

reflections

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In this edition of *Reflections* we continue our focus on key elements of the National Early Childhood Reform Agenda. This is a busy agenda that is progressing quickly, and there have been issues around information sharing. My father, an old school news editor, maintains that good journalism is about raising awareness and informed public critique. With this intent, this edition examines the preschool promise and profiles different models of preschool service delivery. Two strong themes emerge through this discussion. Firstly, while there is consensus around the key determinants of a high quality preschool program, there is more than one way to deliver the program. Secondly, if we are seeking the best outcomes for children, and are serious about finally putting unhelpful care and education distinctions to rest, we need a new integrated approach to preschool delivery in long day care.

Professor Jennifer Sumsion provides an update on the Early Years Learning Framework, a key component of the National Quality Standards Framework. Professor Sumsion shares feedback from the national trial of the draft framework and online forum, and outlines next steps toward the release of the framework in July 2009.

It is fair to say that the scope and pace of the National Early Childhood Reform Agenda is causing some anxiety within the sector, sometimes based on misinformation and/or misunderstanding. It is our firm belief that this problem could be alleviated by more proactive communication strategies, together with a commitment from the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to review this work within a set period of time. This would enable the sector to maximise this opportunity to move forward and improve services for children and families, confident that there will be opportunity to review and refine our work within a reasonable timeframe.

Moving away from the policy agenda, we feature a very honest and personal reflection of a family's transition to child care. Leisa Stathis, mother to Nate and Bronte, offers a parent's perspective on this transition. The article shows the importance of two-way communication and building warm and trusting relationships with parents, and is compulsory reading for all involved in ECEC – staff, family day carers and other parents.

We are also delighted to feature a very thoughtful article reflecting on the issue of staff:child ratios by student teacher, Ellen Nicholas and Nursery Group Leader, Kia Lehane. "Quality in care...It's about more than just the numbers", offers some practitioner insights into the benefits of a higher adult to child ratio with our youngest children.

Finally, we profile a new and innovative collaboration in Queensland. The Queensland Children's Services Alliance is a grass roots initiative that draws together peak children's services organisations to provide a forum for discussion and debate and to work toward an informed and more cohesive voice around collective children's services issues. Despite the obvious challenges in bringing together different organisational priorities and perspectives, the establishment of this group has been greeted with much enthusiasm by government and sector representatives alike.

We trust that the articles in this edition offer useful information, provoke discussion and debate, and support wise decision-making – within your service, your state/territory and nationwide.

Dr Susan Irvine
CEO, *The Gowrie (QLD) Inc*

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- Gilda Howard – *Gowrie Victoria*
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Towards Universal High Quality Early Childhood Education



Prior to winning the 2007 federal election, the Rudd Labor Government committed to an ambitious *Plan for Early Childhood* that spanned universal preschool provision, a national Early Years Learning Framework, more integrated child and family support services and improved quality standards. Building on the continuing work of the Council of Australian Governments, this plan has transcended into the National Early Childhood Reform Agenda. The overarching aim of the agenda is “to provide Australian families with high-quality, accessible and affordable integrated early childhood education and child care” (DEEWR, 2009). Within this context, particular emphasis is being placed on early learning and promoting successful transition to school.

In line with this focus, the Australian Government is looking to provide universal access to preschool education for all Australian children in the year prior to school entry (eg. prep, kindergarten). The government has committed to...

ensuring that by 2013, all children in the year before formal schooling will have access to 15 hours of a quality early childhood education program, for a minimum of 40 weeks per year, delivered by university-trained early childhood teachers in public, private and community-based preschools and child care (DEEWR, 2009).

The Australian Government has committed \$970 million over 5 years to fund the expansion of preschool education, and has established a National Early Childhood Education Partnership Agreement with States and Territories to achieve universal preschool access by 2013. It has been agreed that funding will support universal access to quality early childhood education:

- in the 12 months prior to full-time schooling;
- by a four-year university qualified early childhood teacher;
- for 15 hours a week, 40 weeks a year;
- across a diversity of settings;
- in a form that meets the needs of parents; and
- at a cost that does not present a barrier to access.

The Partnership Agreement acknowledges the role of State and Territory Governments in preschool education, and different approaches to preschool provision across Australia.

It also recognises differences in current preschool participation rates across states and territories. For example, Tasmania and Western Australia currently report 100% of children in their preschool cohort participating in a recognised preschool education program. In contrast, Queensland currently sits on 27% participation, due to the end of the state preschool system and introduction of the full-time preparatory year.

Table 1 provides further details of current preschool participation rates across states and territories.

Table 1: Preschool education participation rates (2007-2008)

	NSW	VIC	TAS	SA	WA	NT	QLD	ACT	AUST
Participation rate (% of preschool cohort)*	60%	96%	100%	88%	100%	85%	27%	88%	69.9%

*Proportion of children in year before school enrolled in state or territory government funded preschool (Report on Government Services Provision, 2009: Table 3A.12)

Responding to this variation, the Partnership Agreement includes a degree of flexibility in how funding may be invested to achieve the desired outcome:

States and territories... will use different approaches to enhance access and participation – including addressing barriers such as distance, cost, cultural appropriateness and convenience for working families (COAG, 2009).

The Agreement also provides additional funding support for those jurisdictions that have lower preschool participation rates, such as Queensland.

The real work is now underway to identify the most effective models of preschool education within different early childhood education and care services. In this edition of *Reflections* we offer snapshots of a number of different models of preschool provision, spanning traditional sessional approaches to some integrated and innovative approaches within the long day care context.

Integrated approaches at the Gowries:

Lady Gowrie Tasmania



Ross Cornish
CEO, Lady Gowrie Tasmania

In Tasmania, children who turn four years of age at the end of December each year have access to ten hours of Kindergarten. These programs are mostly provided by schools, however, the program can be operated by other providers if they meet the requirement of registration as a non-government school. To receive this registration, the provider must ensure the program is planned and delivered by a qualified teacher registered by The Teachers Registration Board and the provider must comply with the requirements for school registration. This includes having a range of policies and procedures in place, as well as delivering the curriculum as determined by requirements of the Schools Registration Board. School registration is gained after the provider undertakes a rigorous process to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Board. Registration can be gained for up to five years. Currently there are only a small number of non-government registered schools operating in Tasmania, with only two operated from a child care environment. As part of the Early Childhood Education and Care program, Lady Gowrie Tasmania has operated such a program for over twenty years - a non-government registered Kindergarten. This program operates within a child care centre environment. The ten hours of Kindergarten is currently provided across two days per week - two five-hour sessions.

In previous years the ten hours have been delivered as morning sessions, or as a combination of morning and afternoon sessions. The two day program has been implemented in response to family needs.

The benefits of the Kindergarten program being provided from a child care centre is that care is available before and after Kindergarten sessions, on the days where Kindergarten is not provided, as well as during school holiday periods.

This availability supports working families who would normally have to deal with the issues of a patchwork of arrangements for their children – before school care, after kinder care and non-kinder care plus school holiday care. For children it provides consistency within a secure environment.

Whilst the program is an ideal model, the issue of affordability is a prohibitive factor. In comparison to the government public school fees, which can be as low as \$100 per annum, the Kindergarten program provided from the Lady Gowrie Centre charges normal child care fees. This significant cost is a key decision making factor for families – choice is often based on cost, not what is necessarily in the best interests of the child.



Integrated approaches at the Gowries: The Gowrie (Qld) Inc.

Dr Susan Irvine
CEO,
The Gowrie (Qld) Inc

Responding to different child and family needs, the Gowrie Queensland offers a number of preschool options. These include both sessional and long day preschool education programs.

At our Love Street Child Centre, families may choose to use our sessional preschool program (pre-prep in Queensland), which is funded by the Queensland Government and operates in accordance with Department of Education funding guidelines. Children attend 5 sessions per fortnight, from 9am until 2.30pm, during school term time.

Two doors along the corridor, we offer an equivalent preschool education program integrated within our long day care service. Recognising ongoing distinctions and the need to address some community perceptions, I want to emphasise the similarities between these two programs. For the record, both preschool education programs:

- are led by a qualified early childhood teacher
- engage a second qualified early childhood professional
- target children age 3 ½ to 4 ½ years in the year prior to entry to Prep
- are based on the Gowrie Queensland educational philosophy and seek to promote our agreed child outcomes
- are covered by the same child care regulations and have the same adult to child ratio and maximum group size
- will ultimately draw upon the national Early Years Learning Framework to promote and support early learning.

The primary difference between the two preschool programs is their operating hours.

Love Street is a larger child centre, and able to support both of these options, including a dedicated preschool room. Our other three child centres are

smaller, and not in the same position. Consequently, we have designed a different preschool model for these centres. The starting point is the same. The preschool program is led by a qualified early childhood teacher and supported by a second qualified early childhood professional. The program is based on the same educational framework, and complies with the same quality standards. The difference is in the context and broader age group.

Within these child centres, the preschool program is situated within the broader 3 – 5 year age group. However, it is not simply ‘all in together.’ Reflecting on the research, and our own understanding of early learning, we have split this group into a younger and older ‘preschool’ group. Building on our primary caregiving model (a feature across all of our ECEC services), a teacher maintains primary responsibility for the preschool group and a qualified group leader maintains primary responsibility for the younger children. The teacher takes the lead in designing and implementing the preschool curriculum, and the preschool children have a stable cohort of same age peers. The group leader takes the lead with the younger children. To give each group ‘space to learn’, indoor and outdoor play areas are used by the groups at different times and group sessions are held in different areas. Both staff still get to know all of the children, and the group comes together for meals, rest and other routines. The difference is that each staff member develops a strong relationship with a smaller number of children, promoting secure attachment and optimal learning.

As can be seen, Gowrie Queensland offers a number of preschool options to meet different family needs. Regardless as to which option is selected, all promote quality relationships and early learning, parent participation and successful transition to school. In long day care, the critical success factor is having the preschool teacher as a valued member of the ECEC team, working core hours and sharing skills and expertise.



Integrated approaches at the Gowries: Lady Gowrie Child Centre Adelaide

Lynne Rutherford

Children's Program Manager,
Lady Gowrie Child Centre Adelaide

Lyndsay Butcher

Preschool Teacher,
Lady Gowrie Child Centre Thebarton

The Lady Gowrie Child Centre at Thebarton is an integrated community child centre and preschool. We are set within a well-established garden in a suburb not far from the city. Our families are from the local area, as well as many for whom the Centre is on the way to work. We have approximately 110 children who attend each day and there are five large children's rooms here.

Our service has been set up to provide two preschool rooms of integrated care and education for children over 3.5 years. Both of these rooms offer preschool and child care sessions or a combination of both. Each room has between 20 and 28 children who attend each day and the rooms are staffed between 8am and 6 pm, with children who arrive and leave outside these times spending time with children in the younger rooms.

Each preschool room has a qualified (Bachelor Early Childhood Education) teacher who is the room Team Leader and who works under the Preschool (Kindergarten) Teaching Staff Award conditions. We have two other staff that work in each room, with at least one of them, if not both, qualified (to either Diploma or Bachelor level). These staff members work under the Child Care (SA) Award

conditions and are also supported by a Centre Collective Agreement, which gives them six weeks annual leave each year, higher levels of pay, the opportunity to attain Advanced Educator status and support to undergo further tertiary studies.

This arrangement can potentially mean that two people with the same qualification can be employed under two different awards, creating significant disparities between their working conditions. Great care has been taken to ensure that the teams are sensitive to one another's roles and conditions in the room through high level professional relationships and by being in tune with one another's needs. It has taken a great deal of time and hard work to build a committed preschool team who can leap beyond their own barriers to work together in building a high quality integrated service.

The preschool is funded through an operating grant from the Department of Education and Children's Services and this grant funding is based on the number of children who attend for preschool sessions each week. We contribute in kind through our overall budget to the shortfall between the grant and actual preschool staffing costs.



We are able to offer pre-entry (one per week) and preschool sessions (up to four per week) every morning and every afternoon. Families are also able to combine child care and preschool for a full day by having a morning child care session, and an afternoon preschool session, with children picked up at 3.30pm. This fits within budget constraints while allowing us to ensure our child to staff ratios are adequate throughout the day.

The child care and preschool programs are completely integrated, so all children who attend the preschool rooms access the same program of experiences regardless of whether they are utilising a child care or pre-school session. The difference therein lies for families with the times of attendance and fees. Every child has a primary caregiver who establishes and maintains a close relationship with the child in order for the child to feel safe and secure enough to access the full range of experiences on offer and develop connections with other staff and children. Over an extended period of time a trusting, child centred relationship with each family develops whereby families and staff are able to work together for the best possible educational outcomes for their children. We are strong advocates of the primary caregiving approach and an action research project undertaken here showed that children of this age still look for, and are more engaged, when their primary caregiver is readily available to them. Within the kindy rooms, each staff member has a mixture of children in their primary care group who attend for child care and/or preschool sessions.

The program is guided by the South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability framework (SACSA) with the preschool teams working together to provide high quality care and education for all children who attend. When the preschool teacher is on leave, the designated qualified child care staff member takes on higher duties to ensure the room continues to function as usual. Our preschool teachers attend all out of hours staff meetings, team leader meetings, professional development opportunities, etc. They also undergo the same appraisal process as the other team leaders in the service.

While it takes a lot of dedication and energy, working together as a team to strive toward a shared philosophy and vision ensures all staff are working toward the same goals and provides a truly integrated service to children and families.





Integrated approaches at the Gowries: Gowrie Victoria

Debbie Cole

Manager Children's Program – Carlton North
Gowrie Victoria

An integrated approach to preschool provision has many benefits for children and families. It offers parents flexible options for care and education, and enables children of working parents to access a high quality preschool program within a child care setting.

Gowrie Victoria at Carlton North operates a child care centre with a fully integrated kindergarten program. The program is delivered by a qualified kindergarten teacher, a diploma qualified child care worker and a trained assistant. The program is offered Monday to Friday as a full day program with all meals provided. A minimum two day booking is required, to ensure each child receives at least ten hours of kindergarten each week. The program operates throughout the school holidays, however we close for three weeks during December/January. The kindergarten teacher delivers the program throughout the year. Gowrie Victoria offers a play based program where there is a balance of child and adult initiated experiences. As children move into the preschool program, the play based curriculum continues with a greater focus on group learning, complex tasks and sustained projects. The environment also becomes more challenging as children's social and cognitive competence increases. The integrated model also uses daily routines such as meals and rest to extend children's learning, and views care as an important aspect of education.

This approach to preschool provision has been offered at Carlton North since 1997. Prior to this, the centre offered a sessional program within the

child care setting. The move towards a fully integrated approach was implemented in response to the changing needs of families and complements other services that are offered in the local community. The Gowrie Victoria model also provides greater continuity of care and education as a consistent team of staff work with children each day. The kindergarten teacher is employed on a full time basis to minimise the staff changes that often occur when teachers only work for short periods of time and are replaced by less qualified staff for the remaining hours of the program. Gowrie Victoria believes that children attending child care should have access to a kindergarten teacher for full days, including school holidays. The Gowrie Victoria program is also delivered by qualified staff above the current state regulatory requirements for qualifications and ratios. These factors also contribute to the quality of the program and the long term benefits for young children.

Research from the EPPE study in England noted that centres where care and education is integrated provided higher quality and better outcomes for children. Central to this research is the inclusion of qualified kindergarten teachers working within child care settings and supporting other staff. This practice has been implemented at Gowrie Victoria for several years and has been extended to children under three years. Gowrie Victoria believes that care and education cannot be easily separated and the quality of both aspects is critical to a child's learning and development from birth.



Integrated approaches at the Gowries: Lady Gowrie Child Centre NSW

Ruth Callaghan
CEO, Gowrie NSW

As with all the States and Territories, the situation in New South Wales has its own unique challenges and opportunities. The Federal Government's reform agenda in relation to delivering universal access to quality early childhood education will inevitably lead to a re-visiting of the distinction between preschool settings and long day care settings.

In NSW there is a fairly significant distinction in the delivery of prior to school early childhood education between the preschool, or kindergarten setting, and long day care. The Department of Education and Training funds preschools with many of them on school grounds. These operate similar hours to schools, and are seen by many parents as providing a "superior" early learning environment, because they are often perceived as offering a more structured, school-type program. There are also community based preschools that have been struggling financially for many years as community preschool fees are not subsidised to the same extent as the government preschools and, as a result, are not as financially viable.

NSW has one of the lowest national preschool participation rates in Australia. In an attempt to address some of the structural inequities between the government and non-government sector, the NSW Department of Community Services has started the growth phase of the preschool re-investment strategy. It is anticipated that this will enhance the longer term viability of the community based preschool sector and attract more parents into these settings.

As a result of the structural separation between preschool environments and long day care, the content of prior to school learning programs is more important in NSW than the setting in which they are delivered. A significant number of children in NSW attend long day care throughout their early lives and transition from these settings into school. The key issue therefore is not the setting in which early childhood education and care is delivered, but the quality of the content and the quality of the experience for children and families.

Lady Gowrie Child Centre NSW operates 3 long day care centres, all of which offer a prior to school

learning program delivered by university qualified early childhood teachers. The program is offered to all children in the 4 years to school age group and is strongly grounded in the belief that all children benefit from a play based curriculum, as well as some more focussed activities around the key socio-emotional, physical and cognitive learning and skills that assist in the transition to school.

Gowrie NSW centres provide prior to school learning in all relevant domains of literacy, numeracy, gross and fine motor skills and socio-emotional wellbeing. Children are also immersed in the creative arts as well as concepts and activities relating to maths and science. In recent years the Erskineville centre in inner west Sydney, has developed a mentoring type program with children from a nearby primary school. In the months prior to entering kindergarten, the children from the long day care centre spend 10 weeks involved in activities and visits with the kindergarten children from the primary school. This integrates children and families within their local communities and de-mystifies some the challenges children may experience in how they perceive school.

In all its centres, Gowrie NSW implements similar initiatives that are aimed at assisting individual children with learning some of the foundational skills for school and life-long learning, as well as connecting children and families with other parents and primary schools that can ease the transition into a different learning environment.

While it is quality, and not setting, that will be the key to delivering on the Federal Government's universal access agenda, it is important to recognise the financial implications of the differences between settings. As Ros Cornish notes, affordability can be a prohibitive factor for parents who may not be able to access quality care in a subsidised setting such as a DET preschool (in the case of NSW) or a higher fee paying structure, which is the case in long day care.

Resolving these issues of access in a country where every State and Territory has a different system will be a major challenge for government and for the non-government sector in delivering on this important reform agenda.

A snapshot of child care practitioners' views on Universal Access to preschool in Western Australia

Practitioners in community child care were asked for their reaction to the COAG proposal for every child to have access to 15 hours of quality early childhood education per week, in the twelve months prior to formal schooling. Feedback was sought via email but was difficult to gain. It was apparent there was a lack of understanding and confusion about the concept of "universal access".

Overview of findings:

1. There is support for an Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and considerable awareness of research evidence of the benefits of a holistic approach to early childhood education and child care. Most (75%) of the children in long day care are three years and under (Child Care Census 2006). Mainstream kindergarten of at least 11 hours per week has been in place for many years for children who turn 4 by 30 June (free in the public system). There is an array of arrangements for children of this age as parents juggle child care, kindergarten and work. There is no common program/curriculum across school based early childhood education and child care. Practitioners are hopeful the EYLF will improve this situation although it is not clear if the EYLF will be used by the schools in WA.
2. There is a high degree of anxiety and misunderstanding by practitioners about the potential impact of the interrelated aspects of the COAG Early Childhood Reform Agenda and the mechanics of how it might be managed. This is possibly indicative of inadequate engagement by policy makers with the child care sector. This anxiety may be heightened in WA because of the unique features of the two very disconnected systems of early childhood education and child care with individual Ministers holding separate portfolios in Early Childhood Education (DET) and child care (Dept for Communities).
3. Preschool programs in child care were piloted in WA about 10 years ago with Department of Education (DET) teachers working in selected child care centres. Overall, this was not a positive experience for the child care sector and may be affecting views of the proposed new system.
4. Practitioners are committed to child focused programs being provided in secure and stable settings, but there is a perception that universal access provision in child care could result in 'schoolification' of the flexible nurturing child care environment.



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5. Practitioners regard universal access to preschool programs as an effective way to reduce the education and care divide but consideration of the practical implications of implementation raises many questions in WA.

Examples of concerns:

The following are examples of the many unanswered queries raised by child care practitioners in WA. These are indicative of the poor information provision and lack of communication with the sector.

- Can teachers who are employed in child care register with DET?
- All teachers, including early childhood teachers in the WA school systems enjoy the best salaries in Australia. Who will pay in child care?
- The current Act does not enable teachers in child care to register with the WA College of Teaching - a fundamental problem for the roll-out of the universal access in WA.
- Which industrial conditions will prevail – child care or teaching awards?
- Who will be responsible for teacher recruitment – the child care provider or DET?
- Would the fee structure allow for full/ half day charges? What are the implications for CCB or CCR?

The way ahead:

Practitioners are aware of the research demonstrating that a high quality pre-school program can make a significant difference in the lives of children and commend the Commonwealth Government's Plan for Early Childhood. But they want to see time lines for the implementation of universal access together with a phase-in pilot program over the next four years providing support to participating programs.

The child care sector in WA needs to strategically think through the broader issues implicit in universal access and how it could work. The whole child care sector needs to engage more strongly in the debate and contribute positively to future planning in this State.

The Universal Access Project

Suzie Woods

Project Coordinator
C&K



Due to different geographical needs some Australian states are trialling different approaches to Early Childhood Education and Care. “The Universal Access Project” is one such project currently operating in Queensland.

The Universal Access pilot project, Mobile Early Childhood Teachers, is funded under the Federal Governments Early Years Strategy. The pilot is being implemented by C & K (The Creche and Kindergarten Association) in conjunction with the Queensland Department of Education, Office of Early Years. The pilot started in September 2008 and has a completion date of December 2009.

The Mobile Early Childhood Project objectives are:

1. To expand access to Pre-prep services by increasing the number of four year old children in quality Pre-prep early childhood learning programs.
2. To pilot alternative service delivery models in a range of contexts.
3. To determine the cost effectiveness of alternative mobile delivery models.
4. To pilot incentives for teachers in high need areas.
5. To increase the hours per week of Pre-prep programs at targeted early childhood education services.
6. To build community capacity through the mentoring of early childhood service personnel to gain teaching qualifications.
7. To maximize early childhood education outcomes through the support of locally identified family support. Sites targeted to participate in this pilot must be in locations in rural and remote, low socio-economic, or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island services.

The models for the trial include:

Long day care model

A 4 year trained teacher working two days a week in two separate long day care services, including a community based not-for-profit, parent managed service and for-profit service. All the sites have separate 3-5 year old rooms with a teacher, group leader and an assistant in the room.

Multi-age group model

A 4 year qualified teacher working in a multi-age site embedding a kindergarten program into the long day care program. A lot of innovative thinking and team commitment will be the key to the success of this model.

Family day care model

This model is very different from the others as it will employ a 4 year trained teacher working alongside a carer to role model, advise, support and develop a carer's skills. The teacher will be supporting, advising, resourcing and mentoring carers with their educational program. The program will focus on the implementation of the *Building Waterfalls* curriculum framework and the links to the Family Day Care Quality Assurance system. The teacher will spend one two-hour session every three weeks with the carer and the children, and one one-hour session with the carer, with a focus on skilling the carer to support the families in their parenting role. This may be delivered over the phone or on a face to face basis.

Kindergarten

A community-based service, the kindergarten model is managed by local council and the parent body. The model will have a 4 year trained Early Childhood teacher working alongside an assistant who will be encouraged to study a formal qualification.



Feedback on the project to date

From existing staff member:

- Regained motivation to study and provide an early childhood educational program to children in my care.
- Appreciated opportunities to network with other services and update skills, especially in rural and remote areas.
- Valued the opportunity to access training and try new ideas.
- Discovered different ideas and ways of documenting children's learning.

Comments from teachers:

- Faced the challenge of overcoming the professional boundaries between teacher and child care staff.
- Recognised the issue of high staff turnover as contributing to inconsistencies in implementing an emergent curriculum.
- Valued the opportunities to share in the achievements of existing staff and seeing them grow in their profession.

Comments from parents:

- "The teacher has had a huge influence on the practices of the existing staff."
- "The children seem more independent in the Kindy program."
- "He loves to tell us at home about what he has done at Kindy."
- "He is developing some good friendships and social skills."
- "Learning new things and sharing them at home."

Mentoring and Coaching

All the models will be part of the mentoring and coaching program to develop the skill of existing employees and move them towards a teaching degree or a formal qualification. Each site will implement the C & K *Building Waterfalls Curriculum* and link this to each sector's Quality Assurance requirements. The mentoring teachers are coached by the project coordinator and are responsible for mentoring existing employees through daily practice discussion, training and meetings.

Feedback on the mentor coaching program

- Really useful information regarding communication styles.
- Good to have a better understanding of the mentor-coaches role.
- Interesting to share and learn about people's approaches to the model.
- Great to share the achievements in each of the sites using this model.
- Good to have a support network and someone on hand to debrief with.

The C & K Literacy Project

This Project has developed from the implementation of the Universal Access pilot project. It was noted that some sites did not have access to quality books and literacy materials. It was decided to enlist the support of children and families from each C & K service to donate books. The children chose books they enjoyed reading. The books were sent to the services with comments from the children. They shared what they liked about the book and their experiences at kindergarten. This was forwarded to the sites in need and the children have had the opportunity to write back to the children who sent them a book, to thank them, and share their experiences when reading the stories.

We are currently expanding this project into workshops for making resources to enhance children's literacy skills eg making puppets to go with a story. The workshops are open to parents and professionals. The teachers at each site are also developing Take Home Literacy Bags full of books, resources and tips for parents. The Tips and Tricks fact sheet includes ideas about how to read a book and questions to ask children about what has been read. We are looking forward to receiving parent feedback on this project.

For any further information on the project please contact **Suzie Woods, Project Coordinator at C&K on 07 3552 5333.**

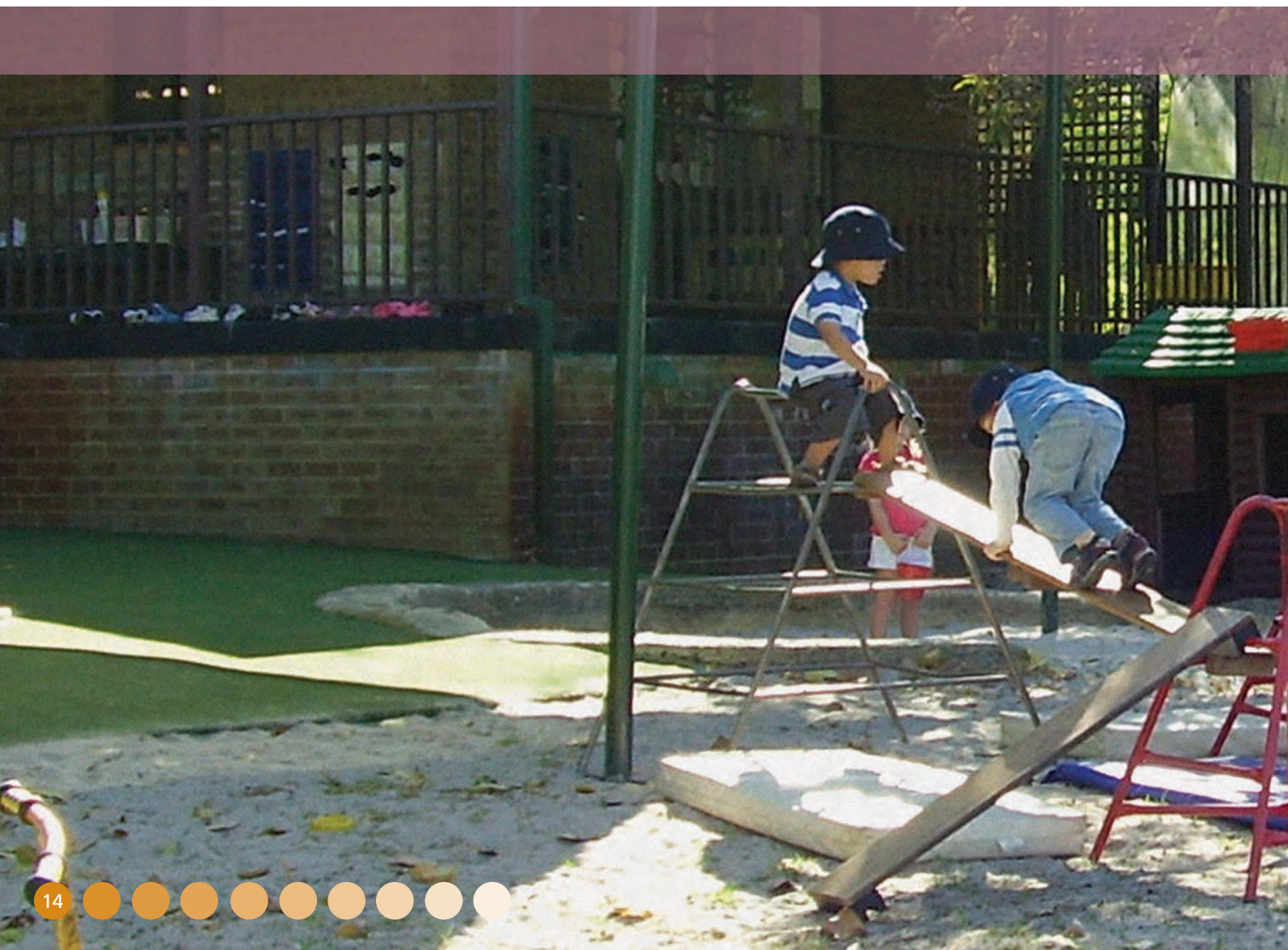
Gowrie Australia Recommendations

With the universal preschool policy, the Federal Government has committed to support preschool education programs in “public, private and community-based preschools and child care” (DEEWR, 2009). The task now is to determine how this will work best in different service types and different communities. A key challenge is to think outside the box and at all costs to avoid any ‘one-size fits all’ template.

The sessional preschool model is arguably the most well known in Australia, is underpinned by a considerable body of research and continues to meet the needs of many Australian families – but not all families. Many families are engaging in juggling acts to get their children to both preschool and child care. This places pressure on children and families, and it could be argued that benefits of the sessional preschool model may be compromised when children are moving between different settings. The EPPE study attests to the benefits of an integrated approach to child care and education, in particular, the inclusion of a qualified early

childhood teacher to deliver the preschool program and support other staff.

The sessional preschool model is arguably the most well known in Australia, remains a sought after option by many families, and is underpinned by a considerable body of research attesting to the success of this model. Many families engage in juggling acts getting their children to both preschool and child care and it could be argued that the benefits of the sessional preschool model are compromised when children attend different settings. Recognising that different families have different needs, the Federal Government is exploring options to strengthen preschool education within long day care. Within this context, **Gowrie Australia believes** there is a need to move away from traditional sessional models to explore models that work in this new context. Why? Acknowledging the long-term social and economic benefits of high quality ECEC, the aim is to create optimal early learning conditions. So let’s reflect on some agreed ECEC research and practice wisdom.



We know that effective early learning is dependent upon:

- Children forming secure attachments and warm and trusting relationships with consistent qualified staff.
- Children having uninterrupted time to explore, interact with adults and peers, and learn.
- Staff forming meaningful partnerships with parents, and engaging in regular two-way information sharing (eg, at the beginning and end of each day).
- Effective team work where all staff share information and expertise and feel valued in their role as early educators.
- Recognition by all stakeholders that sensitive and responsive caregiving and effective teaching and learning are inextricably linked in high quality ECEC, and that both are necessary to promote the best outcomes for children in the immediate and longer-term.

If we are really serious about breaking down the barriers between 'care' and 'education' and building a stronger national integrated system of ECEC services, there needs to be new and different approaches to preschool provision within long day care. These may differ across different services and communities, however, the overarching outcome needs to be true integration. What might this look like?

- There will be stable and consistent staffing (at least across core hours and days) and changes will be minimised to promote secure attachment, quality relationships and optimal early learning.

- Learning will be visible across the (whole) day, and the educational curriculum will span indoor and outdoor play times, and all routines and transitions.
- All parents will have opportunity to get to know their child's teacher and co-worker, and to talk with them about their child and family.
- Staff, families and the broader community will value the inherent 'caring' and 'educating' elements of a high quality preschool education program.

And into the future...

- Staff with the same qualifications and experience will have equitable pay and conditions regardless of the service they choose to work in.

As suggested by the EPPE study findings, the full-time presence of a qualified teacher may also assist on-the-job training and mentoring of other staff, and support the achievement of other identified quality outcomes within child care.

For these reasons, it is argued here that the benefits of this approach are clear, measurable and justifiable. It is also worth noting that many child care centres have been operating full-day preschool models for many years, and have knowledge and expertise to share to support informed decision-making and the very best investment of funds. For these reasons, Gowrie Australia is arguing that the benefits of this more holistic approach are evident.



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Update on the Early Years Learning Framework

Author:

Dr Susan Irvine

Based on an interview with Professor Jennifer Sumsion

One of the key platforms of the National Early Childhood Reform Agenda is the development of a national *Early Years Learning Framework*, spanning birth to school entry and the full range of formal early childhood education and care (ECEC) services.

This is a significant initiative and milestone in Australian ECEC history. The importance of a national approach to promote and support quality early learning across ECEC settings was highlighted in the two *Starting Strong* reports (OECD, 2001; 2006). In addition, a growing number of other countries (eg. New Zealand, England, Scotland, Sweden and Finland) have already traveled this road. It is time for Australia to move forward.

Federal Labor announced the commitment to a national early years learning framework in their election policy entitled *Labor's Plan for Early Childhood* (November 2007). It is interesting to reflect on early conceptions of the framework. Linked to the party's commitment to universal preschool provision, the election policy states:

Federal Labor will work with the States and Territories to develop a nationally consistent Early Years Learning Framework. This framework will be developed in consultation with early childhood experts and educators, with specific emphasis on play-based learning, pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills... While the framework will increase the emphasis on learning and development... it is not a school-like curriculum and will not result in early childhood centres becoming like schools (p. 10).

Work on the EYLF commenced in early 2008, and has continued to progress at a rapid pace. With the completion of the national trial and closure of the on-line forum, Professor Jennifer Sumsion, Foundation Professor of Early Childhood Education, and co-leader of the EYLF Consortium led by Charles Sturt University agreed to provide *Reflections* readers with an update on this important initiative. Building on earlier commissioned research,

symposiums and public consultations, the national trial and online forum have provided rich feedback to further inform and refine the EYLF.

The draft EYLF, and some draft sections of the supporting practitioner guide, have now been trialled in a diverse range of ECEC services across all states and territories. The trial targeted qualified ECEC professionals (diploma and degree qualified) and included: stand alone preschools, long day care centres, family day care, government (school-based) preschools, integrated ECEC services and Indigenous services located in metropolitan, regional and remote areas.

The level of interest in the EYLF is further demonstrated by participation rates in the on-line forum, which attracted over 900 registrations. The forum officially closed on 20 April 2009, and now features a thank you message to participants from Parliamentary Secretary Maxine McKew. In this message, Ms McKew reinforces the importance of this work and the government's commitment to the development and implementation of the EYLF.

As you are all aware, the Early Years Learning Framework is an important element of the Australian Government's quality reform agenda. The Government is committed to taking action so that all children, in all early childhood education and care settings, experience quality learning (McKew, 20 April 2009).

For the full message, visit the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website and select Early Years Learning Framework On-line Forum at: <http://www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Projects/Pages/earlyyears.aspx>.

The Consortium is currently analysing case studies from the 29 trial sites, reflecting on feedback provided through the on-line forum and preparing the trial report. While cautioning that analysis is still continuing, Professor Sumsion shares some preliminary themes. These include:

- Broad agreement that Australia should have a national Early Years Learning Framework and that this is an important initiative within Australian ECEC.
- Broad endorsement of the design and direction of the draft Framework.





There have also been areas identified for further reflection and action. These include:

- The need to ensure the EYLF (language and concepts) is accessible and meaningful to a broad audience (eg. for staff and carers with different levels of qualifications and experience as well as parents using ECEC services).
- The need to ensure explicit coverage of the full early years age span (ie. birth to school entry). This is not merely a preschool curriculum.
- A year on from the national apology, the expectation that the EYLF will promote and strengthen understanding, respect and reconciliation.

Reflecting on this last point, Professor Sumsion notes that the Consortium has most recently been asked to align the EYLF with the draft Indigenous Early Childhood Framework. The development of a separate Indigenous Early Childhood Framework is linked to the Council of Australian Government's

commitment to 2 years ECEC for Indigenous children prior to school entry, and targets children 3 to 6 years. It is a busy time for all Consortium members. The Early Years Learning Framework and Interpreting the Early Years Learning Framework: A Guide was due to the DEEWR by 5 May 2009, and expected to be launched in July 2009.

To keep in touch with progress from here, watch the DEEWR Early Childhood website.

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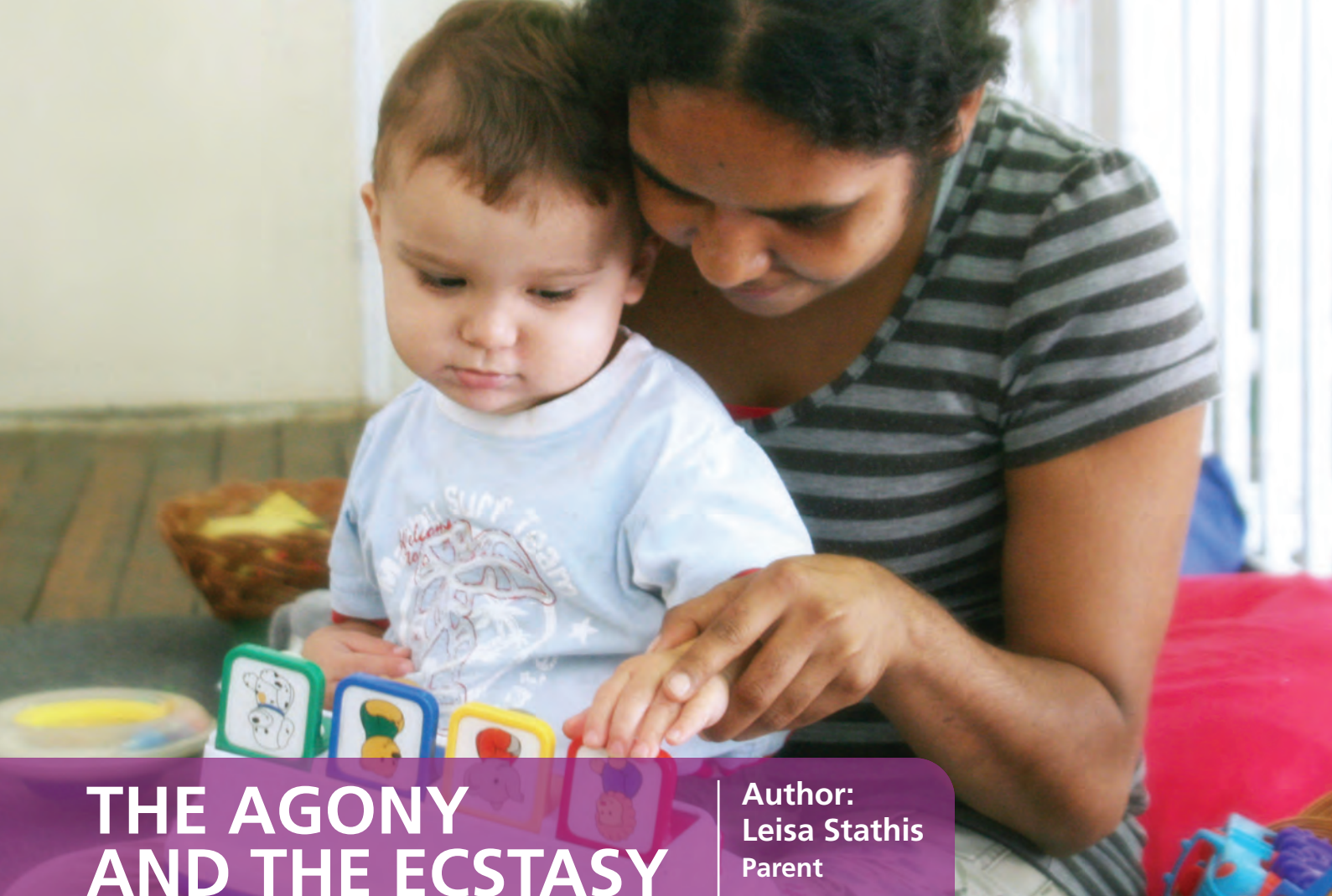
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A potted history of the development of the EYLF

The EYLF is being developed by a Consortium of early childhood experts led by Charles Sturt University. The project comprises four broad elements: consultation, drafting, trialing and implementation. The following timeline offers a potted history of the development of the EYLF and timeframes – and illustrates the hard work and commitment of all involved in the design, trialing and refining of the EYLF.

28-29 May 2008	Symposium of key stakeholders looked at contemporary research and practice and discussed the principles and core components of a high quality learning framework.
	Drafting of the EYLF commenced
3-6 Oct 2008	Early Childhood Australia National Conference – public consultations
29-30 Oct 2008	Second key stakeholder symposium
18 Nov – 12 Dec 2008	National public consultation forums (in all States and Territories)
23 Feb – 10 Apr 2009	National trial of the draft EYLF
14 Mar – 20 Apr 2009	EYLF On-line Forum
5 May 2009	Consortium to have final documentation to DEEWR
July 2009	Launch of EYLF



THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY

Author:
Leisa Stathis
Parent

one parent's perspective on the child care journey

To place your child in the care of a virtual stranger is no small thing. Finding a carer, whether it be with a nanny, in family day care or in a larger organised centre is an act which is fraught with anxiety, trepidation and expectations. To trust another with the burden of caring for your child is a leap of faith. Will they respond to his cries the way that you would? Will they engage her if she is feeling lost and displaced? In absence from you, does your child trust you to return? Many parents, faced with the dilemma of leaving their child with another, are tortured by an underlying pervasive anxiety. It is the anxiety of 'am I doing the right thing for my child?'

In this last year, we began the process of transitioning our youngest (and probably last) child into child care. It was a process that was laden with apprehension. It was not that we had misgivings about the quality of care that he would receive, or even that the experience of child care itself would be negative. Nate's older sister Bronte had been attending Lady Gowrie for three years and seeing what that experience has offered her, we remain two of child care's biggest fans.

Yet, Bronte's personality was resilient, robust and outgoing. Child care had had its challenges yet mostly she had sailed through them, confidence intact. Our second born Nate is a different child altogether, sensitive and shy. Nate seemed so little, and so alone within himself. Was he too vulnerable a child for the rigors of child care?

For my husband and I, a comfort that we held onto as we faced this transition is the philosophy that lies at the heart of Lady Gowrie, attachment. In recognizing the need for children to develop secure attachment, the centre aims to provide children with a 'circle of security' by allocating each child with a primary carer. It is to this carer that the child can turn to in times of distress. Guided by Kent Hoffman's revolutionary theories about attachment, children's behaviours are perceived through the lens of attachment needs. Children are not seen as attention seeking, but rather as seeking connection. Children are seen as unique individuals with their own inherent abilities and strengths. Every attempt is made to engage with that child's uniqueness in everyday encounters. Most importantly, each child is made to feel safe and welcome.

With our first child, this philosophy was perfect. For my husband and I, who are respectively a child psychiatrist and a social worker, these theories matter to us both in our work and the way we parent. Lady Gowrie is a child care dream. Yet, I could see how it would be easy to provide care with this philosophy with an easygoing child, but what of a child who didn't quite fit in as easily? Who is shy and difficult to engage? Is it just rhetoric? Would it transfer into practice?

As the months of maternity leave ticked by, my unease grew. We would soon find out if our decision to place Nate into child care would prove to be as wonderful as it was for Bronte, or our worst fear.... disastrous.

The Ecstasy of Connection

Our fears were unfounded. After a very gradual transition, Nate ever so slowly began to find his place in the nursery and to our delight fell 'in love' with Peta and Nikita. It wasn't easy. In the beginning, he sunk into himself and avoided eye contact. It was painful to watch, and even more painful to leave. Yet the finely tuned sensitivity with which Nikita and Peta responded to Nate's tentative gestures towards connection won out. Much as a mother develops a secure attachment with her child through hundreds of little moments of attunement and connection, his carers too provided Nate with a sense that he was being heard, responded to and contained. In doing so, I came to see how the virtual strangers caring for my child became his friends and allies. In 'attachment speak' each carer became Nate's secure base; a place from which he could venture out to explore the world surrounding him yet return when feeling overwhelmed or anxious. From the security of their arms, Nate was able to raise his head, look the room 'in the eye' and see it as a safe place.

The gift that this offers to parents should not be underestimated. To be able to leave your child in the care of another, trusting that your child feels safe and loved is no small thing. This last year, I have become increasingly aware of a less recognised aspect of the child-parent-carer relationship. Just as my child's carer is his secure base, she is mine. Each day we arrive she welcomes me, contains my anxiety and distress at leaving my child and responds in a manner that enables me to venture from her side and explore the world, whether that be through work or some other endeavour.

Knowing he is happy and his needs are being met has an unseen flow on affect. Not only is Nate contained but I am also. Without that assurance, my days are filled with uncertainty and guilt about the cost that working has for my child. For this reason, relief staff throw me. Staff resignations sadden me.

Thankfully, we have been blessed to have had two consistent, permanent carers whilst Nate has attended the nursery. In truth, a good carer provides so much to the children in her charge but also to their parents. I have received countless advice about sleeps, commiserations over tantrums, and encouragement for when I am tired. It seems to me that this is child care in its best practice.

The Agony of Goodbye

The end of year transition presents an often unspoken grief. To receive the dreaded confirmation-of-enrolment letter, which advises that your child is to progress to the next room often presents a child, but also her parents with anxiety and trepidation. I liken it to the agony and the ecstasy – the agony of separation and building new attachments, the ecstasy of knowing he was happy and loved. To start from scratch and build a relationship with a new carer feels daunting. Will they respond to my child like the last carer did? Will my child be happy? In this instance we are lucky. We know the new carers. We know he will be in good hands. Still, changing carers is intimidating and I am sure it is not just the child who often feels like clutching onto the carer's leg and crying out 'But I want to stay with you...'

Instead, we leave our thank you cards and presents and try to convey some small sense of how grateful we have been for what they have given to us over the last year. And Nate, he who was sunk into himself and so alone just six months ago, showers Peta and Nikita with a thousand kisses before he bolts out the door after his big sister.



Quality in care...

It's about more than just numbers

Authors:
Ellen Nicholas,
Fourth Year Early Childhood Student /
Associate Teacher
Kia Lehane,
Nursery Group Leader

Debates and discussion about the early childhood sector, including the aspect of adult/child ratios, has moved beyond the inner sanctum of child care and into the broader community. This is evident in newspaper headlines and in programs such as SBS **Insight's** feature called 'Holding the Baby' (SBS, 7 October 2008). The **Insight** program covered many issues regarding the care of young children and highlighted the complex and often emotional and culturally bound perspectives of parents, early childhood teachers, experts and representatives of early childhood peak organisations. Perhaps the release of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care discussion paper (COAG 2008) pushed this issue into the public forum and made space for a dialogue that appreciates these multiple perspectives. This is an exciting time for the early childhood field to engage in and provoke dialogue about issues such as ratios in nurseries.

What is our situation?

Our nursery has eight children each day aged from five to fifteen months. Ellen chose to do her final semester in the nursery as she hopes to be a teacher in a nursery after she graduates. With the inclusion of a university student (Ellen) we have experienced a snapshot of what a 1:3 nursery ratio could be like. We have had three adults and eight children in our nursery five days a week for eight weeks and this experience has given us some valuable insights.

What impact has this changed circumstance had on everyday routines?

An extra adult in the room meant we were able to more effectively manage the routine aspects of the day such as meal preparation, cleaning, washing and nappy changes. These 'tasks' did not need to be so swift and mechanical as two adults could remain with the children while one adult spent time changing nappies or preparing food. The impact of this felt like a general sense of slowing down and calmness within the room to become more like moving through a rhythm of the day rather than an automatic routine. We also noticed that other 'duties' such as regulatory and accreditation paper work

could be shared amongst the adults in the room which dispersed the work load and created a shared sense of responsibility.

Who are the staff in the nursery?

We have reflected not only on the value of an 'extra set of hands' in the nursery, but on the *qualities* of this extra adult in the nursery. In our situation the experience of a 1:3 ratio was about more than just an extra body in a room to care for young children. The staff in our nursery comprised of a qualified assistant, a qualified group leader and a four year trained early childhood associate teacher. We found that the combination of these qualifications and the relationships formed had a definite impact within the nursery room. We seemed to talk more about our work as teachers and the ways of appreciating and noticing the children's 'work'. This could have been due to having more time and perhaps the presence of an early childhood teacher created a space for pedagogical leadership and thinking within the room.

What are the possibilities for pedagogy?

Our discussion about this question was heart felt, honest and vigorous. We talked about what it was like being a teacher in a nursery with a higher infant/adult ratio,
"..... sometimes you don't do things because it is difficult to supervise and ensure each child is included...this is regularly where I cut corners to ensure everything else is done...I think this creates mistrust and insecurity...I believe the ratios are too high to create what I feel is good enough."
The addition of an extra teacher in the room has meant we could have more one-on-one time to build trusting and secure relationships with children. We were able to document the children's work during the day with greater depth, empathy and insight. This also allowed us to be more creative and innovative in our work as teachers,
"the extra teacher meant more opportunities to notice and document what happens in our nursery... to know and appreciate each child as a person...and then to make all of this visible to share with other teachers and families."
The documentation that follows is a snap shot of what is possible when teachers stop to experience and notice themselves and the children they work with.



*Kia sits down
Billy and Anakin crawl over
Billy arrives first... which could be why his cuddle comes first?
Consider the joy and pleasure of making time to embrace and share an intimate moment with another person*



*Anakin climbs onto Kia's lap. He seems to often show affection by nuzzling his head close into another person's body.
Billy gazes at Kia
We have noticed many of the children hold long intense gazes with teachers and other children...they appear captivated... what could this mean?
Love, friendship, curiosity, wonder or maybe something not that deep... noticing skin or freckles?*



*Isabella and Noah soon join the group and nuzzle their way into Kia's lap.
There is giggling and smiling as each child finds a space on Kia's lap.
We have often noticed how quickly the children find our laps when we sit down. How might our bodies be making shared and intimate spaces for young children? What could this mean for the relationships these children have with each other?*

Could this noticing and documentation happen with more children and less qualified early childhood staff? We suggest that the combination of qualified teachers and a higher adult to infant ratio has added depth to our work as teachers and hopefully to the experiences for each of the children.

Provocations and questions that we have posed to ourselves – what do you think?

What is quality care in a nursery?
How do we know?
What is a good adult/infant ratio? What else is possible if we think beyond the numbers?
How was a child's day really? Could more adults in the room make space for deeper understanding about children's experiences?
A nursery is often the smallest room in the centre... perhaps it wouldn't be suitable to have extra staff? Do we need to rethink issues of space for very young children...perhaps they need more than we have allowed?

What impact might a changed ratio have on centre budgets and costs?
Would the nursery resource budget be reduced if there are less children?
What about ratios for working with children who are birth to 6 months old?

We recognise that this experience is specific to our context and we are writing from a teacher perspective only at this point. In writing this article we hope to provoke more dialogue about ratios in nurseries as this issue is about more than just numbers.

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Acknowledgements

Thank you to Noah, Anakin, Isabella and Billy and your families for working with us.



New directions in early childhood sector relationships: Establishment of the Queensland Children's Services Alliance

The Queensland Children's Services Alliance (QCSA) is a unique collective of professional early childhood and related organisations in Queensland. The group has emerged from a related project – the *Child Care Skills Formation Strategy* – originally managed by the Health and Community Services Workforce Council and jointly funded by the Queensland Departments of Communities and Education, Training and the Arts. While this project has now ended, the longer-term vision was to establish a self-sustaining group to continue to support improved services for children, families and early childhood staff.

The exciting result has been the establishment of the QCSA. Unlike many other professional organisations, the primary purpose of the QCSA is to draw together different stakeholders across the early childhood sector and to provide a forum to identify, discuss and debate different perspectives on contemporary early childhood practice, policy and issues.

Reflecting broad sector representation, current membership spans all types of early childhood education and care services, private and community-based service providers and a number of related professional organizations. Current membership includes:

- Australian Community Services Employers Association
- Centacare Child Care Services
- Child Care Queensland
- Churches in Child Care
- C & K (formerly Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland)
- Early Childhood Australia
- Early Childhood Teachers Association
- Family Day Care Association of Queensland
- The Gowrie (Qld) Inc.
- Indigenous Professional Support Unit

- National In Home Child Care Association
- National Association of Community Based Children's Services
- Professional Support Coordinator Queensland
- Queensland Children's Activity Network
- Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Services Leadership Group, (ATSICSLA)
- Queensland Care Providers Association Inc.
- Queensland Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association

Despite differences in the scope and main interests of individual organisations, the QCSA has managed to establish a set of shared aims to drive and underpin the Alliance's work. These are:

- To continue to promote the well being of all children in children's services.
- To strengthen the status of the children's services sector and promote the identity and integrity of children's service professionals in Queensland.
- To facilitate collaboration between the various children services stakeholders.
- To provide a forum for discussion and debate.
- To work toward an informed and more cohesive voice around collective children's services issues.

Notwithstanding earlier history, the QCSA is only one year old. Nevertheless, the Alliance has achieved a great deal in a relatively short period of time. This includes:

- the development of a shared vision and aims
- an organisational model that promotes a rotating chair and distributed leadership and power
- the development of shared decision-making processes
- the identification of shared work priorities.



Authors:

Dr Susan Irvine - The Gowrie Qld Inc.

Ms Julie Price - PSCQ

Ms Margaret Brannock - ECA

The QCSA is now exploring the pros and cons of becoming a legally incorporated association.

Of particular note, is the value of such a group when it comes to informing government policy decision-making, with benefits for all involved. The QCSA is working to establish a productive working relationship with both the Federal and Queensland Governments. To date, the QCSA has met with and provided advice to the Queensland Government on a number of current early childhood policy matters, including the State review of child care legislation. The QCSA is also engaging in discussion about new Federal Government reforms, has written to Federal Ministers and has submitted a response to the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care.

The benefit to government is clear. The QCSA provides a forum to share information broadly, to discuss and debate policy matters, to identify similarities and differences in perspectives across key stakeholder groups, and, potentially, a means to resolve areas of disagreement and to negotiate outcomes.

In a similar sense, the QCSA provides opportunity for members to expand their own knowledge, to understand different ways of looking at early childhood issues, to contribute to problem solving, and to have a much louder and influential voice when it comes to policy decision-making.

At a time when we are all stretched in our own work places, this collective of individuals and organisations is to be commended for such an innovative approach to sector collaboration.

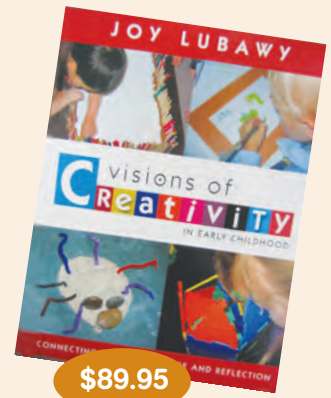
Anne Houghton

Gowrie Victoria Resource and Advice Centre

Visions of Creativity in Early Childhood

Connecting Theory, Practice and Reflection,

By Joy Lubawy, 2009



This is an exciting new Australian book with a fresh and unique approach to support early childhood professionals. It is certainly appealing through its layout and use of images but more importantly a 'great read'. It became my travel companion on a recent holiday where I thoroughly enjoyed the inspiring stories and ways the book reaffirmed, provoked, and challenged my thoughts.

Joy has an incredible ability to make you feel like she's sitting alongside you as mentor, whilst you reflect and explore theories and practices. You will also find this book packed with stories from the field that are sure to inspire you with ideas for rethinking routines and practices. Joy's stories of how a day might unfold in an early childhood setting will help to make connections for those exploring an emergent curriculum. You may even find you already have resources such as children's story books and music CD's along with memories of songs and rhymes Joy makes reference to. Joy shares a wealth of experience in how you might consider the ways you utilise many of these within your curriculum with fresh approaches. I believe this book covers everything you need to know with its 'leaving no stone unturned' approach. You will even find nurturing touches through inclusions titled 'Taking Care of Yourself'.

Jane Merewether, BA, B Ed, (ECE) Early Childhood Teacher, St Mary's Primary School, Bunbury WA also provides an informative summary as follows: "In this book, Joy brings this dance alive. Her vignettes provide practical insights that makes real the richness, complexity and possibilities for early childhood education. The warmth and wisdom of her stories illustrate how educators can bring together many ideas such as those of Multiple Intelligences, Emergent Curriculum, Reggio Emilia, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, the Project Approach and Student Centred Learning. The result is a meaningful and authentic approach to early childhood education.....".

I highly recommend *Visions of Creativity in Early Childhood* to be a new addition to your professional development reading.

Available through Gowrie Victoria Resource Centre & Online Bookshop - www.gowrievictoria.org.au/bookshop

National and International CONFERENCE UPDATE



Spring 2008



Summer 2008



Autumn 2009

Fifth Australian International
Conference on Motherhood

*The Mother and History:
The Past and Present*

2-4 July 2009

University of Qld, St Lucia, Brisbane

E: arm@yorku.ca

www.yorku.ca/arm/MotherandHistory.html

NAEYC Annual Conference
and Expo 2009

*Your Community. Your Opportunity.
Your Conference.*

18-21 November 2009

Washington DC

E: conference@naeyc.org

www.annualconference.naeyc.org/

3rd Australasian Early Childhood
Education for Sustainability
Conference

*Engage empower enact:
Sustainability and the early years*

22-24 October 2009

Darebin Arts and Entertainment
Centre, Melbourne

E: eeec@alphalink.com.au

CEIEC Annual International Early
Childhood Conference 2009:

Honoring the child, honouring equity 9

19-21 November 2009

The University of Melbourne, Parkville

E: [education-ceiec-](mailto:education-ceiec-conference@unimelb.edu.au)

[education-ceiec-](mailto:education-ceiec-conference@unimelb.edu.au)

www.education.unimelb.edu.au/ceiec

8th ISPCAN Asia-Pacific Regional
Conference on Child Abuse
and Neglect, incorporating the
12th Australasian Conference on
Child abuse and Neglect

*Child Abuse and Neglect: Looking
Through the Lens of Prevention*

15-18 November 2009

Perth Convention Exhibition Centre

T: 07 3848 2100

E: apccan2009@expertevents.com.au

www.apccan2009.org.au/

2nd National Indigenous Family
and Community Strengths
Conference

*Strong Stories, Strong Mob, Strong
Kids: GROWING UP TOGETHER*

1-3 December 2009

University of Newcastle

T: 02 4921 6403

E: FAC-events@newcastle.edu.au

[www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/
conferences/index.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/conferences/index.html)

Gowrie Australia

Promoting and supporting quality
services for all children.

Our Mission

A national collaborative approach to
better practices which benefit children,
families and the children's services sector.