

Broadside

COMMUNITY CHILD CARE CO-OPERATIVE (NSW)

NEWS UPDATE MAY 2011

Letter to our new Minister

Dear Minister,

We know what it's like to be in a new job – a lot of new information to absorb, lots of people demanding you do things, lots of people trying to talk to you.

So, we have decided to make it easy for you and tell you the important things children's services in NSW need you to know. We know it may take some time for you to act on these issues, but please make sure they are on your agenda.

We are the *really important* section of your portfolio.

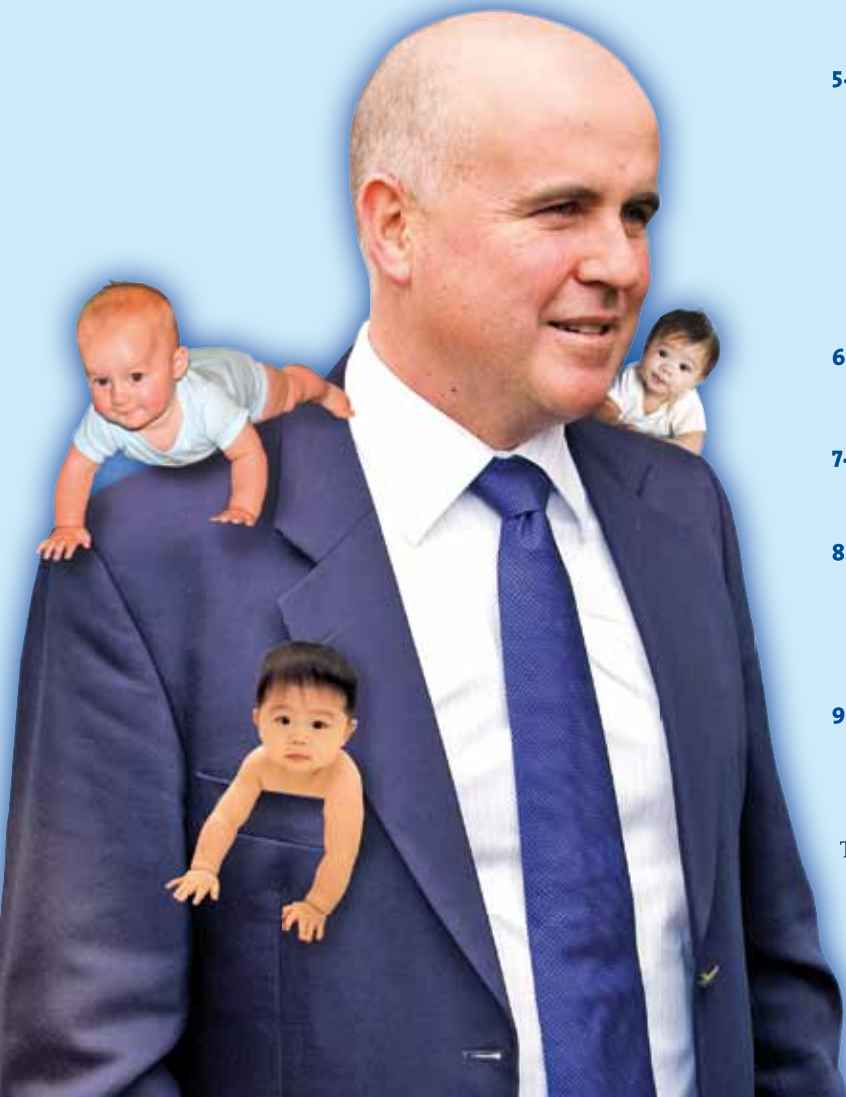
We know that those noisy schools and TAFES and training organisations will say they are more important, but we think it is us!

1. When children are in early education and care services their cognitive, verbal, social, physical and emotional skills are enhanced and further developed which has an impact on their entire life. Neurobiological research has shown us that the early years shape the very architecture of the brain.
2. This hasn't always been known so early education and care services are not as well funded as they should be.
3. The National Quality Framework (NQF) will help us to improve the quality of our services. You may hear us groan about the speed of change, but we want you to support it 100 per cent. We do.
4. The previous government made a great change to staffing ratios for babies. We now have a 1-to-4 ratio but we want to make that even better. Imagine having four children under 2 years of age. Please help us persuade the other states that a 1:3 ratio is what we now need.
5. You have a problem. You have 100 preschools that are well funded and are run directly by your Department. This preschool is free or requires a minimal contribution. Teachers at these preschools are paid at equivalent rates to other teachers. In your portfolio you also fund 750 community based preschools but not at the same levels. Parents have to pay up to \$50 a day for these. Teachers at community-based centres earn up to 20 per cent less than other teachers.
6. Less is spent on children's services in NSW than any other state in Australia. In most other states, all preschools are free or at minimal cost.
7. The RAM funding system that you have inherited is flawed. It is confusing, difficult to manage and makes budgeting impossible.
8. We want to help you to do your job better. It's great that you are consulting with us and the sector is ready to offer you so much more guidance and advice based on years of dedication and commitment to children's rights and well being.
9. We need your help. We need you to be a strong advocate for NSW children's services. We need you to persuade Treasury that money spent on the early years will save them money in every other area later.

There is a lot more we could tell you Minister but for now, that will do. All the best with the new job.

Yours sincerely,

Children's Services in NSW



The mystery of mixed-age ratios

Readers of *Broadside* would be aware that Community Child Care has long had concerns that the Ready Reckoner included in the National Quality Standard (NQS) for calculating mixed-age ratios, seriously undercut the improvements to ratios contained in the National Quality Framework.

As it stood, the Ready Reckoner would have allowed a single carer to care for seven children, including a baby. Community Child Care (NSW) acknowledges that not all of our members share our concerns on this issue.

We have consistently put our concerns on this issue before the Commonwealth and State Governments.

Now that the draft regulations have been completely released, Community Child Care is pleased to note that the Ready Reckoner has been omitted from the National Quality Standard contained in the Regulations (Schedule 1), meaning that services cannot rely upon it to meet the requirements of the Regulation. The draft National Regulations require the ratios for each age bracket to be met where there is a mixed-age group.

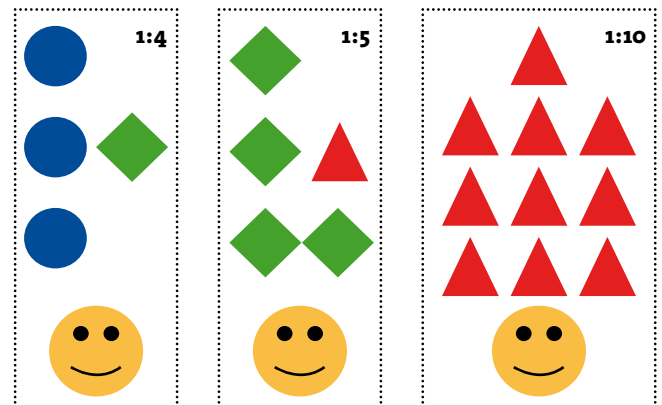
Essentially, what this means is that in a centre-based service where there is a mixed-age group, if one of the group is a baby, the educator would be able to care for no more than four children.

The information paper on the National Regulations explained it in the following way: 'Maintaining the ratio for each age range of children in the mixed-age group would not mean that the educator-to-child ratio for the youngest age range has to be applied to all children in

an older age range. In a mixed-age group of children, an educator who is caring for one age range of children can be also be counted against another age range of children provided that the ratio for each age range is maintained and the education and care provided to children is appropriate across the seven quality areas.'

It also says that 'the first step to calculate the number of educators necessary is to determine the number of educators for the lowest age range of children in the group. Once that ratio is met, an educator can also supervise children in another age range provided the lowest age range is still maintained.'

During the consultation sessions about the Regulations in NSW, Community Services and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) used the graphic below to explain:



It shows that in 2016 (after the new toddler ratio comes in) with a mixed-age group consisting of three babies (the blue circles), five toddlers (green diamonds) and 11 preschoolers (red triangles), three educators (smiley faces) would be required to meet the ratio.

NEW INFORMATION TO LOOK OUT FOR

>> Look out in the mail for:

- **NQF Fact Sheets and Newsletter** from Children's Services Central—clear and easy to understand.
- **The next Children's Services Central Calendar.** With a range of NQF-related courses, as well as all the usual course material, you will surely be able to find courses that suit your training needs. The Calendar should be available towards the end of June.

>> Look on the internet for:

- **DEEWR's National Quality Framework Information Sheets.** Information Sheets on a range of topics about the

National Law and the draft Regulations are progressively being posted on their website. These Information Sheets provide an overview of each topic and are designed to provide a plain English explanation of the National Law and the draft Regulations. Go to www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Pages/DraftNQFRegDocs.aspx or go to the big yellow box on the Community Child Care website (www.cccnsw.org.au), where we have a link to them.

- **A free excursion risk assessment proforma,** developed by Children's Services Central. Go to www.cscentral.org.au/news/nqf/nqf-resources.html

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Show me the money!



Community Child Care has taken a lot of inquiries from children's services recently, asking when they will be receiving funding from the Teacher Costs Contribution Scheme.

So, to be sure we got it right from the source, Community Child Care asked John Mason, executive director of the Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate, to outline what is happening with the scheme.

The answer? 'The Early Childhood Teacher Cost Contribution Scheme is a commitment for 2011/12 under the Bilateral Agreement for the National Partnership Agreement on Early Childhood Education between NSW and the Commonwealth. There is currently a formal

Review underway of this National Partnership Agreement, involving all jurisdictions and the Commonwealth and input from the sector. I would expect that the outcomes of this Review may influence the final shape of the Scheme.'

Services may remember that Community Services have previously said that: 'The first payments will be made in the second half of 2011, based on information collected around August 2011, for the 2010/11 financial year.'

Mr Mason said that he believes they 'would still be looking at second half of 2011 and after August data collection'.

So, is the scheme still happening? It would be hard for it not to happen given that it is part of a Bilateral State-Commonwealth agreement but, we understand it has not yet been signed off by the new Minister. When will it happen? Sounds like between August and December. Would Community Child Care advise services to put it in their budget? Probably not at this stage - we believe it would be better to wait until more definitive announcements are made.

SAVE THESE DATES NOVEMBER 12-13, 2011

Early childhood education environments conference

Creating Irresistible (and Sustainable) Environments for Early Childhood Services that meet the National Quality Standard.

This two-day conference presented by Community Child Care and the Early Childhood Environmental Education Network (ECEEN) in Sydney is designed to challenge participants to create irresistible and sustainable environments for their service. Under the National Quality Standard, services must ensure that environments are inclusive, promote competence, independent exploration and learning through play. Outdoor and indoor spaces must be designed and organised to engage every child in quality experiences in both built and natural environments. How do we do this and is it possible to do this while promoting sustainability?

More information will be released about the conference soon, but in the meantime, save the dates 12-13 November 2011 in your calendar!

SELF REGULATION AND COMPLEX SKILLS MASTERY IN CHILDREN: A MORNING WITH DR STUART SHANKER



FRIDAY, 24 JUNE 2011 SYDNEY MASONIC CENTRE

8-9am Networking Breakfast

9-10.30am Keynote Address

Recent advances in developmental neuroscience are dramatically changing attitudes towards achieving the educational potential of every child.

Dr Shanker will talk about:

- the nature of self-regulation;
- experiences that promote the development of self-regulation and factors that impede its development; and
- what teachers can do to enhance the self-regulation.

\$65
for CCCC members and \$75 for others

TO BOOK INTO THE BREAKFAST AND KEYNOTE, GO TO:

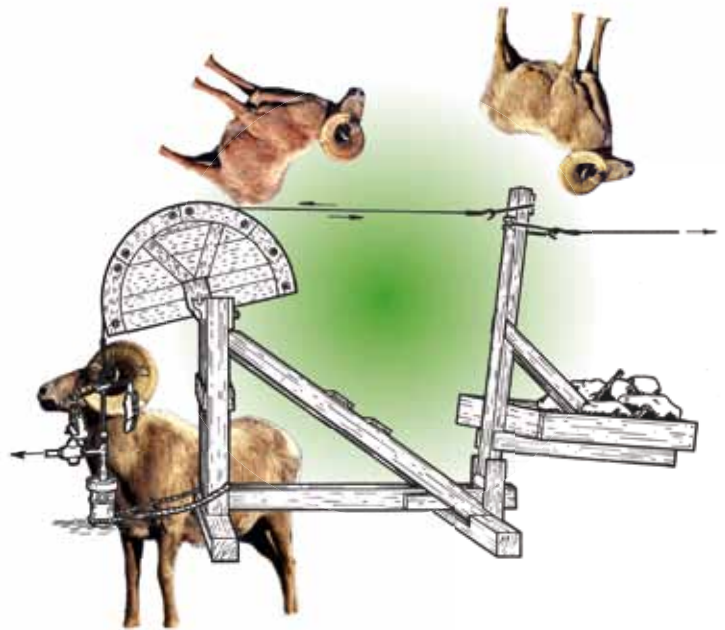


WWW.CCCNSW.ORG.AU/SHANKER

Your future funding, in simple terms...

Funded services recently received a letter from Community Services about their funding. As it is a complex letter, Community Child Care provides a simple translation below.

1. Even though we have moved from Community Services to the Department of Education, the Department of Community Services will continue to handle funding until it can all be shifted to Education.
 2. The Department of Education is going to make all major decisions about funding.
 3. The Department of Education is going to pay your service at the same rates as last year and later on will give you a variation with your new funding levels.*
 4. Keep talking to your Community Services CPOs about your funding and any problems until they tell you otherwise.
 5. There is a new clause in your funding agreement which means that you must be a fully inclusive service including, if possible, being physically accessible (but if this is not affordable, you have an exit clause). As we are only paraphrasing here, services may wish to read Clause 5 of the agreement for themselves.
 6. There is another change where, if your service received under \$25,000 per year, you must only provide Community Services with a Certificate stating that the money was spent properly. If your service received over \$25,000, your service must provide an income and expenditure statement.
 7. You must sign and send back both of the service agreements (or your service will not receive funding) and by doing this, you are also agreeing to carry out the requirements from the Service Specification agreement given to you by your CPO.
 8. Community Services thanks you for doing what you have always done – delivering high quality services.
- *Why? We are not sure, but this sounds familiar... didn't the same thing happen last year? Maybe Community Services haven't had time to perform the fiendishly difficult RAM calculations?



So it turns out... funding comes with us!

Ever since children's services moved to the Department of Education and Communities, there has been some confusion about whether the funding of children's services would also be moving to the new department. The answer is now clear – yes it is, although Community Services will continue to administer it for the moment.

Is this a good or a bad thing?

Only time will tell, but wouldn't it be fun to be a fly on the wall the first time someone in the Children's Services Directorate tries to explain the intricacies of RAM funding to one of their new colleagues or bosses in the Department of Education! One suspects that the part about services being funded on the basis of the children you had enrolled 18 months ago may raise more than a few eyebrows.

Which organisation is getting a new website?

Shhhh! Don't tell anyone, but look out for a *Shortside* announcing a new website for a certain organisation with lots of 'C's in their web address soon!

Educate your MP

What does your local member know about children's services? The change of Government as a result of the State Election in March, means that there are many new local members that may not know a lot about children's services.

Has your service added your new local member to your mailing list for special events? Can you organise to make an appointment to go and see him or her and talk about the value of your service to the local community? If not can you send them a letter (include some artwork that your children have created!) welcoming them to drop in some time? What about calling them?

It is also important to do this if you have an existing member, especially if the existing member is an ALP member who was previously part of the Government. Being a member of the opposition party is quite a different role than being an MP from the party who is in Government. These MPs may have time and interest in connecting with services like yours in their electorate in a way they never did before.

To find contact details for your local MP go to:

www.tiny.cc/NSWMPS.

Vale Rhonda Bignell

Past CEO of Family Day Care Australia, Rhonda Bignell, has passed away after a battle with cancer. Rhonda was appointed to the position of FDCA Chief Executive Officer at the end of 2008, and retired last year.

Prior to working for FDCA, Rhonda was the CEO of St John Ambulance Australia (NSW) and General Manager of two NSW Councils.

During her career, Rhonda had direct responsibility for a range of children's services, including long day care, family day care, preschool, vacation care and outside school hours care. As CEO of Family Day Care Australia, Rhonda was responsible for promoting family day care as a high quality education and care service for Australian families.

QUALIFICATIONS
for children's services professionals



Make 2011 the year
you or your staff acquire
more qualifications!



Community Child Care Co-operative offers Nationally Recognised (Accredited) training courses for people working in children's services. Community Child Care offers Certificate III and Diploma courses in Children's Services, in small Business Management and in Training and Assessment and short courses in food handling and child protection.

CALL **8922 6424**
OR GO TO:
www.cccnsw.org.au/rto

Did DEEWR hear us?

Looked on the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website recently (www.deewr.gov.au)? There is a tiny new section on the site which will make it so much easier for those of us who have to regular trawl through it to find the information you need!

Under the Early Childhood section, there is now a NEWS heading which lists all the latest news posted on the website. So if you want to know what has been added to their website that is of relevance to children's services, you should just be able to go to the NEWS section.

Language updates

As the NQF progresses, there are changes of terminology. Just so you are in the loop...

'Pedagogical Leader' is no longer used; the term is now 'Educational Leader'.

'Statement of Principles' is no longer used; the term is now 'Statement of Philosophy'.

It's the student support that sets ECTARC above all the rest.

An ECTARC Training Officer is available at all times during business hours, 8:30am to 5:00pm Monday to Friday, to take your call. Studying via correspondence does not mean you are on your own. The ECTARC team is there to support you every step of the way.

For information on all ECTARC programs please visit www.ectarc.com.au or call 02 4223 1111 to speak to an ECTARC Training Officer.



RPL funding

A \$9.2 million Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) package was announced in the Federal Budget earlier this month to assist the early childhood workforce to access training.

The RPL package will fund:

- the development of specialist training for 600 RPL assessors in delivery of Certificate III, Diploma and Advanced Diploma in Children's Services; and
- grants of up to \$1,125 for 2,000 rural and remote child care staff per year, to reimburse them for out-of-pocket expenses associated with accessing RPL.

Community Child Care welcomes the RPL investment and its focus on rural and remote workers in particular. Other training and apprenticeship measures announced within the Budget will also assist our workforce acquire the qualifications required under the NQF.

Interested in RPL? Contact Community Child Care (NSW) by email: training@cccnsw.org.au

Book now!

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29 September 2011

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