

Preschool Field Officer Service Newsletter Term Four 2019

To contact the PSFO Team:

Tel: 9742 8199

Email: psfo.service@wyndham.vic.gov.au

AREA LEADER UPDATE

Hello Wyndham Educators

Welcome to our Term Four Newsletter.

Thank you for being patient this year with the waiting time for a PSFO visit. I am happy to report that we now have a full team back on board and have made significant progress with the waiting list. At time of distribution of this newsletter we have reduced our waiting list to 20 and are confident that we will get through the remaining requests before the end of the year. I would also like to acknowledge and thank ECT Michelle Shaw from Thomas Chirnside Kindergarten for assisting the team with *Active Hold Support* phone calls during terms two and three. With one PSFO on unexpected leave for several weeks, we were able to ensure educators were receiving support over the phone to start the ball rolling while waiting for a visit.



In our last newsletter we published some articles based on the learnings from the International Society of Early Intervention & Early Childhood Intervention Australia Conference that was attended back in June. In this edition of the newsletter we will be sharing some more learnings by providing a snap shot of information and links to useful websites and resources. You will be able to read about the latest research on **Developing an Evidence Gathering App for Observing Engagement in Early Childhood Settings & Girls and Autism Spectrum Condition**.

We have also included some information on handy tips to share with parents at kindergarten interviews and working with therapists in your early childhood program

Remember to take the time out to reflect and re-energise yourself over the December/January period and enjoy the time spent with your families and loved ones 😊

Narelle Keleher
PSFO Area Leader



Here's some of your feedback from our surveys in 2019 ...

Very supportive

Practical Strategies

Build on knowledge

Build confidence

Time to debrief

Constructive feedback

Getting to know me

Guide educators

Help us move forward

DEVELOPING AN EVIDENCE GATHERING APP FOR OBSERVING ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

Developing an Evidence Gathering App for Observing Engagement in Early Childhood Settings; by Barry Carpenter, International Educational Consultant.

Barry discussed the importance of engaging children in learning - according to their learning style, and how we can engage children. Barry reminds us that *"In Education, Engagement is the cornerstone of good practice. Engagement is fundamental to high quality teaching; it is the life-force for effective learning. Engagement is inclusive of all learners of all ages and abilities. When you think about it, Engagement for Learning is blindingly obvious and perfectly logical."*

This is reflective of the importance to consider each child's individual learning style and provide curriculums and rich learning experiences that match these learning styles. If we have children who are more concrete/literal thinkers - to provide a truly inclusive programme - we need to ensure that our learning opportunities are reflective of children's motivation to learn. When we engage children in play, interactions and experiences that are holistic to a child's learning skills and backgrounds, we are meeting children's individual needs and supporting their development.

"For children with Special Educational Needs, Engagement is the platform for their participation in learning. At times that Engagement may be fleeting; it may be sustained only in short bursts, but this will enable some acquisition of skills, knowledge and concepts, which, over time, will be integrated into effective daily living, and success and achievement will follow".

We teach an inclusive programme through supporting all children to actively participate, engage and interact within the class room and early childhood experiences. *Children need to believe they can learn and experience success in their learning to be motivated to extend their skills.* When we provide curriculum that matches children's level of learning and engagement, the child feels success and achievement, and is more likely to engage again to continue learning and development.

Seven indicators to engagement of learning include:

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| <i>1 Responsiveness</i> | <i>5 Discovery</i> |
| <i>2 Initiation</i> | <i>6 Anticipation</i> |
| <i>3 Curiosity</i> | <i>7 Persistence</i> |
| <i>4 Investigation</i> | |

The Engagement for Learning Framework offers educators the resources to construct personalised learning pathways, the flexibility to adjust and optimise them, and an effective means to evidence children's progress.

This Framework aligns with Australia's Early Years Frameworks. It can be used as a tool to analyse children's engagement and learning, to support goal setting and learning targets. It is currently being developed as an app for teachers and educators to analyse children's learning through watching video footage of their skills. The scale is evaluated through the 'lens' of 3 (minimum) 'professionals' working with the child to consider different interpretations of skills and observations - collaboration between multiple stakeholders and multi-disciplinary teams. The "Engagement 4 Learning" tool will give measurable data to support the child's learning and skill development and positive interventions.

Reflections....

- How do children learn?
- How do we change our teaching practice to engage a variety of learners?
- How does the child engage?
- How does the teacher engage with this child?
- How do I engage with this child?

References:

<https://barrycarpentereducation.com/about/>
<https://barrycarpentereducation.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/isei-sydney-june-2019.pdf>
<https://engagement4learning.com/engagement-from-principles-to-practice/>

Girls and Autism Spectrum Condition

Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) is a neurodevelopmental condition that primarily affects an individual's social and communication abilities accompanied by repetitive patterns of behaviours or restrictive interests. It was once thought that males are mostly affected by Autism however, recent research suggests that the prevalence of girls with Autism is much higher than initially thought. This in part is due to the signs of autism in girls and women are not the same in boys and men.

(Girls and Autism, Carpenter, Happe & Egerton, 2019)

According to Autism Awareness Australia, some of the common characteristics of girls with Autism are:

- ✓ A special interest in animals, music, art, and literature
- ✓ A strong imagination (might escape into the worlds of nature or fiction)
- ✓ A desire to arrange and organise objects
- ✓ Not wanting to play cooperatively with female peers (for example, wanting to dictate the rules of play or preferring to play alone to maintain control)
- ✓ A tendency to 'mimic' others in social situations in order to blend in
- ✓ An ability to hold their emotions in check at school, but be prone to meltdowns or explosive behaviour at home
- ✓ Strong sensory sensitivities, especially to sounds and touch

(Autism Awareness Australia, 2019)

Girls and women are often getting a later diagnosis which can be attributed to a lack of understanding of how autism can present in girls and women in comparison to autistic boys. The diagnostic & screening tools are designed to identify autistic traits that are more commonly seen in boys and men with autism and may not include the common characteristics noticed in girls and women with autism.

(Amaze, 2019)

How to support girls with Autism?

- Listen to the parents
- Talk to the child
- Provide strategies to cope with social anxiety
- Calming toys
- Introduce scripting

References:

www.barrycarpentereducation.com
<https://limpsfieldgrange.co.uk/>
<http://www.tonyattwood.com.au/>
<https://templegrandin.com/>
<https://www.amaze.org.au/understand-autism/about-autism/women-and-girls/>
<https://www.autismawareness.com.au/could-it-be-autism/autism-and-girls/>
<https://raisingchildren.net.au/autism>

2020 Kindergarten

Handy tips to share at your upcoming kindergarten interviews

Please refer to the link below for some tip sheets to share with parents.

There are three tip sheets that you can print and provide that support children's language development at different stages:

- Tips for parents of young children who communicate without words
- Tips for parents of children who have just started talking
- Tips for parents of children who talk in sentences

<http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Parent-Tips.aspx>

Working With Therapists in your Early Childhood Program

Please find below some Takeaways/ Golden Nuggets that one of our team took from the recent PD with Lou Ambrosy

1. A list of strategies is **NOT** embedded practice – embedded strategies or goals for the child should be able to occur in everyday programs/activities and routines
2. Therapy is **NOT a** goal, it's a means to an end – an Outcome – e.g not Speech therapy instead child needs support to communicate (practical strategies to improve functional outcomes)
3. Consults with Therapists (there are now so many involved and visiting services due to NDIS) – challenge them with questions:
 - a. What is the evidence behind this suggestion?
 - b. How will your suggestions fit into my day?
 - c. How will this work with all the other children in the program? eg “I can't work with just Charlie, I have 32 other children” – get Therapist and family together
4. STOP, BE CONFIDENT – IT IS NOT OKAY TO HAVE:
 - a. Therapists take children to another room on their own (they are not a registered person in the Service)
 - b. Practice isolated skills in the corner – get a list of ALL the therapies you should do with the child when they leave