

Inclusive directions

NEWS



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This issue focuses on our aim for children to feel good about themselves in an environment that supports them in developing strong social skills and relationships.

You'll also read about some great things happening in services; our OSHC/VAC research; and the Quality Inclusion Support Project.

Happy reading!

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Self Esteem



Self –esteem is the image a person has of themselves. It influences people's social behaviour, learning and how they view the world.

Children with a healthy self-esteem are more willing to try new things, able to problem solve, get along with others and are generally happy and confident.

Everyone involved with facilitating the growth and development of children naturally wishes to enhance self-esteem in young people.



Some ideas that are helpful include:

- Spend time with children, letting them know that you enjoy their company.
- Giving positive facial expressions, words and touch to babies/ children.
- Actively listen to children and don't interrupt them.
- Play with children and follow their lead.
- Allow children to have opportunities for parallel play with other children.
- Encourage children to learn conflict resolution and to use language to describe their feelings. Help them to work out issues.
- Give children opportunities to develop 'mastery' of new skills. Scaffold for success by breaking new skills down into small steps, and provide support for success.
- Let children know that it is okay to make mistakes and that everybody does from time to time. Remind them of their many successes.
- Help children to overcome their fears by gently facing them one by one.
- Give children age appropriate responsibilities and make expectations clear and reasonable.
- Help children to view difficulties as opportunities for growth. Encourage them to see the cup as being 'half full' instead of 'half empty'.
- Enjoy the company of children!

References

www.headroom.net.au
www.cyh.com
www.healthinsite.gov.au
www.smart-mums.com.au



CEO's section

Well Spring is well and truly with us and there is a renewed sense of positive activity in the air!



The last few months have been very busy indeed. This is the season of Annual General Meetings and I have been privileged to attend a number. The sense of devotion and passion towards supporting best practice in child care is inspiring, we should all thank the devoted staff, volunteers and committee members that make it work!

Inclusive Directions AGM took place on October 24th, and may I thank the hard working staff, our Board of Directors and supporters for their tireless efforts. The last year has been one of great change and the successes are a direct result of passionate people doing a great job, thank you!

In an effort to ensure that we are able to offer the highest quality advice and assistance we are constantly updating training of our own team members. In the last two months our staff have been upgrading their training qualifications to the new Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. In addition a large number of our Inclusion Support Facilitators participated in the "Making Connections" seminar discussing some of the latest research on brain development, presented by Frank Oberklaid. We attended the Special Education Expo and the entire organisation took part in a session run by Sue Nowland to assist us to gain a greater appreciation of Aboriginal culture.

Enjoy the season of renewal and please feel free to contact any of our team or myself if we can be of assistance.

Peter

Puppets

Cultures around the world have used puppets to entertain, to teach and to transmit their culture for centuries. A puppeteer is a skilful and talented artist as not only are they able to make their puppet but they must also act and perform with the puppet.

The art of puppet making is wonderful way of introducing a particular culture or exploring a culture at a more in depth level. The stories that are told during puppets plays are often based on traditional folk stories, religious stories or heroic sagas. Producing puppet shows provides children with a wonderful opportunity to develop social skills as they plan and assign roles.



The children at Naracoorte Vacation Care recently enjoyed exploring puppets from different cultures including Kathputlis from India and African toe puppets. The children also demonstrated great collaborative skills to present a series of short puppet plays.

Bravo!

Promoting Positive Social Interactions

Part of our role as Early Childhood Educators is encouraging children to develop and practice their social skills. This not only leads to a richer and more positive learning environment but also provides children with lifelong skills.

Here are some starting points to include social skills development into your environment:

- **Sense of Belonging**

Recognise that each child is coming into your service from a different place and from different experiences. Is your environment reflecting this? Is there a 'place' where each child can feel comfortable and secure? By careful observation and communication you will be able to identify if each child feels that they "belong". This is the starting point!

- **Modelling/Rehearsing/Feedback**

Some children need lots of practice before they are ready to take on the real world. Spend time with children acting out particular situations e.g. appropriate conflict management, entering a play situation. Talk to children about what is happening around them and what may be appropriate. Don't assume that they know. Give direct positive feedback about their actions.

- **Sustaining Play**

Set up your environment in a way that allows children to enter and sustain play. Avoid games that involve lots of waiting. Give spectators a role such as scoring or waving flags etc. Have multiples of toys out to avoid conflict and allow for modelling/parallel play. Supplement play areas with objects and open ended materials so a child can enter play without upsetting the existing game e.g. provide signs, blocks, trees, natural materials along with the train set.

- **Emotions**

Having a system that allows children to recognise the feelings of themselves and others can promote understanding and empathy within the group of children. This can reduce some of the social barriers and promote individuals to manage their own behaviours. Ideas can include using pictures of emotions to identify how children are feeling, incorporating emotions into games and songs, having emotion charts on your wall to refer to, using persona dolls to role play situations and promote understanding of others.

- **Visual Cues**

Visual strategies can be an easy and great way to supplement all areas of your program.

- o Social stories – can be made from drawings or photos to tell stories about your room/service. The children can help to make them. They may be about how we feel, room limits, routines etc. Reading social stories can be a good way to practice, rehearse or gain understanding of social situations.
- o Signs, Pictures, Labels. These visuals can allow children to easily interpret what is meant to happen in a certain area e.g. clearly marking play spaces.
- o Cues from other people. Children can benefit greatly from your use of body language as a visual cue e.g. a thumbs up (or down) across the room to signal a good try or a warning.



Inclusive Directions has many highly experienced and skilled adult educators within its staff teams. Child care services may request training via the Professional Support Coordinator (Gowrie Training Centre) and specify their choice of topic and/or presenter. We often recommend that training in topics such as social skills, dealing with behavioural challenges, and inclusion in child care are undertaken by the whole staff team. This assists with building on existing knowledge, a whole of service approach to implementation of learning, and team building.

Basic Principles of Cultural Inclusion for an OSHC Program

Look at the cultural backgrounds represented in your school community – families using the OSHC service, other families in the school, teachers etc.

Consider parents and grandparents as your resources – to access information, guest presenters / demonstrators, cultural items, to check the validity / authenticity of an activity.



Connect aspects of your program to what the children already know eg. American Indian decorating styles and Australian Aboriginal decorating styles, Christmas traditions in Italy and the traditions in each child's home here in Australia



Look at your program and consider the interests of the children using the service eg. Do you currently have lots of girls who like to make jewellery? Do you currently have lots of boys who like to play outside – games, pretend play?



Look at the wider community that the school and OSHC service are part of – which cultural backgrounds are represented?

Take one programming idea eg. Jewellery making, paper folding, Easter eggs, board games, and explore the different styles and materials used in several cultures.



My Turn! My Turn!

Learning the concept of turn taking is very important for children.

Building relationships with others takes patience, cooperation, understanding and social etiquette. These three very important foundations are all demonstrated with turn taking.

Where children need help to learn their turn taking skills it is best to choose something that the child is interested in, that will engage them.

There are perfect opportunities for games at childcare to provide positive turn taking training. For example:

Pass the parcel: Ben's turn, Sam's turn, whose turn? After Ben, before Sam etc



Use a timer to facilitate turn taking games (on the bikes is a good one).

- Remember one of the best ways to teach turn taking to our young ones is by doing short bursts of

turn taking with lots of repetition.

- Also maintain the correct language:

Whose turn now?

Ben is next

Ben's turn now

Who is next?



- Please and thankyou are well included in these types of scenarios.

- For younger children, "Lucky Ducks" – an electronic memory game by Milton Bradley is attention grabbing and fast.

- Using the child's name is a great way to reinforce who is who. Knowing someone's name and having the chance to hear it repeated aids social inclusion within a group. Saying the child's name clearly, giving everyone a chance to use the name with the right language is paramount to turn taking and other social skill building.

Quality Inclusion Support Project

The pilot project was started at the North Office in September 2005.

The project aims to assist staff to identify their strengths in providing a quality, inclusive program and any areas for strengthening.

The focus is very much a strength based approach and the QISP Inclusion Support Facilitator works with staff to empower them to work with their own ideas and skills.

8 services have accessed the project since starting in September 2005.

The positive outcomes of the project:

- Service staff have indicated that they are a lot more confident in providing an inclusive

environment for all children.

- Staff have been provided with the opportunity to share and exchange skills and knowledge and to implement their ideas, while receiving guidance from the Inclusion Support Facilitator.
- Children are more involved in the program.

The project has been very well received by all services involved.

Thank you to all the services who have shared their skills and knowledge and their goal to continue to provide quality care for all children.

If you would like more information about the Quality Inclusion Support Project, please call Dianne Borington at Inclusive Directions—North on 8165 2900.

Lea Kirkbridge, a Family Day Care Provider from Woodcroft, shares a wonderful inclusion learning story about Sofia who is fed through gastrostomy tube...



"Sofia doesn't eat but she will sit with the children watching them eat and sometimes chews with them.

Today Lyn gave her a spoon and plate for her to be included. Lyn showed her what to do. Sofia copied, putting the spoon to her mouth like Lyn did. Lyn started to chew so Sofia copied her. Sofia watched the children then went back to her plate, picked up the spoon, put it to her mouth and then started chewing. While the children ate she sat with her spoon and plate until they had finished.

When I fed Sofia she had her plate and spoon. She kept feeding herself saying, "Yummy Yummy in my Tummy!"

YUMMY YUMMY



Learning Stories



Recipe — Tacos

Mealtimes are fun sharing times and provide a great opportunity for learning new social skills and developing language.



Tacos are a great 'sharing' meal for children to take turns in helping themselves to fillings and sharing with others.



Soft taco shells
Shredded lettuce
Grated cheese
Mild Salsa or drained, diced tomato
Mince meat
Drained tins of Red Kidney beans
Brown the mince meat and add 1 packet of taco seasoning per (500 – 800gms of mince meat according to taste or alternatively use the following 'Mexican seasoning'.



Simmer for about 20 mins with sufficient water to prevent burning. Add the drained beans and simmer for a further 10 mins.

Provide a soft taco shell for each child and have the meat, tomato, cheese and lettuce in bowls on the table for the children to help themselves and others with making a delicious taco!

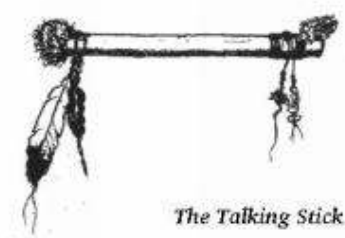
Mexican Seasoning

Combine:
1 tablespoon garlic powder
2 tablespoon ground cumin
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ teaspoon paprika
½ teaspoon onion flakes
½ teaspoon crushed thyme

Guacamole

Pinch salt
2 small gloves of garlic
1 avocado
2 sprig fresh coriander chopped
3 tablespoon plain yoghurt
4 ½ teaspoons freshly squeezed lime juice
2 Tablespoons finely chopped onion
1 fresh jalapeno diced pepper (optional)

The Talking Stick



The talking stick has been used for centuries by many American Indian tribes to designate who had the right to speak at councils and hearings. When matters of great importance came before council, the leading

elder would hold the talking stick and begin the discussion. When he finished what he had to say he would hold out the talking stick, and whoever wished to speak after him would take it.

Some tribes used a talking feather instead of a talking stick. Other tribes used sacred shells or other objects. Whatever the object, it carries respect for free speech and assures the speaker has the opportunity to say what they need

without interruption.

'Talking Sticks' can be a great tool to use with children in OSHC and Vacation care services when meeting as a group to discuss issues in the service. The introduction of a 'Talking Stick' can ensure everyone has an opportunity to express their opinion and provides a visual reminder to children that they need to wait their turn to speak.

www.acaciart.com

Rainbows for a Cure

Here Sharee Borlace, Director, shares the fundraising efforts of Salisbury Heights OSHC for the Leukemia Foundation.

We decided as a service to create awareness about Leukemia, as well as get all involved to participate in "Colour for a Cure" and raise much needed funds.

We programmed this over 3 days to maximize everyone's opportunity to become involved (including some parents and staff!!) We sent out consent forms asking the parents to make a gold coin donation for each child to have their hair sprayed in crazy colour, either a little (or a lot).

The response was great. Two parents also coloured their hair and gained sponsors through work and other contacts (HOW FANTASTIC!!) The days went smoothly with majority of children getting involved, many having the colour done each day by request. Friends and staff had a terrific time playing with their crazy coloured hair.

The best thing was as a whole service (with the help of the above parents, children and staff) we raised \$714.50 for the Colour for a Cure.

I'm very proud of all of them. GREAT JOB!! I'm sure you'll agree.



Biting in Child Care

Biting is a common issue in the child care environment which impacts on all members of the child care community – the child who has been bitten, the biter, staff, and parents. Often there is an air of tension and helplessness... However, with hard work and consistency the frequency of biting can be reduced.

Why do children bite?

There are many reasons why young children bite. There are usually multiple factors which contribute to a child biting. Once it is understood *why* a child is biting, then effective strategies can be put in place. The most common reasons why children bite are listed below:

- Oral muscle development and exploration
- Teething
- Developing independence
- Inability to communicate – biting is a 'physical' alternative
- Over-stimulation / under-stimulation
- Frustration
- Cause and effect
- Attention
- Lack of impulse control
- Social interaction
- Anxiety
- Imitation



How can services stop children biting?

Child care services need to develop strategies for preventing and responding to bites. These strategies should correspond with the centres Behaviour Management Policy. *All* child care staff must be aware of these techniques and respond with consistency.

Show the child who bites that this behaviour is unacceptable:

Establish eye contact

If necessary, restrain the child gently but firmly

Use a stern facial expression and a firm voice

Say, "No biting" or "Biting hurts"

Exclude the child for a short time eg. 'sitting out'

Never bite the child back or encourage the victims to bite back



Biting in Child Care

Attend to the child who is bitten

The child who has bitten should receive minimal attention. Lavish attention on the child who has been bitten. It is important to remember that even *negative* responses by the carer may encourage the child to bite again in the future.

Reinforce positive behaviour of the biter

Praise the child who has bitten and give him/her lots of attention when you see positive behaviour. Children begin to learn that they receive attention when behaving positively with their peers.

Document incidents

By documenting incidents it is likely that you will discover a pattern of behaviour. Is this behaviour related to the business of the room at certain times of the day? Noise levels? Communication difficulties?

Change the environment

Evaluate your programme and environment to reduce factors which you find increase the likelihood of the child biting. For instance, minimise: under-stimulation (e.g. boredom, waiting, queuing, tasks which are too easy or too hard), competition for toys or equipment, sudden changes, and problematic groupings.

Teach alternatives to biting.

Model the communication, social and turn-taking skills you wish to see. Visual strategies e.g. a hand sign coupled with the word 'STOP' when a child wants to take a specific toy.

Keep parents informed

Inform parents that biting is of concern within the centre and that strategies have been put in place and are being acted upon. This can be documented in a letter to all families. Also, explain individually to parents that it is a normal part of child development and that the centre is doing all it can to ensure the children are safe.

Frequent Biting

If the biting occurs more than a couple of times a week, you will need to increase supervision of children who are known to bite. In extreme cases, an adult should 'shadow' the child who bites and whenever she or he opens their mouth to bite, cup their hand under the chin and give a quick upwards push. When a child will not release their mouth from someone's flesh, you should gently but firmly push their head into the flesh/ rather than try to pull them away.

Staff Support

Ensure that all staff are involved in providing both moral and practical support for one another. Biting in child care impacts on the whole service - not just one or two staff members.

A positive outcome can only be achieved if all staff are consistent in approach.

References:

Biting in Child Care, 1988, Resource Unit for Children with Special Needs Inc.

Further Reading

Child and Youth Health – www.cyh.com

Simple Steps: Developmental Activities for Infants, Toddlers and 2 Years by Karen Miller, Gryphon House Publishers, 1999.

Christmas Holiday Program at Kesters Road



In this article, Rosey Bartolo, from Kesters Road Child Care Centre, describes last year's Christmas program in the Toddlers Room where she was Team Leader.

Her aims were to:

- **provide a broader program for the Christmas and holiday time, and**
- **be inclusive and have input and ideas from our families, being aware of cultural and religious sensitivities.**

Following a visit from Deanne from Inclusive Directions to broaden my ideas for a holiday program during Christmas time, we clarified what we wanted to do and how it could be done. The results were incredible!

A survey was put out to all families regarding what they liked to do for the holidays and if there was anything they would not want their child exposed to. 90% of the surveys returned really opened my eyes to what parents would like to happen.

For years Jesus had been left out of the program for fear we were "brainwashing" children or pushing religion, or it was felt to be a threat. However the surveys returned families encouraged us to give children the opportunity to hear about the first Christmas, the story of a Saviour born in the manger. Families wanted their children to know about the baby Jesus.

Jesus now had a place in my program. Children enjoyed making a stable and putting the Three Wise Kings there; the shepherd and the sheep and Mary and Joseph and, of course, baby Jesus. We sang *Away in a Manger* and *Three Wise Kings*. The children loved it and occasionally pointed out Jesus in the stable. Input from our families was valuable -

they all had common ideals that Christmas was a time of peace, joy and love - what Jesus is all about.

It was a great program. Children experienced:

- many different reasons for the season
- activities and songs about our traditional Aussie Christmas
- celebrations of St. Lucia and St. Nicholas
- the Christmas tree and the little baby in the manger.

Christmas surely touched all of us last year; together we were all united. Family input and cultural awareness are important aspects in broadening our views and making a well suited, developmentally appropriate exciting program. We can't wait for Easter!



Dear Parents,

One of our policies is to value diversity of cultures and family traditions of children who are attending our service. To be able to create the best possible environment for your child, we would appreciate if you could tell us some more information about your child and your cultural practices.

Please share some information about how your family celebrates the-holiday season.

Your name:

Child's name:

Your cultural background:

What language(s) do you speak at home:

What celebrations/festivals are important and celebrated in your culture?

Is there anything you would not want your child to be involved in learning?

OSHC/VAC Research

As part of an eight week placement with Inclusive Directions -South I undertook some research on the availability of OSHC and Vacation Care services within their region for adolescents aged 13-18yrs with additional needs. I also looked at some of the issues of inclusion currently being felt by these services for adolescents within the current policy and service framework.

Issues found to be most common among all survey respondents in regards to the inclusion of adolescents aged 13-18yrs included:

- Policy restrictions
- Waiting Lists
- Inadequate space in physical environment
- Lack of resources and equipment
- Cost of borrowing/buying equipment
- Younger children feeling threatened by physical size of older children and resentment on behalf of older children having to be in a primary school geared program
- Staff ratio issues
- Programs inappropriate for ages
- Lack of alternate services for age group
- Proper training
- Funding, and
- Financial burden on families when not being able to access mainstream child care accredited services.

Current solutions being reached by agencies in relation to the lack of services available and age appropriate for

adolescents with additional needs found include:

- Placement but no separate programming or admittance on provision that they provide an adequate service
- Continuation of placement as long as the child started in the service at a young age
- Movement into supported accommodation, and
- Parents and other family members meeting demands for care.

Ideal solutions survey respondents perceived as possible to address the lack of service provision included:

- Separate environments for 13+ with appropriate equipment and ability to mix with own age group
- Larger facilities
- More mainstream youth programs
- Utilisation of volunteers and sporting groups in OSHC services
- Better communication between principles and OSHC Directors
- Involving wider community and education, and
- Funding increases.

I wish to thank all survey respondents for their time and effort in completing the survey as I know they are busy with programming and accreditation. I also wish to thank the agency spokespersons who provided me with their expertise in this area as well and lastly for all the Inclusive Directions staff for their encouragement and help.

Rebecca Mug

These are just some of the positive responses we've had to Inclusive Directions Training. If you'd like a customized training session to met your services' needs, call The Gowrie Training Centre on 1800 129 606.

"It would be difficult to improve on this session. Great presenter - useful/relevant content" (Relaxation ,Yorke Early Childhood Conference)

"Excellent ... a great presentation", "I have learnt a lot. I knew a little before, but now have a better understanding" (Including Children with Autism and Asperger Syndrome in OSHC, Ardtornish PS OSHC)

Have you heard?

"Very informative evening. Presented with passion.", "It's great to do workshops with the whole staff team" (Positive Behaviour, Wellington Road Child Care Centre)

I was very impressed. I learnt a lot. It will certainly help in my approaches to working with children" (Autism and Behaviour, Mercedes College OSHC)

"Most beneficial session, helps to meet all children's needs", "well presented, variety of resources to look at and feel, ideas for making own , personable manner, interactive", "liked interactive nature of this & problem solving & ideas sharing" (Sensory Learning, Yorke Early Childhood Conference)

Enjoyed this, very informative, moved smoothly, flowed well. Great Job!" (Creating a Quality Child Care Environment, Nuriootpa Children's Centre)

Do you know of any good inclusion stories that you'd like to share? If you have, please call either Kerrin, Pip, Trude, Kate, Cathie or Elspeth at Inclusive Directions and we'll discuss including it our next newsletter.



Inclusive Directions welcomes your feedback. Feel free to let us know your thoughts about any of the services we provide by phoning your local Inclusive Directions regional office, or by emailing us on info@directions.org.au.



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Welcome to our New Staff

Hi! My name is Emma and I am excited to be a part of the Northern Team.



I come from an OSHC and Teaching background and am currently studying to achieve my Graduate Diploma of Counseling. I feel that my new role within Inclusive Directions will allow me to share and further develop my strong commitment to the inclusion of all children within our childcare settings.

I am an energetic person who enjoys to experience all that life offers and am having a great time doing it all! I look forward to meeting some of you as I continue my journey with Inclusive Directions.

Hi! My name is Mardi and I'm really enjoying being part of the Northern Team.



I have worked in Children's Services for many years, in both Child Care and Outside School Hours Care. I currently split my days as a Director at a local OSHC and here in the office at Inclusive Directions.

I love working with children and find it both rewarding and challenging. My spare time is spent with my family.

Hi, my name is Rebecca (Bec).



I have just finished my Disability Studies Prac (Placement) with the South office and have been asked to stay on in a part time position. I have one semester left of my degree at Flinders University and also have a background in Psychology.

I enjoy reading, movies and getting together with close friends on the weekend. I am also busy planning my wedding for May next year (Ahhh!)

I look forward to becoming a part of the Inclusive Directions Team at South office.