

bedrock

Issue 2 | Vol 29 | 2024

**Going bush
is good for
teachers too**

Uluru Statement from the Heart

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or 'mother nature', and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia's nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are aliened from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. *This is the torment of our powerlessness.*

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a *rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle*. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

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BEDROCK

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TERMINOLOGY

The union acknowledges regional
differences in some terms. Please
bear these in mind as you read:

QNT – Kindergarten

NSW/ACT – Preschool/Early
childhood centre



Barriers to entry 16
Getting more male teachers in early childhood

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Editorial

As always, we endeavour to bring you professional and industrial news and features that will enrich your working life with this latest edition of *Bedrock*.

May we take this opportunity to pay tribute to former IEU-QNT Senior Industrial Officer John Spriggs who died on 12 April 2024.

We want to pay our respects to John and extend our heartfelt condolences to John's family, friends and loved ones. John made an extraordinary contribution to the IEU-QNT for over 28 years.

IEU-QNT members will remember John's tireless advocacy and many achievements across our union, especially in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector.

To his IEU colleagues, John was a friend of unlimited bounds and generosity – providing support wherever we needed it and always characterised by fundamental good humour.

We are the poorer for his passing. Vale John Spriggs.

In this edition we outline the industrial reforms introduced by the Labor government that should have positive benefits on the lives of workers, particularly those in highly feminised sectors such as ECEC (p6-7).

Taking advantage of these reforms, the IEU is seeking a significant pay rise for teachers in community-based preschools in NSW, with its new campaign Unite for Change (p12).

In Queensland and Victoria, preschool teachers have won pay and conditions in line with school teachers, providing a good model for NSW (p14).

We look at Blaxland Preschool's nature play, unique for its inclusivity (p8).

Does too much screen time limit a child's language development? According to new research, it does (p10).

With the current workforce shortage, getting more men to work in the early childhood sector seems like an obvious answer. But how can that be achieved? (p16).

Communication is critical for ECEC teachers. We have some refresher tips on talking to children and interpreting body language (p19).

Have you ever been told by an employer to take care of your own wellbeing through meditation or some other activity when the real problem is your workload? This is an issue in some workplaces (p20).

Carol Matthews
Secretary
IEUA NSW/ACT Branch

Terry Burke
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IEU-QNT Branch

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UPFRONT



Westfield Bondi Junction tragedy impacts teachers

On 13 April, six people were killed and several others injured, including a baby, when a mentally ill man with a knife attacked people at Westfield Bondi Junction in Sydney's eastern suburbs. We are deeply saddened by these events.

Westfield was closed for some time after the attack, affecting three ECEC services situated in the shopping centre office towers.

Members at the Goodstart centre were directed to work at centres elsewhere or told to take their annual leave. For teachers with young children, who want to save their leave for school holidays and those with limited transport options, this was a difficult situation.

Under the *Fair Work Act*, employers are entitled to stand down staff without pay if the business is closed due to circumstances outside the employer's control. The IEU encourages teachers to request that their employers include paid leave for unexpected events and emergencies in their enterprise agreements or staff contracts. If you need industrial support contact your ECEC organiser for more details.



Members' voices heard on NT registration

Our union has provided feedback to the Northern Territory government regarding options for extending the teacher registration scheme to early childhood teachers (ECTs) working in non-school early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings.

Three proposed models were put forward for consideration.

IEU-QNT Research Officer Dr Adele Schmidt said the consultation process identified recommendations for legislative reform, which will inform policy development for implementing ECT registration in the NT.

"There will be no change for teachers who have completed qualifications that meet the requirements of AITSL's Standards and Procedures for accreditation of initial teacher education (ITE) programs, as these teachers meet existing registration requirements," Dr Schmidt said.

"The changes to the registration system will apply to those who have completed 0-5 years qualifications that meet standards set by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) but do not meet the full course requirements of an ITE program.

"These 0-5 years qualifications do not meet requirements regarding placement in a school setting, phonics instruction, literacy and numeracy testing, teacher performance assessments and other core content requirements," she said.

Read our full submission online at www.ieuqnt.org.au/public-submissions



Working groups to tackle stress and workload

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch is bargaining with Goodstart Early Learning. Six working parties have been established to explore ideas for reducing stress and burnout for teachers and educators.

The working parties cover programming, observation and administrative tasks; teacher workload; inclusion support; Christmas shutdown; stress and burnout, plus food budgets.

The IEU is represented on each of these working parties except the food budget group. The recommendations from the working parties will go to the employer to inform the enterprise agreement and future policies and procedures.

Goodstart members in NSW and the ACT can email kate@ieu.asn.au for more details.



Underpayment win for hospital-based teachers

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch has settled an underpayment claim for \$94,900 for unpaid crib breaks taken in the past by teachers at long day care centres operated by hospitals.

Following lengthy negotiations with the NSW Department of Health and two local health districts, the teachers will now have paid lunch breaks and receive payment for previous unpaid meal breaks, which were a breach of the *Teachers' (NSW Health Early Childhood Service Centres) Salaries and Miscellaneous Conditions Award*.

Paid tea breaks will continue to be provided and teachers will be rostered on eight-hour shifts instead of incorrectly being rostered to work 8.5 hours a day.

One local health district has indicated they will update their employee handbook to reflect the new practice regarding crib breaks.



KEEP THE FIRE BURNING! BLAK, LOUD AND PROUD

7-14 JULY 2024

Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud: NAIDOC Week 2024

NAIDOC Week 2024 will be held between Sunday 7 July and Sunday 14 July, and is an opportunity for all Australians to come together to celebrate the rich history, diverse cultures and achievements of First Nations Peoples as the oldest continuing cultures on the planet.

The 2024 NAIDOC Week theme is Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud, to celebrate the central role of First Nations Elders in guiding generations of advocacy and activism.

The theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture – with fire a symbol of connection to Country, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

National NAIDOC Committee Co-Chair Auntie Lynette Riley said the resilience of mob, our shared experiences, collective memories and kinship are a source of tremendous pride.

"This year's theme is a clarion call to continued unity and solidarity for all Australians to come together and celebrate," Dr Riley said.

Learning resources, teaching guides, activities and local events and celebrations for NAIDOC Week happening across Australia can be accessed through the official NAIDOC website – www.naidoc.org.au

STOP PRESS: Union win at KU Children's Services (NSW)

The IEU has gained important entitlements for directors, including non-contact time for their Educational Leader responsibilities. It's a huge win thanks to members' collective action. Members have overwhelmingly accepted KU's final offer, secured on 1 May after months of negotiations. Some are saying these changes will mean they stay in their jobs. The offer includes:

- 4% pay rises in 2024, 2025 and 2026
- 2 days minimum office time for directors each week (directors who previously had 2 days per week will now have 3 days office time)
- 15 discretionary days for directors per year (these days can be shared with teachers to complete Transition to School Statements)
- 4 hours per week for the Educational Leader role
- 5 hours programming time for full-time Teachers
- 2 child-free days per year.



“The urgency of getting wages moving is most acute in feminised industries.”

FAIR PAY GENDER EQUITY IN THE BALANCE

Following changes to the *Fair Work Act* by the federal Labor government in 2022, there are new avenues to address the undervaluation of female-dominated occupations such as early childhood education and care (ECEC), Sue Osborne writes.

Back in 2013, the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch launched an equal remuneration order case in the Fair Work Commission to win pay rises for early childhood teachers, arguing they were underpaid because the sector is highly feminised.

This argument was dismissed by the commission due to the restrictive nature of the legislation at that time. There was a requirement to compare the work of early childhood teachers with a sector that mainly employs males.

In the IEU's case, early childhood teachers were compared with engineers (a male-dominated profession). The commission was not convinced.

However, since the 2022 amendments, it is easier to argue a case based on gender, with expert panels now assisting in pay equity cases.

In a March article for the *The Conversation*, Lisa Heap, a PhD candidate at RMIT University and senior researcher at the Centre for Future Work at the Australia Institute, writes about the issue: “Advice from gender experts should assist in overcoming historical gender biases in commission decisions.

“Perhaps the most promising tool is the change to the commission's modern awards objective, which requires it to eliminate gender-based undervaluation of work and provide workplace conditions that facilitate women's full economic participation each time it reviews an award,” Heap writes.

Historically, the majority of feminised sector workers (such as early childhood education and care, aged care, disability care etc), have had limited access to bargaining.

Landmark case

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch, in concert with the United Workers' Union (UWU) and the Australian Education Union (AEU), is undertaking a landmark supported bargaining application to the Fair Work Commission to cover teachers

and educators employed in long day care services run by 64 employers in NSW.

The supported bargaining provisions were legislated as part of a range of reforms enacted in the *Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Secure Jobs, Better Pay) Act 2022*.

Federal Industrial Relations Minister Tony Burke, speaking to the industrial relations amendments in parliament in October 2022, said: “The urgency of getting wages moving is most acute in feminised industries.”

“The gender pay gap still sits at an unacceptable 14.1 per cent. To promote job security, to close the gender pay gap, to get wages moving – we need to change the law,” Burke said.

“In the design of these reforms, we have deliberately focused on the needs of lower-paid and feminised workforces.

“Some of the most undervalued workers in our country are workers in female-dominated industries.

“Many are the very workers who put their health and safety on the line to guide us through the shutdown period of the pandemic.

“Work in these industries is undervalued because of unfair and discriminatory assumptions about the value of the work and the skill required to do the job.”

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch is also aiming to run a supported bargaining case for teachers in 80 community-run preschools in NSW (see p12).

Earlier this year, aged care workers won their Fair Work case for a wage rise of up to 28.5 per cent.

The Health Services Union argued that the work had been undervalued due to its growing complexity and the fact that it was primarily performed by female workers.

IEU members are campaigning for a similar outcome in the ECEC sector this year.

References

bit.ly/FairWorktheConversation

bit.ly/HSUcase

RIGHT TO DISCONNECT

Will it change your practice?

Imagine that after a long day at work, you're trying to get your own child to sleep when you get an email from a parent. Should you respond? New legislation may hold the key, writes Sue Osborne.

In a landmark overhaul of workplace laws, the Labor government has introduced reforms granting the 'right to disconnect' from unreasonable work-related communications outside of standard working hours.

Passed in February, the move is part of the Albanese government's broader 'Closing Loopholes' legislation aimed at enhancing workers' rights through the *Fair Work Act*.

After persistent advocacy by unions and their members for fair pay, job security, and improved working conditions, these changes mark a victory for teachers and support staff. They set a precedent for workers' rights in Australia.

IEU members have been notably active, engaging with politicians, participating in Senate hearings, and appearing in the media and social media to emphasise the necessity for these reforms in educational settings, including preschools and long day care centres.

Educating parents and yourself

Will your current practices need to be changed because of the introduction of this legislation? Do the teachers and educators at your centre feel

compelled to respond to emails or messages that appear on Storypark from parents immediately or is a reply in coming work days acceptable?

"The needs of parents must be balanced against the needs of employees, who often have their own families to care for after hours," IEUA NSW/ACT Organiser Lisa James says.

"Educating parents about reasonable expectations regarding out-of-hours communication should be a part of the enrolment process," she says.

"As a director, do you send emails to teachers and educators after hours and expect them to familiarise themselves with policies or other documentation before they arrive at work the next morning?

"If so, it's time to consider new ways of introducing information so that this can be done during work hours or team meetings.

"Early childhood services should update their relevant communication policies to clarify that teachers and educators are not expected to respond to non-urgent emails and telephone calls after work and on weekends."

Undue pressure

Union members, in collaboration with the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), have highlighted the undue pressure of extended work hours and the encroachment of work obligations into personal time.

The federal Labor government has acknowledged these concerns and enacted legislation to address them.

Under the new legislation, if you receive work-related messages or calls from your centre or employer regarding non-urgent matters outside of regular hours, you will be free to respond the next time you attend work. The legislation commences on 26 August 2024 (and a year later for services with fewer than 15 employees). This right also extends beyond your employer to include third-party communications, such as those from parents.

However, the new legislation will also consider whether a refusal is 'unreasonable' and includes the urgency of the contact, the level of disruption it causes, whether you are paid to be available, the nature of the employee's role, and personal circumstances such as family or caregiving responsibilities.

While the practical application of this right will be clarified through future legal interpretations, we anticipate exceptions may apply in urgent health and safety situations or when employees are compensated for their availability.

The right to disconnect is a vital step towards safeguarding staff wellbeing.



"Educating parents about reasonable out-of-hours communication should be a part of the enrolment process."



Going bush is good for teachers too

Blaxland Preschool has a fierce commitment to social justice, even if that means taking 23 children with disabilities into untamed bushland, Sue Osborne writes.

Director Dee Wilde says the Blue Mountains preschool has always had a commitment to nature play and unrestricted time outdoors for children.

Seven years ago, Wilde and her fellow teachers and educators started to research the benefits of nature play, looking into the Scandinavian Forest Kindergartens model, and decided they needed to go a step further than their small playground.

“Our ‘why’ was we wanted to give children more opportunities to connect with Country and to have that freedom of unstructured playtime,” Wilde says.

“We are a service that is renowned for the way we support children with disabilities or high learning support needs. And we are known in our community for our commitment to inclusion and social justice.

“More than 20 per cent of our enrolments are children who receive high learning support funding.”

Going bush

Since 2016, bush preschool has been offered to children one day a fortnight. The children are dropped off at the local girl guides hall rather than at preschool. They spend the whole day in the bush.

The bush preschool happens in Terms 2 and 3, with fire danger being too high in Term 4. In Term 1, children are given the opportunity to get comfortable with features of the bush in a controlled setting, like campfires and knowing what to do if they see a snake. The children are also given the opportunity to contribute to the risk assessment plan.

Some children with disabilities come for short periods or with their parent.

“There are rocky outcrops and spaces where sometimes parents aren’t feeling 100 per cent comfortable. They may be worried they’re going to run away,” Wilde says.

“But part of our commitment to social justice is that we budget for additional educators to be able to support all children to come to bush preschool.”

Wilde says the bush is a learning environment that is multisensory and provides opportunities for children to problem solve, take risks, collaborate, appreciate nature and make decisions.

“Children get a chance to get dirty,” she says. Whatever is encountered in the bush, even if it is dead animals, is an opportunity for learning about the realities of nature.

Many curriculum areas can be explored in the bush such as maths, literacy, music, drama, creative arts, science and environmental education.



“It makes us focus on slow pedagogy, watching that ant and wondering where it’s going and looking at it through a magnifying glass and having rich, deep conversations with children.”



Director Dee Wilde and Blaxland Preschool children enjoy discovering the local bushland

Time for teachers

The children also learn about First Nations culture and language as part of bush preschool. Aboriginal Elders and a national parks Indigenous ranger visit the children regularly to teach them about how plants and bark can be used.

Children use the local Dharug language to name animals and plants. Two educators have completed a Dharug language course and share their knowledge with children.

Wilde says bush preschool benefits the five teachers and educators as much as the children.

“It has smaller group sizes because we only have one class out there at a time. We find it gave us more time to connect on a deeper level with the children.

“It makes us focus on slow pedagogy and how we can just be alongside children, watching that ant and wondering where it’s going and looking at it through a magnifying glass and having rich, deep conversations with the children.

“We’re not a service that is watching the clock. But bush preschool is an opportunity to be away from the phone and the other constant demands.

“Just the physical wellbeing of being outside all day in nature, going on bushwalks with the children is important, as well as our emotional wellbeing, being able to switch off from a busy preschool day and just be in a quieter space.”

Ministerial visit

Wilde is a keen supporter of the IEU and would have attended the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Preschool Forum (p12), but NSW Education Minister Prue Car visited her preschool on the same day.

Wilde, like many other preschool directors, is worried about the future of high-quality community-based preschools like hers, with new graduates opting for jobs in the school system because it offers better pay.

The NSW Government’s plan to build a number of new preschools attached to public schools, and pay those teachers at the same rate as school teachers, is a great initiative, but could also attract teachers away from community-based preschools.

Wilde discussed her worries with Minister Car and said the Minister was receptive.

“I felt heard,” Wilde says.

“Minister Car mentioned she has been talking to the IEU. She understood that something needs to happen. I said I hope it happens in my lifetime. She sees staff shortages are a real challenge.

“I’ve met with quite a few ministers in my time, and she was more positive and receptive than the others. In the past there’s been an attitude, ‘oh well, what can we do?’”



Screen time reduces language learning opportunities

New research shows the average three-year-old is deprived of hearing 1000 words a day if they are using a screen, potentially impacting their language development, Emily Campbell writes.

Dr Mary Brushe from the Telethon Kids Institute led a team of researchers who tracked 220 Australian families over two years to measure the relationship between household screen use and children's language environment.

According to Dr Brushe, the average child hears between 5000 and 35,000 words per day, and conversations during the early years are critical for development.

"Growing up in a language-rich home environment, where there is lots of talking and conversation, is so important for children's language development," Dr Brushe says.

"More recently, we have also seen evidence for the importance of those back-and-forth interactions between parent and child for children's social and emotional skills too.

"These interactions help support children's vocabulary and are also critical for bonding and attachment with the child," she says.

New methodologies

Dr Brushe said her team's study stands out from existing research into the impact of screen time on language because it uses an objective measure of both screen time and children's early language experiences.

"The majority of research so far has relied on parents reporting their own and their child's screen time, whereas we have used advanced speech recognition technology to quantify the child's home environment in terms of the number of words and conversations and their exposure to screens," she says.

"Importantly, our research also includes exposure to modern screen devices like tablets, iPads, and mobile phones."

There is a continuously growing body of research focused on screen time during the early years, although Dr Brushe says it has often struggled to keep pace with technological change, so much of the existing literature focuses on television and computer games.

"We see some evidence that excessive screen time in early childhood may be associated with children's physical activity levels, their attention, language development

and social/emotional skills; however, we need more longitudinal evidence before we can really understand the true impact of screens," Dr Brushe says.

Advanced speech recognition technology

To conduct the study, Fitbit-like technology was used to monitor the audio and quantify the number of words spoken to, by and around the children who live in English-speaking homes.

Background and electronic noise from devices were also recorded, which researchers analysed to calculate screen time.

To collect data, families fixed the recording device to children and recorded 16 hours of audio on an average day, once per six months over the course of two years.

The experiment resulted in over 7000 hours of audio, which showed children in the study accrued, on average, three hours of screen time per day.

"This means that for every extra minute of screen time, the three-year-old participants heard seven fewer words, spoke five fewer words themselves, and engaged in one fewer conversation," Dr Brushe says.

It is estimated this ‘technoference’ led to children missing out on hearing over 1100 adult-spoken words, speaking 840 less words themselves and denied 194 conversations per day.

“However, the study could not capture parents’ silent screen-related activities, such as reading emails, texting or quietly scrolling through websites and social media, meaning we are probably underestimating how much screen usage and ‘technoference’ is occurring around children.”

Navigating screen time

Whether or not there was a notable difference in children’s language skills in homes with minimal screen time compared to higher levels of screen time was not explored in the study. However, Dr Brushe says it is an important avenue for future research.

“What we did find was that increases in screen time were leading to decreases in the number of adult words, child vocalisations and back-and-forth interactions children experienced during an average day.”

Dr Brushe said she avoids advocating for specific screen time limits, given current guidelines can feel unrealistic for families in today’s modern world.

“What I would recommend to parents and early childhood education staff is to think about the type of screen time you might be choosing and ensure there is still plenty of time throughout the day to do things like talking, playing, reading and singing with children.

“Not all screen time is created equal, and so I would argue the guidelines need to move towards supporting parents on what high-quality screen time might look like for children of different ages, rather than strict time limits.”

Better screen time

There are plenty of great options available, but it can be overwhelming for adults looking to select high-quality TV shows, movies and games for young children.

Dr Brushe said ABC Kids is her first recommendation, with a variety of age-appropriate screen content that tends to be more educational.

“I also recommend the resources from

Common Sense Media and Children and Media Australia, which are fantastic for ECEC staff and parents, as they provide reviews of different movies, TV shows and games,” she said.

It is possible to strike a balance between allowing children screen time to develop their digital literacy and the need for conversation and imaginative play.

“We do know very young children often struggle to attend to two things at once, so while the TV is on in the background, even if they are playing or reading at the same time, they are likely getting distracted by the colours or sounds of the TV, meaning they are unlikely to gain the potential benefits or be fully engaged in either task.”

Dr Brushe recommends ‘interactive co-viewing’, where the screen content is used to promote conversation and ideas for play either while watching or following the screen time.

“This might be repeating words and phrases from the screens or using the child’s favourite character to start an imaginative play activity.

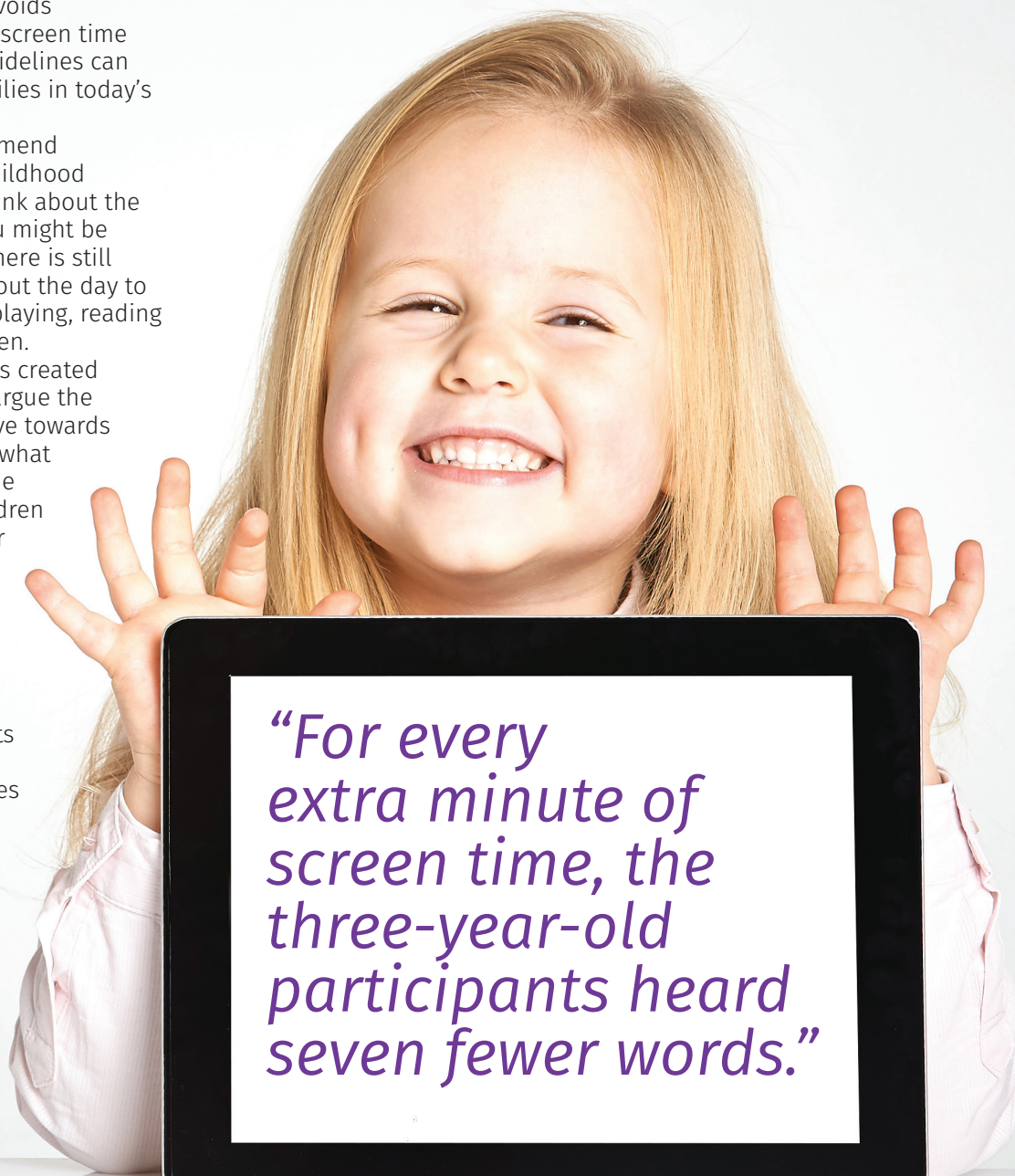
“This is a tool that both early childhood education staff and parents can try to incorporate into their routines to leverage the benefits that screen time can have.”

Further research necessary

Families involved in the study gave permission for the researchers to follow up with their child’s NAPLAN results as they go through primary school, providing an opportunity to better understand how their early experiences of language will impact literacy development.

By conducting further research, Dr Brushe hopes to provide further evidence about the types of content and context in which young children use screens and how that may impact different domains of development.

“We aim to provide families with evidence-based strategies to make their child’s screen time ‘healthier’ to maximise its potential benefits and reduce potential harms,” she says.



“For every extra minute of screen time, the three-year-old participants heard seven fewer words.”

Unite for change: Pay



This page: Preschool teachers and directors call for change at the campaign launch on 5 April; opposite page, top right: IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews talks to members at the launch; ambassadors endorse the campaign

The IEUA NSW/ACT Branch has launched a campaign to fight for substantial pay rises for teachers and educators in community preschools in NSW, write Sue Osborne and Monica Crouch.

On Friday 5 April, preschool teachers from across NSW gathered in Sydney at a forum to kick off the Unite for Change campaign.

Many teachers say that without urgent action, they fear for the future of community preschools.

“We don’t have enough students coming through the system who want to work in community preschools,” said Tash Smith, a teacher at East Lindfield Community Preschool. “Once my generation finishes up, who will replace us?”

Change is urgently needed, said teacher and IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Vice President, Early Childhood Services, Michelle Thompson. “The teacher shortage right now in our preschools is at breaking point,” she said.

Workforce crisis

Preschools need help to address the workforce crisis that is threatening early childhood education.

“For too long, the work of preschool teachers has been undervalued,” IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Secretary Carol Matthews said.

“It’s time for a fair deal for preschools: respect the profession, pay teachers and educators properly and invest in the future.”

Using the *Secure Jobs Better Pay Act* passed in 2022 by

the federal Labor government, the ‘supported bargaining’ stream is designed to assist employers and employees – who haven’t been able to bargain successfully at the individual enterprise level – to bargain as a group.

“It provides an opportunity for us to bargain for a multi-employer enterprise agreement,” IEUA NSW/ACT Branch Assistant Secretary Amanda Hioe said.

Supported bargaining

The supported bargaining process would enable the union, the NSW government and employers to work together to lift pay and conditions across the sector and solve the staffing crisis.

“We see this campaign launch as an opportunity to make a difference. We would really like to see a much more systematic approach to getting better pay in preschools,” Matthews said.

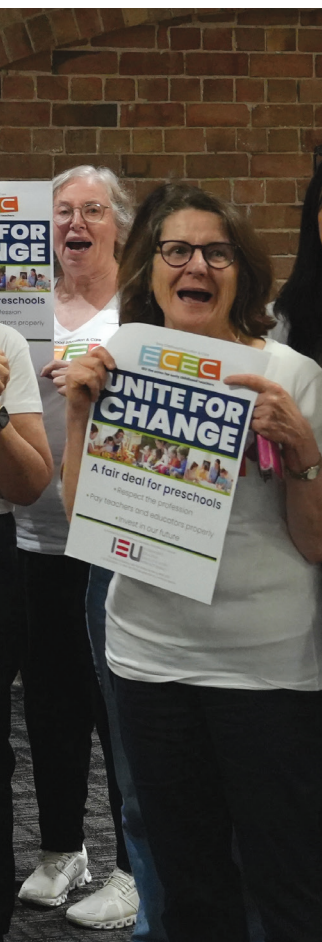
“The aim of our preschool campaign is to create real, lasting improvements going forward. Enterprise agreements can be renegotiated and improved on a regular basis.”

Media coverage

The forum was covered in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on Monday 7 April, with two IEU members, Phillipa Maher and Melinda Gambley, as well as Matthews, quoted.

Gambley, of Clunes Community Preschool near Lismore, said “people who are on early childhood wages can’t afford housing. They can’t afford mortgages and they can’t afford rent.

y rise for preschools



“We need people studying for degrees to want to enter this profession. We cannot win this campaign without building our community.”



“I’ve been working in this sector for a long time and I’ve seen a slow deterioration in the workforce – a staff shortage and pressures on staff. We are in crisis. We’re desperate now and we have to do something about it,” Gambley said.

“I’d like to see the state government support community preschools. Other sectors get support from other places, but it’s really up to the state government to support us because there is no one else.”

The IEU is calling for NSW government-supported pay rises that properly value the work of preschool staff.

“We need a 25% increase for beginning teachers and more for experienced teachers working in preschools,” Matthews said.

“Preschool teachers in other states and territories receive pay rates comparable to school teachers.

“Now we must focus on the needs of our preschools. We urge the NSW government to step up and address the staff shortages caused by inadequate pay and conditions in community-based preschools.”

A win-win situation

It is widely accepted that high-quality early childhood education is crucial to brain development and fundamental to achieving lifelong learning outcomes. It lays a strong foundation for academic success as children progress through school and beyond.

“If preschool teachers were paid comparably to school teachers, they would be more likely to enter the sector and

less likely to leave,” Matthews said. “Teachers, children, parents and the community only stand to gain from a strong preschool sector. We need to unite for change.”

The equity with school teachers is not there – it’s not a fair deal. Supported bargaining can change that. The IEU is calling for the NSW Government to take stewardship of the sector and support employers to pay their staff properly. Community preschools need people who are studying for degrees to want to enter this profession. We cannot win this campaign without building our community.

Teachers at the forum were enthusiastic about the IEU’s campaign and determined to play their part.

“Supported bargaining has been on our radar for some time and we were thrilled the IEU is taking up the case on behalf of preschool teachers,” Byron Bay Preschool Director and President of the Northern Rivers Preschool Alliance, Bridget Isichei, said.

Janene Rox, a teacher at Cronulla Preschool said: “This is an opportunity to be part of the amazing next stage in our sector. There’s lots of different ways to be part of the process. You can be loud and proud or quietly sharing in the background. Everyone can get involved.”

Unite for change: What you can do

- Start a conversation with your colleagues about this campaign
- Join our Facebook group: bit.ly/ececfbgroup



A landmark Victorian agreement provides a model for better pay and conditions for early childhood teachers in NSW, writes Lucy Meyer.

At the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch's early childhood forum and campaign launch on April 5 (see p12), teachers from community-based preschools across NSW heard from the Australian Education Union's Vice President, Early Education, Cara Nightingale, as she explained how Victorian preschool teachers secured pay and conditions equivalent to school teachers.

"I have absolutely full confidence that you too will get to the same point as we are in Victoria," Nightingale said.

Nightingale was the keynote speaker at the forum in Sydney, where she laid out how Victoria could be a model for other states to follow.

She helped lead the fight to secure the *Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement 2020* (see breakout box for conditions, p15).

The former kindergarten teacher told attendees that the Victorian agreement is now the "gold standard" for the sector. Working towards that standard "is the reason we're all here today".

Collective action

The event marked the start of the multi-employer agreement process for early childhood teachers from community-based preschools in NSW. With the launch of the new 'Unite for Change' campaign for better pay and conditions in NSW, there's much to learn from the Victorian example.

"Like all union bargaining agreements, you build upon and strengthen each iteration of the agreement, membership, and the activism of members around each round of bargaining," Nightingale said.

To do this, she explained, members should focus on the log of claims process, building networks, identifying

other members as leaders, and engaging in industrial and political action, advocacy and lobbying. "All of these things I have mentioned build union power and help to deliver better outcomes for members."

To Nightingale, the success of any industrial action depends on a sizeable number of engaged members with the will to take collective action. Having delegates who are trained and supported is critical here, she argued, as those delegates need to be ready to fight for the improved pay and conditions early childhood teachers and educators deserve.

For the Victorian agreement, particular attention was given to addressing the unfair expectation of unpaid overtime.

"So, I'm talking committee meetings, after-hours working bees on weekends, all of those things where your employer expects you to be there.

"If members are going to do that

work, they must be paid. “No more nice ladies, no more doing things out of the goodness of your heart, because it doesn’t pay the bills.”

The path ahead

Nightingale told attendees that achieving an agreement on par with Victoria would take member support, hard work and persistence. The new supported bargaining laws provide fresh opportunities for members to achieve this.

“This didn’t happen overnight. This has taken many iterations of the agreement, but you will eventually get there,” she said.

Despite the toil, Nightingale emphasised the importance and thrill of the work. She wished members “nothing but solidarity” and told them they could do it.

“You’re not alone in this,” Nightingale said. “You have your union here to support you every step of the way. But it does need to be a collective approach.

“So my ask of you today is to commit to going back to your workplaces and networks to start the conversation.”

Nightingale’s presentation inspired attendees. Melinda Gambley of Clunes Community Preschool said: “There’s a good precedent in Victoria that we can copy. This gives us hope and optimism.”

Showing the way on preschool pay



The Victorian model

Conditions in the Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement 2020:

- pay parity with teachers in schools
- maximum teaching time: 25.5 hours per week
- minimum planning time: 12.5 hours per week
- paid term holidays: 50 days annual leave
- time for educational leader and/or nominated supervisor: one hour per week
- organisational days: three days
- professional development days: two days
- time for mentors: four days
- personal leave: 15 days on commencement
- family and domestic violence leave: 20 days paid leave
- family leave: 16 weeks and four weeks for secondary carer
- employee assistance program
- any required paid out-of-hours work to be by agreement, with 14-day written notice period, and
- union training leave: up to five days per year.



The Queensland model

Most IEU members employed in Queensland’s community kindergartens are covered by union-negotiated collective agreements which provide some of the best wages and working conditions in Australia’s early childhood sector.

These enhancements have only been possible due to the collective strength and activism of IEU members who have fought long and hard for change.

The current collective agreements provide for the following wage rates:

**Creche and Kindergarten Association
– approximately 140 services**

Band 2 Step 1 – Graduate teacher entry point:

1 July 2023 \$77,475.42 per annum
1 July 2024 \$79,799.68 per annum

Band 3 Step 4 – highest incremental pay point:

1 July 2023 \$106,844.36 per annum
1 July 2024 \$110,049.69 per annum

If eligible, they may also receive an allowance for either: Senior Teacher or Experienced Senior Teacher, which is paid on top of B3S4 rate:

Senior Teacher’s allowance:

1 July 2023: \$4,898.26 per annum
1 July 2024: \$5,045.41 per annum

Experienced Senior Teacher’s allowance:

1 July 2023: \$9,796.80 per annum
1 July 2024: \$10,090.56 per annum

Lady Gowrie Branch services – approximately 15 services

Band 2 Step 1 – Graduate teacher entry point:

1 July 2023: \$78,781.80 per annum
1 July 2024: \$81,145.26 per annum

Senior Teacher – highest incremental pay point:

1 July 2023: \$113,135.92 per annum
1 July 2024: \$116,530.00 per annum

Affiliate services – approximately 125 services

The remaining services provide at least the following wage rates for 4 Year Trained Teachers, which are the same or better than Education Queensland teachers’ rates:

Band 2 Step 1 – Graduate teacher entry point:

1 July 2023: \$81,639.56 per annum
1 July 2024: \$84,088.74 per annum

Senior Teacher (nine years’ experience):

1 July 2023: \$113,465.94 per annum
1 July 2024: \$116,869.92 per annum

**Experienced Senior Teacher (11 years or more experience)
– highest incremental pay point (in most Agreements):**

1 July 2023: \$117,657.81 per annum
1 July 2024: \$121,187.55 per annum



Barriers to entry

Getting more male teachers in ECEC

Men make up a minority of early childhood education and care (ECEC) teachers – but there are ways to address the gender imbalance, write IEU member Lisa Holohan and co-author Dr Vee Sullivan.

Reflecting on an Australian case study, we discuss the nuances of men working in ECEC environments, analysing their impact on workplace dynamics and the broader implications for gender diversity.

The findings highlight the nuanced interactions between male and female educators, illustrating a blend of camaraderie and scepticism that defines their professional relationships.

Workforce challenges

The ECEC sector faces urgent recruitment and retention issues, with turnover rates between 37-47%. According to the latest survey from the Australian Childcare Alliance (2023) the significant lack of qualified educators is the sector's primary concern. There just aren't enough skilled teachers to meet demand and maintain the regulatory child:educator ratio requirements.

Policy reviews by the OECD (2019) and UNICEF (2019) suggested hiring more men to promote gender diversity in the ECEC sector. As the sector grapples with the shortage of labour, recruiting more men in ECEC has become a

practical necessity. Although increasing gender diversity within the sector is important, it's not a simple answer to address the current challenges. Increasing numbers of one gender over another without addressing the need for support for all staff is unlikely to solve the sector's labour shortage.

Changing gender norms

Gender segregation in the workplace, driven by the notion that certain qualities are inherent in a specific gender, results in role divisions.

Even though women make up nearly half of the Australian workforce, sectors such as nursing, education, and childcare continue to be dominated by women, while engineering and policing are dominated by men.

The disparity remains despite efforts to promote equal opportunity and change gender norms. It contributes to the gender pay gap and minimises men's representation in sectors such as health and education, with ECEC frequently perceived as 'women's work,' deterring men's participation.

Workplace barriers

Despite historical discrimination, women in male-dominated professions – including piloting, engineering, and fly-in fly-out (FIFO) mining roles – frequently receive higher compensation and status than men in female-dominated fields, who face exclusion and must navigate stereotypes challenging traditional masculinity.

Men entering fields such as nursing experience prejudice, which discourages entry due to prevailing gender biases and questions about their capabilities and suitability in such professions.

In the ECEC sector, the entrance of men as educators presents similar issues, owing to their rarity and the complex dynamics of being perceived as both outsiders and important assets.

This condition frequently places men in a position where they must show their usefulness beyond preconceptions, against a backdrop in which their presence is both novel and contentious.

Men's perspective

Societal norms suggest that men's participation in ECEC is not aligned with masculinity. But such assumptions are akin to the gender-based discrimination experienced by women in male-dominated professions.

For decades, men working in ECEC have been seen as unconventional and unusual.

One of the most concerning representations of male educators is that of a potential sexual predator, which can lead to exclusion from duties and caution with physical touch such as comforting children.

In a study by Brody et al. (2021), an Australian male educator described how he was excluded from changing a child's nappy due to being viewed as different. He noted that this had a negative impact on his professional esteem and personal wellbeing.

The perceived risk associated with men working in ECEC is one of many reasons why men have low levels of participation and higher rates of departure from the profession.

A brief case study

Sullivan et al. (2022) investigated men's accounts of inclusion and whether the grouping of men together

changed their experience of working in an ECEC centre.

When the researchers talked to men working in ECEC, they highlighted a progressive process to support diverse gender composition in the sector.

The study showed that male ECEC educators encounter challenges in acceptance and trust within this female-dominated sector.

Crucially, support from male colleagues was key in overcoming feelings of exclusion and to foster a supportive environment for professional and personal development.

This peer support is vital for retention and inclusion, highlighting the importance of male role models and teams in ECEC.

Notwithstanding male mentors, the study highlighted the benefits of mixed-gender teams in ECEC, where collegial support and mentorship from both men and women specifically enhanced educators' identities and professional development.

This collaborative environment fostered belonging, advocacy, and strong community ties, positively impacting all involved – children, educators, and families alike. It highlighted the importance of inclusive support and balanced mentorship for educator retention and sector improvement.

The study revealed that while diverse educator teams face challenges, including gender stereotyping and the pressure for men to prove their competence, these

obstacles can be overcome. With mutual respect and understanding, such teams can foster a sense of belonging and significantly improve the quality of care and education for children.

Addressing ECEC's workforce diversity challenges involves a strategic approach. Grouping men and fostering collegial relationships can mitigate turnover by tackling stereotypes and motive questioning.

Implementing diversity-sensitive policies, inclusive environments, and targeted mentorship for male educators is critical.

Such efforts, alongside gender-inclusive training, are essential for building a more diverse and equitable ECEC sector.

Acknowledgements

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About the authors

Lisa Holohan is an IEU member, a PhD candidate at the University of Queensland and an experienced teacher and academic. Dr Vee Sullivan is the National Project Manager, Social Inclusion at Goodstart Early Learning as well as an Adjunct Research Fellow at the School of Education at the University of Queensland.

References: bit.ly/3QpOApb

“Men encounter challenges in acceptance and trust within this female-dominated sector.”

Meet early childhood teacher and IEU member

Paul Collins



IEU member and early childhood teacher Paul Collins is one of few men employed in the highly feminised early childhood education and care sector, writes Emily Campbell.

Fewer than 3 per cent of teacher and educator roles in Australia's early childhood education workforce are held by men, and the sector is grappling with staff shortages.

Collins initially wanted to become a primary school teacher but took the opportunity to complete a double degree and become qualified in early childhood education too.

His early practicum experience cemented his preference for teaching in the early childhood sector.

"I enjoyed the teamwork, the focus on children as individuals and the ability to cater to their personal emotional development as well as academic," says Collins, who has been in the sector for over 10 years.

"Creating a space built on allowing children to learn from mistakes, process big feelings, practise skills and pursue interests can showcase some of the best elements of humanity," he says.

Supportive workplaces

Collins has worked as an early childhood teacher for Uniting Early Learning for a decade; first at Summer Hill Children's Centre in Sydney for seven years and most recently at

Uniting Early Learning Iluka Bondi Beach, where he currently works.

He's had a positive experience as a man employed in early childhood education.

"In my first practicum, and working casually, I worked with other men, but when I started full time at Summer Hill Children's centre, I was the only man," Collins says.

"Many of the families were excited to have a man employed at the centre their children were attending at both Summer Hill and Iluka.

"I have been lucky to have always felt warmly accepted by workplaces and families," he says.

However, Collins noticed early in his career that some families expected him to move on to "bigger things" or to pursue a leadership role, conversations he says did not appear to be occurring with many of his more experienced female colleagues.

Attracting men to the profession

The ongoing nationwide staff crisis is not news to anyone working in the early childhood education sector, says Collins.

"Reports mention this crisis stems from low pay, low job recognition and high stress in the workplace.

"The staffing crisis can create vacuums of effective leadership, a lack of mentoring and role modelling and issues for the day-to-day work in early childhood," he says.

Collins knows that there are some difficult stereotypes to contend with as a man working in early childhood education, and they can be a deterrent in the effort to attract more men to the sector.

"Unfortunately, there is a common prejudicial suspicion of men in early childhood education and there is also the stereotype that it is seen as women's work," he says.

"These views can make a workplace very uncomfortable and downright threatening.

"As I have said, I've been very lucky in my career to not have experienced this, having worked in progressive and supportive organisations."

To Collins, it is important for

children to see men in caring roles and professions so they can understand there are many different masculinities.

"Men can be kind, caring, sensitive, reflective, supportive and strong," he says.

To attract more men to working in the field, increasing professional recognition and remuneration is key.

"Pay is of course another issue, with many of my male friends quickly out-earning me through employment in other fields," Collins says.

IEU membership makes a difference

Collins believes that IEU membership has been essential to bettering pay and conditions for staff, which is why he joined as a university student.

"Our union has always been supportive if there was ever a pay discrepancy, and organisers have been alongside me during each collective bargaining negotiation," he says.

"I have felt well-represented, particularly when I enquired about leave for starting a family; maternity leave was changed to paid parental leave in the next agreement before it was as common as it is now," said Collins.

The proud union member commends the IEU's involvement as a key player in the multi-enterprise agreement negotiations, which seek to lift wages for staff across over 60 long day care employers in NSW.

"The early childhood education sector needs as many members as we can get, so as I say to my own colleagues, my family, friends and pretty much anyone: join your union."

Communicating with babies

Effective communication imparts skills, fosters a sense of safety and exemplifies social and emotional abilities that pave the way for lifelong success, Katie Fotheringham writes.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) has outlined advice on how early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals can support babies' and toddlers' belonging, being and becoming by practising effective verbal and non-verbal communication.

Children are born ready to communicate, initially expressing needs through crying, before transitioning to babbling, gestures, and eventually words.

Educators can foster communication by maintaining active dialogue, observing and interpreting babies' sounds, gestures, and expressions, and being attentive to non-verbal cues.

Fostering belonging

Children belong as soon as they are born – to their culture, families, communities and education services.

IEU-QNT Assistant Secretary Nicole Kapernick says positive relationships are the foundation of living and learning, and educators play a crucial part in fostering a sense of belonging.

"Simple acts that can contribute to belonging include greeting and saying goodbye to children and families by name, involving children in daily routines and allowing children to help," Kapernick says.

"In an ECEC environment, engaging in dialogue with infants and toddlers about their surroundings, upcoming events, observations, emotions of others, and various aspects enhances their sense of connection and enriches their understanding of the surrounding world," she says.

Early childhood researchers and authors Beverly Kovach and Denise De Ros-Voseles say using language that includes children in communication, rather than talking about them, fosters a sense of belonging. They claim when you do not talk to babies, they are unlikely to understand what is happening to them.

Be present

ECEC settings, especially those catering to infants, are bustling with tasks like nappy changes, feedings, and naps, leaving little uninterrupted time for one-on-one interaction.

Kapernick says there's strength in being fully present, attuning to a child, and focusing on their actions and words.

"Educators can engage in children's play, attentively listening to their

vocalisations, gestures, and facial cues, staying in the present to better understand and support each child," she says.

Kovach and De Ros-Voseles argue that talking about babies rather than directly acknowledging verbal and non-verbal cues discounts them as individuals. If you are present in the moment and communicate with children individually, it validates their self-worth.

"Similar to adults, children may find it difficult to articulate their emotions when upset, making it crucial for educators to help them label their feelings."

Maintain calm

When things are running smoothly, and distractions are minimal, effective communication is straightforward. However, remaining composed and empathetic during times of stress or frustration can be more challenging.

"Similar to adults, children may find it difficult to articulate their emotions when upset, making it crucial for educators to help them label their feelings," Kapernick says.

"For instance, acknowledging a child's anger and asking them what has upset them and validating their feelings."

Kapernick says that in situations where a child exhibits challenging behaviour, acknowledging their emotions while

redirecting their actions can be constructive.

"Educators can suggest coping strategies or redirect them to another task."

Acknowledge the positives

Recognising achievement is integral to positive communication, especially for preverbal infants and toddlers learning to navigate the world.

"Additionally, conveying positivity through facial expressions, such as smiling and nodding, reinforces connection and awareness," Kapernick says.

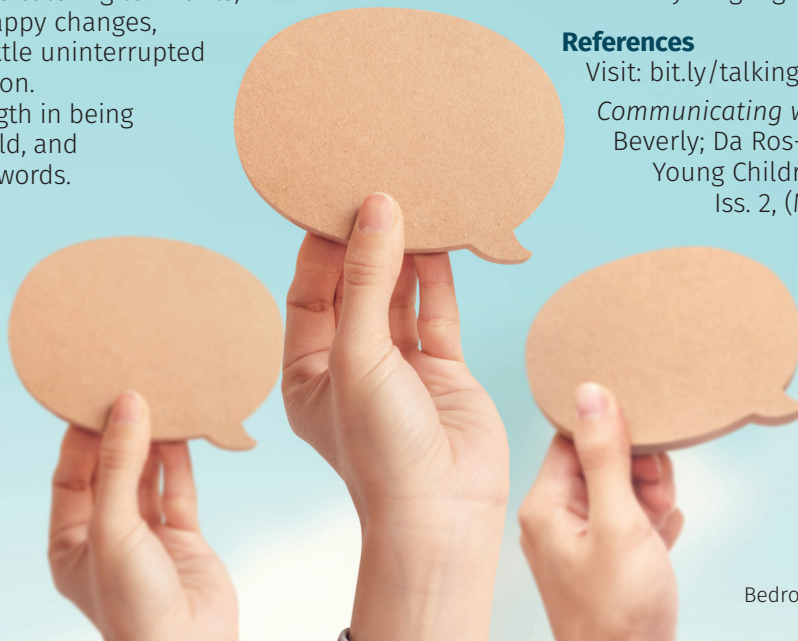
"Positive body language among adults in the environment also sets a constructive example for children, who keenly observe and learn from these interactions."

Education researchers argue there is a vast difference between how babies communicate and how adults communicate – gestures can go a long way where words cannot and it is important to remember babies can understand body language.

References

Visit: bit.ly/talkingaboutpractice

Communicating with Babies, Kovach, Beverly; Da Ros-Voseles, Denise. YC Young Children; Washington Vol. 66, Iss. 2, (Mar 2011): 48-50.



Why taking a walk won't cut it

Addressing workloads is the real solution

New research shows that when employers expect teachers to focus on improving their own wellbeing but don't address workplace conditions, it can intensify the problem, Katie Fotheringham writes.

Dr Saul Karnovsky, who co-authored Curtin University research examining educators' discussions on the online platform Reddit, says the impact of working conditions and broader policies on teachers' welfare were often ignored in favour of suggestions like mindfulness and taking a walk.

Elusive concept

Dr Karnovsky says the concept of 'wellbeing' to describe how teachers feel about their work was relatively new and difficult to define.

"In the past, we've just called this concept 'teacher emotions' or 'educator emotions,'" Dr Karnovsky says.

"But we've got to look at the particular words describing particular conditions of teachers' work; that's much more important.

"For example, both in the past and now, the word 'stress' is coming through loud and clear to us.

"The recent Black Dog Institute survey showed Australian teachers are experiencing moderate to extreme stress, depression and anxiety – double or triple the amount the general population is experiencing.

"At the moment, the expectations put upon educators at all levels are unrealistic, and their workloads are unmanageable.

This causes stress, which causes poor work-life balance, which can lead to feelings of demoralisation or burnout.

"Hence we say the teacher wellbeing is a problem now – instead of talking about what teacher wellbeing is, we need to understand what is driving the issue to begin with and understand how teachers can thrive and feel fulfilled in their work," he says.

Employer sessions miss the mark

Dr Karnovsky says employer wellbeing sessions, which suggest individualised, generic solutions to sector-wide problems, were ineffective in addressing the wellbeing crisis.

"A few years ago, I started some pilot projects in NSW to serve as an

alternative to generalised and often ineffective PD,” Dr Karnovsky says.

“It was guided by a couple of very passionate staff members who had read a piece I’d written in *The Conversation* and reached out to me to deliver academic consultancy to their workplace on developing a more holistic approach instead of the ‘one and done’ PD approach.

“It involved thinking about emotional labour or sharing something that we’ve experienced that we might have felt was traumatic, an extreme emotional event that we’re carrying with us.”

Dr Karnovsky says it was critical that any judgement or fear of repercussions were eliminated when facilitating these sessions.

“It was just a safe space, and safety is critical.

“A safe, non-judgmental space where any staff member who wanted to come, could speak and be heard and listened to and be pointed in the right direction for help if necessary.

“Ill-being involves locating the problem, it’s not on wellbeing, it’s about the fact that educators are experiencing ill-being in their work lives.”

IEU-QNT Branch Secretary Terry Burke says having a strong union representation within your workplace was the best means of taking action on ill-being.

“Through collective action we can bargain for fairer conditions and

ensure employers cannot ignore these widespread issues,” Burke says.

Personal and professional

Dr Karnovsky says it was important to make a distinction between professional self-care and personal or private self-care.

“Often in these wellbeing PD days, these two things are conflated and that’s why it muddies the waters,” Dr Karnovsky says.

“Those things need different kinds of strategies and other types of choices and decisions.

“For example, I practise mindfulness in my private life, and it’s something that I find valuable, but I’m not going to tell anyone at work that they need to meditate as a solution to their stress.

“But what I might do to think a little bit more mindfully about my work is say ‘no, I can’t do that’, or ‘I’m going to not take part in that particular committee this year because I’ve had a careful think about it’.

“When we can be honest and open about why we’re saying no, or deciding not to take part in certain things, and explain that it’s because we’re looking after ourselves, that is a positive step in changing the narrative around wellbeing.

“If you need emotional resources for the children in your care and taking part in an extra committee is going to really drain your resources, be honest about this.

“It’s important to be transparent about those kinds of choices and what you’re doing in a professional context to care for yourself.

“Teachers and early childhood educators are the experts of their own wellbeing,” he says.

Having a voice is key

Burke says it is essential educators have their voices heard when it comes to wellbeing issues.

“Being a union member is the first critical step in ensuring you have a platform and safe space to have your concerns listened to,” Burke says.

“The union gives you an avenue to be honest about what’s happening at your workplace – something that is not facilitated by employers.

“Educators feel minimised and silenced, and with union membership there is always someone willing to listen to you.”

“At the moment, the expectations put upon educators at all levels are unrealistic, and their workloads are unmanageable.”





Monique Roosen is an Industrial Officer for IEU-QNT. Kate Damo is an Organiser for the IEUA NSW/ACT Branch. They answer your industrial and legal questions as they relate to state laws and regulations.

Is lunch with the children a break?

Dear Kate

I work in a private long day care centre which is covered by the *Educational Services Teachers Award 2020* (the modern award). I am not being paid for a lunch break and I must eat my lunch with the children.

Michelle



Kate Damo

Dear Michelle

Your employer is in breach of the award. The employer is required to provide you with a paid 20-30-minute meal break. Eating lunch with children is not a break as you are still supervising. Your employer should be paying this as time worked.

If your break is interrupted for any reason, you should be paid 150 per cent of the minimum hourly rate for a minimum of 15 minutes and thereafter to the nearest quarter hour until an uninterrupted break, or the balance of the break, is taken. If ratios allow, and with the consent of the employer, you may choose to leave the service for 20-30 minutes, and it will be an unpaid lunch break. Please note, different arrangements exist in Queensland. Contact your union for advice.

Kate

What legal responsibilities does a nominated supervisor have?

Dear Monique

My employer has asked that I assume the role of the nominated supervisor. I understand that this role involves additional legal responsibilities. Can you please tell me what they are before I decide whether to accept the role?

Kristie



Monique Roosen

Dear Kristie

The Education and Care National Law and Regulations

govern the legal responsibilities for the role of Nominated Supervisor. Section 161 of the National Law requires that the approved provider (your employer) must operate a service with a nominated supervisor. The approved provider must identify the nominated supervisor and the person must give their written consent to undertake the role.

The key responsibilities for the role of nominated supervisor are:

- the day-to-day management of the service
- ensure that educational programs meet the early years learning framework (section 168)
- supervise children at all times while they are in your care

- ensure that the entries and exits to the premises are secure (section 170 and regulation 99)
- ensure that hygiene and safety practices minimise the risks to children (regulations 77, 79, and 80)
- administer medication in accordance with the legal requirements (regulations 93-96)
- ensure that you are not affected by drugs and alcohol (regulation 83)
- ensure that there is adequate sleep and rest time for children (regulation 81)
- ensure that risk assessments are conducted for excursions (regulations 100-102), and
- ensure that the staff-to-child ratios are met (see regulations 123-128).

Once you have given your written consent to undertake the role of nominated supervisor, your employer must notify the regulatory authority within seven days of receiving the consent. In addition, the employer must display the name of the person(s) who are the nominated supervisor at the preschool (see sections 172, 173(2)(b), and 174(1)).

Further information can be found online at bit.ly/3VM6zdc

Monique

GIVEAWAYS

Exiles

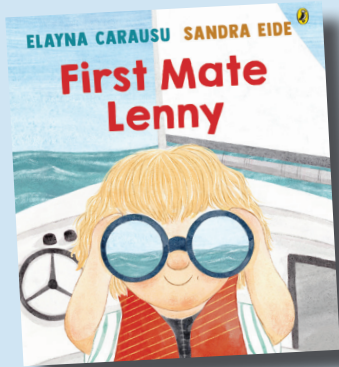
Author: Jane Harper

Publisher: Pan Macmillan

At a busy festival site on a warm spring night, a baby lies alone in her pram, her mother having vanished into the crowds.

A year on, Kim Gillespie's absence casts a long shadow as her friends and loved ones gather deep in the heart of South Australian wine country to welcome a new addition to the family.

Aaron Falk, federal investigator, is joining the celebrations. But as he soaks up life in the lush valley, he begins to suspect this tight-knit group may be more fractured than it seems. As hidden truths slowly emerge, Falk faces the darkest of questions.



First Mate Lenny

Author: Elayna Carausu

Illustrator: Sandra Eide

Publisher: Penguin Random House Australia

Ahoy! Come on board as little Lenny learns the ropes of life at sea.

In the cabin of a home on the sea, Mama leans over Lenny. "Welcome," she whispers, as lapping waves rock the boat like a cradle. For little Lenny, life at sea is one big adventure. There are dolphins and turtles, tropical islands and sandy beaches all waiting to be discovered. There are storms and other things that seem scary or new, too. But Lenny soon learns to be brave and to love sailing around the world with his loving family.

Elayna Carausu sails the world and shares her adventures on sailing *La Vagabonde*. Here is a tribute to Lenny, her first child and first mate, and their shared love of the sea.

Hunter on Holiday

Author: Jessica and Stephen Parry-Valentine

Illustrator: Ashlee Spink

Publisher: Puffin Books

Adventure awaits! Join Hunter on her first overseas holiday: the perfect companion book for a child preparing for their first big trip and anyone daydreaming about the wonderfully wide world.

*Our bags are packed, we have passports in tow,
We're checked in and waiting. It's almost time to go!
Our luggage is all stowed and we do our seatbelts up quick smart,
The plane is taking off now, our trip's about to start!*

Join Hunter as she explores icy fjords and ancient cities; majestic mountains and sunny town squares.

From Jessica and Stephen Parry-Valentine, the creators of travel channel Flying the Nest, comes a delightfully illustrated recount of the family adventure of a lifetime through Europe.



Email entries to giveaways@ieu.asn.au with the title of the book you would like to receive in the subject line.

Write your name, membership number and postal address in the body of your email. All entries must be received by 23 July 2024.

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