

All About OSHC

OSHC Educator Microcredential
Development

Embedding Inclusive Practices Project
Emily McKenna - QCAN

CatholicCare Provides Support for
Educators Who Care For Kids
Veronika Cox

The Journey of Otis, the Therapy Dog
Paige Dowd - Kids Club Abbotsleigh OSHC



Edition 8, December 2023



Welcome

Welcome to our December 2023 issue of All About OSHC. This edition includes some wonderful contributions that we hope you will find both interesting and informative. It is such a pleasure to be able to share these stories of innovative practice taking place across the OSHC sector in Australia.

For this edition we thank Chris Mason from ACECQA for his ongoing contributions to our magazine. The insights shared remind us where improvement opportunities can be prioritised across the sector.

Throughout 2023, we have seen an important focus on mental health and wellbeing which is reflected in the content of our three feature articles. Each of these articles addresses the issue of mental health and inclusive practice from a different angle and the approaches complement each other well.

Finally, we congratulate the Activated OSHC research project on their success in undertaking the largest Australian research project of its kind. This is a significant piece of work for the OSHC sector and will help raise quality and awareness across the sector as the research continues into 2024.

Thank you to our members and collaborators. We hope you enjoy this edition and welcome you to reach out if you have any interesting or informative stories to share!

Kylie Brannelly
Chairperson
NOSHSA

The contributions in All About OSHC come from a variety of sources and authors. The views expressed in these articles may not represent the express views of NOSHSA delegates.

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NEWS AND EVENTS

NOSHSA Meeting Summary

Kylie Brannelly - NOSHSA Chairperson

On the 9th – 10th November 2023, the NOSHSA meeting was hosted by our Victorian alliance member, the Community Child Care Association. The meeting was held at their offices located on Wurundjeri Country.

The meeting was abundant with collaboration and information sharing and we were very proud to have representatives from across the country. Each jurisdiction shared their local updates on issues emerging for both state/territory and national advocacy. The discussion included topics such as:

- Updating our Terms of Reference
- Confirming our future advocacy and strategic plan
- Establishing a workforce vision for NOSHSA and the development of microcredentials and skill sets
- Reviewing our submissions to the national reviews and inquiries
- Evaluation of the 'Embedding Inclusive Practices in OSHC' project
- Updates on significant Australian research projects
- Hosting of the WERA-IRN Global Taskforce Extended Education conference in Brisbane 2024
- The commissioning of Play Australia to develop some practical resources for OSHC

We look forward to sharing further outcomes of the meeting through the NOSHSA website

www.noshsa.org.au



Refreshed and Updated – My Time Our Place Framework for School Age Care 2.0

Jennifer Cartmel - Associate Professor Griffith University

My Time, Our Place



FRAMEWORK FOR
SCHOOL AGE CARE IN AUSTRALIA
V2.0, 2022

I have had the privilege of having a lead role in the writing and update of My Time Our Place. I think I am more excited about 2.0 than the original. The inclusion of new principles, and the rewording of practices, aligns well with the intentions of the OSHC

sector to provide a fun and safe community for children before and after school and during vacation care. These principles and practices strengthen the resolve that it is children's time and a place for children i.e.. Collaboration with children and young people.

The aspect that makes me most excited has been the opportunity for children in services across Australia to send in their perspectives about their

time spent in programs. This contribution is most obvious in the examples under each of the outcomes. The examples of experiences and practice under each of the elements of the outcomes have been drawn from contributions from small and large services, and urban and remote services. Children's ideas have been used in presenting these examples. I am hoping that OSHC services take up the challenge to write their own examples of children's expectations and educator practice. The outcomes section of the Framework is meant to be a living document that reflects what happens in each service. The unique qualities of the children and their communities should be obvious in the examples that are written. If you haven't already done so, in 2024 I urge you to embrace the practice of collaboration and teamwork, and invite children and educators to write about their own service, under each of the headings. I am sure it will help all educators engage with their responsibilities in the service.



Northern Territory Update



Northern Territory

Community of Practice

OSHC services in the Northern Territory are invited to attend a 'Community of Practice' facilitated by the National Outside School Hours Care Services Alliance (NOSHSA). This is a valuable opportunity to collaborate with colleagues and discuss important issues currently impacting the OSHC sector in the Northern Territory. Through collaboration we seek to explore possible solutions and strategies for future advocacy within the Northern Territory.

Discussion points include:

- Innovative Solutions Project – Embedding Inclusive Practices in OSHC
 - ◇ Fully-funded training and support project to promote inclusive practice in the areas of:
 - ◆ Neurodiversity Affirming Practice
 - ◆ Trauma Informed Practice
 - ◆ Complex Behaviours
- Workforce challenges for OSHC – National advocacy update
- Qualifications and skills for OSHC in the Northern Territory
 - ◇ Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care
 - ◇ OSHC Educator Microcredential
- NOSHSA Magazine 'All About OSHC' – 2024 Editions
- Research in OSHC update

DATE: 7th February, 2024

TIME: 10am-12pm

LOCATION: YMCA - Room TBC

FACILITATORS: Kylie Brannelly, Chairperson NOSHSA

Mandy Marsh, the Y OSHC Area Manager and NOSHSA
NT Representative

Register by Thursday 1st February via the NOSHSA website

<https://www.noshsa.org.au/>

National Out of School Educators Day Grows in Momentum

Pauline O’Kane - CEO Network of Community Activities



Save the date and get ready to celebrate and recognise the incredible work of Out of School educators across Australia in 2024!

The theme for the 2024 Out of School Educators Day is "Limitless Possibilities"

Why celebrate OSHC Educators day?

OSHC Educators Day is a time to recognize and appreciate Educators who work with children in out of school hours. The day is marked by celebrations, and advocacy efforts to encourage people to thank and provide ongoing support for the OSHC professionals who make a difference in the lives of children in their communities everyday. You are often the unsung hero's of our school communities.

When is OSHC Educators day?

The last Wednesday in July, each year. **Wednesday 31st July 2024.**

We need to shout out together about the work of OSHC Professionals

OSHC Professionals are often highly skilled individuals who work with children in a range of school and community environments to provide a wide variety of exciting and play rich opportunities for children. OSHC Educators' relationships are central to their work and for creating rich learning experiences during out-of-school hours. Currently in Australia, there is an estimated 60,000 individuals working in Out of School Hours Care.

Why is it important to recognise OSHC professionals?

Did you know?

Nearly 500,000 children participate in after school programs each year, and for every child in an OSHC program, there are often waiting lists and it is easily the fastest-growing section of the Education and

Care sector. Every child deserves quality afterschool experiences that positively impact their development. It takes skilled professionals to create these experiences. Because of the important role OSHC professionals play in the lives of children, they deserve recognition and support! Get on board and start to plan how you will celebrate.

Theme for 2024

OSHC Educators - Limitless Possibilities

OSHC Educators Day is the perfect time to stop, reflect and acknowledge the significant role OSHC Educators play in improving children's lives. This day is an opportunity to promote the profession and the 60,000 Educators working in the sector across Australia. We know the last few years have been tough for many services in relation to workforce shortages, some services work in inadequate facilities, plus the lack of professional status to name a few.

We all know Out of School educators are key for a great service and provide limitless possibilities for children and communities. Every day, Out of School educators play an important role in supporting children. Over the last decade the profession has grown significantly from being unknown to now a recognised profession with many people making it their chosen career of choice.

OSHC Educators Day allows us to stand together and be proud of our wonderful OSHC community.

I hope the marking of this fifth anniversary of OOSH Educators day gives us cause not only to celebrate but also to inspire new Educators into a fantastic, challenging and rewarding career.

How it started

National OSHC Educators Day started in 2020 in NSW by OSHC Educators who wanted a day dedicated to OOSH (NSW terminology). Network supported the idea and worked in collaboration with Roz White (Wilberforce OOSH) a passionate OOSHIE and OOSH leader who brought the idea to life.

How to celebrate - FREE Resources

To help services, schools and communities to celebrate OSHC Educators, Network has a range of resources on our website www.networkofcommunityactivities.org including social media content, thank-you cards, children's activities, posters and social media banners.

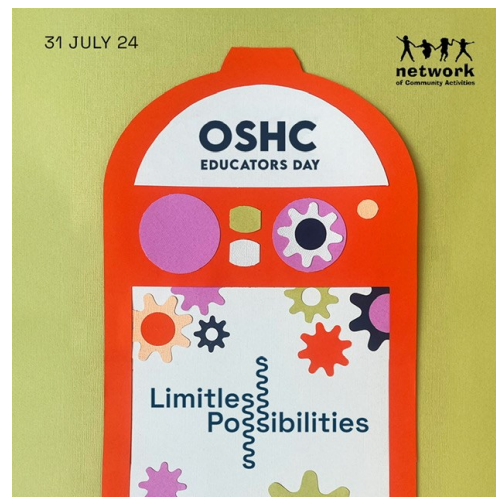
Early next year you will be able to download these resources from our website

<https://networkofcommunityactivities.org.au/what-we-do/events/oosh-educators-day>

In 2024 we are encouraging more services to be involved to make 2024 the biggest ever.

Wednesday 31 July 2024

National Out of School Hours Care Educators Day is the annual national day to celebrate and recognise the important role Educators play in the lives of children. It is coordinated by member organisations of NOSHSA. Each year it is celebrated on the last Wednesday of July.



ACECQA National Quality Framework Snapshot

Chris Mason

In November 2023, ACECQA released its latest National Quality Framework (NQF) Snapshot. Chris Mason, Senior Manager of Workforce, Engagement and Research at ACECQA provides an overview of the Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) sector. The figures below are taken from the NQF Online Snapshot.

As at 1 October 2023, more than 4,300 OSHC services have a published quality rating, with 87% rated as Meeting National Quality Standard (NQS) or above. This represents an increase of five percentage points compared to two years ago, fourteen percentage points compared to four years ago, and twenty one percentage points compared to six years ago.

Looking across the seven quality areas that comprise the NQS, it is Quality Area 7 (Governance and Leadership) that OSHC services find most challenging to meet, with 10% of services rated Working Towards NQS. Of the six

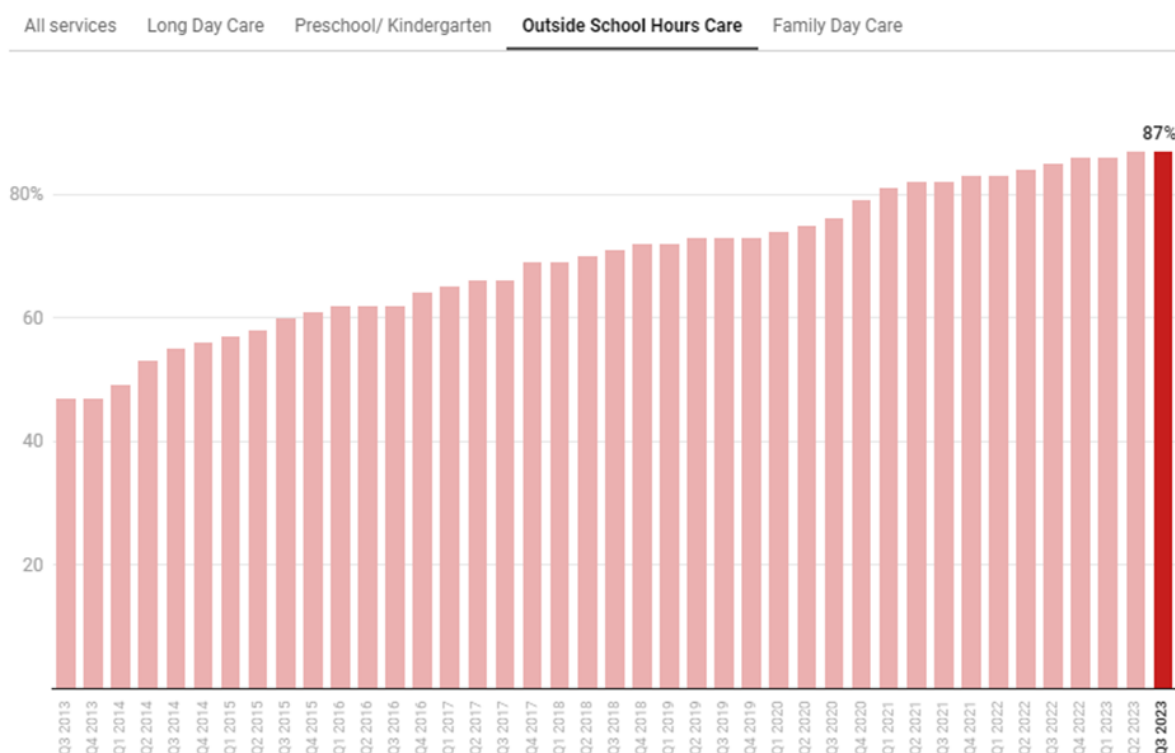
elements of quality associated with governance and leadership, more than 5% of OSHC services do not meet the following three:

- Educational leadership (7.2.2)
- Management systems (7.1.2)
- Development of professionals (7.2.3)

Our website includes a range of resources relevant to [Quality Area 7](#), as well as resources to assist in [Meeting the National Quality Standard](#) in general, and specific guidance and support relating to [educational leadership](#).

Finally, if you haven't already, please do subscribe to our [newsletter](#) to stay up-to-date with key developments, such as the revised [Approved Learning Frameworks](#) and the [national workforce strategy](#), including the [online dashboard](#) published in July and the inaugural biennial national workforce forum held at the end of November.

OR10: Overall and service sub-type quality ratings by quarter (Meeting NQS or above)



Update on the Activated OSHC Program



We're excited to bring you the latest developments in the 'Activated OSHC' program, a cutting-edge initiative we introduced in a previous newsletter, spearheaded by the University of South Australia along with a dedicated consortium of researchers and OSHC industry partners including NOSHSA, OSHCA, YMCA, Big Fat Smile, ACECQA, the SA Department for Education, Healthway, and Hunter New England Health and Wellbeing SA. The program is making significant strides in enhancing physical activity and screen time practices within OSHC services.



Currently, 192 OSHC services across metro and regional areas of SA, WA, and NSW are actively participating in the research trial, extending from 2022 to 2024. We are delighted to share that all available positions in the study have been filled. A big thanks goes out to all participating services and our study partners, whose ongoing support and guidance have been pivotal in advancing this important project.

Looking forward to 2024, we are gearing up to collaborate further with the OSHC sector, laying the groundwork for a national launch of the Activated OSHC program in 2025. This expansion will include bringing Activated OSHC to services in VIC, QLD, TAS, NT and ACT.

We value your feedback and engagement as we continue on this exciting journey. Together, we are making a meaningful impact on the health and wellbeing of children across Australia!

WERA TASK FORCE

Global Research in Extended Education Conference 2024

Hosted by Griffith University and the National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA) the 2024 WERA TASK FORCE - Global Research in Extended Education Conference will be held from 11th to 14th September in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

This conference is titled “Bricolage: Research Methodologies and Perspectives in Extended Education.” Bricolage is derived from two French terms: ‘Bricoleur,’ which means a creator or jack of all trades, and ‘Bricoler,’ which is creating from whatever resources are at hand. In research, Bricolage is the construction of ideas achieved by using whatever is available (a range of methods and methodologies).

It is intended, through the conference research presentations, that participants may gain new knowledge and understanding about research methodologies in extended education that can potentially be implemented regardless of the type of extended education setting or where it is based.

Bricolage: Research Methodologies and Perspectives in Extended Education

WERA TASK FORCE
Global Research in Extended Education Conference

Hosted by Griffith University and the National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA) the 2024 WERA TASK FORCE - Global Research in Extended Education Conference will be held from 11th to 14th September in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

www.noshsa.org.au/weraconference2024



2024



The Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association

[The Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association](#) (GELYDA - *pronounced gelida*) is a new international organization dedicated to understanding, supporting, and improving expanded opportunities for learning, development, and thriving in schools, after school and summer programs, and communities. Our association aims to establish an inter-continental field of extended education that strengthens young people, their educators, and families wherever they live and learn. We plan to achieve these ambitious goals through strong translational research, systematic evaluation, and the use of evidence that will support practitioners and policymakers.

“Extended learning and youth development” refers to opportunities and activities that take place outside of the traditional school day and setting or enrich the experiences of students during and outside of school hours. It encompasses a wide range of programs, initiatives, and experiences that aim to support the holistic development of young people and their educators. These include afterschool and out-of-school time programs, full-day schools, extracurricular activities, such as adventure and nature projects, sports and arts-based youth development, summer learning, community education, and more. Children spend only a fraction of their waking and learning hours in school and that the work schedule of parents typically does not correspond well with the school schedule of their children. Thus, extended learning and development is an essential educational, public health and public safety concern, a fact that should bring it to the fore of policy, practice and research in every locality, country and the global community.

In conclusion, a central aspect of GELYDA is the interconnection between research and evidence-based practice and policy, serving as the signature of our organization. We are committed to far-reaching efforts that have an inter-continental impact, enhancing extended education in diverse

countries and regions, and partnering with international organisations to shape global strategies for the development, learning, and thriving of children and families. Our association actively seeks funding to support international scholarship, drive practice innovation, and facilitate policy changes. Join us in this transformative journey to create a world where expanded opportunities for learning, development, and thriving are accessible to all. There are no fees involved at present or for the next 24 months. We will passionately pursue these values and goals, dedicated to realising our vision of a brighter and more inclusive future for young people and the adults that surround them.



OSHC Educator Microcredential Development

The Queensland Children’s Activities Network (QCAN), NOSHA Secretariat have been funded to develop an Outside School Hours Care Educator Microcredential.

A microcredential is a short certification course that allow you to learn new professional skills very quickly. It is a perfect solution for the OSHC environment as the majority of skill development to work within the sector occurs on the job. Microcredentials are a way of standardising skill and knowledge development through small volumes of training and assessment. This microcredential is being developed as an industry partnership so it is grounded in the everyday practice of OSHC educators.

The microcredential is being developed under the [National Microcredentials Framework - Department of Education, Australian Government](#).

The training and assessment for the microcredential will consist of six clusters/sections. These are outlined in the table below along with the broad themes of content for each of the clusters which will be refined as the microcredential is finalised.

1. Legal and professional responsibilities of educators working within the NQF	NQF Objectives and Guiding Principles
	NQF Governance Structure - Education Council, ACECQA, Regulatory Authority
	Organisational Structures - AP, NS & RPIC, Educational Leader, Educator
	ECS National Law
	ECS National Regulations
	Compliance through Policies and Procedures
	National Quality Standards
	Assessment and Ratings including the Exceeding Themes
	Approved Learning Frameworks

2. Duty of care and child protection	Duty of Care
	Code of Conduct
	Critical Reflection
	Professional Boundaries including Zone of Helpfulness
	Code of Ethics
	Child Protection including Mandatory Reporting

3. Work Health and Safety and Managing Risks in OSHC	Work Health and Safety
	Psychological Safety
	Risk Management including Dynamic Risk Assessment
	Managing Incidents and Emergencies
	Report Writing
	Health, Hygiene and Safe Food Practices

4. Designing and delivering experiences in OSHC (in a manner that accords with the Approved Learning Framework)	The Vision, Themes and Language of the Framework
	The Elements - Principles, Practice and Outcomes
	Theoretical Perspectives of the Framework
	The Framework Planning Cycle and Implementing Experiences in OSHC

5. Effective Supervision and Safe OSHC Environments	Proactive and Effective Supervision for all OSHC Environments
	Development and Implementing Supervision Plans including Dynamic Risk Assessment

6. Relationships with children (including behaviour guidance and support)	Understanding Children and Young People
	Regulatory Requirements for Interactions and Relationships
	Interactions with Children
	Positive Behaviour Guidance and Support
	Social, Emotional, Temporal and Intellectual Environments
	Play and Leisure Context

The training will be delivered as 2 x three hour sessions face-to-face. We can roll these out in a similar way to the sessions we have organised with you over 2023. We are intending to hold the training sessions 3-4 weeks apart so the microcredential can be completed within 8-12 weeks.

Once an educator has participated in the face-to-face training there will be on the job assessment tasks which are grounded in everyday practice. These will need to be signed off as observed by their supervisor in the workplace. While there is assessment required in undertaking a microcredential, the training and assessment for the OSHC Educator Microcredential will be very doable in the context of OSHC and consistent with a reasonable volume of learning achievable for a casual educator.

UPDATE - Government Funded Wage Increases for the Education and Care Sector

*Julie Price - Executive Director
Community Child Care Association Inc*

As we wrote in the last issue, there is a lot of work under way to start a process to get all educators and teachers in the education and care sector a wage rise, through a ground breaking multi-employer agreement. Those undertaking the work believe we are on the road to a wage and conditions package that will recognise the professional work undertaken right across the education and care sector.

Employer representatives and unions have met four times at the Fair Work Commission, with Deputy President Easton, to negotiate the terms of the first multi-employer agreement under the new legislation. The government are due to come to the negotiating table in the last week before Christmas and we are asking for a funded pay rise of 25% and professional development allocation for each staff member. There are other conditions currently under negotiation, however we are trying to keep the bundle as simple as possible to ensure this new agreement can be struck as quickly as possible. This is also why this first agreement is focused on long day care

providers. By keeping the agreement to one service type helps to keep it simple and we are working towards a funded pay rise from the middle of next year.

Once the new agreement is struck early 2024, work will begin on how to get other Long Day Care (LDC) services engaged in this agreement and a very similar agreement for Outside School Hours Care (OSHC). Across the country OSHC educators are engaged under many different industrial instruments, which makes the job more complex. However, we believe we can navigate this complexity and deliver the same increase in pay and conditions to OSHC educators.

We remain focused on delivering new funded multi-employer agreements which fix the professional pay gap between education and care and other government funded sectors including aged care, disability care and schooling. Addressing the workforce crisis by ensuring **ALL** educators and teachers receive a pay rise as early as possible next year is our most urgent priority.



Certificate III in OSHC Provider Update

10983NAT

Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care

Course details can be found at training.gov.au/Training/Details/10983NAT

The following RTOs are accepting enrolments for the Certificate III in Outside School Hours Care at the date of this publication.



NOSHSA is currently negotiating with a number of RTOs across Australia to expand the delivery and accessibility of this qualification. Queries regarding the qualification can be directed to kylie@qcan.org.au

Embedding Inclusive Practices Project

Emily McKenna - LEAD Trainer, QCAN



Outside School Hours Care Strategic and Collaborative Inclusion Project

In this article identity-first language is used (Autistic young person/Neurodivergent children), reflective of the belief that being Autistic or Neurodivergent is a core part of a person's identity. This language has come from the preferences of many members of the Neurodivergent community. We acknowledge language preferences can be deeply individual and we aim to respect these preferences and follow their lead.

This year has shone an important, albeit at times confronting, light on Australian children's experiences. The publication of the Australian Child Maltreatment study spoke to children's adverse childhood experiences. A senate inquiry investigated the increase in school refusal/avoidance, particularly for Neurodivergent children. Across the sector OSHC services have anecdotally reported an increase in escalated behaviour and dysregulation, the results of which are pervasive, impacting not only children and young people's wellbeing, but also OSHC Educators'.

As a result, increased attention is being directed towards supporting children's behaviour and how to respond; with not all of it positive or

constructive. In Queensland in particular, local newspapers published articles lamenting children's behaviour: "South East Queensland's naughtiest preps", "Brisbane's worst behaved schools".

In considering children and young people's experiences, it is clear they are being exposed to environments that aren't meeting their needs. Many children have less time to play and fewer opportunities to build relationships, resulting in less access to learning opportunities, particularly those social and emotional skills that develop in the context of relationships. Many environments are not neurodiversity affirming, that is, they expect conformity to neurotypical standards, and don't allow Neurodivergent children to be their

authentic selves. In addition, it is important to recognise the ongoing impact of COVID-19, some of which is still yet to be fully understood.

The OSHC profession is one that is centred upon children’s rights and best practice. It is one that recognises the importance of play, relational pedagogy and belonging. It is important then that OSHC services reflect on how to create inclusive environments that allow each child to achieve success. It is also imperative that they apply a critical best practice lens to the provision of behaviour guidance strategies. The understanding of children’s behaviour and best practice approaches have evolved over the last decade, which is evidenced in the removal of behaviouralist theories from MTOP V2.0. Despite this, the abundance of information related to supporting children’s behaviour can be overwhelming.

On top of this need to navigate through the evidence, a challenge in embedding inclusive best practice has been the transient nature of the OSHC workforce and the still-evolving understanding of the role of the educational leader. The Embedding Inclusive Practices Project was designed to provide educational leaders and educators, as well as other management roles within OSHC organisations, with the support and resources to work with staff to enhance inclusive practice. The information contained in these resources is drawn from the evidence base, including the lived experience of Neurodivergent individuals.

Three areas of support were developed:

- Trauma Informed Practice
- Complex Behaviour Support
- Neurodiversity Affirming Practice



“The NOSHSA resources were able to give a great starting point for our team members. We want every child to feel like they belong at our services”

This first of its kind national capacity building project, was provided face-to-face to 48 different groups and to educational leaders around the country via 17 online sessions. Using a range of learning resources, OSHC educators were provided with tools to think deeper about complex and diverse behaviour, act and communicate in an inclusive manner and reflect on their practices.

What quickly became apparent was that despite geographical differences, the concerns and challenges identified by OSHC educators were nearly universal across postcodes, providers and professional experience. Through evaluation facilitated by Griffith University, evidence came to light about the positive impacts of these resources, the barriers to embedding inclusive practice and the importance of the educational leadership role. Watch this space for more information on this data.

It was such a positive experience sharing and learning with educators around the country. In reflecting on this journey and writing this article, PCYC and TeamKids were generous enough to share stories of their practice, including how they contextualised these resources for their team and their solutions to barriers they encountered along the way.

Brooke Bridge and Fiona Micallef are Organisation Practice Leaders for PCYC Queensland. They are responsible for developing training and support for the 102 PCYC OSHC services across the state. Anna Mace is the Vacation Care and Training Manager at TeamKids, located in Victoria. She provides learning and development opportunities across the organisation. Working closely with Bec Sheard the Child Wellbeing and Inclusion

Manager, these two leaders have been introducing the NOSHSA resources to their team.

Anna and Bec could quickly see how the NOSHSA resources aligned with the values of their organisation: Innovative, Genuine, Involved, Remarkable and Fun. *“The NOSHSA resources were able to give a great starting point for our team members. We want every child to feel like they belong at our services”* Anna reported.

Decades of research has shown that children and young people’s feelings of belonging can have a profound impact on their wellbeing, identity and mental health. Inclusion is essential to belonging. Belonging shouldn’t be dependent on “fitting in”, rather true belonging allows you to be who you are. According to an article by Monash, despite rising rates of children feeling like they don’t belong, there has been little intervention (Allen, 2022). The NOSHSA resources focus on creating spaces for children to be their authentic selves.

The PCYC Queensland team agreed, their organisation mission statement is building safer, healthier communities through youth development, stating *“[these resources] will provide our educator team with the knowledge and skills needed to provide caring, emotionally safe and considered service environments.”* With the word “care” in our profession, it is interesting that the “ethic of care” is often taken for granted. The NOSHSA resources focus on the importance of relational pedagogy, understanding that learning requires vulnerability and respectful relationships lay the foundation for this. In fact, in a 2017 – 2020 study (Children in Scotland, 2017), children were asked what qualities were important for adults to have when working with them. The number one answer? You guessed it - kindness.

These resources also mobilise educators, supporting them to reflect on the importance of their role and the need for ongoing reflection. This includes reflection on their own practice, their beliefs about children, behaviour and emotions and previously taken for granted assumptions. Educators support children to understand emotions and play an important role in co-regulation and the creation of safe environments. They value different types of play,

learning and communication, which require the questioning of certain expectations including “whole body listening”, the questioning of beliefs about the expression of emotions and certainly the questioning of previously conventional behaviour support strategies, like rewards.

“The resources empower educators to be able to build capacity within our children and young people to be able to be emotionally resilient and have strategies to better be able to recognise their own emotions. The resources empower educators to play a vital role in supporting children to develop self-regulation skills.”

Brooke and Fiona recognised that *“the resources empower educators to be able to build capacity within our children and young people to be able to be emotionally resilient and have strategies to better be able to recognise their own emotions. The resources empower educators to play a vital role in supporting children to develop self-regulation skills.”*

For both organisations, contextualising the resources to meet the individual learning needs of their team was important. While we’re familiar with differentiating our practice to meet the needs of children, considering the diverse learning needs of our workforce is an important component of the role of educational leader and for both organisations, integral in the successful embedding of these resources and strategies. The Delivery Guide provided considerations for facilitating learning and both organisations identified a plan of implementation to meet the needs of their team.

“[At TeamKids] each component was broken down

into a form that was easily digestible and allowed our teams to put into practical use. We have casuals, permanent part-time, full time staff. We also have team members that range from 18 years to 60 years old, with many different experiences between them. Bec ran webinars which allowed us to link all the resources to TeamKids services, using examples and scenarios. We also run pre-holiday webinars and based the topics on specific points from resources”.

At PCYC Queensland to ensure the whole network had access to the resources they added the content to their learning portal. *“We included all the additional resources like the professional standards, addendums as they were released etc so that all the resources were located in one place. We are filming sessions in practice from some of our high performing teams so that they can be shared with others to support their understanding of how to use the resources. We feel that some Educational Leaders would benefit from viewing a session in action, rather than reading a delivery session plan.”*



But it wasn't always easy, with several barriers to overcome in using these resources. It may be no surprise to many OSHC professionals that the main barrier was time, a precious and scarce resource for the sector. At PCYC Queensland, Brooke & Fiona recognised that some service leaders needed to prioritise their time to explore and understand the resources before implementing with teams. At TeamKids, Anna and Bec had to consider how to get this content out to a vast range of team members, with diverse experiences and learning preferences.

Both organisations were able to develop innovative ways to overcome these barriers. PCYC Queensland facilitated a Q&A session open to all services. This captured the experiences and learnings of educational leaders who were able to speak to how they rolled out the resources and supported the practical implementation of this information. Area managers ran focus groups with educational leaders to help develop their confidence and capacity. At TeamKids they considered how they could use their online learning system to share the resources. *“Many teams were unsure where to start...We used a full term to go through one topic. The blended model of learning (online course plus webinar) was utilised to allow for all our field team members across states to have the opportunity to ask questions in real-time. The online modules were broken into courses. Partnered with the Educator Workbook, team members were able to self-pace through the content.”*

Across the country, stand-alone services and group providers implemented these resources in a range of diverse ways. What was clear was that it simply wasn't possible to take a “one-size-fits-all approach” to supporting educator professional practice and growth. It takes time, support from leadership, and a willingness to be vulnerable and reflect on practices.

Returning to meet with participants for a Community of Practice highlighted the deep thinking that was occurring, and it is important to recognise that this deep thinking isn't just something that happens before the “real work” begins, it is an essential part of our work. For those educators who grew up in the era of punishments, rewards and “quit crying or I'll give you something to really cry about”, this reflection has taken them on a journey of understanding the hidden impacts (positive and negative) that behaviour strategies have on children, all the way into adulthood. It required them to think about “why” they were drawing upon particular strategies to support children, and helped them articulate practice that many of them had already subconsciously arrived at and seen the benefit of.

As we draw to the end of 2023, and the finalising

of the Embedding Inclusive Practices Project, we ask ourselves, where to next? When it comes to supporting children, our job is certainly never done. At the time of writing this article, many news outlets are publishing startling new findings regarding school refusal and the need for flexibility in schools to meet children's needs. These articles, among others, highlight that access to inclusive schooling needs to improve. Many of the strategies referenced for schools to implement, OSHC services are already doing. Changing the environment to meet children's needs, developing relationships, allowing flexibility of engagement and collaborating with multi-disciplinary teams.

However, another recent article focusses on the struggles faced within the ECEC sector. It is clear that additional consideration needs to be given to how training is provided to OSHC educators, how time is allocated for the important thinking and learning that needs to occur and how the outcomes we value for children need to be thought of in regard to the people with the important role of caring for them. Educator belonging, wellbeing, learning and respectful relationships have flow-on impacts to their

responsiveness to meeting children's needs. A catchphrase in the NOSHSA resources was: "dysregulated adults, dysregulate children." The NOSHSA resources provide important information regarding supporting children, but just as, if not more importantly, it supports educators understanding of their value, their professional responsibilities and the qualities essential to creating inclusive OSHC services. While we may have more questions than answers regarding supporting our workforce, one thing is for sure, "what we know matters, but who we are matters more", for children, for families and for our colleagues.

Access the Monash article here: [https://
lens.monash.edu/
@education/2022/03/24/1384538/belonging-isnt-
just-a-buzzword-its-the-key-to-our-kids-education](https://lens.monash.edu/@education/2022/03/24/1384538/belonging-isnt-just-a-buzzword-its-the-key-to-our-kids-education)

Read about the Children of Scotland study here: [https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/what-do-
children-want-most-their-
teachers#:~:text=Kindness%20is%20the%
20characteristic%20that,in%20their%20teachers%
2C%20research%20suggests.](https://www.tes.com/magazine/archive/what-do-children-want-most-their-teachers#:~:text=Kindness%20is%20the%20characteristic%20that,in%20their%20teachers%2C%20research%20suggests.)



Tasmania - CatholicCare Provides Support for Educators Who Care For Kids

Veronika Cox



Therapeutic counsellor Sam delivers a training to session in to CatholicCare educators in Hobart.

Each day, hundreds of children all around Tasmania attend CatholicCare Tasmania's vacation care, before school, day care, and out of school hours care, and a play-based learning program called Ludo.

"Many of our services across the state are specifically in vulnerable communities," said Ludo State Operations Manager Theresa Blizzard.

"We know that when we're working with some of these children, some of them have been through some pretty traumatic things, or they might have some pretty high-level behaviours that we are helping them manage and navigate."

The significant challenges faced by educators means it is essential they are well-equipped –

mentally, physically, and emotionally – to ensure the best outcomes for the children in their care.

State Educational Leader, Out of School Hours Care, Janaya Lawson said educators were becoming dysregulated due to the complex behaviours displayed by the children.

"Our educators recognised that behaviours were increasing and building in frequency and wanted to ensure that the skills they had were able to be developed to best support our children," Janaya explained.

In what is believed to be an Australian first, CatholicCare Tasmania has appointed a dynamic and compassionate therapeutic counsellor who works onsite with individual educators at each

service, and offsite providing complex trauma training for staff.

With a formal education in psychology and seven years of practical experience in clinical service delivery, Sam has valuable expertise in working with diverse populations, including forensic cases, disabilities, dual diagnosis, and complex trauma.

“Throughout my career, I have had the privilege of working in various settings, including Australian schools, disability organisations, prisons, and government agencies,” he said.

“This exposure has allowed me to understand the unique challenges faced by individuals (young and old) from different backgrounds and I have honed my ability to tailor therapeutic approaches to suit specific needs.”

Sam helps educators navigate their own health and wellbeing, including making sure they have time for themselves, and introducing mindfulness practices.

“He can come in as a highly skilled, qualified practitioner to work solely with the educators. So, we work with the children, but Sam works with

the educators, so they can put their best foot forward,” said Theresa.

“He's got all those qualities that our staff are needing. Sam is very approachable, he's very trustworthy, he's very compassionate, he's a very good listener.

“It's almost like he's a bit of a sounding board, I think for staff as well, when they are feeling overwhelmed, and their bucket becomes full.

“He gives our educators strategies to be able to empty some of the things from their bucket so that they can still do their job, but the jobs in the bucket are still getting done, whether that's delegated or reprioritised,” Theresa added.

CatholicCare Tasmania's Executive Manager Early Learning and Care Daniel Lane said, with the needs and behaviours of children becoming more complex, CatholicCare's educators needed additional support.

“We now have support layers in place for our educators, and we deliver an enhanced level of care to children who are vulnerable and at-risk,” he said.



CatholicCare educators are benefiting from Sam's career experience and academic knowledge.

The Journey of Otis, Our Therapy Dog

Paige Dowd - Kids Club Abbotsleigh OSHC



This year on Easter Sunday, a puppy was given as a birthday gift and started a magical journey of love, responsibility and support for lots of children. Otis is a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel and was given to me as a birthday present and I immediately knew how well he would fit in at Kids Club Abbotsleigh OSHC. Although this was a dream I headed into my centre with a goal. To have a support dog onsite in our centre three days a week. Starting the journey to have Otis approved by Kids Club and Abbotsleigh was a lengthy and nerve-racking one, but with open communication and feedback on information we were able to have him onsite 3 days a week from early term 2.

This process involved creating new policies with the school and Kids Club, to include having Otis onsite and available for children along with updated risk assessments addressing the safety and needs of the children and of Otis when in the

centre. I have encouraged and sought constant communication with the school to ensure the process of developing Otis from a puppy into a trained therapy dog was clear and transparent and I continue to meet regularly with the school so they understand the process and intensity of the training Otis is undertaking. My OSHC community are so excited for Otis to be in the Centre and everyday I'm sharing my journey with families and reflecting on just how much children are benefitting from the exposure to an animal in our service. Kids Club have supported me in navigating this process and backed me in all aspects of the practices, excited to see where this will lead and acknowledging how important Otis is for children's wellbeing and mental health.

Otis has completed many hours of puppy school and obedience training and will be starting Therapy Dog training in 2024. This will be an exciting time for both him and our centre to have



a nationally recognised therapy dog available to all our staff and children. Families are appreciative of the time and work that goes into the training of a dog to work in a therapy setting and see the benefits for all children especially those without pets at home.

Although he is cute and that is a good enough reason for him to be in the centre the daily benefits to both the children and staff have made the administration all worth it! We have been able to link Otis to so many learning outcomes but the biggest by far is Learning Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners. The children take on the responsibility of Otis when he is onsite, from ensuring that he has plenty of water to throwing the ball to him over and over and over (this game is his favourite). They understand how to care for Otis, how to handle and touch him and most importantly when he needs a break from children. The girls are learning life skills in all their interactions with Otis.

While we have had a trial and error period to find what works best for us and Otis, we have watched the children over the last 6 months create such a respectful and loving bond that has left everyone in awe of the magic that children

can bring into your Centre if you allow the room for it. While we still have an engaging program, the days where Otis is around we spend so much more time outside now! This itself has helped us reflect on our practices and encourage the students to become more active and enjoy the beautiful school grounds around us.

From joining us on excursions to creating mini outfits the boys and girls of our Centre have shown us that taking a risk (within reason) can have the most wonderful outcomes for everyone.

Once Otis has completed his very intensive therapy dog training early next year we are planning for Otis to be working in the Abbotsleigh school environment some mornings and then in the after school care environment in the afternoon. My goal is to create safe spaces where Otis can work with students who need some additional support and then once the bell goes Otis will be in the after school care space for children to connect with after their day at school.

I am so proud of the journey that we have embarked on and the learning this has provided for the educators, children, families and myself. Otis is part of our Abbotsleigh OSHC family and I am excited to see where 2024 takes us following Otis completing his therapy dog training and his



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www.qcan.org.au/conference

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... And more!



There will be more breakout sessions than ever before, with planned two optional in-person events: A **tour of John Marsden's proudly nonconformist Candlebark Primary School** AND a networking evening.

When: Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 May 2024

Time: 9:45 am – 2:30 pm (outside of service hours!)

Where: Online – join from anywhere



The National Outside School Hours Services Alliance (NOSHSA) is a network of all Australian State and Territory Out of School Hours Services (OSHC) Associations. These organisations promote provision of Out of School Hours Services and act as a united voice to advocate both to Government and the community for excellence in service provision.

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