



# Connections

NSW FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATION AND PEAK TRAINING NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

## A Whole New World: Coastwide FDC Educator Led Conference

Earlier this year, on a weekend wedged between two Covid-19 lockdowns, Coastwide Family Day Care educators met to collaborate, be inspired and play. The educator led conference, *A Whole New World*, brought together educators and coordinators from across NSW to share a weekend of networking, professional



development and fun. Looking back now it seems like a moment frozen in time, absolutely a whole new world. Since then, we have all faced varying degrees of restrictions and stay-at-home orders but the memories created and relationships forged have not been forgotten.

As a Family Day Care service with educators and coordinators spread over more than 192,000 km<sup>2</sup>, the opportunity to come together was the inspiration of a small cohort of educators from the service's Educator Reference Group and Nominated Supervisor, Kellie McNamara. Their vision was to bring together educators with diverse service environments set on suburban blocks, rural acreages or inner city streets, educators who share a commitment to continuous improvement, best practice and quality outcomes for children. We know now that they also share an instinct for

fun, an aptitude for play and a curiosity to embrace challenges; something which has proved invaluable over recent months.

Central Coast based Educator, Liz took time to share her appreciation, "Thank you to those that organised the conference.

Great speakers and workshops. A great resource market, fun

time at masquerade dinner and new friendships made. Thank you for all your hard work."

Keynote speakers were chosen for the professional development opportunities they offered. Registered psychologist and former primary school teacher, Nicole Nossiter introduced the Growing Strong Minds program. She reminded everyone to see all children through the lens of character strengths rather than deficit, to acknowledge the potential in building confidence rather than building insecurity.

Tracy, a Central Coast based coordinator has since acknowledged, "Things I learnt have impacted my everyday practice, with the children I meet at services, I think about their character strengths rather than just focusing on their positive behaviours".

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# WELCOME

Anita Jovanovski, CEO



Welcome to the spring edition of Connections. I hope that you are keeping safe and are able to focus on your wellbeing. Unfortunately, Covid-19 has reared its head again in NSW and most of the state has been under stay-at-home orders for almost three months. I have been working very closely with both the state and Australian government on creating the best outcomes for the Family Day Care sector and for the ECEC sector as a whole.

The Family Day Care Educator Diary for 2022 is almost completed. It will be available to purchase online via print-on-demand partner Lulu. This makes a great end-of-year present for your educators. The Association has noticed that after a few years of fancy apps and other electronic documenting, a lot of services and educators are reverting back to paper for more concise, clear and well-organised documenting. Make sure you are logged in to the website to receive the membership discount. If you don't know your service's member login details, please email our membership officer via [magdaj@nswfdc.org.au](mailto:magdaj@nswfdc.org.au). The FDC Educator Diary 2022 can soon be purchased here: [nswfdc.org.au/fdc-services/shop](https://nswfdc.org.au/fdc-services/shop)

The PD in your pocket program is still going strong with almost all topics completed. The next event in this series will be a virtual Family Day Care educator conference. This will take place over half a day in November. Registration for this free conference will open soon via the PD in your pocket webpage. Recordings of the conference sessions will be made available on the website.

I am very excited about the regional forum opportunity for full members and hope that the regions will take up this amazing opportunity with both hands. The Regional Forum will be organised by each region themselves and take place between now and June 2022. So, as soon as it is possible, get together with the services in your region and start planning!

It is important to keep a strong Association that creates plenty of networking opportunities even when we cannot meet face to face. The next State Meeting will take place via zoom on Friday 5 November. This is also the date of the Association's Annual General Meeting, so please mark it in your diaries. See you there!

Happy reading!

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Award-winning author and pedagogical leader, Niki Buchan's keynote speech explored the well documented benefits of nature for children and adults. She offered simple, practical strategies to support children using a combination of nature, play and a nurturing connection. Niki followed her keynote with a range of hands-on nature challenges involving the elements, earth, water, fire, air and space. It was a workshop which promised the opportunity to build a giant outdoor xylophone, make a range of swings, whittle wood and build a tiny fairy village, design a boat to float down the creek or cook marshmallows and popcorn on a small fire laboratory.

The photos of educators' furrowed brows and big smiles prove how much fun they had, as they embraced their own curiosity and commitment to teamwork, inspired by a spirit of adventure and enthusiasm to explore Niki's philosophy.

## Regulations Info

### Working With Children Check Extensions

Working with Children Checks expiring between 19 July 2021 and 26 January 2022 have been extended for three months. Checks that expire outside this time frame are not affected. People who have been granted an extension have been advised by email and the Office of the Children's Guardian system automatically updated.

Please don't forget to update your organisation's records.

## News in brief

### ACECQA Risk Assessment and Management Tool

The Risk Assessment and Management Tool, developed by ACECQA, aims to help children's education and care services, including staff and educators to understand the importance of assessing and managing risk as an embedded part of quality practice and improvement. You can download the tool here:

[nswfdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/RiskAssessmentandManagementToolACECQA.docx](https://nswfdc.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/RiskAssessmentandManagementToolACECQA.docx)

## Association News

### Staff Profile: Marie Tsesmetzis

"Hello everyone, my name is Marie Tsesmetzis and I am one of the NSW In Home Care Family Liaison Facilitators.

I have been in the early childhood educator sector for about 14 years, with almost 7 years spent as a Family Day Care educator for my local council in Marrickville. I started off working in long day care centres and preschools whilst studying my diploma part time in the evenings. My mum had been a Family Day Care educator while I was a child and I always had that at the back of my head when I was studying. After I completed my diploma, I went on to working as a Family Day Care educator.

I chose to work as a FDC educator because I wanted the ability to give children the best early childhood experience, I knew I was able to offer. I worked in childcare centres that I felt were not aligned with my core beliefs, and so being an FDC educator I could create a space and environment that reflected these. I absolutely loved being part of the family Day Care community. Everyone was so supportive of me, I met beautiful women who became my mentors and part of my family. The children and their families I provided education and care for over the years became so valued and we still keep in touch yearly. Their feedback was always so uplifting and I knew I was making a difference to the children. It has shaped me into the mother I have become and allowed me to progress as an educator in ways I think I would have been restricted in centre based care.

I have been working with NSW Family Day Care Association in the NSWIHC business arm since February of this year and believe that my passion for advocating best practice within the early childhood sector and working on building respectful relationships with children, families and educators is vital to my role.

What I absolutely love about working within In Home Care is that the role is so varied. I am able to advocate for families and educators who make up our service. I am so fortunate to work with a diverse team of professionals who have had many years of experience and can mentor me in achieving my best.



## News in brief

### Updated Child Safe Assessment Tool

We have updated our Child Safe Self-Assessment Tool for Family Day Care services.

This tool is part of the Child Safe Resource Kit. You can use the self-assessment tool here: [survey.nswfdc.org.au](https://www.nswfdc.org.au)

Find more information about the Child Safe Resource Kit here: [nswfdc.org.au/fdc-services/nsw-child-safe-resource-kit](https://www.nswfdc.org.au/fdc-services/nsw-child-safe-resource-kit)

### Munch & Move Resources for Services

The NSW Health Munch & Move program provides free professional development, resources and ongoing support to service providers to promote healthy eating, active play and appropriate screen use in children birth to 5 years

The program website [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](https://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au) houses free resources such as:

**Program training:** A series of self-paced eLearning modules, comprising of videos, scenarios and reflective practice questions. The training is approx. 3 hours in length but can be completed over multiple sessions at any time.

**Fundamental Movement Skills Videos** – a series of videos teaching the steps in correctly performing and teaching the 13 fundamental movement skills.

**Breastfeeding, nutrition, physical activity and screen use policy templates.**

**Fact sheets** on healthy eating, lunchboxes, fussy eating, screen time, sleep, oral health, active play and more to share with families. Some fact sheets are available in 9 community languages and some are designed with and for Aboriginal families.

**Implementation resources** – including posters, music and storybooks for educator use.

### Positive Behaviour Support resources

A NSW Government Positive Behaviour Support session provided practical tips and strategies for supporting positive behaviour. Download the resources from this session:

- [Positive Behaviour Support PowerPoint slides](#)
- [A.C.T game for infants and toddlers](#)
- [A.C.T game for children aged 4 and up](#)
- [Social skills to teach \(social skill cards\)](#)

# Zoom Storytime at Wingecarribee FDC

"The current Covid-19 outbreak in NSW and the subsequent Greater Sydney lockdown has meant that I have been working from home. My last day in the office was 24 June, and this was also the last in person Home Support Visit that I was able to complete as part of my role as Family Day Care Educator Support Officer for Wingecarribee Shire Council in the Southern Highlands. While the council have been very supportive in facilitating my work from home, the fact remains that a large part of my role requires in person contact with our Family Day Care Educators.

Among other communication with educators, I have introduced a fortnightly remote storytime that is held over zoom. This has been a wonderful opportunity to see the children and interact with them and their educators in a fun and engaging way. The week before our storytime, I email the educators the zoom link, details of the books I will be reading, songs or games I have planned for the storytime and a suggested craft activity that the educator can then undertake with the children after the story time.

Thus far, we have read several Hairy Maclairy books, Llama Llama Red Pajama by Anna Dewdney and sang and danced in unison to Dingle Dangle Scarecrow, 5 Little Ducks and 5 Cheeky Monkeys. Prior to our most recent storytime, I posted the eEducators a little surprise pack that included some Cheeky Monkey cut-outs and bamboo straws for the children to have their own set of matching props during our storytime.

Most educators join in and have even had requests from families to join in from home. We have held our storytime on different days each fortnight so that we can ensure to include the many different children that attend our service. Many of our educators participated in the National Simultaneous Storytime from space in May this year, making our follow-on of creating our own online storytime at a service level a concept that the children were already familiar with. Our educators include the storytime in their programming as it links in with many of the EYLF Learning Outcomes.

While Covid-19 has certainly thrown us all a curve ball, it has also presented us with opportunities to think outside the box and come up with new ways to stay connected as a community, share experiences as a community and stay connected in spirit even if not in person."



Sharon Dengate, Educator Support Officer –  
Wingecarribee Family Day Care

## NSW FDC ASSOCIATION

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**Melissa Hill** Family and Service Facilitator  
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**Hannah Reviglio** Family and Service Facilitator  
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# National Principles for Child Safe Organisations



NSW FAMILY DAY CARE ASSOCIATION RESOURCE SHEET

SPRING 2021

## 'Keeping Our Kids Safe' Resources

SNAICC has developed a series of informative resources to support organisations working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and communities to implement the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations.

The Keeping Our Kids Safe resources apply a cultural lens to the National Principles to help organisations think about how to make themselves safer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

### The National Principles

The National Principles are 10 principles, agreed by all Australian governments, that give organisations across Australia a consistent approach to promoting a culture of child safety and wellbeing. The National Principles are flexible and relevant for organisations of all sizes and sectors that engage with children and young people.

A need for more information for organisations working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and communities was identified during consultation on the National Principles. The Keeping Our Kids Safe resources take the National Principles and deliver them in a way that is culturally relevant and promotes cultural safety.

### What is cultural safety?

Cultural safety is the positive recognition and celebration of cultures. It is more than just the absence of racism or discrimination and more than cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity. It empowers people and enables them to contribute and feel safe to be themselves. In a child safe, culturally safe organisation, children, young people, family and community members feel that their culture and identity are respected.

### KEEPING OUR KIDS SAFE: CULTURAL SAFETY AND THE NATIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR CHILD SAFE ORGANISATIONS



SNAICC has created two resources:

- a guide, Keeping Our Kids Safe: Cultural Safety and the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, that gives practical advice on how to implement the National Principles in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and communities
- an animated video, Keeping Our Kids Safe: Understanding Cultural Safety in Child Safe Organisations, that gives viewers an introduction to the National Principles through a cultural lens.

For more information about these resources or if you would like to request printed copies of the guide, please visit the Office of Child Safety.

More info:

[www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe](http://www.snaicc.org.au/policy-and-research/child-safety-and-wellbeing/keeping-our-kids-safe)

## How to give effective feedback

Giving good feedback is an art. It can be challenging for supervisors and managers. Here is a quick overview of the key elements of improving feedback are to make it meaningful, constructive, timely and regular.

Feedback is centred on giving information about actual performance against set requirements. Good feedback enables people to learn from both successes and weaknesses in performance. Focusing only on people's shortcomings does not help learning, but hinders it.

### What are the common problems?

Low-quality feedback with inadequate information or vague content from managers does not lead to better work performance. Equally, managers and supervisors need to find a good balance between overwhelming their supervisees with too much feedback and not providing enough or infrequent and delayed feedback.

### The need for a 'critical friend'

Providing effective feedback is essential to improve learning and performance. But, before giving feedback, supervisors should manage expectations and negotiate supervision arrangements. In all organisations, supervisors should aim for a positive supervisory relationship. Such relationships are based on trust, respect, open communication and shared meaning. As feedback can often be misunderstood, supervisors should critically reflect on their feedback style so it becomes a satisfying two-way process.

Constructive regular feedback should highlight both strengths and weaknesses. It should also suggest improvements. So, supervisors can assume the role of a

"critical friend" who is encouraging and supportive but provides candid feedback on performance. Using technologies such as videoconferencing can help in providing timely feedback.

### Five strategies for positive feedback

1. manage expectations and negotiate feedback arrangements
2. build and maintain a positive supervisory relationship
3. be aware of and critically reflect in your own practice
4. ensure suitable feedback content
5. give feedback in suitable and balanced ways

### Characteristics of effective feedback

"suggestive and constructive, brief, frequent and regular, actionable, specific and tailored, explicit, honest but empathetic and tactful, formal, supportive and encouraging, advising, appreciative and respectful but critical"

### Want to know more about this?

NSW Family Day Care Association has **free professional development** sessions available for full member services as part of the Regional Forums. 'Difficult Conversations' and 'Coaching Skills for FDC Coordinators' presented by Anthony Semann are just two of the mini-keynotes members can choose from.

More information: [theconversation.com/feedback-from-supervisors-can-be-a-good-or-bad-experience-heres-how-to-get-it-right-165757](https://theconversation.com/feedback-from-supervisors-can-be-a-good-or-bad-experience-heres-how-to-get-it-right-165757)