



EYLF breakfast success

Croissants? Coffee? Would you like some EYLF with that? The Early Years Learning Framework (the EYLF) was celebrated and explored at a range of EYLF breakfasts hosted by Community Child Care Co-operative for Children's Services Central in 15 locations across NSW.

It is always challenging when a new initiative is introduced to the sector, especially at the end of a long and exciting year. Breakfast sessions on the EYLF gave people an opportunity to come together to hear introductory information on the national framework from those responsible for writing it, and to learn about other resources and training available from Children's Services Central.

The breakfast sessions were also a chance to express challenges and concerns associated with the introduction of the EYLF and to share knowledge to dispel myths. Over 950 participants have attended the EYLF breakfasts held so far – and there are more opportunities to attend sessions at the beginning of next year.

Training sessions in 2010

Children's Services Central will offer comprehensive three-hour sessions: *Belonging, Being and Becoming* –

Putting the Early Years Learning Framework into Practice in the first half of 2010. These sessions will be run in 54 locations across NSW and are designed to give early years educators and services tools to implement the EYLF in their service. These sessions will be suitable for teachers, trained and untrained staff. Children's Services Central encourages services to consider attendance by as many team members as possible.

For more information, go to www.cscentral.org.au/training or look out for your training calendar in the mail in January.

EYLF E-Tips

Are you getting the EYLF E-tips? With 1,008 subscribers so far, these weekly emails give tips, guidance and resources to help services implement the EYLF. To register for the E-Tips, please go to: www.cscentral.org.au/news/eylf.html

Team Meeting Package

370 services have already received the free Children's Services Central Team Meeting Package to deliver professional development at their service in staff meetings. The package includes a PowerPoint presentation and a facilitator guide. To register for your package, email your details to: info@cscentral.org.au





★ **ROUNDUP**



Thank you, everyone!

All of us at Children's Services Central would like to thank everyone who has worked so hard in the service of children this year! We hope you have a happy and joyous holiday season and have the time and space to return next year refreshed and renewed.

Name change for DoCS

For those of you that haven't yet caught up with the news, DoCS is no more! Community Services (formerly DoCS) is now an agency and forms part of the new Department of Human Services NSW.

Industrial Relations changes

Children's services need to be aware that Modern Awards are scheduled to be introduced from 1 January 2010. These awards

will apply to employees working under the federal industrial relations system (that is, those working in constitutional corporations covered by NAPSAs) and to those who were previously covered by the NSW Industrial Relations system.

The NSW Government has decided that all employers currently covered by the NSW Industrial Relations system (mainly sole traders and partnerships) will move into the national scheme from 1 January 2010. All NSW employers and employees in the private sector will now be covered by the *Fair Work Act* and the national system of Modern Awards regardless of whether you are a constitutional corporation or not. For more information, consult your union or employer organisation or go to: www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au

Thanks for keeping us on our toes!... 'disinfectants' in children's services

In the Spring issue of *Central News*, services were provided with three resources around the theme of 'Highlighting healthy habits'. The hand-washing and nappy changing posters were well received by services, however, the 'Hygiene Hot Spots' poster was queried on the use of the word 'disinfectant'.

Children's Services Central apologises if staff felt confused and concerned with the repeated use of the term 'disinfectant'. We acknowledge the term was overused and that it did not pay attention to endemic misunderstandings of the word. The term was intended as a generic word that indicates appropriate cleaning using products deemed suitable by individual service policies.

'Hygiene Hot Spots' intended the definition of 'disinfection' as 'Killing infectious agents that are outside the body by chemical or physical means' (NHMRC, page 107, *Staying Healthy in Child Care*, 4th edition).

Children's Services Central continues to encourage all staff to adhere to individual service policies and procedures on infection control in accordance with NCAC recommended guidelines.

Services need to determine what cleaning options are appropriate to meet the needs of the service, while reflecting on current information from recognised health authorities such as NSW Department of Health, to ensure the risk of infection is minimised.

Infection control resources and information are available online. Useful websites include:

NSW Department of Health:

www.health.nsw.gov.au

National Health and Medical Research Council:

www.nhmrc.gov.au

For further information and sources used by the resources, please contact Children's Services Central on **1800 157 818** or go to: www.cscentral.org.au

Children's Services Central is the Professional Support Co-ordinator in New South Wales and is an initiative funded by the Australian Government under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program. Children's Services Central is managed by a consortium of key organisations that resource and support the sectors of children's services in New South Wales.

Children's Services Central

**Building 21,
142 Addison Rd,
Marrickville NSW 2204**

Tollfree telephone: 1800 157 818

Telephone: (02) 8922 6444

Fax: (02) 8922 6445

Email: info@cscentral.org.au

Web: www.cscentral.org.au

ABN: 81 174 903 921

Annual licence fees

Legislation was passed by the NSW Government on 4 December to charge annual licence fees for children's services. The annual licence fees will be \$700 for a centre based service under 29 places, \$900 for a 29-to-60 place service and \$1,100 for a service with over 60 places.

In addition to the introduction of the licence fee, the Government has also passed legislation to allow the term of a licence to be extended from a maximum of three years, to five years. Any service with a licence in force on 4 December will now be extended to five years from the day it was granted.

Preparing for the EYLF in a Family Day Care Scheme

Sharon Dodd-Gilhooly tells of the experience in her scheme: 'The Early Years Learning Framework document didn't exactly arrive with fanfare and excitement. Being a small scheme we juggle the many aspects of delivering a quality childcare service with minimal resources: we have less than 70 staff hours a week to support 18 carers and 150 families. So something else to squeeze in, is occasionally met with trepidation. However, its arrival coincided with annual leave, and an opportunity to read the document and then formulate what we could do with it was created.'

What was heartening while reading the document was to find that much of what we already do within our scheme was addressed within the content of the EYLF. In many instances, we found it focused on some initiatives that we were currently working on such as:

- Having a heavier emphasis on play-based learning. We do this using our scheme's play session as a platform to reflect on children's abilities to direct their own learning.
- Developing skills to further facilitate that learning, by constantly reviewing the way we plan play sessions and ensure they are a learning experience for the adults who attend as well as the children.
- Providing supportive feedback and having open discussion when staff visit homes to build professional skills.
- Reviewing our enrolment procedures to provide families with a deeper understanding of how we can support their child's development by working together.
- Having a whole service commitment to furthering our professional skills and knowledge. The basis of this is in the support and respect that we provide to each other in our endeavours to keep up to date with best practice.

Every member of our team is a respected individual who shares an interest and commitment to supporting children's development. It echoes the EYLF's fundamental principal that, 'Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who an individual is and who they can become'.

After attending an EYLF professional support forum in late October, our thoughts on where to go from here are that we will:

- Continue to have intention when we plan for children's interests and needs, rather than leave it to children to develop their own curriculum.
- Support each other with reviewing our own philosophies to reflect how we see ourselves as educators. We are planning for this to occur by including it on our 2010 training calendar.
- Continually build on what we are doing, similarly in the way that we have improvement plans for the

Quality Assurance process.

- Read and read again to reflect on current practices. We realise there will be challenges with the EYLF.

- The language is ambitious and can intimidate but the intention in developing a higher level of knowledge is always to extend an individual.

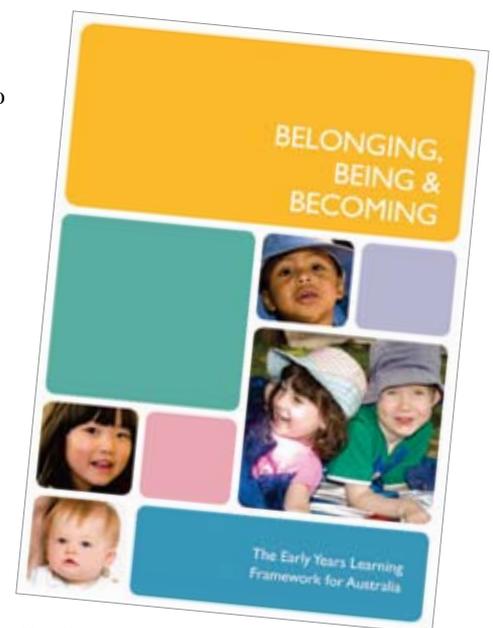
- Trying to work out where the EYLF fits into our professional scaffolding when other frameworks exist could be difficult for new people coming into our service.

The EYLF provides our scheme with a framework of where we are heading – although at the Children's Services Central information forum our staff attended, it was reinforced that the EYLF was not meant to be a global positioning system for our scheme's journey but, rather, a map to guide us.

The EYLF has guided our professional discussion (some of which was robust), and for those who embrace it, it will guide practices as individuals look at why they do what they do. The process for any service will be quite unique and dependant on the individuals who are involved.

What we have learnt is that every childcare service and its team will bring its own experience and wisdom to the EYLF. Rather than seeing it as another hurdle to jump over, we have chosen to use the EYLF as a professional tool that will support our scheme's practices in similar ways to how we have used the Quality Assurance process to reflect on, demonstrate and then measure our professional practice.

**Sharon Dodd-Gilhooly,
North Sydney Family Day Care**



Preparing for the EYLF in a long day care centre

Danielle Layton shares a first-hand account: 'I am a Director of a council-owned long day care centre in Coogee – Moverly Children's Centre. We cater for 0–5 year olds.'

When the federal government and COAG (Council of Australian Governments) announced the introduction of a national-based learning framework for children under five years in Australia, I was definitely excited! The first national curriculum in Australia for early childhood!

I was pleased that the 'Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming' was developed by a range of specialists in the early childhood industry – from early childhood educators in services to academics.

At our service, the Framework will eventually become a guide for curriculum to replace the current NSW framework. As an early childhood educator, I am proud to see the government taking the initiative to see the importance of education, play and curriculum for children under five years.

There has obviously been a range of questions, hesitations and concerns from not only staff but the rest of the sector as well.

I have tried to keep up to date as much as possible and then forward the information to our staff and to families. At first, some staff members have been overwhelmed by yet another change in the sector. I wanted the process to be as consultative as possible between all staff and families. We have a strong connection with the families who use our service, so it's essential that the process is collaborative and engaging for all parties.

Other staff members have been excited about the changes and have been doing their own research. I have tried to be positive and educate both the families and staff. The DEEWR website has great information available that I have continually tried to access so I am up to date and can share the knowledge.

I have distributed the Framework's *Family Guide* and all staff were given the document to read, plus the bookmarks available from the DEEWR website.

We have also attended the Children's Services Central breakfast meetings and all staff will be required to attend the EYLF training through Children's Services Central when it is rolled out in 2010.

Over the next coming months, once everyone has read the documents, we are planning to do the following as a team:

- Review policies in line with the framework;
- A new draft philosophy is being distributed in January for initial feedback from staff and families; and
- We are amending our service framework to incorporate the principles and the five learning goals of the EYLF.

Every time I read and review the document, I am struck again by how wonderful it is and note that it is in line with both my personal philosophy and my service's philosophy. It has a strong emphasis on play and children being successful learners. Isn't this what we have always done? I do not think it demands too much variance from current practice, just emphasising the importance of play using the five learning outcomes:

- a strong sense of their identity;
- connections with their world;
- a strong sense of wellbeing;
- confidence and involvement in their learning; and
- effective communication skills.

At Moverly, we operate an emergent curriculum that is play and interest based. These learning outcomes are already a major focus of our curriculum but the Early Years Learning Framework further reinforces this and allows staff to focus on these areas when planning. It seems to me that because the framework is not structured, it is broad enough to allow all services to introduce it specifically for their own services.

I just hope that services can find a way to incorporate these outcomes without them going into a checklist-style document. I hope services do not go back to this to achieve the outcomes.

I also think that the EYLF will allow a stronger transition to school with these principles and outcomes and will work well in conjunction with the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System. It will work well with Moverly's school readiness program, as it is based on children making connections to their world, self-esteem and the benefits of social interactions through play. These areas are similar to the principles and indications in Quality Areas 1 to 4.

I think the Early Years Learning Framework is a positive change for the sector and should be embraced!

Danielle Layton
Director, Moverly Children's Centre

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Research insights for all

Children's Services Central has an exciting new project to help all staff in early childhood services apply the best of new and developing research in their daily practice. The project involves a new publication, *Contemporary Research Insights*, which will be available on the Children's Services Central website, along with a related strand of research seminars, which will be presented across NSW during 2010.

This project is important because the field of early childhood is changing rapidly. The Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Framework mean that educators will be learning more and saying more about what they do and why they do it.

Research, mostly from universities, offers evidence-based approaches on how to provide the very best for children. However, staff in children's services do not always have the time or opportunity to access the most up-to-date research.

Contemporary Research Insights is intended to provide a bridge between the academic world and your service. The journal and seminars have been developed by Community Connections Solutions Australia (CCSA) and a consortium drawn from the University of New England, Semann & Slattery and Contact Inc., to ensure the newest and most valuable research gets to where it will make the most difference: with staff.

The publication will be different to other Australian journals in early childhood. *Contemporary Research Insights* condenses research from all over the world into short articles that can be read at a single sitting, by anyone, and understood and enjoyed by all staff.

Contemporary Research Insights also offers practical ideas about how to implement changes in practice. Because the publication is available online, it can be printed on demand and given to all staff. It will be a

valuable tool for professional development across your service.

The first issue of *Contemporary Research Insights* is currently in production and will soon be available from www.cscentral.org.au. This issue is devoted to the theme of relationships and belonging, which are key elements of the Early Years Learning Framework. It has articles on the importance of building strong relationships and attachments with children, promoting a sense of belonging in your service and developing relationships with families to help children gain the skills they need to become literate.

The research seminars, which start in February 2010, will mean these ideas are taken to regions of NSW – check the Children's Services Central 2010 Training Calendar to find the venue closest to you. The seminars, which will be presented by CCSA and a consortium of University of New England, Contact Inc. and Semann & Slattery, are also aimed at all staff. They will summarise the research articles and provide practical guidance to help everyone in your service apply these ideas. Participants attending the seminars will also receive a print copy of the publication.

Look out for *Contemporary Research Insights* and the seminars – and start a conversation in your service.

Naomi Parry

Community Connections Solutions Australia



Children's
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Central

Feb-June 2010
Training Calendar

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OOSH and quality

Out-of-school hours care (OOSH) services have been part of the QA system since 2003 and ever since the first service signed up, there have been many discussions and questions about what this actually means for services.

So much of the QA process focuses on having systems in place to meet the requirements: food audits, training, child protection systems, food handling and sanitising procedures. It can be very easy for services to focus only on these systems, rather than thinking about what is quality, where does it come from, how do we achieve it.

For example, Quality Areas 1 and 2 in the OSHCQA system give great opportunities for consideration. In terms of interactions with children and staff, take the time to look around and reflect on how staff and children interact, how interests are catered for, how behaviour is guided and how the staff work together. It may also help

to ask parents and visitors for their impressions, as they can often see things we cannot. Use these reflections to identify where your service is achieving well and where more attention is required. Perhaps you might like to think about the tabled issues below as a starting point for embedding a quality framework at your service.

Interested in finding out more? Sign up for the Network Quality Forums being run through Children's Services Central in 2010. Look in the 2010 Training Calendar for details.

Katherine Newton, Adult Education Coordinator, Network of Community Activities

Issue	Strategies
<p>Staff and children don't know each others' names</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use name tags at the beginning of the year/vacation care period. ▪ Share the roll marking. ▪ Play name games. ▪ Rotate staff areas of supervision. ▪ Display names and photos of staff. ▪ Encourage existing staff to use names regularly to assist new children & staff. ▪ Greet and farewell children by name.
<p>Staff argue and sometimes don't listen to each other and have on occasion refused to carry out tasks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team building exercises are part of staff meetings and performed regularly. ▪ Involve all staff in discussions, including casual staff. ▪ Effective communication skills training is accessed. ▪ Developing and reviewing the service policy covering professionalism in the workplace, teamwork and mutual respect is carried out in consultation. ▪ Open discussions and review of sharing tasks/job descriptions.
<p>Staff don't know how to deal with children with challenging behaviour and/or provide poor supervision</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access professional development for staff on child management and behaviour issues, i.e. training. ▪ Staff meetings are used to discuss issues and possible strategies for children. ▪ Discuss as a team strategies for supervision that best suit your service. ▪ Guidelines/expectations and consequences are developed through consultation with staff, children, parents and families. ▪ Provide clear boundaries for play areas. ▪ Make staff aware of the responsibilities and 'duty of care' with children. ▪ Discuss strategies with families. ▪ Identify other support services/agencies that may provide help.
<p>Staff aren't actively involved in programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use a team approach to programming by actively involving all staff and children. ▪ Programming ideas/resources are available. ▪ Professional development for staff on programming is available. ▪ Create a program that is flexible and shares responsibilities amongst staff and encourages children to take ownership. ▪ Use the interest/skills of all staff to develop program ideas. ▪ Discuss this issue at staff meetings.

COAG changes

In early December, the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) agreed to a number of changes to early childhood education and care through the introduction of a National Quality Framework. The new Framework will cover long day care, family day care, out-of-school hours care and preschools services.

The framework includes:

- a National Quality Standard;
- improved staff-to-child ratios;
- new qualifications requirements for early childhood education and child workers;
- a new quality rating system; and
- a new national body to guide the implementation and management of the overall framework.

The framework will begin to be implemented from 1 July 2010, with staff-to-child ratio and qualification changes being progressively implemented from 1 January 2012.

For more information about the changes, please see the DEEWR website at: www.deewr.gov.au/EarlyChildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Pages/home.aspx

A number of fact sheets for families and services are available. When reading the fact sheets on staffing and ratios, please be aware that there are some areas where

NSW standards are currently higher than the proposed National Quality Standard and these are to be 'grandfathered' so that these requirements will still apply in NSW. Specifically these are:

- the existing staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 for children aged from 36 months to school age will be retained;
- the current requirements for a second teacher in NSW for centres with greater than 40 children, and a further teacher for every 20 children thereafter will be retained.

Children's Services Central will work with services over the coming years to ensure that service's professional development needs around the new measures are met. We anticipate developing a range of new professional development offerings around the National Quality Standard to assist services achieve the required ratings. More information will be available on our website as soon as these courses and opportunities are developed: www.cscentral.org.au

Family participation in the quality assurance process:

A message from the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC)

NCAC reminds services that the involvement of families is vital to continuing improvement.

These resource ideas may help services to keep families informed about Child Care Quality Assurance (CCQA):

- Produce an information pack for families about the service's progress through CCQA.
- Point families to the 'Families and Children' webpage on NCAC's website (www.ncac.gov.au).
- Distribute the Family Factsheets and Quality Companions 'Encouraging Family Participation' and 'Understanding Child Care Quality Assurance'.
- Read NCAC's *Putting Children First* magazine.
- Use NCAC's resources to communicate to families about quality childcare. For example,
 - Quality Child Care Poster Series,
 - The Pocket Guide for Families,
 - The Choosing Quality Child Care brochure.

These resources are available through the NCAC Online Store or by completing a Publications and Administrative Payments Form (www.ncac.gov.au/forms/publications_order_form.pdf).

Note: Family Fact Sheets, Quality Companions and *Putting Children First* articles can be downloaded free and printed from the NCAC site: www.ncac.gov.au

Ways to gather feedback from families

Families should have opportunities to provide feedback about the service's practices, and share ideas and opinions. Some strategies to obtain feedback are:

- Ask families if the service meets their needs.
- Introduce a suggestion box.
- Hold family information sessions with opportunities to provide feedback about the service's progress through CCQA.

Online family survey

Services are encouraged to make families aware of NCAC's new Family Survey at www.ncac.gov.au for families currently using or looking for childcare.

We also encourage services to write and conduct their own surveys to gauge the effectiveness of their practices, and to consider adjusting their practices according to feedback from families.

For information about the role of families when services are progressing through CCQA, contact a NCAC Child Care Adviser by telephone on **1300 136 554** or email: qualitycare@ncac.gov.au

Central is published by Children's Services Central.
©2009 ISSN 1833-4288 • Editor Lisa Bryant • Production ARMEDIA
Manager – Children's Services Central Leanne Gibbs
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Children's Services Central
Building 21, 142 Addison Road, Marrickville NSW 2204
Phone: (02) 8922 6444 Fax: (02) 8922 6445 Tollfree: 1800 157 818
Email: info@cscentral.org.au Web: www.cscentral.org.au

Searching for
support, resources
and professional
development?
Call us on
1800 157 818

Coming up in 2010!

Our Professional Support Needs Analysis 2009 gave us a very clear picture of your needs and wishes with regard to professional development, support and resources.

For our full report, go to: www.cscentral.org.au/publications. Our analysis shows the sector is looking for support using the Early Years Learning Framework, understanding aspects of compliance, regulation and quality frameworks and accredited training. There is also a great need for leadership and management professional development, at entry level and also for the more experienced. People are interested in research, inclusion, environmental education and curriculum. There is also a desire for more flexible learning options.

In response to the needs analysis and national priorities, we are really pleased to present the Children's Services Central Training Calendar for February to June 2010. It offers professional development opportunities for children's services staff and management in NSW – EYLF workshops will run at 55 locations around NSW from March until June 2010; specialist professional development for new and experienced co-ordinators and

managers; customised accreditation training; more options for achieving qualifications; and innovative approaches for both face-to-face and distance learning. In addition to professional development sessions, there are a number of other projects and supports available, such as our Management Committee Support Program, live hosted online sessions, a new mentoring program, encounters with programs and accreditation and individual service support.

We encourage you to check our website for the latest and to download the calendar in December so you can start making professional development plans for your team in 2010.

We have also upgraded our e-booking system – it will be much easier to use, and presents the courses in a clearer way. You will save time and energy making your bookings and browsing the great professional development and resources on offer.

ASPIRING LEADERS FORUM LAUNCH

The Aspiring Leaders Forum (ALF) is a new project delivered by Macquarie University and Semann & Slattery on behalf of Children's Services Central.

The ALF is a cohort of 50 early childhood professionals who live and work throughout NSW. Access involved an application and commitment to a program that would run over 12 months. The program includes 'Light the Fire Seminars' designed to inspire, provoke, and motivate participants through engaging in the stories of an esteemed leader. There are also regional facilitated workshops, participant-led sessions and leadership showcasing. Participants will be involved in developing leadership knowledge through their own inquiry and investigation.

This inspiring program was launched at Macquarie University on 12 November and participants came together for canapés and drinks and to hear from Marcelle Hoff. Ms Hoff, an Independent Councillor with the City of Sydney, has a firm commitment to

community participation in government. She promotes the concept of shared obligation and socially responsible behaviour. Her strong belief in social justice and personal responsibility have seen her support policies and programs providing inclusive, equitable, accessible services to our diverse population.

In her presentation, Ms Hoff referred to the personal and professional experiences that influence her as a leader. She emphasised that leaders must not assume entitlement to their role – they are in a position where they must put others before themselves. Ms Hoff also expressed that it was essential for leaders to develop their own mission statement so that their vision is clear. This will help when making decisions and facing tough ethical issues.

The first Aspiring Leaders Forum continues in 2010 and will culminate in November 2010 with a Leadership Conference. Keep an eye on our website for further opportunities to be involved in the next Aspiring Leaders Forum.