



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



AUDAX

**Audax**

*(Latin) courageous, bold, daring*

**AUDAX 99 – Spring 2019**

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

# President's Report

## AGECS awards life membership to ECE Graduates

Melbourne Graduate School of Education graduating students, Catherine Hronakis and Meredith Anderson receive their life membership awards from Maree Wiggins, June 2019.

### Catherine Hronakis

*Thank you for sponsoring my elective placement to Thailand. I am tremendously honoured to be receiving this award and cannot wait to experience an international IB*

*setting. I am also so grateful to have been awarded a lifetime membership to AGECS and look forward to the support I will receive from the organization in the future. I hope in the future AGECS and I will be able to create advocacy forums for Early Childhood Education appreciation and passion.*



### Meredith Anderson

*It is with much gratitude and heartfelt thanks that I receive the Australian Graduates in Early Childhood Studies Award. I was fortunate to have had many exceptional teachers who ignited my passion for learning and nurtured my natural sense of curiosity.*

*After having my own children, it is now that I have taken the opportunity to pursue my desire to become a teacher and instil a love of learning into future generations. I believe that high-quality teaching in the early years is crucial for all future social and academic achievement and have had the good fortune to experience what exceptional early childhood education and care provides both personally and for my children. I firmly believe my future as a teacher will be in the early years and receiving this award drives me further to enact practices which will ensure all of our children are afforded every opportunity to achieve all that they desire.*

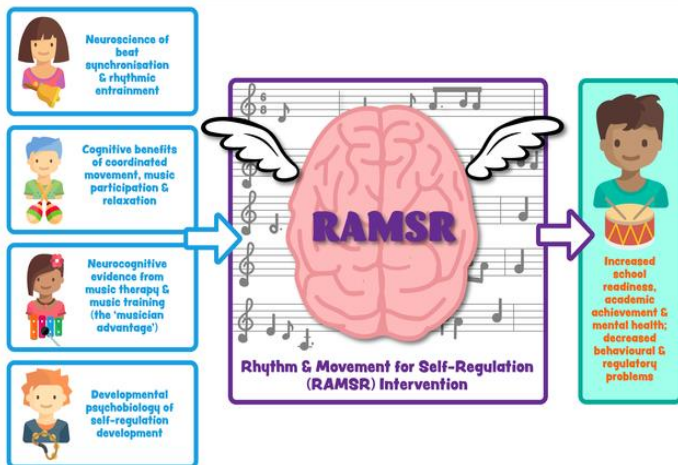


The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies (AGECS) meets in Carlton on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people. Our mission statement recognises that quality early childhood settings enhance learning and developmental achievements for all children, with the most significant impact 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

## • Rhythm and Movement for Self-regulation (RAMSR)

by Alannah Dore



The AGECS is committed to providing accessible, current and relevant professional development to early childhood educators in regional and rural Victoria. Therefore, a workshop on 'Rhythm and Movement for Self-Regulation (RAMSR)' was presented by researcher Kate Williams and enthusiastically received at Churchill and Ballarat Federation University campuses (Also supported by presenter Sally Savage) and in Bendigo at La Trobe University, then in Melbourne University.

As early childhood is a pivotal time for promoting self-regulation teachers can equip their students with the 'musician advantage'. This term refers to the non-musical benefits of formal music training such as self-regulation. Music is not just beneficial for budding musicians. The advantages of music for self-regulation are well documented and while music therapists embrace this research Kate suggests early childhood teachers could do the same. In her article *'Moving to the beat; using music, rhythm and movement to enhance self-regulation in early childhood classrooms'* (Williams, 2018), she states intentional, coordinated rhythmic movement activities can contribute to preparing children for successful school transition and improve academic and wellbeing outcomes.

While RAMSR incorporates enjoyable musical experiences designed to enhance children's attention and regulate emotions and behaviours there were numerous practicalities to the application of RAMSR for teachers. First no prior music expertise by educators was required. Another advantage was the use of minimal resources. Finally, familiar songs rather

than a totally new repertoire were easily adaptable to incorporate the RAMSR strategies. The RAMSR programs coordinated by the AGECS were designed to address the needs of tired teachers and educators who had often driven significant distances directly from the workplace to attend the event. The AGECS appreciates the early childhood professional works hard and shows appreciation for the dedicated attendees by providing a complementary PD, with a nurturing supper and engaging programs for educators who understandably may feel like they are ready to *drift off* at times (Two educators said they arrived at work that morning at 6am). The RAMSR workshops delivered on all counts! Over a delicious light supper teachers and educators were able to catch up with each other before Kate and Sally began with their humorous yet informative 15-minute presentation explaining the research process and findings. The remaining 75 minutes was hands-on for all participants to experientially familiarise themselves with RAMSR strategies.

The future of RAMSR is promising with early childhood educators overwhelmingly supportive of the workshop and of the RAMSR program itself. Teachers and educators from both kindergartens and long day care centres expressed appreciation for the hands-on approach to the presentation and for gaining a clear understanding of how and why RAMSR was recommended. They also valued links made to the Early Years Learning Framework and the accessibility of the program online (it's free!). For AUDAX readers who wish to explore the RAMSR program, the RAMSR Blog has extensive information and resources with opportunities to get involved with the project. Go to <https://ramsrblog.wordpress.com/>

- **Kate Williams** is a Senior Research Fellow in the School of Early Childhood and Inclusive Education, Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Her research focusses on children's development of self-regulation and the parenting, educational, and intervention contexts that support this development. Kate is also a Registered Music Therapist.
- **Sally Savage**, an early year's teacher and a PhD candidate at Monash University, Faculty of Education has research interests focused on parenting and music. Sally was involved in the RAMSR pilot study and has delivered several workshops on this program.

## • *The Launch of The Possum Skin Pedagogy*

AGECS was proud to be a part of the launch of The Possum Skin Pedagogy resource after supporting the project financially, with FKA also offering support. The evening was held in Moreland Town Hall and attended by over 70 enthusiastic people. Wurundjeri Elder Ron Jones Welcomed us to Country and Dr Sue Atkinson Lopez, spoke to us about the journey to achieve this amazing document alongside Annette Sax (Yarn Strong Sista).

Mandy Nicholson launched the Document.

### *Some photos from the Launch*



**Annette Sax, a Taungurung woman**



**Sue Atkinson Lopez, a Yorta Yorta woman and Mandy Nicholson, Wurundjeri woman**

*Possum Skin Pedagogy: A Guide for Early Childhood Practitioners* is authored by Sue Atkinson Lopez. The guide addresses some of the complexities around embedding Aboriginal perspectives, through seven narratives that can be explored with children, referencing the possum skin as a marker of the maintenance and revival of Victorian Aboriginal culture and identity. Most significantly this guide was constructed in consultation with Victorian Aboriginal Elders and other leaders of the Victorian Aboriginal community through the lens of a 'Possum Skin Pedagogy'.



**Wurundjeri Elder Ron Jones**

An additional resource *Reflecting on the Possum Skin Pedagogy* provides case studies of how early childhood practitioners have embedded Aboriginal perspectives into their programs.

### **Visit:**

<https://agecs.org.au/resources/possum-skin-pedagogy-resources-for-early-childhood/> for links to these valuable resources.

# AGECS Fellowship for Leadership and Change in ECE

## Helen Baker

- *Developing a Peer Group Coaching Model to enhance educator practices to support social and emotional learning and behaviour outcomes for young children.*

In 2017, I was privileged to receive a fellowship grant through **the Association for Graduates in Early Childhood Studies**. The focus of my project was to explore peer group coaching to enhance social, emotional and friendship skills and outcomes for preschool age children.

The grant enabled me to attend the 15th National Training Institute on Effective Practices: Addressing Challenging Behavior, St Petersburg, Florida and to visit centres in Denver implementing the Pyramid Model together with Practice Based Coaching.



The Pyramid Model framework was developed and has been extensively researched across the United States for many years. The framework supports early childhood educators to build skills for supporting nurturing and responsive caregiving, creating learning environments and providing targeted social-emotional skills to enhance social and behavioural outcomes for children.

The Pyramid Model aligns well with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, the National Quality Standards and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics particularly aspects of inclusion and equity.



I was involved with a preschool in 2015 where the educators were part of a research project and received training together with intensive weekly coaching from an external coach in the Pyramid Model framework. This involved the educators planning clear goals and strategies; focused observation with the coach and then educators reflecting with the coach at the end of the session regarding the frequency and effectiveness of the strategies implemented with the children. The educators also worked closely with the families.

The training and coaching had a significant impact for educator practices and the relationships between children, families and educators. The families involved noted many positive outcomes for children, including getting along with others, following directions, identifying and regulating emotions, engaging in cooperative play and feeling good about themselves. The educators built skills and confidence to explicitly teach children friendship skills, problem solving strategies for social situations and self-regulation.



This research project supported the data from the United States regarding training and coaching. It also emphasised that when the universal strategies at the base of the pyramid are embedded in practice, there is an overall reduction in challenging behaviour. The research shows that then, only a small percentage of children who initially presented with challenging behaviour required intensive individualised interventions (the top of the pyramid) for persistent challenging behaviour.

The Pyramid Model universal strategies are:

1. Nurturing and responsive relationships with children, families and colleagues.
2. High quality support environments
3. Targeted social emotional teaching strategies



After I had observed the impact of training and coaching for the educators and the resulting impact for children and families, I was inspired to explore options for an effective and sustainable approach to ongoing support for educators. During a Pyramid Model training session I attended, the concept of peer group coaching was introduced and I was keen to understand how this could be applied in preschool settings to

support educators and enhance outcomes for children.

The conference in Florida was a valuable opportunity to listen to and appreciate the range of research programs and outcomes across the United States regarding various aspects of the Pyramid Model. Several sessions outlined research based practical strategies for teaching children friendship skills and empathy. I also attended a number of sessions regarding practice based coaching. I was able to meet professionals involved in implementing a practice based group coaching model who were very generous with giving me individual time and information.

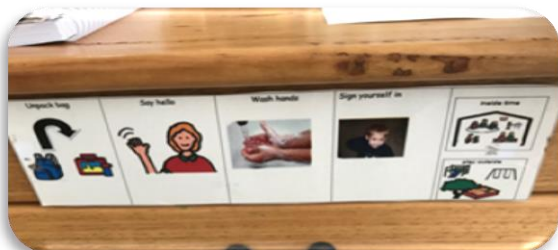
The visits to centres in Denver provided further informative and perspectives and highlighted the importance proactive, intentional, and explicit teaching of emotions, self-regulation and social skills. Coaching was embedded in professional practice at all centres.

On my return to Australia, I worked with a group of 8 educators in our Early Years Management cluster (EYM) to discuss and begin developing the concept of group coaching. The sessions were held once a term and educators valued the opportunity to network and discuss a specific aspect of their practice regarding children's social and emotional development. The sessions included viewing a video of an educator practice for discussion and reflection. While there was some initial reluctance about being filmed, educators valued seeing practice in action.



All educators in our EYM have received extensive professional development training regarding the universal levels of the Pyramid Model. Prior to the training all educators identified relationships with children and families as strength. Following

Pyramid Model training, many educators report that they are now engaging with children and families at a deeper level. Educators continue to develop skills and practices and it is evident that they are more intentional regarding setting up environments, to promote interactions and play; they utilise routines, transitions and small group times to support children to practice social and friendship skills and to teach children a tool box of strategies to use when challenges arise.



Many educators use stories, puppets and role plays to teach children about emotions and social skills; implement visuals /pictures in all aspects of the program, so that each child knows what is happening and what to expect; they are conscious each session of creating enjoyable moments with each child; giving specific positive feedback for relevant, small and significant achievements and engaging individual children in extended conversation about something of interest to the child. Educators also work closely with families to discuss and develop consistent goals and strategies to support each child's learning across home and preschool.



The peer group coaching model has been refined during 2019. All Educational Leaders across our EYM participate in a facilitated peer group of 8 participants once a term. An agreement has been developed that reflects nurturing and responsive relationships between the Educational Leaders. The meeting involves information and discussion of a specific practice, video of one of the Educational Leaders implementing a specific skill or practice they have identified for themselves during a preschool session, then feedback from the group in relation to the specific practice or skill. The peer group model has been enthusiastically received by the Educational Leaders. The feedback has been that they value the focus on a specific practice skill, the networking and the sharing of skills, strategies and resources. While initially uncomfortable about being viewed on video, it is apparent that the Educational Leaders have appreciated the experience of being validated and supported by their peers. A cycle of reflection and learning is beginning to be developed where Educational Leaders share the information and strategies for specific teaching practices with their preschool teams and then reporting back to the group. A focused observation tool is also beginning to be implemented for all educators. The tool involves each preschool team identifying a teaching practice and all educators monitoring and recording how frequently they individually implement the practice throughout the week.

This project has been a small part of an overall training strategy to support educator practices in relation to long term social, emotional and behavioural outcomes for children. Being involved has enhanced my leadership perspective and skills and reaffirmed for me the critical skills, expertise and knowledge of early childhood educators for influencing the immediate and long term outcomes for children.

**Helen Baker**

- *Memoirs from a member—*  
**Kay Hirst (1957 graduate)**



Kay Hirst exploring STEM at AGM 2016

Every year in the Summer holidays, my family went to our beach shack on the far North West coast of Tasmania. Each year, “Auntie Heather” came to stay with another family holidaying there. This venerable aunt was Miss Heather Lyon, principal of the Kindergarten Training College in Melbourne. She saw me teaching children to swim and row a boat and sparked my notion of being a kindergarten teacher. She endorsed my application, as did my Head Mistress at Broadland House in Launceston, who suggested that I could help with the little boarders there. The seeds were sewn. There was no College in Tasmania. For three years, from 1955, I lived at the YWCA hostel in Church Street Richmond in the student wing. There was also a big (100)? Working girls wing. All the Navy girls, who also boarded there were very smart in their WRANs uniforms. KTC students were recognisable in our fisher knit jumpers, gabardine overcoats and pig skin leather dilly bags – fashion slaves? The girls living in the other hostels, Princess Mary Club and Chalmers Hall in the city were similarly attired. There were no more residents at Mooroolbeek. For our kindergarten prac. placements in first year, we had a yellow and blue plaid cotton dress. Sub-primary and school placements in second year, didn’t require a uniform. Third years dress was red and blue plaid cotton. We had to make these dresses ourselves. In 1987 for our 30<sup>th</sup> reunion, Joan Gardner (Allan) made little flag invitations from her 3<sup>rd</sup> year dress remnants.

A number of other KTC students came and went from Doery House YWCA Richmond, including Heather Tinney, (Punshon) who was my room-mate in 1955. (See Audax, April 2019). Bev Tinney also lived there and Heather married her brother. I also married another KTC girl’s brother (Helen Hirst 1956). I was

excited for my little sister when she started kindergarten in Smithton Tasmania, that her teacher, Dorothy Stratton (Webb 1955), had also lived at the hostel in my first year.

Shirley Frost another Tasmanian and I shared a room for 2 years, sleeping one week in the bedroom and one week behind the canvas blinds on the big verandah. The other three Tasmanians in the 1957 group all returned to live and work there - Maxine Geard, Marjorie Smith, Noeline Brook. Oui-Ling Oo was our only international student. Shirley was awarded an OAM for her services to Early Childhood Development in Canberra where she has lived for a number of years with her husband Ian Gollings.

My first Director’s position was at the old mouse-ridden, decaying Burnley Free Kindergarten, built in 1908. Nora Semmens was their first (Froebelian) teacher and I was the last. Nora’s grainy old photo was on the office wall. Many times my assistant and I left that building with the children to go to the Fitzroy Gardens to collect leaves or down to the Hawthorn Bridge to look at reflections in the river below. We also went to look at cattle at the abattoirs in Coppin Street and many times to the local Fire Station. We also took the children to the Royal Melbourne Show with the lunch mother as our only helper. No dads on the roster in those days. No ratios either. The dog that followed the line of 25 children holding the rope, often came with us on the tram. Companion animal?

In many inner suburban kindergartens affiliated with FKU, the management committee members were philanthropic ladies. At Burnley in November 1958 they decided to close the dilapidated building forever. My wedding date was set for January 1959! Urgently, I applied for and was luckily accepted for a new position in the Gospel Hall in Ashburton. On the first day, I was introduced to the parents as “Miss Wragg”. I hadn’t told them that I had married during the holidays. A new building was under construction in a nearby park and we set up Estrella Kindergarten there in 1960. By then, my husband and I were establishing our new home in Blackburn. Every day there was a mile long walk down unmade Lake Road, train to Camberwell, change for Alamein and another mile walk to the kindergarten. The president was also a KTC graduate (June D’Ombrain 1948) and one weekend, I took her son and my widowed assistant’s little fellow on the train for a holiday at my home. Jeremy developed a very high fever and my husband had to run half a mile to the nearest phone box to ask his parents to collect him. No car or mobile phone back then! By Sunday night mumps were obvious.

In FKU kindergartens, staff generally had an idea when a supervisor, Muffie Paul, might visit. The Gospel Hall kindergarten was with the Health Department and

one day, supervisor Romola Woolaston, appeared around the back of the church where I was knitting whilst supervising the outdoor play area. I quickly explained that the children loved watching my Geelong football scarf grow.

I stayed at home in Blackburn while my children, Sally 1961, David 1963, and Anna 1966 were little, until we moved to set up a business in High Street Armadale. In 1969 I went back to teaching part-time at Opportunity Youth Club Kindergarten in Richmond. We all went upstairs to the club TV room to watch the moon landing. Sir Eugene Gorman, honorary Consul for Greece was the patron of the youth club. It was suggested that I study Greek to be better able to work with so many of these families in the neighbourhood. I loved doing that and can still say in Greek “blow your nose”, “sit down – now” and other important phrases – you know the ones!

With the family growing up, I needed more income, so I became full time Director of Indra Pre-school in Blackburn South. There were a number of families enrolled who had moved out to the “burbs” and they were very surprised at my Greek greetings. My marriage wasn’t working, so I decided to move back in (to the inner city) and was appointed director in charge of Brookville double unit Kindergarten in Toorak where I stayed for 25 years (1000 plus families). The very first person I met on my very first day was the mother of one of those children from our beach shack holidays. Her grand-children were enrolled at Brookville and she was visiting from Tasmania.

After a heart health scare (ICU), I retired from Brookville. I eventually became a McArthur Management agency teacher. One day I was sent to Brookville. There were three grandmothers collecting the children of their children that I had taught. A goggle and a giggle! While at Brookville, I had met a new partner and between us we had six children including a big David and a little David. We bought a fisherman’s fibro cement cottage in Airey’s Inlet as diversional therapy. The house burnt down in Ash Wednesday Bush Fires and the relationship also ended. Eventually, I built a bigger, more comfortable Beach House and continued to enjoy holidays with family, friends and colleagues down the Great Ocean Road. Many of my co-workers from the Victorian Arts Centre holidayed there.

I was very lucky to be accepted as a founding front-of-house staff member at the brand-new Melbourne Concert Hall from 1982. My first shift in charge of program-sellers money was a disaster for the manager. I had no idea about sorting the money and coins - \$1 and \$2 paper notes and round 50 cent coins, so I bundled all of the notes up together and put all of the mixed-up coins into the cloth bag. After

24 years working front-of-house in all of those magnificent theatres, I have figured it out!

When my daughter, in Ashgrove Queensland, told me that she was having twin sons on her 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, I resigned from the Arts Centre and went to live in Brisbane to be a helpful grandmother until the boys went to school. I had a glowing reference to QPAC up there but the boys were my priority. I did get to join U3A and played golf regularly so Brisbane was a great experience all round. While I lived in Alderley, I was also asked to set up and manage an out-of-school hours program at the local kindergarten. It was well received and continues to operate as planned. In 1991, I attended a CHIP Foundation Summer School at Melbourne University to study the identification of children of higher intellectual potential. Over time, I had observed pre-school children who could read, had amazing conversation and logical thinking skills. This course was a challenging but very rewarding professional experience. Coincidentally, the lecturer Dr Mirikaca Gross had come across a very clever little 3 year-old Charlie Tao who was the catalyst for her special academic interest in this area.

In Brisbane, I had met up with Prue Walsh, an outdoor playground specialist who has developed her theory about Nature Deficit Disorder NDD. I am pleased that an awareness and understanding of their environment and their place in that space has always been a feature of my planning for the children – wherever, whenever and whichever group. Planting, collecting, categorising, pet care and nature table displays encourage all children and parents to carefully observe and appreciate the natural world. Recently, I have been invited to set up nature table displays for special functions and visitors to the Williamstown Botanic Gardens – no NDD here but the heart is heavy when there are so many plastic play grounds. What can we do?

On my return from Brisbane, I have rented in Williamstown and have been a community visitor at Robina Scott kindergarten here. The children always ask me if I am somebody’s grandmother. Yes, I am, for seven of mine. I have also been on the Brimbank PSA relief teacher list and have spent time in many of their western suburbs’ centres. Recently, at a maritime museum function, I saw a photo of the “Arcadia” and I was reminded that as part of what I presume was a career guidance/counselling exercise by KTC in 1956 we went on board that big passenger ship to look at the children’s nursery area. We also went to Marathon Spastic Centre in Malvern. Our visit to “Keidish” the unmarried mother’s home down the street from Mooroolbeek was never fully explained.

At college, most of the lectures were in the 'Temporary Building'.

- Art - Francis Derham
- Music – June Epstein
- Current Affairs – Yvonne Nicholls
- Psychology – Eileen Edwards
- Mr Utassy taught folk dancing
- Mr Chinnery told us about New Guinea
- Miss Anne Dreyer talked about the soldiers who had listened to her and how surprised they were to meet her – so were we who had also listened to Kindergarten of the Air at 9.30 for many years.

While I was at Brookville, a new building was erected, not far away. It was Armadale Preschool Centre. A parent asked me the difference between a kindergarten and a preschool centre. "I don't know and I still don't".

There are many other changes "in the field". The director is now the Early Childhood Educator. The assistant is the Co-Educator. There is a huge child care sector. There is STEM, NAPLAN, EYLF, GONSKI, HECS,

Transition Statements, DHS. But, for me, the biggest change is turning our brothers and sisters into siblings. How, when, where and why did this happen? Like Pauline, I say "please explain". It's not even an acronym or is it?

A couple more "small world stories",

The husband of the teacher that I replaced at Burnley in 1958, Pat Dufty, had stayed with my family when my father had picked him as a hitch-hiker in Tasmania 1952.

Elaine Oldham and I had first met when we were on a Pioneer bus tour from Melbourne to Sydney in 1952 with our parents. We became pen-friends and met up again at KTC on day one 1955.

### Kay Hirst (Wragg) 1957 Dip.KTC Melbourne

## • *A Day in the Life of a Rural Teacher –*

By Louise Fitzpatrick Leach

**Ouyen Preschool** is in the far North West of the state, 100 kms from Mildura and 443 kms from Melbourne



**6.30 am:** Driving to work, in the headlights I see the shape of a dead kangaroo on the side of the road. The moment I spare for the poor kangaroo is followed by the thought I spare for the motorist who will probably

have to make a trip to the panel beater. (That's been me, on a number of occasions).

**7.00am:** It's getting light by the time I get to Ouyen; the street is empty apart from a tradie's ute heading off. At the kinder I deliver some juicy grass clippings from home to our worms, then make a coffee and sit down to emails and forms (easy); enquiries to anyone I can think of about counselling and referral pathways for preschool children (frustrating). I want to know what the public system offers to a vulnerable family if their child has trauma. There is no social worker or visiting psychologist in Ouyen, (apart from services for sexual abuse victims. Other people, both adults and children, have to travel the 100 kms to Mildura, if they are lucky enough to be able to get help). So far I haven't found any counselling services funded to work with children under-12 in the Mallee. This is not NDIS territory, though that is also challenging in the country with few or no Allied Health services locally and no public transport available to bring people in to Ouyen from outlying areas.

**7.55 am:** My coworker, Bev, arrives. We briefly check our plans for the new movement skills program we are starting today, then we begin to set up. There is no foyer in our building, parents sign in at a bench outside under the verandah, which we set up each morning to make it look fresh and attractive.

**8.15 am:** The first child arrives. Most of our 19 children are here by 8.40, including the 7 who travel in by school bus. (Matilda lives the furthest, 50 kms away; she gets on her bus at 7.30 and arrives at 8.30). I quickly check in with a new mum who isn't aware of the MCHN service next door. The MCH Nurse is actually another mum, so hopefully she will be able to meet her at drop off or pick up on Thursday.

**9.30 am:** Our dear neighbour from next door arrives to read to the children. She has brought a little posey of cheerful yellow daisies. She has a steady stream of "customers" for the next hour. (A mum tells me later today that this is her son's favourite part of kinder: something I will pass on to our quiet, calm, smiling, generous friend).

We have had a busy schedule this term with frequent visitors and excursions, including joining our neighbouring kinder at Manangatang (about 60 kms away) for loose parts play on 2 days. We all tend to make our own fun, but joining in with another kinder is especially enjoyable. These trips are expensive, of course, as we have to hire a bus, but parents have fundraised for many years to support the kinder as well as possible, and they are happy for their children to be socializing with a neighbouring kinder. When I checked in with the "school bus children" and their parents, they were all very confident that they could handle the extra travelling – and they did.



We kick off the footy season with our new ball and some modified rules. Some of the children are doing Kanga Kick at footy training on Thursdays, and they ask why they can't tackle – but one mum tells me later that she thinks the kinder no-tackle rule should be in the real game!

Our new little hen and chicks have also arrived lately, they have been lent to us until December by a friend from up the road at Hattah (36 kms away). They are

an important part of the kinder program, while the weather is cool to mild. Footy and hens don't mix, so they stay in their pen today.

**1.30 pm:** we've come to the end of another action-packed session. One child has an incident report – I have rung the parent, and I explain and pass it onto the childcare staff who are here to collect that child and some others for the next part of their day. They will give it to the parent to read and sign. Buses are a regular part of the kinder day for some of the children. One child arrives at kinder on a school bus, goes back to childcare, and is then either picked up or is sometimes delivered to the school to go home again with his sibling on the school bus. It's a big day, getting to kinder, and I'm glad that he is a resilient little boy with a big sister to rely on. Transition to school – or at least the flow of a school day – won't be a challenge for this child – life will be much simpler.

**6.00 pm:** We're having a celebration of Mothers and Special Friends this evening (as we will do for the Dads later in the year). Out of 17 families, we have only 4 mums not able to make it. (Matilda is back, with a big smile). It's cropping time in the Mallee, farmers are sowing, it's not great timing for an evening out with just one child, but somehow they manage it. For the children, it's magic to be back here in the dark!

**7.30 pm:** the kinder is empty again, we clean up, Bev leaves and I quickly send off a photo to each family so the children can revisit their special night.

**8.15 pm:** lock up and leave. On the way home, on the lookout for active kangaroos, the headlights show me something much more rare - an echidna shuffling across the road.



**Louise Fitzpatrick Leach**

**Kindergarten Educational Leader**

## *News from the Field of the Early Years.....*

- ***A smart investment for a smarter Australia – The Front Project.org.au***

Australia's first Economic Analysis of early childhood education in the year before school

The model looked at the impact of the current Australian system, which provides an early education program for 15 hours a week, delivered by a Bachelor qualified teacher, in the year before school.

Our current system offers a significant return on investment (ROI) of 1:2. For every dollar invested now, Australia receives \$2 back over a child's life. Children, families, governments and business all benefit from the returns early education provides. Benefits are reflected in higher earnings and workforce participation, increased tax revenue and considerable savings in health, education and justice budgets. Early education plays a key role in Australia's prosperity.

The findings demonstrate the potential for more children and families to live healthier, happier and more productive lives alongside dividends that will benefit our entire society and economy.

The ROI can be attributed to the skills and abilities children develop in early education. These abilities lead to stronger academic performance through school and a greater likelihood of school completion and undertaking further education ***We have an opportunity to increase the benefits of early childhood education and improve outcomes for Australian children and families by:***

### **Investing in quality**

Every child should have access to a quality, early childhood program that enhances their learning and development. Currently a quarter of services aren't meeting the National Quality Standard.

### **Committing to ongoing funding**

Ongoing funding commitments from State and Federal Governments will lead to improved service viability, planning, job security and quality. The current agreement between the Commonwealth and the states and territories to fund these programs will

expire at the end of 2019. It has been renewed annually or biannually for the past 7 years.

### **Increasing access**

Ensuring children in disadvantaged communities have access to quality early childhood education. They have the most to gain, yet are the least likely to attend and the least likely to experience high quality learning. Quality early childhood education is good for children. Children become confident and curious learners, able to adapt and apply their learning. Children gain a strong base for social and emotional development, improving their ability to focus, communicate, and manage emotions as well as their numeracy and literacy skills.

### **Offering two years**

Two years of quality early childhood education in the years before school has a bigger impact than one year. Australia is one of the few OECD countries not offering two years of preschool, putting us at risk of falling further behind on international benchmark tests, like PISA.

**Thriving now and into the future.** The jobs of tomorrow will be influenced by physical, digital and bio technologies that we are yet to fully understand. The World Economic Forum estimates 65% of children entering primary school today will end up in jobs that don't exist yet. Succeeding in the workplace will increasingly require agile lifelong learners, comfortable with continuous adaptation and willing to change industries. The skills children will need to thrive in the future workforce are built in the early years. Core skills like literacy, numeracy, communication and enhanced cognitive skills such as perseverance, resilience and the ability to learn new information, will be essential.



## • **Shared Screen Time: why it's good for you and your child**



Using screens with your child has the same benefits as doing any enjoyable activity together.

And, of course, shared screen time with your child can be fun!

### **Using screen time to build your relationship with your child**

Playing a game or watching a show together lets you turn screen time into family time. This means it can be a good balance for solo screen use.

Even more importantly, when you watch TV or videos and play games or apps with your child, it shows you care about things that matter to your child. It sends a simple message – you're important to me.

### **Helping your child get the most out of screen time**

Screen use can have many benefits for children and teenagers. And your child benefits most when you watch and play with him and help him make connections between what he's watching and playing and his own life.

For example, if you're watching a TV show, movie or YouTube video together, you could talk together about how the characters behave and treat each other:

Is that respectful behaviour? Would you like someone to treat you that way?

Is that a safe thing to do? What would you do if one of your friends did that?

What would happen if someone did that in real life?

Shared screen time can also help you start [conversations about difficult topics](#) like bullying, relationships, drug use and so on.

And when you play or watch with your child, you can get her in the habit of thinking about what's on the screen rather than just passively watching. For example, you can sit with your child while she plays a game or watches a show and ask questions like:

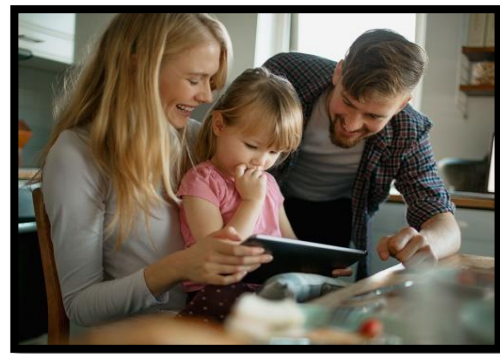
*How do you play this game?*

*What happens when you move there?*

*Why do you think this game has in-app purchases?*

*What's the point of this YouTube video?*

*Why is the person showing that product?*



### **Using screen time to learn new things**

Children learn best from real-world experiences like social time with family and friends, [physical play](#), [playing outside](#), [reading](#) and [creative play](#).

So when you share screen time with your child, it becomes an interactive, real-world experience that your child can learn from. For example, if you:

- talk about what's happening in the show or game, your child can learn new words
- play a multiplayer game, your child can learn social skills like turn-taking and cooperation
- try some coding together on a children's coding site like [Scratch](#), your child can learn some new technical skills.

And the learning probably goes both ways. For example, you and your child could make a video. You might experiment together to work out how to use the editing tools to add effects. Or your child could teach you how to use the editing program – good for you and your child!

### **Ideas for shared screen time**

Here are some ideas for sharing screen time with your child:

- Search online with your child for something that you're both interested in – for example, a weekend activity, or a new recipe to cook for dinner.
- Play an ongoing game with your child, like online Scrabble. This helps to keep you connected. It's also fun and can be something special that just the two of you do.
- Download a music app and share and chat about the music you're listening to with each other.
- Get active while using technology together. For example, go for a hike using a mapping app.



## • *Jamming with your toddler: how music trumps reading for childhood development*

By Liam Viney, a Piano Performance Fellow at University of Queensland.

The key to unlocking a child's potential intelligence and happiness may indeed lie in music, but succumbing to the commercial juggernaut that is the baby-genius-making industry may not be in either your child or your wallet's best interest.

Instead, try making up songs with your toddler. A **new study** suggests that regular informal music-making with very young children may even have benefits above and beyond those of reading.

But there's an important, interesting, and somewhat beautiful catch — for best results, make it shared music-making in your home.



In an analysis of data generated from a study involving more than 3,000 children, a University of Queensland team investigated the associations between informal home music education for very young children and later cognitive and social-emotional outcomes. The team found that informal music-making in the home from around the ages of two and three can lead to better literacy, numeracy, social skills, and attention and emotion regulation by the age of five. By measuring the impact of music and reading both separately and in combined samples, the researchers were able to identify benefits from informal music activity over and above shared book reading, most strongly in relation to positive social behaviour,

<https://youtu.be/ONLYdCFjVd4>

attention regulation and to a lesser but still significant extent, numeracy.

Part of an Australian Research Council funded study titled **Being and becoming musical: towards a cultural ecological model of early musical development**, the study aims to provide a comprehensive account of how Australian families use music in their parenting practices and make recommendations for policy and practice in childcare and early learning and development. Last month, **the team** was awarded the inaugural **Music Trust Award** for Research into the Benefits of Music Education.

Music and its relationship to mental and social development has long captured the attention of parents, researchers, even philosophers. Science has shown that music's effect on the brain is particularly strong, with **studies** demonstrating an improvement in IQ among students who receive music lessons. Advantages in the classroom have been **identified** for students who study musical instruments, and the effects of ageing on cognition may even be **mitigated** through lifelong musical activity.

So recapturing a sense of play (if you're an adult) is crucial to the process of shared music-making, and this research invites parents to focus on the element of "playing" music with toddlers, using any tools at hand.

The human voice is a great place to start, and the kitchen cabinet contains a wealth of percussion instruments.

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# ***Building belonging: A toolkit for early childhood educators on cultural diversity and responding to prejudice***

- **Human Rights Commission**

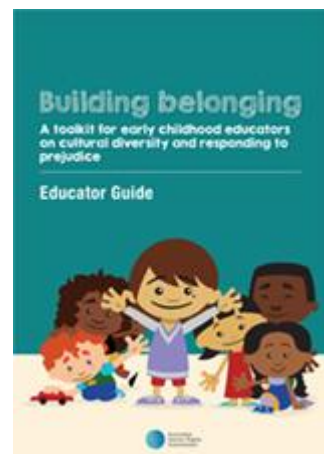
Recognising that early childhood environments provide the ideal setting for children to begin learning about their rights and responsibilities, and to develop respect for those around them, the Australian Human Rights Commission has recently started working more closely with the early childhood education and care sector. In partnership with Early Childhood Australia, the Commission has developed 'Supporting young children's rights: Statement of intent (2015-2018)' which provides high-level principles and areas for collective work, advocacy and action by Early Childhood Australia (ECA), its members and the National Children's Commissioner in relation to the rights of young children—including children from birth to primary school age.

The Commission has also recently developed its first series of early childhood education resources

- Building Belonging' is a comprehensive toolkit of early education resources which includes an ebook, song with actions, educator guide, posters and lesson plans. It is focussed on encouraging respect for cultural diversity and tackling racial prejudice in early childhood settings



'Colours of Australia' is a song celebrating the diversity of Australia. There is an accompanying poster that demonstrates actions that complement the song.



The Educator Guide serves as an introduction to the 'Building Belonging' toolkit of resources which supports early childhood educators in teaching children about cultural diversity and addressing prejudice in early childhood settings.

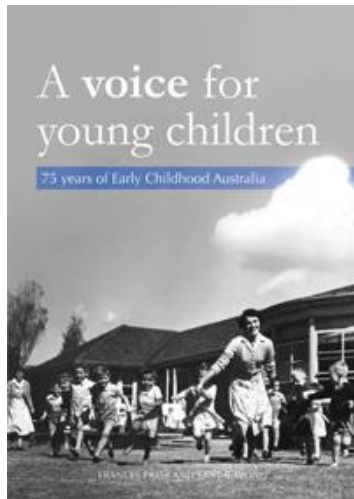


'All My Friends and Me' is an ebook that tells the story of Pax and her friends at preschool as they explore their similarities and differences.

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/education/building-belonging-toolkit-early-childhood-educators->

## Worth Reading...

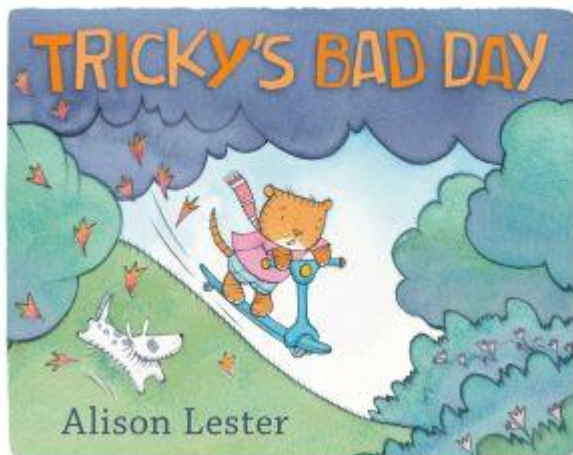
### 75 years of Early Childhood



Since its inception 75 years ago, Early Childhood Australia (ECA) has played a pivotal role in the development and support of early childhood education and care services in Australia. Always taking a broad view of its remit, the organisation has a

history of engagement in national and international dialogue and advocacy concerning the rights and wellbeing of young children.

### CBCA Early Childhood Book Winner for 2019



Poor Tricky! Nothing is going right for him. Milk spills, pyjama buttons won't work, his little sister wrecks their game, and when he tries to help out, everything gets worse. Tricky's having a very bad day!

Then Dad has an idea. Outside it's wild, but there's a lot to

explore...

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgdb\\_Swclpo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgdb_Swclpo)

### Square Eyes

by Emily Booker

Emily Booker set out to learn more about children and television, listening not only to scholars and experts in the field, but also to children themselves. What she found was that the 'problem' of children's addiction to screens is actually, in part, a grown-

ups' problem. Speaking to children about what they watch and why reveals a steadily consistent response: they love to seek out programs that are 'fun'. But their choices are often a source of anxiety for parents, and appear to provoke a need to censure and control the child's enjoyment. At a time when children's lives are increasingly regulated, and the pressures of parenting are felt ever more keenly, this important book teaches us much about the value of entertainment, not only for children but also for adults.

YouTube:

▶ 0:59

- Uploaded by Monash University Publishing  
Trailer by Isabella Orsini Matthew Mendoza **Square Eyes**

[http://www.publishing.monash.edu/books/ ...](http://www.publishing.monash.edu/books/)

## ***Apps for Educators in Sustainability....***

### ***Sustainability Aware...***

*Educational Apps for kids about sustainability.*

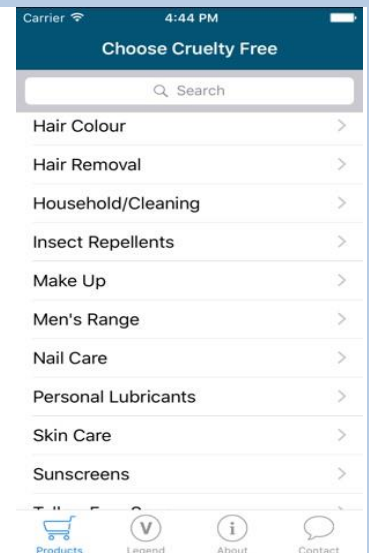
*They are suitable for independent reading, guided reading and for use as library reference. Our apps are aligned with the Australian curriculum and were created to facilitate literacy skill building, whilst educating students about sustainability.*

*Sustainability is one of the cross-curriculum priorities outlined by the Australian curriculum, which means it is to be embedded across all areas of learning.*



### ***Choose cruelty free...***

*A good resource for avoiding products made in ways that harm animals. It only covers brands accredited with animal welfare organisations, focussing on cosmetics, personal care and cleaning products. Eg. Products certified palm oil free.*



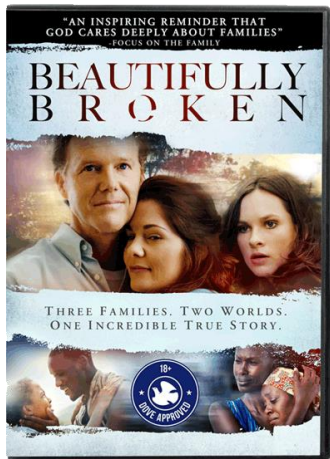
Apps can help kids manage when they feeling anxious. Some apps can help kids get through an anxious moment. And there are also apps that can help by distracting them.

Mindfulness for Children  
Mindful minutes  
Bedtime meditations for kids  
Breathe of light: relaxing puzzler

## At the Movies.....

### Beautifully Broken

A refugee's escape, a prisoner's promise, and a daughter's painful secret converge in this inspiring true story of hope. As three fathers fight to save their families, their lives become intertwined in an unlikely journey across the globe, where they learn the healing power of forgiveness and reconciliation.



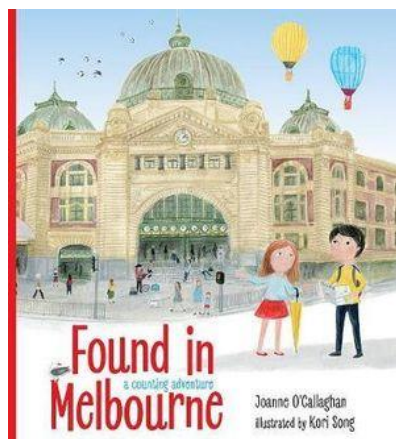
### Van Gogh in Japan

Van Gogh's encounter with Japanese artworks gave his work a new and exciting direction. After leaving Paris for the south of France - to what he thought of as near to a kind of Japan as he could find - the productive and yet troubled years that followed must all be seen in the context of Van Gogh bending Japanese influences to his will and defining himself as a modern artist with clear Asian precursors. In this little known story of Van Gogh's art we see just how important his study of Japan was. The film travels not only to France and the Netherlands but also to Japan to further explore the remarkable heritage that so affected Van Gogh and made him the artist we know of today.



## Geography for our Children...

**Found In Melbourne** by Joanne O'Callaghan, follows a girl and a boy on their travels through the landmarks of the wonderful city of Melbourne, and the wider area of Victoria. Each page showcases a different place with a cheeky rhyme and something to count – all the way up to the million stories to read in the Reading Room of the State Library. Along the way we get to visit the Shrine, the MCG, Puffing Billy, Flinders St and more. This book has been translated by Kevin Yang into Simplified Chinese – the first children's book to be published in both English and Chinese simultaneously by an Australian publisher. The last page of the book gives extra detail about each place, ideal for teachers or parents wanting to discuss any places further.



## What's Happening Around Us?.....



**November 15 – 23**

**Melbourne Music Week** - Melbourne City Council - Alexandra Gardens  
Kubik gets a reboot for the 10th anniversary of Melbourne Music Week as it takes over Alexandra Gardens to bring you an outdoor music venue like no other.

Designed by Balestra Berlin, the structure lights up in response to music, a synthesis of sound and light. Constructed from industrial containers, each unit houses LEDs, individually controlled by custom software that interacts with the beats and frequencies of live performances. **Free and \$\$ event.**

**November 30**

**Opera in the Bowl** – Sidney Myer Music Bowl – 8:00pm – Melbourne City Council



Returning again in 2019, Mazda Opera in the Bowl offers audiences the opportunity to hear opera under the stars.

This **free event** is the perfect opportunity for first-timers or seasoned operagoers to dig out the picnic rug, kick back and relax with family and friends, and enjoy an evening of exhilarating performances of opera's best known arias.

**December 15**

2:00 – 5:00pm

**The Change: Rising Tides** – Yarra City Council Collingwood Estate Underground Car Park, 44 Harmsworth st



A journey of many worlds colliding - from West Papuan uprising to climate refugees on a raft lost at sea, a Turkish poet facing a firing squad, school students taking to the streets and Palestinians up against the apartheid wall these characters journeys will run parallel with the stories of the struggle of the First Nations people of Australia.

This social commentary, humour, personal stories and utopian visions will be served on a deadly sound track of hip-hop, traditional and world music with live band accompaniment to a background of incredible sets.

**January 5<sup>th</sup>**, 10:00am

**St.Albans Lunar Festival** – Brimbank City Council – Alfreida St



The lunar New Year is the biggest calendar events for Southeast Asian communities all over the world and this one kicks off the New Year season in Victoria.

**January 2020**

**Visibility Exhibition** – Wyndham City Council – Wyndham Art Gallery

VISABILITY is a celebration of identities, minds and bodies as artists who identify as having a disability make the invisible and marginalised, visible. The exhibition asks the audience to consider how values, assumptions and falsehoods embedded in our culture and systems discriminate against people with disability - and what might be possible when those assumptions are challenged.

## *Some Post Notes for your Noticeboard....*



If a child knows 8 nursery rhymes

**BY HEART, BY THE TIME**

they are 4 years old

**THEY ARE USUALLY AMONG**

the best readers

**AND SPELLERS IN THEIR CLASS**

by the time they are 8.

*Mem Fox*

***Bring back handwriting: It's good for your Brain***



## 2019 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 2019.

**If you prefer to receive a hard copy instead, you will need to email us at [info@agecs.org.au](mailto:info@agecs.org.au)**

*For all other members, you will still receive your hard copy through the postal service.*

### 2019 Council Members

Maree Wiggins  
Sue Atkinson Lopez  
Annette Sax  
Avril McHugh  
Sue Emmett  
Candy Koch  
Sophie Patitsas  
Sandra McCarthy  
Alannah Dore  
Sarah O'Donnell  
Helen Holden  
Dorothy Connop  
Tess Brook  
Wendy Grenfell  
**Project Administrator:**  
Kay Margetts

### AGECS Members – Where are you?

Moved house? Changed email address?

Login to the website at [www.agecs.org.au](http://www.agecs.org.au) to update your details,  
email us,

or phone 03 8344 0990 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 95 year history of philanthropic work, which continues through its establishment of the**

**[Foundation of Graduates of Early Childhood Studies.](#)**



### History of the Association

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

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

Please send correspondence and articles for inclusion to:

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

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