Explore Reggio Emilia

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Transport children safely

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Michelle Scheu’s ‘Thinking Play’ method

“Children are not just vessels to be filled with information.”
Welcome to the new look *Early Horizons* magazine and our first issue for 2015.

I hope you and your early learners have settled into the year, and are looking forward to all the learning opportunities that lie ahead in the second half of the year.

ASG is committed to supporting children’s education and believes all children deserve equal access to education regardless of wealth, status and capability.

We started this year with ASG’s *Planning for Education* campaign to determine the true cost of education from preschool to Year 12. We found that the average Australian family living in Sydney could spend up to one million dollars on their child’s private education from preschool to Year 12.

We followed this up in March with ASG’s *Planning for University* campaign to determine the myriad costs involved in a student’s university education. You can view the findings from both campaigns at www.asg.com.au/media-releases

As part of our ongoing efforts to support children’s education, we introduced a new educational resource for children and their parents. *ASG’s Little Learner Packs* offer a range of educational videos and books to help children under six years of age develop socially and emotionally. They also include membership to MY ASG—a web portal containing a wealth of education and parenting information. For more information visit www.asg.com.au/little-learner

In this issue of *Early Horizons* we celebrate the inspirational Australian educators who received national awards at ASG’s National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEITA) in March. Through these prestigious awards, which recognise teachers nominated by the community, ASG showcases the top teachers and educators in early childhood, primary and secondary sectors across Australia.

Nominations for the next round of awards are now open for Australia and New Zealand. A poster is included in this issue for parent associations and centre and kindergarten councils to nominate their children’s deserving educators and teachers.

Michelle Schau, a 2013 NEITA national recipient, features in this issue of *Early Horizons*. She talks to us about the method she pioneered that recruits young learners as co-designers of their own learning.

Fellow 2013 national NEITA recipient Daniela Kavoukis, director of Flemington Childcare Co-operative, also chats with us about her unique community, not-for-profit centre.

We speak with forest kindergarten pioneer Claire Warden about her work in Scotland. Claire also recently joined Federation University in Ballarat, Victoria, as an honorary research fellow and consultant in nature pedagogy.

Have you ever dreamed of joining a Reggio Emilia Study Tour to northern Italy? Read about the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange, which coordinates the Australian contingent to this study tour that provides educators with an opportunity to study Reggio pedagogy.

There is much more to read and enjoy, including your chance to win one of 10 book give-aways.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Early Horizons*. We are always looking at ways to further connect with you, so keep an eye out in the coming months for our new *Early Horizons* Facebook page.

John Velegrinis  
Chief Executive Officer, ASG and NEITA
World-renowned early learning pioneer Claire Warden has an ambitious vision. She wants nature pedagogy to acquire global professional status. It sounds like a serious challenge, but after listening to one of her recent keynote lectures it’s clear she’s on the way to attaining that goal.

A frequent global traveller, Warden delivers lectures, training and advice to teachers and educational leaders in dozens of countries. She’s also author of numerous books and resources about early learning methodology, as well as founder of two model nature kindergartens in Scotland. In addition, she’s an adviser to the Scottish government on Risk in Learning and part of the World Nature Collaborative’s leadership group.

Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten and Auchlone Nature Kindergarten, in Perth and Kinross respectively, provide education for children between two and six years of age. In a country where they say, ‘There’s no such thing as bad weather, only the wrong clothes,’ the early learners in Warden’s Scottish kindergartens spend 80–90 per cent of their time learning outside in the natural environment.

The emotional and spiritual connection to land—and the sense of belonging that accompanies it—is the basis of Warden’s educational philosophy. She admits she is still unpacking her own personal connection to her clan’s land and what it means to her as a person.

“I do know that many Aboriginal people I meet—Indigenous First Nation people—around the world, also have that deep connection to land,” she says.

Warden believes that children have a right to high-quality outdoor play and that vital learning occurs when they can immerse themselves into nature. However, she sees dabbling without a pedagogical base as a missed opportunity.

“Sometimes I travel around and people say ‘I do a bit of nature, I do a bit of this and that’, ‘Warden says. ‘And I say, that’s great, but you’ve got to have a pedagogical base to some of your work; otherwise, you get hooked onto needing ideas.”

For Warden, nature pedagogy “is an understanding of our sense of belonging to land, our sense of working with nature.” And “there’s a pedagogical shift”, she says, “when you move outside into nature ... it’s learning with nature, not just teaching about it.” She says children’s education should not be about the mastery of nature, the conquest of the mountain or the domination of nature, but about our connection to it.

Warden looks at nature in all its facets—both inside and out. “Reggio Emilia has inspired us to look at our indoor environments,” she says, so collecting river stones, washing them and putting them in a basket on a table is one way of looking at nature.

“It’s beautiful in what it is”. Warden says of Reggio Emilia, “but it is a very different thing to go out into the wild and to be sitting in a place of silence; to reach down and feel the earth beneath your hand, and to be the first person to lift up that rock and have an emotional connection to it”.

Bemused by what she sees as a preoccupation with climate, Warden is passionate that “The weather must not be the preventer to going outside.” She advises putting trepidation aside, and seeing it instead as an opportunity. “If it rains—joy abounding,” she says. “If it’s a bit hot—alright we can’t go outside for some parts of the day if there’s no shade, but we can go outside for some of it.”

Risk is an important element of nature pedagogy. “You want risky play; you want challenge”, Warden says, “because in challenging moments we are at the forefront in our thinking—we’re pushing ourselves right to the edge of our capabilities.”

However, allowing early learners to participate in risky play comes with responsibilities, and Warden doesn’t take them lightly. She strongly advocates for benefit-risk assessments of outdoor learning.
environments. “What we want to monitor and really think about are the hazards, the unseen risks that exist in that environment for children,” she says.

“So if I’m in the forest and there’s a spike in the ground under leaf litter it’s my job to either highlight it to children or remove it—but I won’t stop them being in that forest. I won’t stop them climbing on the tree because that, I believe, is a very strong part of their learning.”

Risk and hazard are completely subjective, Warden explains, and it comes down to how personally comfortable a teacher is in the environment they’re in. A colleague at the First Nation Nursery on North Vancouver Island might be more comfortable around cougars, mountain lions and grizzly bears, for example, than a teacher trying to deal with hundreds of thousands of midges (small biting flies) in Scotland.

An important part of the methodology is to think about how the children feel when confronted with a risky play environment. Warden uses the Norwegian phrase is i magen, which means ‘ice in my stomach’, to demonstrate the anxiety young children may feel when confronted with something unconventional in their play environment. Jumping off a small log could be equivalent to an adult “jumping out of an aeroplane”, she explains, but “it’s absolutely vital to children that they’re given these opportunities to learn”.

Pedagogical thinking often needs to shift when planning outdoor environments, Warden says, and a well-constructed space should be created in “slow-time”. Collaboration is a favourite word of Warden’s and it is scattered throughout her conversation. Consulting children and working with them collaboratively is essential to the success of nature pedagogy, she says, and “Have you got space for children to make it whatever they want?”.

Warden challenges traditional ways of thinking about early learning—that adults should make all the decisions and that “bubble-wrapping” is a safety precaution. She frowns at the excessive use of antibacterial spray and the oversimplification of nature. She insists that landscape consultants have a pedagogical understanding of children and that nature should be portrayed with positive images, rather than the idealised, stereotyped storybook kind.

Warden is perhaps the greatest gift this generation of children could have. She is intent on listening to them, and seeing their world through their eyes. Recently, Warden was working with an early learning centre in a setting that had strong cultural ties to the landscape. Impressed by the intentionality of the space that connected the indoor dwelling with the outdoor space, she was pleased with so much of what she observed. But then she went outside and sat down on the ground at the children’s level. When she saw a fence of drab grey railings blocking her view to the wild yonder, she went back inside and argued for the children’s right to see it without a blockade. “Take time to understand the simple messages that landscape gives to children,” she said.

Opposite page: Claire Warden
Below: Children involved deeply in Warden’s Scottish Kindergartens.

“The weather must not be the preventer to going outside.”
Federa7ion University in Ballarat is developing an exciting new teaching curriculum that is likely to see it recognised as a hub of nature pedagogy in Australia. Internationally renowned nature pedagogue Claire Warden recently joined the university as an honorary research fellow and consultant—and it hasn’t taken long for word to get out.

Widely regarded as an accomplished speaker and academic, Warden is helping write curriculum for educational courses. In addition, she will travel from Scotland to personally run the Certificate of Nature Pedagogy course, which will operate over two three-day sessions.

Educators and teachers who are diploma- and degree-qualified can enrol in the certificate course with Warden. Those without Year 12 can also apply. The six days involve compulsory attendance at the university, which is set just outside the provincial city of Ballarat in the native bushland of Mt Helen. Three of these days will be early in the year with the second set of days scheduled for later in the year.

Having Warden at Federation sharing her vast international experience with Australian educators and teachers is a coup for the university. It is also likely to be an invaluable experience for those lucky enough to participate in the course. Warden’s reputation for bringing unique perspectives, humour and inspiring deep pedagogical thinking is well known. Her keynote lectures are often filled with teachers who have travelled long distances to hear her speak. They’re also usually packed to the rafters.

Dr Sue Emmett, Coordinator of Early Childhood Programs at Federation University, said there was a possibility they may even take the certificate course, along with Warden, to other parts of Australia if there was a demonstrated need.

“If there’s a big enough group that was interested in the Northern Territory, for example, we could travel up there to deliver the nature pedagogy certificate with Claire,” Emmett said. “We’re trying to organise options for people.”

The Bachelor of Education (Birth–Year 6) degree, with a focus on nature pedagogy, is available online and face-to-face with optional weekend intensives at the Horsham and Mt Helen campuses. Non-Year 12 applicants can also apply through VTAC and there are several ways to complete the course—part-time, full-time or via an accelerated pathway. The Certificate of Nature Pedagogy can be incorporated into the degree, as well as being a stand-alone qualification, and is an internationally recognised certificate.

Nature pedagogy is integrated into some mainstream degree subjects, such as music and art, and one subject is devoted entirely to the approach. In addition, there are 105 days of teaching practicum with some of those days in centres and schools currently practising nature pedagogy around Ballarat, Melbourne and interstate. There’s also an international option for those interested.

A Diploma of Early Childhood with a focus on nature pedagogy is also available and applicants can complete the course at the Mt Helen campus, online or a combination of face-to-face tuition and online.

The Bachelor of Education (Birth–Year 6) program is recognised by the Victorian Institute of Teaching, the Australian Institute of Teaching and School Leadership and the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority.

To enquire about the Certificate of Nature Pedagogy or any other course at Federation University go to: http://bit.ly/1EEprdp

You can also telephone: 03 5327 9729 or email educationarts@federation.edu.au
Victoria Ryle is the Executive Director of Kids’ Own Publishing, a social purpose organisation with a mission to transform literacy learning by promoting a culture of publishing that puts children in the driving seat.

My journey began as an early years teacher in multicultural North London in the 1980s, making class books that encouraged the children to express what mattered to them. This resulted in texts that they all wanted to read. Children need to see their culture, language and experiences reflected back to them in the books they encounter!

A first experience of local publishing led to experiments making hand silk-screened limited edition books. It was clear that something elevated the children’s natural pride to a whole different level when they saw their books in published form. The power of publishing was understood by children who proudly took home books to read over and over—multilayered readings, exploring names, images, their own words and identities.

Those early books were driven by strong artistic processes and aesthetics, and cemented a role for artists. We know more now about the value of multiple literacies, and I’m proud that artists employed on projects become catalysts for new ways of seeing, thinking—inspiring children and their adults to tap into their own creative wellspring.

Kids’ Own Publishing was established in 1997 in Ireland, which with its strong literary tradition, welcomed children as authors and illustrators. In 2003, I brought the concept to Melbourne and redeveloped the model anew for the Australian landscape.

I’ve discovered that while a tangible book remains at the heart of the activity, its true value is as a passport to literacy and literary activities precisely because of the deep investment of child authors and illustrators. Their sense of ownership invites multiple readings, and spontaneous and rich conversations between children and their significant adults, siblings and peers.

Projects grow from the ground up, tailored to the needs of communities. Some focus on validating culture and language in Indigenous and CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) communities. Some tackle low literacy and entrenched disadvantage, but always with the aim to leave a legacy of skills to ensure ongoing publishing.

We have learnt that children cannot be separated from their families and communities—which has led to more projects with the very young in community settings. For example, an eight-week program with playgroups models hands-on art making and bookmaking, and teaches practical skills that parents and teachers use beyond the project. Each week participants take home a collaborative 12-page photocopied picture-book while gathering material for a book published with an ISBN at the end of the project. Participants all receive copies of this book to share with families and friends.

Communities sometimes purchase books to use as fundraisers or awareness-raising tools, such as Donkeys can’t fly on planes. Kids’ Own Publishing also distributes books through its website and the Kids’ Own Book Cubby program. This is a portable capsule for displaying books by children for children and is a great success story—travelling to libraries, schools, festivals and community centres—from Victoria to Western Australia. Often the cubby acts as a library within a library communicating more powerfully than any words we might use, and provides a centrepiece for a range of workshops empowering children to create and publish their own books.

Last year Kids’ Own developed WePublish, a digital publishing app for the iPad. It allows children to create stories and artwork by hand, or digitally, into a template that is imposed, printed and folded up into a small, but real, eight-page book. We are discovering many ways of using this new publishing tool!

Kids’ Own Publishing and links to the app can be found at http://kidsownpublishing.com
The Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange (REAIE) serves as the Australian liaison to an early childhood approach that has become world-renowned for its inspirational philosophy.

Developed after World War II in the northern Italian city of Reggio Emilia, the unique pedagogical approach regards children as ‘knowledge bearers’ who are encouraged to articulate their thoughts about everyone and everything they encounter during their day.

Reggio Emilia-inspired education also advocates that children must be able to exercise some measure of autonomy over their learning process. Children must have the freedom to pursue self-expression and be allowed to learn experientially—through touching, listening and observing. There is also focus on the many ways children express themselves. Called ‘100 languages’ it includes a strong emphasis on the visual arts and active listening where children’s voices, thoughts and opinions are valued as much as their teachers’.

“It’s a way of thinking, rather than a practice”, Ruth Wallbridge, the chairperson of REAIE, explains. “It’s a way of thinking about teaching and learning and it’s got to become part of your belief system because you cannot say ‘I believe in a strong, confident child,’ and then I can’t give them a glass to drink from because they might break it’. Those two don’t match.”

Global interest in the educational approach was triggered in 1991 when Newsweek magazine proclaimed Reggio Emilia’s preschools to be among the best in the world. A Reggio Emilia International Network emerged, fostering the pedagogical approach in 32 countries. In Australia, this network has 800 members across the country including teachers, parents and tertiary educators.

In recent years, Reggio Emilia-inspired pedagogy has begun to spread beyond the confines of early childhood education. A number of Australian primary schools—both public and private—have expressed a desire to integrate the educational philosophy into their teaching.

Each April, the REAIE coordinates the Australian contingent to an international study tour that provides teachers and educators with an opportunity to study Reggio pedagogy at its source. Held in the city of Reggio Emilia at the picturesque foothills of the Apennine Mountains, study tour participants spend a week at the Loris Malaguzzi International Centre, which was named after the founder of the Reggio Emilia philosophy.

On average, each study tour has about 400 participants from around the world, of whom about 100 in recent years have come from Australia. The program is quite intensive, including evening sessions, and because each session is carefully designed to facilitate sequential knowledge building, consistent attendance is crucial. Lectures are provided in English and Italian with translation.

In 2015, the study tour took place from 12 to 18 April, and now is the time to start planning for next year. The program generally includes visits to preschools and toddler centres in Reggio Emilia, as well as seminars by teachers and pedagogical experts. The regular subject matter includes:

• history of the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education
• children as citizens with rights
• the pedagogy of listening, and school as a system of interactions and relationships
• the ‘100 Languages of Children’
• parental involvement in the life of the school.

There’s also opportunities to socialise and study tour participants can chat over dinner and at late-afternoon ‘get togethers’. The REAIE sends two study tour leaders who accompany the Australian contingent to Reggio Emilia and are ‘on call’ throughout.

A group accommodation booking is made for Australian tour participants at the Astoria Hotel in inner-Reggio Emilia. While not compulsory, REAIE organisers have found that having the entire Australian contingent resident in a single venue encourages mutual support and simplifies logistical requirements.

While study tour participants are required to make their own travel arrangements, the REAIE is happy to provide the details of its preferred
travel agent. This year departure was available from all Australian capital cities via Singapore (where participants could meet) and Milan. These arrangements permit study tour participants to either travel together, or meet in Italy before the program commences.

REAIE has found that arriving in Reggio Emilia a few days before the formal program begins provides an opportunity to settle in, acculturate and cultivate social relationships with other participants. Friends and partners are welcome to join the social element of the group, but they will not be able to participate in the formal study program.

REAIE organises briefing meetings in each Australian state one month before the study tour begins. Study tour leaders and local Australian Reggio Emilia Network conveners are also happy to answer participants’ questions. Subject matter readings are provided to participants prior to their departure from Australia to assist participants’ ability to get the most out of the study tour.

“One of the real advantages of doing it [the study tour] through REAIE is that it’s also fantastic for networking,” Wallbridge said. “So you’re actually connecting with like-minded educators, and when you come back you’ve got someone who’s been through the same thing.”

The cost of the 2015 Reggio Emilia study tour was AUS$2800, which is generally tax deductible for educators and teachers. This covers the cost of meetings, presentations, morning and afternoon teas, local travel to schools and the Reggio Children farewell reception. This sum includes a 20 per cent Italian government tax collected for professional study by international visitors. It also encompasses the cost of pre-tour readings, meetings and two Australian study tour leaders as well as general administration costs.

Study tour participants also must bear the cost of their own accommodation. A block of rooms is usually reserved at the Astoria Hotel in the centre of Reggio Emilia. The current conference rates are:

- single room—(one person only) approximately AUS$150 per night depending on currency fluctuations
- double or twin room—(one or two persons) approximately AUS$200 per night depending on currency fluctuations. (It is not possible to triple-share a room except for a family with a child under seven years of age).

To reserve one of these rooms at these special conference rates participants must make their bookings through the REAIE-approved travel agent. Only 18 single rooms are available and these will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis for those staying the entire 11 nights. All study tour participants must take out an international travel insurance policy that will cover medical expenses, accidents or loss.

Places on the tour are highly sought and fill quickly. For further information on how to register visit the REAIE website.

Visit the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange at: www.reaie.org.au

Visit Reggio Children at: www.reggiochildren.it

Join the Reggio Emilia Australia Information Exchange at: www.reaie.org.au/membership

“It’s a way of thinking about teaching and learning and it’s got to become part of your belief system.”
I n October last year, teacher Michelle Scheu received news that the former Queensland minister for education, John-Paul Langbroek, wanted to visit her classroom in the coastal town of Buderim. It wasn’t entirely a surprise because she’d had the opportunity to speak with him previously, and he’d proved to be a very good listener.

Scheu’s discourse with the former education minister began after she was presented with a 2013 National Excellence in Teaching Award (NEiTA) at the Grand Hyatt in Melbourne in March 2014. He invited her to attend his education summit, and there Scheu spoke with him about a concern close to her heart—the diminishing practice of play-based learning in the early years of schooling.

During the 30 minutes Langbroek spent in her classroom at Chevallum State School, Scheu had a further opportunity to express her concerns. And the minister, it appears, was keen to listen. He called a meeting of his departmental heads to discuss how the curriculum translated into early learning environments, and whether it was the optimum way to teach young children. He followed a month later by having his department prepare a submission about curriculum issues to take to the Education Council with the ministers.

On a mission to ensure play-based learning is an integral part of the Australian curriculum, Scheu has become well known for her advocacy. Her message that “play isn’t optional but essential” is growing into a widely supported view. She has produced four YouTube videos and the best-known Let the children play, which was published in September 2014, has more than 4000 views. She is also increasingly hearing from other teachers wanting advice and assistance to incorporate play-based learning into their classrooms.

Teaching Prep and Year One at Chevallum State School, Scheu still actively designs her own curriculum. She plays the guitar, sings and even raps with her students. She also integrates principles of Reggio Emilia, Gardner’s multiple intelligences, Steiner, Piaget, Vygotsky, Montessori and Bronfenbrenner. Teachers and educators need an extensive toolkit of theoretical knowledge, she said, so they can draw on it for children’s individual needs.

With the shift from developmental curriculum to content-based curriculum, teachers and educators “have to be more savvy to include play-based learning in the Australian curriculum,” Scheu said. They should be asking: “Where are these children developmentally, and how can I help them advance?”, rather than focusing on getting “information into their heads”.

“The children love it. The parents love it,” Scheu said, and “the results are very positive”. The Thinking Play method has seven stages. It begins with a provocation—an idea, experience, book, community concern or curriculum necessity. The children then progress to whole-class planning, followed by small-group planning where they use large sheets of white paper to map the development of their idea. During this stage they talk, exchange ideas, negotiate, participate in teamwork and actively work towards a common goal.

“Subject areas are seamlessly interwoven into a learning experience that makes sense to children,” Scheu said. “They ask meaningful questions,” and “learn...
important social skills.” After the children work through the planning stages, they share their event with great excitement and pride. Finally, in the last stage they reflect on all their documentation and question and enquire about the process they used. It’s clear watching Scheu’s YouTube videos, that the children are highly motivated and interested in the whole process, and demonstrate a strong sense of ownership of their own learning.

‘Children are not just vessels to be filled with information’, Scheu said. “They’re really intelligent thinkers and if we give them a chance and trust them to be co-designers—so they’re having input and contributing ideas as well—the curriculum is much richer and much more exciting.”

Trusting children to be curriculum co-designers is a difficult task for some teachers according to Scheu. The curriculum expectations are being set so high in Australia that some teachers are sending Prep students home with homework because they can’t keep up with the content, she explained.

Her advice to teachers is “Don’t rush, and learn it properly,” and she’s fond of the Henry David Thoreau quote “The more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core.”

Opening its doors in 1921 with 13 students, Chevallum Primary School has grown over the decades to accommodate 500 students. A number of the children live closer to other schools, but their parents elect to drive the extra distance for the education offered by Chevallum.

Scheu’s teaching is one of the reasons for the school’s popularity and her Prep classroom has a permanent waiting list. During her 23 years at the school she has enjoyed the support of a principal who shares an equally strong early learning philosophy—and who still sees teachers as curriculum designers.

Chevallum was the first primary school in Queensland to undertake an overseas exchange to Italy. It’s had a Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden since 2010, and it enjoys an ongoing relationship with a New York university that reaps great professional development opportunities.

In 2011, Scheu went to Italy to attend the renowned Reggio Emilia week-long study tour. They’re at the “forefront of thinking in the world of children at that age level”, she said. “What you get out of that week is so rich—they’ve designed it to make you think and evaluate what you do with children.” Scheu anticipates she’d have to go back several times to absorb the depth of knowledge embedded in the approach.

“Although, it must be so frustrating having that wonderful experience and coming back to the restrictions of the Australian curriculum,” she added. Scheu wants to give children more time to create and to learn to grow without the great rush to be little adults. “There’s so much panic in education to use every single second,” she said. “That’s the largest effect of the national curriculum where there is so much content expected, and so many high goals to achieve that aren’t really age-appropriate.”

Children don’t have that lovely fluid time to sit down and chat about what they’re learning and to reflect on it,” she added.

Michelle Scheu’s YouTube videos:
Let the children play: http://bit.ly/1wN6yB4
Time to learn: http://bit.ly/1BzKB8y
Look out for new clips and e-guides from Michelle soon on ASG’s websites asg.com.au and asg.co.nz

Seven steps of the Thinking Play method

1. Provocation
2. Whole-class planning
3. Becoming involved
4. Small group learning
5. Enacting
6. Culmination
7. Documentation

Left: Thinking Play in action
In 1994, the Australian Scholarships Group (ASG) CEO Terry O’Connell launched the National Excellence in Teaching Awards (NEiTA). O’Connell, who was also chairperson of the NEiTA Advisory Council, founded a legacy that day that has grown stronger and more relevant every year of its 20-year history.

It began in the ballroom of the Hilton Hotel when co-founder and ASG president Harry Tyler presented 12 outstanding teachers with cash grants of $5000 each. As the award recipients leant over their iced soufflés in chocolate cups with orange segments, each of them was called up to accept an award for doing a job they loved.

The inaugural recipients were followed a year later by another dozen inspirational teachers. One of them, Jan Duffy, a primary school teacher from Western Australia contributed a paper to the proceedings. She wrote about her teaching practice in the 1970s and “how colourful and refreshing and untainted the children’s writing” had been in “pre-television days”. Those children, she said, spent “most of their leisure hours either listening to radio serials or playing ball games or exploring the mud flats and tidal creeks”. She went on to describe television as “a passive robber of children’s imagination”.

Fast-forward to 2007 and to NEiTA recipient Jenni McDonald, who taught early learners at Caravonica State School in Queensland. She was asked: “How has teaching changed over the years?”

“With the advent of the World Wide Web”, she replied, “access to current information is now at our fingertips—brilliant for keeping teachers and children motivated to learn”.

These comments, a mere 13 years apart, demonstrate the rapid evolution of teaching methods, and the vast changes that have swept the Australian educational landscape over the past two to four decades.

ASG has been supporting children’s education for more than 40 years, and through its NEiTA program has been encouraging and rewarding great teaching for the past 20 years. Since 1994, ASG has received more than 25,000 NEiTA nominations and awarded more than 1000 teachers with cash grants.

In March this year, the 2014 NEiTA awards were held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Melbourne. Once again, a dozen inspirational Australian teachers were celebrated and admired for their valuable and unique efforts, and, as ASG has come to expect, it was a magnificent event.

NEiTA is the only community-centred teaching awards program in Australia. Nominations for teachers and educators are submitted by school parents, school councils, parent associations, committees of management and community organisations. This coalface nomination method is unique, and the quality of recipients proves year after year that it is the most effective selection process available.

At the award ceremony this year Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Education and Training Senator the Hon Scott Ryan spoke to a roomful of recipients and guests. NEiTA Chairperson Allen Blewitt shared an inspirational speech, and 2013 NEiTA early childhood award recipient Michelle Scheu was a charismatic master of ceremonies.

Guest speaker Dr Ken Boston AO, former director-general of NSW Education and member of the Gonski review panel, delivered a poignant speech, and last year’s ASG International Space Camp recipient Kate Smith had fellow teachers and educators wide-eyed as she described her experiences at NASA in the United States. After the awards, she was seen chatting to the newest space camper and NEiTA recipient Michael Harris from Kairi State School.
Lisa Cairns is an early childhood intervention educator who teaches children with disabilities from birth to six years of age. Many of the children Lisa teaches have high levels of anxiety, and many are on the autism spectrum. It’s also often their first experience away from their families and Lisa has to work very hard to establish their trust. But once that is accomplished, she believes “the sky is the limit”. Lisa includes a lot of fun in her program because she believes children who are having fun are more open to learning.

Ariel Wadick is a kindergarten teacher who has been teaching early learners for a happy and fulfilling 12 years. Previously, Ariel studied design—which, she believes, equipped her with the essential creative skills that form the basis of her teaching. Ariel implements her program predominantly through the creative arts as open-ended experiences where the children engage and learn at their own pace. She believes in teaching the whole child and aims to provide multi-sensory experiences that include active play and time outdoors.

Denise Ansingh has been teaching young children for 31 years, and she’s loved every minute of it. Denise is a teacher whose vast experience doesn’t inhibit her enthusiasm for ongoing professional learning. Recently, Denise attended a Reggio Emilia International Study Tour in Northern Italy, and has since incorporated principles of that experience into her own teaching. She has created a beautiful classroom with an atelier for children’s artistic expression, and has worked for many hours in the garden designing and creating enchanting learning spaces for the children. Working out-of-school hours Denise created a bushland area and an ‘Imaginarium’ for the children.

Leanne Gardiner is passionate about early learning. With 52 children aged from birth to five years at her centre, and with 25 of them in her preschool class, Leanne’s pedagogical expertise is well utilised. Leanne is currently implementing the You Can Do It! Education program, which develops social and emotional skills in children. Leanne is a keen international traveller and has designed innovative ways to include the children in her experiences. Recently, she visited Peru and personally delivered craft items to a school there on behalf of her students.
Family daycare educators provide a unique service to their community by offering personalised, flexible education and care within their own homes.

Unlike educators and teachers in early learning centres and kindergartens, family daycare educators teach and care for up to seven children each day, including babies and children up to 12 years of age. These educators often ferry children about, dropping them off and picking them up from school or kindergarten, using their own vehicles or travelling on public transport.

“The transportation needs of family daycare educators can be quite complex,” Zora Marko, project manager of the ‘Starting Out Safely’ program with Early Learning Association Australia, (ELAA) said.

Family daycare is one of the fastest growing services in the early childhood sector. Last year, the number of services in Australia rose to 829, a 35 per cent increase compared with the previous year. Victoria has 339 services.

ELAA, a peak organisation representing parents and early childhood services, delivers road safety education programs and professional development to early childhood educators and services in Victoria on behalf of the road safety authority, VicRoads.

“It’s not unusual for the educators to make up to six separate trips in their cars every day, taking children to and from school, kindergarten or other regular outings,” Marko said. “And when you’ve got different children on different days, you have to change your child car seats in your car according to each child’s needs.”

Fortunately, new resources launched this year mean that Australia’s family daycare services will now have support to safely transport children in their care. Road safety and early childhood experts have developed the methods in a new best practice policy called ‘Safe Transport Policy (Family Day Care)’.

ELAA worked with VicRoads, Family Day Care Australia and other peak bodies in the family daycare sector, as well as leading early childhood experts, to develop the Safe Transport Policy. This new policy is also based on the Best Practice Guidelines for the Safe Transportation of Children in Vehicles published by Neuroscience Research Australia.

Studies by road safety researchers show that almost all young children in Australia (98 per cent) use child restraints when they travel in cars. Unfortunately, about one quarter of these children are using the wrong type of restraint for their age, and about 70 per cent of the restraints are incorrectly installed or used.

Wrongly installed or used child car seats have alarming consequences for children in a car crash. A recent study by Australian road safety researchers—published in Pediatrics—estimates that 42 per cent of child deaths in car crashes and 55 per cent of injuries could be eliminated if all children aged one to six years were travelling in an appropriate child car seat that was correctly installed.

Car crashes are one of the leading causes of child death in Australia. Several thousand children aged birth to six years are hospitalised each year from injuries sustained in car crashes.

The policies in the Safe Transport Policy go beyond the minimum legal requirements outlined in Australian road laws. For example, it is legal to use a safety harness (also known as a H-harness) for children travelling in cars in Victoria, but the policy recommends against their use.
because research shows that safety harnesses provide no safety advantages over lap-sash seat belts and may, in fact, increase the risk of injury.

“The law sets minimum standards for the safe transportation of children,” Marko said. “But we still need to do the best we can to protect children and keep them safe while travelling, especially when we’ve got the scientific evidence and the knowledge about the sorts of best practices that should be implemented.

“We understand that we’re setting the bar high with these best practices and that it may take some time for family daycare providers to take on all aspects of the policies,” she added. “ELAA will provide support with education and resources to assist the sector adopt the policies.”

VicRoads has funded ELAA to train Victorian family daycare providers, coordinators and educators about the new Safe Transport Policy as part of its early childhood road safety program Starting Out Safely. The new policy can be used by services throughout Australia and New Zealand. ELAA is also working with the sector to develop resources and information kits, which will be available free of charge on the ELAA website.

ELAA’s Chief Executive Officer Shane Lucas said the Safe Transport Policy was a great example of how diverse organisations could work together to create practical improvements for educators, children and families in early learning services.

Handy links
www.elaa.org.au
www.childcarseats.com.au

Going the extra distance
Know the facts about transporting children in cars safely*

Know the law in your state
Go to your state road authority website for the road laws relating to child restraints.

Use the safest child restraints
Go to childcarseats.com.au for information on the safety ratings of child restraints. They are also rated on ease of use and the dimensions and weight of the restraints is provided. The policy recommends only using child restraints with a four star safety rating.

H-harnesses and accessories
It is recommended that child restraint accessories are not used unless prescribed by a health professional, such as an occupational therapist. Child safety harnesses (H-harnesses) are not recommended. Child safety harnesses offer no additional protection over lap-sash seatbelts when used with boosters in frontal crashes, and can encourage submarining, which is associated with abdominal and lumbar spine injuries. They should only be considered for use in a seating position with a lap-only belt used with a booster seat, proven to prevent the child from sliding under the lap belt in a crash.

Adult seat belts and front seat travel
Children travelling in cars are best protected in a correctly installed size-appropriate child restraint until they are approximately 145–150 cm tall or they pass the ‘Five-Step Test’. The policy recommends that children do not sit in the front seat of a car until they are over 145 cm tall.

P-platers
The policy asks providers to consider their position in relation to who is authorised to drive children. Statistics show that P-plate drivers are the most likely to have crashes that involve casualties especially in the first 12 months of holding their licence. We ask that you consider whether it is feasible for your service to have a position that only fully licensed drivers are authorised drivers.

Say no to booster cushions
Booster cushions were removed from the 2010 Australian/New Zealand Standards. Family daycare services should use booster seats not booster cushions.

*Source: ‘Safe Transport Policy (Family Day Care)’

The Five-Step Test
For a child to be able to sit in an adult seatbelt, the answers to all these questions should be ‘yes’.

1. Can the child sit with their back against the vehicle seat back?
2. Do the child’s knees bend in front of the edge of the seat?
3. Does the sash belt sit across the middle of the shoulder?
4. Is the lap belt sitting low across the hips touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?
Thirty-seven years ago, in 1978, a group of Melbourne mothers found they couldn’t return to work after the birth of their children because there was no available childcare. Determined not to accept their predicament, they set about creating a solution.

The group registered as a co-operative in 1979, purchased a timber Edwardian house with a garden in Wellington Street, Flemington, and commenced renovation in 1981.

By 1982, the new Flemington Childcare Co-operative opened to local parents with 20 enrolments. The community, not-for-profit, parent-run centre is a rarity in the city today where larger corporate and institutional-run centres dominate the landscape. Currently, 31 children are happily ensconced across three rooms in the former house, along with three kindergarten teachers and eight early learning educators.

Even more impressive is the longevity of the original team’s dedication and commitment. Three decades later, at retirement age, some of the women are still living locally and still keen to keep up to date with what’s happening at the co-op.

“They’re an amazing group of women,” centre director Daniela Kavoukis said, and “if I need to call on them for things I can".

The centre feels like a home and that’s exactly the way Kavoukis intends it to be. There are no shiny polished spaces, but a comfortable, cosy atmosphere where joy is a constant companion. She wants parents to embrace this familiarity too, and to know they are leaving their children in a place that mirrors the environment of their own homes.

“It’s a big challenge to keep what we have,” Kavoukis said, acknowledging the uniqueness of her centre.

“We have a program that’s different”, she added, explaining that the emphasis was on stability and belonging. “We focus on what we would like children to experience in their childhood here, and also what we would like them to carry with them as skills for life.”

Building connections to the local community is an important component of that philosophy and the children often venture out to local places. Luckily, this means they just walk down their leafy, tree-lined street in Flemington to the bank, police station, post office, library, and the fruit and vegetable shop. These everyday experiences—where the children engage with local shopkeepers, bank tellers and policemen and women—help them learn about relationships and day-to-day life. The children also visit the local nursing home.

“Our work is based on resilience, confidence and being active citizens in the local community,” Kavoukis said.

Her team of teachers and educators work hard to mirror the children’s real life experiences back into the centre, and to build on their sense of belonging and place.

Kavoukis keeps a watchful eye over the co-op budget. With a 100-year-old building and a centre that operates “purely on families’ fees,” she works hard to ensure they work in sustainable ways and use their resources thoughtfully.

The absence of ongoing government funding makes the co-op a model that politicians are keen to see in action. “We try to open our doors when we can,” Kavoukis said, and she recently hosted a group of state MPs who visited the centre.

Seven co-op parents make up the board, which is independent, voluntary and not attached at all to the local council.

Good leadership is an essential part of Kavoukis’ role, and providing professional development for her staff is a priority. They “work as a collaborative team bouncing ideas off each other”, she said, and she encourages them to take a team approach to curriculum planning, study and other issues that arise.

As director, Kavoukis takes ultimate responsibility for the children’s safety and learning, but she also takes her staff’s needs very seriously.
She wants to see them happy, developing professionally and empowered. She’s pleased when the teachers and educators “pull together” and make decisions when she’s attending to matters off-site.

Staff meetings are held fortnightly and Kavoukis organises one-on-one meetings with each member of staff. She also encourages the staff to talk to each other about their work.

Three or four times a year the teachers and educators enjoy regular in-house training from Anthony Semann of Semann & Slattery. Kavoukis keeps the same consultant coming back regularly because the team has a strong relationship with him. “It allows the team to be very comfortable with him and to say what they really think instead of sitting there saying ‘I’m not brave enough to say this to a different person’,” she explained.

Taking time out from a caring profession to reflect and discuss professional practice with colleagues is also important to Kavoukis. To promote this goal, she organises twilight sessions at her centre for her staff to share knowledge and network with educators and teachers from other centres. “We started a couple of years ago, and it’s proved hugely successful, she said. “The buzz at the last session was fantastic.”

In December 2014, the co-op received a very welcome long-day service grant of $30,000, from the federal government, to fund staff professional development for the next three years. This money will enable Kavoukis to seek out further training and professional experiences for her staff.

A strong believer that a single teaching philosophy is not enough to cater for the needs of any one community, Kavoukis is a great admirer of Reggio Emilia. After visiting Italy last year, she was inspired and motivated to share some of her learnings with her own staff, although she says the history and culture of the co-op must also be honoured.

As an ASG National Excellence in Teaching Award (NEITA) recipient in 2013, Kavoukis travelled to New Zealand in 2014 to learn about the early learning practices there. She discovered that collaboration was the common denominator in successful early learning settings. “What I was able to draw from it”, she said, “was the way they all collaborate … whether it be from 3pm to 6pm, or every Tuesday night in staff meetings”.

Kavoukis is on the executive of the Children’s Services Coordinators Association (CSCA). With 81 members, CSCA actively supports early learning coordinators from community-owned, not-for-profit services across Victoria. Among her duties, Kavoukis helps to organise four seminars a year for coordinators.

“It’s about looking at what’s happening in the early childhood profession in Victoria and seeing what needs to be talked about,” she said of her CSCA role.

Kavoukis—who has taught for 15 years and is currently studying for her masters—is clearly one of the sector’s brightest young advocates.

“Our work is based on resilience, confidence and being active citizens in the local community.”
Lessons for little chefs

It’s never too young to start learning about healthy food and creating positive associations with it, but engaging little ones on the subject requires a tailored approach.

**KATE WENGIER**

You can’t easily explain to a young child why a food is ‘healthy’ or what ‘healthy’ really means—but the truth is, you don’t need to. Creating a positive association with healthy food starts with two simple things—regular exposure and fun. Below are a few ways you can include healthy food in your day-to-day activities:

**Incorporate colourful fruits and veggies into everyday activities**
Are you talking about colours with your early learners? Then use fruit and vegetables as props. Working on counting? Count carrots. Playing a memory game? Use a banana, an apple, a carrot and an eggplant and take one away. Get vegetable cutters for play dough, and make pretend soup and ensure the home corner has lots of fruit and vegetables. If you’re role-playing, why not have a green grocer theme? It’s easy to start incorporating healthy foods into tasks.

**Do simple cooking activities**
There are plenty of foods little hands can help prepare including fruit salad, wraps, dips with veggies, bread sushi, and vegetable or fruit kebabs using iceblock sticks. Kids can help wash and cut the vegetables (with child-safe knives if over two years of age), and they can help combine and stir ingredients as well.

**Be polite to food**
When it comes to taste testing after cooking activities and during eating times, encourage children to be polite to food and use positive, descriptive language. This is an important habit that’s good to establish from a young age because being rude to food is one of the most difficult habits to break in older children. Ideally, you don’t want children to think it’s acceptable to proclaim ‘Yuck!’ if they don’t like a particular food. To counter this, develop a culture of describing foods—how they taste, smell and
what the texture is—even when the child doesn’t like it. Perhaps make a rule that they have to find at least one nice thing to say about a food.

**Keep the benefits of healthy food relevant and meaningful**

You may not be able to explain complicated concepts such as carbohydrates, sugars and fats, but you can describe the benefits of eating certain foods in a way young children will understand.

For example, particular foods will help make them strong so they can run fast and jump high while other foods will help them remember the alphabet and learn their numbers. This also applies when teaching key messages. For example, the lesson of eating a range of fruit and vegetables every day can be turned into a fun and simple age-appropriate message for younger children—‘eat more colours’. It’s much easier to encourage children to go shopping with their family to help select their colours for the week, than talking about the number of serves of fruit and vegetables they should be consuming.

No matter what the task, it should always be fun. Allowing children to have some freedom of choice and an opportunity for hands-on learning engages their different senses and contributes to important early learning.

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**Bread sushi**

**INGREDIENTS**

- 8 slices wholemeal or multigrain bread
- For vegetarian fillings
  - ½ avocado
  - ½ carrot
  - ½ red capsicum
  - ½ cucumber
  - low fat cheese, grated (optional)
- For tuna fillings
  - 2 x 100 g can tuna in spring water
  - 1/2 celery stalk
  - 2 x 125 g can creamed corn
  - handful spinach leaves
  - 1 tablespoon mayonnaise or low fat cheese, grated (optional)

**METHOD**

Using a rolling pin, flatten bread slightly. Remove edges from sides of bread.

**Vegetarian filling**

1. Using half the avocado, spread 4 slices of bread with avocado.
2. Wash veggies.
3. Cut veggies.
4. Place veggies on top of bread leaving a 2 cm strip along top edge.
5. Top with grated cheese (optional).
6. Roll up to enclose fillings.

**Tuna filling**

1. Drain tuna.
2. Wash and dice celery.
3. Combine tuna, celery and creamed corn in bowl (add mayonnaise and/or cheese).
4. Spread tuna filling over remaining 4 slices, leaving a 2 cm strip along top edge.
5. Top with spinach leaves.
6. Roll up to enclose fillings.

Kate is a dietitian and mum to four young kids. She specialises in the development of fun, healthy eating resources, education sessions and products for teachers, educators, carers and parents. For colourful recipes, activity ideas and other helpful resources visit foost.com.au
A CURRY FOR MURRAY
Author: Kate Hunter
Illustrator: Lucia Masciullo
Publisher: University of Queensland Press, 2015
Format: hardcover
RRP: $24.95

This rhyming picture-book for early learners is written by Kate Hunter and superbly illustrated by Lucia Masciullo. Molly cooks a curry for Murray because he is alone after his partner Maureen goes into hospital. Her generous act travels by word of mouth and before long Molly’s neighbours, friends and relatives are requesting meals. It doesn’t end there, though, and Molly’s reputation for giving reaches New York and Seoul. But then she slips over, hurts her ankle and has to stop. Finally, her neighbours reciprocate by giving her a small gift. The Roman philosopher, Seneca, said “Wherever there is a human being, there is an opportunity for kindness,” and this lovely book exemplifies those words perfectly.

A LIFE IN THE SPACE
Authors: Children at North Melbourne Children’s Centre
Publisher: Kids’ Own Publishing, 2014
Format: softcover
RRP: $15. To purchase go to www.kidsownpublishing.com/kids-own-library/

The children at North Melbourne Children’s Centre worked with the Kids’ Own Publishing artist Nikita Burt to generate ideas, artwork and words for A life in space. This delightful little book of original poetry is written with spontaneity and great joy. It also demonstrates the value of working collaboratively. As the children made their artwork they began rhyming words and later developed these rhymes into poetry for the book.

“There are lots of things that us kinder kids can do
We are bridges … upside down in the ground
We are butterflies … whooshhh … sizzle pizzle
We are a moon … flying the sky at night
We are fairies … with magic beans
We are superheroes … ah … the letter E is eating a queen
We are lego plego … this is our life in the space.”

THERE’S A PARK OUTSIDE MY WINDOW
Authors: Kindergarten students at The Royal Children’s Hospital
Publisher: Kids’ Own Publishing, 2014
Format: softcover
RRP: $15. To purchase go to www.kidsownpublishing.com/kids-own-library/

There’s a park outside my window is published by Kids’ Own Publishing. This not-for-profit publisher provides a platform for children to share their stories and images in their own words. Written by children in the kindergarten program at the Royal Children’s Hospital this lovely book is full of poetic prose about the creatures they imagine live in the park outside their hospital window. It also has a Q&A section with “Tom from Melbourne Zoo” who answers a variety of questions such as “Why are baby tigers so big when they are born?” and “What do ducks eat if nobody gives them bread?”.
A book for every child

THE UNDERWATER FANCY-DRESS PARADE

Author: Davina Bell
Illustrator: Allison Colpoys
Format: hardcover picture-book
Publisher: Scribe
RRP: $24.99
http://bit.ly/18Jn5j0

Author Davina Bell and award-winning illustrator Allison Colpoys have created a small masterpiece in The underwater fancy-dress parade. In this book for three to seven-year-olds they tackle children’s anxiety—the socially terrified, panic-stricken type—and the result is an exquisite story that is both subtle and profound.

Alfie is going to the ‘Underwater Fancy-Dress Parade’, but the day before it he gets “that feeling”—the same feeling he’s had on several other occasions—and he wants to hide. He is full of self-doubt and he knows he isn’t brave enough to conquer his fears.

Using the ocean as a metaphor for Alfie’s fears, Bell masterfully introduces a number of angry sea creatures into the little boy’s dreams. Then we turn the page to see him, in one of Copley’s most poignant images, bent over carrying the entire ocean on his back.

Colpoys and Bell have worked in harmonious tandem throughout this book. At times the words step back and let the illustrations do the talking, and at other times they support Bell’s exquisite storytelling.

“So often the illustrations said exactly what I wanted to say,” Bell said, “They’re innocent, nuanced and delicate, and the colours are so fresh.”

In writing this book Bell said she was interested in “the tiny moments that seem so trivial to an adult—that are so profound and character-forming for children”.

She wanted to “deal with a moment where Alfie is not able to overcome his fears in the first instance” and what he did in that moment of not living up to his ideals.

“That’s where you forge your identity”, Bell explained, “so I wanted to provide an outlet for kids to think about not always being able to live up to their anxieties”.

Bell’s tender message for children that being anxious “doesn’t mean you’re not going to be able to do it one day”, is exquisitely modelled by Alfie’s parents who respond with wisdom and sensitivity to his fears.

This is a book for every child who suffers from anxiety, and for others who need to understand it.

Above left: Davina Bell
Above right: Allison Colpoys

Give-away

Early Horizons has 10 copies of The underwater fancy-dress parade by Davina Bell to give away. To submit an entry, email your name and/or organisation and postal address to earlyhorizons@asg.com.au with ‘book give-away’ in the subject line. Entries close 30 June 2015. Winners will be chosen by ASG after the close of entries to provide a mix from Australia, New Zealand and various states and regions.

Conditions of entry

One entry permitted per person or organisation. This is not a game of skill; readers must email their name and/or organisation and postal address to earlyhorizons@asg.com.au with ‘book give-away’ in the subject line, by the competition closing date. ASG’s decisions as to entries, the allocation of winners across countries, states and regions, and the declaration of winners are final and no discussion or correspondence will be entered into. The winners’ names will be published in the next issue of Early Horizons.
Research snippets

HAPPINESS LESSONS FOR FIVE-YEAR-OLDS
A major study in Britain has recommended that all children receive happiness lessons.

Former British health minister Professor Lord Darzi, and economist and former government adviser Professor Lord Layard have proposed that all children from the age of five years spend one hour each week talking about their emotions, goals and online activity.

Both professors, according to The Telegraph, have warned that schools are becoming “exam factories” and the mental health of young students is receiving too little attention.

The report, which was presented to a global health summit in February, found that one in 10 children and teenagers in Britain is being diagnosed with anxiety and depression.

The professors urged schools to adopt programs that place the same emphasis on mental health and wellbeing as they do on academic subjects.

BEHIND THE FIGURES
A qualitative case study of pre-kindergarten teachers in the United States has discovered two important findings in their level of mathematical expertise.

The first was that “teachers varied in their level of attending to and scaffolding their students’ mathematical thinking”.

The second, more significant finding, was that although “some teachers could successfully engage their students’ mathematical thinking, they could not articulate how they interpreted that thinking”.

Researcher Jae-Eun Lee, in the Australian Journal of Early Childhood (Vol. 39, No. 4) concluded that the study recipients’ “knowledge of children’s mathematical thinking was tacit rather than explicit”.

She added that the results should inform teacher education to focus on developing explicit knowledge.

SLEEP INTERVENTION IMPROVES ADHD SYMPTOMS, SLEEP AND BEHAVIOUR
A sleep intervention trial recently conducted by the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute could improve the severity of symptoms in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Published in the British Medical Journal, the intervention improved children’s sleep, their behaviour, quality of life and school attendance for three to six months post-intervention.

Lead researcher Associate Professor Harriet Hiscock said parents and teachers also reported benefits from the intervention.

The randomised trial involved psychologists or trainee paediatricians delivering sleep behavioural strategies in fortnightly face-to-face consultations. Families received a “tailored behavioural sleep management plan specific to their child’s sleep problem”.

Associate Professor Hiscock said the findings suggested “that clinical management of sleep symptoms can reap great benefits for the considerable number of children with ADHD who have moderate to severe behavioural sleep problems”.

Research snippets
The You Can Do It! Education Early Childhood Program

A Social-emotional Learning Curriculum (ages 4–6)

This structured learning program provides a missing piece in the Early Childhood Curriculum. It has been specifically designed to accelerate the social-emotional development of children and focuses on five key foundation principles—Confidence, Persistence, Organisation, Getting along and Resilience.

The resources in the program have been developed to enhance the motivation, engagement and wellbeing of young children.

Workshops are available for staff and parents. Enquire today by calling 1800 803 135 or email youcandoit@asg.com.au

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*Conditions apply, see www.asg.com.au/early. Only open to Australian and New Zealand residents aged 18+ years with at least one child aged under 18 years as of 21/12/15. Eligible child. Ends 5 pm AEDST (manual entries) and 11:59 pm AEDST (online entries) 10/12/15. Maximum one entry per household. Draw 1/492 St Kilda Rd, Melb; VIC 3004 at 3 pm AEDST 21/12/15. Winners of prize over $250 in The Australian 13/1/16. Prizes (1 x $7500 towards ASG fund/s for up to three eligible children (1st Prize); 1 x $5000 towards ASG fund/s for up to two eligible children (2nd Prize); 1 x $2500 towards ASG fund/s for one eligible child (3rd Prize); 10 x ASG’s Little Learner Packs ($49.99 each); 10 x MY ASG membership ($29.99 each). Promoter: Australian Scholarships Group Friendly Society Limited (ABN 21 087 648 879), 23—35 Hanover St, Oakleigh VIC 3166 (Australia). Permits: NSW LTPS/14/10150, VIC 14/6053, ACT TP14/04474, SA 23—35 Hanover St, Oakleigh VIC 3166 (Australia). Rentals: NSW LTR/14/10130, VIC 14/10623, ACT TPS/14/0307, SA T/SE/4007.