

# BEDROCK

Vol 16 #2, AUGUST 2011

## Navigating the media maze

Learning  
best together

What is self regulation?

# BEDROCK

Vol 16 #1 August, 2011

## EXECUTIVE EDITORS

DICK SHEARMAN  
NSW/ACT Independent  
Education Union  
and TERRY BURKE  
Queensland Independent  
Education Union

## DESIGN/LAYOUT

Iva Coric

## JOURNALISTS/SUB-EDITING

Tara de Boehmler  
Suzanne Kowalski-Roth  
Sue Osborne  
Fiona Stutz

## COORDINATOR

Verena Heron

## PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

Print & Mail Pty Ltd  
23–25 Meeks Road  
Marrickville, NSW 2204

## PUBLICATION MAILING ADDRESS

NSW/ACT Independent  
Education Union  
GPO Box 116  
Sydney 2001  
Tel: (02) 9779 3200  
Fax: (02) 9261 8850  
Email: [ieu@ieu.asn.au](mailto:ieu@ieu.asn.au)  
Website: [www.ieu.asn.au](http://www.ieu.asn.au)

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## Early childhood campaigns cutting through



Dick Shearman

Strong campaigns in NSW and Queensland are holding the respective state governments accountable on pay equity and adequate funding for early childhood centres.

In Queensland, members have requested local MPs sign a pledge committing them to supporting, in Parliament, improved funding to protect community-based kindergartens' future viability along with the working conditions of those employed in them.

In NSW, the Teachers are Teachers campaign has also achieved cut-through. New Education Minister Adrian Piccoli has mentioned the initiative during an early childhood stakeholders meeting and tells *Bedrock* the NSW Government will be advocating for appropriate funding for a national strategy to strengthen the workforce.

The reach of Union campaigns is being extended via social networking services Facebook and Twitter and tailor-made campaign homepages.

Turn to pages 12 and 17 for more details on Queensland and NSW campaign developments.

This issue of *Bedrock* also provides inspiration for helping children navigate the media maze. It shares some approaches for nurturing self-regulation. And it tells how early childhood settings play a vital role in building community resilience.

Enjoy the read and remember, if you have feedback or suggestions for topics you would like to see covered in *Bedrock*, please email [bedrock@ieu.asn.au](mailto:bedrock@ieu.asn.au).



Terry Burke

## Teachers' pay campaign on Facebook

The NSW/ACT IEU has launched its very own Teachers are Teachers Facebook campaign page [www.facebook.com/teachersareteachers](http://www.facebook.com/teachersareteachers)

Join the conversation and help the campaign maintain the momentum crucial for change.

While you are there, check out the Branch's general facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ieunswact](http://www.facebook.com/ieunswact).



## Reform budget gain

An extra \$32.4 million has been added to the budget of the early childhood reform agenda in NSW.

The money is divided into a \$9.2 million Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) package to enable early childhood workers to access training.

The RPL package will fund specialist training for 600 RPL assessors in delivery of Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Children's Services and grants of up to \$1125 for 2000 rural and remote child care staff per year for out of pocket expenses associated with accessing RPL.

The \$23.2 million over four years for the Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) is to be met from existing resources.

This brings the total for the AEDI to \$28 million (indexed) for each three-year cycle.

Additionally \$500,000 will be provided to identify mental health risks. Further information is available at [www.aedi.org.au](http://www.aedi.org.au) and for the other programs at [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)

## Hours of work – beware

Queensland members need to ensure any agreements regarding hours of work do not create negative precedents that can be exploited by employers elsewhere.

While some provisions applying to ECE in Queensland may not match those in schools, conditions obtained by our Union are superior to the conditions which apply in 'non-education' sectors.

Any diminution of the hours of work provisions, even at only one or two kindergartens, will have deleterious consequences for all ECE employees in Queensland.

## EYLF help forum

An EYLF PLP interactive online forum has been established to help the profession navigate the framework. See <http://forums.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au>.

You can also access free resources, newsletters and case studies to help guide you through the EYLF. Details: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/eylflplp/>



Contact Lisa on (02) 9779 3200  
or email [lisa@ieu.asn.au](mailto:lisa@ieu.asn.au)

## Cost pressures

Education Queensland has advised IEUA-QNT that pupil-free days can no longer form part of the mandatory 40 weeks of an educational program, contrary to existing conditions in a number of collective agreements.

Further cost pressures will be placed on kindergartens and parents if this policy is pursued as they struggle to provide an education program while retaining fair and just conditions for employees.

The IEUA-QNT will raise this issue with the Minister for Education to lobby for additional funding, and will approach Central Governing Bodies in relation to a unified approach to the Government.

The Crèche and Kindergarten Association Inc (C&K) said employees should not be required to perform additional work hours without recompense. IEUA-QNT will explore with other CGBs their preparedness to adopt a similar public stance.



## School in a Box

UNICEF's innovative School-in-a-Box helps to keep education happening when chaos abounds.

The box is full of books, pencils, erasers, scissors and a wind-up solar radio and the aluminium lid of the box doubles as a blackboard.

Few gifts are as innovative as this. They retail for \$238.00 and are a wonderful way for early childhood services to contribute to international education. Details: [www.unicef.org.au/Charity-Gifts/School-in-a-Box.aspx](http://www.unicef.org.au/Charity-Gifts/School-in-a-Box.aspx)

Dear Lisa,

I've taken a new teaching job in a long day care centre and the owner told me that they want everyone to come to a full day of training on a Saturday.

The Director said that it is voluntary so we will not be paid or get time-in-lieu for the day but it will look bad for us if we refuse to go.

I am on the Modern Award, can you tell me if this is right?

Thanks for your help,

Joanne.

Dear Joanne,

*The Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 does not state that teachers employed in services that operate 48 weeks or more per year are responsible for attending professional development or acquiring a First Aid certificate in their own time.*

*The IEUA's position is that if the employer requires teachers to attend training, including first aid training, outside working hours the employer is responsible for paying the cost of the course.*

*In addition, teachers should be paid overtime or accrue time-in-lieu for their attendance.*

*If your employer states that all professional development is voluntary to avoid paying for the course itself and/or attendance, I would recommend that teachers do not attend any courses outside working hours.*

Lisa

# Navigating the media maze

Every day children are bombarded by images and information from a variety of media sources. *Bedrock Journalist* Fiona STUTZ hears from Queensland media consultant Jeff Licence about how educators can better understand media concepts and use media technologies for learning, communicating and connecting with children.

"We've got these incredible tools now that allow us to go beyond being a passive recipient of the story. We can actually become a lot more involved in the process. For kids, this is an exciting time, and for teachers too," Jeff says.

Digital media can affect children in many positive ways. "It gives them an incredible opportunity to view, listen, read, share and create stories," he says.

Many children already access these tools. Often they own a video camera, have a computer and internet connection.

Part of the challenge is working out how children can use these tools in a positive way.

## How does it work?

To help children navigate through the media maze, educators must assist children to develop an understanding of how media works, Jeff says.

"When we read little kids books we say who it's written by and it's in front of them and the picture is drawn.

"It's a creation they can understand because they do that pen to paper stuff all the time, whereas things that come out of a screen are so incredibly rich and textured and digitally created – it's important for kids to understand how that creation process happens."

"We're in a phase where

we've got digital immigrants

teaching digital natives"

'KidPix' is a program that teaches the basic of graphic design, drawing and art concepts, which is similar to working with an adult design program such as Adobe Photoshop. Jeff says it is an example of how children can learn more about the creative process.

## Getting skilled up

While children often feel more confident with technology than teachers "it doesn't mean they understand the implications of using it better, but they just don't have any fear behind it so they'll just click away on anything", Jeff says.

"We're in a phase where we've got digital immigrants teaching digital natives."

As computers and new technologies are forced onto schools and early childhood education settings, teachers may wonder how they can best use such programs and tools to better engage their children.

"I think there's a temptation to just say, 'okay, we'll just let them play that game because we've got to use computers'.

"We need to let the teaching and learning needs of the kids guide how we use the technology rather than the other way around."

Professional development is important for teachers to become more confident with technology.

"It's important for teachers not to be fearful of using the technology and to jump in and have a go – it's actually kind of hard to break a computer. Just start exploring different programs."

### Saturation coverage

At the beginning of the year media coverage of Queensland floods was on every TV. As a result many children were bombarded with images of the disaster which they may have found difficult to comprehend.

"For little kids, when they're watching the same footage over and over, they don't see that as a replay. They just see that as another disaster that is happening."

Teachers can help debrief children and encourage them to talk about the images they are seeing.

"They need to be reassured that these are extreme events. They're not going to happen all the time. Your family is going to be safe... just give them some of that really practical advice."

### Scary movies

Such reassurances can also be applied to scary movies or animation, Jeff says.

"The teacher explains that's a creation of a filmmaker – they've used the camera, they've used the music – to make that scene scary and this is how they've done it; going into that basic media 101 creation stuff."

While it is important for children to be able to use and understand media, Jeff says it is equally important for children to know when to switch off.

"Knowing they have a choice to switch off is a really big one.

"This comes down to how parents are policing it so that they can make responsible choices with their digital life, like how long they spend, what sort of games they play and what sort of shows they watch."

### Be part of the debate

Jeff believes one of the positives of using technology is the opportunity for young people "to be part of big picture debates and issues, engage with activism and social change".

"There are networks all around the world that we can suddenly access and link in to, which has never really happened before.

"The earlier they get into this stuff the more armed they'll be to become responsible online creators and users."

Jeff Licence runs workshops to help teachers, parents and children understand the media. You can read more about media and children on his blog [www.jefflicence.wordpress.com](http://www.jefflicence.wordpress.com) and contact him at [jeff@tigermonkey.biz](mailto:jeff@tigermonkey.biz).

## How to use technology for learning

"One of the workshops I do is teaching teachers about simple movie making techniques.

"Just get a bunch of photographs, either that the teacher has taken or trust the kids with the camera.

"You get an amazing perspective from the kids when they've taken the photo because they're so much smaller and their view of the world is so different.

"Bring that stuff into iMovie or Movie Maker...or slideshow programs, as a way of collating what you are doing in your class.

"Kids love it because they love looking at themselves and seeing themselves in action, and they're useful tools for teachers to observe the ways kids interact.

"Get kids to make stories around what they are doing and put together a little film.

"As well as showing how film is made, kids are seeing how the technology is used to add titles and transitions and how camera angles make people look different."

10 minutes with...

# Jay Laga'aia



**W**hat has ABC Television's *Play School* presenter Jay Laga'aia got in common with early childhood teachers? A major passion for early education and an acute awareness of the importance of fun, writes *Bedrock* Journalist Tara **DE BOEHLER**.

"I came over from New Zealand and started working on *Water Rats* in 1995. At the end of 1999 I was asked if I was interested in auditioning for *Play School*.

"As a Polynesian it is like a prerequisite that you play several instruments and harmonise, so I had consciously made an effort not to utilise those skills when I came here.

"The last thing I wanted was to be that stereotypical jolly brown skinned guy on the side of the boat. I wanted to be an actor.

"Because of this, the *Play School* audition was a great outlet - going in there and doing much of what I was doing at home anyway. Much to my enjoyment and amazement they asked if I would join the presentational cast and I've been a member ever since.

"The ethos of *Play School* is not about collecting different faces. It is about being able to perform while also communicating with children.

"Not everyone can work to camera for children so I was very pleased. In a way I thought I was scamming them because all I was doing was what I normally do with my kids.

"At the time I auditioned my wife and I had four children and now we have eight. They range from 22 months to 27 years - four boys and four girls.

"Some people think that because I have eight children I must know what I'm doing but all I really know how to do is fold clothes so I can still

see the television. We spend most of our time at home trying to find shoes so we can get out the door.

"The main value of *Play School* is that it empowers parents. The show is not about fancy equipment or creating things that look like they're store bought.

"*Play School* is very much about saying, 'See this toilet roll and that toilet roll? If you sellotape them together it's a telescope'.

"*Play School* tells parents, if you say this thing is a butterfly then that's what it is. You don't have to get the spangly battery operated wand thing that spins round and round.

"For us it's 'one on one'. Every time we are talking to the camera we are talking to your child, my child, everyone's child and we wait for a response but never in a condescending way. We have presenters who know what they are talking about.

"I have had a lot of experience of early childhood centres with my own children. They seem so much more sophisticated now.

"Along with the same focus on play that has always been there we also see a focus on the real world, looking at space, role-play, different languages or dinosaurs.

"My daughter comes home telling me about different dinosaurs and their skulls. She tells me how the skull is - that it is soft when they are young but harder when they grow older.

"I see all this as a great foundation to build my daughter's curiosity on as she grows older, and I really appreciate it.

"The way I see it, if kids get a good preschool life that is filled not only with love and play but also with information and wonder they will hit the ground running.

"It is exhausting to be an early childhood teacher because you are constantly having to look through the child's eyes but still act in a grown-up, parental way.

"It can be difficult to create and play because you also have major parameters within which you must work. It takes a special breed of grown-up to be able to do this. You play with dolls and build castles but also make sure they know they must eat their lunch.

"Our children are the foundation we build our nation on and I am constantly gob-smacked by the work early childhood teachers do.

"This is where money should be spent so we don't lose all our good teachers to overseas where they know the

“

It takes a special breed of grown-up to be able to play with dolls and build castles but also make the children know they must eat their lunch

”

value. Doesn't the government realise if it pays peanuts it will start getting monkeys?

"I love being constantly taught by young people. At home our two four-year-olds amaze us as they can easily talk together for two hours and they don't even have a life. We say 'what can they be talking about for all that time?'

"Children can sit and play constantly for a good three hours. You realise it is possible because they are living in the moment and they are playing in a way that adults have lost because they are too busy trying to be grown-ups.

"Making time to play with kids and entering their world has taught me a lot.

"Working with children is also such a great leveller. Unlike adults, if children are bored of you they will walk from you. "If you think you've come at them with something fantastic they are great at shutting you down and making you realise that it's really not about you, it's about them. You might not want to listen to that tune again but they do.

"When I write children's music it is very much about writing tunes based in the music I grew up with in the 60s and 80s. In doing so there is a thread of musical form that adults understand but it also deals with things that children can relate to. I try to span both worlds and cater to both tastes."

Jay's second album, *I Can Play Anything*, is out now.

# ANTI-POVERTY WEEK

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poverty



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[www.ieu.asn.au](http://www.ieu.asn.au)

# New Government, new take on early childhood education?

Following a crushing election defeat for Labor earlier this year, NSW's new Coalition State Government is promising change for the better for early childhood education, writes *Bedrock* Journalist Tara DE BOEHLER.

Actions so far include rolling early childhood education into the Department of Education and Communities, which NSW Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli says brings the State in line with the rest of the country, acknowledges a key focus on education and development and "recognises the need for clear separation of early childhood education and care from the statutory responsibilities for child protection".

At a meeting of stakeholders attended by the IEU, Minister Piccoli committed to genuine consultation and made assurances he would be considering the IEU's campaign for pay parity for early childhood teachers.

Meanwhile vocal supporter of the pay parity campaign former Kindergarten Union (KU) Chief Executive Officer Sheridan Dudley has been appointed the Minister's Chief of Staff.

Earlier this year, while still with KU, Ms Dudley spelt out to *Bedrock* (Vol 16 #1, April 2011) her commitment to government-funded pay equity for teachers.

"Early childhood teachers teach just like any other teacher. They undertake teacher training at university, they teach, they have a curriculum and a pedagogical framework. But they're paid less.

"In primary schools they focus on the 3 R's – reading, writing and arithmetic. But in early childhood there is an equally clear curriculum framework, the 3 B's of being, belonging and becoming."

"My strong belief is that there is a drift out of the sector. Particularly in long day care where the days are long, the conditions are onerous, the working year is lengthy and there is often shift work. If you were an early childhood teacher in long day care the temptation would be to move to a school based sector where you work school hours, get school holidays and get paid more," Ms Dudley said.

## First hand knowledge

Mr Piccoli tells *Bedrock* that he also knows how important quality early childhood education and care is. "I have a three-year-old and a six-month-old and I am fortunate to be able to experience first-hand what a quality service is all about at the Dorothy Wade Centre in Griffith.



"I am aware of the importance of the qualifications, expertise and commitment of early childhood teachers working with our youngest children being appropriately recognised and remunerated."

Mr Piccoli says the State Coalition supports "the need for university-qualified early childhood teachers in services". However he says the "main concern here is whether there will be enough teachers available to meet the COAG timeframes".

The Minister says there will be no roll back of the 1:4 ratio in NSW and says the 1:5 ratio is appropriate for two to three-year-olds. "It is already in place in several states and we think that with proper planning and phase-in, services in NSW should be able to implement this by the COAG deadline of 2016," he says.

Mr Piccoli says he looks forward to a collaborative and productive relationship with key stakeholders in the sector to deliver the best outcomes possible for children and families in NSW.

"Members have every right to be represented by their union of choice and I have demonstrated my consultative approach by making it a priority to meet with key providers, peaks and the IEU."

# Fight goes on



*North Queensland early childhood network meeting*

**I**EUA-QNT has consistently and persistently argued for improved funding for community kindergartens for the last two years, writes *Bedrock Journalist* Fiona **STUTZ**.

Along the way some victories have been made, such as the Queensland Government's decision to retrospectively fund the 4.5% wage increase for early childhood education employees in 2009.

However, the fundamental deficiency inherent in the Queensland Kindergarten Funding Scheme (KFS) remains unaddressed.

The proposed level of funding under the State Government's KFS remains inadequate for the overwhelming majority of kindergartens.

The current KFS will result in community kindergarten education being placed beyond the financial means of many families. This will threaten the ongoing viability of many kindergartens.

The combination of the new funding scheme, and the apparently illogical decisions regarding the locations of new kindergartens, threatens to cause the closures of existing kindergartens which will result in redundancies.

Unless a kindergarten has adopted a new federal agreement, existing employees will be without any redundancy payments.

Generally a community kindergarten will face a shortfall in funding equal to \$400 per child per year under this scheme.



*Catherine Neilson-Murray and Tracy Lawrence from Stafford Heights Kindergarten*



*Regional organising committee - Logan, Moreton and Bayside*

# in Queensland

At the end of 2010 IEUA-QNT early childhood education members met with State Government members of Parliament to highlight their concerns. They sought an explicit commitment from parliamentarians that the viability of community kindergartens would be maintained.

Members from Townsville, Sarina, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast requested that their local MP sign a pledge which committed the MP to support in parliament publicly improved funding to protect the working conditions of employees and to protect the future viability of community kindergartens.

The fundamental flaw in the KFS is that it fails to take into account the additional labour costs associated with the introduction of the 15 hour universal access model. The additional hours of teaching work resulting from this model can only result in additional labour costs.

In the majority of instances the lengthened educational program will require the employment of additional staff. The payment of some form of 'overtime penalty' is a less than attractive option where employees are already struggling with workload pressures.

The previous Queensland Minister for Education made clear statements to all parties in the kindergarten sector that employees should not be required to teach for additional hours without any recompense or reward.

However, the Queensland Government has, to date, failed to identify any concrete measures which would ensure that employers do not attempt to impose on employees the additional costs associated with implementing the universal access model.

This failure by the State Government to provide concrete support seriously undermines any assertions that they value early childhood education employees.

The Government must implement tangible measures which, as a very minimum, both protect the existing hours of work of early childhood education professionals and ensure that their wages remain comparable with other education sectors.

IEUA-QNT early childhood education members continue to seek a commitment from the State Government to significantly increase the quantum of funding not only to cover the additional costs, but also guarantee that early childhood employees receive appropriate wages and conditions.

The affordability of community kindergartens for parents must not be adversely affected.



*A delegation from Sarina Kindergarten*



*Mission Beach early childhood education meeting*



*Early childhood staff at Emerald childcare centre*

# What is self-regulation?

**N**euroscientists now believe a child's ability to self-regulate is a better indicator of their future performance at school than their IQ levels, writes *Bedrock* Journalist Sue **OSBORNE**.

But what is self-regulation and how can early childhood teachers nurture it?

Canadian philosophy and Psychology Professor Stuart Shanker is a world expert in this field.

He recently discussed self-regulation at the Federal Government sponsored Early Years Conference held in Sydney, by [videolink](#).

Self-regulation can be defined as the ability to stay calmly focused and alert, Professor Shanker says. This is not the same as self-control or self-discipline.

Baumeister and Vohs (2004) define self-regulation as:

- the ability to attain, maintain and change one's level of arousal appropriately for a task or situation
- the ability to control one's emotions
- the ability to formulate a goal, monitor goal progress, adjust one's behaviour
- the ability to manage social interactions, to co-regulate, and
- to be aware of one's academic strengths and weaknesses, and to have a repertoire of strategies to tackle day-to-day challenges of academic tasks.

Self-regulation works at all levels: biological, emotional, cognitive, social and reflective thinking, and each factor affects the other.

It is learned by babies, from their primary caregivers. The better self-regulated the care-giver, the better she can modify her own arousal states and read and respond to her baby's signals, and thus regulate her baby.

For example, research has found babies with depressed mothers are less active and have more trouble sleeping.

There are six levels of arousal:

## Activation



6. flooded
5. hyperalert
4. calmly focused and alert
3. hypoalert
2. drowsy
1. asleep



## Inhibition



Dr Shanker says the better a child at four can stay "calmly focused and alert," the better he can take in information with all his senses.

Being withdrawn or hypoalert (the children that fly under the radar) can impede learning just as much as hyperactivity.

He compares self-regulation to driving a car. We drive (hopefully) at the appropriate speed for the circumstances on the road.

### Safe driving

For some children, maintaining the ideal speed requires a lot more fuel than is usual for others.

Self-regulation is not the same as being compliant. Dr Shanker uses an example of two Year 1 classes he has visited.

In one class the children were all sitting quietly at their desks being read a story.

Any children that were noisy would be sent to the corridor.

In another class the children were in small groups. One group was making shapes with a projector, another making mobiles out of a pipe cleaner, a third was playing with seashells and sticks and a fourth was writing on a flipchart.

The second class was demonstrating much more self-regulation, as they were guiding their own learning.

Dr Shanker says they were also more engaged and alert, whereas some children in class one were daydreaming or withdrawn.

He warns against jumping to the conclusion that an overly restless or animated child has an attention deficit, and he says teachers need to understand what underlying factors could be making it hard for the child to make sense of information being presented to them.

"A child who daydreams excessively or is inordinately hyperactive is certainly not culpable in any way, and it would be deeply unfortunate to treat the child as if he were, however unconscious this might be.

"Rather than trying to strengthen their ability to remain focused and alert, through punishment and reward, we need to understand and thereby mitigate the drains on their nervous system, which have resulted in these chronic self-regulation states."

### Help not hinder

Could they be anxious, hypersensitive, and slow at processing auditory information, or overloaded by the presence of other children?

"The notion of control is problematic – the very idea that a child needs to inhibit his appetites and impulses is worrying. The real goal of self-regulation is to help the child learn how to manage his internal states, however difficult we ourselves might find his outbursts."



"A child who daydreams or is hyperactive is not culpable in any way, and it would be unfortunate to treat the child as if he were."

Dr Shanker encourages teachers to think about why they are organising a particular activity for their children. Why do the children need to sit still and listen, if it is harder for them to engage?

"Some children are best able to remain attentive when they are moving about. In fact, forcing a child to sit still might have the exact opposite affect on their self-regulation from what is wanted, ie, it might leave them chronically hypo or hyper alert."

Social and constructive play is a great way to develop self-regulation skills in young children.

The play should engage children, encourage them to see things from another's perspective, encourage communication, pose challenges and require self-direction to maintain. Play should be an integral part of learning, he says.

"The better we understand the reasons why a child might be acting up, or not paying attention, or having trouble falling asleep or being aggressive in the playground, the better we can devise strategies to keep him regulated.

"And the nearer the child can stay regulated, the better he will learn how to regulate himself, so that, instead of spilling over into behaviours that we try to suppress, his energy becomes a source of learning and discovery."

A webcast for early childhood teachers featuring Professor Shanker and Jane Bertrand, an early childhood educator from the University of Toronto, can be viewed at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early\\_learning/webcasts1.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/early_learning/webcasts1.htm)

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Shanker S, Casenhiser D and Stieben J 2011, *Understanding the Nature of Self-Regulation*,

Baumeister RF and Vohs KD 2004, *Handbook of Self-Regulation, Research, Theory and Applications*, Guildford Press, New York.

For the dedication and loyalty for so many years to the Early Childhood field, I think those of us who work so hard deserve more money, as greedy as that sounds. I get really upset when all you hear in the media is about how ch... skyrocket and families won't be able to afford the fees. Early childhood teachers are just as important and in some sibility than school teachers as the first 5 years of a child's life is crucial and this is a known fact. Just because hood sector... ed teachers jus schools wh... vesting time and and care? I... dhood because of the early... interparts in det esteem we... years and no ex... uity at pres... believe that I s a low wage... people in my cc... reduce their... e to face teac... preschool in... ould stop unde... contribution... care for them... Because we... tional program... from enrolm... ordering equipm... over 50 chil... e worth or we... compassionate... worked and unde... they are und... d??? Preparing... school is in... t a smooth tra... and school... husband earns tw... hours and n... This campaign... to highlight... ing in the comm... accept belo... JOKE and a pr... the point o... und to to link... Universal Ac... owledge and... of work ho... pected to atten... AGM's, fun... attend street fi... has set up... t attend or not. I... - IT'S RE... don't have a job... not only tea... families. We co... vices they n... st possible. We... the best pe... n when worki... takes a con... s time to hono... be employed... many others in t... to take on r... for infants Tea... Childhood t... other professi... disabilities... e than face to... teacher... th no other stu... to pla... in a school is... ackne... ttee are for mo... expect... ervices then tea... attend... e my colleague... att... WORK CONTR... don't... by providng res... fami... lives of our li... poddi... Teachers take... when... re teachers: ed... time to... field, I think t... hard, MA... n all you hear i... childcare ca... od teachers are... some cases... s crucial and th... because we... are also qualifie... ers just like... Aren't children... time and no... in primary, but... because i be... he same level as... parts in det... years and experie... and no exper... is age ist and a... I subsidise... children of many... community, family. We also... teaching ho... teachers out r... undervaluing... give the people... them recog... ling to provide... program. In... additional needs... ing equipme... s then we mus... worth or we will lose them. We want compassionate, gifted and skilled early childhood teachers educationg tom worked and under paid teachers who feel they are under valued for their contribution to education. Who do you child??? Preparing students well for primary school is incredibly important. I work hard at my job to ensure chil



# TEACHERS ARE TEACHERS



## 2011 ANNUAL ECS CONFERENCE

Saturday, 10 September

8.45am - 4.00pm

Mercure Hotel

### CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

**Prof Jake Najman**  
"Fetal and Early Childhood  
Determinants of Adult Health and  
Well Being"

**Prof Narottam Bhindi &  
Prof Michael Hough**  
"Gen X and Y Parents"

For further information contact  
Iva Coric on 9779 3200 ,  
toll free 1800 467 943  
or iva@ieu.asn.au

### AGENDA

- 8.30 Registration and Coffee
- 9.00 Welcome
- 9.15 Gabe Connell, IEU Vice President  
*The current ECS landscape*
- 9.30 Dick Shearman, IEU General Secretary  
*Teachers Are Teachers campaign*
- 10.00 Keynote: Professor Michael Hough  
& Professor Narottam Bhindi  
*Gen X & Y Parents*
- 11.00 Morning Tea
- 11.30 Keynote: Professor Jake Najman,  
*Fetal & Early Childhood Determinants  
of Adult Health & Well Being*
- 12.15 Workshops (session one)
- 1.15 Lunch
- 2.15 Workshops (session two)
- 3.15 Plenary and Close

# TELL YOUR STORY



FUND EQUAL PAY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS.



**I**n March preschools and long day care centres all over NSW held a Blue Day to highlight the need for pay parity for early childhood teachers with their school counterparts, writes *Bedrock* Journalist Suzanne **KOWALSKI-ROTH**.

The Teachers Are Teachers campaign is continuing to build momentum, and members can participate in a number of ways.

These include teachers 'telling a story' by communicating the importance of their work in early childhood.

"We need to tell everyone a simple story. The story that early childhood teachers are important and just why," says Campaign Director Lisa Bryant.

Teachers and directors will be asked to tell their story to their communities and to book in meetings with local MPs.

Another action will be to put up posters that point to the contribution of qualified teachers in a service.

Teachers will be asked to spread the word about the importance of the campaign to their colleagues. Without the profession mobilising behind the campaign its chances of success are much reduced.

To help the campaign gain valuable momentum the NSW/ACT IEU has launched the Teachers Are Teachers Facebook campaign page at [www.facebook.com/teachersareteachers](http://www.facebook.com/teachersareteachers).

Get online, contribute and have your say about why your work is crucial. This campaign is only as strong as its members.

Many organisations are supporting the campaign. Kindergarten Union (KU) encouraged all its teachers to participate in the Blue Day.

"The 'Blue Day' activities saw KU staff wear blue clothing and accessories, do blue-based activities, and hang blue banners and posters out the front of their centres to help increase awareness about the campaign for pay parity," a recent KU newsletter about the campaign said.

It also said the organisation "has long been seeking pay parity for teachers in early childhood settings" and will continue to support the IEU campaign over the following months.

# Police, Fire, Ambulance, Early childhood service



*A Namibian childcare centre.*

**E**arly childhood settings can play a vital role in building community resilience against disaster situations, says Macquarie University Professor of Early Childhood and Social Inclusion Jacqueline Hayden, in an interview with *Bedrock* Journalist Sue **OSBORNE**.

Professor Hayden has been carrying out research on what happens to young children before and after disasters, and what best supports families.

Her interest in this area began when she worked in Rwandan refugee camps in 1994.

Since then she has undertaken research in Namibia, and several other African countries, as well as Europe, North America and Australia.

With colleague Dr Kathy Cologon she has also researched the effects on children of the Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria and has focused on disasters in developing countries within the Asia-Pacific 'ring of fire'.

At the moment she is working on research projects in Myanmar, Vanuatu, Bangladesh, Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Haiti.

"It is always inspirational and a huge learning curve for me to work with partners in these areas. What we find out about dealing with extreme situations can be applicable for areas which are better resourced."

There is a growing literature about planning for disaster on a national level and a number of excellent resources about disaster risk reduction programs for children and families, but there are gaps in our knowledge about what happens at community level.

This, Professor Hayden says, is where disaster risk reduction and recovery actually take place.

Strong communities minimise risks of disaster and contribute to faster and more sustainable recovery.

Research from recent disasters has identified that younger children, and especially children with special needs, are vulnerable during and after disasters.

There are many factors which define resilient communities, but being aware of children's needs and having services where families and children meet on a regular basis is one of the most important indicators.

"Quality early childhood programs play a central role. Not just preschools and long day care, but when there is a variety of approaches in the community which provide support for all children.

"There is a sense that the community knows and cares about its children – so that when a disaster or any unpredictable event occurs, people know who needs to be included in assistance programs and are ready to gather at, or create, safe places.

"Most importantly, in a strong community, people are aware of families and children with special needs and can mobilise to ensure that assistance is given where needed."

"In all places I have been, I am convinced that early childhood teachers and settings can play a vital role in contributing to family connectedness, and enhanced sense of belonging and community.

"Those who run early childhood programs tend to be seen as neutral or beneficent community players whereas there is sometimes a stigma attached to others who come into contact with children and families, such as child protection workers or even health workers who only see children when something is wrong or needs correcting. For this reason early childhood services are well placed to become a central hub for families and the community."

Professor Hayden often refers in her work to five elements for disaster recovery, developed by Hobfoll et al (2007).

The elements are:

### 1. sense of safety

Children and adults need to have their sense of protection restored. They need to learn to discriminate between indicators which are dangerous and those which are not. They need to understand that people can be trusted to assist them.

### 2. sense of calming

Under emergency conditions, it is common to experience a loss of control and predictability in everyday life. A goal for the recovery stage of emergencies is to reduce anxiety and stress levels and re-establish a sense of calmness in the face of everyday occurrences.

### 3. self-efficacy and collective efficacy

A sense of control over positive outcomes. The realisation that one can draw on strategies for coping with issues is an important goal for health and wellbeing. For children this likely translates into the notion of protection – that there will be help: there are places and people to turn to in times of stress and disruption. Young children are made to feel more in control when taught simple protection factors such as what to do when an alarm rings or an earthquake strikes.

### 4. connectedness

Fostering connections is critical to recovery for both adults and children. Young children need to re-establish caring relationships and/or to have experiences whereby relationships which are formed are likely to be sustainable. Early childhood professionals can help a great deal with re-establishing a sense of connectedness for children and families.

### 5. hope

In this case the term hope refers to the development of a sense of coherence, a sense of confidence that internal and external environments are predictable, and that life can become predictable and normalised. Hope implies a belief in the benevolence of others; that help will be available when needed.

"These five elements do not only apply to post-disaster situations," Professor Hayden says. "Early childhood settings are ideal places to support and enhance these five elements through their everyday practices."



*Early childhood services are well placed to become a central hub for families and the community.*



Above: Jacqueline Hayden meets villagers in Namibia.



Professor Hayden has co-authored a number of books and resources that may be useful to early childhood teachers. Some of these can be downloaded for free. See below.

*From Conflict to Peace Building, The Power of Early Childhood Initiatives*, describes how early childhood services have influenced peace building initiatives in places as diverse as Northern Ireland, Bosnia and the United States. Download from [www.paulconnolly.net/publications/pdf\\_files/WF\\_Peacebook\\_complete.pdf](http://www.paulconnolly.net/publications/pdf_files/WF_Peacebook_complete.pdf)

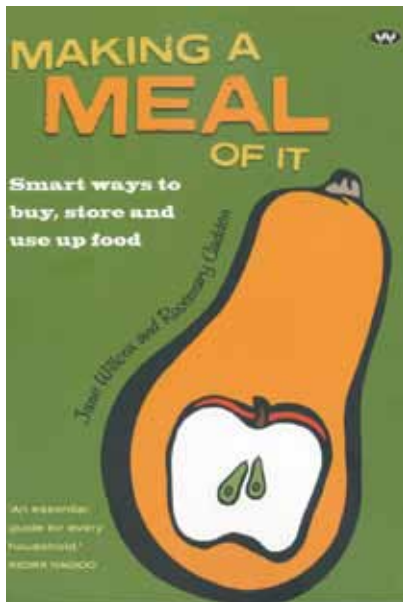
*Early Childhood Care and Development in Emergency Situations* is an annotated bibliography of research in this area. Download it from [http://www.iec.mq.edu.au/research/cfrc/pdf/ECCD\\_Emergency\\_Situations.pdf](http://www.iec.mq.edu.au/research/cfrc/pdf/ECCD_Emergency_Situations.pdf)

#### References

Hobfoll, SE Watson, P Bell, CC Bryant, RA Brymer, MJ, Friedman, MJ, et al. 2007. Five Essential Elements of Immediate and Mid-Term Mass Trauma Intervention: Empirical Evidence. *Psychiatry: Interpersonal & Biological Processes*, 70(4), 283-315.

# GIVE AWAYS

To win one of these books, put your name, membership number and address on the back of an envelope addressed to Bedrock Giveaway 1, 2 or 3, NSW/ACT Independent Education Union, GPO Box 116, Sydney NSW 2001. Entries close Friday 2 September, 2011. Please note: Envelopes that have not been clearly marked with which giveaway they are entering will be disqualified.



## GIVEAWAY 1

**Making a Meal of It: Smart Ways to Buy, Store and Use Up Food**

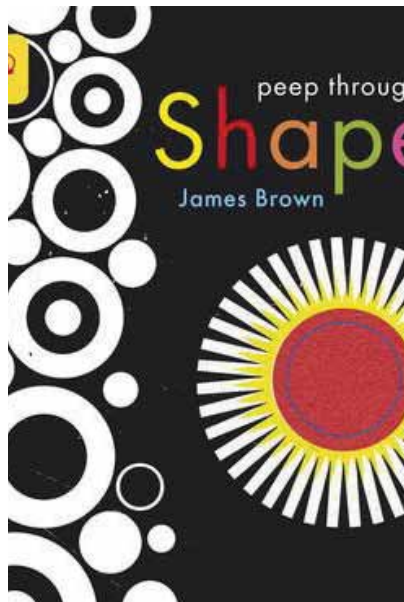
Authors: Jane Willcox and Rosemary Cadden

Publisher: Wakefield Press

ISBN: 978-1-862549135

Three copies to giveaway

Feel guilty no more about wasting food. This excellent book promises to solve dilemmas like: what to do with the other half of the avocado or the sad, lone carrot withering up the back of the fridge. There are chapters on diverse foods like herbs, chicken, potatoes, sprouting garlic, lemon and eggs and handy hints on shopping, storing and recipes to use up leftovers make this a book for anybody who hates wasting resources.



## GIVEAWAY 2

**Shapes: A visually stunning introduction to shapes for babies.**

Author and Illustrator: James Brown

Publisher: Walker Books

ISBN: 9781406328967

Three copies to giveaway

Aimed at babies, this book by illustrator and printmaker James Brown explores shapes through graphic patterns in a simple, contrasting and novel way that is perfect for the youngest babies who are just beginning to develop their visual skills. Each shape is introduced as a part of a fascinating pattern and has holes in the pages for interactivity.



## GIVEAWAY 3

**How to Get Married by Me, the Bride and How to Be a Baby by Me, the Big Sister**

Author and Illustrator: Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sue Heap

Publisher: Walker Books

ISBNs: 9781406323337 and 9781406323436

One pair of the books to give away

How-to manuals with a difference – full of tips and hilarity that saw 'How to Be a Baby' on the *New York Times* best seller list. The first title is billed as perfect for an older sibling about to welcome a new baby into the family while the second title offers helpful hints on "how to choose a husband" and why it's important to never "get married when it's dark because then you won't be able to see and might marry the wrong person". Lots of fun.



# Learning Best Together

**M**ore children with disabilities are now entering kindergarten, writes Bob JACKSON, psychologist and Adjunct Associate Professor of Education at Edith Cowan University in Perth.

This can prove challenging for staff who may feel they do not have the appropriate training, or think such children would be better off in a specialised centre.

Why should these children be included in kindergarten and how does successful inclusion benefit everyone in a centre?

## Learning best together

Children often learn best together. Those who are included develop at least as many academic and social skills as when they are segregated – in fact in 40 years of research comparing segregated and inclusive environments, no study showed the segregated environment to be superior, even though they had higher staff ratios, specialised staff and specialised curricula.

If children share the same learning environments through their schooling then disability ceases to be an issue and becomes part of normal human difference.

Numerous studies have shown that children who are educated in inclusive environments have a much greater acceptance of difference than those that grow up without these shared experiences.

## How to help

Research indicates that all children learn fastest in situations where more structure is present.

This does not mean that it has to be 'sitting in chairs' or rote learning, but it does mean that there is a structure to the learning to allow the child to predict what is required and the correct answer.

For children with a disability, this is even more important as they may not be able to comprehend a constantly changing learning situation.

Games with consistent rules, a curriculum that is graded in steps so that mastery is achieved in fundamental skills and consistency across staff assist all children to learn.

Neurological research indicates that when children repeat an action, the same neurons 'fire' and the connections between these neurons are strengthened and work more efficiently in future.

This gives support to many activities which involve a lot of repetition and constant routines.

Being consistent to assist the child with a disability improves the learning and speed of gaining core skills by all children.

“*Numerous studies have shown that children who are educated in inclusive environments have a much greater acceptance of difference.*”

## Right first time

Of equal importance is that once neurological connections are established they remain and are used in future.

So it is important for all children to do it correctly from the start so they do not have to relearn the skill if it is not correctly established.

Again, this is of benefit to all children, and particularly beneficial to the child with the disability.

The bottom line is that if we can teach a child with a disability well, we will be able to teach all children well. They help us to become better teachers.

Bob Jackson has over 30 years experience as a direct care worker, psychologist, manager of services to people with a disability, researcher and Associate Professor of Special Education. Further information is available on [www.include.com.au](http://www.include.com.au).

## Safe slip, slop, slapping?

**T**he sun safe message has been well integrated into the daily life of early childhood services, writes *Bedrock* Journalist Suzanne **KOWALSKI-ROTH**.

All over Australia children and adults are happily slip, slop, slapping. It's clearly crucial for children to be protected from undue sun exposure and its attendant problems.

But, how safe are the sunscreens many use daily? Are there particular challenges for young children? As the nature of materials used in sunscreens changes rapidly, have our regulators caught up?

Friends of the Earth (FoE) Australia clearly don't think so. Last year they published a Safe Sunscreen Guide 2010-2011 which gave consumers access to information about sunscreens they can't get from a product's label.

They wrote to sunscreen manufacturers and asked them to declare if they used nano materials in their product.

This lack of information and regulation around nanotechnology concerns FoE.

"Currently there is no nano specific safety testing of nano particles and sunscreens and there's no mandatory labelling which we think is really concerning given that nano particles display very unique properties compared to particles of a larger size," says Elena McMaster, Nanotechnology spokesperson for FoE.

"We're calling for further research. We need to find out if nano particles are definitely able to penetrate through

human skin but in the meantime we are concerned there are sectors of the population who may be at higher risk of exposure, this includes very young children who have thinner skins than adults, people with skin conditions like psoriasis or eczema and people with broken skin."

With a 2010 Macquarie University study on sunscreens proving for the first time that a tiny amount of zinc is absorbed through the skin into the body (the study wasn't able to prove if it was nano zinc) and continuing concerns around the ability of free radicals generated by the use of nanoparticles to get into cells and cause damage, care seems sensible.

Indeed CSIRO nano scientist Maxine McCall told the ABC's *7.30 Report* that there just isn't enough information to make informed decisions.

Caution is a path already being adopted by some. In May, the Victorian branch of the Australian Education Union unanimously voted to advise school to be cautious and consider using nano-free sunscreens.

Nanotechnology 'is the study of phenomena and fine-tuning of materials at atomic, molecular and macromolecular scales, where properties differ significantly from those at a larger scale.'

Nano particles found in sunscreens commonly are Titanium Dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) and Zinc Oxide (ZnO). They are used for their superior UV absorption.

In 2009 the ACTU called for a mandatory labelling scheme to be introduced for all engineered nano materials used in the workplace. FoE Australia to echo Europe's approach where new regulations governing cosmetics and sunscreens with nanoparticles are due in 2013.

"We don't want another asbestos tragedy," says Elena. "It's really important we get onto this before this happens – it's not good enough for regulation to happen once the horse has bolted."

Tried reading your sunscreen's label recently?

I took the plunge and got up close and personal with a popular matte sunscreen's label after the manufacturer of the popular product hadn't responded to FoE's request to declare if they used nano particles in their sunscreens.

After a few minutes of squinting and head scratching I was unable to work out if there was nano content in the minimal ingredients list. So I contacted the company.

The response via email confirmed that the sunscreen I'd been using for years uses the nano form of titanium dioxide.

The company wrote:

"Many studies have shown that microfine and nanoparticulate titanium dioxide do not penetrate human skin; these particles lie on, or within, the dead outer cells of the skin. Thus they cannot harm the underlying living tissues. Other evidence shows that titanium dioxide is not irritant, does not cause allergies nor photoallergies."

However, with the Macquarie University study proving that zinc from sunscreens is absorbed into the human body – the inability of such small particles to penetrate beyond the surface layers of skin is now in doubt.

There's also the question of the production of free radicals and whether they are involved in degenerative diseases and cancers.

Back to the company. In its letter it stated: "In vitro tests have shown that uncoated forms of titanium dioxide and zinc oxide could generate free radicals and this could potentially be harmful. The relevance of these in vitro experiments to living people has not been established".

The company explained they did not use the reactive forms of zinc oxide and titanium dioxide and reiterated that the nano particles they use do not penetrate human skin.

So where does that leave the hapless consumer? Bewildered by labels only accessible to scientists and trusting that the regulator, despite the lack of testing and openness around labelling is getting it right, all the time? There's also the need to protect oneself from the sun.

Actually, I know where it leaves me. With a whole lot of doubt and wanting a change in labelling laws so next time I buy a sunscreen I can make an informed choice quickly without having to rely on third party translation.

In the meantime there's the FoE report for those who wish to adopt a precautionary approach.



## RESOURCES

The Therapeutic Goods Administration  
Sunscreen Fact sheet <http://www.tga.gov.au/safety/alerts-medicine-sunscreens-051202.htm>

Download the safe sunscreen guide at: <http://nano.foe.org.au/>

Read more at: <http://royalsociety.org/news/metro/nanotechnology/>

**Every year,  
over two million  
men and  
women lose their lives  
from unsafe work.\***

**\*Source ICFTU**

**Is it fair?**

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EVERYWHERE,  
BECOME A GLOBAL  
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