



NORTH WEST QLD

LOOP

MAY 2009

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

It's regional loop time again!

This edition holds some interesting articles including one from Heather Barnes on stress called '*Look after the children by looking after you!*' and from Sue Inglis we have an article looking at '*The importance of resilience in early childhood education*'.

It's great to see a number of services registering to attend the professional leadership retreat in Townsville. Don't forget registration for this must close on the 3rd of June so don't miss out!

The region has also committed to some more places for the online learning with OWFC so why not jump on there website and see if they may have something of interest coming up that you can register for—the learning style may not be for you but you won't know until you give it a try!

Last, but by no means least, the Northern Regions Professional Development Calendar for 2009 has been updated and is available for you on the website at www.pscq.org.au

Thinking about putting your hand up to become part of the Professional Support Network in the North West region?

Included in this mailout is a simple expression of interest that you can complete and fax to the Townsville office on 07 4760 9806.

It's regional loop time again!

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Regional Roundup
- Australia Wide Conferences
- Frequently asked questions
- Heather Barnes Article
- Sue Inglis Article
- Exchange Program
- Noah's Ark Resources

NEED TO CONTACT PSCQ?

Phone
1800 112 585

Web www.pscq.org.au

Email
pscq@workforce.org.au

Your North West Qld
Project Officer is -

Peter Demopoulos

For more information,
check out the website at
www.pscq.org.au
or give us a call on the PSCQ
freecall number —
1800 112 585.

DATE CLAIMER

Drumming up Childcare Professional Support Conference

15th & 16th August 2009
Mount Isa



REGISTER NOW!

North West Regional

Professional Leadership Retreat

The North West Queensland Professional Support Network

INVITES

YOU!



TO A LEADERSHIP PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ENERGISE, ENTHUSE AND INSPIRE!

Childcare leaders of the North West will be inspired to be everything you can be in your professional setting. As leaders you will be affirmed and valued and will benefit from connecting with each other and gain new or different ideas for leading others.

AUSTRALIA WIDE CONFERENCES 2009

* CHECK THE WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Family Day Care Australia National Conference 2009

20-23 May 2009, Hotel Grand Chancellor, Hobart

<http://www.cdesign.com.au/fdc2009/>

Fourth national conference for the Australian college for child and family protection practitioners

22 -24 May, 2009, Rydges, Southbank, Brisbane

<http://www.accfpp.org.au/events.htm>

Early Childhood Education Conference

<http://www.togetherwegrow.com.au/>

29-30 May 2009, Caulfield Racecourse, Melbourne.

Childcare Queensland annual conference

24-26 July 2009, Royal Pines Resort, Gold Coast

http://www.childcareqld.org.au/media_events.htm

2009 ARACY Conference: Transforming Australia for our children's future: Making prevention work

2-4 September 2009, Melbourne

<http://www.aracyconference.org.au/index.php> (Call for abstracts open until 30 April)

Third Australasian Early Childhood Education for Sustainability Conference

Engage Empower Enact: Sustainability and the Early Years

22-24 October, 2009, Melbourne

<http://www.cccvic.org.au/images/EESEY%20Conference%202009.pdf>

Asia Pacific Conference on Child Abuse and Neglect

15-18 November, 2009, Perth

<http://www.napcan.org.au/index.htm>

Birth to Three 2009 Conference

28-29 May, 2009, Surfers Paradise

<http://www.communitiesforchildrenwwk.org.au/>



EXCHANGE PROGRAM *UPDATE...*



Children's Services Professionals Exchange Program

The Children's Services Professionals Exchange Program is off to a flying start in 2009 with visits already organised to Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Bowen. The lucky participants in the Exchange Program have the opportunity to gather and share knowledge, resources and ideas as well as developing lasting professional network links while visiting other services across Queensland.

Feedback from participants and host services has been positive, with everyone agreeing that this is a valuable professional development opportunity.

"Great to network with other centres and directors and I gained lots of ideas to incorporate into our program."

Carmen from Dysart Child Care Centre (participant)

"Our participant had a great deal of experience using the emergent curriculum to program; this was very helpful for our staff. We learnt a lot from her."

Nola from St Paul's Lutheran Child Care Centre (Host Service)

Participants in the exchange Program decide the type of service and the region they would like to visit, local or outside their region. The Exchange Program Coordinator has a list of fantastic host services across Queensland for participants to select from. They offer a variety of experiences such as remote, indigenous, urban and city as well as services that are experienced in programs based on the emergent curriculum. Whether you work in Long day Care, Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, or Occasional Care as a director, coordinator, administrator, cook, carer, group leader or assistant, you are able to access this fantastic professional development opportunity.

As part of this wonderful professional development experience, PSCQ will pay for and organise any travel and accommodation costs if you are visiting a service outside your local area, as well as covering the wages of relief staff if backfill is needed.

Why not take advantage of this incredibly exciting professional development experience and explore new horizons?

To find out more about the Exchange Program call Fay Edwards, Exchange Program Coordinator on 47237764 or 0408 062 042.



LOOK AFTER THE CHILDREN BY LOOKING AFTER YOU!

Child care professionals are doing much more than just looking after children and playing with them all day. You have an incredibly important and demanding job, nurturing and teaching children during the significant stages of their childhood. Being able to see a baby walk for the first time, noticing the explosion of a toddler's vocabulary, assisting children to learn more about their world and enjoying the funny things that children say, are just some of the reasons why child care professionals generally have a high level of enjoyment of their work.

Unfortunately some people working with children burn out due to the physical and emotional demands of their work. They feel that they are continually involved in a juggling act: ensuring that licensing requirements are met; undertaking self-study and maintaining a focus on continuous improvement (Accreditation); and meeting the needs of children, parents, colleagues, committees and management. Additional stressors occur when there are *new* children, *new* families, *new* staff, *new* management or new requirements in licensing or quality assurance.

When you allow yourself to get run down, stressed out, anxious, overly tired and empty, how can you expect to give the kind of care that children need and deserve? If you are running on empty, how can you expect to fuel them with a passion for life and learning? If you are stressed, how can you provide them with a calm and relaxed environment? If you are experiencing your own inner storms, how can you expect to calm theirs? If you are burned out, how can you keep your interactions positive? (Adapted from *Finding your smile again - A Child Care Professional's Guide to Reducing Stress and Avoiding Burnout* by Jeff A. Johnson, Redleaf Press, 2007, page 33.)

At reasonable levels, stress is a way of making sure that you are alert and ready to tackle issues that arise in your everyday lives. At unreasonable levels, it is unproductive and can damage your health. If your early enthusiasm and energy is giving way to chronic fatigue and irritability, your eating and sleeping patterns change and you indulge in escapist behaviour such as shopping binges, you may be in the first stages of burnout. If you don't look after yourself your work and relationships start to deteriorate. Physical symptoms may include: tension headaches, muscular aches and pains and general tiredness, skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, heart palpitations and excessive sweating, mouth ulcers and susceptibility to colds and digestive problems.



How to avoid burnout:

Be realistic in your job expectations, aspirations and goals. Create balance in your life. Invest more of yourself in family, other personal relationships, social activities and hobbies so that your job doesn't have such an overpowering influence on your self-esteem and self-confidence.

It is important to keep things in perspective and say to yourself, "I know this seems really urgent now but in the overall scheme of things will this be important next month, next year?"

Learn to recognise your own physical, emotional and behavioral responses to stress.

Identify the events, or stressors, that are causing the stress.

Take steps to reduce or eliminate stressful situations or deal with them differently.

Learn to recognise when your body is tense by tuning in to your breathing or notice whether you are holding any parts of your body tightly.

Steps to relieve stress and look after yourself:

- When something worries you don't bottle it up, talk with someone about it.
- Taking some time out can help you see a situation more clearly. This is hard to achieve in some child care settings but taking a 'mental health' day or even just a longer break may be all that is needed for you to re-charge.
- Do something constructive with your pent-up energy if you feel angry. (Cleaning is good!)
- If you feel yourself worrying about yourself all the time, try doing something for someone else.
- Take one thing at a time. Working on just one of the tasks hanging over your head will help you to feel that you are achieving something.
- Relax in a way that suits you – by walking, reading, meeting with friends, yoga class, meditation.
- Eat whole grains, lean protein-rich foods, fruits and vegetables.
- Limit your intake of coffee, tea, soft drinks and alcohol and drink plenty of water instead.
- Try to include 30 minutes of activity each day. Be active with the children!

Don't try to be super-person.

No one can be perfect all the time!

Slow Dance

Have you ever watched children
on a merry-go-round?
Or listened to the rain
slapping on the ground?
Ever followed a butterfly's erratic flight?
Or gazed at the sun into the fading night?
*You'd better slow down
Don't dance so fast
Time is short
The music won't last*
Do you run through each day
on the fly?
When you ask: How are you?
Do you hear the reply?
When the day is done

do you lie in your bed
with the next hundred chores
running through your head?
*You'd better slow down
Don't dance so fast
Time is short
The music won't last*
Ever told a child
we'll do it tomorrow?
And in your haste
not see his sorrow?
Ever lost touch
Let a good friendship die
cause you never had time to call and say
hi?
You'd better slow down

*Don't dance so fast
Time is short
The music won't last*
When you run so fast to get somewhere
you miss half the fun of getting there
When you worry and hurry through your
day
it is like an unopened gift
thrown away.
*Life is not a race
Do take it slower
Hear the music
before the song is over.*

(Written by an anonymous teenager with cancer)



The Importance of Resilience in Early Childhood Education

By Sue Inglis *Growing Early Childhood*

All children will at some time have to face moments that require them to be able to cope and bounce back; to be **resilient**. It might be those first few days or weeks at child care or school, perhaps moving house, dealing with someone who is bullying, meeting new friends or playing sport. For some children even the little challenges in life can be particularly difficult. As a parent or caregiver, it is sometimes stressful dealing with a child who clings to you or who says, "I can't do it," or "I don't have any friends," and often we feel ill-equipped to teach children the strategies to be able to deal with moments such as these.

Much research has been conducted around the world to search for the factors that both contribute to children being at risk of feeling anxious, and also the resilience qualities that assist children to overcome challenges. The research has shown that some children — one in five — are born with a more anxious temperament and are often more difficult to settle when startled or upset. Other factors may contribute to young children feeling anxious or worried; such things as traumatic life events, disease, divorce, separation or death. Even feeling pressured with being in a care situation or extra curricular activities can contribute to children feeling stressed.

Interestingly though, certain protective factors *have* been identified as assisting children to be more resilient in challenging times. Findings from the 5th International Resilience Project showed that one third of the children studied who were living with such risks and pathology had certain 'self-righting' factors that seemed to protect them, and regardless of the hardships they faced, appeared to be well adjusted, happy and successful.

So what factors contributed to these children overcoming the odds and becoming competent and well-adjusted in spite of the risks and adversities they faced? Could these same factors be equally advantageous to *all* children? What are they, and how can we work with our own children to find strategies to cope in their lives?

Luckily, the factors that have been identified as being valuable in order to sustain a resilient mindset can be taught to children, and research shows the younger the better. Resilience involves behaviours, thoughts and actions that can be learned and developed in anyone. Brisbane professor of psychology, Dr Paula Barrett, has identified that children as young as preschoolers can benefit from curriculum especially devised to teach the life changing strategies involved with being a resilient person. As children's brains are still forming in their early years, the information, when practiced, can become part of everyday thinking as the child grows through life. Some families may choose to let their child simply 'grow out' of negative thinking patterns naturally, however the problem is that the longer an anxious child has certain thoughts, the more those thoughts can become part of everyday thinking (Jordana McLoone 2005) and can produce difficulties and interference in the child's development.

Research tells us that the role of adults in the promotion of resilience in children has major significance. It may well be true that resilience in children is dependent on adult contributions to its promotion. Resilience does not develop in a vacuum; it is within a context (Grotberg 1996). The family, and often the childcare environment, has the most influence on a young child's life and it is in the little things we do each day that children learn the biggest lessons. When building resilience children need the support of those caring adults around them to gain inner strength and confidence, and the ability to communicate, problem solve and ask for help.



The Importance of Resilience in Early Childhood Education

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What can parents and early childhood educators do to encourage resilience in children?

Parents and teachers can continue to assist children to learn to recognise and label their own feelings, as well as those of others — When children are able to successfully recognise feelings such as being happy, sad, fearful, worried and angry, they are then in a better position to self regulate and to recognise how their actions affect other people. Although the recognition of feelings may seem a simple concept, it is amazing how many children have not acquired this knowledge through life's experiences, as we may have imagined. Ask children how they are feeling, and test their response. It is valuable to chat to children about how they and you may be feeling about certain events so they begin to gain a greater understanding of emotions.

Encourage children to demonstrate empathy and caring, to be pleasant and do nice things for others — So often we encourage children to look out for themselves, and although that is important, it is extremely valuable for children to feel good about what they can do for others. Perhaps you can join with children to send a letter or card to a friend or family member, or bake a cake for someone. Adults can assist by sharing with children the moments in our lives when we do things for others. Children can then have empathy modeled for them and they can see it is important for adults too.

Model being a positive thinker — Look for what is strong, not what is wrong. Are you the type of person to see the glass half full, an optimist who looks for the positives in everyday life occurrences or are you a little more on the pessimistic side and seem to notice the things each day that don't go so well? There are many benefits for the more positive people amongst us including being more fun to be around, generally happier in life and relationships and often having more of a feeling of wellbeing. As well as this, positive adults assist to build resilient children. So often however, it is so easy for our first reaction to focus on the weaknesses or the things that went wrong about our day; even if the negative parts only amounted to a small percentage of what we did that day! Sometimes it tends to be the negative things that we share with others and for those of us that spend our time with young children, this presents a problem.

You see, children are watching us very closely, even though it may not appear as though they are. They are constantly listening to our responses, and in each response we are modeling to children how to behave in this world. The way we deal with the difficulties of everyday life, and the level of optimism we show, teaches children around us to be positive thinkers and to bounce back if they are presented with the inevitable challenges that may arise for them.

Assisting children to solve their own problems themselves and giving them the confidence that it will be OK — When children are fearful, they need to know there is someone who will listen and take their worries seriously, and they need to know that it is OK to ask for help. As parents and teachers, it is important to be aware that children benefit enormously from gaining the confidence that *they* have some skills themselves to deal with their fears or worries. One of the most useful things parents and caregivers can do for their children is to encourage this resilience. Sometimes that means not jumping in too quickly to help, but offering ideas about how to solve the problem rather than solving it for them. Ask questions such as "What could we do to make this less scary?", "How can we stop you feeling so worried about it?", "What could you do next time that would make you feel better?" Even with little babies, caregivers can help to promote a feeling of confidence that things will be all right. When a parent or carer is really anxious, a child will absorb that anxiety and feel less sure that he or she can manage (Diana Roe 2006).

Encouraging independence with everyday tasks in children's lives — Children feel a real sense of achievement and raised self esteem as they begin to gain life skills through being encouraged to do things for themselves. In fact research findings (Grotberg 1996) have shown that families who provided a trusting relationship with their children and who were role models, but who did not encourage autonomy, frequently had children who did not respond to situations or personal experience with evidence of resilience behaviour. In a generation where we are striving to do so much for our children, we run a very real threat of not allowing them to gain autonomy or to do things for themselves, and this can have a direct influence on our children gaining the skills of resilience. Allow children to tackle self-help tasks, such as putting on their own shoes or getting their own drinks, and positively encourage their attempts at independence.

Structure and Rules — Through positive and supportive communication help children begin to accept responsibility for their own behaviour and understand that actions have consequences. Families and care settings that have trusting relationships and are confident to enforce rules and support children to learn the strategies of being responsible, are assisting children to be resilient thinkers with problem solving and impulse control skills.

Let children know how loveable and accepted they are — Children gain resilience from knowing they are loveable and that other people will like and value them. Parents and caregivers are very valuable here, as they are in the perfect position to highlight children's strengths throughout the day and to encourage children 'just for being here'. Each time you think something positive about a child is a good time to let them know.

For more information about resilience, parent support and group workshops for children from 4-7 and 7-12 years please contact -

Growing Early Childhood
www.growingearlychildhood.com.au
0408 393 965 or 0414674 674

Noah's Ark Children's Services Resource Unit



Two by Two into the Ark —
Resource Library And Advisory Service for the PSCQ

21 Crown Street
South Brisbane Qld 4102

Noah's Ark Library is continually acquiring new resources for the children's services industry. Within the children's services industry, the human resource is the most powerful and most effective resource to ensure quality care. Maintaining high quality care sometimes can come at a price with dedicated staff being over worked, feeling unmotivated and heading towards burnout. Some new resources, now available from the library, which enhance the development of good teams, getting it right with staffing and continue to motivate all staff are:

Rose Carrie "**Create Your Dream Team**" Carrie Rose.

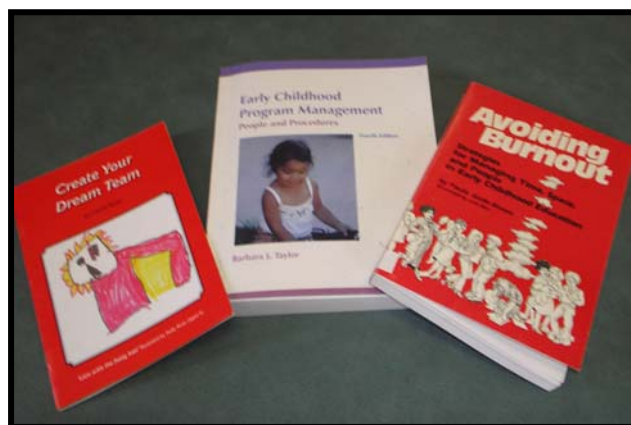
Designed to give Directors, Coordinators and Leaders in the Early Childhood profession ideas of ways to work with staff by identifying and drawing on their strengths.

Taylor B "**Early childhood Program Management – People & Procedures**" Merrill Prentice Hall 2002

Well-trained and experienced staff are the key to quality early childhood programs and healthy child development. Finding good staff and keeping them is a huge challenge. This resource breaks down the recruitment, selection and orientation processes into manageable components and suggests practical and effective techniques to help find staff with the right fit for the services program.

Bloom P "**Avoiding Burnout**" New Horizons 1982.

The term "Burnout" is common place within the childcare industry. Burnout is a stubborn and elusive problem. It is a slow and progressive wearing down of the body and spirit. While impossible to put a price tag on human suffering job burnout takes a tremendous toll on skilled and dedicated works. This resource looks strategies for managing people, time, and space within an early childhood setting with an accent on prevention rather than addressing the issue at crisis time.





NORTH WEST QLD

LOOP

MAY 2009

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Where can I find a registration form?

Flyers for events will be sent to your service at your designated mailing address and if available email address. Flyers can also be found on the website at www.pscq.org or call PSCQ on 1800 112 585

How do I register for professional development?

Please fill in all fields of the application table, making sure all names are written clearly and spelt correctly, as these names will be used for attendance certificates. If paying by credit card complete details and fax the application to 07 4760 9806. Do not post the original or a duplication of payment may occur. If paying by cheque or money order, fax your completed application to 07 4760 9806 then post the application form with payment to **H & CS WORKFORCE COUNCIL , Ground Floor, 303 Adelaide St BRISBANE 4000**

Please book early to avoid session cancellation due to lack of numbers or missing out on a place for a session. Many presenters have strict limitations on numbers attending and or cancellation policies.

Late registrations (Sent after the close date indicated on the flyer) may be accepted to fill sessions, please confirm registration with PSCQ prior to sending any details.

Note: Please check your service's eligibility for PSC training. If you are unsure, please contact PSCQ to confirm. Training may still be accessed, but a different fee will apply.

Do I need to send payment with registration?

Yes. Send your registration form with cheque, money order or credit card payment. **Certificates will not be issued without payment.** No payments can be accepted at the event.

My service requires an invoice before we can pay. What do I do?

The registration form is also a Tax Invoice.

My service requires a receipt. What do I do?

The registration form is also a Tax Invoice. A receipt will only be sent to you if requested at time of registration. The receipt can only be issued in the name of the person/service making the payment.

Will I receive confirmation?

Please consider that your application has been accepted unless we contact you upon receipt of your application to advise otherwise.

What are the fees?

All professional development is GST inclusive. Fees vary according to the length of the presentation and will be clearly identified on the event flyer.

Will sessions be cancelled?

PSCQ reserves the right to cancel or alter training arrangements, where necessary. Although every effort is made to ensure that sessions proceed as scheduled if required you will be advised of any cancellation or alteration.

I have not received my certificate?

PSCQ will not issue certificates until payment has been made and signed attendance sheets have been sighted from presenters. **Always remember to sign in when attending an event.**

Can I get a refund?

If you are sick or unable to be released from your service, you can nominate another person to attend in your place but you will need to advise PSCQ of their details so certificates of attendance can be altered. If you wish to cancel completely, you must tell us by phone, email, fax or mail no later than seven (7) working days in advance, indicating whether you wish to receive a refund or credit for use at a future session. **If you cancel with less than 7 working days notice or simply do not attend, refunds will not be given.**

Is food provided at training?

In the Nth West Qld region the following will apply.

Full day courses have lunch and morning tea available. Half day courses receive morning or afternoon tea. Evening workshops will have a light supper available. Please notify PSCQ on your registration form if you have any special dietary-related needs.

How do I find the venue?

The name and address of the venue will be indicated on the flyer. Those registered to attend will be notified of any changes that may occur.

Is parking available?

Venue parking capacity is subject to each venue, day and time. If you are concerned you may like to contact the venue prior or always leave plenty of time before start time to ensure you can arrive on time.