



FAR NORTH QLD

LOOP

NOVEMBER 2009

REGIONAL ROUNDUP

It's regional loop time again!

I can't believe the year has moved along so quickly! We would like to share with you information that has recently been gathered through our online survey, activity evaluations throughout the year and face to face forum for the Far North Queensland region.

The data gathered came from group leaders, directors, ISA's, coordinators and carers from a range of service delivery types within the region.

Those involved had an opportunity to reflect on the professional support that was provided by the region in 2009 including: the hands on music, drama and storytelling one-off workshops; the sessions on exploring children's behavior; the emergent curriculum three step series; as well as the statewide & regional opportunities through online learning and SEEDS.

In bringing together all of the feedback some of the issues that have been identified include:

- **Environmental sustainability in a childcare setting**
- **Child development — turning theory into practice**
- **Bringing back the passion for music**
- **EYLF**
- **Team Building & Motivation**
- **The facts of emergent curriculum**

Many other creative ideas were also shared and were considered at the recent planning session by the Professional Support Network. The network remains committed to providing a flexible and responsive approach to your professional support needs.

The Northern Regions Professional Development Calendar for 2010 will be available for you on the website at www.pscq.org.au early next year.

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Regional Roundup
- Frequently asked questions
- Sue Inglis article
- Exchange Program
- Noah's Ark Resources
- Childcare Forums—Cairns

NEED TO CONTACT PSCQ?

Phone
1800 112 585

Web www.pscq.org.au

Email
pscq@workforce.org.au

Your *Far North Queensland*
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.



BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE AND MOTIVATED TEAM

You are invited to express your interest in participating in Far North Queensland's FREE Action Research Project. Children's services professionals from around region will come together to explore the topic 'Building an Effective and Motivated Team'. This is a timely topic in lieu of the implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) — *Belonging, Being & Becoming*.

You will need a minimum of two people from your service to be able to participate in this project. As a group you will be supported to explore this topic using the inclusive and engaging principles of action research. Over twelve months you will have time to ask questions, seek answers and explore the ideas and perspectives of your peers. You will work both as a group and individually towards identifying where you would like to see growth and change, not only for yourself and your service, but for your region and for the children's services profession.

I want to know a bit more before I commit.

If you would like to talk more about this project and access some support in completing the application form please call Peter Demopoulos on 1800 112 585 or direct on 07 4799 7981.

I am really keen and ready to fill out an application form!

Head to www.pscq.org.au to find the expression of interest and contract. Please complete all field in the form and fax to PSCQ. If you are unable to access the web please let us know and we will mail out this information to you.



More information on Action Research be found at
www.pscq.org.au

**YOU MUST BE A PSCQ MEMBER TO TAKE PART
IN THE ACTION RESEARCH
PROJECT, AND IT'S FREE FOR MEMBERS!**

ATTENTION! HOW TO APPLY TO BE A PART OF THIS EVENT

PLEASE FILL IN **ALL FIELDS** OF THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM (THIS IS A SEPARATE DOCUMENT FOUND AT www.pscq.org.au AND FAX TO **(07) 3237 1497**. FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 1800 112 585

Children's Services Professionals Exchange Program

News from the Exchange Desk

Who can be an exchange participant and why do people want to participate?

Are you a Director, Coordinator or Team Leader?

Would you like to:

- Develop professional networks with others?
- Discuss how others manage staffing issues?
- See how other services manage the accreditation process?
- Have professional conversation around policy development?

Are you a Cook?

Would you like to:

- Discuss with others how they manage their day?
- Share recipes?
- Find alternate solutions for managing special dietary requirements of children?

Are you a Group Leader or Assistant?

Would you like to:

- See how staff in other services program?
- Learn more about implementing the emergent curriculum?
- Collect some fresh ideas?
- See how other plan for inclusion?

Are you an Admin Officer?

Would you like to:

- See how others manage their office procedures?
- Develop networks with others who use the same children's services software packages?

Does that sound like something you would be interested in?

Then why not become an exchange participant and visit one of our fantastic Host Services. Services across all sectors of children's services have made a commitment to welcome you into their service to share their knowledge, resources and experiences with you.

Host Services are located across Queensland; in metropolitan areas, large regional cities and rural, remote areas. They all offer unique experiences, so whether you want to know more about programming, creating interesting play environments, managing staff, policy development, accreditation, dietary requirements or CCMS or whatever you are interested in, we have a Host Service for you. Simply call the Exchange Program Coordinator to discuss what you would like to learn more about.

As a participant your exchange is organised for you and where required travel and accommodation expenses will be covered.

To find out more about how to become a participant and what is involved look on the PSCQ website or contact Fay Edwards, Exchange Program Coordinator on 0408 062 042 or email fayedwardsconsultant@hotmail.com



Far North Qld Childcare Forums

This year the staff at Smithfield Childcare have implemented and organised a series of successful forums for children's services professionals in the Cairns region. The forums are designed so that educators can network and discuss issues relevant to them and their work environments. We believe that children's services professionals are the experts in the field and by coming together to share experiences, knowledge and solutions we can further our development as educators in the children's services field.

Many thanks to PSCQ for sending out the flyers to all services prior to each forum. Please pass the flyers around your staff team as this informal event is a great chance for each person to chat with other educators about issues relevant to you.

So far we have covered a range of topics such as *Emergent Curriculum*, *Environments*, *Treasure Baskets* and *Bringing Back the Passion to Your Team*. The forums have been well received and we have had excellent attendances at each one. A wealth of knowledge has been shared and copies of the minutes are sent out to interested children's services.

The forums will be continued next year and the first date is set for **Tuesday 16th February 2010**. Keep an eye out for the flyer early in February and mark the date in your diary now! We meet from 6.30 to 8.30pm, provide refreshments for you and a wonderful opportunity to share the knowledge you have with others plus gain lots from them at the same time!

Should you wish to obtain any more information or be a part of next year's forums please contact Smithfield Childcare. We'd love to talk with you and welcome you to our next event.

Our contact details are:

Phone 0740577866

E-mail smithfieldchildcare@bigpond.com

SHARING



Negotiated Emergent Curriculum – “We are just taking baby steps”

By Sue Inglis, Growing Early Childhood

There is great energy in the room when I go to interview the staff at Aroona Child Care Centre on the Sunshine Coast. Their team are exploring ways to bring a negotiated emergent curriculum to life at their centre and the purpose of my visit is to find out what *really* makes this journey work for them.

They love the idea that we can share their experiences and thoughts in *In the LOOP* magazine with others who are taking the same path of creating sustained change in their practice. The thing I find intriguing about this centre is how the emergent practices all started with one motivated staff member, the group leader in the babies' room, and has spread throughout the centre.

Eighteen months ago this staff member attended a full day professional development session which introduced her to the philosophy and some practical applications to working within an emergent curriculum approach. The group leader returned to the centre motivated and full of ideas, however with lots of questions in her head about how this would *really* work in her setting.

“I had a million ideas and little by little things would click. I bought a couple of books and I got really excited about it. We did lots of talking about it.”

The director, who is also the licensee of the centre, was new to the concepts as well. However her style is to value and trust the ideas that her staff bring to their practice and she was willing to listen and learn alongside her team. In doing this she supports a climate of risk taking and “trial and error” as a means of learning and individuals gaining ownership over their own practice.

“I don't say no – this is how it has got to look. Too bad if you have your own ideas; imagine having all those ideas and creativity and not have it go anywhere.”

Do you think change in your centre is a slow process?

Yes, definitely — it has to be for it to work. People work at different rates and you have to be able to ask one another, mentor each other and take risks. I say just chill and let go and see how it works. Sometimes it doesn't finally click until they (the staff) do it for themselves. We started this, as a centre, ten months ago and even though we are all willing to learn and change, some parts of it we are just getting now. It is a huge letting go issue.

How do you share what you are learning with one another?

We value talking with one another. We make time to talk to each other about curriculum at staff meetings and at programming time. At the last meeting we passed around our portfolios so we could have a good look at what each of us was doing. We also find ourselves bouncing ideas off each other in the hall or at lunch times. A lot of our talk is about emergent curriculum. We seem to be constantly thinking about it. If we are unsure we show each other. It is good to connect to someone about what you are doing. We feel comfortable enough to ask others and to get their ideas. We trust each other's judgments.



Article Continued

Have you noticed a change in the staff since being on this journey?

Yes, we notice a big difference in the staff. We think we are more flexible and we feel more empowered. Before we were so busy focusing on the paperwork that it was easy to put that before the children. Back then we were under a lot of stress to get things done because we felt we had to meet expectations. Then we talked about: "What message are we sending to children?" and that was a major thing to me. I wondered, "What do they really think?" We are now working *with* children rather than standing over them. When we do that we notice more about the children, we can see their strengths. My opinion of what I think the children *need to have* has changed. Now I see they are so much more creative. They make their own choices, even the babies... they can do it.



How have the children responded to the new curriculum approach?

We noticed a big difference in the children. Their behaviour changed, they are not so restricted anymore. We have really noticed that the children are not labelling each other or fighting for attention. We make a really big effort to negotiate any issues with the children. We might brainstorm ideas with them on butcher's paper. Our more spirited child has more freedom of choice rather than being told what he has to do. He is so much more engaged, we have seen a massive change in him.

One of the parents had noticed that this program had built on her daughter's confidence and that she had changed to use nicer language at home. Gee,

what we are doing is meeting children's emotional needs. Bringing her into this environment is like a light has turned on. She has learnt to negotiate.

This year I think the children are more socially and emotionally ready for school. Last year we made the children do 'dot to dots' and got them to write their names repeatedly. This year we have just let them write and recognise letters as it suits their play. The children are just as good at writing as last year. They are learning it, but just in a different way. It will be interesting to see how the babies will be by the time they get to pre-school.



As the interview progressed the excitement of their work became very evident. The simple process of sharing the lessons with me and their colleagues created a string of incredibly passionate responses as the team built on one another's' ideas. It is obvious that this group of child care professionals are highly motivated by the responses they see in children and the course that their team is taking. They openly admit that they haven't yet reached where they are heading and that they are more than happy to keep on taking 'baby steps'. As one of the staff members put it, ***"To get the best for children you have to be making changes."*** I questioned each of them about why they thought the process of change was working for them.

I think it is working because all the staff are quite positive about it. I think they are mentoring one another. They are positive to one another and they are learning from each other. The more experienced teach the others. Some of our staff are parents and they give their perspective as well. I think it is because we are being more open.

I think it's because someone came back and was all excited about it. It is that encouragement from everyone else. It is working because everyone has been talking about it and they asked us about what we thought.

I think the change has worked because everyone has done it together. It's also because we want what is best for the kids and we can see it working.

We are going through the change together. We have each other to question and discuss ideas with. We have been given our own freedom to explore this curriculum with the children and implement in our own chosen way in our rooms. We have had the opportunity to attend peer support groups and Saturday courses which strengthen our understanding of the curriculum. We also have lots of director support.

I found it's a lot more stress free. The children are happier and content because they are doing activities they want to do and what interests them.

There is more room for imagination, staff are happy and look forward to learning something new each day. We all love coming to work to see what the children will come up with next.

It is great as a TAFE student to learn a whole new way to program. It doesn't lock the children into a box of expectations they may not be able to achieve. We get to really connect with the children in their play and extend their knowledge in doing so.

It allows the children to develop at their own pace with no pressure to live up to the developmental checklists that teachers previously used.

The children at the centre have been able to experiment more with the environment and as carers we have been able to be more flexible to allow this experimentation. The support for this new venture has been invaluable as we do this together.

Our business is about watching the kids grow. As a consequence I have grown. Emergent curriculum has challenged me to look outside the box and I feel I have grown a lot over these past ten months. It is organic and I can actually see that growth more predominantly than when I was using the more structured approach. It is so natural.

Noah's Ark Children's Services Resource Unit



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

For all those budding scientists in care, finding new and innovative experiences can be a daunting task especially if science is not your thing. The Library has some new resources specially chosen to cater for all those young brilliant minds keen on exploring our world.

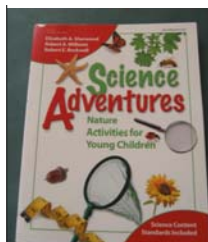
Providing science-based activities supports a child's development in many ways such as:

- ✦ Improving problem solving skills
- ✦ Improving reasoning skills
- ✦ Creating a long term enhancement of spatial and temporal reasoning ability
- ✦ Improving language skills
- ✦ Improving outcomes of mathematical abilities
- ✦ Supporting memory development
- ✦ Stimulating creative intelligence
- ✦ Increasing the ability to think, comprehend and understand

The following resources are samples of what is available in the library which assist services to provide science experiences, as well as supporting the Early Years Learning Framework.

Gizmos & Gadgets – Creating Science contraptions that work, Jill Hauser

50 amazing contraptions that spin, fling, collide and whiz. Children will be building, questioning, creating and learning as they explore the world of physics fun through science. For all ages 7 to 14 years.

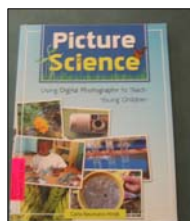
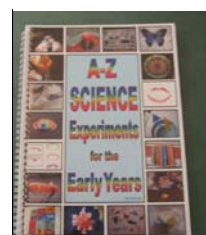


Science Adventures – Nature Activities for Young Children, Sherwood Williams & Rockwell

More than 125 activities to open up a world of exploration through nature activities suitable for urban, suburban and rural settings. Many of the activities include suggestions and adaptations for children with additional needs.

A-Z Science Experiments for the Early Years – Jill Kearney

Exciting experiments that have been modified to make them interesting and suitable for young learners. Step by step pictures and instructions.



Picture Science – Using Digital photography to Teach Young children – Neumann-Hinds

A guide to making digital photography an important part of the early childhood program. Provides step by step processes from posing a question, gathering data, showing findings. Concrete and fun for children.

Remember that you can order your resources on line or call the staff at the library on 1800 112 585 to discuss your resource needs.





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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 4799 7986. 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 4799 7986 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 Far Nth 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.