

BEDROCK

issue 3 | Vol 26 | 2021



**Strong bodies
strong minds** p8

Resilient teachers supporting resilient children p18

Uluru Statement from the Heart

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. *This is the torment of our powerlessness.*

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a *rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle*. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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TERMINOLOGY
The union acknowledges regional
differences in some terms. Please
bear these in mind as you read.

QNT
Kindergarten
NSW/ACT
Preschool/Early childhood centre



Member contribution recognised 10

Queensland kindergarten teacher honoured for 30 years of
dedication to early childhood education sector

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Thank you for your service

Despite the advance of the highly transmissible Delta strain of COVID-19, parents and carers – in particular essential workers like nurses, cleaners, doctors and supermarket staff – have been able to continue working thanks to your efforts.

Early learning centres and preschools have remained open every day during this current wave of the pandemic. Ironically, for much of this time you were not classified as essential workers and given priority access to vaccines.

The IEU fought hard for all teachers and educators to be given priority access to vaccination. However, at *Bedrock* deadline, only those in 'hotspots' in Sydney and all of Queensland had priority access to vaccination.

Day after day, you have turned up for work, putting your own families at risk, to provide the best service you can for the children in your care. Wearing a mask all day is a difficult thing when caring for very young children, but you continue without complaint.

We at the IEU would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your selfless and brave service.

We hope you can find five minutes in your day to relax and enjoy this latest edition of *Bedrock*.

Eating disorders are a serious issue mainly associated with teenagers and adults. But on p8 we explain how the seeds of unhealthy eating can start at a young age, and we suggest some strategies to counteract this.

We pay tribute to some of our longest serving and most loyal IEU members, devoted to the education of young children across the decades. Meet the two Rhondas on p10-11.

For something completely different, check out Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, p12 and learn more about dealing with bullying on p14.

Find our regular columns like Your Questions Answered in this issue, and you can go into the draw to win a book on p23.

Terry Burke
IEU-QNT Secretary

Mark Northam
IEUA NSW/ACT Secretary

BEDROCK

UPFRONT



Call for two years of universal preschool

Thrive by Five has backed unions' call for National Cabinet to prioritise investment in two years of preschool for all Australian children.

"This is an important message for the nation's leaders from Australia's public teachers, principals and education support staff," Thrive by Five CEO Jay Weatherill said.

"The evidence is overwhelming. Two years of high-quality, play based learning at preschool in the years before children start school helps give children a jump start into their education.

"The Federal Government made that commitment for four-year-olds in the May Budget and we have already seen leadership from some states and territories to make preschool available for three-year-olds as well.

"Now it's time to make this a priority for the National Cabinet, so that all children in every state and territory can benefit."

Thrive by Five is also calling for investment in two years of preschool as part of a five-point plan for early learning reform for National Cabinet, including:

- a new federal-state agreement to deliver universal three-year-old preschool across the country to match the agreement in place for four-year-old preschool
- lifting the childcare subsidy to 95 percent for all children and set agreed fee caps
- making the childcare subsidy available to all children regardless of the service type and the income or work status of their parents
- workforce planning for a universal system and fund appropriate pay and conditions for teachers and educators to end the problem of skill shortages, high vacancy rates and high staff turnover rates across the sector.

To achieve these outcomes, we ask that early education and childcare become a part of the National Cabinet reform agenda to deal with complexities of the system and build a true national universal system.

Conference postponed

The IEUA NSW/ACT Early Childhood Conference, which was planned for 7 August, has been cancelled with a heavy heart due to the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown in Sydney. Anyone who booked for the conference should have received their refund by now. However, it is hoped the conference can be revived in 2022, with many of the same presenters attending. Watch this space!



Closing the gap

The Federal Government will invest \$120 million to improve the lives of thousands of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through better access to quality early childhood education. The package includes:

- \$81.8 million to expand the Connected Beginnings program in 27 new sites, helping to ensure an additional 8550 children are safe, healthy, and ready to start school by the age of five
- \$29.8 million to expand the Community Child Care Fund Restricted Program and fund up to 20 additional mostly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander-run services in remote communities, benefitting around 3500 children
- \$9 million to expand the Early Years Education Program to create four new replication sites in Queensland and Victoria, to connect highly disadvantaged children with early childhood services and targeted health, nutrition and mental health services
- \$1.9 million to trial a new early learning teaching model to strengthen literacy and numeracy through explicit instruction, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in two early learning centres.

Great start

A Great Start to Kindy is a new pilot program being rolled out across select Queensland kindergartens in rural and remote areas.

It will provide three-year-olds from identified groups with a supportive pre-kindy program in the year before they begin kindergarten.

Participating children will have free or low cost access to inclusive, flexible and family-centred early learning programs, run by qualified early childhood education teachers.

A Great Start to Kindergarten aims to enhance children's learning, development and wellbeing while strengthening the confidence and capability of families to support their children to successfully transition to an approved kindergarten program.

IEU-QNT Senior Industrial Officer John Spriggs said our union strongly supports the provision of quality early childhood education for three-year-olds, something we have repeatedly called for as part of the ongoing Fund Our Future campaign.

"The new pilot program A Great Start to Kindergarten is a positive step, although we believe Universal Access funding should be permanently extended and broadened to include all three-year-olds," John said.

"For this program to be successful, it must be appropriately funded and resourced with consideration for the practical demands on staff and kindergartens to facilitate the program," he said.



Queensland 'Taken to Teach' expiring December

IEU-QNT members should be aware that several workforce transitional provisions are expiring at the end of this year, particularly Regulation 242: Persons taken to be early childhood teachers (ECTs) – Recognises a person who is actively working towards their ECT qualification as an ECT, commonly referred to as 'Taken to Teach'.

Once this regulation expires an employee will need to have completed their early childhood teacher (ECT) qualification to be considered a qualified ECT.

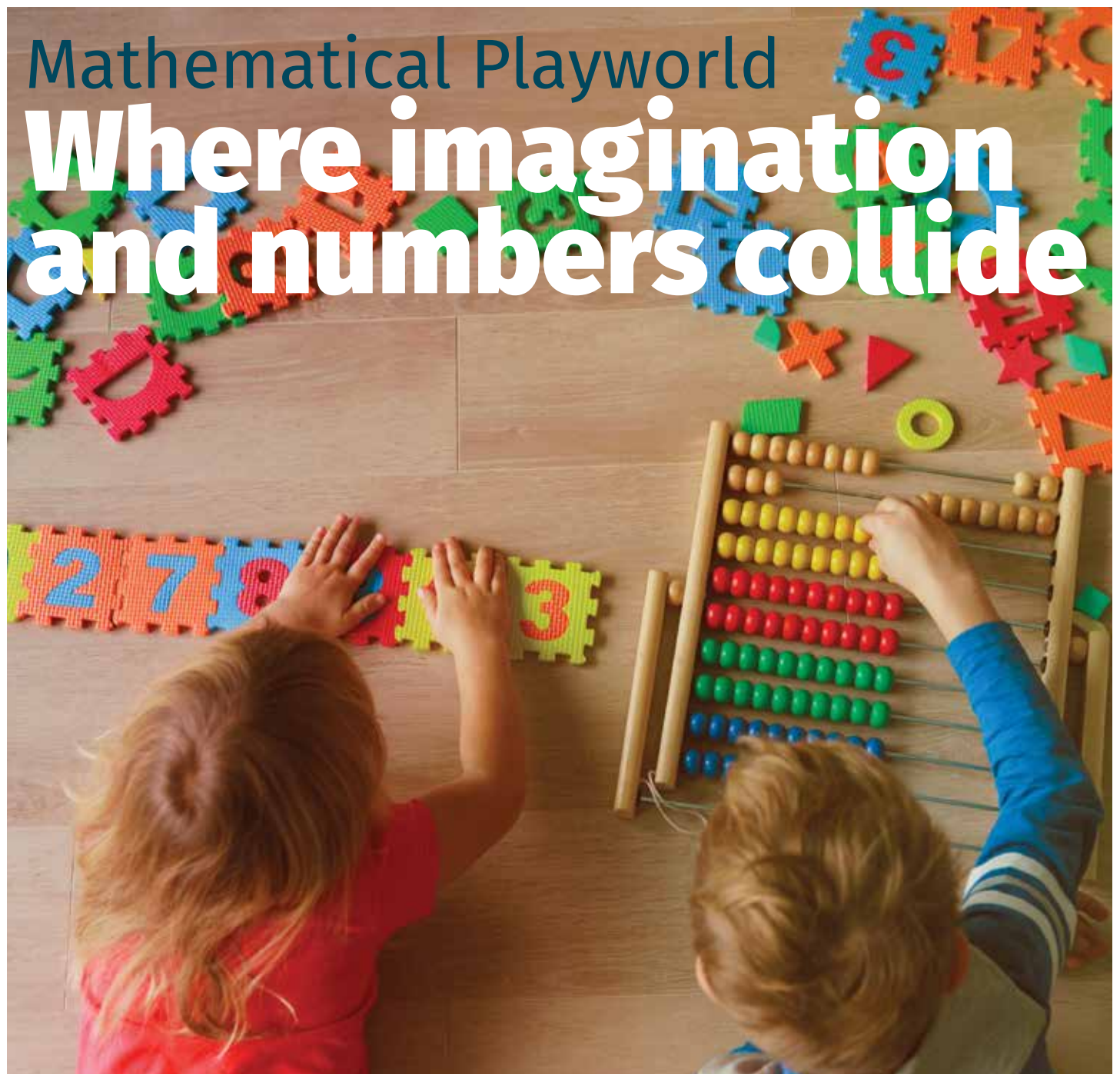
The Queensland Department of Education has advised that services need to ensure they are compliant from 1 January 2022.

Members can check whether their qualifications are part of the National Quality Framework NQF approved list via the ACECQA website: bit.ly/2VLpojr

More information about the transitional arrangements including Frequently Asked Questions can be found here: bit.ly/3xEch0K

Regulation 242 does not apply in Victoria or if you are working in a centre-based service educating and caring for 30 or more children preschool age or under in NSW.

It is also scheduled to expire in the ACT, NSW, Northern Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia on 31 December 2023.



A new pedagogical approach, designed by researchers from Monash University, sheds light on how to effectively support young children's maths learning through a play-based program, writes journalist Emily Campbell.

Early childhood education experts agree children should enter their formal schooling years with a solid foundation of mathematical content knowledge.

This begs the question: how can kindergarten teachers make maths and problem solving more engaging for young children, who learn best through play?

Mathematical Playworld

Based on the design of Laureate Professor Marilyn Fleer's revolutionary Conceptual PlayWorld, the

Mathematical Playworld aims to create the motivating conditions to support children's mathematical problem solving meaningfully, through imaginative play.

Conducted over a seven-month period, the study was based on observations of children and teachers interacting with the Mathematical Playworld program in an early childhood education setting.

According to the researchers who designed it, Dr Liang Li and Dr Leigh Disney, the pilot program was a resounding success.

"We found the Mathematical Playworld really allowed teachers to tap into what children enjoy and harness that real creativity that children bring, yet also allowed them to intentionally teach mathematics, in a play-based way," said Dr Disney.

"It begins with a selected story, whereby children and adults build emotional connections with story characters before they collectively enter the Playworld.

"Adults adopt active co-player roles of being characters and dramatise the emotionally charged problem for children and adults to collectively solve," the researchers wrote.

Designing an emotionally charged maths problem

When designing the particular Mathematical Playworld observed for the pilot study, the kindergarten teachers began by selecting a story book the children were familiar with, *Room on a Broom* (Donaldson, 2003), which was a class favourite.

"The teachers believed the story context would motivate the children,

whilst also linking closely to mathematical concepts, such as ‘how much room on the broom?’” said Dr Li.

As teachers and children all got into character as either dogs, frogs or others, the story evolved and the imaginary Mathematical Playworld came alive.

The teachers then dramatised an emotionally charged maths problem in the context of the story: at the main character’s birthday party, dogs could not sit next to other dogs, only frogs.

“Both teachers used their play role to support the children’s interest in the unknown and facilitate a common understanding and meaning making about why two dogs could not sit together,” the researchers wrote.

When teachers are involved in the collective Playworld, children are actively engaged in a meaningful learning process, which the researchers say helps develop mathematical problem-solving abilities.

“Teachers play a pivotal role as active co-players and co-creators engaging in the sustained, shared, collective, imaginary situation with the children,” Dr Li said.

Making maths magical

Dr Disney said the Mathematical Playworld model is flexible and adaptable, meaning imagination is the only limit.

“For example, the teacher might decide to do a lesson on units of measurement, so creates a problem within the imaginative storyline that motivates the children to develop an understanding of measurements,” he said.

“With that body of knowledge behind them, the teacher will then go in knowing what they’d like to teach but building that mathematical conceptual knowledge so that when the children are immersed in the play situation, then they can extend the children however they need.

“If the children are struggling with the maths concept, the teacher can bring it down to that level, but if the children are really flourishing in terms of solving the problem, then they can extend those children. It’s a very flexible and reactive way teachers can take the child at their current level and then support the child in the ways they see fit.

“It’s not just the child by themselves either, they’re within that group social situation, working, learning and having fun with their peers,” he said.

Powerful pedagogy

Recent literature demonstrates the Mathematical Playworld approach is a particularly effective pedagogical practice to encourage and support children’s problem solving during collective play (Fleer, 2017) whilst transforming children’s engagement from passive to active (Rainio, 2010) and as a transformative activity for children and adults (Ferholt, 2009).

This aligns with what is widely understood by early childhood teachers, that imaginative play is the leading activity for preschool aged children which determines their development (Vygotsky, 1966).

“Further, the Mathematical Playworld contributes to understanding young children’s mathematical problem-solving processes in the collective imaginary situation and highlighted the essential role of teachers’ involvement in the learning,” Dr Li said.

“Teachers play a pivotal role as active co-players and co-creators engaging in the sustained, shared, collective, imaginary situation with the children.”

Problem-solving an important skill

Existing studies confirm young children do have the potential and ability to grasp mathematical concepts.

“Early mathematics learning is a powerful predictor of children’s mathematics achievement in school and previous studies have shown that young children have significant capacities to learn and master

mathematical concepts at a very early age,” Dr Li said.

With career backgrounds in the early childhood education sector, the researchers said the study was motivated by their own classroom observations and experiences, as well as a belief that children should have a sense of ownership in their learning.

Dr Disney said fundamentally, mathematics in early childhood should focus on the process of problem solving rather than drill and practice of mathematical skills.

“From a push-down perspective, often maths is seen as something that needs to be taught in work sheets or in separate activities, rather than tapping into the creative energy that children already possess.

“Meaningful maths learning in preschool requires a frame where children are part of the learning process as active and engaged learners and where teachers can embed teaching practices in play.

“We find it a really magical process for teachers to be able to engage in that and transfer that intentional teaching to support young children as they transition from preschool to the school environment,” he said.

Next steps

Dr Leigh and Dr Disney are continuing their work alongside Laureate Professor Fleer as part of the Conceptual PlayLab research team, where they continue to ‘test ground-breaking play-based models for teaching STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) to young children.’

“We’ve seen the Mathematical Playworld model work and how great it is for teachers, so we’re in that process of thinking how we can move this forward to support young mathematicians to transition to school and then later on to become problem solvers,” said Dr Disney.

To find out more about the Conceptual PlayLab team and to stay updated on their research endeavours visit www.monash.edu/education/research/projects/conceptual-playlab

Members with an interest in the Mathematical Playworld are encouraged to read the full study by Disney and Leigh.

Reference

Li, L, Disney, L *Young children’s mathematical problem solving and thinking in a playworld*. Math Ed Res J (2021). <https://bit.ly/3iDA8K2>

STRONG bodies STRONG minds

Trigger warning: this article discusses body image and eating disorders in young children.

We want young children to grow up with strong, active and happy bodies and minds, writes journalist Jessica Willis.

Unfortunately, we are seeing a rise in children and adolescents suffering from body dissatisfaction.

As many as 50 percent of pre-adolescent girls, and an increasing number of pre-adolescent boys, are reporting a “desire for a more lean and muscular body”, according to the Butterfly Foundation, an organisation that provides support for people with eating disorders and body image issues.

Body dissatisfaction is therefore a significant issue as it is an important risk factor for negative physical, mental and social outcomes, including unhealthy dieting and muscle building behaviours, depression, anxiety and eating disorders.

Worryingly, greater body concerns from ages five and seven have been shown to predict dieting by nine.

The good news is that teachers, especially in early childhood education, can help foster positive foundations for body satisfaction and healthy behaviours, including supporting children to develop skills to feel confident in their bodies, building resilience and fostering positive peer relationships.

Weight stereotypes start early

Dr Stephanie Damiano is the manager of Butterfly Body Bright, a new program for primary school students tackling body image from an evidence and strengths-based approach.

She is also an honorary research fellow at La Trobe University, doing work in understanding the development of body image in young children and the associated factors that contribute to children’s body image.

Dr Damiano said early childhood education settings are equally as important in setting up good perceptions of body image as primary or high school settings.

“What we understand in young children, is that the foundations for body image are set quite early in life and so we’re starting to see that, in the early childhood education years, children get a sense of their body image and start to see their body a bit differently than they did prior to the ages of three or four,” she said.

While there isn’t consistent research finding a high degree of body dissatisfaction within that age group, Dr Damiano said what is consistent across the global research in early childhood is the development of weight stereotypes.

“A decent proportion of three-to-four-year-olds have strong attitudes around body sizes and what we tend to see is that they attribute positive qualities to people with thinner bodies and negative qualities to people with larger bodies,” she said.

“When we interview young children around this it shows a clear indication of how they then might treat peers as a result of these weight stereotypes as well.

“For example, quite a significant proportion say they wouldn’t invite a larger child to their birthday party or they would perceive an average-sized or thinner-sized child as being good and friendly and somebody they would want to be friends with,” she said.

Peers have an essential role in shaping how children feel about their own body and the bodies of others, and weight stereotypes can significantly impact relationships moving into primary school.

Dr Damiano said that the more confident, happy and satisfied a child is in their body, the more likely they are to engage in life and participate in activities inside and outside the classroom, as well as look after their body.

“Whereas when they’re feeling dissatisfied with their body, they’re more likely to engage in unhelpful behaviours, such as less physical activity and restrictive eating, and have poorer self-esteem,” she said.

“The flow-on effect is quite significant and then obviously body dissatisfaction is one of the leading risk factors for an eating disorder.”

Building confidence in strengths

There are some positive ways school communities can approach these topics to help young children feel good in their body and look after it in a way that will serve them well. Dr Damiano said an effective and strengths-based approach that teachers can implement is praising students based on their personal qualities and strengths.

“Praise them for the way they solve a problem, praise them for the way they’re thinking about something or how clever they are or how much they enjoy doing something or how they enjoy moving their body, rather than praising them for their appearance.”

She said this can be difficult because, as a society, we are trained to praise people on the way they look; however, we don’t want children to learn that this is the most important part of their identity.

Another positive thing teachers and assistants can do is be mindful about the language they use regarding food and bodies.

“Try not to label foods as good or bad, or healthy or unhealthy, or refer to foods as junk food or treats.

“Instead, label food for what it is; so, fruits or vegetables or lollies or chips – just really try to stick to what a food actually is rather than putting an umbrella term on it.

“One of the things we include in Butterfly Body Bright in our healthy eating component of the program, which also is very relevant for the preschool years, is really about promoting a natural curiosity about food in kids.



**DID YOU KNOW
THAT CHILDHOOD
IS A CRITICAL
PERIOD FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF
BODY IMAGE?**



“Quite a significant proportion say they wouldn’t invite a larger child to their birthday party.”



“Getting children to explore and be curious around the texture and taste and sound of foods, really connecting that to their senses.

Lunchbox policing unhelpful

In the same vein, lunchbox policing can also be unhelpful. Dr Damiano said trying to keep an open mind and non-judgement around lunchboxes is important.

“Lunchbox policing is very controversial, and I can appreciate why it’s in place in some settings; however, what we would promote is intuitive eating which is encouraging children to eat what their body feels like eating.

“You provide them with the options – or their parents provide them with options – and then it’s up to them what, and how much they eat in their lunchbox which is really tricky and it’s a new way of thinking about eating.”

She suggests redirecting comments about food and lunchboxes made from other children.

“Children tend to comment on what, ‘so-and-so has’. A good way to respond would be ‘well you’ve got what you’ve got in your lunchbox and they’ve got what they’ve got and we all like to eat different things and that’s okay,’” she explained.

Zero tolerance to bullying

Perhaps one of the best strategies to implement is a zero-tolerance policy to bullying or teasing.

“Having a no-tolerance to any appearance-based teasing or negative comments about appearance is especially relevant to early childhood education settings,” Dr Damiano said.

“This is because we know that has such a significant impact on how children feel about themselves.

“If there’s the opportunity to add to an already existing teasing or bullying policy so that it includes anything about appearance – teachers should do this,” she said.

When talking about bodies, we should try to avoid emphasising or implying one body is better than another because of how it looks or what that person eats.

“Take an inclusive approach; teach children to celebrate differences in who they are and what they like doing, for example, jumping, running, skipping, rather than what they look like,” she said.

Helpful resources

Dr Damiano shared some great resources on body image and eating disorders for early childhood education settings. These include:

The Confident Body, Confident Child website (www.confidentbody.net) – while this website is targeted towards parents, there is some great information that teachers will also find useful.

The Curious Nutritionist (a nutritionist and teacher) has tips for teachers on managing lunchbox policing (www.thecuriousnutritionist.com.au/childs-teacher-is-the-lunch-box-police/ and www.thecuriousnutritionist.com.au/the-solution-to-healthy-eating-without-lunch-box-policing)

The Butterfly Body Bright website has a fact sheet on ‘Eating disorders in children’ as well as advice for when you are concerned about the body image, eating, and/or physical activity attitudes in children. www.butterflybodybright.org.au



Queensland Award recognises 30-year member's contribution

Rhonda Murphy regularly plays piano and guitar for her class

Rhonda Murphy's extraordinary contribution to early childhood education has been recognised with a 2021 Queensland Day Award, writes journalist Emily Campbell.

Adored by her local Cannon Hill community and having educated multiple generations of the same families, Rhonda's dedication and contribution to the early childhood education sector is hard to match.

After learning she had received 11 nominations from community members for the award, Rhonda said she felt honoured, although it was completely unexpected.

"I was absolutely blindsided to be honest, but I was so touched by everybody's kind words – it was so lovely," Rhonda said.

Beginning her teaching career in 1981, Rhonda said she was drawn to the profession because she enjoyed spending time with her younger family members and enjoyed the early childhood education age group.

"It's such a great age because the children are so ready to learn and they're like sponges," she said.

"They're so interested in everything and have a natural curiosity about learning."

Engaged and enthusiastic learners

Rhonda was first employed at Canossa Kindergarten in Coorparoo, before moving to Cannon Hill Kindergarten in 1985, where she has worked ever since.

"My favourite aspect of the job is the young children, who are so engaged in what they are learning," Rhonda said.

"I love watching them blossom into unique, capable and happy little individuals."

Developmentally, Rhonda said she notices a big difference throughout the time she is with the children and noted one of the biggest changes she has witnessed during her career has been the growth of technology and its uptake in homes.

"You can see so much happening between the beginning and the end of their kindergarten journey, and it's often when the new cohort of children come in next year that I'm reminded of how far they have come."

Union gives staff a voice

Having been an IEU member for 33 years, Rhonda believes unionism is vital for those working in the early childhood education sector and acknowledges the IEU has been instrumental in giving early childhood teachers a voice and making a difference when it comes to working conditions.

"I joined the IEU very early on in my career as a beginning teacher, because it gives you solidarity, being part of a group of like-minded individuals," Rhonda said.

"Furthermore, members benefit from the ongoing advocacy for those working in the ECE sector, ensuring there is parity between teachers like myself working in the private sector and those in the state sector.

"It's also reassuring to be able to rely on the IEU in terms of industrial advice, legal support and indemnity insurance if it's ever needed," she said.

A huge advocate for Universal Access funding for kindergartens, Rhonda said all members should support our union's Fund Our Future campaign, which would help ensure every Australian child gets an optimal start in life.

"It's so important because it ensures the experience of attending kindergarten is open to as many young children as possible, especially when you consider all of the long-term benefits studies have proven can be acquired from engaging in a quality early childhood education program," she said.

A humble leader

Rhonda expressed her sincere gratitude to Di Farmer, Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development, who presented her with the award and all those who nominated her.

"Receiving the award will remain one of my most treasured memories of my teaching career," Rhonda said.

"The privilege has been mine to work for so long as part of the Cannon Hill community.

"It really meant a lot, because everybody gets to a stage in their life where they wonder if they have made a difference, so it's nice to consider that people think I have," she said.

Still a passionate teacher after 45 years in the profession

Rhonda's 40-year IEU membership presentation with IEUA NSW/ACT Organiser Lubna Haddad



Kellyville Preschool Director Rhonda Holland was recently honoured for her 40 years of loyal IEU membership. Despite almost 45 years in the early childhood profession, Rhonda has lost none of her passion for teaching, learning and children, writes journalist Sue Osborne.

She started her career at a new long day care centre in western Sydney in 1977 and said the experience of being part of a team establishing a new service was invaluable.

"I was really grateful to have long day care experience early in my career," Rhonda said.

After four years she moved to a very different centre in Sydney's north shore, but it was when she started at Kellyville Preschool in 1982 that her commitment to community-based education really took hold.

"The centre had been set up by community members and families who wanted quality early education for their children. Having connection to the community and the families in a not-for-profit environment was something I loved straight away," she said.

She enjoyed working closely with other staff as a teaching director to honour the community's wishes.

"The area was semi-rural at that time, and our goal was to serve the varied community. It was easy to find a sense of purpose."

Over the years Kellyville Preschool has grown with its community, which has evolved from semi-rural to urban. Four staff at the preschool has become 13.

Rhonda is now an office-based director, but for many years she was a passionate teacher.

Honouring children

"I am so grateful to have been a teacher, striving in my career to understand how to honour children, to listen more and speak less, to understand and learn with them, rather than using a deficit model and trying to 'fill them up'."

Rhonda said the changing face of Kellyville has provided her with the challenges and variety to maintain her enthusiasm and determination over the years. As well as the urban growth, the centre has become more multicultural, and Rhonda has invested in re-educating herself, and as director, working with her staff and families to adapt and respond to the children in their care.

Only this year, new multicultural garden spaces were added to the yard, using Department of Environment funding, to represent the diversity of the service's community.

As well as her teaching degree, Rhonda has a counselling diploma which she has found invaluable in working with families and children, as well as colleagues.

Another significant change was the introduction of the National Quality Framework, which she said motivated her as a leader.

"My growth came from leading through change, it was never stagnant moving through it with the community and staff."

Nowadays, as children she taught are bringing their children back to preschool, the community spirit remains strong.

She appreciates the union because of the advocacy work that it does on behalf of early childhood teachers.

"I'm committed to gaining respect for early childhood teachers from the community, and I willingly support the work the union does in that field."

One of the negative changes Rhonda has witnessed in her long career has been the deterioration of pay and conditions in the sector. When she started out in the 1970s pay for early childhood teachers in NSW was equivalent to school teachers. She would like to see that imbalance redressed.



Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Would you like to help children receive regular age-appropriate books for free?

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Australia is a book gifting program "devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere" according to the website.

Each month, enrolled children receive a high-quality, age-appropriate book by post, free of charge. Children receive books from birth to age five.

Centres or preschools can become Local Champions and enrol children in the program. In 2013, a joint effort between Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and the United Way began. The partnership brought the program to Australia in 2014 making it the fourth nation and third continent to launch the Imagination Library.

According to Dolly Parton's website, towns such as Doomadgee in Queensland are seeing "marked improvements" in school readiness among children who have received Imagination Library books.

How it works

Each month, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library sends a book to all registered children, addressed to them, at no cost to the child's family.

Countless parents have shared how excited their child is when their new book arrives each month. Many groups and individuals work hard behind the

scenes to make that special moment possible for each child.

The Imagination Library provides the infrastructure of the core program, including managing the secure central database for the Book Order System and coordinating book selections and wholesale purchasing. It also incurs the cost of the program's administrative expenses and coordinates the monthly mailings.

Local Champions

The Imagination Library partners with Local Champions who help bring the program to cities, towns and communities around the world. Local Champions can be businesses, school districts, small or large organisations, or simply individuals who share in the mission and purpose of the Imagination Library.

Local Champions are responsible for enrolling children who live within the geographical area where they are offering the program. They promote their local programs online and at events. While the Imagination Library negotiates wholesale pricing for the books, Local Champions secure funds to cover costs. Books are free to enrolled children because their Local Champion takes care of the cost of books and shipping fees.

In a letter on her website, Dolly Parton writes: "Before he passed away, my Daddy told me the Imagination Library was probably the most

important thing I had ever done. I can't tell you how much that meant to me because I created the Imagination Library as a tribute to my Daddy.

"He was the smartest man I have ever known but I know in my heart his inability to read probably kept him from fulfilling all of his dreams.

"Inspiring kids to love to read became my mission. In the beginning, my hope was simply to inspire the children in my home county but here we are today with a worldwide program that gives a book a month to well over 1 million children.

"Of course, I have not done this alone. The real heroes of our story are the thousands of local organizations who have embraced my dream and made it their own. They raise millions of dollars each year and wake up every day with a passion to make sure their kids have every opportunity to succeed.

"It's been quite a journey, but we have so much more left to do. I would love for your community to join our family so please take the time to explore our website. Let's share this dream that all children should grow up in a home full of books.

"The first step is always the hardest, but you'll never know unless you try."

Details: imaginationlibrary.com/au



Power of shared reading in vocabulary development

Early childhood education experts and researchers agree: vocabulary development is foundational to young children's language and literacy learning, journalist Emily Campbell writes.

Typically, children enter formal schooling with an estimated vocabulary of between 2300 and 4700 root words (Biemiller, 2009 as cited in Anderson & Anderson, 2021).

However, there tends to be a significant gap in the vocabularies of young children from immigrant families and families living in 'vulnerable' communities, or English language learners who speak another language at home, and those for whom English is the first language (Graves et al., 2013; Mancilla-Martinez & Leseaux, 2011 as cited in Anderson & Anderson, 2021).

Shared reading a rich opportunity

Researchers Ann Anderson and Jim Anderson from the University of British Columbia in Canada sought to explore how parents of kindergarten-aged students in these vulnerable families helped their children develop and improve their English vocabularies.

The authors wanted to see how parents and caregivers engage in shared book reading time with the children, given its potential as a rich opportunity for word learning and concept development (Anderson & Anderson, 2021).

A wealth of research exists to support the power of interactive shared reading, which is shown to greatly benefit children's vocabulary development, especially when adults draw attention to unknown words and provide explanations in context.

The fundamental question guiding their study was to discover the best strategies to support young children's vocabulary development. How should an immigrant father, for whom English is a second language, use shared reading time with his preschool daughter?

Strategies to enhance shared reading

The researchers observed shared reading sessions between Mr Lee, a recent immigrant to Canada from Malaysia, and his four-year-old daughter Susan, as he read a fiction and a non-fiction book to her.

Although the family spoke Malay and English at home, English was the spoken language at Susan's preschool.

Mr Lee used several strategies when engaging in shared reading time with Susan, which the researchers described as 'exemplary', given he had not undergone any formal reading training.

The four main strategies identified by the researchers were observed and categorised as:

- verbal explanations
- pointing to the relevant illustration associated with the verbal explanation
- referencing the child's previous life experiences, and
- using demonstration and gestures.

According to the researchers, the above strategies are examples of Mr Lee using multi-modality (Kress, 2010 as cited in Anderson & Anderson, 2021) in shared reading, a theory where meaning is conveyed through different modes within a communication event.

"In shared book reading, the written text, the illustrations or pictures, the reader's intonation, gestures and so forth work in synergy as participants construct meaning," they wrote.

Children from diverse backgrounds benefit

Anderson and Anderson's study is corroborated by that of Ewers and Brownson (1999) who found that kindergarten children's vocabulary learning increased when the reader drew attention to unknown words compared to when the reader provided no explanation of these words.

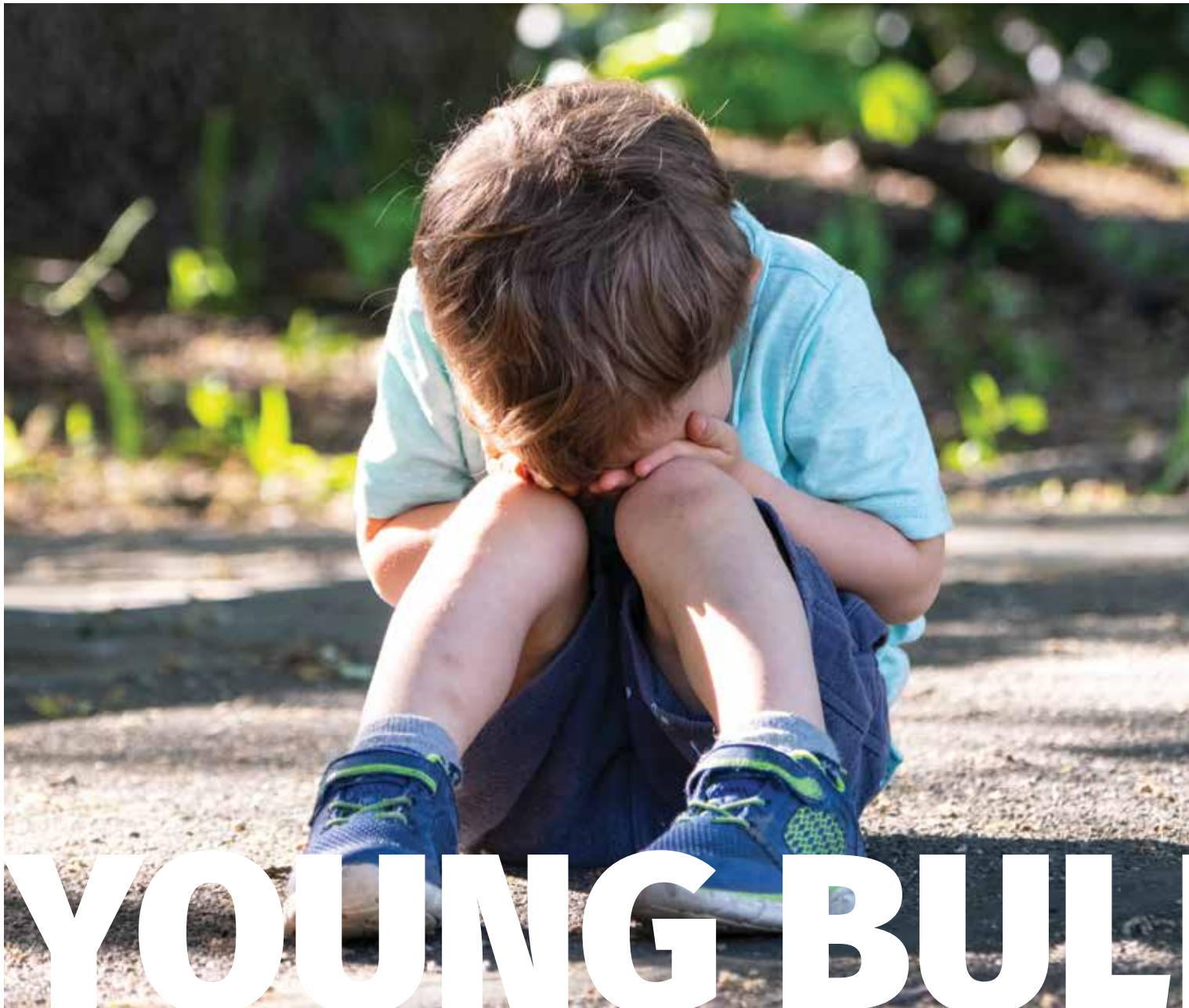
Rather than simply reading a word aloud, Mr Lee enhanced his daughter's learning experience by drawing attention to unfamiliar words, asking Susan if she knew what they meant, providing rich verbal explanations and using illustrations to support her understanding.

Existing research about interactive shared reading time asserts that it has significant social and academic benefits for children, particularly in the acquisition of vocabulary for those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Members with an interest in reading more about the benefits of a multi-modal approach to shared reading with kindergarten aged students for whom English is a second language are strongly encouraged to read the entire study by Anderson & Anderson.

Reference

Anderson, A and Anderson, J (2021), Supporting vocabulary development in a culturally/linguistically diverse family, *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, 0(0) 1-18 DOI: 10.1177/1468798421995533



YOUNG BUL

School bullying is a global phenomenon with teachers often on the frontline of aggressive behaviour, writes journalist Jessica Willis.

While we don't know the exact age bullying behaviours may develop, research has shown preschool and early primary-aged children, between four and 10 years old, can display bullying behaviours (Ey and Campbell, 2021).

However, research into the effect of bullying on 'victims' within this young age group has not been as thoroughly investigated as it has with older age groups.

What research we do have suggests young children are just as vulnerable to the same negative outcomes as children in upper primary or secondary school.

Victims of bullying are more likely to have poorer educational attainment, impacting their opportunity to engage in higher education as well as, in

the long term, limiting employment prospects (Ey and Campbell, 2021; UNESCO, 2019).

It can also have detrimental effects on the victim's ability to form and maintain interpersonal relationships later in life.

Given this, it is important early childhood education teachers understand bullying, can identify bullying behaviours and implement appropriate prevention and response strategies, not only for their own professional practice but to help educate young children as well.

The research

New research by prominent Australian academics, Dr Lesley-Anne Ey and Professor Marilyn Campbell, sought to investigate if Australian early childhood education teachers could define and identify bullying and non-bullying behaviours, as well as whether their understanding of

bullying behaviours are similar or different to primary and secondary school teachers.

The study found participants could identify bullying vs non-bullying behaviours "far more efficiently", compared to previous research conducted with primary and secondary teachers.

However, while it found participants had a sound level of understanding of bullying, it was not "comprehensive".

The study overwhelmingly found that additional training and support would help teachers in identifying and correctly responding to bullying behaviours in young children, noting that many preservice teachers report not having covered the topic during their initial teacher education courses.

Dr Ey, who is also a former preschool and primary school teacher, said 95 Australian early childhood education teachers participated in a survey assessing their understanding



of bullying and fighting and the differences between the two behaviours.

“The study found that although teachers could describe characteristics of bullying, such as the intent to harm, the power differential and repetition; many had difficulty clearly explaining distinguishing differences between bullying and fighting,” Dr Ey said.

Along with the survey, teachers were given 20 scenarios and asked to identify whether the behaviours depicted traditional bullying behaviours, cyber-bullying behaviours, non-bullying face-to-face behaviours or non-cyberbullying behaviours.

Dr Ey explained there is limited research on teachers’ understanding of bullying and even less on teachers’ understanding of this behaviour in children under eight years old.

“Existing research suggests students who experience bullying before the

age of eight years old are vulnerable to the same negative outcomes as those who experience it later in childhood, but bullying prevention programs in Australia don’t enter the school curriculum until Year Four,” she said.

“Early childhood education teachers are not being trained and supported to identify bullying and non-bullying behaviours.

This is a concern because “children are rapidly developing at this age period and it is usually teachers to whom they turn to solve their problems,” she said.

Bullying vs Fighting

Both bullying and fighting are types of aggression; however, there are key differences between the two.

Bullying comprises three defining characteristics: repetition, intent to harm and a power differential. With bullying, an individual wishes it to stop but is powerless.

Fighting involves two (or more) individuals who are equally involved and have an equal intent to win.

A fight may last for a period of time, for example a few days or a couple of weeks, but is over a singular incident and therefore not repetitive.

Bullying goes beyond a singular incident, the continuous picking on an individual.

Children can be harmed from being involved in either bullying or fighting.

Important but difficult

Professor Campbell said recognising bullying and non-bullying behaviours is especially difficult in early childhood because of children’s complex social and emotional developmental processes.

“The difficulty of correctly identifying bullying behaviours, in early childhood, strengthens the argument for delivering professional training and support in this area to early childhood teachers,” she said.

Dr Ey said these two behaviours need to be distinguished because the intervention that is used needs to be different.

For example, if children are fighting, teachers should address both participants equally and educate them both on how to solve their problem, issue or differences (Ey and Campbell, 2021).

The response should be constructive to both or all parties.

On the other hand, an appropriate response to bullying behaviour should not further traumatise the victim by involving them in a discussion

with the child bullying them (Ey and Campbell, 2021).

Early childhood education teachers who misinterpret fighting, or even a playful joke, as bullying may deliver an inappropriate response.

According to the researchers, a comprehensive understanding of bullying and non-bullying behaviours will mean that:

- children are not mislabelled at an early age
- support systems can be established for the victim
- behavioural supports can be established for the perpetrator
- children who are fighting can learn how to manage conflict and their relationships.

What next?

Dr Ey said there is a clear need to increase teachers’ knowledge of bullying to support the prevention and intervention of bullying.

“Results from the study suggest formal training about school bullying should be implemented for early childhood education teachers to enable them to have a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics which constitute bullying,” Dr Ey said.

“Teachers’ ability to recognise and respond to bullying is essential to support children’s wellbeing, especially in preschool and early primary school where students often look to their teachers for guidance about their behaviour,” she said.

A comprehensive understanding of bullying and non-bullying behaviours can also make a difference to the professional lives of members.

Bullying is a serious issue and our union supports many members in navigating it within the workplace.

Being able to identify the three characteristics of bullying may help members recognise when this is occurring to themselves or their colleagues, or instead, whether an incident constitutes a ‘fight’.

Members needing advice on bullying or fighting in the workplace should contact their relevant union branch.

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Putting early childhood education front and foremost

Anyone working across early childhood education and care (ECEC) may have encountered an organisation quietly driving improvements in ECEC access, experiences and outcomes for Australian children – the Front Project.

Based in Melbourne with a national outlook, the Front Project's founding CEO Jane Hunt (pictured, above right), an internationally awarded systems change entrepreneur, and her team are committed to finding ways for all children to have equal opportunities to reach their full potential.

"We all want our children to be more and have more than we had, and early learning is an essential part of making this possible," Hunt said.

Changing the system

To help ensure Australia's ECEC system is equipped to set up children for happier and healthier lives, the Front Project applies a 'systems change' lens to its work. This approach considers the entire ECEC system, to understand how each part intersects with others, and the impacts for our broader society.

"Our systems change approach ensures we can identify the best opportunities to deliver the most benefits to children, their families, our communities and our economy," Hunt said.

"To effectively change the system, we need to be able to work across all of its different parts at the same time. This isn't possible for just one organisation or individual – it relies on collaboration."

The Front Project's Apiary Fellowship and Future Tracks programs are two initiatives enhancing collaboration

across the sector. The Apiary Fellowship brings together individuals with wide-ranging perspectives of ECEC to learn more about each other's experiences and take action to create lasting change.

Future Tracks helps educators enhance the quality and impact of their work by supporting them to 'upskill' to become early childhood teachers.

Through these collaborations, the Front Project has learned more deeply about the different daily experiences of people working in all roles, in a variety of settings, right across the sector. They have determined that more people should be able to benefit from peer support and access to new ideas to enhance their work, so are launching an online community to assist with this.

"The online community is a place for ECEC professionals to connect, share insights for best practice and work together to address any issues they encounter," Hunt said.

"Seeing the commitment to improving children's lives in the Apiary and Future Tracks reiterates that this sector has what it takes to create and sustain meaningful change."

Gathering evidence

Another key initiative of the Front Project is contributing to the evidence base to show the benefits of ECEC to even more people, especially leaders in government and business who can help influence change.

The first pieces of research from the Front Project successfully caught the attention of both business and government because they clearly explained, for the first time in Australia, how ECEC impacts economic growth.



“More than 80 percent of surveyed parents and carers agreed that ECEC professionals have a significant impact on young children’s learning and wellbeing, and more than 70 percent said they support changing pay and conditions to reflect the importance of ECEC work.”



The Front Project worked with PwC to deliver the first Australian analysis of the economic impact of investing in early learning in the year before school – A Smart Investment for a Smarter Australia. This landmark report found that for every dollar invested, Australia receives \$2 back over a child’s life.

“That’s a higher economic return than many of our nation-building infrastructure projects,” Hunt said.

“Some benefits can be seen immediately, and returns continue as children become adults.”

For example, the cognitive benefits for children who receive a quality early childhood education can be linked to \$1.06 billion in higher earnings over a lifetime and a further \$495 million in higher taxes paid to government.

They followed up with a report revealing that Australian governments spend \$15.2 billion each year managing social problems that could be prevented by optimising investment in the early years.

Since then, the Front Project has continued to promote the economic benefits that ECEC delivers through helping parents return to work and improving children’s future career opportunities. In doing so, they have secured support for ECEC from influential organisations such as the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) and Chief Executive Women (CEW).

Raising voices

The Front Project moved the spotlight over to direct experiences with ECEC in the 2021 report, *Work and play: Understanding how Australian families experience early childhood education and care*.

Produced with independent research from Heartward Strategic, this report analysed responses from nearly 1700 parents and carers across Australia to gather a firsthand account of their needs, choices and experiences of ECEC.

Hunt said that the report shows, “there is no doubt that parents understand and deeply value the crucial role that

ECEC plays in the lives of their children and entire families, and they consider early years educators and teachers to be at the heart of quality ECEC experiences.”

More than 80 percent of surveyed parents and carers agreed that ECEC professionals have a significant impact on young children’s learning and wellbeing, and more than 70 percent said they support changing pay and conditions to reflect the importance of ECEC work.

This research follows a series of publications across 2020 that asked teachers and educators, parents and carers and even children about their experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic – these also showed resounding appreciation for ECEC.

“Parents who have stayed home with their children have deepened their appreciation for ECEC services, acknowledging the education and wellbeing it provides for children and the stability it creates for families,” Hunt said.

“And children shared how much they love and care about participating in ECEC, calling for ‘fake kindy’ to end during lockdown so they could see their favourite teacher and friends.”

What’s next?

The Front Project will mark five years into its journey this year, and Hunt said more Australians are understanding the value of ECEC than ever before.

“There is increasing attention on the importance of supporting ECEC so children can learn and develop, parents and carers can work, and families and communities can flourish.

“We will continue to connect with people who are creating changes in children’s lives each day until all Australian children, in every postcode, can access the quality ECEC that they need to lead happy and healthy lives.”

Find out more about the Front Project and subscribe for updates at www.thefrontproject.org.au/keep-in-touch

Power and purpose – how resilient teachers and resilient children can support each other

In difficult times like these when we are in crisis without an end in sight, it sometimes feels that we just can't go on, Stephen Gallen writes.

Yesterday a four-year-old child I work with turned to me, stamped her foot, clenched her fists and let out a scream of frustration. "I hate lockdown. Nobody say that word ever again!"

Wearing my face mask as I nodded at her, I could only agree. We are all fatigued and fed up. How are we expected to go on, maintaining our essential work as early childhood teachers, in these conditions, with these risks, and with only halting and grudging government support?

If ever we needed to draw on our capacity for resilience, it's now.

What is resilience?

Resilience, broadly defined, is the capacity to effectively respond, to adapt – to 'bounce back' in the face of adversity (American Psychological Association, 2012). There are many ways to think about resilience but there is consensus that it involves

several key elements: self-care, mindfulness, connection, self-awareness and purpose.

Rather than consider these in purely individual and psychological terms, maybe we could ask how we – both teachers and children – can use the elements to collectively grow our capacity for resilience as a sector. Part of our job is to enable resilience in children, so this is something we are expert at.

As a pillar of resilience, self-care is also something we can do very well. After all 'care' is also a key part of our professional remit. This might be a call to prioritise not just children but also ourselves as professionals. To care for ourselves, for children and for each other is not a passive, gentle process: it requires strength, political action and will; a fierce commitment to prioritising the wellbeing of children and ourselves.

The front line

We see children as agents who have power (including the power to offer care to us) and it's important to

remember that we are also agents who collectively have power and impact. The recent rise of awareness of early childhood education as an essential 'service' is surely an indication of our potential. If self-care involves the struggle to demand recognition and true prioritisation – and after all children and educators are on the front line – then how might we sustain this struggle without burning out in these challenging times?

The resilience literature suggests 'mindfulness'. Maybe it's in our capacity to accept support and 'care' from children that we can generate the strength we need to carry on. As always in our profession this comes back to the quality of our relationships with children and each other and to our capacity to create the space to prioritise and advocate for these. This requires a slowing down, an entering into the rhythms of childhood and relationality, a nurturing of moments of rare and precious shared attention and time together. We call this reflective practice in our professional language,



***“The teacher’s goal is the same as that of the children: to find meaning in her work and in her existence, to see value and significance in what she does, to escape from being indistinct and anonymous, to be able to see gratifying results from her work and her intelligence. The teacher cannot work without a sense of meaning, without being a protagonist.”
(Rinaldi, 2006).***

and moments of reflection should be restorative and regenerative. They should be an opportunity for ‘mindfulness’, rather than another administrative burden on already overworked teachers.

Reflective space

To build resilience together means fighting for this space to be reflective and relational, for the centrality of pedagogy and relationships to our work instead of technical processes and compliance. The struggle for ‘quality practice’ (such as slow, mindful, reflective relationships and pedagogy) can’t be separated out from the struggle for better conditions, pay and recognition. Issues of quality practice and of pedagogy are neither the consequence nor the aim for our industrial struggle – they are the very conditions for it – embedded right in the heart. This struggle requires collective relationships, it requires solidarity. Resilience is not an internal quality, it’s an effect of our material conditions. We need to fight for our professional rights, and we need to do this with children, not for children.

‘Quality’ and pedagogy need to be central to our industrial campaigns, not subsequent to or dependent on them.

For this to occur we must be prepared to change – to let go of older ways of working. This will require us to be adaptable and nomadic in the ways we understand our professional identities and in how we frame our struggle. Carla Rinaldi (2006) talks about the possibility of reconstructing our schools and preschools as productive and generative spaces, that make a visible and valued contribution to the cultural and social life of the community in the here and now, not just in the future. They become not only educational spaces, but community and civic spaces for a range of political, social and cultural projects (Dahlberg et al. 2013).

Visible work

The work that we (teachers and children) do is truly important and truly valuable. It matters and it makes a difference. We might just need to make this visible to ourselves before we can expect this recognition from

others. Maybe through defining who we are and what we do we can rediscover and regenerate a shared sense of purpose. Teachers, like children, need to find renewed meaning and purpose in our work, and to have this recognised. This sense of purpose is what will give us the capacity to respond to adversity with resilience. How do we support each other in this struggle?

Stephen Gallen is an early childhood consultant and teacher whose work focuses on curriculum, pedagogy and children and teachers’ power.

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“Central to our Deadly Journey has been the increase in staff who identify as First Nations and/or Australian South Sea Islander heritage from none to 14 percent.”

Borilla Kindergarten

Our Deadly Journey

Borilla Kindergarten, situated on Kairi Country in Emerald, Central Queensland, is on a ‘Deadly Journey’, writes Director Jenny Finlay.

This journey has not been accidental; it has been carefully planned using a holistic and multifaceted approach, supporting and incorporating educators, management committee, families, carers, children and the local community.

The service uses honest, robust critical reflection to examine current policies, philosophy and practices. These elements, combined with an examination and reflection of the theorists who inform and guide the service, has led the kindergarten on its Deadly Journey so far.

Our Deadly Journey has strived to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives into the daily life of the kindergarten, develop and improve educator knowledge and in turn, increase the enrolment of First Nations children in a kindergarten program.

The Borilla Kindergarten has achieved success in all these endeavours, empowering local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, and engaging in meaningful partnerships.

Where it all began

In 2009 educators at Borilla Kindergarten became aware of the mismatch between the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) data on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in the region and the enrolment in the kindergarten.

First Nations enrolment has gone from 1 percent of the cohort in 2009 to 26 percent in 2021. This journey has been driven by genuine critical reflection, which can be confronting and must be undertaken with intent and honesty (by all team members) if long term practices are to be challenged and meaningful change is to occur. Sometimes we must be prepared to challenge old policies.

Questions began with our Kindergarten Waiting List Policy. This policy was written by our Central Governing Body and was identified as a block to enrolment for our First Nations families.

These families did not foresee that they needed to be on a waiting list for years prior to attending kindy – by the time their children were ready, there were no kindy spots left.

The question was asked: Who is advantaged by this policy and who is disadvantaged? The answer was clear!



Our First Nations families do not use waiting lists. Until this policy was amended no change to enrolment could occur. This was one critical step towards our Deadly Journey. Do not blindly accept policy!

Another vital step on our Deadly Journey was the development of the Kindergarten's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Working with our local Elders, our First Nations families, the Kindergarten philosophy and theoretical influences in mind, the RAP slowly evolved.

The RAP provided a road map and included specific employee (HR) procedures, challenging existing policies and protocols.

Other priorities included building genuine community engagement and partnerships with feeder schools, connecting with traditional owners and local Elders, ensuring inclusive resourcing of the kindy and most importantly, nurturing a sense of belonging for all children, families and educators within the service. Borilla Kindergarten's first RAP was published in 2018. It is updated annually.

Change of staff

Central to our Deadly Journey has been the increase in staff who identify as First Nations and/or Australian South Sea Islander heritage from none to 14 percent.

This increase is a result of a wide range of initiatives. School-based traineeships were put into action. In 2019, Borilla Kindergarten created the position of cultural officer.

NAIDOC Week celebrations are cemented into the local community by our cultural officer. Our kindergarten's Acknowledgement of Country has been written, led by a kindy child who is a traditional owner of the Mithaka lands.

As a service, we are incredibly proud of this, we teach it to our current yearly cohort, instilling in

them the importance of recognising and practising Acknowledgement of Country every day.

New resources

Some important resources have been added to our Kindergarten environment. Totem poles were erected to welcome families. These totems tell the belonging, being and becoming story of our philosophy and are a visual welcome to First Nations families.

Another significant addition is a mural painted on our outside space, by First Nations children in foster care (some of whom attended our kindy when younger).

Our own kindy shirt was lovingly designed by Nanny Toohey to tell the story of how our kindy is valued and accepted by our First Nations families.

Other actions have included a staff 'Walk on Country,' free shirt and hat (to foster a sense of belonging), food provided, a 'soft and supportive approach' to enrolment, partnerships with Hearing Australia, a pop-up health clinic on site, a speech pathologist on staff, a 'Circle of Security' as our guiding philosophy and practice, a focus on staff wellbeing and working conditions, support from Gowrie Queensland and continuous opportunity for individualised staff development and training.

Our Deadly Journey is far from complete. It will continue to meander, and its direction will be determined by reflecting on how far we have come, where we strive to go and what obstacles are in our pathway. We are just getting started.

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

FAQ

Lisa James is an organiser for the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch. Danielle Wilson is an industrial officer for IEU-QNT. 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 I have been told by the committee that I must be the 'responsible person'. The director is now working part time, but I am full time. This doesn't seem right to me as I am not in charge of the program and I really do not feel comfortable taking this on. Do I have to do this?

Gemma

Dear Gemma

You will not be surprised to hear that we get this question a lot. Since the Queensland Government made changes in 2017 to 'reduce red tape' for early childhood services, we have had a lot of queries from assistants being asked to take on the duty of 'Responsible Person'.

According to ACECQA, a Responsible Person must be either the approved provider or person who has managerial control, a nominated supervisor or the person in day-to-day charge of the service.

Assistants should not be expected to take on this responsibility, particularly as there



Danielle Wilson

are no provisions for this under the award or in any agreements that we are aware of.

The person appointed as the 'Responsible Person' needs to be someone who is already responsible for the day-to-day running of a program. There may be exceptional circumstances where an assistant may be asked to take this on, but we would not want that to occur without consultation, consent, clear guidelines and compensation.

Should you have any questions about whether or not your employer can ask you to do this, we encourage you to contact our union for advice.

Danielle

Dear Lisa

I recently started in a new position and the owner told me that she expects teachers at the centre to meet with her during their lunch break to work on the QIP and for staff appraisals. I told one of my friends from my previous workplace and she said she wasn't sure if that was legal. I thought that it would be the same as asking staff to return to class during their break. Is that right?

Louise

Dear Louise

Teachers are entitled to a break from work during their lunch break. Requiring a teacher to perform work during their meal break is not compliant with the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award*. In fact, if your employer interrupts your break, you are entitled to be paid overtime until the remainder of your break can be taken.

B.3.1 Meal break (b) Where an employee is called back to perform any duties within the centre or the break is interrupted for any reason the employee will be paid at time and a half for a minimum of 15 minutes and thereafter to the nearest quarter hour until an uninterrupted break, or the balance of the break, is taken.



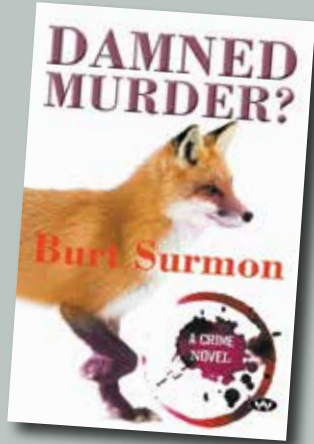
Lisa James

If you are asked to meet with your employer during your break, I suggest that you email her a copy of the relevant section of the Award (above) and explain that you should not be required to work during your break. If you can demonstrate that the employer has continued to direct you to perform work during your break and would like the IEU's assistance, please email copies of documentation showing any meeting that was held during your break, such as the roster specifying your break time, meeting invitation and/or meeting minutes. We will then write to your employer and request that you are paid overtime for that day and that the practice of meeting with employees during their breaks is discontinued.

Lisa

GIVEAWAYS

BEDROCK



Damned Murder?

Author: Burt Surmon

Publisher: Wakefield Press

Age has not wearied this coterie of bon vivants, gambolling in the rolling hills, vineyards and wineries of the romantic Clare Valley. But the Valley's dark secrets are revealed when firebrand Milton Manning's half-undressed body is discovered in the mud by the dam. Accident? Murder? Or simply a weak heart that gave up?

When DI Louis Buckingham and his offside DS Sally Seymour investigate, they uncover more than they bargained for – and Sally is astounded by tales of what people her mother's age get up to.



The Flag Book

Publisher: Lonely Planet Kids

Welcome to the amazing world of flags! Did you know that each flag is actually a picture that sends a message to everyone who sees it?

In *The Flag Book*, Lonely Planet Kids introduces you to the flags of every country in the world, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, and tells you what their design, colours, and images represent, along with lots of other incredible facts.

What's the only country that doesn't have a rectangular flag? Why does Hawaii's state flag feature the UK's Union Jack in one corner? And what do the 13 stripes of the USA's 'star spangled banner' represent? You'll find out the answer to all these and much, much more.

The book will then show you the other fascinating ways flags are used throughout the world. Learn the International Code of Flag Symbols to communicate with ships at sea; read about flags used in sports, like Formula 1's chequered flag; marvel at flags commemorating world records and incredible human achievements; and peer with a microscope at the planet's smallest flag, which is no wider than a human hair.

But that's not all! Travel back in time to the golden age of piracy and have your timbers shivered by the bloodthirsty flags of 'Black Bart' Roberts and his fellow pirates sailing the Caribbean.

The Daredevil's Guide to Outer Space

Author: Anna Brett

Publisher: Lonely Planet Books

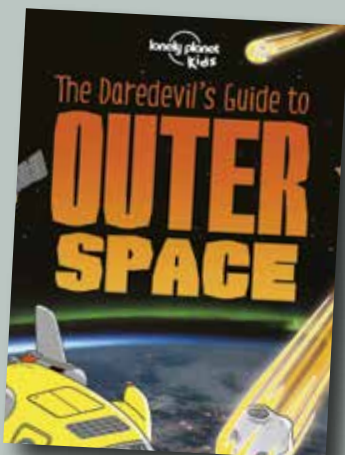
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