



Early Childhood Newsletter



Association of Independent Schools
of Western Australia

Welcome to Term 3

If I had an instant medal making machine I would be handing out medals to all staff working in Early Childhood across our diverse Independent Schools. Individually tailored medals for your contribution to early education and care as you coped with the demands preventing an outbreak of Covid 19. Your efforts across Term 2 were outstanding. You showed *flexibility* in adapting to the changing requirements of learning at home and school. You showed *resilience* in staying healthy despite the close proximity to all those little germ spreaders. You displayed *professionalism* in the way you continued to provide a high quality program although there was uncertainty in our world. You offered care and *compassion* in helping children transitioning home to school and throughout the day.

Our thoughts are with our colleagues in Victoria as they face new challenges with the rise of cases, school shutdowns, learning at home and lockdowns. We wish the very best and hope that they and their students stay healthy.

This term we start to resume our PL provision as much as is possible. We understand that schools have been challenged financially this year and we have made our PL offerings as affordable as possible. We have increased our network events by creating metro hubs. Our aim is to provide quick PL bites afterschool so that you can attend without teacher relief costs.

We have reactivated our specialist network sessions. Our **Language of Arts** sessions are for educators would like to increase their expertise in a medium of art. We don't expect you to be skilled artists. This is about you developing a few techniques to assist you in offering this medium to the children as an opportunity for them to demonstrate their understanding. I have a strong memory of watching a child in one of the schools in Reggio Emilia. He was making a spider from clay. Guided by his teacher to look closely at photos of spiders, he restarted his clay work several times as until he was satisfied that he had got the two body parts in proportion and a separate head was required.

Our **Nature Pedagogy** sessions are aimed at supporting schools that are running a nature pedagogy program. The Australian Curriculum states *Students can experience the joy of scientific discovery and nurture their natural curiosity about the world around them.* A nature pedagogy program can offer endless opportunities for children to experience the joy of scientific discovery. Our session, Botanical Literacies, will support you to build on the children's natural curiosity of the plants in their environment.

Our **Little Scientists** program was severely curtailed this year. Just two sessions remain on our calendar. One of my favourite modules the Human Body is a perfect module to go hand in hand with inquiries into Self. The other module Computing (unplugged) is perfect for those who are in the beginning stages of understanding algorithmic thinking. In fact if you don't understand what that means then this course is perfect for you.





Earlier this year we sent two copies of our new book Further Journeys of Inquiry to each AISWA Member School. Seek it out at your school or order a book at cost for \$40 for members through our [online store](#). We are currently assessing the interest in running a two day PL, Journeys of Inquiry lead by Rebecca Duncan. If this is of interest to you and you know that you would get leadership support to attend please email an expression of interest to wgorman@ais.wa.edu.au. We will run this course if we can raise interest from 20 participants.

Our Early childhood team is here to assist you via a phone call, zoom chat or school visit. The team are experts in tailoring professional learning for staff meetings. Please don't hesitate to contact us.

Have a wonderful term,

Wendy

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Playgroups in School

Playgroup is an opportunity for families to playfully prepare for school. Playgroups provide regular opportunities for families with young children to come together, support each other, play, learn and have fun.

When a playgroup is on or near a school site there is the added benefit that children and families become familiar with the school environment and build relationships with staff, which benefits both families and the school (Playgroups WA).

A recent AISWA survey highlighted the many playgroups operating within schools throughout the state. Whether it was a community playgroup run by parents, or a teacher facilitated playgroup, all agreed on the benefits for both parents and children.

A recent report by Telethon Kids Institute and commissioned by Playgroup Australia found that children are more ready for school through involvement in playgroup, and those who have not attended playgroup are over 1.7 times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable. (www.telethonkids.org.au). The research also confirms that playgroup assists children to form the fundamental skills they need when they start school across all five AEDC developmental domains including physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognition and communication skills.

Playgroups also play an important role in supporting parents. They can provide an informal environment in which parenting skills and experiences can be shared. This is particularly important for parents who are new to an area, or to the country, and are experiencing feelings of isolation. Playgroups can provide a network of friends and give parents a sense of belonging to their local community.

If you would like any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at fshand@ais.wa.edu.au or contact Playgroups WA.

The Language of Arts (A Hundred Languages)

Collage - 17/08

The Language of Arts workshops will support educators in providing multiple ways for children to develop, expand and express their language skills and understandings through the Arts. During 'hands on' workshops you will be working with local artists to explore drawing, sculptures and collage.

We will be running two 'hands on' workshops this year and you will have the opportunity to engage with local artists who will support you in developing the skills necessary to introduce the materials and experiences into your classroom.

The first workshop is collage as a medium and is presented by visual art teacher and award winning children's book illustrator Karen Blair. Each participant will receive a copy of 'Playing with Collage' by Jeannie Baker.

Each child has a hundred languages, a hundred hands, a hundred ways of thinking of playing, a hundred joys for singing and understanding, a hundred worlds to discover, a hundred worlds to invent and a hundred worlds to dream (Excerpt from 'The Hundred Languages of Children' by Loris Malaguzzi).

[Click here to register](#)

Little Scientists

Human Body - 26/08

Little Scientists is a not-for-profit, professional development program, offering STEM workshops for early childhood educators and teachers, Australia wide.

The workshops aim to promote confidence in recognising STEM learning opportunities and implementing playful, inquiry-based learning experiences in children's daily lives.

Workshops are designed with you, the teacher in mind and **previous STEM knowledge is not required**. They connect theory and practice in an engaging way, whilst also providing you with professional planning materials you can use the very next day.

We may look quite different on the outside, but underneath our skin, our organs, muscles and bones are working in very similar ways. Investigate your sense of smell, focus on your breath and explore exciting functions of the body. See the human body through the eyes of a child and learn how to playfully include scientific models into your setting.

[Click here to register](#)



Term 3 Metro Regional Early Childhood Network Meetings

In second semester 2020 we would like to invite you to small, early childhood network hubs across the metro area. We welcome all participants to come along to whichever hub suits you. We have organised these network meetings into hubs to cater for our vast schools across metro area.

Why:

- to enable you to meet, share discuss and engage with early professionals closer to your workplace
- to provide bit sized chunks of PL free without teacher relief costs
- to customise our PL to the needs of the local group
- for AISWA consultants and Early Childhood educators to develop strong mutual relationships of support and sharing

Central suburbs - [Click here to register](#)

Eastern suburbs - [Click here to register](#)

Northern suburbs - [Click here to register](#)

Peel district details available shortly



Nature Pedagogy and Practice

Building Botanical Literacies - 04/09

Nature Pedagogy and Practice - Workshop 1

AISWA Early Childhood is offering a Nature Pedagogy workshop aimed at providing educators with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make nature pedagogy a sustainable and ongoing part of their early childhood classroom practice. Nature Pedagogy Workshops are run by educators and nature pedagogues who have a recognised expertise in nature play. During this Nature Pedagogy workshop participants will explore local bushland to experience their own awe and wonder of the plant world and partake in traditional botanical science practices such as botanical drawing and plant recognition and classification.

Building our own botanical literacies alongside children is important, especially as we venture beyond the walls of our classrooms. Whether we are situating our play and learning in a nature playground, or a bush, beach or river area, it becomes important to acquire plant knowledge and an understanding of which plants are native, what purposes they may have and what their names are. This workshop will provide ideas for teaching Botany in early childhood when the educator may not have all the answers, but is willing to learn alongside the children.

This workshop is hands-on and practical so come dressed for the occasion. All attendees will receive a gift of sketch materials to document their botanical discoveries.

[Click here to register](#)

Spotlight On Series

The AISWA Spotlight On series was written by Rebekah Garwood during COVID 19 in 2020 to support the work of educators as they navigated an unprecedented educational situation. Educators were facing school closures and with it the requirement to create home-based learning packs and moving to an online teaching platform. Return to classrooms also brought unique challenges.

Small world play is a special form of play that can be enjoyed independently or with groups of children. It involves creating imaginative environments on a small scale, allowing children to explore imaginary and familiar worlds within the safety of a contained space. Small worlds can be inspired by books, travel, film or real life and are limited only by your, or your children's imagination.



SPOTLIGHT ON...

SMALL WORLD PLAY

Small world play helps young children to make sense of the world around them.

The wonderful thing about small world play is that it doesn't take up much room and can be set up in a variety of indoor and outdoor spaces. You could consider; an empty shelf, a shoebox, the top of a table, the base of a tree or a pot plant, a small garden bed, cable reels, car tyres, large shallow tubs... the list really is endless.

Building a collection of loose parts and sensory materials will help you create inspiring and engaging small world play spaces. You could consider large rocks and stones, aquarium pebbles and gravel, shells, tree branches, wood chips and wood cookies, coffee beans, sand, dried beans and pasta, cotton wool, cardboard tubes, coloured silks, felts, nests, blocks...

Within small world play it is also important to include the familiar elements (on a small scale) to place into the environment that has been created. Consider collecting small realistic toy animals, vehicles, superheros, dinosaurs, knights, fairies, aliens, trains, a dolls house with to scale furniture, play figures, wooden/felt trees... It is the addition of these elements that facilitates a narrative and sparks the storytelling.

You can extend young children's learning through small world play. Consider encouraging them to design, collect materials and create their own small worlds. Emergent writers may wish to create maps and signs for their small world. Rich literature placed closed by may prompt some small world dramatic play and storytelling. Children may want to document small world dramatic play through use of an iPad, camera or blank booklets for writing and drawing stories.



CONSIDERATIONS WHEN PLANNING SMALL WORLD PLAY AREAS:

- What are the children interested in?
- Have you included a range of materials that will provoke their thinking and curiosity?
- How does this play area encourage collaboration and language development?
- How does this small world play connect to other learning areas?
- How might the children construct new learning?

Wuukarta pirlingka nyininpa. Wana jusi ngalkuninpa. Nyarru! Wuukarta, Nyarru! Wuukarta, Ngalku-na-nta nyuntungka!

The aim was that the Spotlight On series would support educators in their planning for play, both in their classrooms and in discussions with parents regarding at home learning. The series was synchronised with Deb Martin's An Invitation to Play series, highlighting wonderful examples of play-based learning practice at home. Both can be found on the [AISWA Early Childhood Facebook page](#) or contact Janelle jdickinson@ais.wa.edu.au to have these emailed.

Spotlight On:

- Wellbeing
- Hospitals
- Blocks
- Measuring
- Physical Play
- Puddles
- Loose Parts Play
- Reading
- Playdough
- Small World Play

An Invitation to Play:

- Block Play
- Rainbows
- Shops
- Hospitals
- Loose Parts
- Nature Play
- Measuring
- Obstacle Course
- Reading
- Sensory Play

AEDC Professional Learning

Early childhood development is a Western Australian Government priority, using the AEDC to measure improvements in the health and wellbeing of children in their early years.

We understand that given the current environment, of last term you may not have had time to consider on-line professional learning for the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC). Maybe now you can allocate some time to engage with the new AEDC professional learning. The AEDC is a crucial tool that will capture many aspects of child development that are likely to be impacted by COVID-19.

The AEDC, an Australia-wide census, gathers information about young children's development. It provides a snapshot of children's progress in five key areas of development: physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and general knowledge. The census happens every three years, with the next one taking place in 2021.

To assist ECEC and schools to build a deeper understanding of the AEDC, the Western Australian Department of Education is pleased to provide new free on-line learning. The on-line learning includes the following four 15-minute modules.

1. Access your data
2. Explore and reflect
3. Plan effective responses
4. Next steps

The training makes links to the National Quality Standard and the Early Years Learning Framework, and provides guidance on how the AEDC can be used for evidenced-based planning within local community contexts.

To access the AEDC online professional learning visit the Western Australian Department of Education website:

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/aedc-resources-for-educators>

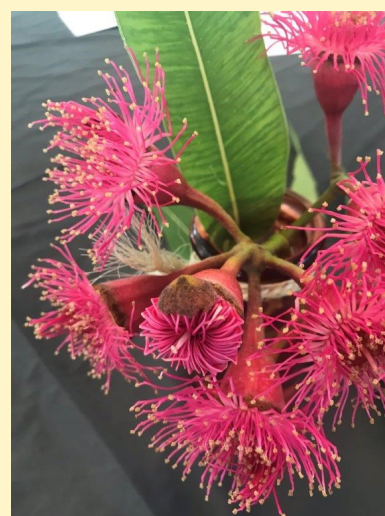


Photo: North Fremantle Primary

On Entry Update

What a strange year it has been for us all! First, the huge change to the On-entry Assessment scoring system and then not being able to use the data, as quickly, to inform your teaching practise as most of your students were learning at home. Hopefully by Week 3, 4 or 5 of Term 2, you dug out the on-entry results and began interpreting your student's skills and understanding and started thinking about planning for differentiated, targeted learning programs.

Did you notice learning areas or skills which needed more focus than others? Have you targeted an area of need in your school or year level? If so, what steps have you already taken to improve the teaching and learning in that particular area? Don't forget, if you need any help interpreting the new scoring system and student data Deb Martin or Fiona Shand are available to assist you. Please do not hesitate to contact Deb dmartin@ais.wa.edu.au or Fiona fshand@ais.wa.edu.au with any questions, queries or to arrange a meeting to discuss your On-entry assessment data.





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