Supporting partnerships through family participation

by Anne Stonehouse

Families want to feel connected with their child's experience in child care. For many families, choosing from a variety of ways of participating in the child care service not only strengthens this connection but can also create a sense of community within the service. Families’ participation can also benefit the service in many ways. Most importantly, participation can contribute to strong relationships between families and child care professionals. Relationships between child care professionals and families, often referred to as partnerships, are an important indicator of the quality of any service.

Partnerships involve collaborating with the aim of ensuring that the experiences offered in child care support each child's learning, development and wellbeing.

Participation and partnerships – what are the differences?

The distinction is often made between partnership and parent involvement, which has been a traditional feature of child care programs, with partnership being viewed as much more important and valuable. One major difference is that partnerships require professionals to share authority and power with families, with the result that the child's experience is a negotiated one. Traditional parent involvement, however, usually consists of a number of ways, determined by professionals that families can participate in and contribute to the child care service. These ways typically allow professionals to maintain their authority.

Partnership is a relationship, while family participation and involvement are ways families can contribute to the operation of the service and to their child's experiences in child care. The assertion is often made that involvement is optional in a quality service, but partnership is not, even though the partnership will be unique with each family.

While this is true, family participation opportunities can also have an important place in quality child care services.

Some discussions about partnerships may imply that family involvement and participation are unimportant. This is not so.

Having a variety of ways for families to participate is important and can contribute in significant ways to successful partnerships.

What are worthwhile family participation experiences?

The three overlapping types of typical family participation experiences in a service include:

Contributions to the operation of the service:

- Joining management or parent advisory committees
- Helping to develop and review policies
- Participating in working bees

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- Conducting fundraising projects
- Organising projects and events
- Donating supplies and materials
- Donating professional expertise and/or skills
- Sharing talents or interests with children
- Helping in a variety of ways. For example, mending dolls’ clothes, repairing equipment.
- Being an extra adult on an excursion.

Social events:
Some families will enjoy participating in and/or helping to organise social events such as end-of-year parties, multicultural evenings and welcome functions for new families. These events can be excellent ways for families and child care professionals to spend time together in a relaxed and informal way and for families to get to know each other. It is critical that the nature of such social events and the times they occur respond to families’ interests and needs.

Information sharing:
In some communities families will appreciate the service organising sessions with speakers about aspects of children’s learning, development and wellbeing, community resources for families and other issues related to parenting and family life.

When child care professionals participate alongside families, issues and concerns of mutual interest can be discussed. This can build shared understanding. For these sessions to be successful, they must be offered in response to interest from families.

How can participation contribute to partnerships?
Creating a sense of community among children, families, staff and carers is an important component of a child care service. Participation allows professionals and family members to get to know each other and can create a sense of belonging.

Through participation families can also:
- Learn more about how the service operates
- Get to know other children and families
- Experience their child in the child care setting and learn more about what their child does at child care.

All of these outcomes are likely to increase families’ confidence in contributing to their child’s learning and development both within and outside the service.

Working alongside professionals can be one way of demonstrating partnership.

Most family participation experiences occur in more relaxed, informal times than the busy drop-off and pick-up times, making them more conducive to having conversations and sharing information and insights.

What makes family participation experiences successful?
A successful family participation experience can be just about anything that flows from the values and philosophy of the service. Just as for experiences for children, how and why you do what you do matters as much as what you do.

Within the service community there will be diverse interests and priorities and not all family participation experiences will suit all families.

Some points to consider:
- Base the opportunities offered on what families want, not what professionals think they ‘should’ want. Invite families to suggest ways they would like to participate.
- Offer a variety of opportunities. One-off and ongoing, modest and substantial, simple and challenging
- Share authority and decision making with families
- As you learn about families’ strengths, talents and interests, think of ways to tap into these
- Be sure that family participation is, and is seen to be, voluntary, not compulsory. Some families will not want to participate, or do not have the time to do so.
- Avoid tokenism – that is, having families spend their time doing jobs that don’t really need doing
- Ensure that the ways families can participate are empowering and engender a sense of belonging
- Show genuine appreciation of all contributions
- Ensure that family participation experiences feel inclusive – that is, everyone is welcome
- Respect individual differences. Find ways to encourage families that don’t currently participate without making them feel that it is compulsory. For example, place articles about participation opportunities in the service’s newsletter, but clearly note that these are voluntary and that families are not obligated to be involved.

Why document family participation?
The documentation of family participation using photos, stories, notes in a newsletter or on a notice board can promote a sense of belonging.

Acknowledging and documenting all contributions, both big and small, demonstrates appreciation and can encourage more participation. Including family participation as one focus of ongoing evaluation involves getting feedback from families and acting on it. Evaluation that questions traditional ideas of family participation, and that focuses on the interests and needs of families will help to ensure the relevance of what is offered.

Conclusion
Invitations to participate in services in a variety of ways can contribute to establishing and strengthening relationships between professionals and families and to building a strong inclusive community within the service. However, keep in mind that the aim is to have a partnership with all families, regardless of whether they participate in service activities.
References and further reading:


This article relates to:

Filling the vacancies: When staff leave or take leave

For young children in care outside the home, the basis of high-quality experiences are the relationships they have with their carers.

In order to feel secure with the adults who look after them, babies and young children need care to be stable and predictable, and they need time to develop trusting relationships. Continuity and consistency of care along with best practice child–staff ratios, group size and staff qualifications are the cornerstones.

Managing staff transitions

How do we continue to provide high-quality care when a staff member leaves or takes annual leave? What policies and practices do we have in place to ensure children and families have time to adjust and form new relationships with another carer?

To have true partnerships with families we need to give parents and children the respect (and information) they need and deserve when an inevitable change happens.

Too often practices, policies and realities don't allow the time or budget to do this really well. There are some services where 'we don't tell the families, as they might get upset and leave', and a staff member just disappears forever. There is also the old belief (which fortunately, rarely occurs now) that a child will be upset when a parent or carer leaves, and it is best to just sneak away.

We need to ask ourselves what this means for a young child who has a close relationship with that staff member. How do we celebrate the contribution of the staff member who is leaving; and allow parents, children and other staff to say goodbye, both formally and informally?

Welcoming new staff

It’s also important to consider our systems for orientating a new staff member. Does time and budget allow us the chance for departing and new staff members to work alongside each other?

The orientation of new staff is much less about management principles and centre policies, and much more about the individual ways young children especially infants and toddlers need to feel secure during their childcare day.

We need to understand that parents and children may require time to ‘grieve’; and services may need to support families through the transition process, similar to when they first started. With notice, we can also give children and families time to build relationships with other regular staff.

Coping with short notice

How do we manage when a staff member leaves suddenly, or leaves ‘under a cloud’, and we have no time to let children and families know?

The nature of human attachment means that, even if the staff member has been employed only briefly, they will have formed close bonds with some or all of the families and children in their care.

We need to be open and honest with the families at this time, and understand their need to feel let down and even angry for themselves and their child. We can help this process by using regular relief staff, and asking existing staff to provide extra support during this difficult transition.

This process can also be implemented when staff take other kinds of leave, such as holidays or for sickness.

Letting families know whom they can expect to be looking after their children each day is respectful and gives them time to talk to their child: ‘Bronwyn is away today and Sharon will be looking after you. Remember when Sharon pushed you on the swing?’

When we understand the nature of attachment and the significance of children's early relationships with adults outside of the family, we have a responsibility to take the issue of continuity of care seriously.

Cooloon Children's Centre Inc.
What is Anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and is potentially life threatening. It must be treated as a medical emergency, requiring immediate treatment and urgent medical attention.

Anaphylaxis is a generalised allergic reaction, which often involves more than one body system (e.g., skin, respiratory, gastrointestinal, cardiovascular). A severe allergic reaction usually occurs within 20 minutes of exposure to the trigger and can rapidly become life threatening.

What causes Anaphylaxis?

Common triggers of anaphylaxis include:

Food
Milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, crustaceans and soy are the most common food triggers, which cause 90% of allergic reactions, however, any food can trigger anaphylaxis. It is important to understand that even trace amounts of food can cause a life-threatening reaction. Some extremely sensitive individuals can react to even the smell of a food (e.g., fish).

Insect Venom
Bee, wasp and jumper ant stings are the most common causes of anaphylaxis to insect stings.Ticks and fire ants also cause anaphylaxis in susceptible individuals.

Medication
Medications, both over the counter and prescribed, can cause life threatening allergic reactions. Individuals can also have anaphylactic reactions to herbal or ‘alternative’ medicines.

Other
Other triggers such as latex or exercise induced anaphylaxis are less common and occasionally the trigger cannot be identified despite extensive investigation.

Signs and Symptoms
The signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis may occur almost immediately after exposure or within the first 20 minutes after exposure. Rapid onset and development of potentially life threatening symptoms are characteristic markers of anaphylaxis. Allergic symptoms may initially appear mild or moderate but can progress rapidly. The most dangerous allergic reactions involve the respiratory system (breathing) and/or cardiovascular system (heart and blood pressure).

Common Symptoms

Mild to moderate allergic reaction
- Tingling of the mouth
- Hives, welts or body redness
- Swelling of the face, lips, eyes
- Vomiting, abdominal pain

Severe allergic reaction- ANAPHYLAXIS
- Difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- Swelling of the tongue
- Swelling or tightness in the throat
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Loss of consciousness and/or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

Diagnosis

A person who is suspected of having a food allergy should obtain a referral to see an allergy specialist for correct diagnosis, advice on preventative management and emergency treatment. Those diagnosed with severe allergy must carry emergency medication as prescribed as well as an Anaphylaxis Action Plan signed by their doctor.

Food allergic children who have a history of eczema and/or asthma are at higher risk of anaphylaxis. Administration of adrenaline is first line treatment of anaphylaxis.

Management & Treatment

Anaphylaxis is a preventable and treatable event. Knowing the triggers is the first step in prevention. Children and caregivers need to be educated on how to avoid food allergens and/or other triggers. However, because accidental exposure is a reality, children and caregivers need to be able to recognise symptoms of an anaphylaxis and be prepared to administer adrenaline according to the individuals Anaphylaxis Action Plan.

Research shows that fatalities more often occur away from home and are associated with either not using or a delay in the use of adrenaline.

For more information visit [http://www.allergyfacts.org.au/](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au/)

In the world of psychology, and particularly in the area of the psychology of learning, a lot is known about the way in which people learn as well as the way in which people forget.

From the time of learning after only one day the percentage of material remembered is 54% while 46% is forgotten. After 28 days this drops to 19% remembered with 81% forgotten.

Make sure you remember to update your anaphylaxis training every 12 months.
A healthy balance of exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet (UV) radiation is important for general health. Too much UV from the sun can cause sunburn, skin damage, eye damage and skin cancer. Too little UV from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Adolescence and childhood are critical periods during which exposure to UV radiation is more likely to contribute to skin cancer in later life. Melanoma, the most dangerous skin cancer, is the most common cancer in young people aged between 12 and 24. Vitamin D regulates calcium levels in the blood. It is also necessary for the development and maintenance of healthy bones, muscles and teeth.

When UV levels are 3 and above, sun protection is required because that is when the sun can damage skin and eyes and lead to skin cancer. However in Victoria average UV levels from May to August are low (1 or 2) so during these months it’s time to get some sun for vitamin D.

To check the UV levels in your area go to the SunSmart UV Alert in the weather section of your daily newspaper or follow the links to the SunSmart UV Alert on the SunSmart website at www.sunsmart.com.au.

When UV levels are low, a “No SunSmart UV Alert” is issued and sun protection is not required unless you are in alpine areas, near highly reflective surfaces such as snow or outside for extended periods.

To get enough vitamin D during the winter months, it is recommended that faces, arms and hands (or equivalent area of skin) are exposed to the sun for two to three hours over the week. Adults and children with naturally very dark skin may need three to six times these exposure times.

So over the winter months, for healthy bone development in children, put sun hats and sunscreen away.

Here are some ideas to help children learn about the change in outdoor habits for this part of the year.

**SunSmart shoebox**

Ask children to decorate a shoe box with their name and lots of bright colours, the sun, hats, sunscreen, sunglasses etc. You could use glitter glue, cut outs, shapes, paints. Children then put their sun hat, sunglasses, sunscreen etc in this for safe keeping until September. When the SunSmart season begins again in September, the children can have a special opening ceremony of their SunSmart box. You’re also guaranteed to have their hat ready to go!

**SunSmart hide and seek**

Instead of putting their hats and sunscreen on before they go outside, ask the children to play hide and seek with their hat and the sunscreen bottle. They hide their hat and / or sunscreen bottle in a suitable spot outdoors and see if other children can find them.

**SunSmart seasons**

As you explore the change of seasons, you can also discuss how the sun isn’t as strong at this time of year and the days become shorter and cooler. Look at the effect this has on plants in the outdoor space. The leaves fall off trees, some flowers stop blooming, birds move to warmer areas, there aren’t as many butterflies and some parts of nature go to sleep. It’s time for people to wear warmer clothes and we don’t need to use the 5 SunSmart steps anymore.

**Winter**

Ask the children to look around their outdoor space for signs of winter. Create winter cubbies and dioramas of winter scenes. What types of clothes do they wear in winter? Create a winter wardrobe and a summer wardrobe poster/display. Do we need our SunSmart clothes in winter? From May put sun hats away – suggested activities

**SunSmart calendar**

Look at the different months on a calendar. Discuss the different months and special things that happen in those months. Find May - May is when we celebrate Mother’s Day. Mark Mother’s Day (2nd Sunday in May) on the calendar so children can remember the day. Mark a circle around the May heading. Highlight that this is also the month when the SunSmart things are packed away. “From May, put sun hats away.”. Children can help mark off the days. Also find September. September is when we celebrate Father’s Day. Mark Father’s day (1st Sunday in September) on the calendar so children can remember the day. Mark a circle around the September heading. Highlight that this is also the month when we need to start being SunSmart again. “From September, 5 things to remember! Slip on a shirt, slop on sunscreen, slap on a hat, seek shade and slide on some sunglasses.”

**Water**

Winter usually brings more rain! Explore some water activities with children. ~ Water music: Grab a number of jars and fill them at different levels. Tap on the sides of the jar using a spoon, stick, peg etc and explore the different sounds the various water levels create. Create a water symphony! ~ Water colours: Have a number of clear glass jars available. Fill them with water and ask children to create new water colours by dropping food colouring into the jars. Use these water colours to create images on blotting paper. Ask children to observe how the colours mix together and the water is soaked into the paper.
Welcome dads, addressing them by name. Share actively recruit male staff members for infant/toddler rooms. Recognise the important role that all male employees (in administration, maintenance, or other roles) play. Seeing other men working in a child care setting goes a long way in making fathers feel comfortable and welcome.

Welcome dads, addressing them by name. Share the same information with them that you would with mothers. Be sure to tell fathers what they’re doing right with their babies and toddlers: “Dunia has been saying dada all the time now. She is really crazy about you.” New fathers, like new mothers, are doing their best and learning as they go.

Strategies that you could try:

- Focus on one or two fathers you feel comfortable with or whom you see on a regular basis. Ask them for ideas on what the program can do to be more father friendly. Then plan activities around fathers’ interests. For example, one program invited a local motorcycle dealership to host a motorcycle “petting zoo.”

- Actively recruit male staff members for infant/toddler rooms. Recognise the important role that all male employees (in administration, maintenance, or other roles) play. Seeing other men working in a child care setting goes a long way in making fathers feel comfortable and welcome.

- Welcome dads, addressing them by name. Share the same information with them that you would with mothers. Be sure to tell fathers what they’re doing right with their babies and toddlers: “Dunia has been saying dada all the time now. She is really crazy about you.” New fathers, like new mothers, are doing their best and learning as they go.

- Invite fathers to share their hobbies, skills, or information about their jobs with the children. Display images of fathers in the play room. Include stories about fathers and a range of family types in your book choices.

- Set up volunteer roles outside of the typical workday. For example, plan a Saturday Gardening Day when fathers can bring their toddlers to help plant flowers and vegetable plants at the centre.

- Host a monthly Mum’s Morning Out, when fathers and babies come in on a Saturday morning for a group activity (perhaps led by volunteer instructors from a local children’s gym). A breakfast event or a Dinner with Dad, held at the centre or family child care home, can also work well.

- Encourage educators to expand their language in the program beyond just fathers to include father figures such as grandfathers, uncles, cousins, neighbours, and even “a man who is important to or cares about you.”

- Offer problems to solve. Near the front door, post a few projects the program would like help with, such as mulching the centre’s garden or building a new sandbox. One program that used this approach had a father with woodworking skills build a toddler-size picnic table for the playground.

- Involve men in the program infrastructure. Invite fathers to be involved in the child care committee and/or advisory board. Ensure that goals around father involvement are included in the mission and vision of the program.

Child care programs and family day care homes are ideal settings for giving fathers opportunities to be involved with their children in positive and loving ways. Men can swaddle, joke, rock, bounce, lift, comfort, care, and hold.

Their ability to care for and care about their children is just as fierce and powerful as that of women but may not be expressed in the same way. By making room for fathers in child care, we offer babies and toddlers the opportunity to build an even stronger connection with fathers who affect their lives so profoundly and whose involvement will influence them forever.

Extract from: September 2009 Rocking and Rolling, Celebrating Fathers as a Resource in Early Child Care Settings/ Rebecca Parlakian and J. Michael Rovaris
http://www.naeyc.org/yc/columns/rocking
Supporting young bilingual children

What to expect when children are learning a second language

Many children become silent when first exposed to a second language. This silent period can last months and can be important in developing understanding. During this period it is important to allow children time to just observe without pressure to speak.

At this time, children often rely on adults around them and on non-verbal cues in the environment; for example, adults pointing to what they are talking about or asking the child to do. They also often follow other children and imitate them.

It is not unusual for bilingual adults to switch between languages within a sentence and this can in fact enhance communication. Similarly, it is normal for children who are learning a new language to mix the two languages when making sentences.

Children who are learning English often begin by using short social phrases; for example, “my turn”, “chase me”, “help me”. They usually find these phrases easy to use and often get positive results from other children and adults.

Supporting bilingual children in early childhood settings

There is no single approach that will work for all bilingual children, or children learning a second language. Workers in early childhood settings can support children by finding out all that they can about them, their families and their culture.

It is important that the child’s first language is acknowledged, as well as its continued use at home. It is similarly important to observe what children are interested in, and what motivates them, so these activities or experiences can be included in early childhood programmes.

If early childhood workers know more about what to expect when children are learning a second language, they can have appropriate expectations. By knowing, for example, that some children will go through a silent period, they can recognise this stage and not pressure children to speak.

For many children, having an adult to support them during this silent period can help develop their understanding of the second language. If children are showing signs of being ready to join in activities, early childhood staff can encourage them, provide support and praise them.

As in all early childhood settings, children will learn through play, routines, books, games and songs.

As part of these activities, staff can support language development by modelling and repeating meaningful words and phrases (for example, ‘wash hands’, ‘come play’). Using gesture and visual materials such as photographs can also greatly assist children’s understanding of language and their acquisition of words.

Children learning a second language can also be included in non-language activities (for example, picture matching) and activities that stimulate a range of senses (for example, water play). These activities allow children to demonstrate their competencies and participate without language.

They also provide opportunities to interact with peers, who can also assist when children are learning a second language.

Children can vary markedly in their willingness to initiate, attempt and take risks. By tuning in to children’s strengths and needs, early childhood workers can help children’s communication to be a positive and rewarding experience.

Communicating with Children and Families

1. Even if a family can speak English they still may require an interpreter for long conversions where important information is being exchanged.
2. When using an interpreter speak directly to the family and not the interpreter.
3. Speak slowly and clearly using a basic vocabulary.
4. Pause after two or three sentences.
5. Make sure that you have been understood.
6. Provide key information in a written format.
7. Researching different cultures can be very useful but don’t assume, ask individuals what is relevant to them and their families.
8. Find out as much information as possible about the child’s home routines. Meal times and sleep patterns may alter and it is important to try to maintain continuity in the child’s day.
9. Use visual aids, for example … laminated photos of what food is appropriate and not appropriate for children’s lunch boxes.
10. Many of the parents are keen to build relationships with you and will come to social gatherings at your home or invite you to their homes. Home visiting is an excellent way to really understand a child’s culture.

“No one has yet realized the wealth of sympathy, the kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure” - EMMA GOLDMAN
The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is part of the Council of Australian Government’s (COAG) reform agenda for early childhood education and care and is a key component of the Australian Government’s National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care. It underpins universal access to early childhood education and will be incorporated in the National Quality Standard in order to ensure delivery of nationally consistent and quality early childhood education across sectors and jurisdictions.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children’s learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

The Vision of the EYLF

**The Principles**

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Partnerships
- High expectations and equity
- Respect for diversity
- Ongoing learning and reflective practice

**The Practices**

- Holistic approaches
- Responsiveness to children
- Learning through play
- Intentional teaching
- Learning environments

**Learning Outcomes**

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

**Accountability**

Early Childhood educators are:
- accountable for implementing the EYLF
- assessing, documenting and reporting on children’s learning outcomes
- providing an active learning environment

**Program Planning**

Both the Framework and the Educator Guide aim to improve professional judgment and practice, especially curriculum decision making, by encouraging a cycle of questioning, planning, acting and reflecting that will build professional knowledge and confidence. This knowledge and confidence will support educators to make informed judgments so that all children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life (Framework, p.7).

- EYLF supports a model of curriculum planning as an ongoing cycle
- Working in partnership with families
- Learning through play
- Intentional teaching

**Training in the EYLF**

One World for Children (OWfC) is committed in assisting employers and students become more aware of the EYLF throughout their training. In doing so, OWfC trainers will use and promote the terminology used in the EYLF. (Refer to “Glossary of terms” over page.) Trainers will also provide a link from the EYLF to the relevant training program that is being delivered, by making reference to the Vision, Principles, Practices and Outcomes.

OWfC has developed a series of online professional development sessions. These sessions assist you to unpack each component of the EYLF. If your service is requiring further assistance in understanding the EYLF, we recommend that you participate in as many relevant online sessions as you can, as this will give you the opportunity to hear what other services are doing and ask questions specific to your services’ needs. For further information go to our website: www.owfc.com.au
Active learning environment: an active learning environment is one in which children are encouraged to explore and interact with the environment to make (or construct) meaning and knowledge through their experiences, social interactions and negotiations with others. In an active learning environment, educators play a crucial role of encouraging children to discover deeper meanings and make connections among ideas and between concepts, processes and representations. This requires educators to be engaged with children’s emotions and thinking. (Adapted from South Australian Curriculum Standards and Accountability (SACSA) Framework, General Introduction, pp10 & 11).

Agency: being able to make choices and decisions, to influence events and to have an impact on one’s world.

Attuned: “Attunement includes the alignment of states of mind in moments of engagement, during which affect is communicated with facial expression, vocalisations, body gestures and eye contact”. (Siegel, 1999).

Children: refers to babies, toddlers and three to five year olds, unless otherwise stated.

Community participation: taking an active role in contributing to communities.

Co-construct: learning takes place as children interact with educators and other children as they work together in partnership.

Communities: social or cultural groups or networks that share a common purpose, heritage, rights and responsibilities and/or other bonds. ‘Communities’ is used variously to refer, for example, to the community within early childhood settings, extended kinships, the local geographic community and broader Australian society.

Critical reflection: reflective practices that focus on implications for equity and social justice.

Curriculum: in the early childhood setting curriculum means ‘all the interactions, experiences, activities, routines and events, planned and unplanned, that occur in an environment designed to foster children’s learning and development’. [adapted from Te Whariki].

Dispositions: enduring habits of mind and actions, and tendencies to respond in characteristic ways to situations, for example, maintaining an optimistic outlook, being willing to persevere, approaching new experiences with confidence.

Early childhood settings: long day care, occasional care, family day care, Multi-purpose Aboriginal Children’s Services, preschools and kindergartens, playgroups, creches, early intervention settings and similar services.

Educators: early childhood practitioners who work directly with children in early childhood settings.

Inclusion: involves taking into account all children’s social, cultural and linguistic diversity (including learning styles, abilities, disabilities, gender, family circumstances and geographic location) in curriculum decision-making processes. The intent is to ensure that all children’s experiences are recognised and valued. The intent is also to ensure that all children have equitable access to resources and participation, and opportunities to demonstrate their learning and to value difference.

Intentional teaching: involves educators being deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions. Intentional teaching is the opposite of teaching by rote or continuing with traditions simply because things have ‘always’ been done that way.

Involvement: is a state of intense, whole hearted mental activity, characterised by sustained concentration and intrinsic motivation. Highly involved children (and adults) operate at the limit of their capacities, leading to changed ways of responding and understanding leading to deep level learning (adapted from Laevers, 1994).

Children’s involvement can be recognised by their facial, vocal and emotional expressions, the energy, attention and care they apply and the creativity and complexity they bring to the situation. (Laevers) A state of flow Csikszentmihalye cited in Reflect, Respect, Relate (DECS 2008).

Learning: a natural process of exploration that children engage in from birth as they expand their intellectual, physical, social, emotional and creative capacities. Early learning is closely linked to early development.

Learning framework: a guide which provides general goals or outcomes for children’s learning and how they might be attained. It also provides a scaffold to assist early childhood settings to develop their own, more detailed curriculum.

Learning outcome: a skill, knowledge or disposition that educators can actively promote in early childhood settings, in collaboration with children and families.

Learning relationships: relationships that further children’s learning and development. Both the adult and the child have intent to learn from each other.

Literate: in the early years literacy includes a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, story telling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing.

Numeracy: broadly includes understandings about numbers, patterns, measurement, spatial awareness and data as well as mathematical thinking, reasoning and counting.

Pedagogies: practices that are intended to promote children’s learning.

Pedagogy: early childhood educators’ professional practice, especially those aspects that involve building and nurturing relationships, curriculum decision-making, teaching and learning.

Play-based learning: A context for learning through which children organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations.

Reflexivity: children’s growing awareness of the ways that their experiences, interests and beliefs shape their understanding.

Scaffold: the educators’ decisions and actions that build on children’s existing knowledge and skills to enhance their learning.

Spiritual: refers to a range of human experiences including a sense of awe and wonder, and an exploration of being and knowing.

Technologies: includes much more than computers and digital technologies used for information, communication and entertainment. Technologies are the diverse range of products that make up the designed world. These products extend beyond artefacts designed and developed by people and include processes, systems, services and environments.

Texts: things that we read, view and listen to and that we create in order to share meaning. Texts can be print-based, such as books, magazines and posters or screen-based, for example internet sites and DVDs. Many texts are multimodal, integrating images, written words and/or sound.

Transitions: the process of moving between home and childhood setting, between a range of different early childhood settings, or from childhood setting to full-time school.

Wellbeing: Sound wellbeing results from the satisfaction of basic needs - the need for tenderness and affection; security and clarity; social recognition; to feel competent; physical needs and for meaning in life (adapted from Laevers 1994). It includes happiness and satisfaction, effective social functioning and the dispositions of openness, curiosity and resilience.

Bullying: No way! is working together to create learning environments where every student and school community member is safe, supported, respected, valued — and free from bullying, violence, harassment and discrimination.

National Safe Schools Framework

All students should be able to learn and develop in safe and supportive environments. The Australian Government takes issues of bullying seriously and believes student wellbeing and safety are essential for academic development.

As part of a national approach to supporting schools to build safe school communities, the Australian Government has worked with all state and territory Governments to revise the National Safe Schools Framework.

The Framework provides Australian schools with a vision and a set of guiding principles that assist school communities to take a proactive whole-school approach to developing effective student safety and wellbeing policies. This vision includes creating learning environments which are free from bullying, harassment, aggression and violence.

The Framework places an emphasis on student wellbeing and child protection and includes relevant national and jurisdictional legislation and Government policy. The Framework also highlights and responds to the emergence of technologies that have enabled new forms of bullying to develop.

The Framework was endorsed by all ministers for education through the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA) in December 2010.

The Framework and a supporting resource manual will be available to all Australian schools and will be officially launched on the 18 March 2011 to coincide with the inaugural National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence.

The Framework will be published in hard copy and distributed to all primary and secondary schools. The resource manual will be available online in a downloadable format. The Framework and the resource manual will also be available to download from the safe schools website www.safeschools.gov.au from late March 2011.

Bullying

Bullying (which is also called harassment) is a form of cruelty that affects not just the bullies and victims, but those who witness the behaviour and the distress of the victim. Bullying is widespread and most commonly found in schools. A very competitive school environment can contribute to bullying.

Schools have a responsibility to create an environment where children feel safe and in recent years schools have taken steps to develop policies against bullying.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is deliberate. It is the desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be with words or actions. It can be by one person or more, and can vary in the degree of severity. It can be a ‘one-off’ incident, but usually involves repeated actions by a child or children. The differences in power make bullying possible.

Bullying can include threatening, teasing, name calling, excluding, ganging up, preventing others from going where they want to, or taking away their belongings.

It can be pushing, shoving or hitting and all forms of physical abuse.

It includes sending hurtful or scary messages on phone calls, SMS text or e-mails. It can be one or a number of these, however verbal abuse is the most common form of bullying.

It happens at school in toilets, change rooms, locker rooms and playgrounds. It happens outside school at bus stops and train stations, on transport, in parks, walking home, at sporting clubs, in fun parlours and at home.

As long as the bullying gives satisfaction and no-one does something about it, the bullying will continue.

Children who Bully

There are many reasons. Children who bully may:

- pick on just anyone, or choose their victim
- find that bullying pays (get what they want or get admired by others)
- be aggressive and impulsive
- enjoy feeling powerful over others
- not be affected by the distress of the victim
- believe that some kinds of people deserve to be bullied
- see it as fun
- have been influenced by aggressive ‘models’ (in real life and/or in movies/or on TV)
- often have a violent family background
- see their behaviour as ‘pay-back’ for some unfair treatment
- be or have been victims themselves.

Children who bully are more likely to grow up to bully their partners and their own children.

Children who are Bullied

Any child can get bullied just by being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Sometimes children who are popular, smarter or attractive can be victims of bullying but bullies may pick on children who seem easy to hurt.

Children can be picked on who:

- look different or are different, come from a different culture or different religion
Autumn is a great time to teach children about leaves.

- Leaves are all around us.
- Leaves change colours, usually from green to red, orange, yellow and brown.
- Leaves can be found on trees.
- Leaves fall to the ground and we rake them up.

The season of autumn also known as fall is a great time of the year to celebrate with children. Children can learn about autumn leaves, make autumn art, and even learn about the beautiful autumn colours. Autumn is a season that should be celebrated by the old and young alike!!!

Use autumn to come up with ideas to work on building speech and language with the children. There are wonderful opportunities for eliciting sounds and words as well as working on repetition.
Children's Behaviour: Whose problem is it?

Many services offer staff training and/or regularly send out surveys to identify future training needs. Managing children’s behaviour is the topic most frequently requested and it seems the one topic that many childcare staff are repeatedly happy to attend.

This raises many questions. Has children’s behaviour changed so much in the last 10 or 20 years? We know that many parents juggle work and family pressures and increasing numbers of children are spending many hours in formal care outside the home. What else has changed?

Could it be that our expectations of children have changed? Not only do we expect children, often very young babies, to manage without the significant adult in their life, we also expect them to negotiate the complex and often exhausting process of being part of a larger group who also are still learning language and the social skills needed for group harmony. We know young children are egocentric – why do we place them in these group situations and then wonder why they fail? What else must we do?

Seeing from a child’s perspective

As professionals we need to find ways to understand why children are behaving in certain ways. The first step is examining ourselves. ‘What is it that I do or don’t do that might trigger unacceptable behaviour?’ ‘How can I ensure this child receives the positive attention they are seeking?’ ‘What do we need to do to give this child control and power over their day?’ ‘Are my dealings fair?’ ‘Could the child feel some sort of injustice?’

When we understand how our feelings and reactions affect how children respond we are well on the way to not seeing children’s behaviour as a problem. Of course there will always be a few children who may need additional support and resources. This can only be done when we objectively gathered information from a variety of sources.

It is often easier to seek additional support, in terms of an extra worker, rather than to really look at why children are behaving the way they are. With the large number of unqualified staff currently working in child care, perhaps it is time for a new model of support to be considered for these staff and children. A pool of experienced teachers could work alongside the staff in the classroom and help them to work differently with these children as well as be available as a mentor and support.

Developing support strategies

We often have unrealistic expectations of our staff. How can staff with little or no training and at times difficult staff–child ratios support all of their children differently to become successful? Staff need mentoring and support to ensure these children are not labelled ‘a problem’ but are supported to find solutions that work for that child’s individual needs. Some children will need more support than others to make this transition.

A mentor could encourage centre staff to examine how the physical environment impacts on each individual and work together on shared ideas. Minimum space requirements, both inside and outside, may work for some children, but for others the noise, proximity to the other children and expectations to share toys and adults may cause some children to withdraw and/or become aggressive.

An experienced mentor may support staff to examine their teaching styles and consider why one approach may work better or differently with different children. This support could in turn ensure all of our early childhood environments are structured in a way for all children to have a sense of control. How are centre routines structured to ensure every two–year-old, for example, can be outside if they want to?

Zack had attended child care two days per week since he was two years old, and in his prior-to-formal-schooling year he continued at child care and began preschool three days per week. Four weeks into the new term the preschool teacher approached the childcare staff with concerns about Zack’s behaviour, including running away. When the staff from the two services met they discovered that each program ran very differently from the other. Zack was merely reacting to these differences and was demonstrating his lack of control in his new environment. Working together, and sharing information about Zack, the staff and family were able to ensure Zack eventually had a successful transition.

All staff in children’s services, including assistants and untrained staff, need to have planning time away from the children to ensure all staff have the opportunity to discuss the children and work towards a shared purpose and develop consistent strategies to support them.

Meeting individual needs

Staff often see children differently, and contribute different ideas to these solutions. A child seen as challenging by one staff member might be viewed by another staff member as an energetic and creative thinker. Not withstanding the pressures on the staff in children’s services, we need to find ways that work for all children.

We need to unpack our statements of philosophy to ensure that we can actually deliver what we promote in our parent materials. We use words such as ‘home-like’, the child as an ‘individual’ and ‘high-quality care’. How can we deliver on that promise when we operate with staff–child ratios that are not supported by research, when we expect all children to be in a certain place at the same time and willingly comply? Until we come to terms with all of the realities of working with young children we will continue to view children whose
behaviour is non-conforming as a problem. We, as professionals, have a duty of care to all of our children and must find ways to support children as they interact and react differently, in each of our service types. This may mean picking up one toddler more than another, it may be rocking one baby to sleep, it may be allowing Johnny to always have a red cup, it may mean allowing Mary to always hold the teacher’s hand, and it may mean allowing the three-year-old to spend some time in the toddler room each day.

It’s not about equity of time or fairness, it’s about meeting each child’s individual needs. We dare not call ourselves professionals when we ignore these simple requests. The sooner we meet these needs, the sooner the majority of the ‘problems’ will be resolved.

EveryChild magazine – vol. 15 no. 1, 2009, pp. 4–5

Connecting Children With Nature

The most important thing to remember when it comes to children and nature is to provide young children with positive experiences of the natural world. Noted environmentalist David Sobel has coined the term, “eco phobia,” which means the fear or aversion to the natural world. By teaching young children about endangered species, pollution, and other environmental tragedies we sometimes teach children that their relationship with nature is based on worry and fear instead of love and wonder. We can take Dr. Sobel’s advice of “no bad news until grade four” to mean that we should not weigh children down with the problems of the world until they are developmentally ready to take some kind of action to address those situations.

Through positive experiences with nature, we set the stage for a lifetime commitment to caring for the Earth, animals, and our communities. Early childhood is indeed the time to plant the seeds of wonder. Let children explore and discover for themselves the magnificence of nature by making sure they have many opportunities to play outdoors. Children will find ways to connect with nature on their own by exploring worms and dirt and leaves and sticks and rocks and bugs, and the endless wondrous classroom that is the outdoors. Even in urban environments, children can experience nature in many ways. Weeds grow in sidewalk cracks and sunlight makes amazing shadows on the ground. These are things just waiting to be discovered.

Inside the play room, provide children with hands-on experiences with water, sand, dirt, and yes, even mud. Remember, hands and clothes can always be washed! Sticks and twigs, rocks and pebbles, shells and leaves can all be sorted, counted, used to build amazing structures, explored with magnifying glasses, and used in art projects. Collect bugs and let them go when you’re done, take a nature walk this autumn to explore nature’s preparation for the upcoming winter, or observe the clouds in the sky and ask children what they see. If you’re feeling daring, let children use hammers and nails with donated scraps of wood, not for building a particular product, but for the sheer sensory fun of the process. (Always remember to provide children with protective eyewear and adult supervision in a woodworking area.)

Many of us, out of the best of intentions, want to teach young children about the world’s environmental problems because we think we’re helping to create future responsible citizens. Let the school teachers work on this level of activism. Young children need to learn to love the Earth before they can be asked to save it. That’s a job ready-made for early childhood professionals.

Richard Cohen, M.A., began his early childhood career as a preschool and kindergarten teacher and currently acts as an international consultant, facilitator/trainer and speaker. Please visit www.RichardCohen.com for more information.

Take advantage and save yourself time & money!

Why not send your assessments to us via e-mail: assessments@owfc.com.au
It will save you time, money and your assessments will get to us promptly and safely.

Any administration queries may be made directly to: admin@owfc.com.au
Any technical support/queries can be made directly to: tech@owfc.com.au
All other enquiries can be made directly to: training@owfc.com.au
Save time and money with online workshops

Improve the quality of your service with ONLINE professional development

Our ONLINE workshops are subsidised under the Inclusion and Professional Support Program in a number of States and Territories – check with your Professional Support Co-ordinator or visit our website.

One World for Children is a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) which delivers nationally accredited qualifications from Certificate III to Advanced Diploma level in both children’s services and out of school hours care. We train extensively throughout Victoria, specialising in workplace training and assessment and offer online training, nationally.

One World for Children is an industry-based Registered Training Organisation (RTO) specialising in the delivery of competency based training programs to the children’s services industry since 1998.

We have developed a range of professional development training sessions for the childcare sector using a new and innovative approach, which will enable all services, regardless of geographic location, access to quality professional inservice that is appropriate to their needs.

Our workshops focus on assisting child care service providers to achieve and maintain quality assurance standards, and is an effective tool for fostering industry networking.

To benefit from this new and innovative approach to ongoing professional development, all you need is a computer with speakers, internet access and a microphone.

What we provide is a platform that uses the latest VoIP programming combined with electronic white board, chat areas and a number of different communication tools, making online learning visually stimulating, interactive and fun!

If you’ve never heard of VoIP, get ready to change the way you think about communication. VoIP or Voice over Internet Protocol, is a method for taking analog audio signals, like the kind you hear when you talk on the phone, and turning them into digital data that can be transmitted over the internet, turning a standard internet connection into a great learning and communication tool.

Imagine all of your staff participating in workshops without leaving the workplace. What a positive impact this could have on the quality of your service and all for the fraction of the cost!

Our virtual classroom enables 20 participants to partake in relevant, current workshop sessions whilst actively engaging and interacting with a professional qualified trainer, and networking with each other.

Features of this innovative virtual classroom include an interactive white board, powerpoint presentations, video clips, slide shows, web tours and two-way voice.

The appeal of face to face interaction is now captured in our virtual classroom, however the associated costs have been substantially lowered.

Each session is available on various days with varying times on an ongoing basis, putting you in the position to allow everyone of your staff the opportunity to participate in a session that addresses an identified need within your service. No travel time means staff replacement cost is minimised and you have the added benefit of staff being available in the workplace should the need arise.

Highlights from our calendar...

Building a strong sense of identity

This will be the first of five sessions targeting specific discussions around the learning outcomes of the new National Early Years Learning Framework.

The session will focus on the importance of understanding how children construct and develop their own sense of who they are and how they develop a sense belonging within the family and community. It will examine the importance of early experiences in relation to this. The connection between the vision, belonging, being, and becoming and the shaping of one’s identity will be discussed, and the areas of attachment, social and cultural heritage, evolving experiences and positive relationship building will be explored.

Participants will be encouraged to reflect on their own knowledge, beliefs and values, as well as critically examining documentation and the provisions within programs.

Ideal for: Qualified Child Care Workers

Practices and principles in action

Participate in this session to discover how values can be viewed through a lens; where educators or services can reflect on current practice. Take this opportunity to look at ways to improve or renew practices based on your values. Your services values should underpin practice that is focused on assisting all children to progress in to their full potential.

Share your thoughts, or come along and listen to some ideas on implementing the values and current practice.

Ideal for: ALL Child Care Workers

“I was impressed, very impressed. Also excited. I kept thinking who I would like to tell about it and how may I use it in my own centre. This is going to be an invaluable tool. It will make training, up skilling and interaction readily accessible to all. Congratulations One World for taking this step...”

Pauline Burgwin, Director, Wattletree Early Childhood Centre

Connecting children with the world

This session will target specific training and dialogue around the effect of experiences and relationships that assist children to make connections to their world. The relationship this has to the vision of the National Early Years Learning Framework in terms of belonging, being and becoming will be examined as part of a holistic approach to children’s overall learning and development. Early childhood services who provide children with opportunities to interact together and more broadly within their communities allow children to gain important skills and feelings of validity, experience interdependency, and build on their own self identity.

The session will provide a forum where participants can reflect on their current practices in relation to connectivity and share and extend on ways to further enhance children’s contributions and connections to their world. The session will look at diversity, social responsiveness, fairness and justice and how we can provide programs that allow children to explore and experience this.

Ideal for: Qualified Child Care Workers

Our online “Care for Babies” workshop has proven to be very popular.
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – Online option!

The introduction of the CSTP in 1999 enabled our team to develop an RPL process that has enabled individuals to gain, or to work towards gaining, a Children’s Services or Out of School Hours Care qualification from Australasian Qualifications Framework Level 3 (AQF3) through to an Advanced Diploma of Children’s Services (AQF6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHC30708</td>
<td>Certificate III in Children’s Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC50908</td>
<td>Diploma of Children’s Services (Early childhood education and care)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC60208</td>
<td>Advanced Diploma of Children’s Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHC41208</td>
<td>Certificate IV in Children’s Services (Outside school hours care)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHC51008</td>
<td>Diploma of Children’s Services (Outside school hours care)</td>
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An RPL process is primarily a self-funded service, although it is at times available as part of a government-funded program. In addition to being offered as an assessment only pathway to a qualification, our trainers will also conduct a skills assessment for all training participants at the commencement of training to identify competencies already held and those yet to be attained.

RPL is a valid process that ensures that you are not offered structured training for competencies you have already achieved, and that you gain appropriate recognition for the competencies you have already acquired.

**Recognition of Prior Learning - Online**

An important component of the RPL assessment process is the evidence portfolio. It can be a time-consuming task to develop a portfolio that adequately addresses each of the competency’s elements and performance criteria, and to gather evidence and supporting documentation.

- In recognising this One World has developed an online program that steps you through developing your portfolio using templates.
- This program simplifies and streamlines the RPL process for the participant by providing an individual assessment plan available to the participant on their MyWorld homepage, which outlines in detail each of the competencies the participant is required to include in their portfolio.
- It also provides access to the required competency templates within a password-protected site, enabling participants to work on their portfolio, save, and come back to it, whenever they like, wherever they have access to the internet.
- To assist even further, we provide practical tips for each competency along the way, with suggestions for further evidence and requests for specific supporting documentation when required.
- Our assessors are also able to view your portfolio online, and are available to provide you with specific feedback to assist you further in the development of your portfolio.
- When all competencies on your assessment plan are completed you can submit online as a completed document, and mail your hardcopy documents to your assessor.
- Of course, on-the-job competency is still assessed in your workplace, and online doesn’t mean out of touch! As always, we maintain frequent contact with you throughout the RPL process, guiding you and providing support and assistance whenever needed.

The cost of the RPL process is largely dependent on how much or how little preparation you put into developing your portfolio of evidence and any formal training that you may have completed. One World offers two ways of completing an RPL process:

1. **The participant preparing their own portfolio:**
   - Participant uses the online templates to complete all evidence requirements.
   - Once all the evidence is completed, a One World assessor assesses all written evidence first.
   - Once the written evidence has been assessed, the participant is able to put into practice what they have submitted in a written form.
   - After final on site visit has complete, participant will meet with trainer for a final interview to consolidate all forms of assessment to meet competence.

2. **A One World developed portfolio:**
   - Participant meets with assessor for an assessment to meet competence. This process is repeated until all evidence is compiled.
   - Once the written evidence has been compiled, full day observation visits are arranged with the participant at their workplace. The on site assessment visit Validates that the participant is able to put into practice what they have submitted in a written form.
   - When all evidence is completed, participant will meet with trainer for a final interview to consolidate all forms of assessment to meet competence.

The development of the online RPL program came from a desire to make the process less daunting and more user-friendly for our participants. We hope we have achieved our aim. If you are enrolling into an RPL program be sure to enquire about RPL online.

Think you may be a candidate for an assessment only RPL process that may lead to either a statement of attainment or a complete qualification? Then simply enquire online or contact us on 1800 006 533.

In addition to delivering quality training programs, One World also offers an assessment only service. Known as a recognition of prior learning, or up-front assessment, RPL is a streamlined process of assessment of the competencies that a person has gained through life, work and formal study. Assessment is undertaken by our trained assessors against the competency standards required for each qualification. RPL can lead to either a statement of attainment or a complete qualification.

The Community Services Training Package (CSTP) recognises that as lifelong learners we all acquire knowledge and develop skills over our lifetime. That’s why training packages introduced recognition of prior learning, and in so doing, paved the way for many skilled and knowledgeable practitioners to achieve their career aspirations, sooner, rather than later.
Wonder, Investigation, Discovery . . . are three words to describe what happens when children grow in their knowledge of the world around them. As adults, we can encourage and aid this growth in many simple ways.

**Smells, Sounds, Tastes**

A keen sense of observation is essential for successful learning. The following ideas will encourage children to use their senses and help them develop confidence about the world around them.

**Sound Containers:** Teach children to listen closely and be able to identify sounds.

You will need: small, securely covered containers that all look alike, such as metal or plastic film cans; coloured contact paper if container is transparent; items to be identified, such as paper clips and buttons. Cover containers if necessary. Fill a pair of containers with the same materials. Let the child shake the containers to distinguish and identify different sounds, and pair up containers that have the same sound.

**Smell Jars:** Teach children to observe and distinguish a variety of smells.

You will need: small, non-breakable containers as described in sound containers; a variety of items that have a distinctive odour, such as coffee, cinnamon, rose petals, etc. Punch small holes in lids with a pointed instrument. Put a small amount of each item in separate containers. Children can try to identify each odour as well as match two of the same odour.

**Taste Buds:** Teach children to distinguish and appreciate a variety of flavours and textures in foods.

You will need: a blindfold (or have children close eyes); different food samples - you may use all liquids or all fruits, etc. Give the child a small taste of each, one at a time. Ask if it is sweet, sour, salty, etc. and if they can identify the food.

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**Plant a Garden of Learning**

There are so many things young children can learn as they help you plant and tend an indoor garden. Even two- and three-year-olds can begin to understand:

- **Soil + Seed + Sun + Water = Plant**

Encourage toddlers to use their senses to smell the soil and feel the warmth of the sun and the wetness of the water; watch the shoots come through the soil, and enjoy the beauty of the plants.

Place all plants in a sunny, warm area. Clear plastic containers with raised lids, like those some pies and cookies come in, make perfect miniature greenhouses. Fill an aluminium foil pan with potting soil, punch some holes in the bottom for drainage, and plant and water the seeds. Put the foil pan in a clear plastic container. The seeds sprout very quickly. Raise the lid occasionally to let excess moisture escape.

Use seeds and parts of the following fruits and vegetables to grow new plants:

- **Carrots:** After trimming off the leaves, cut 1/2" to 1" off the top of the carrot. Place the top in a layer of pebbles in a flat dish. Be sure to keep well watered.

- **Pineapple:** Cut off the top of the pineapple and trim off the bottom 3 rows of leaves. Let dry for 3 days. Plant 1" deep in soil. Keep moist and sunny.

- **Avocado:** Set large end of an avocado seed in a jar of water, using three toothpicks. Sprout in partial sunlight. When the stem is about 4-5 inches tall, plant in soil.

- **Onion:** Find an onion that is already sprouted. Plant in soil.

Many other items for investigation and discovery can be found in the hardware store. Little people love to use “the real thing” instead of toys.

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**Assessments**

Our trainers are keen to remind all learners of the vital importance of copying or backing up all assessments. At times we have run into the problem of learners ensuring us that assessments have been sent in, yet they have not reached our office. We recommend that in all cases you photocopy your assessments before posting them in or taking a back up copy before emailing them in. Yes they are on your hard drive, but these have failed also!

We also ask that all assessments submitted are clearly named. This includes when you send an assessment in the mail, via email or hand it directly to a trainer. At times we are able to piece the puzzle together and find an owner but there are assessments that remain unclaimed.

Please take responsibility for your own assessments and ensure you have your name on them and you have a back up or copy. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

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