



Australian Childcare Alliance
New South Wales

THE NURTURE NOOK

Winter 2016 Edition



'Jobs For Families' Package

What Did the Senate Say About the Package?

Universal Access Funding Confirmed

We have had another significant win this year.

Nurturing Yourself

Nurturing you and your sparkle.

Plants for Playspaces

Tips for a natural and safe environment.



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PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Hi everyone,

As we all start the processes associated with the end of financial year, it's often tough to remember our successes when we're staring at the bottom line, and looking around us thinking "that's all I've got to show for another year and another thousand grey hairs?".



It is worth reflecting on the achievements of your business; the educators you have employed and helped in their career development, the families you have supported, and – most of all – the children whose lives you have enriched by giving them access to high quality early childhood education and care. After all, with even more studies confirming the impact we have on their outcomes, what we do is critical in shaping their future.

The Australian Childcare Alliance coordinated a roundtable forum at Parliament House in March, hosted by the Federal Education Minister, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham. We gathered the leaders from the early childhood sector, along with Prof Frank Oberklaid and a range of politicians – Ministers and Senators alike, to discuss the Jobs for Families package and how it could be better shaped to meet the needs of children and make it through the Senate. Since that time, ACA has been working very hard running through various models and costings to find solutions that would achieve our goals. It was therefore disappointing to hear in the Federal Budget that the package has been delayed by another year. Families and children are already struggling with the limitations of the current model, and this delay is going to mean real problems for many Australians.

The Federal election looms large, and ACA NSW is working hard on our national agenda by compiling our election strategy document. We will be writing to each party asking them about their Early Childhood policies, and collating their responses for our members to share with families. There will also be a call to action for you to contact your local politicians if you are unhappy with their proposed policies – so keep an eye out for how you can actively participate in this year's election.

I was delighted to see so many of you at our Newcastle retreat – particularly up on the dance floor on Saturday night! We have a really stellar line up of speakers for Coogee in July and I hope to see you there. Come on over and say 'hi' during the weekend!

Don't forget to take some time to plan the spending of your final instalment of the Long Day Care Professional Development Programme funds for the upcoming year – remembering to focus on the National Quality Framework Quality Areas.

Our executive have been busily beavering away in the background, working on budgets, training strategies, membership packages and constitutional reviews. Our amazing CEO and I have also been working closely with the media as stories emerge.

We also have a new Executive Director of Early Childhood – Ms Tracy Mackey – who has a clear and positive agenda for the NSW Early Childhood Directorate. I caught up with Tracy at the Cultural Connections Forum recently, and will spend more time with her and the team at the Department in the coming months to ensure that your issues are at the forefront of their policy developments.

Lastly, as you all know – it's that time of year again – flu shot time! My kids and I made the most of the post-jab jelly beans when we had ours recently!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Nesha'.

Nesha O'Neil Hutchinson
PRESIDENT

CEO'S WELCOME

Let the games begin!

As this issue of *Nurture Nook* goes to print, we are rapidly finalising our Federal Election strategy, following the announcement of a double dissolution election; a 12-month delay in the implementation of the Jobs for Families Package; and plenty of speculation about what the future holds for our sector. You can read more about what's happening in Federal politics in the pages ahead.

At a state level, we are approaching the 18 July 2016 commencement of Early Childhood Teacher Accreditation, and doing our best to keep you informed as the Board of Studies Teaching and Educational Standards NSW (BOSTES) releases information of relevance to you. If you have not yet opened the information packs sent to you from BOSTES earlier this year, please do so immediately, as Early Childhood Teachers must be accredited before 18 July 2016 to continue working in their current capacity.

Still at a state level, we are hopeful that your 2016 Universal Access payment will be provided in the weeks ahead. We are very proud of the positive results of our relentless advocacy on this issue and trust you are able to put this funding to good use in supporting your preschool programmes for children in their year before school.

Things have not quietened down on the industrial relations front. We – through our national body, the Australian Childcare Alliance – have been carefully responding to the issues raised in the 4-yearly review of Modern Awards. Without our intervention, the industrial environment we currently operate in could be dramatically altered, which would have serious implications on the way you run your service. We have provided an update in this issue of *Nurture Nook* to keep you up to speed on the review.

We have been delighted to see so many of you supporting our professional development activities over the last few months. For those of you who have attended our bus tours, weekend retreats and/or workshops, I am sure you will agree that our sector has a vibrant future if the energy in the room at these events is anything to go by! If you have not yet attended one of these events, please have a look through our website and find a professional activity that suits you and your team. With only a little more than a year left before the Long Day Care Professional Development Programme expires, now is a great time to revisit the professional development section of your Quality Improvement Plan and ensure that you can meet your service's professional development needs.

Thank you for supporting ACA NSW. If you know an approved provider who is not a member, please encourage them to look at the benefits of membership. The stronger our organisation, the better our ability to positively influence government on the issues that matter most to you – our members.



Brianna Casey
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



‘JOBS FOR FAMILIES’ CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PACKAGE

Federal Budget

The Federal Budget was handed down Tuesday 3 May 2016, significantly altering the implementation timeframes for the ‘Jobs for Families’ Child Care Assistance Package. Blaming the failure of the Family Tax Benefit changes announced in the 2015/16 Budget to be supported by Labor, the Federal Education Minister, Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham announced that the bulk of the package would not be implemented until 1 July 2018 – 12 months later than the original 1 July 2017 commencement date.

What Has Changed?

The key changes announced on Budget night relate to implementation timeframes, which have in most instances been pushed back a year.

- **Child Care Subsidy**
 - o Single, means-tested payment (replacing CCB & CCR) – July 2018
- **Child Care Safety Net**
 - o Additional Child Care Subsidy – July 2018
 - o Community Child Care Fund – July 2018
 - o Inclusion Support Programme – July 2016 (as originally scheduled)
- **Compliance Framework**
 - o Some Framework elements commence – July 2017
 - o New Compliance Framework – July 2018
- **Budget Based Funding**
 - o Budget Based Funding Programme – extended to 30 June 2018
- **Nanny Pilot Programme**
 - o Extended to June 2018
 - o Subsidy increased to \$5.00 – \$8.50/hour – 1 June 2016 (up from \$3.50 - \$5.95/hour)
- **Indexation of the Child Care Rebate (CCR)**
 - o The freeze on indexation that has been in place since July 2011 will finally be lifted from 1 July 2017, meaning that the CCR maximum limit of \$7500 per child per year will be indexed.


What Did the Senate Say About the Package?

Following the Senate inquiry into the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Bill 2015, the Education and Employment Legislation Committee recommended that the Senate pass the Bill. However, when the Senate Report was released on 4 April 2016, two dissenting reports were also published, the first by Labor Senators and the second by the Australian Greens. Unsurprisingly, the proposed activity test drew the most criticism and concern from submitters; and the simplified system of the proposed Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy attracted the most praise. As outlined in the various ‘Reactions’ sections of the Senate Report, submitters remain concerned about a number of aspects of the package, particularly how the package may support at risk, vulnerable and disadvantaged children in an operational and funding sense.

What Do We Think?

Whilst there is a lot to like about the proposed package, and the amended implementation timeframes will hopefully give us time to address the elements we have concerns with, delaying the introduction of the new subsidy is of enormous concern. We know that many families are already struggling, and that a growing number of families are reaching the CCR threshold well before the end of financial year. As such, asking them to wait another two years for financial relief is a big ask, and it will be very interesting to see how this plays out during the election campaign.

“You will find an overview of the package and links to all current (amended 3 May 2016) fact sheets available from the Federal Government in the Members Only section of the ACA NSW website.”




Jobs for Families Child Care Package

The Australian Government will invest around \$40 billion on child care support over the next four years. This significant investment includes an increase of more than \$3 billion to support the implementation of the *Jobs for Families* Child Care Package. The Package will make our child care system simpler, more flexible, more accessible, more affordable and targeted to those who need it most.

Child Care Subsidy (\$23 billion)

The centrepiece of the package is the Child Care Subsidy. When the Child Care Subsidy commences in July 2018, it will:

- replace the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) with a single, means-tested subsidy
- be paid directly to service providers to be passed on to families
- be simpler than the current multi-payment system
- be better targeted and provide more assistance to low and middle income families.



Families earning \$65,710^a or less will receive a subsidy of 85 per cent of the actual fee charged (up to 85 per cent of an hourly fee cap). For family incomes above \$65,710^a, the subsidy tapers down to 20 per cent when family income reaches \$340,000^a.

| Combined Family Income | Subsidy per cent of the actual fee charged (up to relevant percentage of the hourly fee cap) |
|---|--|
| Up to \$65,710 ^a | 85 per cent |
| More than \$65,710 ^a to below \$170,710 ^a | Tapering to 50 per cent* |
| \$170,710 ^a to below \$250,000 ^a | 50 per cent |
| \$250,000 ^a to below \$340,000 ^a | Tapering to 20 per cent* |
| \$340,000 ^a or more | 20 per cent |

*Subsidy tapers down by 1 per cent for each \$3000 of family income.

When the subsidy commences the hourly fee caps will be:

| Service type | Maximum hourly fee cap |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Centre Based Long Day Care | \$11.55 ^a |
| Family Day Care | \$10.70 ^a |
| Outside School Hours Care | \$10.10 ^a |

^a Note: These provisions of the Package, as introduced in legislation on 2 December 2015, will be increased by CPI for implementation in July 2018.

For families earning more than \$185,710^a, an annual subsidy cap of \$10,000^a per child will apply.

Activity test

Family eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy will be determined by a three-step activity test, more closely aligning the hours of subsidised care with the combined hours of work, training, study or other recognised activity undertaken, and providing for up to 100 hours of subsidy per fortnight.

| Step | Hours of activity (per fortnight) | Maximum number of hours of subsidy (per fortnight) |
|------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | 8 hours to 16 hours | 36 hours |
| 2 | More than 16 hours to 48 hours | 72 hours |
| 3 | More than 48 hours | 100 hours |

A broad range of activities will meet the activity test requirements, including paid work, being self-employed, doing unpaid work in a family business, looking for work, volunteering or studying. There will be exemptions to the activity test for parents who legitimately cannot meet the activity requirements.

Some families who don't meet the activity test will be assisted through the new Child Care Safety Net including families on incomes of \$65,710^a or less a year who will be able to access 24 hours of subsidised care per fortnight without having to meet the activity test.

For the first time, families who currently use Budget Based Funded services will be eligible for child care fee assistance. Around \$227 million has been budgeted under the Child Care Subsidy in 2018-19 to 2019-20, with the subsidy paid directly to services.

Child Care Safety Net (\$1 billion)

The Child Care Safety Net, which will be progressively rolled out from July 2016, aims to give the most vulnerable children a strong start, while supporting parents into work.

The Child Care Safety Net has three components:

- Additional Child Care Subsidy
- Community Child Care Fund
- Inclusion Support Programme

Additional Child Care Subsidy (\$173 million) – July 2018

The Additional Child Care Subsidy is a top up payment in addition to the Child Care Subsidy. The Government recognises that extra support is needed for:

- children at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- families experiencing temporary financial hardship
- grandparents on income support who are the primary carer of their grandchildren
- parents transitioning to work from income support
- low income families who do not meet the activity test.

Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) (\$284 million) – July 2018

Under the CCCF, child care services (including former Budget Based Funded services) will be able to apply for supplementary funding through a competitive grants programme to:

- reduce the barriers in accessing child care, in particular for disadvantaged or vulnerable families and communities
- provide sustainability support for child care services experiencing viability issues
- provide capital support to increase the supply of child care places in areas of high unmet demand.

As part of the CCCF, commencing in July 2016, \$20 million over 2 years will provide for the integration of child care, maternal and child health, and family support services in a number of Indigenous communities experiencing disadvantage, as recommended by Andrew Forrest in his review of Indigenous jobs and training - *Creating Parity*.

Inclusion Support Programme (\$543 million) – July 2016

The Inclusion Support Programme will assist mainstream services to improve their capacity and capability to provide inclusive practices and address barriers to participation for children with additional needs, particularly children with disability.


The programme includes:

- practical inclusion advice and support for services
- access to specialist equipment
- additional funding to the service to assist inclusion of children with additional needs.

Implementation timeline

The *Jobs for Families* Child Care Package also includes funding for:

- the National Quality Framework
- Universal Access to Early Childhood Learning
- a new Information Technology System to support the package
- the Nanny Pilot Programme (Interim Home Based Care Subsidy Pilot Programme).



More information on the *Jobs for Families* Child Care Package and other programmes is available at: www.education.gov.au

Last updated 3 May 2016

What Happens Next?

All of the changes above are predicated on the package actually getting up ie the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Bill 2015 being supported by Parliament (in particular the Senate). With Parliament having been dissolved to make way for the 2 July 2016 double dissolution election, the earliest that the legislation could be debated is the third quarter of the year – depending whether the Turnbull Government is re-elected. The package is expected to be a key election issue, so there may be further announcements during the election campaign. If the Turnbull Government continues its position that the package can only be funded through Family Tax Benefit changes, it is unlikely that Labor, The Greens and cross-benchers will support it. So in short, what happens next is anyone's guess! We will of course keep you informed every step of the way, so please keep an eye on our Weekly Update member emails and on the dedicated page in the Members Only section of our website.

Where Can I Find Out More?

We have a dedicated page on the Jobs for Families package in the Members Only section of our website. After logging in, you can access the page via the Members Menu. You will find an overview of the package and links to all current (amended 3 May 2016) fact sheets available from the Federal Government. We encourage you to share these with the families at your service, noting that there are separate fact sheets for families and service providers.





UNIVERSAL ACCESS FUNDING CONFIRMED FOR 2016

As members would be aware, we have been fighting for a more equitable approach to Universal Access funding in NSW for many years.

We had a significant win last year, with \$300 per child in their year before school provided to long day care services via the \$20m Long Day Care National Partnership Grants Program. You may recall that this was promoted as a “one-off grant”, which we strongly objected to given that it was confirmed in the 2015-16 Federal Budget that Universal Access funding would be provided to states and territories in both 2016 and 2017.

We worked tirelessly over the last nine months to ensure that the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access made it explicit that states/territories - including NSW - would have to provide the funding regardless of setting; and to ensure the NSW Government delivered the funding more equitably across the sector. We met with the NSW Early Childhood Minister, the Hon Leslie Williams MP earlier this year to nut out the final details.

We had a major win, with the NSW Government announcing 11 March 2016 that \$23.6 million will be made available to long day care services to support the delivery of preschool programs for four and five year old children in their year before school.

The base funding will be the same as last year (approximately \$300 per enrolled child in their year before school), but additional bonus payments will be provided to encourage children to attend a preschool program for the recommended 600 hours per year.

All four and five year olds will be eligible for a minimum payment of \$300 per child, rising to a payment of \$450 for children enrolled for 600 hours. Four or five year olds from Aboriginal backgrounds or enrolled in services in disadvantaged areas will be eligible for a minimum payment of \$450 per child, increasing to \$675 for those enrolled for 600 hours.

We understand that **this funding will be made available to services by late June 2016** through the 2016 Long Day Care National Partnership Grants Program. This is an excellent outcome and we are delighted to have been able to improve the implementation of this funding in NSW on behalf of our members.

For any queries on the Long Day Care National Partnership Grants Program, please contact the Partnerships and Programs Unit on **1300 770 962** or email **ldc.ececd@det.nsw.edu.au**.

TEACHER ACCREDITATION

We provided a detailed overview of the new teacher accreditation requirements for Early Childhood Teachers (ECTs) in NSW in our last issue of *Nurture Nook*, but with only a few weeks left before teacher accreditation becomes compulsory, we have provided a quick update below.

NSW early childhood teachers working in long day care and preschools will need to be accredited by the Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES) before 18 July 2016. This includes ECTs who are currently employed in full time, part time or casual positions in an approved early childhood education and care service; who hold an early childhood teaching qualification approved or recognised by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA); and who deliver and assess against the Early Years Learning Framework.

All services should have received information packs earlier this year providing further information about the new accreditation requirements, the registration process and the timeframe for transition. As a result, we are hopeful that all ECTs have already registered online and provided the necessary paperwork to confirm their registration for accreditation. If you have an ECT/s at your service who has not yet registered, please ask them to visit the BOSTES website (<http://www.nswteachers.nsw.edu.au/current-teachers/early-childhood-teachers/>) immediately to commence this process.

PUBLIC HEALTH ACT REVIEW

Thank you to those members who took the time to respond to our recent survey on the possible changes to immunisation requirements for early childhood education and care (ECEC) services in NSW arising from the current review of the NSW Public Health Act 2010. The discussion paper released as part of the review includes a section on vaccination requirements for enrolment in ECEC services in NSW, which questions whether the current conscientious objection exemption should be removed, which would effectively prevent unvaccinated children from enrolling in the services in NSW - a very significant change from current arrangements. At the time of writing, your survey feedback is being analysed and will be invaluable in assisting us prepare our submission in response to the review. Keep an eye on our Weekly Update member emails for the outcomes of the review and what they will mean for members.



Let's Talk Teeth can assist in lifting the profile of Oral Health in Child Care Facilities across the state by providing Professional Developments for Educators, Incursions for children and Parent information sessions. Visit the website: www.letstalkteeth.com.au or find us on Facebook for some great photos and recent reviews, or call Kelly on 0401875225.



INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS UPDATE

4-Yearly Review of Modern Awards

As outlined in our Member Alert issued in early March 2016, the review of modern awards is being conducted in two parts: 'common issues matters', which are being heard in relation to issues common to all Modern Awards and 'award specific' matters, which relate to specific awards, including our awards.

The ACTU have made a number of wide-ranging claims in respect of casual and part-time employment in most Modern Awards. These claims include our awards and seek to introduce a number of provisions relating to casual and part-time employment, including the introduction of casual conversion clauses, minimum periods of engagement and restrictions on employers hiring new casuals.

As previously advised, ACA engaged Australian Business Lawyers and Advisors to act on its behalf and have filed submissions and a witness statement opposing the ACTU proposals. The hearing of the matter commenced 14 March 2016 and is due to run until August, with a decision likely to be published in late 2016. Our thanks to ACA Secretary (and ACA Victoria President) Paul Mondo for appearing as a witness at the hearing.

The Commission will also review our awards generally. These proceedings will likely result in substantive changes to our awards and will likely occur in late 2016. ACA will be involved in the review of the Commission's proposed new awards (known as exposure drafts) in the mid-part of 2016 while a full hearing in relation to various parties' claims in our awards will be heard later this year or in 2017.

We will continue to keep you abreast of progress throughout the review via our *Weekly Update* emails; future issues of *Nurture Nook*; and during our approved provider sessions at our early childhood weekend retreats.

Teachers Award Changes for Casuals

We have uploaded an updated pay and allowances summary table ("pay rates") to our website. The new rates of pay apply only to casual teachers under the Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010. The amended rates have been calculated following very recent advice from the Fair Work Ombudsman that it has changed its view regarding the application of specific provisions in this Award that apply only to teachers working in a children's or early childhood service which usually provides services over a period of at least eight hours each day for 48 weeks. In light of this development, we issued a Member Alert in early May, providing links to the updated rates, which are only available in the Members Only section of our website.





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THE FOUR MOST COMMON PERSONALITY STYLES OF EDUCATORS

Author: Adrian Pattra.
Education Director, Farran Street Education

Educators work and communicate in very different ways. Learning how to identify and understand different working styles based on common characteristics is a fundamental component of creating high performing and harmonious teams.



Not everyone in the world communicates and reacts to their environment in the same way. Some of us enjoy basking in the glow of the limelight, while others are very uncomfortable with public displays of praise.

Understanding different personality styles is not about changing other people; it's about changing the way we operate in order to create an environment where others can thrive.

There tends to be four main working styles;

- Analytical,
- Driver
- Amiable,
- and Expressive.

Each of these working styles exhibits general characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses. They need to be managed and communicated in different ways. Understanding the unique characteristics will help your team bring out the best in each other.

1. Analytical (Owl)

The analytical personality type is profound and thoughtful. They are serious and purposeful individuals. Analyticals are orderly, organized, they love lists and process. They want things done right! And they want them done right the first time. They are neat and tidy individuals. Analyticals are detail focused and they are self-disciplined. Analyticals' weaknesses are that they can be moody, critical and negative. Analyticals can be indecisive and they over-analyse everything.

2. Driver (Eagle)

Drivers have a dynamic and direct working style. They exude confidence and move very quickly to action. For Drivers, close enough is good enough. Drivers' strengths are that they are very determined individuals. They are independent and they are productive. Drivers get a lot of things done. On the weak side, the driver can be insensitive, unsympathetic, harsh, proud and sarcastic. They can also rush to a decision without thoroughly thinking it through.

3. Amiable (Dove)

The amiable working type is very patient and well-balanced. They are quiet team players, very sympathetic, kind, and inoffensive. Amiables do not like to offend people. An amiable is easy going and everybody likes Amiables. They don't like conflict, so they're very agreeable. They're diplomatic and calm. But on the weak side, their aversion to offence and conflict can also manifest as a weakness.

4. Expressive (Peacock)

Expressives are the social specialist because they love to have fun. They are individuals who turn disaster into humour. They prevent dull moments and they are very generous people. They want to be included in projects, in teams and conversations. On the strong side, the expressive is very outgoing and easily engaged. They are ambitious, charismatic, and persuasive. On the weak side, they can be disorganized, undisciplined, loud, and lose interest quickly.

Adapting your style

Adapting your approach to better suit someone's personality is the key ingredient in building trust and improving relationships. Adapting your approach may mean making temporary adjustments in your assertiveness or switching between task or people focus. Adapting the way you approach a situation to suit the other persons style makes them feel comfortable and more engaged.

In fact we are already experts in adapting our style; we do it with the children everyday. You'd never speak harshly to a child whom you knew to be sensitive; the same applies when dealing with colleagues. Modify your style to help bring out the best in them.



Case Study – Giving Feedback using Personality Styles.

Giving feedback to Educators can be tricky at the best of times. However, when you understand their working style you have a better chance of getting your message across.

Situation:

A staff member has left a window open when completing the closing routine last night. The open window caused a breeze, which set off the alarm.

Action:

You need to give the staff member some feedback about the window. You need to get your message across while maintaining a strong relationship with the staff member.

Here are my suggestions for each of the 4 working styles. Each style has been scripted to get the message across in a way that suits their working style.

1. Driver

Hi Driver, You left the window open last night. Can you please make sure you close it next time?

2. Analytical

Hi Analytical, I just noticed this morning that the window was open about 10 centimetres. Can you please check that the window is included on the closing checklist? If it's not, can you please update the checklist, photocopy it and give it out to everyone.

3. Amiable

Hi Amiable, How was your night? I was just walking past the window and I noticed a breeze. I'm not sure whether you locked up last night or someone else locked up, but if you could go around and remind everyone to ensure they shut the window when they close, that would be great!

4. Expressive

Expressive! Window, window, you forgot the window last night you silly billy!

Changing your approach to suit your colleagues working styles ensure we can bring out the best in each other.

When you take this approach as a team, you'll find you have increased collaboration and less aggressiveness. They will have increased engagement, positivity and a genuine respect and acceptance of different personalities.

Farran Street Education is a leading provider of professional development training specifically for the ECEC and OSHC sector. We offer a range of seminars and in service workshops to grow strong teams. Find out more or book a workshop at www.education.farranstreet.com.au or call 1300 366 896.

Have commercial realities **limited the availability for creative space** in your centre?



There's space to play.

If space is an issue in your centre like so many others in this day and age, we have the answer.

Construction play is something we hold dear. The vital life skills that are encouraged via construction play form the basis of so many careers. We believe that construction play helps create a learner who is an engaged, passionate and innovative problem solver.

Observing what children are building during free block play can influence how we set up learning experiences to create more complex construction problems. Frequently, block play leads to cars, robots, buildings and various inanimate objects. Creating a learning experience that provides children a chance to explore the living world can just begin with probing questions such as:

- Can you make a giraffe?
- Can you make a monkey?
- Can you make an eagle?
- Can you make a snake?

Tegu is the wooden block reinvented. It is the magical combination of magnets and the beautiful Honduran hardwoods. Designed to unlock creativity and inspire creative experience, Tegu are the ultimate resource in a space poor centre.

Transferring this natural inspiration to build is something educators can do to help engage children in the finer mathematic, scientific and engineering principles behind construction. Because Tegu comes in different sizes and shapes means that children will be captivated by how the blocks work together and then by opportunity to create their own designs.

Take the time along the way to pose some general questions to the team involved, try these:

- What do you think is inside the blocks?
What do you think you could do with it?
- Who made the decision to build this?
- Where did your idea come from?
- What do you think it will look like when it is completed?

The actual steps from idea, to building and completion are ideal times for observation of a child's self-confidence and self-direction. Also, it provides an insight into gross and fine motor skills, as well as early mathematic concepts.

There's always space to play!

Want to learn more about Tegu? View their story here www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxV6yIl3N_I

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EARLY CHILDHOOD WEEKEND RETREATS

Thank you to those of you who have been actively supporting, promoting and attending our early childhood weekend retreats. We have been blown away by your interest, enthusiasm and very helpful feedback.

Our *Live, Learn, Play!* weekend retreat at Noahs on the Beach in Newcastle from Friday 11 – Sunday 13 March 2016 was a massive success, with more than 100 participants in attendance throughout the weekend. Whilst we had great feedback on all of our speakers, it is fair to say that our motivational speaker, Julie Cross, was a crowd favourite. We felt so strongly about the positive messages she had for our sector that we asked her to write an article for us so that those of you who were not at the retreat can find out a little bit more about why you should nurture yourself. You can find Julie's article on p18.

As we go to print, we are rapidly processing registrations for our next weekend retreat, which will be held at the Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach Friday 29 – Sunday 31 July 2016. The program for our weekend retreat is jam-packed with hands-on, fun and entertaining professional development workshops linking back to the core principles of belonging, being and becoming, with presenters including Anthony Semann, Marc Armitage, Amanda Morphet, motivational speaker Mark Bunn and more! We will be celebrating Christmas in July at our retreat dinner, so get your red and green / Christmas character outfits ready now! You can find the full program and registration details on our website, but as registrations are flooding in, please ensure you book early to avoid missing out on this unique professional development opportunity.



It starts with us!

Registrations are now open for our next Early Childhood Weekend Retreat! Join us at Crowne Plaza Coogee Beach **Friday 29 – Sunday 31 July 2016** for a fun-filled weekend of professional development. For the program and registration details, please visit the ACA NSW website. We look forward to seeing you and your team there!



NOW THE WEATHER IS GETTING COOLER, WHAT ABOUT SUN PROTECTION?

There is some confusion about how to balance sun protection with getting enough vitamin D. But, there is one thing all experts agree on – sun protection is needed when ultraviolet (UV) levels are 3 or above.



Although vitamin D is essential for bone and muscle development, most people will get enough vitamin D from their normal outdoor activities.

Here are a few important messages from Cancer Council NSW:

- Use a combination of sun protection measures (broad brimmed hat, covering clothing, sunscreen, sunglasses and shade) when the UV level is 3 and above.
- If you are near a reflective surface like water or snow use sun protection even if the UV level is below 3.
- The UV may be higher or lower depending on where you live. You can check the daily UV by downloading the free SunSmart app available on the app store.
- The majority of Australians have more than adequate vitamin D levels.
- Being physically active while outdoors will assist with increasing vitamin D levels.
- More than a few minutes exposure to intense UV won't significantly increase your vitamin D levels, but will increase your risk of skin cancer.
- Talk to your doctor if you are worried that you are at risk of vitamin D deficiency.

For more information on vitamin D and sun protection head to http://wiki.cancer.org.au/policy/Position_statement_-_Risks_and_benefits_of_sun_exposure#Vitamin_D_requirements.

Are you displaying your SunSmart sign?

Displaying your metal SunSmart sign is a great way to let the community know that your centre is a member of the Cancer Council's SunSmart program and is implementing a best practice sun protection policy to protect all staff, children and visitors.

If you are part of the SunSmart program but you do not have a sign, please contact our friendly SunSmart team on sunsmartchildcare@nswcc.org.au or (02) 9334 1761.



NURTURING YOURSELF

Hello to all of my friends...

Some of you I may have met already
and some I hope to meet one day!

For those that know me or have seen me speak know that I am all about nurturing you and your sparkle.

What is your sparkle I hear some people asking; well your sparkle is you and your unique personality, but it is even more than that. It is also your caring, your empathy, your courage and resilience. It is your ability to connect, give praise, redirection and reward. It is the way you serve, giving more of yourself in every interaction and it is your ability to lead by letting go of ego and fear. It is self-leadership, it is real and honest and it is fun, laughter and creativity. It is YOUR 'sense of agency!' You, more than anybody, needs to be, and deserves to be, constantly in touch with your sparkle.

You are in an industry where you are giving so much of yourself everyday and that means that you have to nurture and look after yourself more than ever. We cannot give what we don't have, so for us to keep giving, caring and sharing ourselves with others then we need to fill ourselves up too.

So, how do we do this? Well by doing loving things for ourselves and saying loving things to ourselves is a great place to start.

It is inside that your sparkle resides, so every morning when you go to the mirror look into who you are and take the time to delight in the miracle that you are. You are that same beautiful perfect miracle that came into the world as a baby that everybody adored... you just grew up is all! Yes that's right, go to that mirror and love yourself up (your legs too!), like you did when you were two, why wouldn't you?

Then let us look at the words we are saying to ourselves everyday and throughout the day. When somebody asks how you are, what is your reply? Do you say, "Great!"... or is it more likely to be a 'Tired, busy' kind of answer? And then ask yourself is this the kind of day do I want? A day that is tired and busy or would I prefer a day that is great? (Oh and it may still be busy too!) Sometimes you have got to state how you want to be, not how you are and then the energy catches up with you! And let's face it you deserve 'great', not tired and ordinary.

It does take a discipline in our thinking to control our energy and our moods... to control our sparkle, but it is worth the effort that is for sure.



Just like it is an ongoing journey to look after ourselves physically – I mean you can't just do some exercise one day in your life and then that is done - well it is the same emotionally, it is an ongoing journey to be physically and emotionally fit and healthy!

You cannot expect to get to the top of a mountain to admire the view if you are not physically fit... and you can not expect to climb on top of emotional challenges in life if we are not emotionally fit... and believe me it is worth the effort because the view is so beautiful from the top!

So thank you for the wonderful work that you do nurturing our children's physical, academic, creative and emotional growth and never forget we need to do the same for ourselves too... because you are so worth it.

When I see you all I see your sparkle shining ever so brightly, so keep shining up that sparkle and keep sharing it with the world, because the world needs you, that is for sure!

If you need another dose of sparkle and an emotional work out, would like to attend an event for lots of laughs and inspirational entertainment, then you can connect with me at...

Website: julie@juliecross.com.au

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JulieSPRKLE/>

Educators Big Day Out in Sydney 28th May 2016... tickets at <http://karbentraining.com.au/educatorsbigdayout/>

Keep Sparkling!



Julie Cross



PLANTS FOR PLAYSPACES

Kidsafe NSW

Playspaces are often one of few places where children have access to the natural environment. It is important for designers and playspace providers to include natural elements, such as a rich variety of plantings and play features. When choosing plants seek expert advice to ensure that children's access to the natural environment and gardening is safe, engaging and supports their development.

When planning spaces for children, risk management must be approached with an understanding of how children explore, manipulate and learn about their environments. Children's exploration will involve the five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell and taste. *Don't you remember making, admiring, smelling and tasting your first mud pies?*

In order to be sensible about planting in children's environments a practical method of plant selection should be conducted which may include the following:

Do your research - Investigate and research the plants that are planned for the playspace. Seek information on features such as potential toxicity, spiky foliage, thorns/burrs, berries/capsules, known associated allergies, and causes of asthma.

Understand toxicity - If a plant is toxic, gain an understanding of the toxic parts of the plants (leaves, flowers, etc), and potential symptoms (fatal, vomiting, pain in stomach, or dermatitis).

Consider bees - It is a fact that where there are flowers, there will be bees. Bee stings may cause anaphylactic reactions for some children which is alarming for all involved. However, it is important to remember that very few children have died in this situation. Most educators are prepared and trained for such situations.



Understand the needs of the children - Seek to understand the population of the children using the space, such as age and abilities. Generally older children are beyond the mouthing stage of development and less likely to ingest plants. However some children with additional needs may demonstrate these behaviours.

Place feature plants appropriately - A plant that is spiky or causes dermal reactions, yet beautiful, could be positioned away or bordered with a garden bed to prevent access, to be observed and admired. This may require additional supervision or management practices, however, may offer many benefits if rewarded with spectacular seasonal flowering and wildlife visitors.

Be prepared – Ensure that the supervising educators have a current First Aid Certificate to deal with emergency situations.

Very few plants, if ingested, will be fatal. However, some toxic plants can make children very ill, some may cause severe asthma, and others evoke skin allergy reactions. There are a number of resources to assist with your research and plant selection:

Your local nursery - Nursery professionals are well informed to assist you when purchasing suitable plants. Take note of the labelling and ask questions;

Asthma Resources - *The Asthma Foundation NSW* asthmansw.org.au has a useful resource titled *Asthma and Allergy Friendly Gardens* that provides plant recommendations and those to avoid;

Poisons Information - *The NSW Poisons Information Centre* (13 11 26) provides 24/7 telephone advice regarding the toxicity of plants and treatment of suspected poisoning from a variety of plants.

There are so many plants to choose from and there is no need to feel limited by the concern over toxic plants. The key to providing a safe yet stimulating natural environment for children is to utilise the knowledge resources at hand and apply sensible risk management practices. Gardening and the natural environment should be enjoyable and rewarding for adults and children alike.

Kidsafe NSW recognises the importance of gardening with children to build life skills, inspire creativity, grow and harvest food, role model safe practices and a respect for nature.

'Grow me safely' was developed to provide information for educators, parents and carers to engage children in gardening activities. The information provided is supported by injury data and statistics. <http://www.kidsafensw.org/growmesafely/>

ABOUT KIDSAFE

Kidsafe promotes learning through safe, creative play. The expert team at Kidsafe NSW offers design and playground inspection services to assist playground owners and educators achieve a balance between safety and challenge for children.

For Further Information

Contact Kidsafe NSW Playground Advisory Unit:

P: 02 9845 0893

E: SCHN-KIDSAFE@health.nsw.gov.au

W: www.kidsafensw.org

ECEC WORKFORCE CENSUS

The Australian Government will be conducting the third Early Childhood Education and Care National Workforce Census of all Child Care Benefit approved child care services from **23 May - 17 July 2016**.

The census will collect detailed information on service usage, children with additional needs, access to preschool programs and staff details, including staff demographics, types of work, qualifications, experience, and current study. This information will be used to provide a national overview of the early childhood education and care workforce and inform early childhood and care policy. **The census is a requirement for all approved child care services, and forms part of the conditions of approval of services**

under family assistance law. It is therefore important for services to complete the census. Registration for the census began in March for non-vacation care services, and May for vacation care services. You should have been notified when registration opened for your service and invited to complete registration online. For further information, please visit <http://bit.ly/1UAoFJ2>.



HAVE YOU BOOKMARKED THESE HANDY FAQs?

We know a lot of you have already bookmarked the four Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) pages on the ACECQA website (with separate FAQ pages for National Quality Framework; Educators and Providers; Families; and Regulatory Authorities), but have you also bookmarked the FAQs page on the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate website? You can find it at <http://bit.ly/1WJMtKL>, with information on questions from supervisor certificates to early childhood teacher requirements to service approvals. It's well worth a look!

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Our newest supplier member will blow you away with their discounts for ACA NSW members! Educational Experience is providing a 20% discount off all catalogue prices to ACA NSW members, plus a flat \$9 delivery fee for most orders. With end of financial year just around the corner, make sure you log in to our website to find the promotional code to quote before lodging your next Educational Experience order.

We are also delighted to welcome Tassway as a supplier member. If you are looking for nappies, gloves, paper products, cleaning products, art and craft supplies and more – be sure to visit their website.

We also encourage you to support our other supplier members, listed at right, many of whom offer discounts and promotions for you, our members.

Are you taking advantage of our Officeworks discount?

As you may already be aware, ACA NSW recently partnered with Officeworks to offer members with exclusive benefits that could save you thousands of dollars per year. As an ACA NSW member, you can gain access to exclusive member benefits by signing up to a 30-day business account, which provides you with preferential pricing on a range of business essentials, and free delivery nationwide with no minimum order quantity (NB; this does not apply to larger item orders). As an example, here in the ACA NSW office, we normally pay \$59 (incl GST) for laminating sheets. Using our Officeworks discount, we now pay \$24.54 - a saving of 58%! This is but one example of the types of savings you can take advantage of by registering as an ACA NSW member. Please visit <http://www.officeworks.com.au/campaigns/business-account/ACANSW> for further information and details on how you can register your service for discounts.

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