



AGECS | The Association of Graduates
in Early Childhood Studies

AUDAX



AUDAX

(Latin) courageous, bold, daring

AUDAX 101 - Spring 2020

Journal of the Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies
PO Box 12163, A'Beckett St, Melbourne VIC 8006. Mob. 0492 956 829
info@agecs.org.au

President's Report – Alannah Dore



The AGECS began the year with an informative presentation from the Foundation Trustees on their role with AGECS at the first council meeting. COVID 19 has dominated 2020 and has been a year of challenges for the

Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector experiencing the impacts of a 'new normal'. Along with the rest of Victoria, ECE services have been significantly impacted with the closures of centres and adapting to online learning. AGECS has also had to adapt and cancel most events for this year. However, this offered a 'golden' opportunity to revamp The AGECS infrastructure establishing processes, procedures and role descriptions with easy online access for council members. This revamp has enabled us to offer a range of online learning and efficient communication with all members and the wider ECEC community.

As previously stated, AGECS has seized the opportunities presented by COVID 19 including the hiring of Liz Potter as our new Administration Officer. We also began the process of establishing from scratch the first of three stages of a new business and administrative infrastructure this included simplifying the administrative process of membership applications with a one-step PayPal system and other website updates. Liz was able to bring efficiency, innovation, a 'can do' attitude, passion for the AGECS vision and excellent communication skills and process changes. Exponential progress has been achieved this year for The AGECS. Additionally, those benefiting from AGECS projects, programs, and advocacy will do so long into the future, thanks to Liz's skills in transforming our ideas into action.

The face to face event conducted this year, was a well-received February Forum facilitated by Karen Hope with the panel consisting of Mary Holwell, Ruth

Harper & Justeen Fitzgibbon. The topic was 'Exploring Pedagogy, Practice & People 2020 & the next ten years in Early Childhood Education'.

The AGECS is also ending the year with a COVID 19 *exploration of the future for early childhood education*. Dr Red Ruby Scarlet's presentation online is: Exploring the Places and Spaces of Educators in the 'New Normal', and will be a thought-provoking conclusion to 2020.

Prior to the eagerly awaited appointment of AGECS new events coordinator Alex Heard in September, the AGECS council responded to member and broader sector mid-year survey feedback testing new synchronisation of online platforms Eventbrite, Mailchimp, Survey Monkey and Zoom. We planned to deliver online learning and presented the first session with Sarah O'Donnell's Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT). The enthusiastic feedback from the 90 teachers and educators who attended this event was reassuring that the direction we are heading in with online events is relevant and valued by the sector.

Heartfelt thanks extended to regional and metro reps who have rallied this year with innovative ideas drawing on voices from their region as well as members, council and the ECE community. Thanks go to Coral Campbell and council member Maree Wiggins Geelong & West Coast, Andrea Broughton Bendigo region, Bridie Raban Mildura region, Judy Dunn Mornington Peninsula and council members Sue Emmett and Sandra Wilson for greater Gippsland. The AGECS will be prioritising identified needs for these areas through online events by extending early bird registration opportunities to EC educators, teachers, and AGECS members before opening bookings to the broader ECE community.

We are also looking forward to supporting the Shire of Buloke in central Victoria by working with them based on the previous successful Cultural Change project implemented in Melbourne and evaluated by Deakin University.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives' having been identified by AGECS in 2020 as very

important for council to explore and understand how to work with Aboriginal projects and programs respectfully, inclusively and in consultation with Aboriginal early childhood representatives. AGECS council members are grateful to AJ Williams-Tchen, who has graciously agreed to support The AGECS with comprehensive training and is leading the newly established AGECS RAP committee. The RAP committee has four council members and four Aboriginal representatives including AJ, Kerri Douglas, Tristan Williams and Kay Mondon. They share, among other abilities, early childhood and mental health expertise with the RAP committee.

We look forward to concluding this RAP by June 2021, having been officially endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and then implementing the plan via a yet to be established Reconciliation Working Group over 2021 to 2023.

Maree Wiggins, past president, has been instrumental in bringing to fruition a Special Resolution to update The AGECS constitution. Her excellent communication skills and adherence to correct protocol have ensured that legally and ethically The AGECS will work under a viable and robust guide relevant to today. I am also deeply grateful to Mercia Chapman for the donation of her time and legal expertise consulting with The AGECS council online during this process to ensure the constitution has been thoroughly prepared for submission to this November AGM.

Finally, I would like to formally farewell a tireless leader and contributor to The AGECS for more than

two decades prior to resigning in December 2019. Kay Margetts was a member of the council in earlier years and in more recent years held the roles of Administrator and Events Coordinator. This was a complex task given the scope of the increasing number of events being organised by The AGECS. On behalf of the council, I would like to thank Kay for her significant contribution to The AGECS achievements and wish Kay the very best in her future endeavours.

The AGECS is looking ahead to finalising the third stage of procedural updates with a focus on continuing the improvement of membership experiences while upgrading the online delivery of quality, freely accessible and relevant events to the early childhood sector. As a voluntary committee, we need to be realistic with our time and energy. Therefore, with the comprehensive COVID safety requirements to be considered for face to face events, for the time being, we look forward to continuing via online to provide, and I quote from our website...

"..Innovative and challenging learning to Early Childhood professionals to develop quality early childhood settings... enhancing learning and developmental achievements for all children with the most significant impact being on the outcome of children experiencing vulnerability."

Alannah Dore

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

AGECS activities.....

• First Virtual PD! Sept 8th 2020

The AGECS held its first online PD event, delivered by Sarah O'Donnell, AGECS Fellowship recipient, on the topic of Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) or Tapping.



Sarah's presentation was a great success and 90 attendees was a pleasing result for our first online event. Some comments from participants:-

- *Sarah is a fabulous presenter, so engaging and informative. This is life changing information!*
- *The practical application of the learning and its simplicity and effectiveness*
- *The practical demonstration of the tapping points and the simple recipe for following the sequence of the points.*
- *Revision of the brain and the function of the hippocampus and amygdala were really helpful and great reminder of how our bodies respond to stress.*
- *Learning the technique and hearing how it can help you overcome trauma and stress.*
- *To learn a new skill to calm myself down and not let minor irritations escalate*

A recording of the PD has been uploaded to the website in the free resources section.

www.agecs.org.au

• Fellowship for Leadership and Change 2020

We received several high quality applications for the 2020 Fellowship Grants and although these were successful, all are on hold due to the restrictions on travel since March.

We look forward to the recipients completing and presenting their new learnings to the Early Years Sector in 2021.

We welcome all of you to consider applying for a Fellowship worth up to \$10,000.

Applications close February 28th 2021.

This is an opportunity for you to pursue learning new knowledge in an area you are interested in and where you could effect a positive change in your own Teaching, in the broader field of ECE and to share with colleagues, peers and The AGECS community.



Beth Stubbs 1918 -1998

Awarded the Vera Scantlebury Brown Scholarship

In 1949, as the first early childhood educator to be awarded a VSB scholarship, Beth Stubbs was well acquainted with Dr Scantlebury Brown's work. She had been appointed as the first pre-school child development officer for the City of Kew when the municipality adopted Dr Scantlebury Brown's plan to provide coordinated services of health and education for children from birth to school entry age. After receiving the Diploma of the Kindergarten training College in 1940, Beth had gained an extra qualification by completing the one-year nursery school course. After six years of teaching, her role at Kew was to establish toddler playgroups in infant welfare centres, oversee the work of the kindergartens, advise teachers and voluntary committees, and adapt services to meet changing needs.

"Part of my work involved visiting other municipalities to explain the VSB plan and Kew's part in it. Several Councils became interested and South Melbourne, Brighton and Melbourne City appointed pre-school officers to develop services in those municipalities."

Beth enrolled in the BSc (Early childhood) course at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York. She began the two-year course in February 1950 and, between semesters, taught at the Children's School, Vassar Summer Institute and undertook extra courses at Merrill Palmer School, Detroit. In the USA, two former Principals at the Melbourne Kindergarten Teachers College gave help and support to Beth, opening many doors and providing valuable experiences. After graduation in 1952, Beth left for the UK and Europe. Letters and diaries from the period show how she used the opportunity of her overseas study and experience to inform her later work.

"In the USA, I attended six conferences and from each one gained much both from my contacts with other professionals and from observation of the organization and content of the program. At the 1951

ACEI conference in Seattle the 2000 participants came from three levels of education – nursery school, elementary and high schools – and from social work, health and housing. This made for a very valuable richer exchange of views and increased understanding. I hope we can develop this kind of conference in Australia one day. At the NAEYC conference in Chicago I gave a lecture on pre-school work in Australia to a good audience."

In Denmark, Beth was impressed with the amount of freedom children were given in Adventure Playgrounds. "I visited a playground in Copenhagen which was open all day; children came before school, in the lunch hour and after school. There was no 'playground equipment' as we know it, but stacks of building material – boxes, bricks, mortar and logs – for shacks and cubbies. Older children take responsibility for the younger ones. I asked about the upper age limit and was told the children stop coming when the playground has nothing else to give them. These unstructured playgrounds are something for us to consider in Melbourne."

And in England: "(the) course at the Department of Child Development at the London University has a developmental and psychological approach to the study of the child, (not unlike our MKTC course). It offers students the opportunity of specialising in their particular interest – research, remedial work, etc. and I think Australian grads should be encouraged to undertake it."

Soon after her return to Melbourne in 1952, Beth was appointed Chief Pre-school Supervisor in the Mental Infant and Pre-school Welfare Division of the Victorian Health Department. The division became influential in setting up and maintaining standards of building and staffing as the numbers and expertise of Pre-school Advisers grew. At the times there were 166 kindergartens in Victoria, almost all built and managed by local committees. Under Beth's leadership, the pre-school service became an accepted and expected service, especially in new housing areas where a kindergarten/infant welfare centre was often one of the first community projects

undertaken. Like Dr Scantlebury Brown, Beth valued and supported the NGOs in their roles as service-providers and independent lobbyists, thus keeping a balance between government and non-government sectors.

Further periods of study leave overseas ensured that Beth kept herself, and the Advisory Service, up to date with new understandings of children's development and ways of providing the best services for them. In 1971, she completed a Bed at Monash University.

In 1980, when Beth retired, there were 1125 kindergartens with 58,774 children enrolled; the number of pre-school advisers had risen from three to 33 and the Division of Pre-School Child Development had been established as a separate division with Beth as Director. She had taken major responsibility for changing the emphasis of services from facilities for young children to services of support for families. Two outstanding achievements were the regionalization of the advisory service and a more flexible approach for subsidising services, with special funding allowed in certain circumstances.

Beth's influence extended past Victorian borders; she was a prime mover in the establishment of the Institute of Early Childhood Educators in 1973, the national body for senior early childhood education professionals, and became its first Secretary.

During 18 years of retirement, Beth continued her active involvement in many community organisations concerned with children and families. She was a member of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Preschool Association, Chair of the management committee of the Lady Gowrie Child Centre, and a member of the Advisory Council for Children with Impaired Hearing. She helped to set up a small centre near Pentridge Prison that provided care for children and other support to families during visiting hours and was a volunteer at the Court Network Service. She also maintained her interest in children in third world countries through membership of the World Health Organization of early Childhood Education (OMEPE).

Beth's admission to the Order of Australia in 1987 was widely endorsed as a well-deserved recognition of her service to the general community, and in particular the positive impact of her leadership on the

development of care and education services for children.

Re-printed from: -Changing Minds, Changing Lives
The legacy of the Vera Scantlebury Brown Memorial Trust 1946 – 2004

By Joan Waters



2021 **Scholarship** **Opportunity**

Applications for the Vera Scantlebury Brown Child Welfare Memorial Trust Scholarship close early March 2021.

The purpose of the Scholarship is to enable the successful applicant to undertake further studies or research overseas or in Australia.

The Scholarship is open to the following:

Pre-School Teachers (women only) with a university level Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood) or equivalent three year degree in early childhood studies and an approved fourth year of study recognised by the Australian Early Childhood Association Qualification Approvals Committee.

Applications for this Scholarship must be in writing to the Trustees on the approved [application form](#) and reach the Secretary to the Trust on or before the closing date for applications.

For further information:

Please contact Helen D'Cruz on 9345 6671 or gr-mc@unimelb.edu.au

<https://medicine.unimelb.edu.au/school-structure/paediatrics/study/professional-development/the-vera-scantlebury-brown-child>

Three Letters from Members.....

Working in Stage 4 of COVID 19 restrictions in ECE

Dear AGECS members,

Working with young children during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a unique experience for me. Due to the advices and restrictions from department, we have made some changes in program planning and implementation.



First, wearing facemasks changed our practices when working with children onsite. We had been worried about children's

reactions because body languages, such as facial expressions, as we all know, are effectively integrated into our interactions with children. However, with the support of social stories and visuals, children reacted to the change quite calmly. During our practices, we kept giving reassurances to children that we are smiling under the masks. Moreover, we observed that some children even talked about their using masks outside the kindergarten, for example when walking their dogs or going to grocery stores. So our children are more capable than we thought of coping with some changes of our practices during the pandemic.

Secondly, some children have been absent since early Term 1, which also changed the dynamic of the group. Some children may feel unsettled when not seeing their best friends whom they built relationships with at the beginning of the year in the playroom. Therefore, supporting children practise their social competencies in building new friendships is also essential for them to be involved in a new combination of the group. In our program, we planned more cooperative play to provide more opportunities for them to socialize with someone who they had not played with. As educators, we also provided scaffolding for them to know each other more deeply and find common interests so children

can sustain their interactions and develop their relationships. It has been observed that children become much happier and have more engagement in learning experiences when they build strong relationships with the new group.

Last but not the least, the practice of remote learning is absolutely new during the lockdown. It is challenging to sharpen our computer literacy in a very short period, knowing how to manipulate the software and how to organize a virtual classroom. More importantly, it is important to deliver appropriate learning experiences that are workable for both families and educators remotely.



When reflecting the previous experience, I can see 'team around a child' worked very well in practice. Our kinder team helped each other dealing with technique issues, brainstormed different ideas of activities and paid attentions to each other's wellbeing. Meanwhile, our families showed positive supports and great understanding, helping their child get used to the new learning environment and supporting them participate in the remote learning.

COVID-19 changed some of our practices, but it never changed the high-quality of education that educators, families and communities collaboratively deliver to our children.

Linda, EC Diploma, Long Day Care.

Dear AGECS members,

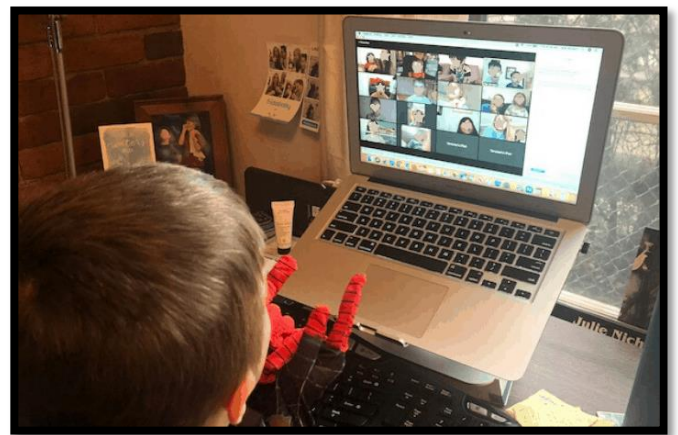
Initially there was some uncertainty as we started kindergarten under stage 4 restrictions. Unlike the previous lockdown, this time I was working with a different team of educators and we would be working with a group of children and families from other local kindergartens. What was this going to look like? How do we support children and families in a new environment, and when families are under uncertain times during the lockdown?

Putting all of these questions aside, as a team we decided we would take a day at a time, and follow the children's lead in play interests. No expectations just supporting children's wellbeing, making them feel safe and welcome in a new environment. Once the children arrived, it was reassuring to see their happy faces and delighted in their enjoyment as they explored a new environment. This shifted our thinking as educators, the uncertainty disappeared, and we enjoyed getting to know the new children and families and engaging in their learning. In reflection it was a very positive experience, the families were very thankful to be able to continue with a kindergarten program, and what a great time the children have had. It was reassuring to all of the educators that we were able to provide some happiness during challenging times.

The turtles actually came out of hibernation for the first day of Spring, much to the delight of the children.



One area that was more of a challenge initially was maintaining contact with the families who were at home. For my kindergarten, this was the first time all of the children were at home, so engaging in home learning was going to look a lot different. Apart from phone calls, regular emails and sending home a pack with different activities, we were going to run Zoom sessions, so we could interact with small groups of children at a time. This was a huge challenge for me, as technology is not a strong skill I possess. After a few trial runs with educators, we ran regular sessions weekly with the children. It was lovely to see the children, hearing about what they have been doing at home, and joining in singing and musical experiences.



Although there were challenges at times working during stage 4 lockdown, all of this was overcome, and shows that no matter what challenged me initially, can be worked through, taking it a step at a time. I feel it has helped my growth as an educator for now and the future.

Tracy, EC Teacher,

Sessional Kindergarten.

Dear AGECS members,

Working within Early Intervention as a psychologist, I have been noticing some BIG feelings in adults and children alike.

There has been a steady increase in challenging behaviours for children. Generally taking the form of anger or aggression, but also an increase in 'clinginess' behaviours and separation anxiety.



Many parents and educators have had difficulty recognising this as a response to lockdown, instead wondering why their child is acting out.

Many expressed their confusion, noting that their child should be enjoying lockdown, after all they have extra screen time, more time to play and no need to transition to kinder/school. While this may be the case for some children, others have experienced difficulty with disruption in routine, missing peers, heightened family conflict and difficulties adapting to changes in family dynamic (primary caregiver roles may have shifted).

As adults, we have relied heavily on keeping connections with friends and family over online platforms, maybe seeking extra reassurance from our partners and sometimes just needing a moment to vent!

All of which have been seen as normal reactions to lockdown. In short, we can identify and articulate what it is we need and access this when we need it. For young children, being able to verbalise or even label these feelings may be an emerging skill and their underlying needs may not be getting met.

Remember back, these children have also experienced an upheaval of their social networks and avenues for play and learning. Some were picked up from Kindergarten one day pre lockdown and are yet to return, not having had any contact with peers or educators. It can be hard and confusing to express feelings of uncertainty, insecurity, worry or frustration (commonly noticed during lockdown), and these children are also trying to make sense of this new COVID- 19 normal.

As educators and parents it is important to recognise that children experience emotions just as we do, but are not yet equipped with the skills to verbalise and regulate these emotions. By taking a moment to look from their perspective we can notice, listen and validate these emotions. Look at this as opportunities for intimacy and teaching. By doing this we are making sure they feel heard and responded to, which will increase feelings of security and connection. We all need to be gentle right now, with ourselves and those around us, particularly our children. Check in with your child's emotional cup (and your own), it may need some topping up.

Brydie, Psychologist/ECT, Early Intervention



News from the Field of ECE

• Play Learn Grow Text Message Program

Is a free program for parents and carers of under 5's in Victoria. It provides parents with information, practical advice and easy activities that can support your child's learning, development, health and wellbeing at home. Parents receive three text messages a week for the duration of the program. It is specifically designed program to support children at home, laying the foundations for them to have success later in life.

For example, two texts came out as:

- *Your child is constantly solving problems when they play – whether it's putting a puzzle together or opening the toy tub. But if they get stuck, gently offer ideas or ask what they might do next. For example, "Where else could that piece fit?" or "Have you tried turning it the other way?"*
- *Use size, shape and number words as you are chatting to your child during the day. For Example, when sorting the washing, talk about how the sheets and pillow cases are big and little rectangles. How many socks are there? Count them together.*

DET Victoria, Text "PLAY" to 0428 606 027



Play is Important for Children AND Adults

In many preschool programs and kindergartens, young children are engaged in filling out worksheets, reading from flash cards, or reciting numbers in rote fashion. But just because young children can do those things, in a normative sense, is not sufficient justification for requiring them to do so.

Lilian G. Katz

Kristin Wong writes:

"At a time when jobs are precarious, livelihoods are at stake and we're still fighting a deadly pandemic, play is low on our list of priorities. We are living in a world that's more conducive to anxiety than playfulness. In the never-ending to-do list of adulthood, play can feel like a waste of time. We exhaust ourselves with tasks we should or have to do, but we rarely have time or energy for activities we want to do...

Play offers a reprieve from the chaos, and it challenges us to connect with a key part of ourselves that gets lost in the responsibilities of adulthood, especially during a crisis...

There are a number of benefits to play for adults, including improved stress management and an improvement in our overall well-being — benefits we could certainly use right now."

Here is one idea Wong suggests to help us get started playing again by reflecting on childhood memories:

"List the activities you enjoyed as a kid, then brainstorm the grown-up version. If you liked climbing trees, maybe you can try indoor rock climbing. If you loved Play-Doh, maybe you could take a pottery class or make bread from scratch. You don't always need a new version of a childhood pastime, though. Climbing trees can still be pretty fun as an adult."



And, speaking of childhood memories, Lilian Katz, writing in the book, [*Art of Leadership: Cultivating Curriculum in Early Childhood Organizations*](#), reminds early childhood practitioners to carefully guard young children's chances to learn through play:

"As for the learning environment, the younger the children are, the more informal it should be. Informal learning environments encourage spontaneous and cooperative effort. In spontaneous play, children engage in whatever play activities interest them."

Exchangeeveryday@ccie.com

• Health and wellbeing report for Australia

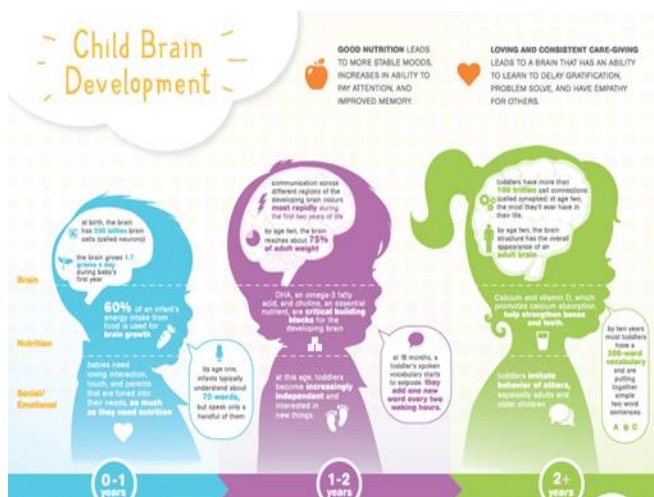
A report published by UNICEF recently examined the happiness and wellbeing of children in the world's richest countries. The data from the report was used to also compile a "league table", and the results are a significant source of shame for Australia. Not only did we rank 32 out of 38 countries overall, but when it comes to the mental health of our children; we are doing even worse – 35th out of 38 countries.

Start early

We need to get things right for children starting in early childhood, when 90% of brain development occurs. The evidence tells us that children thrive when they have strong relationships, supportive environments, and social infrastructure that supports families.

A key factor in children's happiness is whether they feel they have a voice. Therefore, reforms to improve their wellbeing must be made with children, not just be about them. Children and their families must be included in the design and implementation of all initiatives that concern them. This is consistent with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides that children have the right to express their views, and to have those views taken into account.

This is an extract from the article written by Sue West, Associate Director, Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children's Research Institute and Royal Children's Hospital and Paula Gerber Professor of Law and Deputy Director of the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law



• Melbirds

There are approximately 300 different species of birds that live in and visit the Melbourne area, that is far too many to fit in this book!

This book shows the names and pictures of the most common birds that you can see around Melbourne. These are the ones that we think you will see when you are in your backyard, or visiting a park, or walking in a forest.

Sometimes you might be lucky and see a more unusual bird. There are websites and other bigger books that might help you to learn about those birds.

Helpful websites for birds

Different birds make their own distinct calls. It is possible to recognise a bird by listening carefully to its call, as well as by looking at it. You can listen to calls on the web at

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>

If you are having trouble recognising a bird you have seen, the bird finder can help you figure out what it is:

<http://www.birdsinbackyards.net>



Written by Michael Livingston & Cindy Hauser

Ideas for your Notice Board.....

4 EASY WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING:

- #1 Avoid interrupting them when they are concentrating & engaged in play.
- #2 Provide open-ended toys or loose parts that they can freely use for imaginative & creative play.
- #3 Balance between encouraging independent play & joining in - both have different benefits.
- #4 Observe what your child is interested in & continuously find ways to build/extend on that.

@INSPIRED.PLAY

HOW TO TALK

@kids.eat.in.color

MAY NOT HELP

"Apples are good for you."

"Carrots will turn you into a bunny."

"This food will help you grow."

"Salad is healthy."

"Blueberries have antioxidants in them."

"White food isn't good for you."

MAY HELP A LOT

"Red food gives you a strong heart."

"Orange food helps you see in the dark."

"Yellow food helps your body heal cuts."

"Green food helps you fight off sickness."

"Blue & purple foods give you a strong brain."

"White foods give you energy."

ALL FEELINGS

ARE FOR EVERYONE!

There's no such thing as a "girl feeling" or a "boy feeling".
We can **all** feel:



Angry



Sad



"Scared"



Confident



Proud



Affectionate



Brave



Insecure



Assertive

All feelings are **NORMAL** and **HUMAN**.
What matters is how you express those feelings.

©Elise Gravel

"The more risks you allow your children to make, the better they learn to look after themselves."

- Roald Dahl

Articles of Interest in ECE.....

- **Thrive by Five – Mindaroo Foundation**

Meaningful moments, early and often, build young brains.

The message may sound simple but it's a strong and important one, central to a new early childhood awareness campaign from the world leading researchers at Telethon Kids Institute and the philanthropic Minderoo Foundation.

The eight-week campaign challenges thinking about early brain development. Featuring a cute blue critter, known as Bobbie, which represents a baby's brain, 'Bright Tomorrows Start Today' shows how the brain is stimulated by quality interactions and experiences with parents and carers.

Created by CoLab – Collaborate for Kids (a partnership between Telethon Kids Institute and Minderoo Foundation) the campaign aims to challenge thinking about brain development in babies, with more than a million neural connections a second built in the first three years of a child's life. Based on the latest child development science, it responds to gaps in understanding mapped by US-based social research organisation, Frameworks Institute.

CoLab director Professor Donna Cross said the campaign was an important step in changing public thinking about the importance of building young brains from birth.



"Building young brains in the first three years of life gives children a well-rounded start, improving their health, social and emotional wellbeing, even reducing their risk of chronic illnesses like cancer and heart disease later in life," Professor Cross said.

"Activity in a child's brain peaks from birth to three years of age — long before children start at kindergarten or school — and during this time are most receptive to the influence of relationships and experiences.

"This campaign challenges the idea that babies are sponges that passively soak up their surroundings. In fact, the research behind Bright Tomorrows shows that quality interaction with a baby or toddler — reading a book or blowing raspberries on their tummy — builds the connections in their brain which sets them up for a better future.

"As we show in the campaign, babies' brains light up with excitement and activity, triggering up to a million neural connections every second in response to adult voices, smiles and attention. Repeated, these connections form pathways that shape their thinking and emotional patterns for life and influence their approach to learning, relationships and tackling challenges."

Minderoo Foundation co-founder Nicola Forrest said the whole community, not just parents or caregivers, had a role to play in ensuring every child received the best start, from as early as conception. "A good start in life — right from conception — forms a stable foundation, helping children to learn, achieve and navigate relationships or stressful situations," Ms Forrest said.

"This strong start can be a powerful preventative factor against the social and emotional challenges we know can contribute to pathways that include poor mental health, unemployment or experience in the juvenile justice systems.

"We can all work together — government, social services, business, families and community — to ensure the future health and wellbeing of Australian kids. Together we have the power to create this bright tomorrow."

www.mindaroo.org.au

• How Can I Prevent Gender Bias in Young Children?

The foundation for gender identity formation is established during the preschool years.

By age three, although most children can identify themselves as boys or girls, they are still sorting out the concept of gender. "The support they get or do not get in their preschool years lays the foundation for the rest of their gender identity formation," according to Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards.



Adults can take a variety of measures to create fair and gender-equitable environments for young children. They can:

- Reflect on their own attitudes and behaviours.
- Send only non-sexist, non-stereotyped messages.
- Provide equal opportunity for girls and boys to speak (Derman-Sparks, Edwards, 2010, 98).
- Avoid responding more quickly to children of one gender than another (Miller, 2002).
- Discuss gender issues by involving children in helping to solve gender-related problems that may arise.
- Use gender-neutral language (Choose plural pronouns, such as "they" and "them," instead of masculine pronouns such as "he" and "him" and words such as firefighter, flight attendant, garbage collector, and humankind can easily be used to replace the use of "man" as a generic noun or ending.)
- Change traditional children's music, rhymes, and finger plays so that they include characters of both genders. For example, alternate male and female names: *In Mary had a Little Lamb*, use "Jimmy" instead of "Mary." Interchange parental roles: *In Five Little Monkeys* interchange "Mama" and "Papa." Make verses gender neutral: *In The Wheels on the Bus*, use "parents" instead of

"mommies;" in *Where Is Thumbkin?* use "Friend" instead of "Sir;" in *Old MacDonald Had a Farm*, use "The MacDonalds" instead of "Old MacDonald" and "they" instead of "he."

(*Bias-Free Foundations: Early Childhood Guidebook & Activities for Educators*, 2001, 8)

Ensure the environment reflects diversity in gender roles and encourages opportunities for everyone by including:

- Alternatives to the pretend kitchen such as a workbench, home office, store, office, hospital, etc.
- Gender neutral career puzzles that include images of men and women in non-stereotypical roles such as: girls and women depicted as physical and strong, in leadership roles and having occupations in fields such as sports, science, mechanics, etc. and boys and men showing emotions other than anger, participating in domestic tasks, providing care for families, and having occupations in fields such as dance, nursing, cooking, etc
- Diverse family styles and composition
- Children's books that reflect diverse gender roles

Help children gain comfort with a broader range of activities, regardless of their gender.

Observe the ways children's choices seem influenced by gender lines varying groupings during free play/choice time.

Establish non-sexist routines and experiences by ensuring that all children have equal responsibility in assigned jobs (Derman-Sparks, Edwards, 2010, 97). Help children develop skills for thinking critically and taking action.

Have them explore their ideas about gender identity and think about what is or is not "fair with respect to gender.

Teach them ways to address hurtful gender put-down. Although gender role norms have broadened over time, attentiveness to the equity and diversity in gender identity can help create a solid and positive foundation for children's future identity development.

www.adl.org



Resources to support ECE....



Using Nature's wisdom to bring Joy and effectiveness to our work with children.

By Nancy Rosenow

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

-Rachel Carson

Koorie Culture Map

Is an interactive experience where you can explore Indigenous culture, stories and art. Each map or touchpoint has a Welcome to Country, as well as animations of creation stories and videos of culturally significant sites. Revival of language is fundamental to this project.

Koorieheritagetrust.com and



Workshops – STEM & Pedagogy

There are **10 hands-on STEM workshop topics** to choose from these include Chemical Reactions, Air, Mathematics, Computer Science, Water, Engineering, Human Body, Optics, Acoustics and Design and Technologies.

They are designed to help you **connect theory and practice in an engaging, easy to understand** way to provide you with the knowledge needed to confidently implement STEM as part of every-day learning.



Our professional development workshop program provides teachers and educators with a variety of tools and educational concepts to meet a range of requirements of the National Quality Framework (**NQF**) and the Early Years Learning Framework (**EYLF**).

The Little Scientists project is supported and funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training through the National Innovation and Science Agenda.

[Littlescientists.org.au](http://littlescientists.org.au)

Talking the Talk Healthy Sexuality Conversations with children 4 – 12 years.

Podcasts and blogs to listen to when parents/teachers lack confidence to educate children about healthy sexuality.

What is typically expected behaviour and how to respond when a child touches their genitals?

Vanessa Hamilton, Psychologist and sexual health nurse. Melbourne.

Talkingthetalksexed.com.au

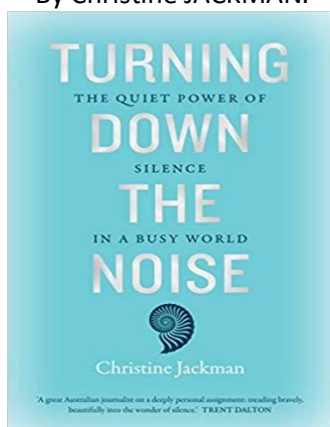


What to Read and Watch.....

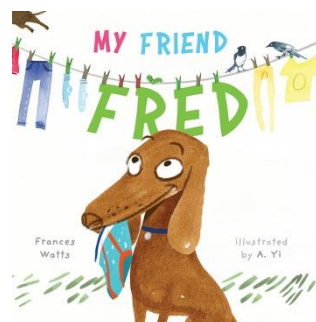
Turning Down the Noise

4 year old Christine Jackman takes refuge in a cubby house at kindergarten because she needed peace and quiet. Not that she thought of it like that at the time. It took decades of living at a frantic pace for her to understand what her younger self had been yearning for. So began her quest for the replenishing well of silence buried deep within us that is the source of all the contemplative traditions.

By Christine JACKMAN.



Children's Book of the Year EC Winner -2020

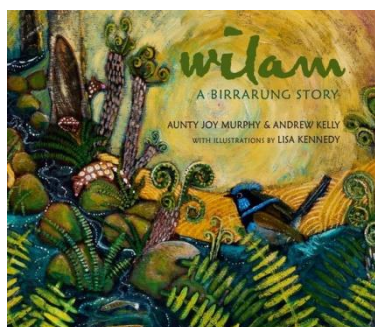


This book is full of energy and movement while exploring themes of friendship, tolerance, and difference. The strong message of positive reinforcement that we can be very different in how we act,

what we eat, how we behave, how we look and yet still be best friends, provides a highly satisfying ending. The short, engaging sentences, with some repetition, keep the pages turning.. The writing mimics the cheeky nature of felines, while the illustrations allow the reader to visualise Fred's boundless energy and enthusiasm, highlighting the personality and differences between the two friends.

By Francis WATT.

Wilam, A Birrarung Story



Yarra Riverkeeper Andrew Kelly joins award-winning picture book duo Aunty Joy Murphy and Lisa

Kennedy to tell the Indigenous and geographical story of Melbourne's beautiful Yarra river, from its source to its mouth; from its pre-history to the present day. An ode to Australian rivers, the flora and fauna that live on them and the function they perform as a part of modern day life.

Wilam brings Aboriginal life, culture and language right in to the heart of the city.

By: Aunty Joy Murphy, Andrew Kelly, Lisa Kennedy (Illustrator)

The Dreaming – NITV series.

Airs at 9:30 am or through SBS on demand and NITV.

Traditional Indigenous dreaming stories across Australia explained by Elders through words and animation. Including the dolphin NSW and the Wanka Manapulpa Minyma WA.



Obituaries

We take time to remember all passed Early Childhood Educators.



Alison Floyd

Passed away in January 2012

Alison continued her education when she attended the Kindergarten Training College in Kew. She graduated as a Kindergarten Teacher in 1955 and began her career in Melbourne. Alison worked at several Horsham kindergartens over many years there and found time to have four children. In 1976, the family moved to Bendigo where Alison worked for many years at the Bendigo Crèche before stopping full time work, and then spent time relieving at various kindergartens around town. Alison was a popular kindergarten teacher and was remembered many years later when one of her students, Brian Nankervis, of Rockwiz fame, gave her a copy of his book of poems with a lovely note for her. Many children in Melbourne, Horsham and Bendigo will also remember Alison as their "Princess of Playdough".



ADDING SMALL FOOTPRINTS to the yielding sand, these children, in line of fours, on either side of Miss Alison Cairns, turned eyes right as one individual when the cameraman appeared. They were out for a Bayside stroll from the Ada Mary a'Beckett kindergarten.



Alison St. John

passed away in April 2017.

Allison went back to University, when her three children were older and completed an Education degree, and then an Early Childhood Teaching Diploma. She was such an empathetic and effective teacher to her little pupils of diverse nationalities at Annie Todd kindergarten, and many others. With many an evening spent preparing teaching aids.

Resided in Bayside, Melbourne.

Elizabeth Mary Byrne

Passed away December 2019.

Formerly of Claremont, Tasmania 7011.

Jane Tindale

Passed away in July 2020

Jane was great friends with (Muriel Foote) when they worked together at the Kindergarten Teacher's College in Kew in the 70's. The somewhat radical (at the time) philosophy they researched and endorsed is now universally espoused as best practice in Early Childhood Education. They were real pioneers in the quest to have 'play' acknowledged as vital for the development of healthy youngsters.

Play Australia is deeply saddened at the passing of our highly respected former Board member and Life Member Jane Tindale. Jane spent much of her life strongly advocating for the right for all children to enjoy quality outdoor play and she will be very much missed as an advocate for children and play in Victoria.

Jane, we salute you for a life of outstanding service.

(Words taken from The Age Obituaries)

2020 AUDAX

We are providing AUDAX as an electronic Journal to our members.
For those members who have supplied an email address to us, AUDAX will be sent to that address in 2020.
If you prefer to receive a hard copy instead, you will need to email us at info@agecs.org.au

2020 Council Members

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

Administration officer:

Liz Potter

Events Coordinator:

Alex Heard

AGECS Members – Where are you?

Moved house? Changed email address?
Login to the website at www.agecs.org.au to update your details,
email us,
or call 0492 956 829 and leave a message.

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

The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies

is a membership-based, not-for-profit organisation providing professional
development and networking opportunities for their members.

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

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

Foundation of Graduates of Early Childhood Studies.



History of the Association

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

Join AGECS via the website: www.agecs.org.au

Please send correspondence and articles for inclusion to:

PO Box 12163, A'Beckett Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 or email to info@agecs.org.au

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