

## Child Friendly Cities & Communities Network Meeting

**Friday 16 August 2019 1pm - 3pm** LGPro Offices - Level 3, 58 Lorimer Street Docklands VIC

**Attended:** Clara Yip (Boroondara), Nicole Lindsey (Brimbank), Simone Myshiw and Stephanie Xidas (Blyth St ELC), Janet Keily (Yarra), Amy Forward (Dandenong), Caroline Meier (Knox), Karina Viksne, Kate Beveridge and Ali Johns (Cardinia), Neil Rogers (Whitehorse), Carme Cappello (Whittlesea), Sherryn Prinzi (Banyule).

**Apologies:** Barbara Champion (PRAV), Jeanette Cole, Irene Giavas, Jeff Tyson and Anne McGregor (Moreland), Roberta Colosimo (Banyule), Hayley Crawford and Melinda Xeres (Port Phillip), Jan Gardner and Sharon McArthur (Moorabool), Margaret Grose and Carolyn Whitzman (University of Melbourne), Sue Hobbs (Macedon Ranges), Stacey Jennings (Latrobe), Brigid Keele (Whittlesea), Renaye Kelleher (Berry Street), Helen Lindner (VicRoads), Virginia Lloyd and Ann Addinsall (Casey), John MacDonagh (Brimbank), Tina McLeod (Warrnambool), Clie Miratana (Dandenong), Clare Mouat (Uni of WA), Cherie Salmon (Wyndham), Chrissy Singh (Brimbank), Jo Smale (Darebin), Matthew Turen (Cheeriodkids Heidelberg), Matt Welsh (Melton), Kylie Whilmot (Dandenong).

Agenda	Notes/ Actions
<p>Acknowledgement of Country Welcome and introductions</p>	<p>Carmen welcomed members to the meeting and acknowledged the traditional land owners. Brief round table introductions.</p>
<p>Guest Speaker</p> <p><b>Children's Council- Blyth Street Early Learning Simone Myshiw</b></p> <p>After exploring the concepts and principles &amp; documentation of the Schools of Reggio Emilia, Simone Myshiw was inspired by the richness of the dialogue between children, the idea of the child as an active participant and citizen in their community and the peer to peer relationships that had formed through shared interests and learning experiences. At its heart, the Children's Council is about respecting the way children think, and the way children and adults can think together.</p>	<p>Overview: Blyth Street is a 91 place centre where children and educators mostly live in the community and have a shared philosophy of pedagogy. Further to a study tour to the Reggio Emilia region of Italy, Simone sought to enhance altruistic thinking in the curriculum and establish a higher image of children to build on ownership and capacity development.</p> <p>Selecting the council. 4 x 3-5 year olds could be elected. Children developed an election pitch and promoted their position. Everyone in the centre were invited to vote. Elections held Children's Council development. Elections occur every term.</p> <p>First iteration was to convene a group of 3-5 year old children in the coordinators office for the purpose of running an already made decision past children. Soon realised many gaps in the approach, including the need to develop the art of asking the right questions.</p> <p>The first big question crafted focused on the need to recruit staff. Children were asked to ponder the desired qualities of a new educator. The discussion led to a debate over whether hugging was a desirable behaviour. Children engaged in robust discussion on the differing needs of children and their appetite for a hug.</p> <p>The following debate centred around the inclusion of zucchini in meals. The outcome was children deciding to leave zucchini in big chunks so that children can choose to consume.</p>

	<p>Response to children’s council. Children expressed pride in being part of the council and felt it was important work. Children developed their ability to engage in debate with each other and better understood the responsibility of making decisions on behalf of a community. Educators developed a new appreciation for the benefits of sharing control with children, and developed an improved understanding of what issues look like from a children’s perspective.</p> <p>Observations of the council. The duration of the council sessions depends on the engagement of the group. Engagement techniques selected to match the children’s capacity to participate. A range of issues are discussed within the context of the service and within the community.</p> <p>Some key projects. Children developed a <b>Code of Conduct for Play. Merri Creek environmental action</b> to address litter in the creek- made posters for community to share their concerns and suggestions. <b>Moreland Council road safety advocacy</b> – collective concern regarding safe entry and exit on Blyth Street led to lobbying Council to take action, resulting in a submission to Council through public question time and the Mayor and officers attending the service to listen to children’s concerns. Council have not resolved the matter as yet.</p> <p>Children’s council framework. The council is founded on strong relationships with children and the fostering of trust. Need to know community well and establish mechanisms to garner support. The imperative to build the capacity of children to understand their rights and responsibilities and work with others to develop a solution. Need to align the image of the child as an active citizen across the educator team. Work on the pedagogy of listening such as the work of Peter Moss (<a href="http://www.oecd.org/education/school/2535274.pdf">http://www.oecd.org/education/school/2535274.pdf</a>)</p> <div data-bbox="657 1496 710 1556" data-label="Image">  </div> <p>childrens council - VLGA.pptx</p> <p>For further questions please feel free to email Simone Myskiw <a href="mailto:smyskiw@guardian.edu.au">smyskiw@guardian.edu.au</a></p> <p>Final thoughts. Children’s council has built the capacity of families to engage their children in civic life.</p>
<p><b>Children’s Artefacts- value and empowerment</b> Sherryn Prinzi</p> <p>A snapshot of the theory behind developing artefacts is explored to better understand their potential to empower children. Examples of published artefacts that represent the hopes and concerns of children from Banyule and the</p>	<p>Artefacts capturing the voices of children <b>Key elements of value</b> “Children have complex and shifting identities as they move between and participate in different social groups” (DEEWR 2010) Children are active agents and are able to influence their own lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic motivation to explore their world, understand the universe and participate in society.</li> <li>• Can tell the story of their developmental life.</li> <li>• Need longitudinal, scaffolding opportunities to be successful participants.</li> </ul>

<p>Inner North LLEN will be presented. Goodbye Primary/Hello High School focuses on transition into secondary school and Of Bugs and Birds and Magical Things highlights reflects children views on daily life.</p>	<p>Children think and communicate about their experiences and while doing so they may evolve and re-create ideas and meanings.</p> <p><b>Beyond the symbolism of artefacts.</b> Artefacts are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artificial products made by people (Hornby 1974)</li> <li>• Perceived by the senses and have certain intentions, aiming to satisfy a need of goal (Gagliardi 1990)</li> <li>• Allow people to do things, and inspire people to feel or react in a certain way (Rafaeli &amp; Pratt 2005)</li> </ul> <p><b>Three dimensions of artefacts.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INSTRUMENTALITY- the impact of an artefact on the tasks or goals of people, groups or organisations.</li> <li>• AESTHETICS- the sensory experience an artefact elicits.</li> <li>• SYMBOLISM- the meaning or associations an artefact elicits.</li> </ul> <p>Different types of artefacts shown including books, photography and art projects. The INLLEN transition book Goodbye Primary, Hello High.</p> <p>The book creation was an interesting experience as an artist in residence worked with the Year 5/6 students to explore their hopes and concerns about transition and develop stories that reflected this. They started with creating 8 page origami booklets and through collage and drawings and a few words expressed their hopes and concerns. These 8 page books (examples included) were then shared with Year 7 students at a local secondary school who developed their own 8 page booklets reflecting on their journey and answering the primary school students' questions. The primary school students at the time had extremely lively imaginations and so the stories were a bit more out there than anticipated. Together with the artist, they developed the stories and the images to go with them. A graphic designer then worked with the artist to turn their work into a publishable book. This project was inspired from a fabulous kinder to primary transition book, Crazy Wicked Awesome Survival Guide. The project cost in the region of \$10,000. This did however include printing of a number of books that have since been distributed to local schools in class sets for use as part of their transition practice. School. <a href="http://inllen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/KOP_JTD_Moreland.pdf">http://inllen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/KOP_JTD_Moreland.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Pedagogy and practice summary.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our image of the child and young person influences how we work with them and construct power relationships.</li> <li>• Drawing on children's perspectives to shape professional practice- children, by what they feel and express, can become creators of the pedagogy and practice.</li> <li>• Provocation for deep critical reflection and practice/ policy development.</li> <li>• Situated participatory context-based frameworks.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Share your practice</b></p>	<p>City of Yarra- Connie Benn Centre implemented the Voice of the Child project. Asked children what they liked or did not like about the centre. Used paintings and voice recordings to capture responses. Resulted in a new project to develop orientation kits by children for children.</p> <p>Children advocating to save a beloved tree in children’s centre. Due to condition the Parks &amp; Gardens team informed the centre the tree will be removed. Children protested resulting in Parks &amp; Gardens team coming to the centre to explain why the tree had to be removed. Children were then involved in deciding on a replacement. Lead to a discussion on the bins and water fountains in neighbouring parks.</p> <p>Nappy change policy being reviewed by Knox. In addition to observing staff practice, Knox is investigating how children experience the policy. Taking steps to include the child consultation the process flow chart and establish mechanisms to record the information routinely. It is important to read the cues for consent from young children- a mindset of consent can be established from birth. An approach of children observing other children to look for indicators of comfort was discussed as a means developing new perspectives on children’s experiences.</p> <p>Whittlesea engaged Kylie Smith several years ago at their early years conference to discuss the topic of consulting with babies and recommends her research.</p> <p>Cardina Shire’s Children’s Ambassador program. This program involved inviting Council staff to nominate as a children’s ambassador for the purpose of championing listening and responding to children within daily work. Children were asked to critique the applications and gave feedback to applicants. All senior managers and formal applicants were appointed as Children’s Ambassadors. Kate will provide an update as the project evolves.</p>
<p><b>Advisory group updates</b></p>	<p>Children’s Week- members encouraged to ask children “Why should adults listen to children” and send collated responses to <a href="mailto:Ruth.Ball@vlga.org.au">Ruth.Ball@vlga.org.au</a>. A summation of the results is expected to be shared during children’s week.</p> <p>ACTION: The letter to be attached to the minutes.</p>
<p><b>Feedback and wrap up</b></p>	<p>Question posed for the next meeting: What is the risk of moving away from stand-alone plans for children and young people to generic public health and wellbeing plans?</p> <p>Members thanked for their participation.</p>