Early Childhood Education

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The 2021 SSTUWA Early Childhood Educator (ECE) Conference was recently held and was a timely event for members to re-connect face-to-face and delve into conversations on early childhood education.

Members heard from keynote presenter Professor Helen Milroy, 2021 WA Australian of the Year, (pictured top right), on her work with the Telethon Kids Institute and Embrace Mental Health, into supporting childhood mental health and well-being and the impact of adverse childhood experiences.

Worldwide estimates indicate that 48 per cent of adults experienced some sort of traumatic event during their childhood or adolescence. The graphic on the opposite page illustrates some of these statistics.

A timely presentation was provided to the conference by the team at the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (SCSA) who have been involved in developing the curriculum support documents from K-10; a process that has arisen as a direct result of a win secured by the SSTUWA in the 2019 Schools General Agreement (Clause 61).

It was a fantastic opportunity for members to be able to hear directly from the team at SCSA working on these documents for use by early childhood educators across WA.

For more coverage of the conference turn to page 24 of this issue of Western Teacher.

National Quality Framework approved learning frameworks update

On 15 December last year, Australia's Education Ministers commissioned an update of the two national approved learning frameworks (ALF) under the National Quality Framework (NQF) – Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia (EYLF) and My Time Our Place: Framework for School Age Care (MTOP).

The ALFs inform educational programs and practices in early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services.

As both ALFs have been in use for a decade or more, the purpose of this update is to ensure they reflect contemporary developments in practice and knowledge to extend children's and young people's learning.

A national consortium, led by a partnership between Macquarie University, Queensland University of Technology and Edith Cowan University, was engaged by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority on behalf of all governments to lead this project and the paper was prepared by the chief investigators of the consortium.

More information about the project is available on the ALFs update website at: bit.ly/3nAqBWH

The intent of the review is to strengthen the great principles and practices that are already embedded in the EYLF.

Over 400 early childhood literature articles have been reviewed as part of this process, including 15 early childhood learning frameworks from across the globe.

The AEU on behalf of all state and territory branches, will be providing a submission into this review.

New bilateral agreements are currently being negotiated with states and territories to replace the Universal Access National Partnership agreements, which are set to commence in 2022 and run through to the end of 2025.

While the $2 billion funding reform is set to provide funding for 15 hours of preschool a week, or 600 hours a year, for all children in the year before they start school, there are conditions that are still to be negotiated with state and territory governments. More info: bit.ly/3kOAAG4

Little detail is known about what the “preschool outcomes measure” would look like or how this could operate in a Kindy setting.

Also of concern is that from 2024, payment to states and territories will be tied to attendance targets.

It is yet to be seen what the states and territories will sign up to under this “ambitious reform agenda.”

Early childhood education in focus

Authorised by Sally Dennis, General Secretary, The State School Teachers' Union of W.A.
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