna,*** was the location for the state wide launch of 'The Seedlings Project' in July. Parliamentary Secretary, Mr Brad Battin, was seen in the digging patch to



Weaving: a great use of an old safety gate or cot side. Nursery in Cornwall, UK.

www.naturallearning.org.uk



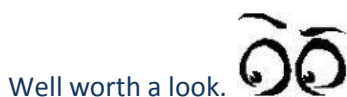
Recycling centres don't need to be an eyesore. This one is in the foyer of a centre at Only About Children.

Only About Children

www.oacChildcare.com.au



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



Well worth a look.

- **University of Bristol, UK**

TIME OUTDOORS LOOKS GOOD FOR CHILDREN'S EYESIGHT

British children who spend more time outdoors are less likely to become short-sighted according to new research from the Children of the 90s study at the University of Bristol.

Short-sightedness (myopia) can affect 25-50 per cent of young people in the West and up to 80 per cent of young people in parts of south-east Asia. More than a third of adults need to wear glasses for the condition, in order to see distant objects clearly – a figure that has doubled over the last 30 years. Research in Australia and the United States has previously suggested a link between the amount of time children spend in active outdoor pursuits and their chances of needing glasses later in life but it was unclear whether this was due to physical activity, or to simply being outside.

To address this question, Drs Cathy Williams (Bristol) and Jez Guggenheim (Cardiff) and their colleagues at the University of Bristol have followed the occurrence of short-sightedness in over 7,000 boys and girls in the Children of the 90s study at ages 7, 10, 11, 12 and 15 and compared it to the amount of time they spent outside at age 9 and how much physical activity they did at age 11. The time spent outdoors was measured by a questionnaire filled in by the children's parents and their physical activity was recorded objectively using an activity monitor they wore for a week at age 11.

The researchers found that children who spent more time outdoors at age 8-9 were only about half as likely to become short-sighted by the age of 15.

Other recent research has shown that 80-90 per cent of children in Asia are short sighted, which is thought to be due in large part to the amount of time they spend indoors. This UK study now provides the first direct evidence, based on longitudinal data from a large number of contemporary children and teenagers in south-west England, that spending more time outdoors is associated with less myopia by age 15.

The protective effect of being outside for longer is unrelated to whether the children's parents were short-sighted or how much time the children spent reading.

Dr Williams said: 'We're still not sure why being outdoors is good for children's eyes, but given the other health benefits that we know about we would encourage children to spend plenty of time outside, although of course parents will still need to follow advice regarding UV exposure.'

'There is now a need to carry out further studies investigating how much time outside is needed to protect against short-sightedness, what age the protective effect of spending time outside is most marked and how the protective effect actually works, so that we can try and reduce the number of children who become short-sighted.'

Dr Peter Allen, College of Optometrists council member and Principal Lecturer and Director of Clinics at Anglia Ruskin University, added: 'As a College we always welcome research that improves our understanding of eye health. Myopia, or short-sightedness, affects a significant number of people in UK so any findings that can help shed more light on why some people develop this and others don't is hugely valuable. This research is particularly exciting because it's the first to identify that simply spending time outside (regardless of what outdoor activities you're engaged in) reduces the risk of becoming short sighted.'

Reference: *The paper, 'Time outdoors and physical activity as predictors of incident myopia in childhood: A prospective cohort study' by Jeremy Guggenheim et al was published recently in the journal Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science*

• The Age Newspaper

Watch, wait call on child stuttering by Konrad Marshall

When her toddler Dean had barely turned three and had a host of brand new words at the ready but couldn't quite say them aloud, Kaylene Grimshaw remembers most the pained and frustrated expression on his face. 'His little eyes would screw up because he couldn't get a word out. For him to say, 'Mum, can you leave a hallway light on?' would take him two minutes. It was all split words: 'Muh-muh-muh-mum ... Ca-ca-ca-can ...' But now he just chats his little head off."

None of this would be surprising to Professor Melissa Wake of the Murdoch Children's Research Institute and the Royal Children's Hospital, who co-wrote a ground-breaking paper on stuttering in preschoolers, published on Monday in the international journal, *Paediatrics*.

The paper was based on long-term observation of more than 1600 children in Melbourne, and found stuttering is twice as common in children up to the age of four as previously thought. Not only that, but after a battery of mental health and temperament measures, as well as tests on non-verbal intelligence and language - including measuring stuttering by counting the number of syllables repeated - the study also found children with mild stutters often emerge with no ill effects: emotional, intellectual or otherwise. "If anything, they did slightly better," Professor Wake said. "It's a really reassuring finding."

Lead researcher, Professor Sheena Reilly of the University of Melbourne, said parents could adopt a more relaxed "watch and wait" approach to a stutter (given how intensive and expensive treatment can be).

Dean was not a mild stutterer. Immediate therapy was the appropriate course of action for him, and the resulting intervention over the course of a few years has proved dramatically effective. Although he occasionally repeats his "ums" and "ahs" and "ands" these days, most people don't know he ever had trouble with speech. "It's only once in the last two weeks that I've had to say to him, 'Can you say that without a bump?'" Ms Grimshaw said. "People say to me now, 'Oh, did Dean have a stutter?' They can't tell. He's fantastic.



More than ten per cent of children have a stutter by the age of four but they score just as well as other children on tests designed to assess their language, thinking skills and temperament





- **SEEDLINGS**

- **Early years education for sustainability**

www.facebook.com/seedlingsEYEFs.com.au

' In a nutshell, what is it?

Seedlings is an innovative, ground-breaking approach that encourages children, families and Early Childhood Professionals to work together towards a sustainable future. The Seedlings EYEFs Framework is adaptable and transferrable across all Early Years settings, and is flexible enough to be implemented regardless of the management structure in place.

Assisting Early Childhood Professionals and Service Managers to **meet** and **exceed** the requirements of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, National Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework.'

It will empower, enable and connect children to live more sustainably.
It will be delivered via a milestone based approach

1. **Sow the Seed: knowledge and understanding**
2. **Grow the Tree: Principles and Practice**
3. **Nurture the Forest: Connections and Collaboration**

As services move through the milestones, they will be helped to develop principles, practices, policies and provide training programs, resources and tools relating to:

Understanding Early years Education for sustainability

Nature

Waste

Energy

Water

Health and Wellbeing

Stewardship

Sustainable Governance and Leadership

The Framework recognises the importance of the early years as a critical developmental stage, therefore is engaging with Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Playgroup, Child Care, Family Day Care and Preschool.

Presently, the pilot program is being undertaken at 5 participating Local Government Agencies in City of Port Phillip, City of Melbourne, Knox City Council, Shire of Yarra Ranges and Alpine Shire. It is being funded through the Victorian Government's Sustainability Fund and the 5 Councils.



St.Lukes Innovative Resources,

a not for profit organisation based in Bendigo, has now produced a newsletter. September was their latest on line edition this year and it is called SOON.

Innovative Resources is committed to creating materials that promote a strengths-based philosophy, use straightforward language and require no special training.

Respect, Hope and Fairness is their motto.

www.Innovativeresources.org

Intentional In Our Teaching

The notion of intentional teaching has been in the limelight since its inclusion in the Early Years Learning Framework, with many educators puzzling over the meaning behind intentional teaching and its role in the education of young children. Rightly so, with the introduction of new terminology there should be reflection and consequent amendments as people experiment with such language and its implementation into practice. More recently, questions in the professional learning programs Semann & Slattery has been delivering on behalf of Children's Services Central include: What is the relationship between intentional teaching and the range of pedagogical approaches within a program e.g. emergent curriculum?

Can intentional teaching operate in a program that has a commitment to play-based curriculum?

Does intentional teaching mean being intentional about delivering outcomes as those outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework and the My Time Our Place?

The National Quality Standards specify that the program promote 'children's learning across five learning outcomes' (DEEWR, pg 20). These outcomes in the EYLF are:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity.
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
4. Children are confident and involved learners, and
5. Children are effective communicators.

And while these are interesting outcomes, they really are a set of outcomes that a small group of writers has determined as essential skills. Some would argue that these outcomes are difficult to achieve in adulthood, let alone childhood. A critical reading of these outcomes may raise more questions than answers. Such questions include:

How were these outcomes determined for children?

What are the challenges associated with identifying pre-determined outcomes?

Does identifying outcomes for children in early childhood programs across Australia, regardless of location and human diversity, really honour the diversity of childhood and uphold the ethos of difference which has been the centre of early childhood practice?

If outcomes for children are the focus of teaching and learning endeavours, where does the notion of being surprised by children fit into our work?

Such questions intend not to shift a focus away from the outcomes themselves, but rather query and question the focus the outcomes have played in the teaching endeavours within early childhood classrooms. To question brings a critical lens to our work and particularly assists us in unpacking what is meant by intentional teaching. As a number of participants in learning programs have asked, 'Does intentional teaching mean being intentional about delivering learning outcomes as outlined in the learning frameworks?' The short answer to what can be a very long thesis is 'No'. Intentional teaching is not about teaching to outcomes, but rather an assurance, in part, that our teaching is theoretically sound and based on what is in the best interest of children.

Within the EYLF, intentional teaching is used to describe teaching that is 'purposeful, thoughtful and deliberate'. That is, teaching takes place when educators are conscious of the intended purpose of their teaching and are aware of the consequences of such intentions. For example, one might suggest that transitioning 20 children into the bathroom to wash their hands prior to lunch is an intentional activity to maximise the time available at lunch. Undoubtedly, the educator who has implemented such a transition has been 'purposeful, thoughtful and deliberate' in their teaching. However, what is questionable in this example is the consequence of such a transition on children. Herein lies the creative tension between the intention of educators and its impact on children.

The other interesting and often overlooked component of intentional teaching is the fact that intentional teaching can never be simply observed. Why? Because one person can never observe what another person is thinking. This raises another dilemma regarding intentional teaching and the assessment process. If intentional teaching cannot be observed, including during an assessment visit, then the onus is on the assessor and the educator to create a space to discuss the thinking behind the educator's practice rather than working within a predetermined definition of 'good' or 'bad' practice.

For example, I often hear people critiquing group times as an outdated approach to teaching that has a negative effect on young children. However,

this critique fails to examine closely the intention behind the educators' decision to include a structured group time in their curriculum. Surely what is more important is the content and intention of such a group time rather than the mere fact that children are participating in a whole group experience. This is where intentional teaching really takes shape.

The educator has a responsibility to explain the decision behind his/her practices, and, in doing so, might explain the intention of such a group time is to build a sense of community and identity (Learning Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity). This is especially important in the age of indoor-outdoor programs, and progressive morning teas and lunches, which has meant children rarely come together in whole groups anymore. This coming together as a group can be argued to contribute to social capital and a sense of togetherness for children and adults alike.

So what does this mean for educators and their intentionality? Educators should take time to critically reflect on their teaching strategies, the goals they set for young children and the impact their decisions have on the lives and opportunities granted to children in their program. Our responsibilities are therefore two-fold: firstly, responsibility to provide children with the best education possible, and secondly, responsibility to stand by the decisions we make regarding our curriculum and teaching strategies.

In times of change, many of us revert to what we know and what might seem to be safe. In recent times, this has played out with educators proclaiming their teaching, observations of children and curriculum content being linked to the learning outcomes within the frameworks.

Rather, what is needed during such times of change is to ask some critical and reflective questions that challenge the assumptions we might have about intentional teaching and learning outcomes and our role as educators of young children.

Written by Anthony Semann, Director Semann & Slattery. Anthony has a degree in education, a Masters qualification in sociology and is currently completing a PhD investigating the relationship between courage and leadership.



NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS UPDATE

• Policy Brief 25 Murdoch Institute

The vision is “by 2020 all children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves, and for the nation” (COAG, 2009).

International research demonstrates that it is high-quality ECEC programs that have a positive impact on the health, learning, development and wellbeing of children who participate (e.g. Vandell et al., 2010; Mashburn et al., 2008; Melhuish et al., 2008; EPPE, 2007).

E4Kids is an Australian research project that considers children’s abilities and family backgrounds alongside the quality of ECEC programs, including staff training and resources, and the experiences of children in ECEC settings (Tayler et al, 2013).

In relation to the new National Quality Standard, this implies that ECEC services are succeeding in fostering *relationships with children*, but may be underperforming in terms of *educational program and practice*. The data point to the importance of investing in the education and training of the ECEC workforce to promote improved levels of instructional support for all children, and build on the strong foundation in emotional support and classroom organisation. This evidence raises concerns regarding children’s ECEC program experiences. Access to early childhood education alone is insufficient; high-quality interactions for all children are fundamental to ensuring the best start in life.

Child outcomes are likely to be enhanced by improvements in the way that children are supported to develop key concepts about the world around them; and in the ways that educators ensure that children develop their thinking and understanding. New requirements for staff qualifications and experience in the NQF set a context for further research on how such improvements may bolster learning and cognitive outcomes. The role of Lead Educator is now in place in every Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority approved ECEC service and presents an opportunity to explore the quality of the everyday programs children experience within ECEC services.

Cloney, D., Page, J., Tayler, C., and Church, A.

www.rch.org.au/ccch/policybriefs.cfm

VICTORIAN EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Victorian Education Excellence Awards acknowledge the important contributions made by primary and secondary teachers, school principals, business managers, school support staff and early childhood teachers in improving learning outcomes for Victorian children and young people. Check the website for information to nominate for 2014.

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/awards

THE EARLY YEARS AWARDS- 2013 Awarded in Children's week

The Early Years Awards 2013 will be presented in three categories to recognise and celebrate leadership, exceptional dedication and innovation in the provision of early years services

The finalists come from across the state with diverse programs, services and partnerships.

[The Maroondah Early Parenting Program](#), developed in partnership with the O'Connell Family Centre, supports vulnerable families to develop a positive parenting relationship with their new baby. This program has been successful in increasing the level of ongoing engagement with the maternal and child health service, especially by refugee families.

[The Meeting Place – Aboriginal Children and Family Program Castlemaine](#) was developed to improve the health and wellbeing of local Indigenous children. Once a fortnight during school term, Indigenous primary school students get picked up and taken to the popular Meeting Place site at Yapeen to learn healthy cooking skills and develop a greater knowledge of their heritage and culture.

The awards will be presented in the Great Hall of the National Gallery of Victoria International on Tuesday 22 October during Children's Week which runs from 19-27 October.

For more information about applying for the Early Years Awards 2013, please phone (03) 9651 3415 or email beststart@edumail.vic.gov.au



GENERAL ARTICLES OF INTEREST

- *Improve your self control with Mindfulness*

Did you know that...you can improve your self-control with mindfulness practice? Well, you can; it's true. For many years it's been assumed, due largely to the work of Roy Baumeister, that self-control becomes depleted over time and with use. That is, you get "tired" if you have to control yourself for long periods and eventually you "give in". But a recent Swiss study tested this by first training participants in mindfulness and found that following the meditation practice, the meditators did not show self-control depletion. This is a fantastically important finding for anyone who'd like to be more disciplined as it means we can, if we so choose, build our willpower and protect against "tiredness".

.

This week's challenge is...to boost your self-control via the practise of mindfulness meditation. If you've never tried mindfulness before don't be put off by what some consider to be complicated and "alternative". In simple terms it's a simple skill that anyone can learn, practice, and ultimately benefit from.

Firstly, **understand what mindfulness is** - mindfulness is most commonly described as observing, without judgement and with curiosity

Practice mindful breathing - set aside just a few minutes, several times each day, to just stop what ever it is you're doing and pay attention to your breathe. That's all, just be mindful of your breathing

Practice mindful eating - each time you sit down to eat over the next week, pay careful attention (especially for the first mouthful) to what and how you're eating. Attend to the taste, smell, texture and every aspect of the process of eating

Choose one of the following and try this at least once as well - mindful listening (when next in a conversation), mindful waiting (when next in a queue) or mindful walking

Finally, **remember that mindfulness is a skill** and like any new skill it will take time to master; but also, like any other skill you will get better (i.e. be able to go for longer periods without being distracted) with practice

• *The Mayonnaise Jar and Coffee*



When things in your life are almost too much to handle, when 24 hours is just not enough, remember the mayonnaise jar, and the coffee.....

A Professor stood before his philosophy class and had some items in front of him. When the class began, wordlessly he picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and began to fill it with golf balls. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They

agreed that it was. So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles rolled into the open areas between the golf balls. He then asked the students again if the jar was full. They agreed that it was.

The Professor next picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. The sand filled up everything else. He asked the students if the jar was full. They responded with a unanimous 'yes'. The professor then produced two cups of coffee from under the table and poured the entire contents into the jar, effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed. "Now" says the professor, as the laughter subsided. "I want you to recognise that this jar represents your life. The golf balls are the important things – your family, your children, your health, your friends, and your favourite passions – things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full. The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, and your car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff".

If you put the sand in first, there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for life. If you spend all your time and energy on the small stuff, you will never have room for the things that are important.

Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness.

Play with your children!

Take time to get medical check ups.

Take your wife/husband/lover/friend out to dinner. Maybe even play another 28. There is always time to clean the house and fix the disposal.

Take care of the golf balls first, the things that really matter.

Set your priorities. The rest is just sand."

One of the students enquired what the coffee represented. The Professor smiled. "I'm glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there is always room for a couple of cups of coffee with a friend".

(unknown source)



The Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership

(AITSL) came into being on 1 January 2010. The Commonwealth Minister for Education has outlined **SCSEEC's** priorities for the Institute in a **Letter of Expectation** signed on 15 January 2013.

AITSL has responsibility for:

- rigorous professional standards
- fostering and driving high quality professional development for teachers and school leaders
- working collaboratively across jurisdictions and engaging with key professional bodies.

www.aitsledu.au



A Real Charmer: A frog won't allow these girls to suffer from nature-deficit disorder



Michaela Graves, 8, of Austin, Texas, and Elizabeth Burras, 9, of Ames, release a frog in a pool near a bog in northeastern Minnesota. Photo by Todd Burras/Ames Tribune

The commotion coming from outdoors caused me to rush for the nearest door to see what was the matter.

It wasn't the first time over the weekend that the peace and quiet of the serene north woods retreat being enjoyed by parents and grandparents alike had been broken by the sound of two young girls screaming.

"What happened," I exclaimed while bolting through the door.

"Come see what we have," my 9-year-old daughter yelled while charging across the yard.

Not far behind and coming out of the woods came Elizabeth's 8-year-old cousin, a pair of butterfly nets stacked atop one another in hand.

"I caught a frog," Michaela cried. "I caught a frog!"

Sure enough, once Michaela reached Elizabeth and me and lifted up the top butterfly net, I could see it: a big green and brown frog trying its best to leap or at least climb its way to freedom.

"I herded it through the water toward Michaela," Elizabeth explained.

“And I caught it with the net,” said an excited but nearly breathless Michaela. A team effort, I thought, how cool is that?

By then, the girls’ grandparents and Michaela’s dad had formed a little circle around them and were inspecting the helpless frog while listening to the loquacious girls retell their tale.

“I caught a frog,” Michaela said yet again. “I caught a frog.”

The significance of those four words wasn’t lost on me. In fact, I was a bit stunned. Elizabeth tromping around in a mosquito-infested bog looking for frogs didn’t surprise me in the least. She’s just that kind of girl: Loves animals. Loves the woods. Catches and releases insects that get in the house. Wants to be a vet. But Michaela? This is a girl who dreams of being a cheerleader and a princess — the kind who marries a prince who hitherto *wasn’t* a frog. But here she stood excitedly gushing about the strategy invoked in capturing the frog still trapped in the net only a few inches away from her face.

Clearly I had underestimated this girl, I thought. Or, perhaps, I had underestimated the power of nature to still lure carefree children into its web of charm, wonder, beauty, mystery and intrigue.

Richard Louv, author of the 2005 groundbreaking book “Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder,” once told me that contact with nature is essential for healthy early childhood development. Louv’s research and subsequent writing launched the Children and Nature Network movement, which has been buoyed by numerous health studies in recent years showing exposure to nature can be therapeutic for kids *and adults* who are suffering from traumatic stress, depression, obesity and many other disorders.

In the case of Elizabeth and Michaela, the extra dose of exposure to nature they experienced over a five-day vacation was also just a lot of fun. The kind of fun that can happen when kids get out of the house, get out of the city, get away from their electronics and get out from under the hyper-watchful eyes of their frequently hovering and sometimes paranoid parents.

“People today have this tremendous fear that something terrible is going to happen to their children if they go outside or go into the woods,” Louv told me. “So we send them on field trips but tell them they can’t get off the path, that they can’t go exploring. Where’s the adventure in that?”

“Now we don’t want our kids to get a terrible rash from a weed or bitten by a poisonous snake, but it might be a really interesting weed or snake to at least look at from a safe distance. Why aren’t we thinking about it that way? We have to switch our thinking around and think of things as opportunities for adventure in our lives, for excitement, for all those things that we try to

manufacture virtually, but which still don't satisfy our need for reality and authenticity."

Like Louv, I'm not advocating for parents to abandon common sense when it comes to supervising their children, but there are a lot worse things than a few bumps, bruises and bug bites in a child's upbringing.

"We have such a brief opportunity to pass on to our children our love for this Earth, and to tell our stories," Louv wrote in "Last Child." "These are the moments when the world is made whole."

When it came time to release the frog, Elizabeth was a little apprehensive about touching the slimy amphibian out of fear of dropping it. In the end, though, she decided she at least wanted to hold it for a couple minutes before setting it free. Michaela, conversely, didn't want to touch let alone hold the frog. She did, however, want to be the one to carry it back to the bog in the net and let it swim out of the net and into the pool from which it came.

The fact that she didn't want to hold the frog – not this time, anyway – didn't matter. What did matter was the fact that this was a start. A sort of rite of passage into a realm of nature she previously hadn't experienced. A journey to a place she hadn't previously visited, but one to which she may return. If not today or tomorrow, then hopefully someday soon.

Ames Tribune – August 08, 2013





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

. Reviews to improve childcare and early childhood education commence

Saturday 28 September 2013 Media Release

The Hon Sussan Ley MP

Assistant Minister for Education

The Australian Government today announced the commencement of two critical policy commitments relating to childcare and early childhood learning.

They include the promise of an immediate review into the previous Labor Government's administration of the Early Years Quality Fund (EYQF) and to meet with state and territory ministers to improve the implementation of the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Assistant Minister for Education, Sussan Ley, said the independent review of the EYQF was promised in response to concerns raised by many providers in the sector about the inequity of this Fund.

"It fulfils our election promise to examine the EYQF's implementation process, taking into account allegations it was used to push childcare centres into enterprise bargaining agreements and boost union membership," Ms Ley said.

The review will consider:

The process by which the EYQF was established, including legislative and governance arrangements

The experience of the early childhood education and care sector

The views of the EYQF Advisory Board

Submissions made to two parliamentary inquiries into the Early Years Quality Fund Special Account Bill 2013.

"I have asked the Department of Education to organise this independent review immediately and to report back by the end of October," Ms Ley said.

Today, the Minister also confirmed she had written to each of the state and territory governments to find practical ways to improve the implementation of the NQF reforms, without compromising the standard of care provided to children.

"The issues to discuss will include considering whether we need to extend the deadline for staff training in light of a severe shortage of qualified personnel and whether the implementation of staff-to-child ratios can be slowed."

"This will allow the sector enough time to absorb the required NQF changes, while ensuring continuity of services and affordable care," Ms Ley said.

A joint meeting of ministers will be held as soon as a mutually convenient date can be set.

www.deewr.gov.au/earlyyearsqualityfund.



OBITUARIES



Vale Di Chandler

Di Chandler, manager of the Elwyn Morey Centre at Monash University Clayton, passed away peacefully on Wednesday evening 31st July after a battle with cancer. Di was a long time ECA member, and a highly regarded and much valued member of the early childhood and early childhood intervention field. She will be remembered for her work in early childhood, in early childhood intervention and in professional development and training across Victoria.

Di's skill, passion, commitment, energy, and championing of access for all children to nothing less than high quality early childhood services, programs and staff will be sadly missed by all.

Early Childhood Australia – Victoria Branch will be instigating a new award in Di's honour – the Di Chandler Professional Development Award to be awarded annually to an ECEC professional to undertake a PD training opportunity to enhance their skills and their work with young children. Details of the award will be finalised later this year and will be advertised to all members via the ECA Vic Branch newsletter and the website



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