

BEDROCK

issue 2 | Vol 26 | 2021

Breaking down gender stereotypes p6



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.

Endorsed by:



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regional differences in some
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mind as you read.

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Fight for respect continues

2021 has already presented many challenges in terms of workers' rights and safety, demonstrating that unions and collective power are still more important than ever to protect the very people who sacrificed so much to keep Australia safe last year.

Through the hard work, dedication and perseverance of frontline workers including early childhood education staff, Australia has found itself in the 'new normal'; yet when it comes to ensuring recognition and respect for these employees, our fight continues.

Many of the articles in this edition of *Bedrock* are, at their heart, about ensuring equity.

Equity for the working rights and conditions of our members and early childhood education staff.

We focus on the outcomes of the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch pay equity case (p14).

After a long campaign, our collective efforts have pay rises of up to 10% for early childhood education teachers covered under the modern award.

Our union will continue to advocate for pay and working conditions for teachers and assistants to be comparable to their colleagues who work in schools because we know this is key to ensuring the future of the sector.

To that end, we discuss what the National Workforce Strategy needs to get right in terms of proper recognition for the profession (p21).

We also examine equity for our students.

Whether it's breaking down gender stereotypes (p6) or disrupting ableism (p12) – our union is committed to ensuring a just and fair society for all.

The many challenges we face also reiterate the importance of the psychological wellbeing of workers in our sector (p10).

We hope this edition provides you with fresh insights and points of connection to discuss with your colleagues in the coming months.

As always, we love to hear your feedback – so please let us know what story or stories connected with you from this edition via bedrock@ieu.asn.au

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Terry Burke

IEU-QNT Secretary

BEDROCK

UPFRONT

Save the date

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch annual early childhood conference 'We are all in this together: Support, Resilience, Recognition', will take place on Saturday 7 August at Aerial UTS Centre, Level 7, Building 10, 235 Jones Street, Ultimo, Sydney. It's back to a face-to-face event this year after last year's virtual sessions. Keep an eye on the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch website www.ieu.asn.au and publications as further details are revealed.



Educator who refused flu shot sacked

The Fair Work Commission (FWC) has upheld Goodstart Early Learning's dismissal of an educator for refusing to take a free flu shot.

Rejecting the lead educator's argument that Goodstart Early Learning's mandatory vaccination policy represented an unlawful assault, the Commission said that her inability to back up claims of a "sensitive immune system" and a prior adverse reaction vindicated the employer's decision to dismiss her in August last year.

FWC Deputy President Lake said, "In the absence of that evidence, it is unclear how I, or Goodstart, could be satisfied that there was valid ground for a medical exemption".

Ms Bou-Jamie Barber v Goodstart Early Learning [2021] FWC 2156 (20 April 2021)

Maintenance of accreditation

Experienced early childhood teachers in NSW who were deemed Proficient in 2016 are due to finalise their maintenance of accreditation in 2021 if they are employed full time or in 2023 if they are employed part time (unless they have taken a leave of absence during their maintenance cycle). IEUA NSW/ACT Branch has advised on accreditation requirements, see <https://bit.ly/3emAFxM>



Recognising bullying

A recent study by Dr Lesley-Anne Ey, of the University of South Australia and Professor Marilyn Campbell of Queensland University of Technology (QUT), examines whether early childhood teachers' understanding of bullying behaviours are

similar or different to teachers of primary and secondary school students.

Dr Ey said, “There is limited research on teachers’ understanding of bullying and even less on teachers’ understanding of this behaviour in children under eight years old”.

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.”

Dr Ey said, “There is a clear need to increase teacher’s knowledge of bullying to support the prevention and intervention of bullying. Results from the study suggest formal training about bullying should be implemented for early childhood teachers to enable them to have a comprehensive understanding of the characteristics that constitute bullying.

“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.”



Old People’s Home for 4 Year Olds

You may have seen the heart-warming ABC Television program *Old People’s Home for 4 Year Olds* recently. In this documentary miniseries, a group of scientists and gerontologists try a revolutionary experiment by bringing elderly people into a classroom of preschoolers.

In an Australian first, scientists have begun a pilot trial to assess the mutual health benefits of intergenerational activity, such as reducing frailty and depression.

The Intergenerational Integration Initiative will see older adults and young children engage in a structured series of investigative, artistic and educational activities together.

Evidence suggests these planned intergenerational activities might reduce frailty and improve mood and thinking skills in the older adults, and improve empathy and language development and reduce age stereotypes in the younger participants.

This study has been funded by the UNSW Ageing Futures Institute, with in-kind support from St Nicolas’ Church and Preschool and Anglicare. Results from the pilot trial are likely to be available in July.

Early childhood education bargaining update

Collective bargaining continues for IEU-QNT members employed at various individual community kindergartens across Queensland.

Negotiations with Creche and Kindergarten (C&K) Branch centres are commencing for a replacement agreement, with key employee claims including:

- additional release time and allowance for the nominated supervisor/director
- converting senior teacher allowance to a substantive salary
- experienced Teacher classification (similar to the state sector at the first pay-point)
- access to long service leave after seven years of continuous service (including on termination)
- paid domestic violence leave
- paid emergency and natural disaster leave
- paid pandemic leave, and
- recognising senior assistants/educators with an allowance.

IEU-QNT Senior Industrial Officer John Spriggs said the inclusion of additional salary steps was important to ensure early childhood education teachers received wages and benefits comparable with teachers in other sectors.

“Over the last decade, teachers in state schools and the non-government school sector have gained increased remuneration through the inclusion of additional incremental salary steps above the scale, otherwise applicable,” Spriggs said.

“In early childhood education, these additional salary steps are yet to become common.

“Without the addition of these additional steps, the comparability of early childhood education teachers’ wages with teachers in other sectors will become diluted and eventually lost,” he said.

Heal Country, heal our nation

NAIDOC Week 2021 is set for Sunday 4 July – Sunday 11 July. This year’s theme *Heal Country!* calls for stronger measures to recognise, protect and maintain all aspects of First Nations culture and heritage.

This includes greater protections for First Nations lands, waters, sacred sites and cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration and destruction.

It also encompasses the fight for substantive institutional, structural and collaborative reform – something that First Nations Elders have been advocating and marching for, for generations.

IEU members are encouraged to mark NAIDOC Week in their workplaces to celebrate the rich history, diverse cultures and achievements of First Nations people as the oldest continuing cultures on the planet.

Learning resources and teaching guides are available for use on the official NAIDOC website (www.naidoc.org.au)

Other actions members can take include:

- emailing your state MP to change the record on Black deaths in custody (www.changetherecord.org.au)
- joining the ‘Raise the Age’ campaign (www.raisetheage.org.au), and
- supporting Amnesty International’s ‘Community is Everything’ First Nations youth inequality campaign (www.amnesty.org.au/campaigns/indigenous-justice).



Breaking down gender stereotypes

Two early childhood education teacher members share their insights into how kindergarten children perceive gender – and some strategies for combating stereotypes – with journalist Emily Campbell.

Young children make sense of the world through imagination and play, by observing, imitating, asking questions, and relating to other children and adults (Vygotsky & Cole, cited in Nilsson & Ferholt, 2014).

However, gender stereotypes can perpetuate inequality and pressure children to comply with standards of masculinity and femininity, which is limiting and potentially harmful.

Early childhood teachers are in a unique position to help shape children's understanding of gender, teach them to celebrate diversity and to challenge their views to help their growth and development.

Influence of family and community

Bridget Kings, an experienced teacher working at Vera Lacaze Memorial Community Kindergarten in Toowoomba, said there are many external factors which can influence kindergarten children's understanding of gender.

"For kindergarten-aged children, most of that is family, so how they've heard their family talk about gender and gender roles at home impacts their understanding," Bridget said.

"Other influences on how young children learn about gender include the movies, books and stories they consume, the cultural and religious beliefs and the communities they are involved in.

"Additionally, children's peers, playgroups, older siblings and friends can shape their understanding, so children develop a picture and

implicit biases and subsequently stereotype gender based on what they have heard and lived with," she said.

Tabatha Seddon, who teaches kindergarten at Goodstart Early Learning in Collingwood Park, agrees with Bridget.

"It can be difficult to pinpoint exactly where children's understanding of gender stems from, although I think most of it comes from what they see at home and what their parents might talk about," Tabatha said.

"Their family environments, what children see on screens and in the media can perpetuate gender stereotypes, so it takes a lot of intentional teaching to break those."

Visual cues and physical traits

Both Bridget and Tabatha agree one of the first major ways children differentiate gender is by observing physical traits and choice of clothing.

Tabatha said one of the misconceptions children commonly hold is that people with long hair are girls and those with short hair are boys.

"I find children can be very set in their ways about certain hair styles being associated with particular genders," she said.

"Some girls I teach have short hair and even if she is wearing typically feminine clothing like a dress with flowers on it, some of the other children will still say she is a boy.

"When this occurs, I will challenge their beliefs by asking the child with short hair to tell the others what gender she sees herself as, so she reinforces to the others she is a girl.

"I will ask them to think about women they know who have short hair, then go online and to find resources like movies of girls with short hair and boys with long hair to demonstrate that people of all genders can have different hair lengths and styles.

"It can take a lot to break the stereotypes and requires a lot of visuals to convince children."

Gender in different cultures

Tabatha said her kindergarten is very multicultural and she uses this to demonstrate to children that various cultural groups understand gender differently.

"We speak to our parents and get them involved in the teaching process too," Tabatha said.

"If children say boys can't wear dresses, I will take the opportunity to go online and show them examples of different cultures where men do wear skirts, sarongs and dresses and reinforce it's perfectly fine.

"Some children will say 'but my dad doesn't wear dresses' so I will respond by saying that's your dad's choice but that doesn't mean some dads don't wear dresses.

"They're very receptive to it and innocent at that age, so they don't make judgements and you can see the lightbulb moment where they realise it's fine and some men do wear dresses," Tabatha said.

Bridget said conversations around gender sometimes arise when the children are engaging in dramatic play or arts and crafts.

"We have a wonderful Torres Strait Islander man who comes to visit and read books to the children at the end of the year before they transition to school, and it's great because he wears traditional clothing when he addresses the children and shows

"Some children will say 'but my dad doesn't wear dresses' so I will respond by saying that's your dad's choice but that doesn't mean some dads don't wear dresses."



them photos of different outfits worn by people in the Torres Strait Islands.

"The children see photos of people wearing both traditional clothes and the everyday clothing the kids are familiar with, so they see there are different outfits for special occasions and people of all genders can dress differently whenever they like."

Seeing the world

"Another stereotype which arises is only girls can like the colour pink, so we will talk to the children about all the different colours and how we can love them all," Bridget said.

Stereotypes regarding gender roles and jobs comes up quite often too, according to Tabatha.

"If a child says only girls can be ballerinas or dancers I will identify it as a teachable moment straight away, then go online to find images and videos of river dance, Tap Dogs and male ballet dancers to show them men and women can all be dancers," Tabatha said.

"Another instance occurred when a group of boys wouldn't let a little girl join in their soldiers game because the boys said girls can't be soldiers.

"I asked them, why can't she be a soldier? They couldn't actually give me an answer.

"Intervening early and being able to challenge their thinking and following it up with images from the Australian Defence Force of women officers helped debunk their beliefs.

"It is important to show them rather than just telling them, as children need that visual cue."

Supporting staff

Bridget said there is a need for more professional development regarding gender and stereotyping in young children.

"We attend PD on cultural diversity and reconciliation, although there is not much I'm aware of specifically to do with gender stereotypes, inclusion and understanding," Bridget said.



Tabatha agreed and said kindergarten teachers do need more information, especially if they teach children who are gender diverse.

"I would have to do extensive research to make sure I am doing the right thing and not limiting the child," she said.

The fundamental value Bridget and Tabatha said kindergarten children should be taught early on, is to respect everybody, regardless of their gender identity, culture or interests.

"If you show acceptance of everything and everyone then I think that makes it easier for children to do the same," Bridget said.

"That's one of our philosophies – you have the right to be how you want to be so long as you develop relationships and behave in ways that aren't going to hurt other people or interfere negatively with how others are thinking and feeling," she said.

"Every child needs to realise no matter what your gender is, or your interests are, you treat others with respect and they have every chance to be successful at whatever they want," said Tabatha.

Resources and further reading

The following resources provide informative further reading for members who wish to learn more about

the topic of gender stereotyping in an early childhood education context.

No limitations guide: Breaking down gender stereotypes in the early years, published by Women's Health East, is a resource guide for early childhood teachers and assistants. The guide provides practical tools, tips and resources for both an organisational focus and working with families. Contents include comprehensive ideas for practice, tips for engaging in conversations with children about gender stereotyping, actively promoting gender equality in your service, a breakdown of definitions and terms, a list of books that challenge gender stereotypes, benefits of a gender equality approach and a self-reflection guide for teachers. It can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3ejFSpT>

GRP4ECE toolkit: teachers challenging gender stereotypes developed by VVOB Education for Development, Forum for African Women Educationalists and public education partners in Rwanda, South Africa and Zambia have united to develop a gender-responsive pedagogy for early childhood education. The toolkit enables early childhood education teachers to become aware of their gender biases and overcome them, whilst supporting

them to proactively challenge budding gender stereotypical ideas in their learners. The open educational resource can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3eWJJZ1>

Level Playground's website provides access to a curated list of resources for early childhood education teachers to help build knowledge about how to break down gender norms and stereotypes. There are videos, activities which promote gender equality, audits for your environment, lesson plans, teaching guides and more from a variety of early learning and development stakeholders. The resources can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/2QU5wJ4>

References

Change the Story: A shared framework for the primary prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia, Our Watch 2015, Melbourne, Australia www.anrows.org.au
 Nilsson, M & Ferholt, B 2014. *Vygotsky's theories of play, imagination and creativity in current practice: Gunilla Lindqvist's "creative pedagogy of play" in U.S. kindergartens and Swedish Reggio-Emilia inspired preschools*. Perspectiva.

Speaking out for teachers

“The pressure on teacher/directors can be overwhelming, and the role is undervalued. We need to make a change and the IEUA gives us an opportunity to make our voices heard.”

Amy Martin is proud to represent her profession and her union publicly, having no qualms about addressing a large crowd outside NSW Parliament House on International Women's Day (IWD) in March.

Martin is a member of the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Early Childhood Sector Council, a body which consults on and advocates for early childhood teachers, and is made up of practicing teachers.

The low pay in the early childhood sector is due to the female domination of the workforce, so Martin had no second thoughts when requested to speak on behalf of the IEUA at the Sydney IWD event.

A Teacher/Director at Goodstart Early Learning Centre Cromer on Sydney's northern beaches, Martin said the support of the IEUA had been invaluable to her throughout her 13 year career as a teacher.

“If somebody is investing time and effort in me, I'm going to invest time and effort in them,” she said.

“The pressure on teacher/directors can be overwhelming, and the role is undervalued. We need to make a change and the IEU gives us an opportunity to make our voices heard.”

When she first graduated from Charles Sturt University in 2007, Martin was a member of Uniting Voice, but after consulting them for help, she realised the IEU was better qualified to support teachers. She has since convinced several colleagues to join.

“When I returned from maternity leave in 2017, a lot of things had changed in the profession and most of the information I was getting about accreditation and other changes was coming from the union, so I thought being part of Early Childhood Council would provide a wealth of information.

“It's great being able to share ideas about the profession with teachers from all parts of NSW and the ACT, rural and regional.

“It feels great to have the opportunity to have a forum to make a difference. And being in the union generally – the amount of times I've just picked up the phone and there's support available, it's great. For teachers working in a private, rural centre, it would be massive.”



“It's all about people power, the more members we have the more we can achieve change and decrease the pay disparity with school teachers.”

She would encourage all teachers to join the union. For details email ecs@ieu.asn.au

Psychological wellbeing of workers essential



Last year, *Bedrock* (Issue 1, 2020) introduced you to the Early Childhood Education Wellbeing Project (ECEWP) run by Charles Sturt, Macquarie and Griffith Universities, specifically studying the wellbeing of early childhood education workers on a holistic level. Since then, COVID-19 and its ongoing impacts have placed a renewed spotlight on the psychological wellbeing of those who work in the sector. Dr Tamara Cumming (pictured), a lead researcher on the project, talks to journalist Jessica Willis about the importance of the psychological wellbeing of early childhood education teachers and assistants.

In addition to the support available through our union, we encourage members to seek additional support if they are in need.

Avenues for mental health support:

Queensland Mental Health Week
www.qldmentalhealthweek.org.au

Employer Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Beyond Blue
1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au

Lifeline
13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au

MindSpot
1800 614 434 www.mindspot.org.au

Mensline
1300 78 99 78 www.mensline.org.au

Kids Helpline
1800 55 1800 www.kidshelpline.com.au

“Psychological wellbeing includes a person’s mental health, but also things like their self-esteem, emotional wellbeing, stress, motivation and job satisfaction,” Cumming said.

“Psychological and physiological wellbeing are closely linked, so it can be hard to tell which comes first or is the most important aspect to attend to.

“Early childhood education workers’ wellbeing is in everyone’s interests, and employers, governments, families, children and workers’ themselves need to be involved in improving and sustaining wellbeing.

“The first step is in recognising the value of teachers and educators and their work and seeing teachers and educators’ and children’s interests as interconnected – not competing.

“Teachers’ and assistants’ wellbeing is an ongoing process that ideally includes prevention and universal

supports and requirements that guarantee this issue will get the attention it deserves.

Essential but often overlooked

Research shows that the psychological wellbeing of early childhood education teachers and assistants is essential for the quality care and education of young children; however, often this gets overlooked.

“There are so many reasons why teachers’ and assistants’ wellbeing has been invisible for a long time – it can be perceived as ‘women’s work’ and therefore both ‘natural’ and not requiring effort or expertise, but also because ‘women’s work’ tends to be less valued in society,” Cumming said.

“There is also a tendency to think in very binary ways about children and educators – that if children are to come first, teachers and assistants must always come second.

“The thing about that is if teachers and assistants are not encouraged and supported to have good work-related wellbeing, they can’t do their best for children.

“As workers, they also have a right to decent work and workplaces that support them.

“Part of that is having decent pay, because having poor financial wellbeing can have a big impact on workers’ feelings of stress that impact practice quality for children as well as quality of life for workers,” Cumming said.

The other part is ensuring that all workers in the sector have access to

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protected working conditions and rights comparable to their colleagues working in primary and secondary schools.

Causes of stress and injury

Cumming said there are many contributors to early childhood education teachers' and assistants' workplace mental stress.

"Things like: complexity and intensity of educators' work, lack of resources (including things like supplies) to provide activities for children, poor public recognition of workers' professionalism, and work conditions including problematic relationships with colleagues and families.

"Psychological injuries like anxiety, depression or post-traumatic stress can happen due to work related harassment or bullying, work pressure, or exposure to workplace violence or traumatic events."

Warning signs to look out for

There are a few different warning signs of poor psychological wellbeing that workers can look out for in themselves and their colleagues.

"Burnout is a term that is used a lot, and it's actually quite helpful as a way of monitoring how you are going yourself, as well as how your colleagues are going.

"If you see behaviour developing over time that looks like emotional exhaustion (feeling empty of feeling or the ability to give), hating your job, becoming indifferent to children, families or colleagues or feeling that you are doing your job poorly, these are signs of burnout, and need attention.

"Blaming, victimising, bullying behaviours, losing interest in things you used to enjoy can also be signs that a person's mental wellbeing is compromised.

"Physiological signals also give clues – consistently disrupted sleep, no appetite, chronic digestive problems or headaches can also be part of poor mental wellbeing."

COVID-19 impact

"We know from our own research, and research done by a team from Monash University that teachers and assistants have suffered emotionally and psychologically because of COVID-19," Cumming said.

"As well as the stress of additional day-to-day cleaning, and emotional care of children and families, teachers and assistants reported feeling they needed to remain strong and calm on the outside, even if feeling scared about risks to their health or angry about inequities in how the sector was treated."

Cumming said that many workers felt severely let-down by the federal government, which recognised the sector as an essential service but failed to acknowledge the effort and professionalism demonstrated by the workers who were expected to "just get on with it."

"They were also very disappointed to not have universal access to Personal Protective Equipment (at least for travelling to and from work) and when JobKeeper was removed first from the early childhood education sector."

Cumming said it was hard to tell whether or not the public perception of early childhood education staff had changed since COVID-19.

However, the need to amplify the message that early childhood education is an essential service and that workers' wellbeing needs to be attended to as a matter of urgency, is critical to sustaining the workforce.

Taking action as a union

IEU members can contact their relevant union branch for support and advice regarding any workplace injury, including psychological injury.

Union officers are highly experienced in, for example, supporting members to access leave and entitlements; WorkCover referrals; or supporting workplace IEU Chapters enforce collective agreement/award provisions (such as hours of duty) which may relieve workplace stress.

On a federal level, our union continues to advocate for better pay and working conditions for early childhood education workers, so that they are comparable to those working in primary and secondary schools.

Other resources for workers

Cumming said that in terms of helping prevent psychological injury in the first place, free programs like those offered by BeYou are key to preventing problems occurring.

"But to really support the whole workforce it may be that changes to the National Quality Standard are required, so that all organisations – whether they are single, standalone, private or community-operated – are supported in how to help prevent psychological injury as well as be accountable for doing this as part of the overall quality of their service.

"BeYou and ECA have some excellent fact sheets and resources for supporting early childhood education workers' mental wellbeing.

Some organisations have made Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) available (where an employee can get psychological support over the phone), and these are likely to help.

"There are also online chat services available through organisations like Beyond Blue, and through your union.

Seeing a GP or another qualified mental health workers are also good first steps for those needing support.

Members can find the Early Childhood Educator Wellbeing Project on Facebook @EarlyChildhoodEducatorWellbeingProjectECEWP.



Disrupting ableism in picture books

There's a need for more books featuring strength-based representations of people with a disability, journalist Emily Campbell writes.

Children's books are powerful tools which allow developing young minds to make sense of their own and others' experiences and perspectives.

However, children's books featuring main characters who have a disability are few and far between.

Diversity and inclusion

Researchers acknowledge that children's literature is a powerful influence on the social construction of perceptions and narratives, so it is critically important all children see themselves represented in the books in their classrooms (Hayden & Prince, 2020).

Generally, early childhood education teachers are excellent at bearing this in mind as they use their own personal experiences and professional judgement when considering which stories to stock their kindergarten shelves with.

Books, movies and other media representing the experiences of marginalised groups are increasingly available and have been crucial in highlighting diversity and equity needs in terms of racial, cultural, gender, sexuality and socioeconomic difference (Hayden & Prince, 2020).

Including such literature helps foster and maintain an inclusive program that promotes equity, celebrates inclusion, champions diversity and encourages each child to reach their full potential, in line with the principles underpinning Australia's National Quality Framework (ACECQA, 2020).

Despite this, research demonstrates strength-based views of characters with a disability are rare in children's picture books, meaning children with a disability scarcely see themselves reflected in the stories they read.

Even the few children's picture books which do feature a character with a disability may reinforce limiting, ableist stereotypes and perpetuate misconceptions about people who have a disability and their lives (Hayden & Prince, 2020).

This presents a challenge for early childhood education teachers who may find it difficult to source children's books which include strength-based representations of disabilities or may be unsure of which books are appropriate.

Strength-based views

Disability advocates argue representing characters with disabilities in strength-based ways in children's literature is of utmost importance and key to debunking ableist myths.

Ableism is discrimination and prejudice against those with a disability and occurs when members of the 'dominant, typically-developing culture enact perceptions that "maintain biases and myths" (Myers & Bersani, 2008

cited in Hayden & Prince, 2020), resulting in inequitable treatment of people with disabilities'.

By contrast, strength-based views can be defined as representation which recognises people as causal agents in their own lives and focuses first on "what each person is able to do and to be" (Shogren et al., 2017 cited in Hayden & Prince, 2020), which removes thresholds for inclusion, emphasising the capacities of all people in any environment.

Strength-based views are a powerful and positive counterweight to ableism, recognising a person as a whole individual who is not to be defined by their disability, which is just one aspect of a person's life or body. When children's books feature strength-based representations of main characters with disabilities, it helps young children form narratives that refute ableist beliefs and social stigma (Hayden & Prince, 2020).

One in five students has a disability

According to NCCD results, 20.3 percent of school students in Australian classrooms in 2020 had either a physical, cognitive, sensory or social-emotional disability or a combination of these (ACARA, 2020).

Given the scarcity of children's books featuring characters with a disability, this means the one in five Australian students are not seeing themselves or their experiences adequately reflected in the literature they read as young children.

This is extremely disheartening, as a significant segment of children are missing out on literature which promotes attitudes of acceptance, encourages inclusion and teaches typically developing students about disability from an early age.

Experts agree there is an urgent need for more children's literature which presents people with a disability as being empowered, able to live fulfilling lives and which pushes back against harmful, cliched and ableist stereotypes.

Recent research

A recent study by Hayden and Prince (2020) undertook qualitative content analysis of 34 children's picture books published in America, which featured a main character with a disability, to examine how each of the books disrupted ableist views explicitly and implicitly.

In the sample, the authors noted low occurrence disabilities such as visual impairment were more frequently represented than high incidence disabilities such as a specific learning disability.

For example, only one book featured a main character with specific-learning disability (SLD) despite students with SLD representing the largest percentage of students who received special education services in America during 2017-2018 (US Dept of Education, 2020).

Characters with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and orthopaedic impairment (OI) were each depicted in seven of 34 books, although students receiving special education



for ASD account for 10 percent of the school-aged population and students with OI less than 1 percent.

The researchers identified this as problematic because the representation of characters with disabilities in the books analysed did not reflect the disability prevalence in the population of the books' target audience.

Furthermore, students of colour in the USA are drastically overrepresented as needing special education services, although half of the main characters in the sample of books were white.

Key findings

According to the authors, the six books which scored a most highly in terms of strength-based representation and disruption of ableist myths had several things in common:

- All six main characters demonstrated agency, self-acceptance and self-awareness, with storylines addressing specific misconceptions and myths.
- The books disrupted ableist myths about disability and provided the reader with tools to push back against both implicit and explicit stereotyping, teasing and bullying.
- Characters change, grow and develop throughout the narratives.
- The three books featuring low-incidence disabilities initiate avenues for agentive conversations about disability, and for honesty about the way disability is often perceived and responded to by able-bodied people.
- When characters were exposed to unkind ableist actions, those with a disability presented strength-based counter stories.
- All six books prompted opportunities for discussion of agency and growth mindset, personal challenges every child faces.

Conclusion

Children's literature has the capacity to shape young minds, which is why young children must be exposed to literature featuring strength-based views of disability from a young age.

The sole presence of a disabled person in a children's storybook is tokenistic and inadequate.

Including children's picture books with positive, strength-based representations of disability in their literacy instruction, is a key way early childhood education teachers will help tackle ableism head on and help progress towards a more inclusive, equitable society.

Early childhood education teachers with an interest in disability representation in children's books are strongly encouraged to read the full study by Hayden and Prince.

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Union wins pay rise for early childhood teachers

Early childhood teachers across Australia paid under the modern award will receive a pay rise of up to 10% thanks to a long legal campaign by the Independent Education Union of Australia (IEUA).

Eight years ago, the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch began two cases at the Fair Work Commission (FWC). One essentially argued that early childhood teachers were underpaid because the sector is female dominated. The other application argued that the modern award undervalued the work of teachers.

While the gender undervaluation argument was dismissed by the Commission due to the restrictive nature of the legislation, they concluded “there have been substantial changes in the nature of the work of teachers and the level of their skills and responsibilities since 1996. This constitutes a significant net addition to their work value which has to be taken into account in the rates of the pay in the modern award”.

The pay rise of 5–10% will mainly benefit teachers in long day care centres and preschools without enterprises agreements under the modern award, but there is a scattering of school teachers employed on this award as well. Nationally, the decision will benefit approximately 12,000 teachers in about 8000 long day care centres.

There will be significantly higher increases for some teachers if they have responsibilities as educational leaders.

The FWC Full Bench found that “the exercise of professional skills and judgement, the overall work value, involved in early childhood teaching” was the same to that of school teachers.

“The rates of pay do not recognise that teachers are degree qualified professionals,” they said.

Values case

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Mark Northam said, “This is a significant win. The Commission has recognised the increasing value and importance of the work of all teachers, but particularly early childhood teachers.”

During the proceedings, the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch supplied a number of key witnesses, including Borilla Community Kindergarten Teacher/Director and member of the IEU-QNT Branch



Executive Jenny Finlay, who travelled from Emerald to Sydney to testify on the increasing complexities and pressures of her work.

She described the day-to-day demands of a 132-child kindergarten serving children with a wide range of needs, including low socio-economic status background, English as a second language, First Nations background and special needs.

“I wanted the Commission to hear the story of what an early teacher actually does, how the work has changed, the complexity of the work the challenges and the training it takes to be an early childhood teacher,” Finlay said.

She said the risk assessment and risk management were significant parts of her responsibilities.

The IEU-QNT Branch congratulates the NSW/ACT Branch on the work value wage increase achieved in the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020*.

IEU-QNT Branch Senior Industrial Officer John Spriggs appeared as a witness in the case, adding support from an industrial perspective to the direct evidence provided by Finlay.

Achieving arbitrated increases of this magnitude is a significant achievement, given that the opportunity to conduct such a case presents itself infrequently.

While the outcome of this case means increases will apply to the minimum award rates of pay, for the large majority of IEU-QNT members, the arbitrated increases to the minimum award rates will result in no practical change.

This is because almost all IEU-QNT members are covered by a collective agreement rather than this award.

As a result, the rates of pay for teachers covered by collective agreements are significantly in excess of the award minima.

This is a direct result of the action and collective strength of IEUA-QNT members over time and reinforces the need for workers in early childhood education specifically, and the education sector generally, to be union members and negotiate collective agreements.

Government responsibility

Northam said it was significant that the Commission had also asked all governments to examine their capacity to fund the wages of early childhood teachers.

“The Commission has requested state and federal governments consider funding early childhood sector pay. The union calls on governments to recognise the key role teachers play in early childhood education and support their work.”

Wonderful result

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Early Childhood Sector Vice President Gabrielle Connell said: “This is a wonderful result for early childhood teachers after a long and hard-fought campaign.

“The IEU has put all its expertise and resources into ensuring better wages for early childhood teachers,” Connell said.

“It was wonderful to see it was won on work value recognition at last for

the valuable contributions we make to education and our professionalism.

“This is the beginning of pay parity and it will also mean that we can attract and retain qualified professionals into the sector. This can only lead to better outcomes for children and families.”

IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Early Childhood Sector Council member and Teacher/Director at Goodstart Early Learning Centre in Sydney, Amy Martin, said: “What a great win after eight years. Thank you to everyone involved who worked long and hard to get a great result in the end.

“Thank you once again for your hard work, not only that you have done for this case but the work that you do every day for the early childhood profession.”

The union particularly thanks the officers and staff who drove the eight-year legal battle, including IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Deputy Secretary Carol Matthews, Industrial Officer Michael Wright, and the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch early childhood team including Lisa James and Verena Heron.

Matthews said, “The energy and commitment of our staff and our legal team of Ingmar Taylor SC and junior barrister Lucy Saunders was outstanding.”

The Commission has yet to determine the date of the pay rise. A further hearing will examine more submissions and evidence on the impact of the decision on the sector and how the pay rise will be phased in.

To read a summary of the FWC decisions, see <https://bit.ly/3h3tjAL>

Book review:

Play-Responsive Teaching in Early Childhood Education

Play is at the centre of our practice, our philosophies, our National Quality Framework (did you know that 'play' is mentioned over 70 times in the Early Years Learning Framework) and our everyday work with children, writes IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Early Childhood Council member Melinda Gambley.

But how well do we really understand the connection between play and learning, and the role of teachers in children's play? Through an examination of research and practice from Sweden, this book invites us to learn more about play – its history, its importance to early childhood education, and how teacher participation in play can enhance children's involvement and learning.

Reading this book has given me pause to reflect on my own involvement in children's play. In my own practice as Teacher and Educational Leader at Clunes Community Preschool in NSW, I've seen that, while we all agree that play is important, how we plan for and involve ourselves in children's play can be contentious, with other early childhood professionals that I meet in my work having wide ranging opinions and philosophies around play.

History and beliefs about play

The authors begin by summarising the history of play and the image of the child. There is a discussion of the role of post-developmental theories in play, and a comparison

of the traditional view of play in early childhood settings, that is, that play should be 'hands-off' by the adults, with content unimportant, balanced by the more contemporary view that the adults do have a role in pedagogical play.

Interestingly, they talk about the contradictions of play in our communities, and this is evident to me as I move through my own centre, town, and community, and the cities and spaces that I visit.

“While play is often romanticised as something free and innocent, the authors refer to the ‘free’ in free play as ‘illusory freedom.’”

There is the contemporary adult belief that we often hear in our preschools, schools and centres: that play should be spontaneous, child directed, and completely free from adult interference. In apparent opposition to this, we (the adults) intentionally plan and designate spaces specifically for play, for example early childhood centres, playgrounds and theme parks. I begin, through my reading, to reflect on what we say about play and how this is reflected (or not!) in our spaces for play and leisure.

our spaces for play and leisure.

Is 'free play' actually free?

While play in Europe, where the research for the book originates, and also here in Australia, is often romanticised as something free and innocent, the authors refer to the 'free' in free play as 'illusory freedom', that is, bound by the cultural rules of the group to which the child belongs. They give the example of a type of play that we see frequently: where the child takes the role of parent with a doll in the role of the baby. The child's actions in play

will, of course, be shaped by their experiences to date – what they have seen or heard of the adults around them. A child's play is also influenced by the materials and the spaces available to them (usually provided by the adults). The authors argue that, rather than play being fantastical, purely for escapism, and a 'break' from the work of learning, the opposite is actually true – that play allows children to bridge the gap between the concrete and the abstract, allowing them to understand concepts more deeply and develop mastery of new skills.

The publication draws on the work of Australian academic Marilyn Fler, who describes the link between imaginative play and the development of abstract concepts and cognition. The authors expand on this idea:

"Developing children's conceptual understanding is important to the child's everyday life, not only to his or her subsequent academic success; it allows children to act and experience the world in more purposive and functional ways. Importantly, Fler's work (2011, see also 2010) provides ample ground for understanding how engaging children in imagination and play are critical to such development, and also therefore should remain as foundational to early childhood education practices."

As teachers then, we have moved from the traditional 'child as an empty vessel' approach, to seeing children as active participants, who use play as a technique to develop new skills and knowledge. Which then leads us to question the role of adults – where and how do we fit into the pedagogy of play?

Play-responsive pedagogy

The authors cite research that suggests that 'guided play' has benefits to children, especially when more complex concepts are involved. This guided play can consist of either: adults enriching the play environment with props and materials for play, or adults playing along with children, asking questions and modelling problem solving and language. They suggest we no longer need to ask whether the teacher should participate in play, but rather how the teacher participates.

In Chapter 4, they describe some strategies that teachers used as part of a research project, including:

- asking permission to join the play
- asking questions about the play
- taking a role in the play (after observing), and
- responding to a child's (verbal or non-verbal) suggestions.

At preschool, we use strategies like this and others, observing children's play to make a thoughtful offering of materials or ideas to extend the play, modelling the use of language or materials to build children's repertoire of play and problem solving skills, or listening in to 'disrupt' the play and invite the children to think more deeply about an idea. It means that teachers and educators have to know children well, observe closely, and be deeply engaged in the work of teaching and learning.

In Chapters 5 to 9, the authors present and analyse transcripts and case studies of early childhood teachers in Sweden using the strategies and giving us a glimpse into the pedagogy of the teachers in the study.

Tensions and questions

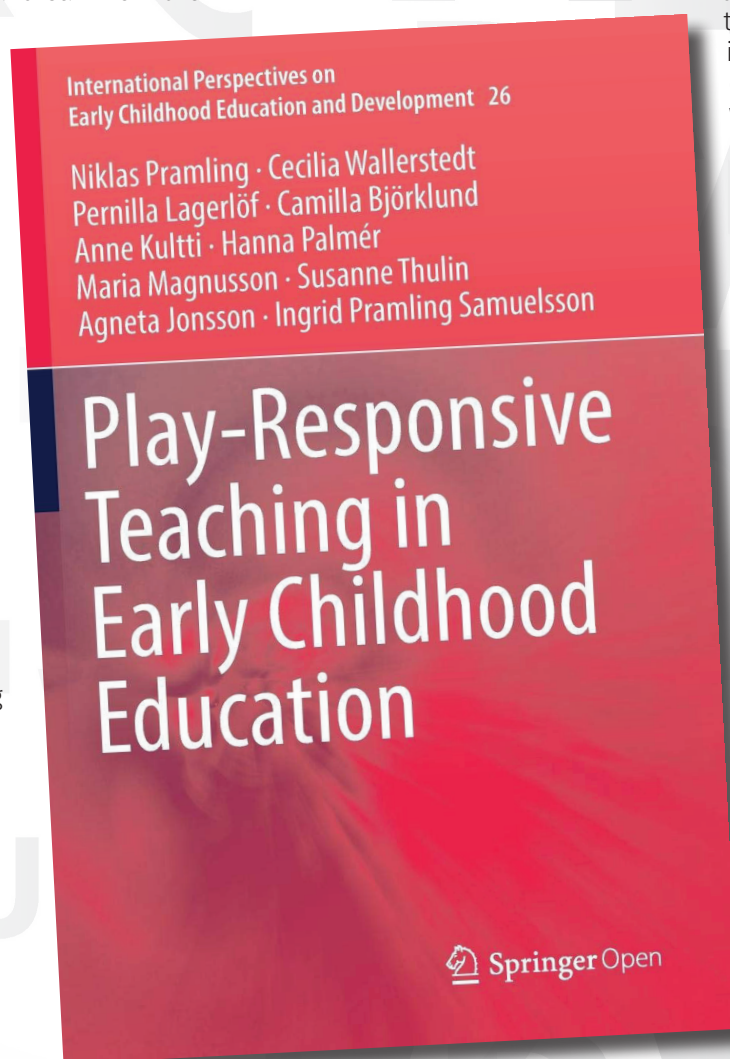
The authors describe some of the tensions that arise for teachers as they work in play-responsive pedagogies, including finding the balance between supporting realistic play (what they call 'as is' play) and creative pretend or make-believe play ('as if' play). Other questions arise around whether we, as teachers and play-partners, follow the child's lead or alternatively, challenge children by expanding and extending on their play ideas. How do we walk the line between being play-responsive and taking over, and how can our participation best support children's learning and development?

If we agree that the goal of early childhood education is to educate young children, that education involves gaining skills or content, and that play is central to children's learning, then, they conclude, play-responsive teaching must be at the cornerstone of our work as teachers.

This book provides a useful provocation for us in our everyday work with children and invites us to reflect on our own involvement in children's play. It provides some useful strategies for teachers as we begin to work more intentionally within play-responsive pedagogy, and invites us to reflect on our own practice as play-responsive teachers.

Play-Responsive Teaching in Early Childhood Education is by Niklas Pramling, Cecilia Wallerstedt, Pernilla Lagerlöf, Camilla Björklund, Anne Kultti, Hanna Palmér, Maria Magnusson, Susanne Thulin, Agneta Jonsson and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson. Published by Springer Open, it is available at all the usual outlets.

Go in the draw to win PDF access to *Play-Responsive Teaching in Early Childhood Education*. Email entries to giveaways@ieu.asn.au with the title of this book in the subject line. Write your name, membership number and postal address in the body of your email. All entries must be received by 20 August 2021.





“We can spot any potential issues with children at a very young age.”



Playgroup/preschool link reaps rewards

A unique partnership between a playgroup and preschool is benefitting teachers, educators, children and families in a small rural community, writes Werris Creek and District Preschool Director and NSW/ACT Branch Early Childhood Services Council member Julia Cameron.

Werris Creek is nestled in the Liverpool Plains, a 45-minute drive south west of Tamworth in north western NSW. The 1800 population is made up of young families, retirees, farmers and railway employees. Werris Creek and District Preschool is a community-based preschool operating five days a week.

In 2015, the preschool received recurrent funding from the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA), for a Beyond the Gate project, to provide a playgroup for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous families. The playgroup operated out of a large community hall, chilly in winter and warm in summer.

The aim of playgroup was to bridge a gap. The vision was to create and maintain an environment of safety, belonging and mattering for all families as well as supporting friendships, while children experienced an educationally based program with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) as its foundation.

Playgroup progress

As playgroup progressed, a partnership was formed with Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child and Family Centre, with a community worker providing Indigenous perspectives weekly, through song, dance, language and stories. On average 10–12 families attend each playgroup session.

The preschool and the local council negotiated on development applications for five years to enable the use of the building for playgroup. Successful grants were sought from a local community-based organisation, Farming for Kids and Whitehaven Coal.

This enabled the interior to be painted, new floor covering, a small kitchen, reverse cycle air conditioning and appliances such as a refrigerator and stove to be installed. NIAA agreed for some operational funding to be used to update resources and equipment.

In 2021 the hard work and tenacity of all those involved finally paid off, with playgroup now being offered twice a week during school terms.

It was a major boost when the Liverpool Plains Shire Council gifted the old library building, next door to the preschool, for use by the playgroup. Now the children could interact with each other through the windows (see photo).

Preschool administers the playgroup. The playgroup coordinator is also a preschool diploma-trained educator, so the transition for families and children has been seamless.

Language and culture.

Playgroup was named The Children's and Dhiyaan Nest (Dhiyaan means family in Gomeri) and the teaching of Gomeri words has been a part of the playgroup experience which has filtered into the preschool community. Our playgroup coordinator brings a lot of learning back to the preschool.

By attending playgroup, the children's transition to preschool is a lot less stressful. Families get to know each other at playgroup, and grandparents and other siblings

can make connections. Families are helping each other out picking up and dropping off children.

Some parents enjoy attending playgroup and spending time with their younger child while the older one is attending preschool.

One of the main advantages of playgroup is the early intervention. We can spot any potential issues with children at a very young age, which all the research highlights as beneficial. We work with allied health professionals such as speech therapists and occupational therapists to provide early intervention before the children even reach preschool.

Playgroup also gives educators and teachers a chance to discuss children's developmental progress and parenting skills with parents attending playgroup. Again, there are benefits of early intervention here.

An oasis

This community suffered a lot during the awful drought, and is now enduring a horrendous mouse plague. This preschool/playgroup centre is a community hub that provides respite. People love coming here. In fact, they've asked for the playgroup hours to be extended.

There are plans afoot to develop the outdoor areas to provide a place for playgroup children to play outside, next to the preschool.

I'm not aware of any other playgroup/preschool partnerships like ours. I've posted some information about this on Facebook and I've received a lot of interest from people wanting to know how we managed to get this working. It's a such a great stepping stone that could be beneficial in other rural communities.



Screen time linked to developmental delay

Preschool directors believe too much screen time is hampering children's transition from preschool to school, researchers have found.

Conducted by University of South Australia (UniSA) researchers Dr Kobie Boshoff, Alessia Pivato and Sarah Seekamp, the study explores the concerns of 41 South Australian preschool directors, finding that an overuse of screen time, in lieu of quality play, is substantially impacting children's development, putting them behind their peers as they start school.

Paediatric expert and Director of UniSA's International Centre for Allied Health Evidence, Dr Kobie Boshoff, says reducing children's screen time and replacing it with more developmentally appropriate playtime will help improve poor rates of school readiness.

"School readiness is all about the ability of a child to make a successful transition from preschool into formal school. But as research shows, nearly one in four South Australian children are not meeting the mark," Boshoff said.

"In our research, preschool directors indicate that families are overusing screens as 'babysitters' and that this could be contributing to lower levels of social skill development, concentration, problem solving abilities and self-regulation – all key skills that improve school readiness.

"This is acutely important for all families and children, but especially so for families living in rural and low socioeconomic areas, where the risk of developmental delay is known to be statistically higher."

Boshoff said preschool teachers could suggest ideas to parents for alternative, developmentally appropriate activities for children and families.

However, teachers did not need to avoid screen time in preschool because there's too much use at home. Rather preschools need to use screentime in a supervised and time limited manner.

"Children do need exposure to current technology and to feel comfortable and familiar with it. Preschools can role-model healthy screen time use across all developmental domains. They can learn about what a balanced day looks

like and how to set limits for yourself with timers; taking breaks and not eating in front of the screens.

"The take home message from our findings is the need for teachers to role model healthy screen use, to ensure their curriculum is balanced across all developmental domains, and to identify and support children whose development is influenced by too much screen time."

Guidelines

In Australia, health guidelines for preschool-aged children (2–5 years) recommend no more than one hour of screens per day, which includes television, computers and smart devices.

"While screen time has certainly become a normal part of everyday life, there has to be a balance, and we must educate parents about the adverse effect of too much screen-time on children's development," Boshoff says.

"Young children need to be spending more time riding scooters, being outside, or playing with traditional toys such as blocks, cars, or puzzles.

"A balanced, healthy lifestyle incorporating weekly time for physical activity, positive play time with parents and peers and giving children time to develop independence in their daily routines, are some examples of healthy activities for families.

"The result is that many more preschools have children with greater needs, leaving them in desperate need for early childhood interventions such as occupational therapy, speech pathology and physiotherapy.

"Providing this support is vital to ensure that children have a positive experience of the early years of school and that strong foundations for learning occur from day one.

"We do need to support our children to make most use of their learning opportunities and if we can get the message out that we all, as a society, need to look out for how our modern lifestyles are influencing our children's development, then perhaps we will start seeing some positive change".

"In our research, preschool directors indicate that families are overusing screens as 'babysitters.'"

What the National Workforce Strategy needs to get right



As many IEU members will know, our union has been involved in consultations arranged by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) on the new National Workforce Strategy, set to be endorsed and published by the end of 2021. Journalist Jessica Willis explains what the strategy needs to get right.

While there are many aspects of the new National Workforce Strategy that are important for the early childhood education sector's success, attracting and maintaining qualified and experienced early childhood education teachers and assistants is essential for the future of the profession and the sector.

This is the central point of our union's advocacy at both a state and federal level.

What is the strategy?

The new National Workforce Strategy is, according to ACECQA, a proposed 10-year plan to "ensure that Australia's children's education

and care sector has a sustainable, high-quality workforce that meets the needs of children and their families, the requirements of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and promotes positive education and developmental outcomes for future generations".

It will also aim, according to the organisation, to ensure "careers in the sector are engaging and rewarding".

Funding and pay key

If the new strategy is to be a long-term success, it is going to have to ensure two things:

- consistent and guaranteed federal funding for the sector; and
- the appropriate remuneration of early childhood education teachers and assistants.

Independent Education Union of Australia Acting Assistant Federal Secretary Christine Cooper (pictured) said without these, the sector would continue as it is now.

"The Federal Government needs to implement a guaranteed and consistent funding model for early childhood education, so the sector can actually implement long-term planning," Cooper said.

"Quality early childhood education has been proven to be a significant factor in the future wellbeing and academic success of young children; the early years (one to five years old) being an essential time for development.

"Early childhood education teachers and assistants are highly qualified and highly experienced in fostering this complex development and growth – it is no small task.

"It is just as (and in some cases more of) an important period of learning compared to Prep to Year 12, so it should have federal funding

guaranteed to ensure the best possible outcomes for students.

"This kind of funding would also provide longer-term job security for staff.

"Further, economists have shown that every dollar invested into the sector yields double in return, potentially adding trillions of dollars to the Australian economy through better outcomes for students, better financial security for workers and more opportunities for parents to return to work.

Quality conditions = quality education

Countering high employee turnover also requires appropriate remuneration and working conditions for teachers and assistants.

"The current high turnover of employees in the sector is a significant concern but is easily fixed," Cooper said.

"When employees have appropriate remuneration – which reflects the significance and complexity of their roles – and working conditions, they will not only stay in their roles but also perform to the highest standards.

"Our union's position is that remuneration and working conditions for early childhood education teachers and assistants must be comparable to those which exist in primary and secondary schools.

"This is what the new national workforce strategy needs to address," she said.

Our union will continue to advocate for members in the ACECQA consultation meetings and will keep you informed on any updates to the strategy.

Members can access further information on the ACECQA website <https://bit.ly/33j885T>.

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 thinking of leaving my position as a community kindergarten teacher given the bullying I'm experiencing from a member of the management committee. They use their position to continually question my teaching methods in quite an aggressive manner. I feel like I have nowhere to turn because the committee is my employer.

Cassie



Danielle Wilson

Dear Cassie

The repeated behaviour being exhibited towards you certainly meets the definition of workplace bullying. The Fair Work Commission considers a worker to be bullied if an individual or group of individuals repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards the worker or a group of workers.

It must also be behaviour that constitutes a risk to health and safety.

It is always preferable to try and resolve the matter at an informal level if possible, but it sounds like your situation is one requiring a formal complaint to be made, which our union can assist you in drafting.

Once the employer is aware of a complaint, they are required to invoke their complaints management system to address it.

Where it has been established that bullying has occurred, if an appropriate informal resolution can be attempted in the first instance, either by speaking directly to the alleged bully or through mediation, this should occur.

However, if this is not suitable, for example, where the behaviour or power imbalance is severe, it would be inappropriate for any direct approach to be made. Your employer should formally investigate and resolve the matter and take all necessary action if substantiated.

Should this not be successful, or should your employer not manage this appropriately, there are options you can consider and our union can assist you in taking the next steps needed to formally address the matter and ensure you receive the respect at work you deserve.

Finally, no one has the right to be aggressive, verbally abusive or physically abusive toward anyone in a workplace. This is occupational violence and should be reported. If you think what you have experienced is more than workplace bullying, be sure to contact us for help.

Danielle

Dear Lisa

When I receive annual leave loading (over Christmas), should the 17.5% loading be made on just my teacher hourly rate or inclusive of the director's loading as well?

My employer paid loading only on my base hourly rate but not on the additional director's loading. I don't understand why the amounts need to be separated and I would have thought the loading would be paid on my overall hourly rate given I am still the director while on annual leave and have still worked from time to time in management duties during the annual leave period.

Sarah



Lisa James

Dear Sarah

Annual leave loading is paid on the base or weekly rate of pay. Fortunately, the enterprise agreement that applies in your service is clear. The Director's Allowance is included in your base rate of pay. The IEU insisted that the wording in the enterprise agreement be clear to ensure directors would be paid annual leave loading on their Director's Allowance and that the Director's Allowance would be payable during periods of paid leave including personal

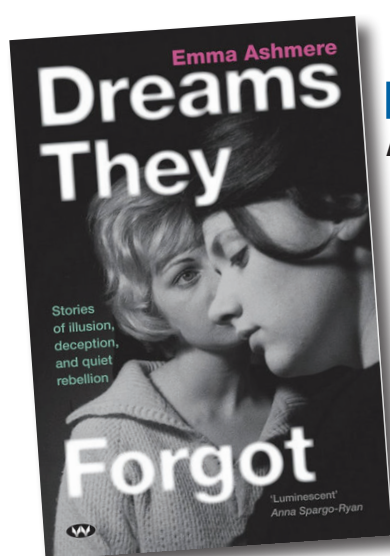
leave, annual leave and long service leave. Your annual leave loading should have been paid on your Director's Allowance.

The relevant clause in your enterprise agreement is: "8.3: Base rate of pay is the rate of pay payable to the employee for his or her ordinary hours of work. With the exception of a preschool manager whose Manager's Allowance is included in their base rate of pay, the following amounts are not included in the calculation of the base rate of pay: (a) Incentive based payments and bonuses; (b) Loadings; (c) Monetary allowances; (d) Overtime or penalty rates; (e) Any other separately identifiable amounts."

31.1 Employees entitled to annual leave will receive an annual leave loading of 17.5% on their base rate of pay, which is payable at the time the leave is taken."

It is lucky your workplace is covered by an enterprise agreement. Unfortunately for teachers working in services covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award*, it is not always the case that annual leave loading would be paid on the Director's Allowance.

Lisa



Dreams They Forgot

Author: Emma Ashmere | Publisher: Wakefield Press

Two sisters await the tidal wave predicted for 1970s Adelaide after Premier Don Dunstan decriminalises homosexuality. An interstate family drive is complicated by the father's memory of sighting UFOs. Two women drive from Melbourne to Sydney to see the Harbour Bridge before it's finished. An isolated family tries to weather climate change as the Doomsday Clock ticks.

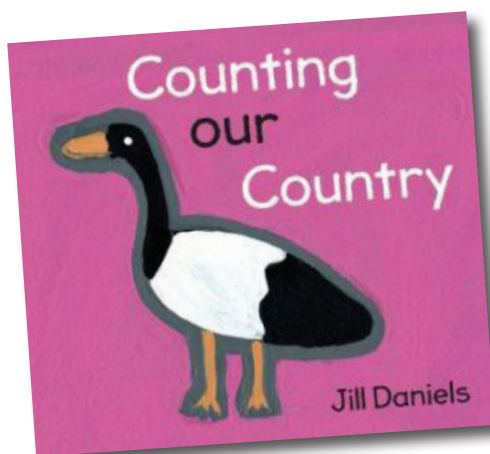
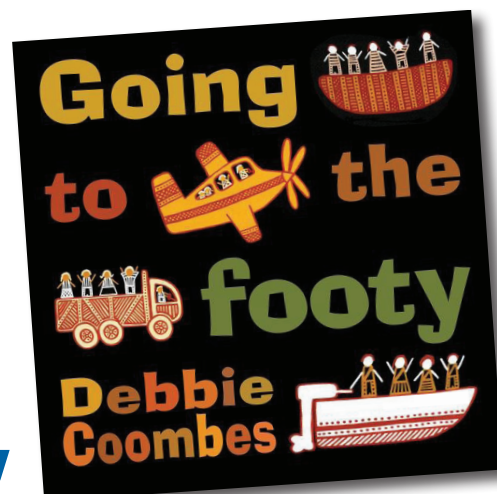
Emma Ashmere's stories explore illusion, deception and acts of quiet rebellion. Diverse characters travel high and low roads through time and place — from a grand 1860s Adelaide music hall to a dilapidated London squat, from a modern Melbourne hospital to the 1950s Maralinga test site, to the 1990s diamond mines of Borneo.

Undercut with longing and unbelonging, absurdity and tragedy, thwarted plans and fortuitous serendipity, each story offers glimpses into the dreams, limitations, gains and losses of fragmented families, loners and lovers, survivors and misfits, as they piece together a place for themselves in the imperfect mosaic of the natural and unnatural world.

Going to the footy

Author and illustrator: Debbie Coombes | Publisher: Magabala Books

In this quintessentially Australian title, *Going to the footy* combines richly textured and striking illustrations of iconic Australian modes of transport, with some gentle humour. This strikingly beautiful book for early childhood will captivate young children and older readers alike. The highly original artwork of Debbie Coombes in a vibrant Tiwi style, will showcase many different ways to get 'to the footy'. Whether you go to the footy in a tinny, a troopy or on a barge, this book is unforgettable.



Counting our Country

Author and illustrator: Jill Daniels | Publisher: Magabala Books

Counting our Country is a bilingual counting book from Jill Daniels, an Indigenous artist who lives in SE Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. Jill's paintings of animals found on her country celebrate her distinctive style and playful use of colour. Children will love counting the animals from one to 10 as they turn the pages.

Each double-page spread features the name of the animal in Ritharrnu, Jill's Aboriginal language, and in English. A guide on 'how to pronounce the Ritharrnu animal names' appears at the back of the book and encourages readers and young children to see if they can say them. *Counting our Country* recognises the value of developing cultural literacy by introducing Indigenous language and art in the early years.

Email entries to giveaways@ieu.asn.au with the title of the book you would like to receive in the subject line. Write your name, membership number and postal address in the body of your email. All entries must be received by 20 August 2021.

