Strengthening collaboration and practice across the early years

17 – 18 May 2018, Cairns, AUSTRALIA

The Conference is financially supported by the Australian Government
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Early Years Conference

Today’s Children Tomorrow’s Future

Strengthening collaboration and practice across the early years

WELCOME

The Early Years Conference Organising Committee would like to respectfully acknowledge the Gimuy Walubara Yidinji and the Yirrganydji Traditional Owners of the land on which this event is taking place and Elders both past and present. We also recognise those whose ongoing effort to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures will leave a lasting legacy for future Elders and leaders.

The Conference Organising Committee welcome you to the Cairns Early Years Conference in 2018.

Over the years and in 2018, this conference has attracted nationally and internationally acclaimed keynote speakers and provided valuable opportunities for professional development and networking for delegates from throughout the Far North Queensland region and Australia working in the children and families space.

Through a unique partnership of government and non–government agencies, the Early Years Conference promotes the wellbeing of children and families by advancing collaboration and evidence-based practice, and provides a platform to reflect multiple perspectives to improve early childhood development.

The conference continues to have a strong association with the Cairns Institute (James Cook University) and the Pullman Cairns International.

We are excited that the conference in 2018 has attracted such a huge calibre of keynote speakers and presenters and we take this opportunity to thank them for their participation.

The conference program has been developed to showcase Australian and international research, parental engagement programs, and examples of flourishing communities as well as programs that centre on prevention, early intervention, evidence and a commitment to families and children in the early years space.

Enjoy the 2018 Early Years Conference and Cairns, where the forest meets the sea.

2018 Early years Conference Committee
COMMITTEE

Sarah Brown
Program Manager, Communities for Children, Mission Australia

Gwen Kemp
Child Youth & Family Health Team, QLD Health

April Schipke
Director, Early Childhood Education and Care and Training. Far North Queensland, Department of Education, Child Safety and Disability Services

Cassy Bishop
Benevolent Society, Acting Manager, Cairns Early Years Centre

Rebecca Giacomi
Principal Community Services Officer, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services

Jennifer McHugh
Events and Project Manager, The Cairns Institute, James Cook University
### Day One – Thursday, 17 May 2018

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Ballroom</th>
<th>Tully 1</th>
<th>Bluewater 2</th>
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<th>Bluewater 1</th>
<th>Rosser</th>
<th>Boardroom 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:15-9:00am</td>
<td>Conference Registration</td>
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<td>9:00-9:30am</td>
<td>Conference Opening and Welcome to Country</td>
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<td>9:30-10:30am</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speaker One - Professor Kerry Arabena</strong>; Executive Director, First 1000 Days Australia. Director, Indigenous Health Equity Unit President, International Association of Ecology and Health, The University of Melbourne</td>
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<td>10:30-11:00am</td>
<td>Morning Tea Break</td>
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<td>11:00-11:40am</td>
<td>40 minute papers</td>
<td>From category to strategy: Re-thinking attachment theory</td>
<td>What works, what doesn’t work: A unique family support model for working with indigenous families</td>
<td>Engaging children’s voices to improve program quality</td>
<td>Kuunchi Kakana – families together in Lockhart River</td>
<td>Together in mind – A perinatal and infant mental health day program</td>
<td>“Right service, right care, right time” – Child Youth and Family Services Access Unit, QLD Health Referral Management team</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Frances Cheverton</td>
<td>Nerida Andersen with Sarah Petersen and Louise Skennerton</td>
<td>Sharon Eggins</td>
<td>Denise Hagan</td>
<td>Jean Henle with Jelena Botha and Sacha Condon</td>
<td>Deborah Elder with Julie Brooker</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:40-11:45am</td>
<td>Short Break to Switch Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:45am-12:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speaker Two - Dr Tim Moore</strong>; Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Children’s Research Institute, Melbourne</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:45-1:30pm</td>
<td>Lunch Break</td>
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<td>1:30-1:45pm</td>
<td>10 Minute Presentation: <strong>Barbie Bates and Katie Roberts</strong>: If a turkey and turtle can, you can too</td>
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<td>1:45-2:45pm</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speaker Three - Professor Ross Homel</strong>; Foundation Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University, Brisbane</td>
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<td>2:45-2:50pm</td>
<td>Short Session Swap Break</td>
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| 2:50– 3:50pm | **60 minute workshops**  
 Everybody Wins: how integrated and collaborative services deliver better outcomes in the early years  
 *Gwen Kemp, Jackie Black, B Powell, A Maher and Karina Enks*  
 Helping young children with ASD cope with change  
 *Lynda Melville*  
 Understanding mandatory reporting: roles and responsibilities  
 *Deborah Hall and Amanda Ireland*  
 Specialised trauma educator training  
 *Marie Stuart with Shan Peng*  
 Do you know the signs? A capacity building project for early childhood  
 *Yvonne Black*  
 The Playing With Gratitude Project  
 *Rod Soper with Fiona O’Donnell*  
 Does the Animal Fun Program improve the social skills of young children? An exploration of current research into the links...  
 *Sue McLaren with J Piek and D Rigoli* |
| 3:50 – 4:10pm| **Afternoon Tea Break**                                                           |
| 4:10 – 4:50pm| **40 minute papers**  
 Empowering parents understand their children’s experience of trauma through sensory activities  
 *Jennifer Nelson*  
 “Alone: Great, Together: Exceptional”: education and nutrition inter-professional collaboration for better childhoods  
 *Alison Evans and Megan Gibson, Lyn Zollo*  
 Exploring parental perceptions of a family-centred model of care in the delivery of public child development  
 *Nicole Argall with E Cox, E Johnson C Hislop and S Lefmann*  
 Judge & referee: Re-visiting family relationships after family violence  
 *Claire Stanley*  
 Every child making a confident start  
 *Hannah Simpson*  
 Collective impact: Cairns South  
 *Allan Dale with Fiona Allison Jennifer McHugh and Stewart Lockie*  
 Keeping children safe – OSHC services leading the way  
 *Fay Hadley with Manjula Waniganayake* |
| 4:50pm       | Conference Day One close                                                        |
| 5:15 – 7:00pm| Twilight networking: Drinks and canapés. The Pool Deck level 3                     |
### Day Two – Friday, 18 May 2018

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Ballroom</th>
<th>Tully 1</th>
<th>Bluewater 2</th>
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<th>Bluewater 1</th>
<th>Rosser</th>
<th>Boardroom 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>8:30 – 8:45am</td>
<td>Conference address by the <strong>Hon DR David Gillespie MP</strong>, Assistant Minister for Children and Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:45 – 9:45am</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speaker Four - Professor Richie Poulton</strong>; Director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand</td>
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<td>9:45-9:55am</td>
<td>10 Minute presentations, Samantha Lewis: Digital storytelling: Selfies and candids to engagement and attachment</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:55 – 10:15am</td>
<td>Morning Tea Break</td>
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</table>
| 10:15 – 10:55am | “Caring Dads”: Helping fathers value their children  
Brett Fahey with Gema Laycock | Building resilience in children aged 0-12  
Rebecca Wright | You’re Kidding Me – Engaging families in child development and bringing together communities  
Debbie Miller with Madelaine Winstanely and Jennifer Cartmel | Communities for change  
Jessica Salvador | The Dual Role of Parents during the Transition to Formal Schooling  
Grant Webb | Connecting2u (C2u) Text messaging intervention – connecting baby, family and community  
Alanna Philipson with S Frazer-Ryan | Feasibility and acceptability of using telehealth for early intervention parenting support.  
Nicole Owen |                      |
<p>| 10:55–11:00am | Short Break to Switch Session |                                                   |                      |         |             |        |             |
| 11:00am – 12:00pm | <strong>Keynote Speaker Five – Prof. Bob Perry</strong>; Emeritus Professor in the School of Education at Charles Sturt University and Director, Peridot Education Pty Ltd. |                                                   |                      |         |             |        |             |
| 12:00 – 12:45pm | Lunch Break – |                                                   |                      |         |             |        |             |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>12:45 – 1:45pm</td>
<td><strong>60 minute workshop</strong>&lt;br&gt;Access for all - Breaking down the barriers to participation&lt;br&gt;<strong>Sandi Lascelles</strong>&lt;br&gt;Engaging with Vulnerable Families A Maternal and Child Health Action Research Project&lt;br&gt;<strong>Lynette Diamant</strong>&lt;br&gt;Partnerships with families: Practical steps for constructive conversations and collaborating with parents in ECEC&lt;br&gt;<strong>Catherine Murphy with Olivia Clayton</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘Bending the rules when words are not enough.’ - Tools of the modern trauma therapist&lt;br&gt;<strong>Emily Gleeson with Helen Merry</strong>&lt;br&gt;‘Paying it forward’: Capitalising on the future by building executive function skills as a basis for learning&lt;br&gt;<strong>Lisa Sonter with Desley Jones Sue Southey and Leanne Hunter</strong>&lt;br&gt;Children, Family Law processes and allegations of sexual assault: ensuring therapeutic responses are in the best interest of the child&lt;br&gt;<strong>Beth Tinning</strong>&lt;br&gt;Toilet training troubles: when to worry, why they happen and what to do&lt;br&gt;<strong>Lauren Fitzpatrick with A Kenney-Behr and L Kearney</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:45 – 1:50m</td>
<td>Short break to switch session</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:50 – 2:50pm</td>
<td><strong>Dr Tim Moore</strong>: Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Community Child Health, Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, Melbourne&lt;br&gt;<strong>Kuranda room</strong></td>
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<td>2:50 – 3:00pm</td>
<td>Short Afternoon Tea Break</td>
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<td>3:05pm</td>
<td>Closing addressed by the <strong>Hon Curtis Pitt Speaker and Member for Mulgrave</strong> and afternoon tea continuation. Prizes and giveaways awarded.</td>
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VENUE MAP

Ground Floor

Ground Floor
Grand ballroom
Kuranda ballroom
Mossman ballroom
Ballroom foyer
Tully I
Tully II
Tully III

Diagram of Ground Floor with room labels and locations.
First Floor

Level 1
Bluewater I
Bluewater II
Rosser
Agincourt
Foyer lounge

Level 2
Boardroom I
Boardroom II
Kingsfords
Richie Poulton

Director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit

Professor Richie Poulton is Director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit which conducts the Dunedin longitudinal study, one of the most detailed studies of human health and development ever undertaken.

In 2007, he established and became a Co-Director of the National Centre for Lifecourse Research, a research centre based at the University of Otago in Dunedin, but with partners located at universities across New Zealand and internationally.

He has published 250+ peer-reviewed scientific papers, with many appearing in leading international journals. His research interests include: mental health, nature-nurture interplay, and psychosocial determinants of chronic physical disease. In 2014, he was named as a Highly Cited Researcher by Thomson-Reuters (one of only four New Zealanders so designated) and was listed in 2015 World’s Most Influential Scientific Minds, Thomson-Reuters.

In 2004, he was awarded the New Zealand Association of Scientist’s Research Medal and the Health Research Council of New Zealand’s (inaugural) Liley Medal for Excellence in Health Research. In 2005 he was awarded the University of Otago’s Rowheath Trust Award and Carl Smith Medal for Outstanding Early Career Achievement, and also received the Dunedin School of Medicine Distinguished Research Award. In 2010, he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand and was the joint recipient of the RSNZ Dame Joan Metge Medal for excellence and building relationships in the social science research community. In 2014, he was awarded the Dunedin School of Medicine Dean’s Medal for Research Excellence. In 2016, he received the Celebrating Research Excellence Award from the Health Research Council for ‘an outstanding contribution to health research throughout an established career’. Earlier this year, the Dunedin Study Research Group, which he leads, received the New Zealand Prime Minister’s Science Prize for work that has had a significant impact on New Zealand and internationally.
Kerry Arabena

Professor Kerry Arabena is Director of the Indigenous Health Equity Unit at The University of Melbourne.

A descendent of the Meriam people from the Torres Strait, she has a Doctorate in Human Ecology and a degree in Social Work. Professor Arabena is the Executive Director of the First 1000 Days Australia, a model which aims to provide a coordinated, comprehensive strategy to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families so they can address their children's needs from pre-conception to two years of age, thereby laying the best foundation for their future health and wellbeing. With an extensive background in public health, administration, community development and research, her work has made significant contributions in areas such as sexual and reproductive health, family violence, gender issues, access and equity, service provision, and harm minimisation.

Professor Kerry Arabena is Chair for Indigenous Health and Director of the Indigenous Health Equity Unit at The University of Melbourne. A descendent of the Meriam people from the Torres Strait, she has a Doctorate in Human Ecology and a degree in Social Work. She is the Executive Director and Lead Investigator on the First 1000 Days Australia, an interventions based pre-birth multigenerational cohort study designed with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. This is now a national and international initiative through a joint collaboration between the University of Melbourne and Save the Children and engaging Indigenous peoples in Indonesia and Norway. With an extensive background in public health, administration, community development and research, her work has made significant contributions in areas such as sexual and reproductive health, family violence, gender issues, access and equity, service provision, and harm minimisation. Her professional experience has seen her recognised as an Australian of the Year Finalist in 2010 and recipient of the prestigious JG Crawford Prize for Academic Excellence at Australian National University in 2011. She was the inaugural Co Chair of the National Congress of Australia's First People's and the inaugural CEO of the Lowitja Institute. She is currently a member of the Aboriginal Economic Board in Victoria, OzChild, Indigenous Community Volunteers, Kinnaway Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce and the Victorian Aboriginal Economic Board of Development. She is an author and business owner; a mother and a grandmother with interests in achieving equity for all Australians.
Bob Perry

Emeritus Professor in the School of Education at Charles Sturt University

Bob Perry is recently retired from paid university work after 45 years in higher education. He is Emeritus Professor in the School of Education at Charles Sturt University, Albury-Wodonga, Australia and Director, Peridot Education Pty Ltd. Bob has recently received an Honorary Doctorate from Mälardalen University, Sweden and a Career Research Award from the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia in recognition of his body of research. His doctoral graduates and current candidates along with other projects, including educational evaluations in Queensland, and writing and editing, seem to keep him just about as busy as he used to be when working for the university. Bob's current research interests include powerful mathematics ideas in preschool and the first years of school; ethical tensions in researching with children; transition to school, with particular emphasis on starting school within families with complex support needs, preschool education in rural and remote communities, and evaluation of educational programs. Bob shares life with his partner, Sue Dockett, and their son, Will.

Ross Homel

Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University

Ross Homel is Foundation Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia. He is a former Vice-President of the Council for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, and is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. Professor Homel has published three monographs and eight edited books or special journal issues, as well as approximately 200 peer-reviewed papers, chapters, and high impact government reports. He has won many awards for his research on the prevention of crime, violence and injuries and the promotion of positive development and wellbeing for children and young people in socially disadvantaged communities. In 2008 he was appointed an Officer in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AO) “for service to education, particularly in the field of criminology, through research into the causes of crime, early intervention and prevention methods.” In 2010 he received the Sellin-Glueck Award from the American Society of Criminology for criminological
scholarship that considers problems of crime and justice as they manifest outside the United States.

Charlene Smith

Mitchell Institute, Victoria University

Dr Charlene Smith leads the policy team at the Mitchell Institute, an influential education think tank at Victoria University. Her main focus is on the ways education policy and system reform can build equity and social inclusion, especially in the early years.

In her previous role as General Manager – Projects and Collaboration with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, Dr Smith led a diverse team to deliver research-informed policy advice to federal and state governments. Her advisory areas included parent engagement in school education, the role of data in design, delivery and evaluation of social services, and the need for effective responses by both the education and health systems to prevent educational disadvantage for students experiencing school absence due to illness or injury.

Charly completed a PhD with the Australian National University in 2007, and is currently studying a Graduate Diploma in Psychology at the University of New England.

Tim Moore

The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne

A psychologist by training, Dr Tim Moore is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH) at the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, The Royal Children’s Hospital, Melbourne. He heads a small team with responsibility for monitoring, reviewing and synthesising research literature on a wide range of topics relating to child development, family functioning and service systems. He has been the principal writer on numerous Centre for Community Child Health reviews, reports and policy briefs, many of which have had a significant impact on policy and practice, nationally and internationally. He is also a frequent keynote and workshop presenter.
Early life predictors of later success: Implications for interventionists and policy making

Richie Poulton
Director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Research Unit

The Dunedin Lifecourse Study has identified a small number of powerful factors in childhood that both predict and promote later wellbeing and success. These findings align with developmental neuroscience in highlighting the critical role played by early brain development. This is because the young human brain is especially sensitive to environmental inputs. When these inputs or contexts are positive, healthy development is likely. When toxic stress is the norm, taking the form of poor intra-uterine exposures, neglectful/abusive caregiving, parental violence, substance abuse or mental health difficulties, then brain health and wellbeing are compromised. A programme of joined-up (“across-sector and life-stages”), evidence-based interventions supported by the State, beginning at (or even before) conception through to the early 20’s and beyond according to proportional universal principles, is empirically supported and should be implemented.

Creating pathways to child wellbeing in disadvantaged communities

Professor Ross Homel, AO
Griffith University

Children living in economically deprived areas, especially First Nations children in these areas, are more likely than those from more affluent communities to: drop out of school, become trapped in inter-generational cycles of poverty and welfare dependence, or get caught up in the child protection or youth justice systems. Despite the best efforts of governments and caring organisations, and the billions of dollars they have spent over several generations, the gap is not narrowing. Today, where children live has an even greater impact on their life chances than it did 30 years ago. The recent widespread adoption of collective impact frameworks for place-based initiatives is a promising innovation, but robust methodologies based on rigorous research have yet to emerge. The challenge now facing Australia is to build prevention science methods and insights into large scale, sustainable, economically efficient, early prevention delivery systems.

In this presentation, I describe how the CREATE Research Team, with partners from academia, government, and non-government organisations, is responding to this challenge. I present an overview of the results to date of three related research programs:
1. Analyses of the Pathways to Prevention Child Longitudinal Database, based on work conducted with Mission Australia and local schools in a disadvantaged area of Brisbane between 2001 and 2011. Little is known about the medium- and long-term effects on children of routinely delivered family support in disadvantaged communities. The Pathways analyses show that family support can indeed have positive long-term effects, but the results are mixed when the focus is child social-emotional wellbeing and classroom behaviour (ages 5-11, Grades 1-7), and on offending (10-16 years).

2. The implementation of Rumble’s Quest, an interactive game for tablets and computers that gives children an opportunity to report for themselves about their feelings and lives as they progress through primary school. Rumble’s Quest provides a robust and reliable measure of child social-emotional wellbeing. It is suitable for use in non-clinical settings with large numbers of children aged 5-12 years, has been tested for psychometric quality (validity and reliability) with 8,000 Queensland children, and is being progressively implemented in NSW and Queensland primary schools.

3. The CREATE-ing Pathways to Child Wellbeing Project, a national program of preventive research with 14 partner organisations working in 9 Communities for Children sites in NSW and Queensland. The aim is to construct and implement a Prevention Translation and Support System, and to evaluate its impact on child outcomes, as well as on family-school engagement and the quality of functioning of local partnerships involving schools and community agencies. The PTSS incorporates electronic tools and resources – including Rumble’s Quest - and the services of a new profession, Collective Impact Facilitators (CIFs) in each community.

These research programs provide many lessons for schools and community agencies working in disadvantaged communities. One lesson is that we have good grounds for optimism: much of what is happening across Australia is achieving good outcomes for children. But a second lesson is that we could do much better if schools and community agencies worked together within a collective impact framework that genuinely empowered local communities to make data-driven decisions that guided evidence-based practice across the entire public health cycle of Coming Together; Deciding Together; Planning Together; Doing Together; and Reviewing Together.

Provision of quality preschool education in rural and remote areas of Queensland and other parts of Australia

Professor Bob Perry
Emeritus Professor in the School of Education at Charles Sturt University, Albury-Wodonga, Australia and Director, Peridot Education Pty Ltd
In 2007, the then Rudd Labor government declared that all Australian children would have access to 600 hours of quality preschool education in the year before they started compulsory schooling. While this provision falls way short of that in many other countries around the world, it was the first time in Australia where such a declaration of children’s entitlement to preschool education has been made. Since the declaration, people at all levels of government in Australia have been trying to operationalise it. In the major and regional cities and even in many smaller country towns, it was clear that such access could be provided through existing and developing centre-based early childhood programs, some of which had long and proud histories. Of course, since Australia is a federation of states and territories, different things happened in different jurisdictions but the overall thrusts were similar. But...

What happens if a preschool-aged child lives in an isolated community which cannot sustain a viable preschool centre, or in an Indigenous community, or on a station hundreds of kilometres from a preschool centre? Queensland has accepted the challenge posed by this question as a matter of social justice and children and families’ rights. It has introduced programs such as Foundations for Success, eKindy and the Remote Kindergarten Pilot. The presenter has been involved in various guises with all of these programs and will outline their various purposes, approaches and impacts, drawing on his own research in Queensland and other Australian jurisdictions. All children have the right to a quality preschool education but how can this be achieved?

First 1000 Days Australia in Indigenous context

Kerry Arabena
University of Melbourne

First 1000 Days Australia – the Australian Model of the international 1,000 Days movement – aims to provide a coordinated, comprehensive strategy to strengthen Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families so they can address their children’s needs from pre-conception to two years of age, thereby laying the best foundation for their future health and wellbeing. This presentation will showcase what is being achieved through time specific, multidisciplinary and multi-knowledges approaches to Building resilience; Learning and innovation, fostering Leadership and Generating and using evidence for impact. Conceived of and led by Indigenous academics, First 1000 Days Australia is premised on the family remaining the primary and preferred site for developing and protecting culture and identity in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Understanding and meeting the needs of families facing multiple challenges: Towards a new synthesis
No parent sets out to do a less than optimal job of caring for and raising their children, but some may end up doing so as a result of a range of personal and environmental challenges. This presentation begins by considering the nature of these challenges, focusing on the way that environments can shape health and development, constrain people’s choices, and compromise their decision-making. The barriers to families fully engaging with social networks and making use of the available services will also be explored. In the light of this analysis, what should we do to better support such families? The default approach has been to seek to provide them with additional services, targeting those most ‘at risk’, and ensuring that services are evidence-based. Each of these strategies can be interpreted and applied in different ways with different effects. First, relying solely or mainly upon services ignores what we know about the importance of the immediate physical and social environments in which families are living, and the relatively minor role played by services. Second, the way in which we target those most in need determines how effectively we engage with them. Third, in seeking to improve the efficacy of services provided to such families, governments have increasingly sought to ensure that services are evidence-based, and begun to compile lists of evidence-based programs for services to choose from. However, properly understood, evidence-based practice is not reducible to a list of evidence-based programs, but involves making decisions about services based on several sources, including the needs and preferences of the families themselves. Based on this broader understanding, a model of evidence-informed decision-making will be described. The presentation concludes with key messages about effectively supporting families facing multiple challenges.

Moving to the NDIS: Challenges for early childhood intervention services

This interactive session will explore some of the challenges for early childhood intervention services in moving to the NDIS. To begin, we will remind ourselves of some basics facts about young children with developmental disabilities: how they learn, what conditions and supports they and their families need, and what constitutes best practice in early childhood intervention service provision. Then, we will explore the differences between the market-based NDIS model and the existing forms of funding and service. This will lead to consideration of the practical challenges these changes pose for early childhood interventionists, and how these can be met. Finally, we will explore the potential threats to best practice, and how these can be addressed.

Universal early learning: Distilling the evidence and checking the claims

Dr Charlene Smith
Policy Program Director, Mitchell Institute, Victoria University
The provision of preschool for all Australian children has been codified via National Partnership agreements since 2009. In recent years, advocacy for an additional year of preschool before compulsory schooling has been gaining momentum. This presentation will interrogate the evidence base for provision of preschool programs at scale, with particular focus on the question of universal access and the nature and importance of quality. Questions to be discussed include: What are the likely benefits of preschool? Why are two years better than one? Which children are most likely to benefit? Is universal provision the best option? How can we ensure access and inclusion for the children at highest risk? What is the role of policy in this conversation?
**PRESENTER ABSTRACTS**

*From category to strategy: Re-thinking attachment theory*

Frances Cheverton  
Berry Street Childhood Institute

In recent years, we have witnessed an exciting resurgence in the utility of attachment theory across the lifespan. For those working in the early year’s fields, in both health and education settings, attachment theory is a guide to looking below the surface and truly understanding the meaning behind children’s lived experiences in their most intimate family relationships.

But Attachment theory has often hit a road block when working with children and their families. The ‘A, B, C, D’ model of attachment, based on the work of John Bowlby and developed by Mary Ainsworth and later, Mary Main has often led to the labelling of children as having either a ‘secure’ or ‘insecure’ attachment style. In her decade of clinical experience as a Child and Adolescent Mental Health therapist, Frances observed the relational barrier and personal and familial stigma often associated with the label of ‘insecure’ when attempting to effectively work with a family.

Drawing on the international expertise of clinician, researcher and author, Patricia Crittenden, and her Dynamic Maturational Model of attachment and development, Frances will engage the audience in a workshop that looks beyond the status quo. She will explore with the audience how ‘insecure’ attachment categories can be redefined as strategies. Drawing on her work in systemic family therapy, Frances will provide case examples of how this shift from ‘category’ to ‘strategy’ can lead to new and transformative understandings and experiences for children, their families and practitioners.

*What works, what doesn’t work: A unique family support model for working with Indigenous families*

Nerida Andersen  
Sarah Petersen  
Louise Skennerton  
Bridge Program

This presentation will share evidence based, practical skills for working with Indigenous families, as delivered by the Bridge Program at Centacare North Queensland. The Bridge Program uses a holistic, early intervention therapeutic model based on voluntary, long term, in-home family support and counselling with families. The program enhances family functioning and reduces child protection risks, aiming to prevent involvement with Police and statutory child protection services. This
program is unique in its delivery of a therapeutic relationship to address risk of harm and trauma on two levels.

First level, a relationship with families. This is to provide flexible, tailored and practical in-home family support to focus on parenting skills, attachment and behaviour management. This parenting support is combined with therapeutic counselling to address mental health and trauma.

Second level, the relationship of a multi-disciplinary team of professionals to provide integrated support. This collaborative approach to supporting families includes an alliance of theoretical principles, combined with communication and team work. This alliance also includes assisting families to connect with local support services and community groups, as part of achieving their identified goals.

This presentation will include a case study to demonstrate how this unique therapeutic model has been implemented and adapted to best support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, to bring about lasting change.

*Engaging children’s voices to improve program quality*

Sharon Eggins

HIPPY (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters)

HIPPY (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters) is a two-year, home-based early learning and parenting program for four and five year olds. HIPPY empowers parents to be their child’s first teacher. With Australian Government support, the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) together with local partner organisations deliver HIPPY to vulnerable children and families; provide local jobs and skill development; and strengthen communities in 100 sites.

Throughout 2016 HIPPY provided children the opportunity to give direct feedback about their experience in the program. The project was designed as part of quality assurance, to enhance children’s engagement and improve service delivery. Across Australia, 180 children, at 13 different sites, participated.

HIPPY used a multi-method approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data about children’s experience in the program. The data collection activities were designed to engage children from four to five years old. All activities were endorsed by the Brotherhood of St Laurence Research and Policy Ethics Committee.

Through this process HIPPY recorded preferences from the children which will inform service improvement and resources. The design of the activities and the methodology could be used by other professionals looking to gather feedback from pre-school aged children.
The 2016 process has raised staff awareness of the importance of including children’s voices in the program and how this process can lead to more effective programs. It also highlighted how key the parent-child relationship is to the child’s engagement with HIPPY.

*Kuunchi Kakana – families together in Lockhart River*

Denise Hagan  
Puuya Foundation

The Kuunchi Kakana (families together) Centre is an initiative of the Puuya Foundation in the very remote Aboriginal community of Lockhart River, Cape York. Puuya means “heart or lifeforce” in Kuuku Ya’u. The Foundation’s purpose is to develop everyday leaders, from “in the belly” to Elders – to empower the people to create a positive future. What makes the Foundation different is the belief that the community must determine and drive this new future themselves.

In 2012, community leaders identified that the early years “were a mess”. They asked the Puuya Foundation to work with them to develop this idea and make it a reality. The Kuunchi Kakana Centre opened in 2016. It is breaking the cycle of disadvantage and changing the lives of the next generation of young children and their families. The centre is community led and local staff run a Montessori program for 0 – 4.5 year old children and their parents/ carers. It is not a drop off child care centre. Families have to be involved. As well, staff run a home education program, Parents and Learning, for parents of children in pre- prep. Early research indicates good progress. There is still a long way to go.

In 2017, the Puuya Foundation was awarded the Premier’s Reconciliation Award and was a finalist in the Outstanding Organisation category of the national HESTA Community Sector Awards.

*Together in Mind - A perinatal and infant mental health day program*

Jean Henle  
Jelena Botha  
Sacha Condon  
QLD Health

Perinatal mental illness impacts on an infant’s earliest neurological, social and emotional development. With over 16% of Australian women, and 10% of men, diagnosed with a perinatal mental illness there is an urgent need for the development of responsive and accessible perinatal and infant mental health program. Research highlights the need for an integrated and collaborative approach to perinatal and infant mental health and the breakdown of silos in which services are traditionally delivered.
In 2016, in collaboration with Cairns and the Hinterland Hospital and Health Services (HHS) and Townsville HHS, the Queensland Centre for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health (QCPIMH) investigated the impact of a 6 week (1 day a week) day program for mothers with a moderate to severe perinatal mental illness with their infants under 12 months of age. This ‘step up/step down’ program is designed to meet an identified gap in the continuum of care between community care and inpatient treatment to this vulnerable population, their infants and families. The objectives of the program are to:

- Improve the mother’s emotional-social wellbeing
- Improve the mother-infant attachment relationship
- Improve knowledge, competence and confidence in parenting
- Improve the social and emotional development of the infant
- Improve access to referral pathways

The presenters will explore the development, outcomes and implementation of the perinatal and infant mental health day program, ‘Together in Mind’, delivered by an innovative interagency partnership between Adult Mental Health, Child and Youth Mental Health and Community Child Health Services. With research results indicating statistically significant and improvements in maternal mental health, maternal-infant attachment, parenting confidence and stress and uptake of referral pathways, the Queensland Mental Health Plan (2016-21) has endorsed the implementation of Together in Mind programs across thirteen HSS including Cairns and Hinterland in 2017-18.

“Right service, right care, right time” – Child Youth and Family Services Access Unit, Qld Health Referral Management team

Deborah Elder
Julie Brooker
QLD Health

The CYFS Access Unit commenced as a project in 2016 to assist in reduction of waiting periods and ensure children are accessing the “right care, at the right service, in the right time.” The purpose of the CYFS Access Unit is to minimise the time between receiving of referrals to first contact with the most appropriate service provider.

The CYFS Access Unit provides timely holistic screening, including prioritisation of referrals and provision of short-term therapeutic response to parents and children referred to Paediatric Outpatients, Community Child Youth and Family Health, Child Development Service and Allied Health Services across the CHHHS. This includes applying crisis management strategies, assistance with advocacy and information for families to facilitate appropriate decision- making to meet the needs of their child.
Advocacy with other service providers through networking and community partnerships is a key component of the role. The Access Unit aims to recognise families’ capacity to support their child’s needs and assist in the identification of appropriate assessment and service provision to ensure the child’s needs are meet with the most appropriate referrals. The Access Unit engages with appropriate stakeholders to collate information to provide a holistic overview of the child’s needs to assist in care management. Information is reviewed to identify if there are acceptable alternative pathways of care.

Utilising and understanding of clinical prioritisation criteria, service capacity, evidence based practice and interagency referral pathways to reduce inappropriate referrals, minimise wait lists and enhance patient flow to support children accessing the “right care, at the right service, in the right time.”

Supportive listening environments for remote Aboriginal communities

Frances Bugden
Corrine Butler
Deadly Ears Program, QLD Health

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children currently have one of the highest rates of otitis media—or middle ear disease—in the world. Ear and hearing health is a major public health concern as hearing loss affects how children interact, understand and communicate with the world around them.

Early childhood education and care (ECEC) services play an important role in children having the best start to life. When health and early childhood services work together they can create supportive listening environments for children who have conductive hearing loss attributable to middle ear disease. By supporting today’s children educators can promote positive futures and reduce the impacts of ear disease.

The aim of this presentation is to introduce the Supportive Listening Environments tool and training package. The tool is used to systematically profile and improve the capacity of ECEC environments to prevent and manage the impacts of hearing loss attributable to middle ear disease on child development and educational outcomes. The training package allows early years sector representatives to use the tool with ECEC services. A summary of the development of the tool and training package with the early years sector, practical examples and recommendations for use will be presented.

If a turkey and turtle can, you can too

Barbie Bates
Paint the town read
Across Australia from Perth to Penrith, from Marrickville to Mackay, children are being introduced to the love of books and learning by a plethora of crazy creatures!

Here is a chance to meet some of them, and grasp again the child like wonder of what it means to feel safe and secure with someone who loves you and wants to share a book or a song with you.

*Everybody Wins: how integrated and collaborative services deliver better outcomes in the early years*

Gwen Kemp
Jackie Black
B Powell
A Maher
Karina Enks
QLD Health

Combined presentation on collaborative practice in an integrated model between Government and Non-Government organisations in the Early Years Sector. Queensland Health and The Benevolent Society are in a partnership delivering universal and targeted services to families with children 0-8 years.

This paper will outline the unique model development from planning through to implementation and evaluation processes with demonstration of effectiveness through outcomes for families.

Discussion will include examples of barriers and enablers to service provision and future directions. It will demonstrate a model which strives to reach families through a soft entry approach and provide an integrated service.

*Helping young children with ASD cope with change*

Lynda Melville
Autism QLD

This session will outline the processing and decision-making systems common for young children with ASD and the effect these may have on understanding, predicting and managing change. The presenter will discuss examples and cases to highlight challenges and strategies which may be useful for managing both day to day routine changes as well as transitions and unplanned changes.

*Understanding mandatory reporting: Roles and responsibilities*

Deborah Hall
Amanda Ireland
Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women

The Queensland Law Reform Commission found that the early childhood education and care sector is uniquely positioned to observe and report concerns about physical and sexual abuse of children. Amendments to the mandatory reporting requirements in the Child Protection Act 1999 (Mandatory reporting – Mason’s Law) were passed by Parliament in September 2016. From 1 July 2017, early childhood education and care (ECEC) professionals were mandated by law to report child safety concerns to Child Safety Services where there is a reasonable suspicion that the child has suffered, is suffering, or is at unacceptable risk of suffering, significant harm caused by physical or sexual abuse, and there is not a parent willing and able to protect the child from harm.

Specialised trauma educator training

Sonia Harris
Shan Peng
Goodstart Early Learning

Research demonstrates that many children with trauma have additional needs, particularly observed in an early learning environment. We identified a gap in the number of educators available with the knowledge and skills to best support children with needs related to trauma. We also noticed a significant increase in referrals from the Department of Child Protection. In response we recruited a specialised team of educators that have the qualities, values, knowledge and skills required to work with children experiencing trauma and living with vulnerability.

An intensive six module workshop was developed that builds on our foundational learning platform this is delivered by a trans-disciplinary team. The content is focussed on relationships with children and includes attachment theory, Circle of Security, exploring vulnerability, equity vs equality, brain development, social and emotional development, speech and language rich environments, sensory development. All topics connect back to how trauma impacts on brain development and how we can use high quality practice, empathy and connection to make a positive difference, supporting children to be successfully included in meaningful early learning. We included reflective practice, infant observations and the practical aspects of implementing intensive emotional support plans as well as self-care.

The role of the educator team includes centre swaps to provide one on one support for children and their families, role modelling best practice, providing team support and on the floor coaching. Educators are invited to co-deliver ongoing professional development to centre teams as part of the sustainment of this model.

Do you know the signs? A capacity building project for early childhood professionals to enhance childhood wellbeing and safety
Yvonne Black
TRUE

This interactive 60 minute interactive workshop will showcase Do you know the signs? a mentoring and professional development program for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) centre staff.

Helping children to be safe and healthy is a component of many ECEC centres philosophy. How to achieve this in relation to sexual development, behaviour and safety can be an area that centres ask for help to do well.

Do you know the signs? is a formal partnership between True Relationships & Reproductive Health and Mission Australia Communities for Children (Inala to Ipswich), funded by the Australian Government. The program contributes to the primary prevention of child sexual abuse by building the capacity of educators and parents to support healthy sexual development and implement universal protective factors in the lives of young children. Secondly, it contributes to the tertiary prevention of child sexual abuse by improving the capacity of educators to recognise, respond and report risk of child sexual abuse.

Do You Know the Signs? is designed to be sustainable and effective. ECEC centres are supported to integrate protective practices and education into centre policy, procedures and day to day work with children. This increases the duration of children’s exposure to protective factors, and therefore supports them to be safer.

During the workshop, conference participants will gain insight into the theoretical background of the project and interim learnings. Participants will have the opportunity to participate in some interactive learning activities to help build their capacity to identify healthy sexual behaviour.

The Playing With Gratitude Project

Rod Soper
Thinkers.inq Consulting, Foundation Early Learning

Play with purpose invigorates creative and critical thinking and transformative relationships between children in their early years and their collaborating educators. However, findings from our current research suggest that young children can all too often struggle with a lost sense of self and consequent disconnection with peers and staff when this purpose is lost. In response, a consortium of seven Australian early years settings, crossing three states, representing diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds have engaged in a journey of change using the science of gratitude as the innovative ingredient to forge and facilitate new play and thinking patterns in children and educators in order to strengthen their sense of self and connectedness. Our research, The Playing With Gratitude Project, is a practitioner inquiry research program investigating how gratefulness
influences wellbeing of educators and children birth to five through co-playing. Our study offers findings around what occurs when educators use current research around the science of gratitude, its psychological, physical and social elements, to co-play with children. The program measures change against the indicators of the Wellbeing Observational Scale; Reflect, Respect, Relate Scales, achieved educator gratitude goals and recorded observational change through pedagogical documentation. The current project results, to be shared at the Early Years Conference, will focus on two remarkable findings. Firstly, the shifts in educators personhood as they report deep and personal perspective modifications towards their self, others and the play space. Secondly, the innovation in the co-play with children, as a result of the influence of gratitude, highlighting shifts in language, dispositions and expectations of self and peers in their play environments, relationships and consequent over-all well-being.

**Does the Animal Fun Program improve the social skills of young children? An exploration of current research into the links between physical skills and mental health in young children**

Sue McLaren  
J Piek  
D Rigoli  
Curtin University

There is growing evidence indicating that motor competence and physical participation are also crucial for positive functioning in the social and emotional domains. This suggests that children with poor motor coordination, who also withdraw from physical participation partly due to their movement difficulties, may be at significant risk for psychosocial problems.

Several studies have now revealed an important relationship between movement and internalising problems such as increased depressive and anxiety in children. Other research has found a lower sense of self-worth and lower levels of perceived competence in children with motor skill difficulties. In fact, movement difficulties have been linked to various negative outcomes such as academic underachievement, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and inattention and hyperactivity symptoms, as well as difficulties in the social domain such as self-reported fewer playmates and being asked less often to play with other children, greater peer exclusion, and peer-victimisation.

The Animal Fun program, designed by physiotherapists, occupational therapists and psychologists was found to be effective in improving the motor skills and social skills of young children together with a decrease in hyperactive and inattentive behaviours.

This workshop will give participants the opportunity to learn about the current research in this area and how movement skills are linked to mental health. The workshop will include an overview of the Animal Fun program with audience participation in some simple movement activities which can be
easily embedded into the everyday routines and rituals of the child. Participants will leave with lots of ideas as to how they can make the practice of movement skills fun for kids and thereby help them to become more confident and resilient.

**Empowering parents understand their children’s experience of trauma through sensory activities**

Jennifer Nelson  
Centacare

Families involved with the Department of Child Safety often present with many layers of trauma, parents and children alike. We see that the trauma can impact on their ability to thrive day to day, from how they cope in relationships, to their ability to focus in a classroom or at work, to regulating their emotions when having a bad day.

How our mind holds and stores memories of traumatic events is closely linked with the sensory system. For some of us, we automatically seek or avoid sensory based strategies to regulate our emotional and physiological state. Children and individuals who have experienced trauma may not have learnt to self soothe, or even what safety means.

This is where a sensory based intervention can be beneficial. Helping clients learn to recognise body sensations when they feel safe and unsafe and then exploring sensory strategies that they find to be soothing. I work with the parents to understand and work through their own trauma through sensory activities, and then empower them to help their children with their own experiences of trauma. This builds on their attachment as well as developing a toolbox of self-soothing strategies.

My presentation will involve a practical exploration of sensory activities that can be used in a variety of settings, to demonstrate how seeking different sensations can soothing for children and individuals who have experiences trauma.

**Alone: Great, Together: Exceptional: Education and nutrition inter-professional collaboration for better childhoods**

Alison Evans  
Megan Gibson  
Lyn Zollo  
Early Childhood Australia

With the increasing negative impacts of poor diet, inadequate exercise and high levels of screen time experienced by children, families and communities around Australia, early childhood settings have become crucial places to provide support for children’s health and wellbeing. This complex issue was
addressed through an innovative professional experience project which demonstrated interprofessional work and authentic collaboration between the disciplines of Early Childhood Education and Nutrition and Dietetics at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) and the Creche and Kindergarten (C&K) Association. The project explored ways of engaging with children and families within early childhood services.

Results from two student placement models will outline the transdisciplinary professional experiences for Education and Health students who completed paired placements in early education and care settings and how they engaged children and families in health-related topics. This model will provide delegates with new ways of thinking about interprofessional partnerships and how they contribute to Early Childhood Leadership in addressing multifaceted health related issues.

An overview of this action research project will demonstrate how children and families were engaged, how students benefited from practical, real world, community-integrated learning; and how academic staff across the two Faculties worked collaboratively with C&K within a real-world context.

*Exploring parental perceptions of a family-centred model of care in the delivery of public child development services in Townsville, Queensland*

Nicole Argall 1  
E Cox 1  
E Johnson 1  
C Hislop 1  
S Lefmann 2  
1. Townsville Hospital and Health Service  
2. University of South Australia

Contemporary paediatric allied health practice recognises family-centred care as crucial to providing effective health services to children and families. Despite this, evidence is limited on best ways to incorporate family-centred theory into tangible models for child development services. This presentation will outline a family-centred model of care delivered by Child Development Service (CDS) Townsville, Queensland for children with complex developmental difficulties, aged between 0 and 8 years. This model consists of a structured orientation session, comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment, transdisciplinary feedback session and structured goal setting appointment (using a formal goal setting tool). The model evolved in correspondence with the introduction of National disability funding reforms (e.g. National Disability Insurance Scheme). Child Development Service Townsville anticipated that for families to effectively navigate this funding framework they would require a confident understanding of their unique child and family needs. The family-centred model of care provides clear care pathways and transition points developed for children accessing Child Development Services across the Townsville Hospital and Health Service.
CDS Townsville investigated parental perceptions of the restructured family-centred model of care. Interviews with parents or caregivers were conducted and qualitatively analysed to generate formal research outcomes about the model’s applicability. Practical insights into the factors influencing day to day service delivery using this framework are shared as well as suggestions to further integrate family-centred principles into practice. This research further considers the practical and tangible components of delivering assessment and structured feedback in the changing context of National Disability Insurance Scheme funding reforms.

Judge & referee: Re-visiting family relationships after family violence

Claire Stanley
Berry Street Childhood Institute

In Victoria, family violence is being provided with the political, social and financial recognition that it has long deserved. But despite the increase in awareness and funding, family violence rates remain static. Why is this?

Combining her systemic family therapy and social work knowledge, along with her fifteen – plus years’ experience in the family violence sector, Claire hypothesises that changes in rates of family violence can occur when we re-conceptualise the therapeutic approaches we use to engage with families.

At present, the majority of family violence services are crisis driven with a focus on immediate safety. Although vital, this can be viewed as a black and white approach to family violence: remove the risk and safety will prevail. Claire has called this ‘the judge’ approach. But once the initial crisis is over and safety has been established, what next?

Drawing on the research of international experts in family violence and adult attachment theory, Claire suggests that in addition to a judge, we also need a ‘referee’. The referee looks for nuance and complexity through exploring loss and new beginnings with the family.

Supporting practitioners to become both a judge and a referee is one way that we can all begin to think differently about our approach to family violence and get better outcomes for families across Australia.

Every child making a confident start

Hannah Simpson
Mareeba State School
At Mareeba State School we value the importance of ‘Every child making a confident start’ by having positive transitions between home, early childhood and school. Current research, AEDC and school data continues to highlight the positive impact of early intervention. There are two main parts to our school’s approach to foundations for success. The first approach is the ‘school transition program’, which involves working with children, parents and families and the second approach is the ‘Mareeba Early Childhood Community Network’.

The school transition program provides families and children the opportunity to participate in a range of transition activities over the course of the school year. One significant activity that we developed in 2017 is the ‘Prep 4 Prep’ program. ‘Prep 4 Prep’ invites families to attend information sessions and children to visit and participate in prep class activities. It is an 8-week program, which is offered to families in Term 4.

The Mareeba Early Childhood Community Network is a collaborative approach to the Early Years, which involves working with other community agencies and participating in professional networking. Both public and Catholic schools, all Early Years Services and interagency services in the area are active members of the network. The network meets 1-2 times per term and the agenda is co-designed. In 2017 the network worked together to create an ‘I wonder’ about school book.

We have a strong philosophy at our school that making a difference in the early years makes a difference.

Collective impact: Cairns South

Allan Dale
Fiona Allison
Jennifer McHugh
Stewart Lockie
The Cairns Institute

This presentation will provide information about a local Collective Impact (CI) project currently being undertaken by researchers from the Cairns Institute, JCU. Collective Impact is a relatively innovative framework designed to build capacity and to align collective effort of community, government and non-government stakeholders so as to more effectively address a complex social issue.

The Cairns CI project has a focus on improving outcomes for children aged 0-12 years of age in Cairns’ Southern Corridor (Early Years Cohort) in a broad range of areas (health, learning, cultural and other inclusion etc.). It is the first CI project in Far North Queensland (FNQ) and was initiated by the Cairns South and Yarrabah Communities for Children, a local group whose collaborative work is facilitated by Mission Australia.

At the time of presentation, the project will have been running for approximately two years. Project team members will present on progress as at mid-2019, as well project beginnings. They will discuss CI methodology generally, but also its local implementation in FNQ, and key learnings to date.
information is likely to be of interest to those working/living in communities interested in implementation of a CI framework around early years-related issues.

The project has relevance to conference themes that include capacity building. It aims to increase, for instance, the capacity of service providers to work more collaboratively and to better meet the needs of vulnerable groups/individuals, and of grassroots community to play an active role in improving Early Years Cohort outcomes.

*Keeping children safe – OSHC services leading the way*

Fay Hadley  
Manjula Waniganayake  
Macquarie University

Public discourse surrounding children has increasingly valorised the importance of supporting children’s physical and psychological health and safety. In turn, much research and policy in Australia and overseas has concentrated on the role and importance of educators and educational programs in fostering children’s wellbeing. Educators’ perspectives of child protection and mandatory reporting have thus been well documented in the international early childhood research literature. However, whilst a range of research has drawn out insights from educators in prior-to-school and school contexts, there is currently a lack of empirical evidence investigating the ways in which educators understand and approach child protection and mandatory reporting in the Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services. This paper reports on a research project conducted in partnership with a large provider of OSHC services in NSW. 180 respondents were invited to complete an online survey investigating participant understandings of mandatory reporting. Practitioners’ insights on child protection processes, compliance requirements, provider policies, knowledge of external professionals and relational approaches used to engage with children and families were investigated through the project. This paper reports on survey data, to highlight issues and challenges emerging in relation to child protection and mandatory reporting for stakeholders engaged with children in the OSHC services. Implications for child wellbeing are discussed alongside recommendations for future practice and research. In particular, implications for leaders and managers in developing accessible and robust policy, and supporting professional development of staff in OSHC care are discussed.

*Digital storytelling: Selfies and candid to engagement and attachment*

Samantha Lewis  
Wuchopperen Health Service

Digital storytelling has been steadily increasing over the past 20 years thanks to advances in handheld technology. The combination of images, video footage, music and voice is proving to be a
powerful medium in healthcare to help increase client engagement as well as ownership over their own health and wellbeing.

The First Time Mum’s program, a home visiting service for mothers in the Cairns Indigenous community having their first baby, is built upon the importance of establishing and maintaining therapeutic relationships with clients over a two and a half year period.

Having used digital storytelling for the past seven years, the First Time Mums Program has found this modern practice to be a successful client engagement tool that helps the client’s to bond with their unborn child and strengthen the mother/child attachment.

The First Time Mums Program have been creating digital stories that honour the client’s casting of her pregnant belly, the journey of the client and her experiences over the two and a half years, as well as stories that bring all the client’s experiences together. As a result, clients developed a sense of pride over their journey into motherhood, strengthened their resolve to achieve their goals, and enhanced the connection between the client and the program.

“Caring Dads”: Helping fathers value their children

Brett Fahey
Gema Laycock
Mission Australia

This presentation will talk about the Domestic and Family Violence Intake, Referral and Assessment Model being trialled in NSW under the NSW Government’s Safe Home for Life Child Protection Reforms. The presentation will cover the targeted and individualised multi-modal early intervention and prevention responses to families where DFV is present in the home. Specifically, the audience will learn about the Men’s Behaviour Change Program, “Caring Dads” being delivered through the service. Caring Dads is a 17 week program aimed at fathers who have exposed their children to DFV of low to moderate severity and still have regular contact with their children. The program focuses on fathering as the motivating factor of change. The presentation will cover the core components and goals of the program, providing opportunities for the audience to participate in some of the activities that make up the program. The presentation will also cover the initial results from delivering the program in the Illawarra/South Coast region.

Building resilience in children aged 0-12

Rebecca Wright
Beyond Blue
Resilience is broadly understood as the ability to bounce back from adverse life events and is an important protective factor for good mental health. However, there has been significant debate and divergent views about how to best define, build and measure resilience – particularly in relation to children. The early and middle years is a time when individual, community and environmental risk and protective factors are most influential, and when the onset of mental health conditions begin to emerge. Acting early is critical to addressing this. This presentation reports on new research commissioned by beyondblue which consolidates and extends current knowledge about children’s resilience, resulting in the development of a new practice guide. The Building Resilience in Children (0-12 years) Practice Guide is informed by the findings of existing international and new beyondblue research involving consensus-building among Australian experts, in-depth consultations with professionals working with children and families, and the lived experiences, perceptions and voices of parents and children. The practice guide, including a framework for how to build children’s resilience, will assist professionals working with young children and their families across early childhood education and care, primary schools, welfare and community-based health and mental health settings. The framework and implications for practice in the early years will be discussed together with recommendations for professionals working with children, parents and families, and communities.

You’re Kidding Me – Engaging families in child development and bringing together communities

Jessica Salvador
Lake Macquarie City Council

The You’re Kidding Me Project, launched in 2014, has the aim of providing families with access to free, local, expert advice in all areas of child development. Since its inception, more than 1500 families have registered for the workshops and more than 20 local providers have presented in the program. The Project consists of two elements, the first, an annual expo that has brought more than 100 providers to the one location and allows families to connect with services they didn’t know existed. The connections that are created at the expo have supported families to build relationships with services to assist them in navigating the parenting and child development journey.

The other element is the ongoing monthly program, which offers families workshops, screenings and presentations on a variety of child development topics. Topics include – Speech screening, brain development, sleep, attachment, play based learning, nutrition, emotion coaching, positive behaviour, communicating with children with additional needs and more. The emphasis is on supporting parents to make more informed -decisions in their child’s development, and not about selling a particular product or service. The program is targeted towards child development in the first 5 years. All workshops are held in the library, this allows families to quietly step into a session to seek advice without feeling judged or pressured.
This presentation is relevant to the entire theme of the conference as we are laying foundations and knowledge of early years development for families, so they can grow our future leaders of tomorrow.

**Communities for change**

Debbie Miller ¹
Madelaine Winstanely ¹
Jennifer Cartmel ²
  1. Pathways to Resilience Trust
  2. Griffith University

Pathways to Resilience Trust has been working with early years services and their associated schools and community services in cluster groups to support holistic ways of working with children and families to support social and emotional wellbeing. The whole of community approach has been particularly valuable in communities where there are high levels of vulnerability. This session will discuss the coalition of stakeholders and the diverse range of strategies that have been effective in developing a cohesive approach. The outcomes from this intentionally structured system have increased school attendance and reduced classroom tensions.

The community voiced a desire to become more skilled and to be more cohesive in particularly supporting children who demonstrated vulnerability in developing social and emotional competence which is linked to engagement in learning. The use of a common language to discuss social and emotional wellbeing has been critical to curriculum design and planning and implementation. The importance of building strong relationships in order to facilitate engagement in wellbeing programs and evidence about how children’s self-awareness and esteem were improved contributed to educators’ knowledge and confidence. Parents have also become involved in working together with educators and children’s services professionals to contribute to the changes desired to support children’s wellbeing.

**The dual role of parents during the transition to formal schooling**

Grant Webb
DET & CQU

Children progress through a number of life transitions and each is a pivotal point of development for them, their parents and family members. While existing literature places a strong focus on understanding and supporting children as they make this transition, little focus has been placed on the experiences of their parents.
This presentation will be based on the findings of a recent Queensland research project which aimed to describe and interpret parents’ narratives of their experiences as their child transitioned to school. This study has led to a better understanding of the parents’ lived experiences during this transition and a better understanding of the ways in which parents shape and are shaped by their children’s developmental transitions and how parents support their child’s transitions.

This presentation will initially provide a short overview of the current literature in the area and the project’s methodology. The project will then share the ‘stories’ of eight parents’ experiences as their child transitioned to formal schooling and the implications for practice.

Finally, the presentation will explain how the results of this study have relevance for schools and systems as they develop and review policies and practices. The presentation will assert that governments, schools and educators have an increased role in supporting parents with their changing roles, responsibilities and relationships as their child transitions to school. Schools and systems will also be challenged to engage in a strengths-based approach to support parents at this pivotal time in their own and their child’s growth and development.

*Connecting2u (C2u) text messaging intervention - Connecting baby, family and community*

Alanna Philipson
S Frazer-Ryan
QLD Health

Mobile Health is an emerging platform for health education and promotion; it represents a convenient, cost-effective, widely available and efficient tool for disseminating health messages. In this regard, there is increasing evidence suggesting that SMS can be an effective behaviour change tool.

Connecting2u (C2u) is oriented on the priority life stage of ‘early years’ and utilises SMS as a mHealth strategy to engage and support parenting self-efficacy, attachment, parent health behaviour and parenting practices.

This randomised control trial aimed to determine the effectiveness of the text messaging intervention in supporting positive parenting behaviours in expectant and new parents. The two objectives of the C2u evaluation were to 1) examine the process of intervention implementation to inform improvements in future cycles of implementation and to 2) determine the impact of participation on positive parenting intentions, behaviours and self-efficacy, with respect to antenatal and postnatal stages.
Findings from the impact evaluation showed that the C2u intervention resulted in the significant increase in maternal confidence of first time mothers during the postnatal phase of the study. This finding is supported by the process evaluation findings, where first time mothers believed that the C2u messages helped them to feel more confident in feeding, playing with and caring for their baby. Additionally, the SMS messages were well received by mothers and fathers, particularly first time mothers and fathers, as they offered reliable, useful and relevant information in a convenient and timely manner. Information gained by participants was being applied to share information with partners, strengthen parents’ connection with each other and their baby and to provide relief from the anxiety of new parenthood.

Feasibility and acceptability of using telehealth for early intervention parenting support

Nicole Owen
QLD Health

Currently Early Intervention Parenting Clinicians (EIPC/EIC) (social workers or psychologists) provide counselling through most child health centres across Queensland, with parents or guardians of children under the age of eight years old who are having caregiving difficulties. With financial assistance from the Telehealth Support Unit, a trial has been set up in 12 child health centres/services to explore parent counselling through telehealth and this research evaluates both the parents and clinicians experience of the trial, to inform future service delivery options.

The trial aimed to support skill development in clinicians and engagement and this was done by: providing the video conference (VC) equipment; VC technical and training sessions for clinicians and peer support to increase the clinicians’ skills and confidence in using telehealth

Parents engaged in the video conference counselling through their computers or mobile phone and were linked into the Qld Health system using the Telehealth Portal.

This research is still in progress, but 8 parents/families have participated in the research project and 13 clinicians. The parents were interested in using this mode of service delivery due to: distance to travel in rural/remote areas, work commitments, lack of child care options and health issues restricting travel. Although a majority of the parents experienced some minor technical difficulties with the VC, all would use VC for future counselling sessions. When asked what mode of service delivery they would prefer, half the parents involved would like a combination of face to face and video conference. All parents except one improved in their feelings of parenting efficacy and satisfaction after completing the counselling.
Access for all- Breaking down the barriers to participation

Sandi Lascelles
Creche and Kindergarten Association

This presentation will explore factors around the participation of all children in Early Childhood Programs, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families and children who are experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage. Sandi will take you on the journey she followed during her Churchill Fellowship around Canada and the USA and showcase strategies used by Early Childhood organisations to increase the participation of all children. Links and similarities will be identified in Australia’s current contexts.

The fellowship identified that programs work best for all families when there is a community approach. Programs that build relationships with families support positive parent-child relationships, family well-being, and connections to community.

The workshop will showcase the C&K services in Bundaberg and the unique solutions we have in place for engaging families and children in our early childhood programs. Strategies will be outlined for ensuring attendance for our families experiencing disadvantage and our approach for trauma informed practice will be outlined. Community partnerships will be highlighted with strategies to make these links. A strengths based approach is used to value and develop the skills and strengths of children, families and communities.

Research has shown that disengaged families face disadvantage, linked to inter-generational impacts of trauma and discrimination. Quality Early childhood education has been found to be a significant factor in a child’s ability to learn and contributes to later educational, health and employment outcomes. Access for all has meant creating unique solutions for barriers and allowing every child their right to quality early childhood education.

Engaging with vulnerable families: A maternal and child health action research project

Lynette Diamant
Bayside City Council

Maternal and Child Health is a Victorian universal primary health care service that consists of ten key age and stage visits which support families in the areas of health and development, wellbeing, health promotion and safety, referrals and linking into local communities. These visits are free and available
to all families living in Victoria. At each of these consultations, parents are given the opportunity to discuss their concerns, parenting experiences, and how to optimize their child’s health, growth and development.

Currently there are larger numbers of Australian families choosing to immunise their children due to legislation changes affecting the ability of children to attend Kindergarten and Childcare or receive Centrelink payments. These policy changes are seeing increased numbers of families also attending the free immunisation sessions which are run by local council within the Bayside Municipality in Victoria.

This project reports on findings from an action research project undertaken which examined ‘Would having a Maternal and Child Health Nurse present at local council immunisation sessions to complete Key Age and Stage Consultations identify with some children and families who are not engaged and identify and engage with clients who are due for or who have missed any consultations?’

Partnerships with families: Practical steps for constructive conversations and collaborating with parents in ECEC

Catherine Murphy
Olivia Clayton
Parenting Research Centre

Partnering with parents in early childhood services is increasingly being recognised as a key way of improving learning and development outcomes for children, particularly to the extent that we can effectively support parents in creating optimal home learning environments. Strong relationships with parents and genuinely collaborative practice is key to effectively engaging parents. This practical and interactive workshop will examine some of the challenges that arise in working with parents and carers, and provide some useful relationship building and interpersonal communication strategies for use in early education and other early years settings.

This workshop is designed to help participants better understand the social and psychological context of parental help seeking, and better navigate the complexities of working with parents and carers to enhance outcomes for their children. It will draw on early work the Parenting Research Centre is doing for the Victorian Government Department of Education and Training on developing and implementing a Practice Model for Working with Parents in ECEC settings.

In this interactive workshop we will:

• Look at the social and emotional barriers to parental help seeking
• Apply a relationship framework for building a social and interpersonal environment conducive to genuine collaboration
• Introduce and demonstrate strategies for conducting constructive conversations in challenging situations.

‘Bending the rules when words are not enough’- Tools of the modern trauma therapist

Emily Gleeson
Helen Merry
Act for Kids

Drawing on the presenters’ expertise in Child Centred Play Therapy and Trauma Centre Trauma Sensitive Yoga (TCTSY - developed by Bessel van der Kolk and David Emerson), the workshop will provide a brief overview of the neurobiological impact of trauma and discuss the evidence base that informs play and body based therapeutic modalities in the context of complex trauma. Participants will learn about the work of play, particularly for those children for whom their traumatic experience is beyond the reach of language. Participants will practice a number of skills used by the Child-Centred Play Therapist in order to convey 4 key messages to the child – I am here, I am listening, I understand, I care. These non-directive skills will enable the participant to enter the child’s world of play, their natural form of expression, to develop a growth-promoting relationship with the child. It is through this relationship the child can then safely explore their inner world and connect to their outer world. Participants will also be lead through a TCTSY practice, providing an opportunity to experience 5 key elements - invitational language, choice making, present moment experience (interoception), shared authentic experience and non-coercion. TCTSY is accessible to everyone and can be offered as a chair-based practice. Exploring the underlying principles of these therapeutic modalities will not only provide insight into therapeutic ways of working but a deeper understanding of how these principles can be incorporated across platforms and environments in daily interpersonal engagement with children affected by trauma.

‘Paying it forward’: Capitalising on the future by building executive function skills as a basis for learning

Lisa Sonter 1
Desley Jones 2
Sue Southey 3
Hunter Leanne 4

1. University of New England/ Consultants at Play
2. Ballymore Kindergarten
3. Springwood Kindergarten
4. Mitchelton Pre-Schooling Centre/Consultants at Play
Executive Function (EF) skills are the higher order mental functions that include working memory, self-regulation and cognitive flexibility. These skills support children to maintain focussed attention and engage in flexible, logical thinking (Centre for the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2011). These cognitive functioning skills are fundamental to achieving quality education and improving learning outcomes (UNESCO, 2015), and as such are strongly linked to capacity building in young children’s engagement with learning.

This interactive session is led by a group of practising teachers, who have come together to form Leading Executive Functioning (LEX). Together, they share varied perspectives on using an executive functioning lens to understand and extend their work with young children. This workshop focusses on developing participants’ understanding of EF skills through showcasing evidenced based practice from Queensland early childhood settings. The presenters invite participants to learn about and reflect on current research, and focus on how they might apply this into everyday practice and relationships. During this collaborative session, participants will have the opportunity to share and gather practical, successful strategies and resources to support children’s EF skills. This workshop aims to build participants’ confidence in sharing information and engaging with parents, professionals and community in order to support today’s children successfully engage in and capitalise on tomorrow’s future.

**Children, family law processes and allegations of sexual assault: Ensuring therapeutic responses are in the best interest of the child**

Beth Tinning
Child and Family Counsellor at True Child & Family Services

In 2006 the Shared Parental Responsibility Act significantly changed the Family Law landscape. Many policy analysts agreed that the ‘problem’ addressed by the legislative change was that of the perceived disadvantage of fathers in Family Law processes and the often-cited anecdotal evidence that women fabricate domestic violence allegations in order to garner advantage in the Family Court. Subsequent research identified that post the legislative change it became more challenging to alert the Court of potential risk of harm to children from domestic violence.

Allegations of sexual violence by a child in a family where parents are separating can be a minefield for therapeutic counsellors. This is particularly so if the alleged perpetrator denies any form of violence or abuse and counter alleges the child disclosures are a result of grooming by the other parent. The ideas of parental alienation, estrangement, alignment and affiliation have been expanded to include the organisations perceived to be colluding with alignment or alienation. How can child counsellors in domestic violence and/or sexual assault services work with children who are alleging sexual assault in ways that do not place children at further harm? How are generic family support and counselling services supported to broaden their knowledge and skills in assessing the
presence of domestic and family violence and a resulting impact on allegations of child sexual assault by a parent?

Drawing on over 25 years of practice, research and supervision in the fields of sexual assault and domestic violence Beth will unpack best practice principles alongside the goals of keeping children safe and free from violence.

Toilet training troubles: When to worry, why they happen and what to do

Lauren Fitzpatrick ¹
A Kenney-Behr ²
L Kearney ¹&²

1. Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service
2. University of the Sunshine Coast

Despite popular belief, children do not automatically outgrow soiling and wetting accidents and it is not always a product of poor toilet training or delayed development. Bowel and bladder disorders occur frequently in typically developing children. Children with other developmental, behavioral, learning and health needs including ASD, ADHD, ODD and obesity are at increased risk. Current literature on the impact of incontinence on children’s quality of life and parents’ well-being will be summarized.

This presentation will review current age expectations for toilet training, how to determine if toilet training is delayed or dysfunctional, reasons behind difficulties, options for assessment and advice, and how child care workers and educators can help.

‘Pondering Poos’ and ‘Wondering about Wees’ parent/carer information workshops are offered on the Sunshine Coast and cover: signs, causes, management, follow-up service options and resources for parents and children. A research study has recently been conducted which explored the impact of these workshops on parent’s sense of competence and children’s quality of life. These results will be shared.

Audience engagement will be maximized using case studies and quotes from children and parents. Audience interaction will be possible through discussion exercises between participants and regular question breaks.

This presentation best fits into the ‘Children with additional needs: Challenging behaviors’ theme. The reality is that childhood incontinence can significantly impact on a child’s progression through child care groups, transition into school, family harmony, success of foster care placements and peer interactions. It can persist and negatively impact on school attendance, academic achievement, as well as mental health during childhood, adolescence and into adulthood. Child care and education
staff in every setting need to be well-informed, sensitive and supportive in responding to challenging toileting behaviors.
**Fiona Allison**

Fiona Allison has strong experience with the aims/processes of Collective Impact, including work in Katherine with Justice Reinvestment. Fiona has also worked at JCU as the Project Coordinator for an Indigenous Legal Needs Project (2011-2015). The ILNP was a 5-year national study looking at Indigenous civil/family law needs and access to justice (in areas such as tenancy, child protection, social security). In this role, she travelled to over 40 communities and engaged with over 800 local Indigenous people and over 350 stakeholders.

**Nerida Andersen**

Nerida, a Yindiji woman has repositioned her dedication and enthusiasm of working in the early childhood sector to supporting parents in her current role as an Indigenous Family Support Worker. The mother of three’s ongoing commitment, connection and passion for life-long learning have been the core force of change for self and families.

**Nicole Argall**

Nicole Argall completed a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy in 2004 at James Cook University and has worked in multiple health settings since. In 2013 Nicole started at Child Development Service (CDS) Townsville and works across outreach, developmental caseload and in evaluating the family-centred model of care at CDS, Townsville.

**Barbie Bates**

Barbie is Executive Director of Paint the Town REaD. She has many years’ experience working across government and the not for profit sectors.

As an occupational therapist, she has seen the power of reading together not only to prepare children for learning but also to help develop secure attachments.

**Yvonne Black**

Yvonne Black is Program Coordinator - Metropolitan at True Relationships & Reproductive Health. Within this role she is responsible for Do you know the signs? a child protection mentoring programme. Yvonne has worked in health promotion and relationships and sexuality education for over twelve years.
| **Frances Bugden**  
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<tr>
<td>Frances is a Speech Pathologist with the Deadly Ears Program. She has been a paediatric speech pathologist for thirteen years, working internationally and across a range of government and non-government organisations in Queensland and New South Wales.</td>
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| **Corrine Butler**  
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<td>Corrine is an Aboriginal woman with strong family connections to Yarrabah in North Queensland. She has been an occupational therapist for 8 years. She is co-founder of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Occupational Therapy Network, a member of Indigenous Allied Health Australia and OT Australia.</td>
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| **Frances Cheverton**  
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<td>Fran Cheverton is the lead clinical consultant for the Trauma and Healing Team with the Berry Street Childhood Institute. Fran is an Approved Mental Health Social Worker and Family Therapist, who has devoted her professional career to working in Child and Adolescent Mental health both in Australia and the United Kingdom.</td>
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| **Olivia Clayton**  
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<td>Olivia is a psychologist with 15 years of experience in research, practice design and direct service delivery to vulnerable families. She is an experienced and skilled facilitator of evidenced based programs in the early intervention and parenting support. Olivia is dedicated to supporting the uptake and use of evidence-based practice in services for vulnerable families.</td>
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| **Allan Dale**  
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<td>Allan Dale has an international research focus on building the health of complex governance systems, and a strong history in Collective Impact-style approaches. Allan believes shared analysis of complex governance systems is the key to achieving far greater success in solving complex policy problems within society. In this context, he has analytical experience in Indigenous Development, Human Services Sector Development, Regional and Rural Development and Natural Resource Management (NRM), particularly the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). He currently leads the Cairns South Collective Impact Project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynette Diamant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynette Diamant is a Maternal and Child Health Nurse, Midwife and Registered Nurse. She is currently employed by Bayside City Council in Victoria and is working in the capacity of both universal centre nurse and also outreach nurse. Lynette has a particular interest in engaging with hard to reach families.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Sharon Eggins</th>
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<td>Sharon Eggins is a consultant at HIPPY (Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters) Australia. Her work focuses on advocating for children’s voices. Sharon has worked as a primary school teacher for 10 years and the community sector for the last 6 years.</td>
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<th>Alison Evans</th>
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<td>Alison Evans is the Education, Wellbeing &amp; Inclusion Manager with the Crèche and Kindergarten Association (C&amp;K). Alison has over 25 years of experience in Early Childhood Education and Care in multiple roles. Her current position includes overseeing the curriculum, research and innovation strategy together with inclusion and wellbeing. Alison has experience in training and leading teams to support best practice.</td>
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<th>Brett Fahey</th>
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<td>Brett Fahey has worked in the Community Services sector for 20 years and has a Bachelor of Social Science and a Master’s in Business Administration. As the Regional Leader for Mission Australia in NSW Illawarra and South Coast, Brett leads teams across a vast array of services including support for children, young people and their families, working with victims and perpetrators of domestic and family violence, therapy and Laycock intervention supports for children with a disability, drug and alcohol withdrawal and rehabilitation services for young people, kinship care, juvenile justice, employment related services and financial and gambling counselling services.</td>
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<th>Lauren Fitzpatrick</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lauren Fitzpatrick is an Occupational Therapist providing paediatric services within Queensland Health and private practice on the Sunshine Coast. She frequently works with children who have bowel continence issues, as well as their families and educators. Lauren believes education is key in prevention and effective management of childhood continence issues.</td>
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Danielle Gallegos

Danielle Gallegos is a social nutritionist and Professor at Queensland University of Technology where she is the discipline leader for nutrition and dietetics, is involved in teaching public and community nutrition and in undertaking research in areas of social justice. Danielle’s special areas of interest are developing nutrition and dietetics as a profession in Vietnam, food security, food literacy and supporting breastfeeding through the use of innovative technologies.

Megan Gibson

Megan Gibson is a Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Education, QUT. Key areas of research include: ECEC workforce, professionalism, leadership, preservice teacher education and sustainability. Megan has worked across a range of diverse early childhood contexts. Her doctoral research examined early childhood teachers’ professional identities.

Emily Gleeson

Emily Gleeson B. Social Work (Hons.), 200hr YTT, currently enrolled TCTSY certification. Emily is currently in a Senior Practitioner role at Act for Kids and is passionate about her work across the family violence and trauma sector. Emily is excited about the emergence of body-based approaches to trauma in Australia and for the opportunity to combine her love for therapeutic work and yoga.

Fay Hadley

Fay’s been involved in the early childhood sector for thirty years. Her research examines leadership in early childhood education. Fay is also interested in partnerships with diverse families in educational settings and the impacts this has on educational and well-being outcomes for children.

Denise Hagan

Denise Hagan is Founder and CEO of the Puuya Foundation, established to develop everyday leaders, and empower the Lockhart River Aboriginal community to create a positive future. She produces outstanding advances in social justice through innovative, community led strategies.

Some describe Denise as an incredibly rare, multi-dimensional professional equally adept at the top of modern organisations and at the heart of communities. Her unique capability for translating issues across cultures and disciplines is further enabled by her gentleness, playfulness and wisdom.
Denise’s work has been recognised locally and internationally. Most recently, the Puuya Foundation won the Queensland Premier’s Reconciliation Award 2017.

**Deb Hall**

Deb Hall is a Social Worker who graduated from James Cook University in 1999 and Graduated from Monash University Melbourne in 1990 with an Associate Diploma in Human Services. Deb has worked for over 25 years in the area of Child and Family Welfare with the last 18 years specifically in the statutory child protection area. Deb has had extensive experience in the non-government sector including domestic and family violence, substance misuse, crisis and homeless services and accommodation support. Deb has work in a range of positions in the Department of Child Safety, Youth & Women including Regional Child Protection Resource Officer, Team Leader of generic Child Protection Teams, including developing a Transition From Care Team for young people 15 years to 18 years, Senior Practitioner (2005). Deb has a strong interest and experience in integrated partnerships and improving services for children and families in remote communities. Deb is Regional Practice Leader for Far North Queensland at the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. This role is responsible for the organisations strategic and operational practice development.

**Sonia Harris**

Sonia Harris is the South Australian Social Inclusion Coordinator for Goodstart Early learning. Her background is in paediatric nursing, both in the acute sector and in the community as a child and family health nursing. Sonia has a passion for education and has been teaching, coaching and mentoring for over 10 years. Sonia has worked with many families supporting their parenting in the early years and has taught nurses, midwives, teachers and educators in the not for profit sector and as well as post graduate courses at Flinders University. 

**Jean Henle**

Currently employed as a Child Health Nurse with Cairns Community Child, Youth and Family Health Services. Jean has worked with infants, children and families in a variety of settings over the past 20 years and holds a Graduate Diploma in Paediatrics, Child and Youth Health

**Amanda Ireland**

Amanda Ireland is a Social Worker who graduated from James Cook University in 2006 before gaining further qualifications in Community Services Practice
(Statutory Child Protection and Client Assessment and Case Management). Amanda has spent the previous 12 years working in statutory child protection and has experience working across all stages of the child protection continuum as Child Safety Officer, Senior Team Leader, Senior Practitioner and Manager. Amanda's current role is Senior Practitioner for FNQ Regional Intake Service, Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect Team (SCAN) and Innisfail Child Safety Service Centre. Amanda specialises in complex risk assessment and through her various roles in the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women has developed and sustained strong relationships with key partner agencies. Amanda continues to have a strong interest in promoting robust cross-sectoral participation in responding to families in need.

Carolyn Keogh

Carolyn Keogh is a lecturer in the School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences at QUT. Carolyn has worked across a range of diverse areas in the field of Nutrition and Dietetics, particularly in the area of Community and Public Health Nutrition. Carolyn’s key areas of teaching and research are professional experience, innovative models for professional practice and pedagogical practice.

Sandi Lascelles

Sandi currently works as a Children’s Services Manager with C&K. Sandi, a Churchill Fellow, has travelled through Canada and the USA, researching the barriers for participation in quality Early Childhood education programs. Sandi is an advocate for all children and their rights to access quality educational services.

Gema Laycock

Gema Laycock has worked in the educational and community services sector for 8 years and has certificates in childhood education, teaching support and a Bachelor of Applied Social Science. Gema has specialist training in facilitating parenting program; including Circle of Security, 123 Magic, Tuning into Kids and Caring Dad’s.

In Gema’s current role as Team Leader for Mission Australia’s Domestic and Family Violence pilot program, Gema oversees the case management of families who are identified as At Risk of Significant Harm.

Samantha Lewis
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Role and Experience</th>
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<td>Cairns local, Samantha Lewis</td>
<td>Registered Nurse, Midwife and Child and Family Health Nurse. Her passion for Primary Health Care enabled her to transition from the Cairns hospital firstly into the role of Nurse Home Visitor with the First Time Mums Program and is now the Program Supervisor. Over the past decade Samantha has been privileged to work alongside many families and witnessed firsthand the empowering nature of the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sue McLaren</td>
<td>Research Coordinator and Director of the Animal Fun Program. She has a Social Science background and has wide experience of working with children and families – especially children with special needs. Sue managed the research project and has also coordinated the translating of this research into practise by developing Animal Fun into a dynamic resource for parents and educators of young children. She has co-authored three peer reviewed papers on the research findings into the effectiveness of the Animal Fun program.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynda Melville</td>
<td>After completing a Bachelor of Education, Lynda has work at Autism Queensland for over 25 years. During her time at AQ, Lynda has worked with children from early intervention age through to adolescence. Her roles have included group teacher, Metropolitan and Regional Consultant and for many years co-coordinator of AQ Professional Learning and Development Services. Through her role in Professional Learning and Development Services, Lynda has presented throughout Queensland, Australia and overseas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helen Merry</td>
<td>Helen Merry BPsych, GradDip Bus Admin, Certified Clinical Play Therapist, MAPS. Helen has worked as a Psychologist for 24 years with an interest in ASD and trauma. The therapeutic relationship is at the heart of Helen’s work. She has embraced the non-directive nature of Child-Centred Play Therapy and its capacity to support children to safely express, explore and make sense of their experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Miller</td>
<td>Debbie is an experienced educator and the Director of Education and Learning at Pathways to Resilience Trust. She engages with those working with children to have a positive impact on their wellbeing and resilience. Debbie is author of Wings to Fly (0 - 5 years) and Kaleidoscope (5 – 8 years).</td>
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<td>Name</td>
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<td>H. Moss</td>
<td>Helen Moss qualified as a Registered Nurse and Registered Midwife in Leicester, UK where she worked predominately as a case load midwife. Having moved to Cairns in 2003 for a “sea change” with her family, Helen began working as a midwife at Cairns Private Hospital and then made the transition into General Practice. For the last 3 years Helen has been a Nurse Home Visitor with the First Time Mums Program at Wuchopperen Health Service.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Murphy</td>
<td>Catherine is a psychologist and Practice Design Specialist working with early childhood services and family support agencies across Australia to design and implement evidenced informed programs. These programs focus on supporting and building the capacity of professionals to engage effectively with children and families so that they achieve positive outcomes.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Nelson</td>
<td>Jennifer Nelson is a Family Intervention Worker with Centacare North Queensland, working intensively with families involved in the Child Protection system. Jennifer studied as an Occupational therapist, and has worked with families in the Child Protection System for several years. Jennifer is passionate about the area of trauma, particularly in relation to parenting practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole Owen</td>
<td>Nicole Owen BSW MSW has been working with families for over 25 years and is a clinical supervisor for Early Intervention Parenting Clinicians in Child Health, Qld Health. She initiated the telehealth parent counselling trial and research project in 2015 and evaluated the experience for clinicians and parents to inform future service delivery options.</td>
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<td>Shan Peng</td>
<td>I am an early childhood teacher and teacher mentor in Goodstart. I have always been passionate about early childhood education. I particularly have a strong focus on children’s social and emotional wellbeing and skills development. I believe these two areas are fundamentally important for children to success in the future.</td>
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<td><strong>Alanna Philipson</strong></td>
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<td>Alanna Philipson has been a practising public health and health promotion professional since 2002. She has a particular interest in health promotion in the early years, and has completed a Masters of Public Health and Graduate Certificate in Perinatal, Infant Mental Health to support her work. Alanna works part time for the Centre for Children’s Health and Wellbeing, Children’s Health Queensland.</td>
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<th><strong>Katie Roberts</strong></th>
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<td>For 25 years, Katie has worked within the education and care sector as an educator and Early Childhood Officer, from Brisbane to East Timor. Katie is currently the First 5 Forever Project Coordinator for Mackay Regional Council and continues working as an Early Childhood Officer for the Department of Education.</td>
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<th><strong>Jessica Salvador</strong></th>
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<td>Jessica Salvador is a Community Planner for Children and Families in Local Government. She supports children, families and the community in a strategic approach as she works to identify areas of need. The role has deepened her understanding of the complexities of family issues and she work from a solutions based perspective.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Hannah Simpson</strong></th>
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<td>Originally from South East Qld, I spent my childhood growing up in remote communities of Far North Qld including Kowanyama, Normanton, Pormpuraaw and the Torres Straits as my mother was a teacher for Education Queensland. Following in her footsteps, I too have worked for Education Queensland for the past 15 years, travelling throughout the Far North region before calling Mareeba home. Throughout my career I have been incredibly passionate about curriculum and this has seen me support a variety of schools and teachers across the P-12 spectrum. Working with such variety has given me the opportunity to build many community links and it is this that has led me to my specialist interest in the Early Years, focusing on Early Intervention and engagement. As a mother of 2 teenagers I value the importance of the foundational pillars that have helped to shape not only my children, but all children, for greater success throughout their schooling experience and into life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lisa Sonter
Dr Lisa Sonter is an experienced early childhood teacher, consultant, and recipient of a NEiTA Community Merit Award for leadership and innovation in early childhood teaching methods. Currently a sessional academic at the University of New England, Lisa is also Vice-President of the Queensland Early Childhood Sustainability Network.

Rod Soper
Rod has over twenty years’ experience in the field of education. He is the Co-founder of Thinkers.inq, an educational specialist, entrepreneur, author, speaker and leadership coach. Rod’s expertise in educational design includes research into ontological and interpersonal development, creative thinking, critical pedagogy. The Playing with Gratitude Project is his most recent practitioner inquiry project which is bringing to life his passion for well-being to flourish in the early childhood sector.

Sue Southey
Sue Southey is Co-Director/Teacher at Springwood Community Kindergarten. She provides training, in-house support and professional development for early childhood educators. She has been a State Finalist in the NEiTA Inspirational Teaching Award and has been awarded the Inspirational Teaching Award from the Down Syndrome Association of Queensland.

Claire Stanley
Claire Stanley is the Senior Clinical Consultant for the Trauma and Healing Team at the Berry Street Childhood Institute. Claire is a qualified Family Therapist and has spent her 20 year career working with vulnerable families and children in Out of Home Care, family violence and sexual assault in the UK and Australia.

Beth Tinning
Beth is a social worker employed as a Child Counsellor in the True Child & Family Service (previously Cairns Sexual Assault Service). Beth has been working in the human services sector since 1991, primarily in organisations (government and non-government) responding to domestic violence and sexual assault. Beth was employed as a Lecturer in the Department of Social Work and Human Services, James Cook University from 2007 – 2014. Her research focus during these years explored domestic violence, family law and mental health. Beth returned to direct service delivery in late 2014 and has
continued to work with children who have experienced trauma, their carers and parents.

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<tr>
<td>Manjula Waniganayake</td>
<td>Over three decades, Manjula has been involved in the early childhood sector as a teacher, a parent, an advocate, a policy analyst, a teacher educator, and a researcher. Her teaching and research interests cover educational leadership, family diversity, as well as childhood socialisation and quality assurance matters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Webb</td>
<td>Grant has undertaken a number of educational roles across a variety of state, national and international contexts. He has been a classroom teacher, Learning Support Teacher, Educational Consultant, University Lecturer and Principal. He is the immediate past president of the Australian Literacy Educators’ Association and is completing his doctoral studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madelaine Winstanely</td>
<td>Madelaine is an Education and Engagement Consultant at Pathways to Resilience Trust. She is an experienced primary teacher and program writer, with a background in drama, environmental education, mindfulness and yoga for children. She is the author of “Journey to the Island of Calm: Wellbeing in the upper primary classroom”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Wright</td>
<td>Dr Rebecca Wright is a Project Manager in the Families Team at beyondblue. Rebecca has experience in project management and has spent the last two years delivering projects in mental health prevention – in children’s resilience and perinatal mental health. Rebecca also has experience in local government and academia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyn Zollo</td>
<td>Lyn Zollo is a lecturer in the School of Early Childhood. As an early childhood educator, with some 20 years of teaching experience, Lyn has worked across a range of diverse early childhood contexts both in Australia and internationally. Lyn’s key areas of teaching and research interest include: professional experience, initial teacher education, pedagogical practice and creating curriculum in early childhood contexts.</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Conference Organising Committee would like to thank Brandtree (http://www.brandtree.com.au/) for their invaluable support and for volunteering their time and expertise in designing our logos and hosting the conference website.

Brandtree is a local design and creative studio, providing clients just like you innovative solutions across all channels of marketing, for all industries. We have over 10 years of experience in the local region, and passionately create unique brands for start-up businesses, property developers, builders, tourism, hospitality, retail, corporate players, and all other industries in between.

Nick, Daniel, and the Team from Brandtree are proud to be locals and proud to support local events and community programs.

A special thank you also to Accor Hotels for their support.
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