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THE NEW CCS

Benefit? Burden? Or Both?





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2018: The Year of *Big & Costly* Changes

To all of you wonderful Providers and Educators working so passionately nurturing, developing, educating and caring for the children. I don't know about you, but as an approved provider, 2018 is shaping up to be a year of tremendous changes for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. And there's still up to 4 more months left of the year to go!

Starting with clarification from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) on what educator breaks were always supposed to be interpreted (as opposed to what was generally understood by the sector and not objected to by the regulator), followed by the introduction of the Commonwealth Government's new Child Care Subsidy, just to name two issues, I have lost count of the number of service providers who have reported expending more labour, resources and an inordinately more amount of days, evenings, weekends, weeks and months of additional work just to achieve compliance and make the "system" work, and most importantly to minimise wherever possible the cost, inconveniences and stress for parents and their children.

Notwithstanding how 2018 has been shaping up so far, I do get the impression from our politicians that finally they are beginning to understand that these regulatory and process changes they have introduced are increasing the costs, and moreover putting upward pressures on childcare fees. And while they struggle to solve these problems, they put at risk the quality of early childhood education and care that we all agree must be protected.

But 2018 is not all doom-and-gloom, especially when politicians begin to sharpen their minds towards getting themselves re-elected at the NSW State Election on 23 March 2019 and the Federal Election (which I am predicting will be in May 2019).

Consequently, I am extremely proud that our Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW was the only state based peak body across Australia advocating on behalf of privately-owned ECEC services at the Senate Select Committee Hearing on Red Tape. It was most heartening to hear from crossbench Senators about their ever-rising scepticisms and dissatisfactions about what are the expensive cost-of-living realities faced by families and ECEC service providers, versus the promises of a lean and efficient legislative and regulatory framework. Successive governments and politicians are finally trying to overcome their inconvenient and uncomfortable truth that increasing regulations has costed far more than "a cup of coffee" as was previously predicted.

"Notwithstanding how 2018 has been shaping up so far, I do get the impression from our politicians that finally they are beginning to understand that these regulatory and process changes they have introduced are increasing the costs, and moreover putting upward pressures on childcare fees. And while they struggle to solve these problems, they put at risk the quality of early childhood education and care that we all agree must be protected".

ACA NSW is also happy with the news about the NSW Payroll Tax reform announced by the NSW Government on 19 June 2018. Although ACA NSW had been advocating for many months to increase the NSW Payroll Tax Threshold to \$2m for early childhood education and care centres, the threshold increase to \$1m from 1 July 2018 to 30 June

2022 will bring welcome relief for up to 900 services and directly and indirectly assist up to 35,000 parents.

And although I strongly suspect thousands of childcare service providers are extremely frustrated with the consequences of the new Child Care Subsidy since 2 July 2018, I wish to remain optimistic that by the end of 2018, all the "bugs" will be ironed out. My greatest concerns I have, however, are for the children whose parents fail the household income test, those who cannot or refuse to meet the activity test for genuine reasons, as well as those with language barriers and are unable to successfully enrol. ACA NSW and through our National Committee continue in earnest to engage with the Federal Minister (Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham) and the Federal Department of Education and Training to address and resolve the litany of identified problems and confusions. "Fixes" like the Federal Government now having to manually process sessions in which the CCS was not applied for an absent session gives us some hope that they are listening to us.

Hopefully, by the next edition of Nurture Nook, ACA NSW will have even more causes for celebration.

Love,

Lyn Connolly, President
Australian Childcare Alliance NSW

Transitioning from *Problems* to *Solutions*



One of the most noticeable aspects of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector since my appointment 23 months ago was the obliviousness of virtually all federal and NSW parliamentarians and their government departments of the excessive cost of ever increasing regulation endured by NSW-based service providers and the consequential effects on families.

And it has always been a known weakness of the NSW political culture of solving problems by introducing more and more legislation and regulations, and importantly legislation and regulatory changes that have not been the subject to the rigours of comprehensive cost-benefit analyses. One of the most glaring examples of how NSW has been thoughtlessly disadvantaged is demonstrated through NSW-based services being required to have up to 4 times more degree qualified early childhood teachers (ECTs) than any other Australian states.

Is that because NSW children aged 0-5 years old needed up to 4 times more assistance or is it because it produces up to 4 times more superior educational outcomes than their interstate cohorts or is it that children aged 0-5 years in all other states are not as deserving as NSW children?

The answer of course is that there is no such proof either way. But the unintended outcome is for families to bear the brunt of decreasing childcare affordability as well as increasing cost-of-living pressures, as if NSW parents have no other affordability problems they have to contend with.

In the NSW Government's defence, that requirement of up to 4 degree-qualified ECTs pre-dates the current legislative and regulatory framework. But when that regime was introduced, bringing with it then a new requirement for all staff to be have appropriate Certificate III and Diploma qualifications, NSW's existing requirements for up to 4 full-time degree-qualified

ECTs remained while the rest of the nation introduced or lowered theirs to up to 1.6 full-time equivalent ECTs.

Ever since the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW published its Briefing Paper, "Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW: A Better Direction" on 19 March 2018, ACA NSW has notched up 2 wins of the 14 identified issues. Perhaps it may be because there will be a NSW State Election on 23 March 2019 and a Federal Election most likely in May 2019.

The increase of the NSW Payroll Tax Threshold is a good start and we applaud the NSW Government for listening. The Federal

monthly report showing the true occupancy levels (aggregated and de-identified) of all services for all local government areas. This will provide helpful market data showing where oversupply and undersupply are, and assist the prospective new childcare operators against speculating. Although this is not the entire solution ACA NSW has seeking from the Federal Government to address childcare oversupply, it is nonetheless a start.

As we get closer to the two elections in 2019H1, we need our political leaders and parliamentarians to think about what must be done to provide quality ECEC services to all children and not just some. Based on

"Ever since the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW published its Briefing Paper, "Early Childhood Education and Care in NSW: A Better Direction" on 19 March 2018, ACA NSW has notched up 2 wins of the 14 identified issues. Perhaps it may be because there will be a NSW State Election on 23 March 2019 and a Federal Election most likely in May 2019.

Government has also agreed to changing its MyChild website so that incorrect ratings of services are fixed and that the dates of when each service was rated would now be published. With up to 891 NSW-based services not having been re-assessed or re-rated for 2-6 years, the old MyChild website was effectively giving wrong information to prospective parents, potentially causing them to stay away for the wrong reasons.

The Federal Government has also agreed to consider ACA NSW's request for a new

feedback from members, ACA NSW is already quite advanced in our "shopping lists" and have been in discussions with political parties regarding solutions and promises.

It is beginning to look like we are seeing a transition from problems to solutions. Finally.

Chiang Lim, CEO
Australian Childcare Alliance NSW

MEMBER BENEFITS



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New South Wales

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3. MEMBER SUPPORT
4. MODERN AWARDS AND WAGE RATES
5. FREE LEGAL & INDUSTRIAL ADVICE
6. INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS
7. POLICY TEMPLATES

The NSW Regulation 168 policies have all been updated and are accessible for all members to access via the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) website. ACA NSW members can access the templates for all mandatory policies in order to achieve minimum compliance with Regulation 168. The policies have the relevant regulations and applicable laws within. There are also templates, responsibilities of Approved Providers, Nominated Supervisors and staff members and are all able to be tailored to your service.

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9. EMAIL & SMS BROADCASTS
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11. DISCOUNTED TRAINING & EVENTS
12. VOTING RIGHTS
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PLEASE CALL 1300 556 330
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ACA NSW CALENDAR OF EVENTS

AUGUST - DECEMBER 2018

AUGUST

03 AUGUST 2018
MUNCH & MOVE DAY

06 AUGUST 2018
ACA NSW CHATSWOOD
NETWORK MEETING

13 AUGUST 2018
ACA NSW CANBERRA
NETWORK MEETING

20 AUGUST 2018
ACA NSW SUTHERLAND
NETWORK MEETING

27 AUGUST 2018
ACA NSW WOLLONGONG
NETWORK MEETING

29 AUGUST 2018
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING

SEPTEMBER

01 SEPTEMBER 2018
WHEELS ON THE BUS TOUR

01 SEPTEMBER 2018
ACA NSW NEWCASTLE
NETWORK MEETING

12 SEPTEMBER 2018
NEW OWNERS NIGHT

17 SEPTEMBER 2018
ACA NSW CENTRAL COAST
NETWORK MEETING

19 SEPTEMBER 2018
CUPCAKE 4 A CURE

24 SEPTEMBER 2018
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING

NOVEMBER

05 NOVEMBER 2018
ACA NSW BLACKTOWN
NETWORK MEETING

19 NOVEMBER 2018
ACA NSW WOLLONGONG
NETWORK MEETING

DECEMBER

25 DECEMBER 2018
CHRISTMAS DAY

OCTOBER

08 OCTOBER 2018
ACA NSW COFFS HARBOUR
NETWORK MEETING

22 OCTOBER 2018
ACA NSW PARRAMATTA
NETWORK MEETING

24 OCTOBER 2018
OFFICE OF THE
CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN
SAFE SERIES WORKSHOP

27 OCTOBER 2018
WHEELS ON THE BUS TOUR

EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION WEEK
GALA AWARDS NIGHT

29 OCTOBER 2018
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING

The New CCS: Benefit, Burden or Both?

To say that the introduction of the Commonwealth's new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is the biggest change affecting parents and service providers in early childhood education and care in 40 years is clearly proving to be an understatement.

For months well before its introduction on 2 July 2018, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW and its interstate peers had been receiving an unprecedented number of calls and e-mails from members seeking assistance with the government's new Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). Accordingly, ACA NSW had held numerous Network Meetings and webinars, created calculators and distributed a significant amount of information.

Challenges faced by service providers included significant difficulty in fully comprehending how CCS departs from the known Child Care Benefits and Child Care Rebate system, differing messages from different government departments' representatives, the rollout of the new Provider Digital Access (PRODA), the readiness and lack thereof of 28 (now 18) software providers, how those software providers successfully/unsuccessfully interfaces with the new national online system, and ultimately the cooperation of 1.2

million families enrolling and participating in what is a brand new system.

So far, in the first month of the new CCS, there have been a number of parents billed incorrectly, and in some cases forced to pay full fees even where subsidies apply. Some services' child enrolments have gone missing, too many software providers unable to cope with the avalanche of telephone calls and e-mails seeking help, and childcare service providers taking out additional bank loans in order to prevent the risk of not paying staff's wages because financial transfers for CCS were either insufficient or none at all.

Many parents remain confused with different messages from their childcare service provider and Centrelink, services blaming software providers and the government, the government blames software providers, while software providers are putting some down to user error.

KEY ISSUES

- CCS payments for the same child are inconsistent from week-to-week;
- Some children are not receiving CCS benefits, some others are receiving incorrect amounts, and others are receiving the correct amounts;
- Many parents do not know what their correct entitlements are supposed to be despite their notifications and their legal entitlements;
- A number of child enrolments have been "lost"
- A number of existing services with successful CCS registrations "disappeared";
- A number of major software providers are unable to provide customer support to childcare service providers;
- Very late availability of parents' entitlements data to service providers;
- Centrelink made "bandaid" payments directly to parents after them paying full fees because of CCS "glitch";
- Confusion over whether the new contract (ie a Complying Written Agreement) is actually a new document or not;
- Centrelink providing incorrect inconsistent advice on parents' entitlements;
- Confusion by government department(s) over treatment of certain exemptions and rules.

WHAT HAS CHANGED

Under the previous system (ie Child Care Benefits and Child Care Rebates), families had entitlements to government financial assistance of up to \$7,500 per child per year.

Under the Family Assistance Legislation (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017, the Commonwealth Government shifted its emphasis towards subsidising only parents who are in full-time, part-time or casual employment, in unpaid work, training, volunteering or other similar activity.

Moreover, the new CCS system is also means tested with varying levels of subsidy. It ensures that subsidies are primarily for families with a combined household income of up to \$351,248 (for FY2018/2019). Hence those with a household income over \$351,248 and those with a household income less than \$66,958 and demonstrating no employment or any other recognised activities will not receive any subsidies from 2 July 2018 onwards.

Eligibility is based on the parent who is working the lesser of the two. So if one parent works full-time, part-time or casual, or for that matter multiple jobs, and the other stays at home, the subsidy is zero.

The previous \$7,500 cap per child per year has been removed for any families with a combined household income of up to \$186,958 (for FY2018/2019), and a cap of \$10,190 for other families with a combined household income of up to \$351,248.

EXEMPTIONS FOR CCS:

- Unpaid work in a family business
- Voluntary work
- Actively looking for work

- Actively setting up a business
- Paid/Unpaid Leave from Paid Work
- Training
- 36 hours of subsidised care for pre-schoolers in the year before school
- Individual or individual's "partner" is a grandparent or great-grandparent
- Disabilities or impairments
- Temporarily living outside of Australia
- Providing constant care
- Receiving carer's payments or allowances
- Receiving Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, parenting payment or special benefit

BENEFIT, BURDEN OR BOTH

While it may still be a little early to fully appreciate the new Child Care Subsidy for 1.2 million children and their families, and 15,760 childcare service providers across Australia, it is clear that many are already benefiting, and many are currently not.

Moreover, the Australian Childcare Alliance (ACA) NSW remains uncomfortable about the fundamental focus away from children. There now exists children who are at risk of not receiving any early childhood education and care simply because their parent(s) are not eligible.

ACA NSW continues to listen to its members and works through its National Committee, the Federal Government, the Federal Department of Education, the Federal Department of Human Services, and a number of software providers to resolve issues relating to CCS.

Members can contact ACA NSW on **1300 556 330** or **nsw@childcarealliance.org.au** should they be experiencing difficulties and are in need of assistance





BUILDING WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

in early learning services

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Most of us spend a considerable amount of our waking hours at work. We may spend more time with our work colleagues and customers than with our families and loved ones. Therefore our workplace relationships are a significant part of our lives.

Building healthy and effective relationships at work is not necessarily about making best friends. We can work well with people we aren't friends with. However, just like our personal relationships, building and maintaining work relationships is not easy. Yet when we manage to do so, there are many benefits.

For an educator within an early learning service, there are *three* important relationships they need to build and nurture:

1. Colleagues

Working in an early learning service can be quite a demanding and busy job. For the service to function effectively it's necessary that all staff, not just the educators, work well together.

2. Parents and other family members

The parents of children are a very important element of an early learning service. They decide which service they will have their child attend and how often. A positive relationship with parents may make them more comfortable with leaving their children with the service.

3. Children

Obviously children are a key relationship for any early learning service staff member. Whilst the children may not make the decision to attend the service, their happiness and contentment when at the service will be very important to their parents.

Why building relationships can be difficult

A relationship is defined as a connection between two or more people. However sometimes the connection isn't by choice. For those of us who are not responsible for staff recruitment, we are expected to work with, and therefore spend a great deal of time with, people we have not chosen to have a connection with. Our work connections are forced connections and sometimes there is little more than work in common.

Some of these relationships can easily turn into very meaningful and pleasing relationships when we find ourselves getting along well with someone in the workplace. However this isn't always the case. Unfortunately sometimes we just don't 'click' with the people we interact with at work.

Relationships in the workplace can also be challenging as we are often so busy when at work. We aren't there to primarily work on a relationship; we are there to do our jobs. And sometimes the pressures and demands of a busy job can add a strain to these relationships. We are also rarely taught how to build a relationship. While it is something we can learn informally through life experiences, we usually only receive little, if any, formal training about the importance of relationships and how to develop them.

Why effective workplace relationships are important

Effective workplace relationships serve a number of purposes. The more we get along with someone, the

more we're likely to work well with them. Our teamwork and support for each other will improve and this can lead to our work being more productive and successful. Working well with someone is also likely to lead to us enjoying our work more. And when we're enjoying being at work, our performance and productivity can improve.

From a work health and safety perspective, respectful relationships in the workplace are related to greater job satisfaction, a positive attitude, better teamwork, reduced sick leave and staff turnover. Respectful relationships help prevent bullying and other negative behaviours in the workplace. An early learning service, like any other organisation, that is characterised as respectful creates a positive atmosphere for workers, parents and children.

Even when there is a great working relationship with colleagues, we can still encounter problems or conflicts in the workplace. This is a normal part of any workplace, we don't have to always agree and get along. However having a sound relationship where staff feel they can be open and honest with each other will assist when trying to deal with any issues.

Guild Insurance sees a number of claims every year that relate to workplace issues. In some of these cases it appears that the staff members involved have not been able to, or made an effort to, sit down together to discuss the matter, understand the different perspectives and come to an agreement before taking it further.

Relationships with children who attend your service and their parents are vital to the success of your business as they are your customers; without them you don't have a business. Developing a relationship with both children and parents assists to develop their trust in and respect for you, something needed when leaving a child in the care of another person. It's also possible that good relationships between parents and staff may assist when there is an issue or problem at the service, such as a child injuring them self. The better the relationship, the more likely parents may be understanding if there was an incident involving their child.

How to build effective relationships

There are many things which can contribute to building an effective relationship in the workplace. Most of us will agree that any relationship requires trust, honesty, open communication and support. Additionally, constructive feedback, positive role models, reliability, the promotion of diversity and equality, recognition of contributions, an agreement of shared goals and collaboration all contribute to positive working relationships.

However these things don't just happen. People need to

be committed to making time to develop and nurture their workplace relationships. This can be done in formal manners such as team meetings or staff development programs on topics such as teamwork or communication. It can also be done informally, such as by taking the time to chat to colleagues about non-work matters and getting to know each other better.

To build an effective relationship it's important to understand and appreciate each person for who they are. We all know we're all different in so many ways, yet sometimes in our busy lives this can be forgotten. We can become frustrated when people don't see things the way we do. However if we use these differences as a positive by recognising and utilising our different strengths and ideas, we can become much more productive when working together. Differing opinions or disagreements within a working relationship doesn't have to be a bad thing. If used well it can become a real positive for the relationship and the workplace.

Active listening is vital in your relationships with colleagues, families and children. Active listening is about not just hearing what the other person is saying but really understanding everything they're saying. You need to show the person that you're hearing them (use eye contact whilst they're talking, don't look away) and respond to them in ways that show you've heard them. You don't have to say you agree with them however by repeating what you've heard shows the person that you've understood them. This is particularly beneficial in situations where there is conflict or another type of challenging conversation.

And finally, don't take your workplace relationships for granted. Like any relationship, they need to be valued, nurtured and repaired if there are problems. Remember that when all is going well in the relationship, there can be significant benefits for you and your workplace.



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Early Childhood Education Week

23 – 27 July, 2018



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**Thank you for being part of Early Childhood Education
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early childhood education & care industry.

For more information, visit

www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au/events/ecew2018

Sweet Dreams are made of this

HOW TO ENSURE CHILDREN IN YOUR CENTRE ARE SLEEPING SAFELY



We all know that meeting a child's sleep needs are crucial in supporting their development. As an early childhood educator, you play a very important and vital role in helping children and their parents develop safe practices to support quality sleep.

Sadly, each year, SIDS and fatal sleeping accidents claim the lives of many infants as a result of unsafe sleeping environments. It is therefore essential that child care services ensure that children in their care sleep safely at all times and that the centre's service policy and practice is based on current research and reflects evidence-based principals.

With further changes to the National Quality Standards, effective of 1 February 2018, Cindy Davenport, Co-Director of Safe Sleep Space and Sleep Smart outlines some essential safe sleeping practices for babies and toddlers in childcare centres.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



Some safe sleeping practices to consider:

- Always sleep babies on their back on a firm flat surface. Tummy sleeping reduces a baby's arousal level and ability to swallow and increases risk of SIDS by 3-14 times when compared to sleeping on the back.
- If you wrap a baby, always take into account their stage of development. It is so important to leave their arms out or free once the startle reflex disappears which is often around 3 months. You should also stop using a wrap once the baby shows signs of attempting to roll.
- If blankets are used rather than sleeping bags, make sure that the baby's feet are touching the bottom of the cot to prevent them from wriggling under the blankets. Blankets should also be tucked securely.
- Remove clothes with hoods, drawstrings or ties, as they can become wrapped around an infant or young child's neck.
- It is not recommended that a baby/child has anything around their neck for sleeping, for example a necklace or amber beads, which could tighten during sleep and make breathing difficult.
- Products such as pillows, bumpers or soft toys in a cot can increase risk of an accident as they can be used as a step to climb up and over the side of the cot.
- Bean bags, sofa, large cushions and air mattresses are not recommended as a safe surface for young children to sleep.
- Check and inspect sleeping children at regular intervals and an assessment of each child's circumstance and needs should be undertaken to determine any risk factors.
- Sleeping children should always be within sight and hearing distance.
- Supervision windows should be kept clear and not painted over or covered.
- Cots should be arranged so that all sleeping children are visible through the observation window.

Sometimes parents will request sleep practices that are contradictory to what you know to be safe. Always discuss your safe sleeping policy at orientation and enrolment. Acknowledge and respect the family's beliefs, values and practices, but explain why the practice may be unsafe and that you cannot accept the risk or potential consequences of using an unsafe and risky practice. Finally, remember all children are different and your childcare service should consider the risk for each individual child, tailor your Sleep and Rest Policies to reflect the levels of risk identified.

Developed specifically for Early Childhood Educators, Sleep Smart is a comprehensive online training course that arms participants with step-by-step strategies for creating

an emotional and physical safe sleep space. The course also equips participants with the essential information to help comply with ACECQA's mandatory sleep and settling policies and procedures. For more information visit www.safesleepspace.education

Sleep Smart is brought to you by Safe Sleep Space, Australia's leading Sleep infant and toddler sleep consultants. Cindy Davenport is a child and family health nurse, midwife and lactation consultant, and has worked in the early parenting field since 1998. Cindy is the Co- Director of Safe Sleep Space and Sleep Smart.

For more information visit

www.sleepsmart.education or call **1300 775 337**

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We use our extensive industry experience and networks of experts to assist and support owners and centre purchasers during their childcare development journey.



Centre Leasing

We assist our clients to negotiate commercially advantageous lease agreements that are in line with industry standards.

Providing value across the disciplines of centre brokerage, centre developments, operations and marketing to generate results for childcare stakeholders.

CURRENT NSW LISTINGS



Chatswood Area, NSW

Brand new, beautifully presented childcare centre located in a leafy Chatswood residential area only 20 minutes from Sydney CBD. This centre is perfectly situated close local transport links, the Westfield Shopping Centre and Chatswood CBD which is one of the North Shores major commercial and retail districts.



NSW Leasehold 72 Places EOI



Inner West Area, NSW

Located in the highly sought-after area, this established 25 place boutique centre is just 10km from Sydney's CBD. The centre is close to public transport links, local shopping centre and amenities. 15 years remaining on lease.



NSW Leasehold 25 Places Offers over \$1M



Croydon Park, NSW

Set on a large block of land with spacious interior rooms, this childcare centre would suit an owner/operator or investor looking to put their mark on an established business with a superb reputation.



NSW Leasehold 36 Places \$1.2M



Auburn, NSW

This well-equipped 60 place centre is located in a large and busy shopping centre in the heart of a densely populated area. This gives the new leasee fantastic opportunities to promote their services to employees of the nearby businesses as well as a large number of families in the local area.



NSW Leasehold 60 Places \$1.2M



Moruya, NSW

This 52 place childcare centre is situated in a desirable location, close to schools, TAFE college, local shops, businesses and residential areas. This passive childcare freehold investment opportunity in Moruya is budding with potential.



NSW Freehold 52 Places \$1.2M



Port Macquarie Area, NSW

Situated in a delightful and desirable coastal location, this 44 place Freehold centre is a fantastic opportunity for an owner operator or someone looking to expand their portfolio.



NSW Leasehold Freehold 44 Places \$350,000 \$1.125M



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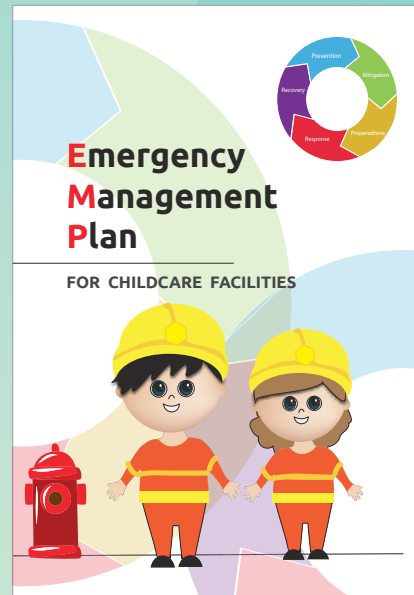
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How do we grow *Healthy Minds* in early learning services and schools?



Tara, who was four years old, had just commenced in the preschool room. The educators were very concerned as Tara bit one child after another, grabbed other children's art work and pushed and shoved them if they came near her. Tara was the youngest of four children. When she was dropped off each day her mother appeared frustrated, listing things that Tara had upset her with that morning.

The educators carefully observed and considered the situation with Tara, looking at her daily interactions with both peers and adults. The observations recorded in the following days showed Tara experienced very few positive interactions with either an adult or a child from the time she was dropped off by her mother until departure time.

The educators started planning for Tara: the first interaction of the day with Tara had to be positive and meaningful. The educators in the preschool room were to focus on getting to know Tara better, learn her

strengths and interests and to work at developing a secure warm relationship. The educators made a time to meet with her mother. They talked about Tara at home and how she interacted and responded with others. They discussed the observations. They learnt that Tara was allowed by her siblings to do whatever she wanted as she was the youngest. The educators discussed with mum what they hoped to achieve with their planning and described the strategies they were putting in place to support Tara. Mum was happy to try anything to make things better for Tara. She agreed to try to make her morning separation a positive time, whatever may have happened at home earlier.

In a very short time the change with Tara was amazing. Each day the educators greeted Tara warmly making a positive comment. The children in the room followed their example with more positive interactions occurring between Tara and her peers. The biting became much less frequent and Tara started to enjoy the challenge of the outdoor play equipment. She no longer grabbed

other children's art work and started to be more involved in experiences and activities around her.

The outcome may have been very different if the educators had ignored the signs that Tara had shown through her behaviour. What does this example tell us about being mental health aware?

We know that early childhood mental health is about young children's social and emotional wellbeing which influences their behaviour. This includes children's developing capacity to experience, regulate and express emotion, to form close, secure, satisfying relationships; and to explore and discover the environment and world around them. Young children learn the skills for sustaining mental health through positive and responsive interactions with significant people. These relationships are also essential for the optimal development of brain structures and functions.



Being mental health aware means that services and schools have all the structures in place to positive healthy relationships. This includes relationships between management and educators, the educator team, the children and between educators and each child and family.

In this example, by observing Tara carefully and knowing and recognising mental health difficulties the educators were able to recognise Tara's behaviour

as a symptom of an underlying issue and they put in place strategies to address the issue. They also worked on developing a strong relationship with the family so they could discuss their concerns and work in partnership to make decisions to support Tara.

Mental health aware early learning services and schools offer high quality early childhood education and care. High quality services provide protective factors that enhance and strengthen children's resilience and

mitigate the impact of risk factors. Hence it's less likely that children will develop mental health difficulties in the future. Knowing and understanding a child, their family background and life experience in their community, developmental strengths, interests and temperament helps to give a holistic picture of a child. This knowledge can also indicate the level of risk a child may face. Educators are then in a position to use this knowledge to plan early intervention strategies to support the child and family.



KidsMatter Early Childhood is an early childhood mental health and wellbeing initiative.

For early learning services and schools, KidsMatter Early Childhood offers:

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- Gain certificates as you progress through the professional learning topics
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- Be ready to leap into the soon-to-be launched National Education Initiative. For participating services and schools, there will be a seamless handover from KidsMatter into the National Education Initiative.

Educators committed to growing healthy minds, now is the time for your team to start the KidsMatter experience.

To start visit www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood/components/start-kidsmatterexperience, complete a short registration form and attend a Getting started event.

IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION IN STAFF MEETINGS – *manual handling*

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Purpose: this document has been prepared as a risk management article to educate early learning staff members about the benefit of using staff meetings to reflect on and reiterate manual handling messages and processes.

Staff learning and development in manual handling should be considered an ongoing process. All staff have something further to learn; be it general manual handling information or information specific to the early learning centre in which they work. However, learning doesn't have to be just about new information. Reiteration of existing knowledge and skills is also important.

We don't always do what we've been taught

It's reasonable to assume that most early learning staff would have at some stage been taught the correct way to carry out manual handling tasks. However, it's not uncommon for staff to be seen doing things the incorrect way. To be able to address this it's important to consider why some may not do what they've been taught. Some of these potential reasons could be:

- They possibly didn't understand the manual handling information they were taught

- They may have understood what they were taught but didn't learn why the skills and information were important and therefore don't understand why it should be adhered to or followed.
- Over time they may have forgotten what's considered best practice and have fallen into bad habits. This may occur if there is something they haven't done regularly or didn't do for a while after they were initially taught how
- They may be working in a centre where senior staff don't do things the correct way, so they've learnt and have been encouraged to follow these incorrect ways.

Never assume that just because a person has been taught something, they'll continue to do it the correct way for the rest of their career. Due to the various reasons detailed above, continual reiteration of skills and knowledge is required. Staff meetings are an ideal forum for the reiteration of manual handling skills to occur.



Finding time to 'stop and think'

'Stop and think' is a very important risk management message and action for any professional. Stopping and thinking requires people to take time out of the day to day busyness of their job and reflect on how things are being done and if this is working or not. It's too easy for professionals to become busy and just keep doing things how they've always done it and not take the time to think about whether things should be done differently. Staff meetings provide the necessary break from day to day work where staff should be able to find the time to discuss their roles, tasks and any changes that may be necessary.

Agenda for staff meetings

To get the full benefit out of staff meetings, they need to be structured carefully. Staff meetings are about allocating, not just finding, time to discuss important information.

For there to be continual reiteration of manual handling tasks and correct methods, this should be an agenda item for staff meetings. These manual handling agenda items could be specific so there is a different focus at each meeting; such as lift children out of cots or using step ladders for reaching high items on shelves. However, there should also be time allocated for staff to raise any manual handling issues or concerns they have that may not relate to the agenda items.

It could also be ideal to have different staff lead these manual handling conversations. Whilst there needs to be a process of ensuring what is discussed is best practice, only having senior managers lead the conversations can lead to other staff not feeling a part of these conversations.

Giving junior staff responsibility in leading some manual handling conversations may lead to the information resonating more with them which in turn should lead to it being remembered and followed.

Structure of staff meetings

There can be a temptation to fall into a routine of staff meetings being run whilst always sitting around a table. However, this doesn't have to always be the case. For staff meetings to be beneficial and engaging, changing how they're facilitated is ideal.

Staff meetings with a focus on manual handling are an ideal opportunity to get staff up and about the centre and participating in practical and physical tasks. Learning practical skills whilst doing them is going to assist greatly with recall and understanding. This is also possibly going to make team meetings more enjoyable.

What is best practice?

With any training being undertaken, it's obviously vital that what people are learning is correct and best practice. Therefore, it's the responsibility of managers and other senior staff to be sure this occurs in relation to the manual handling discussions had and instructions given in team meetings.

Senior staff need to be sure they're always putting best practice into practice. Do as I say, not as I do is not an ideal way to influence behaviour. To ensure staff carry out what they've learned, senior staff need to consistently demonstrate this behaviour.

There isn't always just one way of doing things. So whilst there will always be generic information to be learned, information should also relate to what is unique about each early learning centre. This will assist staff in applying what they've learned to what they do in their role.

Summary

In summary, don't assume or hope staff will continue to do what they've been taught to do once. To fully understand, remember and apply learned information and skills, continual reiteration of these messages is recommended. And staff meetings are the perfect opportunity to get staff members away from their day to day work and to ensure they understand and are further reminded about manual handling best practice and the reasons for this.



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"TRAINING *is a tough caper...*"

So says Early Education and Care College (Powered by Kool Kids Training College (RTO 40636) Manager, Sam Hendry in an interview held this week with Nurture Nook.

For the past 5 years Sam has been in the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) sector following a successful career in the highly competitive Internet Security industry. But he said the move into the RTO arena has been the most challenging of this career.

"Working with fast moving tech companies and protecting brands and consumers online is definitely a challenge but building up a successful RTO from scratch and all the elements that go with that has been far greater," he said.

A Focus on Quality

Sam heads up Kool Kids Training College (RTO 40636), a specialist training college in Early Childhood Education and Care. Kool Kids as an early learning centre group has owned and operated centres since the early 2000's in SE Queensland and Northern NSW. The move to open the training college in 2013 was a natural step in wanting to ensure quality in training in their own centres.

"Establishing the RTO was a logical step as we are control freaks!" Sam said. Whilst the first decade of the new millennium was focussed on owning and operating centres, and in fact leading the market with these centres, there was a piece of quality in Kool Kids' operations

that was missing ...and that was training. "We suffered the same issues that a lot centre owners encountered when reviewing our training providers. Lack of progress and infrequent visits and mentoring were the main issues. We thought we could do it better and set about to create a niche training college just offering the Certificate III and Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care qualifications and then backing that up with quality trainers and a commitment to regular visitation in centres."

What Sam was not prepared for having come from the fast moving and in some regards unregulated Internet space, was the compliance and administrative overhead that comes with operating an RTO.

Compliance-driven Industry

"It is funny listening to Politicians talking about reducing red tape and the impact on business growth that red tape imposes on Small to Medium sized businesses. I'd like the Minister for Cutting Red Tape (if there is such a Ministry) to sit at the desk of an RTO Owner for a few days. It is excessive." Of course compliance and regulation have a place in any Government subsidised sector such as training but the amount of paperwork that is imposed on RTOs is excessive in Sam's opinion. The process for reporting and operating a RTO was a surprise.

"Having come from a technology background, I could not believe how non automated and paper based RTO

processes were (and in many cases still are)."

"As a business we made the commitment to go paperless and whilst it took a full 18 months we have delivered on that objective. It is has been a massive project in many regards but the end result on business process improvement, risk reduction and a better student experience has been well worth it."

Company with the best technology wins

"I have a statement I firmly believe in ...'the company with the best technology wins', and in my mind once we started on this training journey, I wanted the college to be technically savvy in terms of how we interact with our students, how we maintain and access records, protect our data and how as a team we collaborate. I looked for the pain points in standard RTO processes and set about using technology to fix them," he said.

Sam said the actual volume of paper used was a 'real eye opener.' "I recently heard of an RTO who closed down and had 5 shipping containers full of paper. It is madness!"

"We now have a seamless training offering that is paperless, delivers an exceptional training experience for both student and trainer and importantly from a compliance angle we track and manage everything in real time."

"I can also sleep well at night knowing all

of our records are secure and trackable. Very important when the Government auditors check in regularly!" he said.

Tackling the NSW Training Market. Having established a market leading position in Queensland, it made logical sense for Kool Kids Training College to move into the training market in NSW.

"We quickly created a great presence in QLD and train for some of the leading centre groups in that State, but NSW was always a market we wanted to get into." But the challenge was identifying what to tackle first.

The initial starting point was securing a NSW Government Smart and Skilled contract so the RTO could offer Government subsidised training. "Now, that was a big process!" he says.

"Government do put up big hurdles and in NSW especially if you wear the Maroon coloured jersey" he says with an ironic smile.

"Seriously though, securing Government approvals is a major challenge, but we were able to secure a Smart and Skilled auspice initially and then more recently our own funding allocation."

One of the issues with any approvals is that the Government will continually raise the bar in order to weed out poor operators. "There is logic to it, and the recent high profiled scandal of VET FEE loans and RTO's going out of business does frustrate those of us who have integrity at our core, as often the reaction from Government is to make things harder."

Once the funding approvals were in place, the next challenge was to prioritise how to approach the market – how to break in and establish training relationships with centres. Sam and Kool Kids founder Bruce Coulson, went back to basics and 'hit the pavement.'

"Literally we knocked on doors."

And they knocked on a lot of them. "We visited lots and lots of centres and

from day one there was a recurring theme of providers being underwhelmed with the performance of their RTO." Whilst this was not a shock to Sam and Bruce it reaffirmed that they could indeed break into a very competitive training market.

"Bruce and I both subscribe to the notion 'the harder you work, the luckier you get' and we were lucky to come into contact with Lyn Connolly, ACA NSW President and her team not long into our training activities in NSW.

"It became apparent very early in discussions that the team at ACA NSW were committed to driving better training outcomes for members and this was music to our ears."

Creation of the Early Education and Care College

The idea for the Early Education and Care College Powered by Kool Kids Training College (www.eecc.com.au) was formed shortly after - training with the basic principles of quality and regular visits to centre being essential elements.

"Lyn Connolly the ACA NSW President really impressed upon us the importance of nurturing and supporting educators," Sam said. "Lyn liked our specialisation and the fact we come from the sector having owned and operated centres for many years."

In November 2017 the official announcement of the Early Education and Care College was made at ACA NSW Gala Awards night and Lyn proudly announced the creation of a preferred training provider agreement with Kool Kids Training College. By having a preferred training provider agreement as a member of ACA NSW you will be able to support the college like it is your very own.

If you are looking to upskill your team or are an educator that wants to upskill, then read on and learn more about the Early Education and Care College agreement with Kool Kids Training College.

We Train Across NSW

We train in early learning centres throughout Sydney and in regional areas within New South Wales.

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We provide students with the best possible resources to support them in their educational pathway. All resources have been written 'in house' (not purchased 'off the shelf'), ensuring they are dynamic and constantly updated as the sector evolves and training needs change.

All students receive relevant and engaging resources and these resources are delivered in an advanced Learning Management System that is dynamic. Most importantly, with their learning needs in mind the platform is very easy to use.

Sam concludes "If you are frustrated with the quality of training in your centre, then try us even with one enrolment. You will be impressed with our dedication to our students."



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WET, WINDY & WICKEDLY COLD?

Get outside!

Leaves are falling to the ground; little arms are dotted with goose bumps and the grass is dewy underfoot. After what feels like the longest Summer in history, the cooler weather is here, bringing with it a few challenges for outdoor play. *Or does it?*

By Nicole Halton

Who is it challenging for?

Somewhere along the line, we adults have developed a low tolerance for cold, wet or windy weather. The children that we care for generally don't feel the same way. They delight in the puddles, turn their faces to the wind and run, jump, climb, twirl and hop to keep warm. They find joy in what the cooler weather offers. So, the challenges that we might face as the temperature drops usually have nothing at all to do with the children.

They tend to fall into 3 main categories:

Challenge #1 - "I don't want my child to play outside, they will get sick."

It's a common misconception that being cold will make you sick. It will not.

"Colds are caused by a virus spread by another infected person. A number of conditions can increase your chances of catching a cold. People appear to catch colds indoors during the colder months when living conditions bring people closer together and close to other people's cold viruses. Closed windows and lack of fresh air also seem to contribute to the problem. Fatigue, poor health, some indoor air pollutants and stress may also increase susceptibility. Cold weather,

chills or exposure to cold do not cause colds. In the Antarctic, scientists are free of colds until they return to home." *Lung Foundation Australia (2016)*

When I was directing, this was a recurring challenge. However, over time, as we provided more and more information to families and strengthened our philosophy and policies to reflect the importance of outdoor play every day, it happened less and less. Why? Because knowledge is power.

Rather than feeling frustrated at these comments, we need to meet parents where they are at. Respect their beliefs but also provide them with information on enrolment and throughout their time with us, such as the quote above from Lung Foundation Australia, to support our commitment to outdoor play in all weather.

Challenge #2 - "Can't we just keep the children inside this afternoon? It's too cold."

I've been there. I've been the educator who stood with my arms folded, desperate to head back indoors to the warmth.

But, I have also been the educator who delights in watching the children run, discovering that when it is really cold you can blow "smoke" out of your mouth.



“There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.”

Sir Ranulph Fiennes

The biggest problem we have with the cold weather is that we don't dress accordingly. In countries such as Denmark, it is commonplace to sleep infants outdoors and spending the vast majority of the day outdoors is important. Children and adults dress in warm jackets, all-weather suits and beanies and scarves.

We need to encourage families to pack wet/cold weather appropriate clothing and also have spares on hand. We can also encourage educators to leave a warm, weatherproof jacket at the service for when the weather changes unpredictably.

Operating an indoor/outdoor program has immense benefits for children's play and can also solve the "it's

too cold" problem. There may be children who would rather be indoors also and flexibility around this can work for everyone.

Challenge #3 - "It's wet!"

Wet grass or mud? Gumboots! Wet swing? Old towel! Drizzly rain? Umbrella! Wet grass, wet equipment and even rain, should not stop us from getting outdoors. Sure, lightning, thunder and strong winds are a no-go, but a drizzly shower on an Autumn afternoon – now that's fun! Puddles are great for splashing, rain feels funny on your tongue and changes in the environment provide a great source of fascination – can you imagine missing that?

A supply of spare clothes, spare rain coats and spare gumboots can make a world of difference. Ask for donations of these items or pick up from op-shops. Keep a large supply of towels on hand to allow children to dry off after play.

Look for the positives

Instead of seeing the challenges, see the positives – they are there in abundance. The opportunities to explore STEM concepts, the Vitamin D exposure, the physical development and the absolute joy at exploring all that nature has to offer, because of not in spite of, the cold, rainy, windy weather.

“Childhood is that state which ends the moment a puddle is first viewed as an obstacle instead of an opportunity.”

Kathy Williams

Sources:

Lung Foundation Australia http://lungfoundation.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Common-Cold_FS-Mar2016.pdf



Nicole Halton is an author, early childhood consultant and presenter. She was a service director before co-founding Inspired EC, Inspired FDC and TimberNook Newcastle.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

JURY DUTY

What is Jury Duty and who can be called for it?

- A type of community service leave.
- All employees whether they are full time, part-time or casual.
- By law (Jury Act NSW 1977 and Fair Work Act 2009 Commonwealth) as an employer, you must release an employee for jury service.

Did You Know as an ACA Member:

- You can download template for staff to apply to be excused from jury duty, should that be their choice from our website www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au
- Members can also receive a customised supporting letter from ACA NSW providing further official Federal Government evidence of the challenges faced by service providers to recruit staff. The letter from ACA NSW produced will be specific for the member's staff. More information about jury duty can be found at <https://www.fairwork.gov.au>

MEAL BREAKS AND REST PAUSES, ENTITLEMENTS

Do I have to pay ECTs for lunch breaks?

- Where the ECT is required to remain on premises, for the duration of their meal break, they are entitled to be paid for the break of no more than 30 minutes and no less than 20 minutes.

Do I need to cover staff for lunch breaks?

- In NSW, Educator-to-child ratios must be maintained at all times.
- Only Educators working directly with children can be included in ratios. Therefore, meal breaks and rest pauses must be covered.
- In relation to ratio requirements, there is flexibility for Educators to take a short break for example for personal hygiene, without being covered, as long as the Educator remains on the premises and is immediately available to respond to the needs of the children.

Did you know you can access the Children Services Award 2010 and the Teachers Award on our Website? Head to the services tab at www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au

More information about break entitlements can be found at: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/>

TRAINEESHIP

What award is a trainee paid from?

- Trainees are paid from Miscellaneous Award 2010 under Wage Level A found in E.6.1 of the award.
- The conditions of a trainee's employment is outlined in the Children's Services Award as well as the conditions of employment set out in the contracts between the relevant state/territory authority, Registered Training Organisation and the Approved Provider of the service.

What is a traineeship?

Traineeship means a system of training that:

- a) has been approved by the relevant State or Territory training authority; and
- b) meets the requirements of a training package developed by the relevant Skills

Service Organisation and endorsed by the Australian Industry and Skills Committee; and leads to an AQF certificate level qualification.

As an ACA NSW Member you can access the Miscellaneous Award 2010, Children's Services Award 2010 and Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 as well as the respective pay summaries from our website www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au

Did you know that as an ACA NSW member, you have access to the Early Education and Care College, which provides centre based training?

Our President Lyn Connolly says that "to have our own training college with guidance and support from specialists is a great step forward."

Get more information from www.eecc.com.au

LEVEL AND QUALIFICATION CLASSIFICATION STRUCTURE

How do I classify what level staff should be on?

You can review which levels your staff should be paid under by looking at the relevant award, as well as the Award conditions. Please refer to the Children's Services Award 2010 (MA000120) (*Schedule B - Classification Structure, page 40*) and Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 (MA000077) (Clause 13. Classifications, page 17) to clarify the relevant Award level classifications. You can access the awards on our websites under the services tab www.nsw.childcarealliance.org.au

Did you know as an ACA NSW member you can access these awards and pay summaries on our website? Also if you need further help with classifying staff levels, you can contact the ACA member support staff Monday - Friday from 8:30am-5pm on 1300 556 330.

Bilingual BY FIVE

THE BENEFITS
OF LEARNING A
SECOND LANGUAGE
IN THE EARLY YEARS

BROUGHT TO
YOU BY



As the Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) Program has recently received extra funding, foreign language studies in early childhood education has once again become a hot topic amongst industry experts.

ELLA, a digital, play-based language learning program, first introduced by the Federal Government to 40 preschools in 2014, has been very successful and is currently available at 2500 Australian Preschools. The new \$11.8 million funding, as announced by Federal Education Minister Simon Birmingham, will expand the program to 5000 preschools and 300 primary schools around Australia.

Why learn a second language so early?

The benefits of learning a second language during the early years are endless. Harvard Professor and director of Harvard's Language Science Lab Maria Polinsky is a strong supporter of second language learning in early childhood. Polinsky explains that children who learn more than one language develop much more cognitive control than their monolingual peers. This enhanced cognitive control supports the development of skills like problem solving, critical thinking and multitasking.

Contrary to common belief, being exposed to different languages does not confuse young children. It actually enhances literacy development in their mother tongue, as they learn how languages work and are able to create links between the different languages.

Being exposed to a new language also means being exposed to a new culture and bilingual children display a more positive attitude, greater empathy and tolerance towards other cultures. Another fantastic benefit of learning a second language during the early years is that it enhances children's self-esteem and social skills.

Education experts around the country and the world agree that early exposure to foreign languages is extremely beneficial. At Early Start Programs, we prefer to deliver this with a more interactive method

using song, dance, stories and rhyme delivered face-to-face in a play-based environment. Extracurricular programs are growing popular amongst early education and care centres and children are reaping the benefits. Early Start Programs' LCF Fun Languages, for example, is a fantastic alternative or addition to ELLA, as it takes this learning experience even further with foreign language lessons from fluent speaking teachers.

These programs take place at early education services as incursion programs and are aligned with individual services' programs and based on children's current interests. Lessons include songs, games, arts and craft activities that also help build children's interpersonal and social skills. Preschools and Long Day Care Centres in NSW can utilise government funding options, like Start Strong to implement programs like Early Start Programs at their services and help make high quality early childhood education more affordable. Programs are delivered for only \$3/child/day*.

Early Start Programs offer sports, yoga, music and foreign language programs at childcare centres around Australia. For more information about their programs and quotes, visit www.earlystartprograms.com.au or email enquiries@earlystartprograms.com.au

Early Learning Languages Australia (ELLA) program

ELLA is an Australian Government initiative.

www.ella.edu.au



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