



Preschool Field Officer Service Newsletter Term Three 2021

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PSFO TEAM UPDATE

Hello Wyndham Educators



Here we are, Term 3 already!

The PSFO service continues to operate in lockdowns through modified and adaptable service delivery. We are all now accustomed to working flexibly and have adjusted to our new approach with educators providing support, information and always striving towards positive outcomes for children and families.

The PSFO team has seen a few changes recently. Narelle Keleher has moved back in to the PSFO Service Leader role after spending almost a year in working on a project to support the rollout of School Readiness Funding (SRF). SRF in our region is an exciting time for us to be working in early childhood, we will see many opportunities for further learning and the recognition that early childhood is the most important time for children's learning and development.

Lisa Blake departs the team to a secondment role as an Early Years Reform Project Officer in the Early Education and Care Services Unit. As a result of Lisa moving into this role, it has allowed PSFO's Rochelle, Tania and Caroline to add on an extra workday to their week.

And another change...we welcome Eunice Chang to our team for approximately 8 weeks to cover leave that Tania Sinclair-Camilleri will be taking. Eunice comes to us with experience in early childhood teaching and has worked with a range of different types of learners as a kindergarten teacher at Arndell Park Kindergarten. Eunice has recently completed her Masters in Learning Intervention with The University of Melbourne. We look forward to learning and gaining new ideas from Eunice.

PSFO Team

Please remember you can call the PSFO Service at any time for general advice, you do not have to have a child referred



Mental Health Care and Medicare

The Mental Health Treatment Plan has been increased from 10 to 20 sessions per calendar year

Find out more here:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/whats-covered-medicare/mental-health-care-and-medicare>



How can the language we use in documentation support children's needs through referrals and transitions...?

As PSFO's we are very fortunate to work with many different Educators in a variety of services which allows us to be diverse in our approach and learn from the educators we work with. One task that we do often support Educators to work through are referrals to Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) or other support programmes. Often in these types of referrals, we need to look at the child's development through a 'negative lens' rather than strength-based, and this can be difficult. However if we don't, then the child may not be considered eligible for the supports you are applying. This format of writing could be considered a 'deficit-based approach' – with the wording "*Current concerns in the following domains*" (<https://ndis.bsl.org.au/early-childhood-early-intervention/referral-form/>). We can use our observations of the child to consider their developmental progress, potential delays and support needs. Within this referral we provide information regarding the child's developmental concerns so the reader (who we are referring to) can gain a clear picture of the child's skills and support needs, thus providing required interventions.

When Educators are writing transition statements, it can be a challenge to provide the Primary School the information they require to best reflect the child's needs and support the child's abilities in a strengths based approach.

"A strength-based approach to early childhood education is a collaborative and solutions-focused way of working. It encourages educators to consistently draw on their knowledge of a child's skills, capabilities, and dispositions to learning. When used effectively, this information supports educators to set high expectations for children by offering rich learning opportunities that motivate and interest them, and help them to see themselves as learners."

(pg 126 - section 6.4 Strengths based approach to transition)

"The strength-based approach is about assisting professionals to build a picture of what a child's learning and development is currently, and consider the most appropriate strategies and actions to intentionally scaffold the child's learning into the future."

(pg 126 - section 6.4 Strengths based approach to transition)

The Transition to School Resource Kit provides a lot of resource information regarding this way of writing.

"A strength-based approach is not about describing a child's learning and development in a positive light and neglecting to identify areas for further development and/or areas of concern, Nor is it about framing the learning and development message one way for families and another way for foundation teachers. It's about the consistent sharing of information about 'what works' or 'what next' for each individual child, to support continuity of learning from one setting to another".

(pg 127 - section 6.4 Strengths based approach to transition)

When we use strengths based language, we focus on what the child can do and what they are currently achieving. This helps teachers to understand where children's skills are currently at to build on them, scaffold learning and intentionally teach. When a Primary School teacher reads this information; and having their own knowledge of child development and skills, they will be able to understand the child's support needs.

For example, from a description of a child's play skills, interactions with others and ability to participate in the programme we will know;

- What support needs they may require
- If they are differing from the developmental milestones and
- Learning that we would expect from a child of that age.

Examples – Deficit Based Language VS Strength Based Approach

| Deficit based language | Deficit-based language Strength-based language including intentional teaching and learning strategies |
|--|---|
| Rosie doesn't communicate often with peers or educators. | Rosie is a quiet and reserved child who responds well to encouragement to communicate with trusted people. She is beginning to initiate conversations with her peers and can be supported to remember to include others in play and communication. |
| Robert has trouble settling in the morning, taking around 10 minutes. | Robert settles best in the morning if given time to say goodbye to his mum and then by taking his hand and leading him to the mat for an activity. This usually takes about 10 minutes and could be an area of continued focus. |
| George speaks Greek at home but can't speak English at a level expected for his stage of English learning. | <p>George's first language is Greek and he communicates confidently in Greek with family members.</p> <p>Some things that have helped George's English development include: using pictures and objects to show him what you are talking about; repeating simple phrases related to what he is doing; partnering him with a friend during new and whole group activities.</p> <p>Other children also learnt some simple Greek words for greetings, colours and numbers, to share in his culture and have him feel a part of the group.</p> |
| Phoebe is not confident in unfamiliar environments or with new experiences. | <p>Phoebe is able to confidently explore and engage with familiar environments. She requires adult support to explore new environments.</p> <p>She responds well to a conversation or storybook about where/or what is next so that she is able to 'prepare' to try something new or to experience an unfamiliar environment.</p> |

Questions to consider

Learning and Development

Strength and/or Achievement

- What can the child do on their own?
- What can the child do when provided with educational support?
- When/where/how/with whom does the child learn best?
- What does it look like when the child is learning and developing at their best?
- How and when does the child prefer to communicate?

Concern and/or challenges

- When/where/how does the challenge/concern happen?
- How does it impact on the child's learning and development?
- What, if anything, sets this off (triggers)?
- How often does this happen?
- How long does this go on for?
- Has this concern/challenge been discussed with the family? If yes, what did they say?
- Does it happen at home? If yes, what is the family's strategy at home?

(pg 133 - section 6.4 Strengths based approach to transition)

Source:

Transition: A positive Start to school\Resource Kit

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/professionals/Transition-to-School-Resource-Kit.pdf>

HANEN TIP

Do you have a child who is not talking very much?

Is the child saying mostly single words, or maybe only a few?

You can try the 'expand' strategy from Hanen 'Teacher Talk' program.

Expand is where the Educator:

- repeats the child's words. The Educator also corrects any incorrect grammar whilst doing this.
- repeats the child's words **and** adds another idea. For example the child may say 'ball'. The Educator repeats 'ball' and adds a concept such as 'red ball'.

If the child repeats the expansion (e.g. Red ball), the Educator *adds yet another* idea. The Educator in this instance would say 'Big red ball!'.

Use animation, eye contact, be face to face and so on, to encourage engagement from the child. These are all important things to remember during our interactions!

Personal Construct Theory - George Kelly

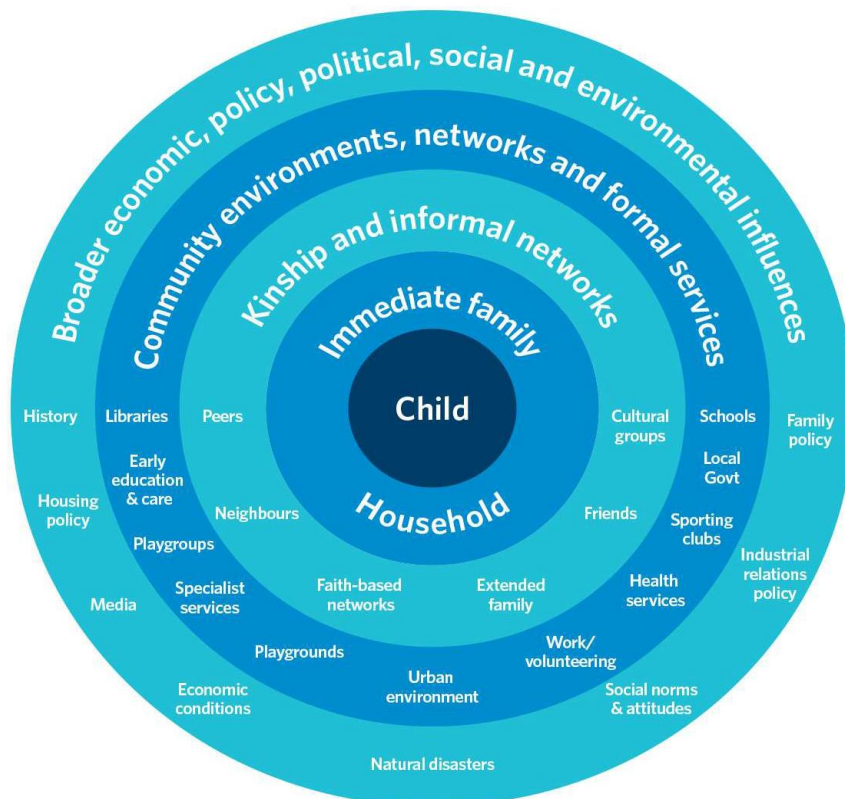
Kelly's personal construct theory suggested that the differences between people result from the different ways that we predict and interpret events in the world around us. **Personal constructs**, he suggested, were the ways that each person gathers information, evaluates it, and develops interpretations.

Using an **ecological approach** when working with children helps us to understand things from the family's perspective. Characteristics of a child and parent are influenced by the types of support available to them within their broader network.

Question...

In your practice when working with children have you considered who else influences a child?

Ecological systems model for child development



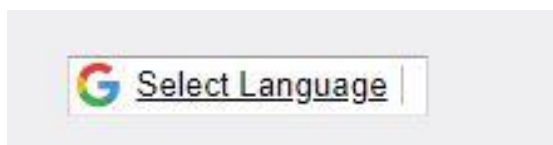
TRANSLATION FACILITIES ON WEBSITES

This could be a really handy tool when you are supporting parents from CALD backgrounds to learn about a programme or something of interest, for example – explaining the PSFO Service.

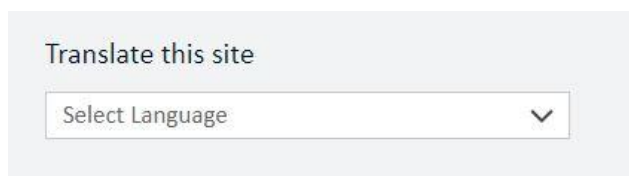
Have you ever used “select language” on a web page?

Some websites (including DET and Wyndham City Council) have an option to translate the page you are reading in a variety of languages

Scroll down to the bottom of the page and, if it is available, you will see a box either like the one below on the DET website:



Or this on the Wyndham City website:



A list of languages will be offered and will translate the open web page to the selected language.



Wyndham Learning Together Term Three - 2021

Check out this great Workshop coming up on the PD Calendar:

Becoming a Trauma-Informed Educator

What early childhood educators need to know to understand childhood trauma and how to incorporate practices to help the healing process.

This online workshop is aimed at Early Childhood Educators who want to learn how to understand and meet the needs of children who have a trauma background.

Join us as we learn from Jessica Cleary who is a Psychologist and Director of the Hopscotch and Harmony Psychology clinics as well as founder of the training organisation for ECEs, Hula Hope Classrooms.

This workshop will give you fundamental knowledge of what trauma is and how it affects children. It will also provide you with ideas on how you can incorporate trauma-informed practices into your day so that you can help traumatised children start to heal through your interactions.

Learning Outcomes:

- You will feel more confident in your understanding of how trauma affects the brain, behaviour, regulation and learning.
- You will understand why educating through a trauma-informed lens will help all children in your service, not just those with a known trauma background.
- You will leave the workshop with more confidence on how to have trauma-informed interactions with children.
- You will be able to identify the impact of a child's trauma on you and how you can look after yourself.

Date – Thursday 19th August 2021

Time – 1.00pm-2.30pm

Where – Online (a webinar link will be sent to the email address registered when you book your ticket, either the day before or the Thursday morning)

Cost - \$45 + GST

Tickets - [GET THEM HERE!](#)

NB – a recording of the session will be available for all ticketholders for the 7 days following if you are unable to stay for the whole time

These workshops are also coming, but bookings are not open yet
(keep a look out for the emails):

- Hanen – Teacher Talk – Part B – 27th August, 3rd September and 10th September
- 3 Year Old Funded Kindergarten – an Educator perspective – 8th September