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Romp & Stomp Wrap Up

Thank you to all the children, families and carers who joined us at Romp & Stomp Fun Day for Children on Wednesday 26 October at the Melbourne Museum.



Celebrating Children’s Week and highlighting the value of education, experiences and diversity in early childhood development, Romp & Stomp Fun Day for Children aged 0 to 5 years, offers a variety of fun and educational activities designed to engage, entertain and explore different aspects of early childhood learning.

2016 saw our collaborative relationship continue, with fkaCS participating in the organising committee and activities on the day.

This year, a small team of fkaCS Bilingual Workers and a Consultant participated in four bilingual story time sessions with stories and children’s songs shared in English and Mandarin, Cantonese, Dari and Farsi.

All bilingual storytime sessions were deemed a success, with children and families positively immersed and engaged throughout.

We’re already looking forward to Romp & Stomp 2017!

Source: <http://rompandstomp.org.au/> Accessed: 30/11/2016

fkaCS Library open for online requests, drop-offs

We’re settling in nicely at our new office in Collingwood and the Multicultural Resource Centre (library) is open for online requests and returns via mail/drop-off to:

FKA Children’s Services
42 Dight St
Collingwood VIC 3066

Additional works are still required in the space surrounding the library – including creation of a larger meeting space – so we’ll open the library for (safe) browsing in the New Year.

AGM Reflections

We're pleased to report our 107th Annual General Meeting held in November was a success, with *fkaCS* board member, Professor Mindy Blaise, presenting a fascinating talk touching on children's development, agency and the cultural politics of childhood. Another highlight was the awarding of *fkaCS* Life Membership to Rosemary Waite.

Reflections from Denise Rundle, *fkaCS* President, on *Bringing Childhood Studies to Early Childhood Education: Provocations and Possibilities* presented by Professor Mindy Blaise

The first part of Professor Mindy Blaise's talk focused on how, historically, the role of developmental psychology in the early childhood education field, served to both give status to early learning but also to narrowly define children's behaviour and learning within a scientific assumption that children's development is universal, predictable and true to all children.

Mindy then went on to discuss how sociology and social anthropologists have progressed the idea that children are part of society, not separate from it; how society and culture have an impact on the way each child experiences their growing up or childhood.

This view has led to the idea of children's agency – that children can act independently, have choices, express ideas and initiate actions – to be included in both the state and national learning frameworks and that there is a societal, cultural and environmental context to the experience of childhood i.e. the cultural politics of childhood.



In the outline describing Mindy's talk, we used the phrase 'responding to the complexity of children's lives'. As a teacher myself, this statement reflects the reality of the children I teach; the transitions children need to make every day from home to kindergarten/school are many, varied and complex. Mindy's talk, and the discussions that followed, both challenged and inspired me to critically reflect on my practice.

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Recognising Rosemary Waite



In acknowledgment of over 20 years of service on the FKA Children's Services Board, Rosemary Waite was awarded *fkaCS* Life Membership.

With insightful, funny and heartfelt speeches from *fkaCS* President, Denise Rundle, current and previous board/life members Dr. Anne Kennedy, Gillian Johnson and Bruna Pasqua and Rosemary herself, the occasion was a highlight enjoyed by all.

Rosemary worked for the Association of Subsidised Child Care Services, formerly Association of Day Nurseries, and around 1993, she moved into the Stewart Street offices, alongside *fkaCS*. The then Executive Director, Dr. Priscilla Clarke, recalls that Rosemary was so helpful and interested in the work of *fkaCS* that she was invited to join the Board. This coincided with an expansion of *fkaCS* to the long day care sector.

During her time on the board, Rosemary brought great insight into the industrial pressures facing services and staff in the long day care and kindergarten sectors as well as the challenges that small child care services faced.

Rosemary always gave clear and valuable feedback about strategic directions and she was never afraid to voice a dissenting opinion, always in a quiet yet forthright way. She drew on both her professional knowledge and experiences of being a 'user' of early years services with her children and grandchildren.

We thank Rosemary for many years of invaluable contribution to the early childhood sector at large, including 20 years of service on the FKA Children's Services Board.



fkaCS News

December 2016

Building Belonging: A toolkit for early childhood educators on cultural diversity and responding to racial prejudice

The [Human Rights Commission's](#) 2015 survey of 'over 400 early childhood educators across Australia, found that 43% of educators said they had heard a child say something negative about another person's racial, cultural or ethnic background and 49% told the Commission they had heard a parent say something negative on the same grounds'.

During the launch of the *Building Belonging* toolkit, Megan Mitchell, Australia's first National Children's Commissioner met with [ACECQA](#) to discuss the toolkit and how it came about. She shared some sobering statistics, such as those above, about the kind of comments educators reported hearing from children and families in their services.

A survey respondent captured the challenge this kind of experience raises for many educators, "I think the main difficulty is that many people feel uncomfortable addressing prejudice. So if a child makes a comment, educators aren't confident in talking about the issue and instead give an answer about how it's not nice to say those things or we're all friends in pre-school."

So how do we – as educators, teachers, parents, care givers – respond in similar circumstances, when something said or expressed, catches you off-guard or even offends you on a personal level?

In response to the survey findings, the Australian Human Rights Commission developed the Building Belonging toolkit.

'The toolkit aims to provide educators with simple and practical ideas on how to handle challenging or confronting questions about racial differences, while also offering children stimulating activities and games to engage them with ideas around cultural diversity'.

[Download the Building Belonging toolkit from the Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

Highlights from ACECQA's discussion with Megan Mitchell, Australia's National Children's Commissioner, are definitely worth a read – view online via ACECQA's October 19 issue of *We Hear You*.

Have you experienced something similar in your service? What did you do to address it? Will you use the toolkit in your service? We'd love to hear from you. Email fkacs@fka.org.au to tell us your story.

Source: <https://wehearyou.acecqa.gov.au/2016/10/19/building-belonging-a-toolkit-for-early-childhood-educators-on-cultural-diversity-and-responding-to-racial-prejudice/> Accessed: 30/11/2016

fkaCS 2016 Expo

Building culturally responsive relationships: Children, families and the community

The *fkaCS 2016 expo, Building culturally responsive relationships: Children, families and the community*, held in Bendigo saw local community services and the Victorian Inclusion Agency partner with *fkaCS* to provide community support information, inspirational learning spaces and a professional development forum for the early childhood education and care services in the Bendigo region.

with the families and children actively participating in their program.

Sue Ghalayini from Bendigo Community Health Services (BCHS) and Kate McInnes from Loddon Campaspe Multicultural Services (LCMS) shared with participants the unique needs and changing demographics of the area, as well as the services available to support newly arrived families in the community.



Shell Shell, an *fkaCS* Bilingual Worker and Chris Gerring, a Kindergarten Teacher at Havilah Road Preschool, shared their journey of building culturally responsive relationships within their diversifying community. Shell shared some of her life experiences and how this information was used to support the growth in understanding and practice at Havilah Road Preschool. Chris was open and honest about the challenges faced within their learning community, and the joys they have experienced by building strong and responsive relationships



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Loddon and Campaspe Multicultural Services, Anglicare, Bendigo Community Health Services, Catholic Care and the Victorian Inclusion Agency provided professional conversations, information and resources regarding the local support systems available to the participating educators and other early childhood professionals.

With thanks to Jane and Nettie from the Victorian Inclusion Agency and *fkaCS* staff, demonstration learning spaces were also available.



The role of the demonstration spaces was to inspire reflection on how learning spaces support the building and strengthening of culturally responsive relationships, to prompt participants to reflect on the spaces currently in their services, and how the intentional use of spaces and resources can reflect the identity, value and sense of belonging we share.

Thanks to [The Foundation of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies](#) for their contribution to the EXPO via a Warrawong Professional Learning grant.



Peter Williams Trust Grant: Applications close February 2017

The Peter Williams Trust Fund was established with a focus on the early childhood years and an acknowledgement of the critical significance of appropriate developmental experiences to later life outcomes.

The Trust Fund supports children and families experiencing financial and social disadvantage.

Applications close Friday 17 February 2017

- [Click here to download the 2017 Grant Application](#)
- How-to-apply and more info can found on the Peter Williams Trust website www.peterwilliamstrust.wordpress.com

Source: <https://peterwilliamstrust.wordpress.com/how-to-apply-for-a-grant/> Accessed: 16/11/2016

Christmas and New Year Closure

fkaCS will be closed from 24 December to 8 January. We will reopen Monday 9 January.

We hope you enjoy this special time of the year catching up with friends and family.

Happy holiday season!