General Manager’s Message

2014 has been another significant year of review and reform for the early childhood education and care sector, with both the Productivity Commission’s public inquiry into childcare and early learning and the Review of the National Partnership Agreement on the National Quality Agenda for early childhood education and care.

NSW has been actively involved in the Review of the National Partnership and I had the pleasure of speaking at a number of the consultation sessions in November. It was very encouraging to see a high level of interest and engagement by services, providers and educators who attended. There is still an opportunity to have your say by making a submission, completing a survey, or making an online comment before Friday 16 January 2015.

The Directorate has also achieved some important milestones in implementing the Government’s agenda for early childhood education and care during the year. Highlights included rollout of the new Preschool Funding Model, the release of the Transition to School Statement, improving the sustainability of services through a new operational support program and the cluster management initiative, and promoting greater accessibility through initiatives such as the Preschool Disability Support Program. We have also continued to streamline our regulatory processes in the management of approvals, funding agreements, and assessment and rating. Further process improvements are planned for roll out in 2015.

Early Childhood Extra has been a major success in 2014, with an 30% increase in subscriptions. It is now one of our major communications with the sector and we thank you for your support.

On a sad note, I would like to acknowledge the McLaughlin family who lost their young son, Thomas, in a holiday road accident at the very beginning of 2014. In memory of Thomas, his family are working to strengthen road safety skills and awareness for young children. It was with this in mind that we asked Kids and Traffic to provide us with some important road safety information for inclusion in our final issue of 2014.

May you and all the children in your care have a safe and peaceful holiday season.

Ruth Callaghan

Keeping kids safe on holidays

With Summer holidays almost upon us, we would like services to take the opportunity to remind families of those things they can do to help keep children safe when out and about in and around vehicles.

Through their Early Childhood Road Safety Education Program, Kids and Traffic, Transport for NSW’s Centre for Road Safety has proposed some key messages for the season. They suggest including these messages in information for families and embedding them into learning experiences for children leading up to holiday time:

- Always hold children’s hands, hold them close or buckle them up safely in a pram or stroller whenever cars are or could be about. Talk with children about all the things you do together to keep safe.
- Actively supervise children while they play and ensure play spaces are fenced or separated from vehicles, driveways and roadways.
- Buckle children up correctly in a properly fitted and adjusted child car seat, right for their age and size.

Visit the Kids and Traffic website to download their Happy holidays! flyer for families and to access a range of road safety education resources for educators and families. These include songs, information sheets and brochures, and ideas for activities that link into the Early Years Learning Framework. You can also book into a free Kids and Traffic professional development workshop.

Images supplied by Kids and Traffic.
Viability funding guiding principles

Six guiding principles have been agreed for development of the Viability Funding Program in consultation with the early childhood sector. Further information is available on our website.

Funding payments for community preschools

The following information applies to community preschools in receipt of funding under the Preschool Funding Model (PFM) and the Preschool Disability Support Program (PDS). Northcott has been appointed Program Manager for the PDS and should be your first point of contact for any questions about PDSP payments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Payment Type</th>
<th>About the Payment</th>
<th>Timeframe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjustments to PFM quarterly payments</td>
<td>The PFM is the funding program under which all community preschools receive funding from NSW DEC.</td>
<td>Funded community preschools received a letter on 28 November advising of any adjustments arising from information submitted as part of the 2014 Annual Preschool Census. If applicable, adjustments will be paid as part of the December 2014 and April 2015 quarterly payments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Universal Disability Loading (UDL) (under the PDSP)</td>
<td>The UDL is a new loading that provides funding to community preschools to support the educational inclusion of children with a disability</td>
<td>The first payment was made to all funded community preschools on 8 December 2014.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child-Focused Targeted Support (CFTS) (under the PDSP)</td>
<td>CFTS provides funding to assist community preschools support individual children with moderate to high levels of disability</td>
<td>Eligible preschools will receive notice of their CFTS allocation before the end of Term 4 2014. The first payment of the CFTS will be made in week 2 of Term 1 2015.</td>
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</tbody>
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Albury Preschool Excellent rating

Congratulations to Albury Preschool on its Excellent rating. Early Childhood Extra spoke to Director, Gabrielle Connell, about what makes Albury Preschool special. Gabrielle spoke of highly qualified staff at the service, the leadership role the preschool plays in the local community and in partnering with other services in the region, and various measures that have been undertaken to better meet the needs of families using the service. The service will also be shortly installing a Soundfield Amplification System to better facilitate learning, particularly amongst children with a hearing impairment, or speech or communications delay. Albury Preschool is a NSW DEC-funded community preschool.

NSW Health menu planning guide - Caring for Children

Last month, Explore and Develop at Artarmon hosted a launch for the release of a new edition of Caring for Children Birth to 5 years. This edition contains a new menu planning guide. This provides information and advice to cooks, directors and educators at early childhood education and care services on providing the best nutrition possible for children aged from birth to 5 years.

The guide is available from the Healthy Kids website. Healthy Kids also provides nutrition information for school aged children, which may be useful for outside school hours care and other services caring for older children.

Keeping in touch

Update your contact details by logging onto the NQAITS portal and/or for funded services by logging onto ECCMS.

You can also get in touch with us by:

• visiting our website - www.dec.nsw.gov.au/ecec
• phoning us on 1800 619 113 (general) or 1300 755 426 (funding)
• emailing us on eecd@det.nsw.edu.au (general), ecec.funding@det.nsw.edu.au (funding) or eceextra@det.nsw.edu.au (EC Extra editor)