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BEDROCK

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So many questions we need to answer 20
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NSW and ACT Teachers
Reading this publication may count as PD!
Professional reading can be included as part of your PD or PL for maintenance purposes.
Remember to log your professional reading with NESA or TQI.
For more information refer to NESA or TQI websites.

Regulation must not rule out diversity in sector



Diversity is very much a central theme in this edition of *Bedrock*. The strength of the early childhood education sector comes from its diversity.

There is diversity of the students, diversity among teachers and assistants, and the diversity of the programs provided in centres each and every day.

This diversity of programming is fundamental to providing our youngest generation of Australians with the support and skills they need as they begin their education and development journey.

Having such diversity of programming sets up our children for a life of learning and should not be overruled by onerous regulation of the sector.

Nor should that diversity be narrowed by increasing requirements on early childhood education employees that limit their ability to use their professional judgements in their interactions with their students.

While the provision of centres that deliver quality education in a safe environment is paramount for our students, we clearly have a problem with some of the regulatory frameworks being imposed on our sector and our profession.

It is alarming, as Lisa Bryant writes on page 7 of this edition of *Bedrock*, that “57% of services that were previously assessed as Exceeding the National Quality Framework prior to 2018, have now been downgraded to Meeting the NQS – or even worse – Working Towards”.

When such ratings can be so radically altered within a year – and given the significant flow-on impact this has for our centres and our members as early childhood education professionals – one must surely question the system being used.

Any regulatory system should facilitate and reinforce the professional nature of teaching, not diminish it just for the sake of uniform measures which fundamentally fail to acknowledge the depth and importance of diversity within our sector.

Terry Burke **John Quessy**
QLD NT Secretary NSW ACT Secretary

BEDROCK UPFRONT



Equal pay case underway

The IEUA's simultaneous Equal Remuneration Order (ERO) and Work Value cases are now before the Fair Work Commission (FWC).

The ERO case was heard before the Commission this time last year, and at that stage the FWC said that the evidence and their “preliminary perusal” of the material IEUA had lodged indicated the Modern Award minimum rates of pay had not been properly set.

The FWC has the power to vary those rates for ‘work value’ reasons and invited the Union to consider a new additional application. The IEUA widened its submission to demonstrate that the existing Modern Award minimum rates of pay for teachers were not properly determined, bear no relationship to the value of the work performed by teachers in all settings and should be varied.

IEUA is also arguing that early childhood teachers’ pay is too low because it is a female dominated workforce. Outcomes from both cases will be known later this year.



Census findings

The findings from the 2018 Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) have been released.

The AEDC measures the development of children in Australia in their first year of full time school and provides important information to the early childhood sector to support early childhood planning and education.

Overall, the majority of children were found to be developmentally on track for each of the five domains measured – physical health and wellbeing; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive skills; and communication skills and general knowledge.

More girls were developmentally on track, which was consistent with previous data.

A key finding of the 2018 census was a significant decrease in the percentage of children who were classified as ‘vulnerable’ across one or more domains.

One in five children were found to be developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains and this increases to two in five Indigenous children.

The census also found positive trends in language and cognitive skills, with an increase of children ‘on track’ from 77.1% (2009) to 84.4% (2018).

An increase of children ‘on track’ from 90.8% (2009) to 91.8% (2018) was found in the domain of communication and general knowledge.

The census data provides the early childhood education sector with snapshots of the vulnerabilities prevalent within their geographical areas.

This gives those working in the sector the opportunity to reflect on what is working well as well as what needs to be improved to better support local children and their families.

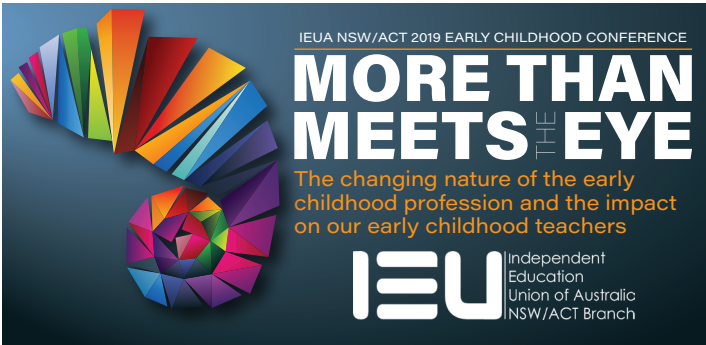
For more information on the 2018 AEDC data, visit <https://www.aedc.gov.au/>



Accreditation woes

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch is appealing to NESA, the teacher accreditation authority, to come up with a plan to assist teachers that work in out of scope services including mobile preschools and early intervention services, to be able to access and/or maintain teacher accreditation.

The Union has been contacted by a number of members in such services who consider their exclusion from accreditation to reflect a lack of recognition regarding their qualifications and experience.



More than meets the eye

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch annual Early Childhood conference More than meets the Eye, the Changing Nature of the Early Childhood Profession and the Impact on our Early Childhood Teachers, is on Saturday, 7 September. The conference is a popular feature of the early childhood calendar and will feature keynote speakers and workshops.

The conference will be live streamed so it is accessible to members from all over the country. See www.ieu.asn.au



National Quality Framework Review

There are still a few days (until Thursday 30 June) for IEUA members to have their say on the National Quality Framework (NQF) through a survey on key issues currently under review.

Key issues under review include:

- scope of services regulated under the NQF
- application efficiency and effectiveness
- maintaining current information about service delivery
- physical environment
- sustainability of the NQF
- regulatory approach
- qualification requirements
- protecting children and staff in an emergency
- education and care in OSHC
- education and care in FDC
- value of quality rating for families
- appropriateness of sanctions
- protected disclosures, and
- prohibitions notices.

The National Quality Agenda for Early Childhood Education and Care was developed by the Australian government with the intention of creating a national quality strategy for the early years.

The NQF provides the national strategy and approach to the regulation of quality education and care services across Australia.

To complete the survey, which closes on 30 June 2019, visit: <https://www.nqfreview.com.au/>

To read more about the issues under review, visit <https://www.nqfreview.com.au/44707/documents/102305/download>

What is happening with Assessment and Rating?

Is there something rotten happening with the assessment and rating system for education and care services or is it just bad policy implementation, communication, and training after a change to the system, Early Childhood Consultant Lisa Bryant asks.

Directors and Approved Providers, especially those from NSW where the changes have hit the hardest, are pretty much convinced that there is something rotten happening.

How, they ask, could 57% of services that were previously assessed as Exceeding the National Quality Framework prior to 2018, have been downgraded to Meeting the NQS – or even worse – Working Towards?

Gabe Connell, a Vice President of the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch said she is “hearing a lot of horror stories in regard to the Assessment and Ratings Process ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous”.

NSW Organiser Lisa James tells of members, especially those who are NSW service directors, being “stressed and deflated after putting so much work into preparing for Assessment and Rating.”

She said it is increasingly becoming a work health and safety issue with members suffering from “insomnia, confusion, disillusion and burnout when facing a process so many are finding increasingly demoralising”.

In NSW and in Victoria just over 300 services have been re-rated in 2018 and in 2019 so far in each state.

In Victoria 56% of those who were re-rated retained their Exceeding rating compared to just 43% of the NSW services. 36% dropped to Meeting (47% in NSW) and 7% dropped to Working Towards (compared to 10% in NSW). In comparison 54% of ACT services previously rated as Exceeding lost their Exceeding rating. Lots of services are clearly finding it harder to retain their Exceeding ratings, but NSW services seem to be more likely to lose theirs.

So what has happened?

In 2017 the Education Council determined that there would be a new National Quality Standard from February 2018 and that simultaneously a new way of calculating Exceeding ratings would be implemented. To be rated as Exceeding, a service has always had to have all quality areas rated as at least Meeting the NQS, with four or more Quality Areas rated as Exceeding NQS, with at least two of these being Quality Areas 1, 5, 6, or 7. Complex though it is, this has not changed.

What did change was that to be rated as Exceeding in any Quality Area a service must now receive Exceeding for all the standards in that Quality Area. Obviously this change may lead to fewer services being rated as Exceeding, but given that a service still only need receive an Exceeding rating in four of the seven Quality Areas, one would not have thought the impact would be high on the number of services receiving an overall Exceeding rating.

The change came as a consequence of the first review of the NQF. The proposal was canvassed initially in the Consultation Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) and later in the Decision Regulatory Impact Statement. At no time did ACECQA, any government or the Education Council declare publicly that was a need for fewer services to be rated as Exceeding. The initial consultation RIS only said that the change was designed to simplify the calculation of the Quality Area rating for Exceeding.

At the time the change took effect, ACECQA said that “governments and ACECQA had developed guidance that clarifies the difference between Meeting the National Quality Standard (NQS) and Exceeding the NQS at the standard level”. They talked about it as an “opportunity to make this higher quality benchmark more readily understood” and said that “feedback from the sector suggested a need for clearer guidance on the difference between Meeting NQS and Exceeding NQS rating levels.” They said that Exceeding meant going above and beyond meeting the NQS and they wanted to clearly explain what “above and beyond” means.

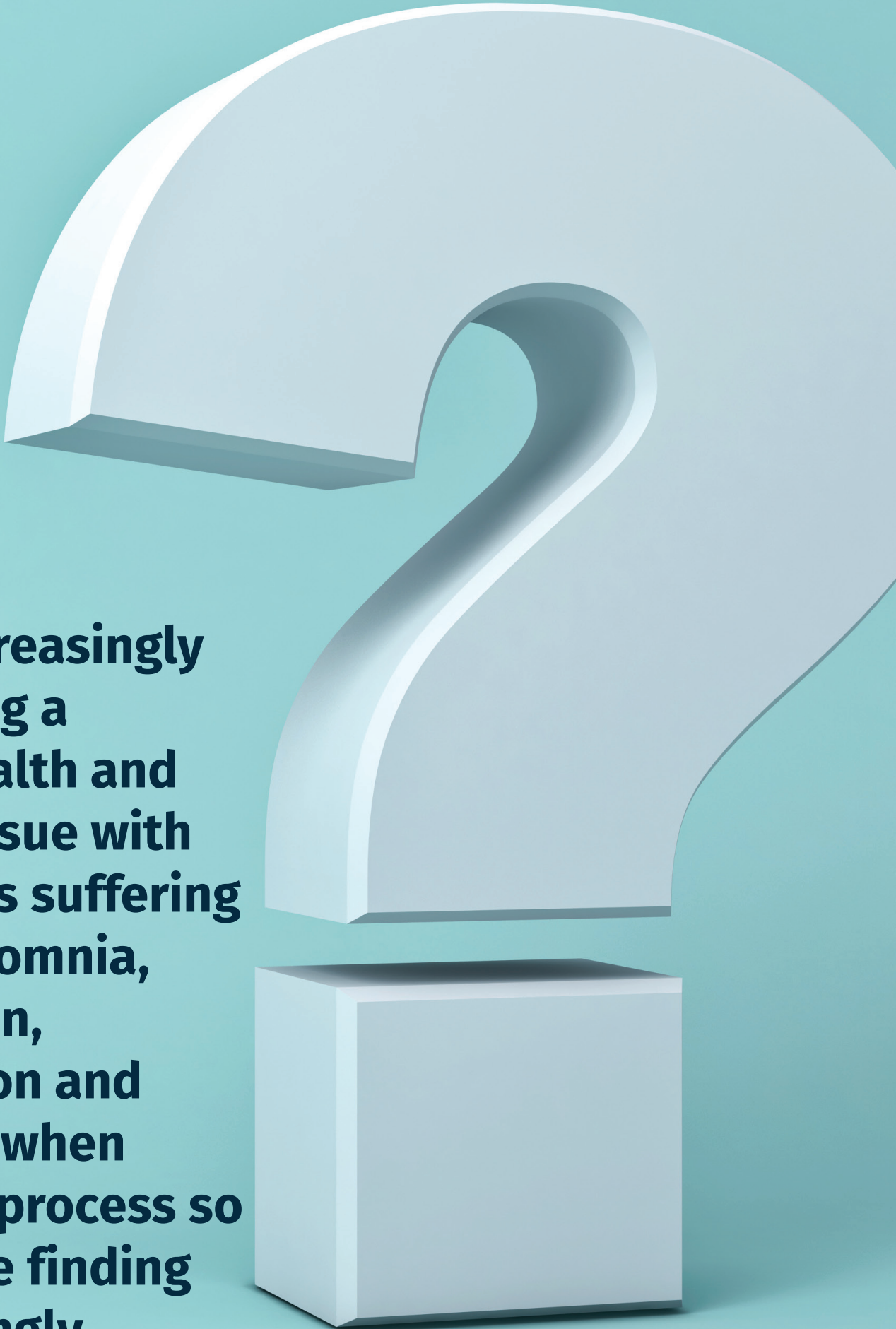
It came the three ‘Exceeding themes’ requiring practice to be embedded, informed by critical reflection and shaped by meaningful engagement with families and the community.

And here is where everything seems to have gone astray. Despite promises that Assessment Officers (AOs) would be retrained, it appears as if the message taken away from that training is that it should be harder for services to obtain an Exceeding rating.

Clearly this was not the intention – at least not the stated intention. So it looks like the sector needs some answers from ACECQA.

- Was the intention to make Exceeding a harder rating to get?
- Why have so many services lost their Exceeding rating after the themes came in?
- Why have more NSW services lost their Exceeding rating than services in other states and territories?
- Is ACECQA aware that service directors and teachers are losing (have lost?) faith in the ratings system because of the wholesale loss of Exceeding ratings?
- Was there a communications failure – should ACECQA have informed the sector that the impact of the new themes coupled with the need to get Exceeding in all standards in order for a Quality Area to be rated as Exceeding meant that a substantial proportion of services would be downgraded?
- If reducing the number of services rated as Exceeding was not the intention, do AOs need retraining again?

If the sector loses faith in the assessment and rating system, the sector loses faith in the NQF. Surely none of us want that to happen?



“It is increasingly becoming a work health and safety issue with members suffering from insomnia, confusion, disillusion and burnout when facing a process so many are finding increasingly demoralising.”



The reality of rural life

Located 240km west of Rockhampton is a gem of a rural town: Emerald

The hub of the Queensland Central Highlands and home to the Kairi and Wangan peoples, Emerald is – despite its name – a gateway to one of the largest sapphire fields in the southern hemisphere.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Emerald grew rapidly as a result of new coal mines in the Bowen Basin and is now a thriving rural service area rich in minerals and agriculture.

IEUA journalist Jessica Willis talks to Jenny Finlay, Director of Borilla Community Kindergarten, and Kay Harling, Director of Emerald Preschool and Community Kindergarten, about the joys and challenges of teaching in rural communities.

Both directors are passionate and tenacious early childhood teachers who have taught generations of families in rural communities, for 40 and 35 years respectively, and are advocates for supporting high quality rural teaching.

Finlay's family has strong ties to the Emerald community.

"I grew up in central Queensland and my family have settled here from the 1800s so I have a very strong link to this community," said Finlay.

"I have always been an advocate for quality early childhood education."

"I strongly believe that children in rural communities deserve the best of teachers. You should not have to go to the city to have the same

quality education – and that's a passion of mine."

Similarly, Harling has family connections to the community.

"I started working rurally as my husband was offered a position at a coal mine and so we moved. I always wanted to raise my family in a small town as I was raised in small towns," Harling said.

"And I love it. It gave me a place to raise my children in a small community with great support.

"Emerald Community Kindergarten is an amazing caring community who support their staff and believe in the magic we provide for staff, students and families.

"This has been my reward."

Diverse and inclusive services

Both centres cater for a large and complex cohort of children which means that Finlay and Harling work hard at maintaining the professional development of staff and supporting them in every way possible.

"Borilla Community Kindergarten is a large kindergarten with three operating units and 132 children," said Finlay.

"We have a very complex enrolment cohort.

"About 20% of our children classify as having a disability and we have a high enrolment of children from Indigenous backgrounds.

"We also have a mixture socio-economically, with about 40% of our families classified as low socioeconomic.

"So we are very mixed and diverse, and we pride ourselves in being an inclusive service.

"We are also quite an innovative community.

"We were the first kindergarten in Queensland to have a Domestic Violence Leave provision – we've had that since 2015 – and we've had an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) for our staff for four years, which should be in every kindergarten but unfortunately is not."

Unique challenges

Teaching in remote areas does have unique challenges which require innovation and tenacity to overcome.

Most challenges are directly related to the remoteness of these communities which create barriers for both teachers and students.

"Accessing good professional development is the biggest challenge. For example, the cost of sending 15 staff to Brisbane, accommodation and course fees is huge. As a non profit affiliate kindergarten this impacts our service," said Harling.

Finlay agreed, adding that being proactive in the community is critical.

"I've tried to engage the very best



staff that I can and keep them up to date, as I have done myself,” she said.

“Our service spends a lot of money on professional development that is tailored to the individual and if that means travelling to Melbourne, then that means we travel to Melbourne.

“Quite often grants are sourced wherever we can.

“Technology has definitely made this easier but as good as online [Professional Development] is, it isn’t the only answer,” she said.

“I work closely with the QCAA (Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority) and if I can get a certain number [of staff] for a workshop, they will come to Emerald and deliver it to us.

“In the long term, it benefits the whole community.”

Another challenge of the kindergartens’ remoteness is the mismatch between perceptions of policy makers and rural realities, such as the sheer distance and waiting times for essential services.

Both teachers said it is difficult to grasp these practicalities without first hand experience living in a rural community.

“We have children who travel an hour and a half just to get to kindergarten one day a week,” Harling said.

“If children require interventions we have to navigate who in the

community, or in the surrounding areas, can help,” Finlay said.

“For example, an occupational therapist might only be here for six months before moving on, so we have to know where to look rather than who to look for.

“This impacts us if we have deadlines for things like funding. A child might wait months for an appointment and drive five hours for it; therefore we need to allow for this.”

Rural advocates

Finlay has also found herself to be a prominent advocate for early childhood education and teachers in the community.

She explained how it is critical that early childhood teachers in rural areas are recognised for the high quality education they provide and that families realise they don’t need to move for their children to receive the best education.

“Teaching rurally has meant not being afraid to take the fight to whatever level is needed. The needs of a rural service are different [to urban or metropolitan services] and as a result I have been an advocate on many occasions whether it is for teachers, children or families,” Finlay said.

Being part of our Union also provides strength and support for members working in rural and remote settings.

“Our Union ensures that the voices of the rural teachers are heard,” Finlay said.

“Our unique needs are acknowledged and issues are always addressed.

“Our Union is very approachable and provides accurate information that is not always easily accessible to our rural teachers.”

Harling and Finlay explained that with big challenges come big rewards; they say there are an abundance of reasons for teachers to move or stay rural.

First of all, Harling said, teachers can access financial support to make the move such as the ARIA Funding from Queensland Department for Education.

Incentives include support with housing, moving costs and above award wages.

“Teaching rurally means you are part of a small and supportive community. There are always great social events and many sporting clubs,” she said.

“There are wonderful people, less traffic, clean air and amazing wildlife.”

“The children get so many unique opportunities. For example we had one of our farming parents bring in an echidna to show the children.”

Finlay added that rural communities are a very special place to teach as the pace of life is slower and the relationships built between teachers and families are beautiful.

“One of the best things is that I get to know the families really well and this can enrich the education experience for both teacher and child,” she said.

Making the move rurally

Finlay and Harling encouraged teachers beginning a career in a rural area to make the most of the varied opportunities it will bring.

“Go out with an open mind and really join in with the community,” said Finlay.

“Network! We have some amazing services in our region and other early childhood teachers who are willing to mentor,” Harling explained.

“It will change your life; there is nowhere else I’d live.”

For information on Queensland Department of Education funding for Early Childhood Education, visit <https://earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/funding-and-support/grants-tenders-and-funding/QKFS/qkfs-resources/aria-and-seifa-subsidies>.



Freedom to thrive at a Berlin preschool

In the time since I became a parent eight years ago, my personal experiences and observations have augmented my academic interest in the question of how we, as parents, teachers and as a society, promote or hinder children's development of autonomy, competence and connectedness, Almut Weiler Anderson writes.

With the support of KU Children's Services, in 2017 I was awarded the National Early Childhood Educator of the Year as part of the Australian Family Early Education and Care Awards.

The award was generously sponsored by MyLife MySuper and their financial support enabled me to undertake a study tour to Germany in July 2018. There I was able to visit exemplary early childhood settings to observe their practice and engage in indepth discussions with teachers and parents about their priorities, attitudes and practices in educating or raising children.

Waldwichtel is a Forest Preschool in Berlin, and it was the first preschool I visited. What I found most striking during my time there was how little conflict, aggressive behaviour and negative emotions the children exhibited.

Instead, they were engaged and immersed in their play and actively and independently sought opportunities for exploration and learning. I left deeply impressed by the children's independence, capabilities and confidence.

According to Deci and Ryan's (2002) *Self-Determination Theory*, autonomy, competence and connectedness are the three universal, innate human needs that, if satisfied, allow optimal function, wellbeing and development.

I believe that the forest environment and the pedagogy that underpins it emphasises these three aspects, insofar as it enables children to experience themselves as competent and autonomous, and also provides them with ample opportunities to connect with their peers, their teachers and the natural world around them.

Fostering autonomy

During the morning meeting, the children and their teachers discussed which part of the forest would be most desirable to spend the day in, taking into account weather conditions. Then each child voted for their preferred location and the majority vote won.

Children were given the liberty to freely choose the materials they would use, and the activities they would undertake, during their time in the forest. Except for a box with books, all provisions were open-ended eg, woodworking equipment. Children used what they found in the forest for their play, there were no toys as such – a wonderful way to foster imagination and creativity.

The children displayed confidence in choosing appropriate risks and challenges for themselves; be it in regard to how high they climbed up a tree, which height they could safely jump from, or which tools they used. In the 16 years that this preschool has been operating, there has only been one serious incident requiring medical treatment, and that was when a child stepped into a wasp nest and was stung multiple times.

Promoting competence

Children were trusted to be capable and responsible, and to self direct their own learning. The role of the adults was to step back to give the children the freedom to follow their interests, while at the same time, conveying to them that they are always available when needed, be it to model carving, co-construct factual learning about the natural world or simply listen. I noticed that the adults' language was positive and I rarely heard a 'no' – not because the teachers were laissez-faire, but because the children did not require much behaviour guidance or adult intervention.

Rather than walking (or riding their bikes) as a tight group all the way to their chosen place in the forest, the voyage was separated into numerous sections. Once everyone had assembled at a spot, the adults would tell the children where the next spot to stop was, which was generally around 100m away and always in clear view. This allowed children to make their way at their own pace – which included a lot of running.

Facilitating connection

I observed several rituals during the day that promoted children's belonging, eg a morning meeting with a set structure and rituals before eating breakfast, and then also a meeting at the end of the day.

The unhurried pace and long periods of unstructured play allowed children to connect deeply with their peers and educators on their own terms. The spacious, natural environment evidently had a calming effect on adults and children alike, and the ever-changing flora and fauna opened up many opportunities for observation, sensory exploration, investigation, appreciation and connection.

The adults all demonstrated deliberate listening skills. By dedicating sufficient time, and offering their undivided attention to the children, sometimes individually, sometimes in small groups, they were able to truly hear and connect with them and give them a voice – thereby empowering the children to express themselves. Their contributions were clearly valued, in alignment with the statement made by Carla Rinaldi, Pedagogical Adviser and President of Reggio Emilia: "Listening is attributing value to others".

It could be argued that some of the stress and mental health problems children experience today are in fact at least partly caused by a society that is overprotective, overcontrolling and often overscheduled.

Rather than promoting children's healthy development of autonomy it underestimates their potential and does not provide opportunities to challenge themselves and develop their capabilities. Society seems to have lost sight of the importance of offering children opportunities to build deep connections with their peers, parents, communities and the natural world.

While not all early childhood teachers have the opportunity to educate children in the wonderful environment of a forest, beach or bush school, I strongly believe it is worth reflecting on how we can contribute to children's wellbeing by fostering their autonomy, competence and connection within the opportunities and constraints of our own settings.

Almut Weiler Anderson completed a Master of Teaching in Germany before emigrating to Australia. She then undertook postgraduate studies in Early Childhood Education at Macquarie University and has been working as a preschool teacher for the past decade. She has a particular interest in children's risk taking, anti bias education and nature pedagogy. In 2017 she was awarded the Australian Family National Early Childhood Educator of the Year award.



Anderson's first picture book *Auf der Suche nach Rosa (Looking for Rosa)*, a story of self-empowerment featuring a girl who overcomes her fear of doing things for herself, was published in Germany in 2018.

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WHY WE NEED MORE DIVERSE BOOKSHELVES

A lack of diverse books is failing children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This is something that should concern all Australians, Helen Joanne Adam, Lecturer in Literacy Education and Children's Literature, Edith Cowan University, wrote in *The Conversation*.

"I studied five Australian early learning settings and found less than 5% of books contained cultural diversity. My more recent findings show teachers are struggling to use books in ways that promote intercultural understandings," Adam said.

"Diverse books can help achieve principles of diversity written into Australian education policies. The potential of diverse books in addressing these principles and equity more generally is too important to ignore.

"Reading to children has a powerful impact on their academic and intellectual development. Children learn about themselves and the world through the books they're exposed to. Importantly, children can learn understanding and respect for themselves and for those who are different to them.

"The majority of children's books depict white main characters. But a lack of diverse books means we have a serious problem. Currently, children from minority backgrounds rarely see themselves reflected in the books they're exposed to. Research over the last two decades shows the world presented in children's books is overwhelmingly white, male and middle class.

"For children from minority groups, this can lead to a sense of exclusion. This can then impact on their sense

of identity and on their educational and social outcomes.

"The evidence regarding Indigenous groups across the world is even more alarming. Research shows these groups are rarely represented. And, if represented at all, are most likely to be represented in stereotypical or outdated ways.

"Research over the last two decades shows the world presented in children's books is overwhelmingly white, male and middle class."

"Many teachers or adults unwittingly promote stereotypical, outdated or exotic views of minority groups. This can damage the outcomes for children from those groups."

Director Julia Cameron of Werris Creek and District Preschool uses literature as one avenue to close the gap by respecting diversity for her community.

"With almost half of our enrolment being Indigenous, one of the ways we reflect the belonging and understanding of the culture is through books, music, storytelling and told stories," Cameron said.

"Some of the storylines such as *Just a Little Brown Dog* by Sally Morgan, illustrated by Bronwyn Bancroft, could be a story reflected in any of our preschool's Indigenous and non Indigenous families. So rather than 'traditional or cultural,' it is a story

that's set in anyone's family, however, it is the colours and strokes in the artwork throughout the story that leads us to the Indigenous heritage.

"*Warnayarra-the Rainbow Snake*, as told by the Senior Boys Class Lajamanu School and illustrated by some of the school children, is a regular favourite story. According to the preschool children, they like the way the Lajamanu children drew the pictures, particularly the Rainbow Snake.

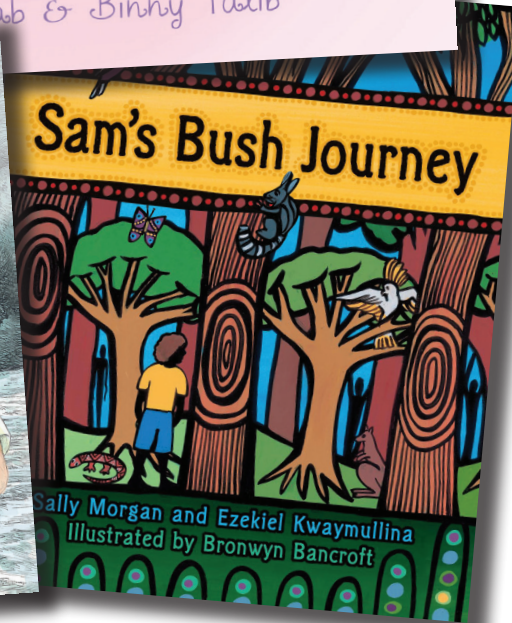
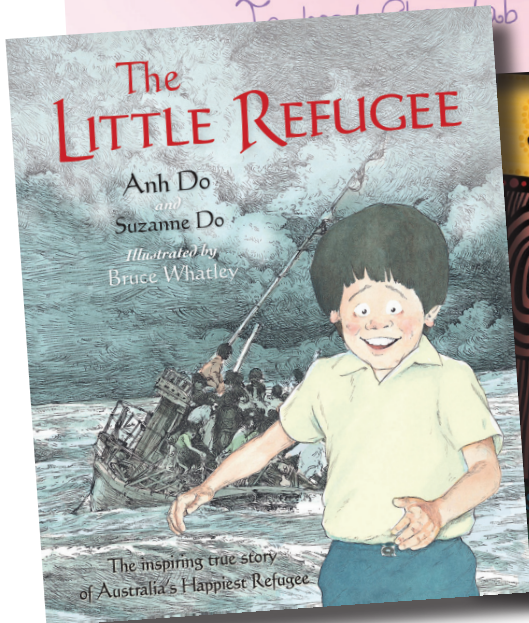
"Both contemporary and traditional Indigenous stories aimed at the preschool age are now accessible, unlike many years ago, when the outdated stereotypical stories showed bearded men wearing a loin cloth and carrying spears.

"Providing a choice of diversity leads to extended learning and understanding and branches into many other learning experiences and knowledge."

"In exploring Indigenous stories, artwork and symbols we are planning to work with a Kamilaroi artist and story teller to create stories that reflect the Kamilaroi nation from a child's perspective," Cameron said.

"Some of our soft furnishings, such as cushion covers, reflect Indigenous art symbols. The children are able to recognise many of them and have reproduced their own interpretations.

"Our community based preschool also facilitates a weekly community playgroup which is predominantly aged 0-3 years. In recent times we have partnered with Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre – whose Community Support Worker is currently teaching the playgroup families, teacher and educators *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* in Kamilaroi, as well as sharing Dreamtime stories."



Some saw diversity as a special extra to address occasionally rather than an essential part of everyday practice.

"The call for more diverse books for children is gaining momentum around the world. The value of diverse books for children's educational, social and emotional outcomes is of interest to all.

"The voices of Aboriginal and minority group writers calling for change are gaining momentum. But there is still much to be done", Adam said.

"The recent development of a database from the National Centre for Australian Children's Literacy is an important step. Publications of diverse books are still very much in the minority but some awareness and promotion of diverse books is increasing.

"These important steps forward could be supported with better training for teachers and increased discussion among those who write, publish and source books for children."

Here are five tips to help you build a more diverse book collection.

(Bedrock often offers giveaways from Indigenous publishers Magabala Books. See page 23.)

Five diverse books to get you started

The Perfect Flowergirl

By Tahgreb Chandab and Binny Talib (illustrator)
Pub: Allen & Unwin

The Little Refugee

By Anh Do, Suzanne Do and Bruce Whatley (illustrator)
Pub: Allen & Unwin

Sam's Bush Journey

By Sally Morgan, Ezekiel Kwaymullina and Bronwyn Bancroft (illustrator)
Pub: Hardie Grant

The Patchwork Bike

By Maxine Baneeba Clarke and Van T Rudd (illustrator)
Pub: Hachette

Want to Play Trucks

By Ann Stott and Bob Graham (illustrator)
Pub: Walker Books

Reference

<https://theconversation.com/five-tips-to-make-school-bookshelves-more-diverse-and-five-books-to-get-you-started-110718>

Adam said children from dominant cultural groups can view themselves as 'normal' and 'others' as different.

"In my recent study, I found the book collections in early childhood settings were overwhelmingly monocultural. Less than 5% of the books contained any characters who were not white. And in those few books, the minority group characters played a background role to a white main character.

"Particularly concerning was the lack of representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Of 2377 books, there were only two books available to children that contained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander characters. Only one of these was a story book.

"In this book, the Aboriginal

character was portrayed as a semi-naked person playing a didgeridoo in the outback. There were no books showing actual everyday lifestyles or views of Aboriginal people.

"The accompanying practice of teachers may also be counterproductive to achieving equitable outcomes for children from minority backgrounds. The teachers in my study were keen and committed to the children in their care.

"They were passionate about the importance of reading to children. But when it came to selecting books, they struggled to know what books to select and how best to use them.

"Teachers also need support to learn how to select diverse books.

"Some teachers overlooked the importance of diversity altogether.



Resources for educational leaders



In 2012, when the requirement for every early childhood service to appoint a designated educational leader was introduced as part of the National Quality Framework (NQF), many services and teachers struggled to make sense of the role, Melinda Gambley writes.

What has long been clear to both teachers and researchers was the link between strong pedagogical leadership and quality education and care, but how to achieve this hasn't always been apparent.

With little information about what the role was and what it entailed, and with minimal support and mostly no extra wages or recognition, many teachers were appointed to the position and left to find their own way.

Into this space stepped the peak bodies, who engaged experts in early childhood pedagogy and leadership to develop resources and professional development to support their members.

Early Childhood Australia produced an excellent series of resources as part of the NQS Professional Learning Program. At the same time, a number of private training organisations and consultants began to offer professional development and printed resources to support educational leaders.

Tick a box risk

These have varied considerably in quality and content and we don't have to search far to see that there are a huge number of diaries, planning tools and checklists available for purchase to help educational leaders in their role.

One big concern is that, in some settings, educational leadership has become a compliance role of checklists and documentation quotas, rather than the visionary leadership role that was first envisaged under the NQF.

Fast forward seven years, and we see a sector much more comfortable with the idea of a designated pedagogical leader, with this position now beginning to be seen as crucial to the educational quality of a service and some recognition in terms of specific job descriptions, with additional conditions and wages attached. And to support all of this work, this year ACECQA have released their own document, *The Educational Leaders Resource*.

The first part of the resource outlines the regulated and expected role of an educational leader in Australian settings and the tasks that make up this role, including discussions, networking and mentoring.

Helpful ideas

There are links to resources that educational leaders can use to develop their own professional practice and some helpful ideas for managing meetings and dealing with difficult people. This section would be especially helpful to students or those who are new to the role as they establish systems and strategies to use in their services.

While the resource says little on the role of the educational leader in the assessment and rating process and meeting the National Quality Standards, there is a section that focusses specifically on the new Exceeding themes and how these can be used by educational leaders as part of the cycle of continuous improvement.

Following is a section for approved providers around their role of recruiting, employing and appointing a suitable educational leader, and a section on the qualifications, skills, and attributes required of educational leaders, that

may be helpful to consider when designating the role. The resource notes that, while there is still no minimum qualification required for this role, there is a suggestion that higher qualifications correlate to services 'doing better' in Assessment and Rating of Quality Area 1.

Pedagogical leadership

Part 2 of the resource proposes a model for educational leadership based on the work of Elizabeth Stamopoulos, a researcher from Edith Cowan University. Stamopoulos' model proposes four dimensions of pedagogical leadership: knowledge, professionalism, relationships and reflection. The remainder of this section examines these dimensions in greater depth through the work of academics and researchers who are themselves experts in pedagogical leadership.

Professor Fran Press, Dr Lennie Barblett, Dr Andrea Nolan, Dr Jennifer Cartmel and Dr Marilyn Casley all delve into each of these dimensions, offering strategies and research based approaches for educational leaders to develop their own

practices and to support the professional development of others. There are case studies, questions for reflection, and further reading for educational leaders who wish to deepen their own understanding of these dimensions or that of their colleagues.

Call to action

Finally, Part 3 of the resource is a 'call to action' of sorts,

encouraging educational leaders to take charge of their own professional development through reading, researching, and 'trying something new'. The document's appendix includes a helpful glossary for people new to the sector and a number of suggested sample templates for job descriptions, meeting minutes, and a self-assessment tool.

While these are just suggested as tools in this document, it's important that both educational leaders and regulators don't see these as prescriptive and 'the only way' to lead, as has happened in the past.

Overall, the educational leaders resource has the potential to be a useful aid to the work of new and experienced educational leaders. The information, case studies and reflections could be used in multiple ways in early education settings. The information is research based and there is certainly no mention of checklists or quotas that we might see in other resources.

For educational leaders who would like to continue their own professional development, there are some great local networking groups (some now offering networking specifically for their educational leaders to share their own pedagogy and to hear about others), fantastic conferences, and some excellent forums online and on social media, including the Perth-based non profit Educational Leaders Association who have a fast growing membership base across Australia. Or, as the educational leaders resource suggests, 'try something new' and start your own with colleagues!

So, educational leaders: do you have the courage to imagine what is possible?

More details: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/educational-leadership>

Melinda Gambley is the Director of Clunes Preschool and a member of the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Early Childhood Council

"It is recognised that the educational leader is not the only driver of change, but change for the better needs champions who lead practice and have the courage to imagine what is possible."

Educational Leaders Resource, ACECQA, 2019



The power of story, science and play

Fleer's Conceptual Playworld is an innovative play based model integrating Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) concepts. Journalist Elise Cuthbertson talked with the program designer Marilyn Fleer (pictured), Monash University Laureate Professor of Early Childhood Education and Development.

A group of five year olds is reimagining the classic Robin Hood story. The heroic outlaw of English folklore becomes an engineer, so do his merry friends in Nottingham. Robin and the engineers hit the books and search through some child friendly YouTube videos. They devise a pulley system to break into a castle where Robin's perennial rival, the Sheriff of Nottingham, is hoarding wealth he has stolen from citizens. In the end, through their engineering nous, Robin and friends win and share the wealth evenly among Nottingham's inhabitants.

This is just one example of how the Conceptual Playworld can be implemented in an early childhood education setting, with the intersection of story, science and play.

"What we've learnt from our research is that imagination and play and imagination and learning are hand in glove," Fleer said.

Imagination, she said, is central to children's understanding of STEM concepts.

"If you develop children's imagination through play, you are actually developing their foundational capacity to be thinking abstractly and to imagine concepts – because a lot of concepts are very imaginary."

The strength of the Conceptual Playworld model is in its adaptability and synergy with teachers' talents. Fleer said the model's success pushes back against previous academic literature which claims early childhood teachers are not teaching STEM effectively.

"Early childhood teachers are terrific with children's literature. They're wonderful with dramatisation and storytelling... so this Conceptual Playworld model draws on all of their strengths and what's unique about it is that early childhood teachers and the children create the Conceptual Playworld together.

"It takes what teachers are already doing but it positions them very powerfully into the play and it provides the vehicle... the children are so motivated to solve problems. They're learning STEM concepts in the service of their play [and] the children are so engaged."

Fleer said young children were naturally curious about STEM concepts in coming to terms with the world around them.

"The infant is already exploring gravity when they throw things from their high chair, they're feeling the

wind on their face and wondering what it might be and how balloons float... children are already super curious and we know this from the research."

An ARC laureate first

The Conceptual Playworld model is part of Fleer's broader research project, which was recently awarded a prestigious Australian Research Council (ARC) Laureate Fellowship.

The \$3.2 million grant will fund a five year research project, including a longitudinal study into children's curiosities and interests.

"Nobody has looked at, longitudinally, the interests of children and the curiosity that they have – in the world and especially not in Australia. It will be an absolute first," Fleer said.

"If we already know what toddlers and preschoolers and infants are interested in, then we can really work with that content in our curriculum.

"We'll be able to have that evidence and it will be so exciting. My best guess is that we're going to blow the minds of primary and secondary teachers – they will be so gobsmacked at what young children can do."

The research project will also consider the development of artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR) resources to support play based STEM education at home.

It's the first time the ARC Laureate Fellowship has ever been awarded



to a researcher in the field of early childhood education. Fler also received the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Fellowship – a grant for exceptional female researchers to assist in mentoring women in their field.

“I feel so proud for us in early childhood education. It’s so exciting. It’s an honour,” Fler said.

Girls in STEM

The under-representation of girls and women in STEM study and industry has long been flagged as an equity concern.

Fler said she observed the exclusion of girls in STEM education in her career as an early childhood teacher and then later explored the deepening trend as an academic.

“The same things that happened 20 years ago are happening now. We haven’t changed the story for girls and we haven’t opened up the opportunities for them.”

The Conceptual Playworld provides an opportunity to change this story for girls.

Fler said in free play settings girls often kept themselves on the periphery while boys were more likely to take an active role. The Conceptual Playworld model provides teachers with the ability to give girls a clear role in the story.

“What we’ve learnt from our research is that imagination and play and imagination and learning are hand in glove.”

In the Robin Hood example, Fler said the teachers who created that Playworld named the girls – as well as boys – as engineers from the beginning, providing them with a clear opportunity to engage.

With women accounting for just 12% of the Australian engineering workforce, Fler believes change has to start early.

“The pipeline of girls in STEM has to begin in early childhood. Girls are interested... it’s just that all these blocks get put in their way and one of them is just this wall of boys being in there and getting their hands on everything before the girls do.

“We have to change the story in early childhood education because of children’s absolute passion in the STEM area.”

Using Conceptual Playworld

Early childhood teachers interested in the Conceptual Playworld model can download the program’s free app or online resources.

Further resources will continue to be released as the research develops.

Would you like to be involved?

Fler is also looking for early childhood services to formally participate in the research project.

To find out how you can be involved, visit <https://www.monash.edu/conceptual-playworld/>



How children's experiences affect their genes

This article first appeared on the developing child website of Harvard University. The study of epigenetics and child development has big implications for early childhood teachers.

New scientific research shows that environmental influences can actually affect whether and how genes are expressed.

In fact, scientists have discovered that early experiences can determine how genes are turned on and off and even whether some are expressed at all. Thus, the old ideas that genes are 'set in stone' or that they alone determine development have been disproven. Nature vs nurture is no longer a debate — it's nearly always both!

During development, the DNA that makes up our genes accumulates chemical marks that determine how much or little of the genes is expressed. This collection of chemical marks is known as the epigenome. The different experiences children have rearrange those chemical marks. This explains why genetically identical twins can exhibit different behaviours, skills, health and achievement.

Correcting misrepresentations

Until recently, the influences of genes were thought to be set, and the effects of children's experiences and

environments on brain architecture and long-term physical and mental health outcomes remained a mystery.

That lack of understanding led to several misleading conclusions about the degree to which negative and positive environmental factors and experiences can affect the developing fetus and young child. The following misconceptions are particularly important to set straight.

"The very best strategy is to support responsive relationships and reduce stress to build strong brains from the beginning, helping children grow up to be healthy, productive members of society."

Not set in stone

Contrary to popular belief, the genes inherited from one's parents do not set a child's future development in stone. Variations in DNA sequences between individuals certainly influence the way in which genes are expressed and how the proteins encoded by those genes will function.

But that is only part of the story — the environment in which one develops, before and soon after birth, provides powerful experiences that chemically modify certain genes which, in turn, define how much and when they are expressed.

Thus, while genetic factors exert potent influences, environmental factors have the ability to alter the genes that were inherited.

Although frequently misunderstood, adverse fetal and early childhood experiences can — and do — lead to physical and chemical changes in the brain that can last a lifetime.

Injurious experiences, such as malnutrition, exposure to chemical toxins or drugs, and toxic stress before birth or in early childhood are not forgotten, but rather are built into the architecture of the developing brain through the epigenome.

The 'biological memories' associated with these epigenetic changes can affect multiple organ systems and increase the risk not only for poor physical and mental health outcomes but also for impairments in future learning capacity and behavior.

Despite some marketing claims to the contrary, the ability of so called enrichment programs to enhance otherwise healthy brain development is not known.

While parents and policymakers might hope that playing Mozart recordings to newborns will produce epigenetic changes that enhance cognitive development, there is absolutely no scientific evidence that such exposure will shape the epigenome or enhance brain function.

Changing brains

What research has shown is that specific epigenetic modifications do occur in brain cells as cognitive skills like learning and memory develop, and that repeated activation of brain circuits dedicated to learning and memory through interaction with the environment, such as reciprocal serve and return interaction with adults, facilitates these positive epigenetic modifications.

We also know that sound maternal and fetal nutrition, combined with positive social-emotional support of children through their family and community environments, will reduce the likelihood of negative epigenetic modifications that increase the risk of later physical and mental health impairments.

The epigenome can be affected by positive experiences, such as supportive relationships and opportunities for learning, or negative influences, such as environmental toxins or stressful life circumstances, which leave a unique epigenetic signature on the genes.

These signatures can be temporary or permanent and both types affect how easily the genes are switched on or off. Recent research demonstrates that there may be ways to reverse certain negative changes and restore healthy functioning, but that takes a lot more effort, may not be successful at changing all aspects of the signatures, and is costly. Thus, the very best strategy is to support responsive relationships and reduce stress to build strong brains from the beginning, helping children grow up to be healthy, productive members of society.

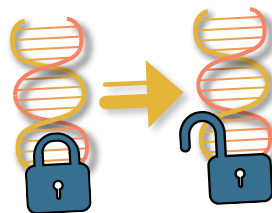
Reference

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/what-is-epigenetics-and-how-does-it-relate-to-child-development/>

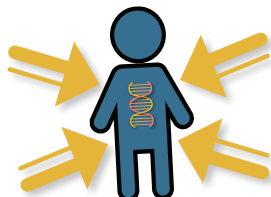
WHAT IS EPIGENETICS?

AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO CHILD DEVELOPMENT?

"Epigenetics" is an emerging area of scientific research that shows how environmental influences—children's experiences—actually affect the expression of their genes.



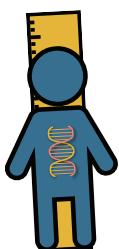
This means the old idea that genes are "set in stone" has been disproven. Nature vs. Nurture is no longer a debate. It's nearly always both!



During development, the DNA that makes up our genes accumulates chemical marks that determine how much or little of the genes is expressed. This collection of chemical marks is known as the "epigenome." The different experiences children have rearrange those chemical marks. This explains why genetically identical twins can exhibit different behaviors, skills, health, and achievement.



EPIGENETICS EXPLAINS HOW EARLY EXPERIENCES CAN HAVE LIFELONG IMPACTS.



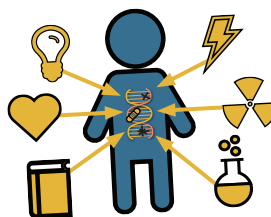
The genes children inherit from their biological parents provide information that guides their development. For example, how tall they could eventually become or the kind of temperament they could have.



When **EXPERIENCES** during development rearrange the epigenetic marks that govern gene expression, they can change whether and how genes release the information they carry.



Thus, the epigenome can be affected by positive experiences, such as supportive relationships and opportunities for learning...

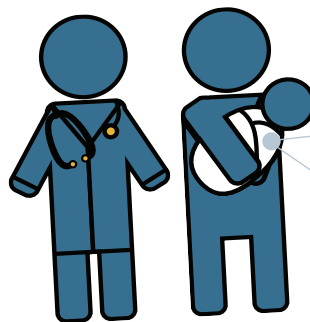


... or negative influences, such as environmental toxins or stressful life circumstances ...

... which leave a unique epigenetic "signature" on the genes. These signatures can be temporary or permanent and both types affect how easily the genes are switched on or off. Recent research demonstrates that there may be ways to reverse certain negative changes and restore healthy functioning. But the very best strategy is to support responsive relationships and reduce stress to build strong brains from the beginning.

YOUNG BRAINS ARE PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE TO EPIGENETIC CHANGES.

Experiences very early in life, when the brain is developing most rapidly, cause epigenetic adaptations that influence whether, when, and how genes release their instructions for building future capacity for health, skills, and resilience. That's why it's crucial to provide supportive and nurturing experiences for young children in the earliest years.



Services such as high-quality health care for all pregnant women, infants, and toddlers, as well as support for new parents and caregivers can—quite literally— affect the chemistry around children's genes. Supportive relationships and rich learning experiences generate positive epigenetic signatures that activate genetic potential.



So many questions we need to answer

As the saying goes 'children ask questions a wise person cannot answer'. However, we may need to be answering these questions as best we can. Journalist Jessica Willis talks to Professor Virginia Slaughter, Head of the School of Psychology and founder of the Early Cognitive Development Centre at the University of Queensland, about why children ask so many questions and the importance of answering.

"There is a really simple answer as to why young children ask so many questions – to learn!" Slaughter said. "They are trying to make sense of the world."

As a teacher, it can be wearying to try and answer every single question throughout the day especially as this number multiplies with every child.

However, it is important to remember that a student is asking questions not just to test your patience or seek attention.

Asking as learning

"The research on questioning really suggests that children are doing it simply because they are trying to work out how and why the world works," said Slaughter.

"Children are bombarded with information and they don't have frameworks for understanding the way adults do.

"When adults learn a new fact or a new relationship, it slots into a bigger framework that they have for the way, for instance, society or the physical world works.

"Children are still developing these bigger conceptual frameworks.

"Especially from the age of around three to about seven, children have quite good verbal ability, yet they don't have sophisticated causal explanatory frameworks for slotting in new facts, observations and bits of information that they hear, so instead they ask questions."

Properly answering questions is therefore extremely important as an engine of cognitive development.

Research has also shown that if their questions are not answered satisfactorily, children will simply keep asking.

"There was a study done a few years ago by The University of Michigan that analysed adult-child question and answer sequences from a really intense day-to-day recording of family conversations.

"They analysed the question-answer sequences in terms of whether answers given to children would be considered satisfactory from an adult perspective and they found that

if an answer was not satisfactory there was always a follow up question.

"It's better to give children what they need so they can build and add to their causal explanatory framework."

Emotive and important questions

This remains the same for awkward and uncomfortable questions, which can be extra tricky for teachers balancing their role when encountering questions that should be answered in the family domain.

"The main area of concern that no one wants to address is about death, followed closely by birth – so both sides of the lifecycle," Slaughter said.

"Children are aware when they hit a highly emotive and important topic. If you are avoidant, and don't tell them the truth or are confusing, you can potentially create a lot of anxiety."

However, as a teacher answering questions regarding topics such as birth, death, sex, gender, violence or illness can place you in a highly vulnerable position, especially taking into account any cultural or religious considerations.

Kay Harling, Director of Emerald Preschool and Community Kindergarten, believes it is important to exercise your professional judgement on the suitability of information given to young children.

"Giving truthful but appropriate answers is critical," Harling said.

"Keeping communication open with parents about topics that will be or have been discussed is also critical.

"Some things we do, such as call body parts by their proper name, are for child protection and safety and needs to be communicated to families at the beginning of the year.

"A good strategy to use is asking children why they have asked the question.

"Normally, it's for a completely different reason than expected and you can adjust your answer accordingly."

Teachers often perform a remarkable task of addressing such emotive and important topics with their students, but in doing so they should also be mindful to ensure they follow any workplace policies and procedures, or employer directives.

If these do not exist, our Union encourages members to work together to develop some as a chapter in collaboration with their employers and their committees.

**How do you answer children's questions?
Send your examples to bedrock@bedrock.ieu.asn.au**



ARE YOU A PODCAST PERSON?

Podcasts, the medium by which people can receive words of wisdom straight through their earbuds, appeal to many people, Lisa Bryant writes.

Here is a secret that I'll let *Bedrock* readers into as long as you each promise not to tell a soul. I am not one of those people.

How you reacted to this secret, depends if you know that I am one of the co-hosts, along with Liam McNicholas and Leanne Gibbs, of Australia's longest running early education podcast. It's clocked up 100 episodes since it started three years ago.

If you know about the podcast or are a regular listener of *The Early Education Show*, it must seem weird. How can someone who publishes a podcast every week not enjoy listening to them? You know that now debunked theory that some of us are visual learners, some are kinaesthetic and some are auditory? I reckon part of it must be true because auditory learning has never worked for me – I stop paying attention after the first sentence.

But luckily there are people who love listening to podcasts! The *Early Education Show* has been downloaded over 80,000 times, so we must be doing something right.

So what is the podcast about?

Essentially in every episode Liam, Leanne and I discuss a different topic about the policy and politics of young children and early learning in Australia. We also have Patreon* only episodes where Liam is doing an element by element explainer of the National Quality Standard.

Being a podcaster is a wonderful, but sometimes strange, experience. People can listen to a podcast whenever it suits them, and believe me they do. We have an insomniac listener who we apparently keep company in the early hours. Another listener has us playing when she cooks dinner. Her husband is now becoming an expert on early education policy. Another uses us to get her through her long commute every Friday morning. We even have listeners who play us during their showers!

Where and when people listen to podcasts creates a strange intimacy between listeners and hosts. I'll never forget the time I rang a bureaucrat and when she heard my voice she got way too excited saying "It's the voice from the podcast, but it's... it's interactive!"

The *Conversation* website named *The Early Education Show* as one of the eight podcasts people should listen to in 2017. They said it was "an

engaging and informative podcast for everyone with an interest in early childhood education and care policies, news and practices in Australia and beyond. The presenters are passionate and knowledgeable, bringing diverse perspectives and just the right amount of disagreement, self-deprecation, irony and humour."

Of course not everyone likes us. One listener wrote "I could not believe how much the presenters waffle on with this inane banter and how little they actually present the information".

Why not take a listen and see if you like our banter or not? Not sure how to listen to a podcast? Go to www.earlyeducationshow.com/newtopodcasts for a really simple guide.

The best thing about podcasts, apart from the fact you can listen to them whenever and wherever you want, is that they are free!

** A Patreon is someone who for reasons known only to themselves voluntarily donates money to the show in recognition of the value of the content we are creating.*

Your questions answered

Danielle Wilson is an industrial officer for IEUA-QNT and Lisa James is an organiser for the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch. They answer your industrial and legal questions as they relate to state laws and regulations.



Dear Danielle

I am an assistant in a Kindergarten and my director has told me the committee require me to clean the toilets every morning and afternoon. I have been in this role for five years, and while I do assist with emergency clean ups, prior to Christmas we had always had a contract cleaner come to do the regular cleaning of the toilets for our children. It is not written in my position description that I am required to do this.

Can the committee make me clean the toilets regularly like this?

Petra



Dear Petra

That is an unusual situation, but we have had instances where committees distribute duties like cleaning to their staff in an effort to save money.

Unless you are employed as a cleaner and have this type of regular cleaning written into your position description, you cannot be expected to carry out regular cleaning. You have already noted you undertake emergency cleaning as needed and this is necessary to ensure the duty of care to the children and staff is maintained. It is not uncommon to see reference to emergency

cleaning in an assistant's position descriptions. However, regular cleaning needs to be done by people specifically employed to clean.

If you continue to have this issue, please contact our office for further advice.

Danielle

Dear Lisa

I have resigned from my position as an early childhood teacher but am working as a casual teacher at the same centre. I have been informed that the centre will not pay out my long service leave because I am working casually for them. What should I do?

Jane



Dear Jane

Long service leave is accrued for all unbroken service with an employer (other than leave without pay) from the date of commencement of employment. The *Long Service Leave Act 1955* states: 11 (a) "service of a worker with an employer means continuous service, whether on a permanent, casual, part time or any other basis, under one or more contracts of employment". Although you have resigned from your permanent position, as you are working casually without at least a two month break in your employment your long service leave will continue to accrue with that employer. If you would like your accrued leave to be paid out (provided that you have sufficient years of service) you

will need to resign from your employment as a casual, have a break of at least two months and you can then undertake casual employment with the same employer as a new employee.

Lisa

BEDROCK GIVEAWAYS

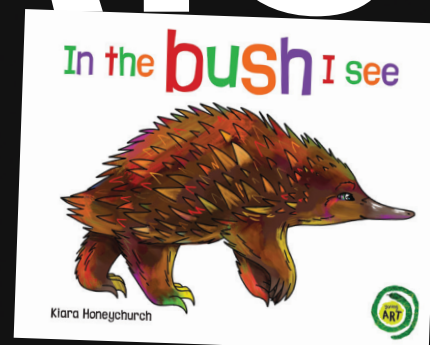
In the Bush I See

Author and Illustrator: Kiara Honeychurch

Publisher: Magabala Books

Three copies to give away

In the Bush I See is a playful ensemble of Australian creatures, and an exciting illustrative debut from teenage artist, Kiara Honeychurch. Hailing from Tasmania, Kiara is inspired by the bush creatures she encounters in her rural home out of Hobart. With bold and sophisticated pops of colour, Kiara unleashes the beauty and character of each creature and reimagines its unpredictable tones in a changing light from sunrise to sunset. Kiara's warm and creative understanding of the animals she sees is a lively showcase of her talent. This board book for early childhood will capture the hearts of young readers and readers young at heart.



First Words Spanish

Art by Andy Mansfield **and** Sebastien Iwohn

Publisher: Lonely Planet Kids

Three copies to give away

This handy board book is perfect for introducing very young children to the Spanish language. It features 12 words to learn – from sun and shoes to beach and book. Each word is accompanied with a beautiful illustration and pronunciation guide to make the vocabulary fun and easy to learn.

And be sure to visit Lonely Planet's First Words website, where you can use a free audio pronunciation guide to hear each word spoken out loud.



My Australia

Author: Julie Murphy

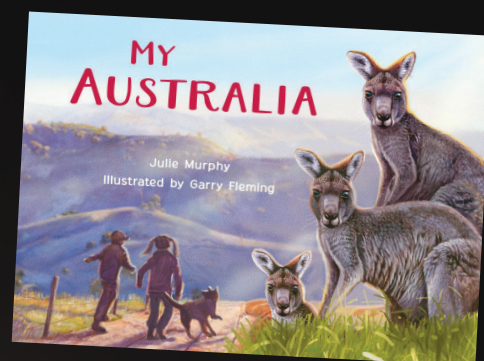
Illustrator: Garry Fleming

Publisher: NLA Publishing

Three copies to give away

My Australia is a poetic journey across the Australian landscape. Celebrating both the ancient and modern Australia, the book invites readers to travel across the delights of our continent – from dry deserts to lush rainforests, from high mountains to stormy seashores, from winding rivers to fertile swamplands – all the magical places that are my Australia.

With colourful illustrations by Garry Fleming, Julie Murphy's story is beautifully simple, and sure to excite young readers, encouraging a greater awareness and appreciation of our precious and irreplaceable natural places.



Email entries to giveaways@ieu.asn.au with the giveaway you are entering in the subject line and your name, membership number and address in the body of the email. All entries to be received by 19 July 2019.

YOU ARE YOUR BIGGEST ASSET.



You may have insurance on your car, your house and even your mobile phone.

But your ability to earn a living is one of your most precious assets. And if disaster strikes, it's the one that could result in the biggest financial loss. *Isn't that worth protecting?*

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