

Early Childhood Education Update

Issue 1: May, 2007



Welcome to the first *Early Childhood Education Update* May, 2007. This update aims to keep districts and schools up to date with key early childhood information.

Issue 1 is centered on pre-compulsory operational matters and outlines the work of the Early Childhood Education Directorate. An *Early Childhood Education Update* will be distributed on a quarterly basis.

Enrolments

Applications for enrolments for children entering kindergarten, pre-primary and Year One close on **Friday, 27 July 2007**. Please note, parents are eligible to submit an *Application for Enrolment* form with schools from the beginning of the school year. After the first round of offers are processed schools can enrol a child, at the time they apply, if vacancies exist.

If parents do not have a copy of their child's birth certificate, or if there is doubt about the date of birth, they should contact the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages on 1300 305 021, visit www.justice.wa.gov.au or fax 9264 1599, giving the child's name, estimated date of birth and mother's full name.



children may enrol if they are three years of age but not four by 30 June and if places are available. Three year old children should not be enrolled until the second week of Term One in order to give kindergarten-aged children the opportunity to enrol at the start of the school year.

Communication to parents regarding enrolments

The Department will commence an enrolment campaign in June 2007 advising parents/carers of the date by which an application for enrolment needs to be lodged with their local public school. The campaign strategy will include:

- notices in a range of publications available across the state such as: *The West Australian*, community and regional newspapers, *Kids in Perth*, *Yamaji News*, *Interaction Magazine* and *Perth Child*;
- the distribution of colour posters, flyers and brochures to schools, district offices and a range of community agencies;
- eye-lites in major shopping centres; and
- enrolment information on the Department's early childhood website.

As the enrolment campaign is coordinated centrally, schools cannot advertise individually. An information pack will be available to principals to promote the school to the local community. This will be sent to schools through Ed-e-mail.

Alternative attendance arrangements

While students can only be enrolled at one school, in exceptional circumstances they may also attend an alternative school. Students in this category may be those from mobile or transient families, or those under Family Court Orders.

Resources are allocated to the enrolling school. This school is responsible for allocation of resources,

monitoring attendance and reporting academic results, including results required by the Curriculum Council. Both principals are responsible for ensuring communication between schools and an equitable distribution of resources.

These arrangements may also apply to pre-primary students with identified disabilities who may attend an education support school as well as their local pre-primary. *Schools Plus* supplementary resources can be allocated on a pro-rata basis. Again, the two principals need to collaborate in relation to coordinating services and smooth transitions.

Attendance

There is no legal requirement for students to enrol in kindergarten or pre-primary programs, once enrolled, students must attend as required by s.23 of *The School Education Act 1999*.

While the Act and Policy prevent the use of pre-compulsory programs as occasional child care: s.25 (2) (a) (ii) allows for non-attendance due to any reasonable

If a parent/carer indicates on the application form that the child is not a permanent resident of Australia, then the child's passport must be viewed. Section 5.6 of the *Enrolment Policy* provides a list of visa subclass numbers identifying students who can be enrolled. Please refer to the *Enrolment Policy* for further information.

Principals are asked not to place children on a waiting list if their pre-compulsory classes are full and to help facilitate enrolment at another local school. This process is in line with government policy of universal access to a pre-compulsory program for all eligible children.

District Offices will manage the overflow process. Please contact your local district education office if you require support in managing enrolment issues.

Early entry

Some parents seek exemption to 30 June cut-off date because their child is 'ready' for kindergarten or is 'extremely bright'. Schools are reminded that the Department of Education and Training does not have early entry to public school kindergarten programs. Children must meet the age criteria as stated in *The School Education Act 1999*.

The only exception to this is at identified Aboriginal kindergartens and remote community schools. Aboriginal

"...helping children to play requires the most sophisticated teaching strategies of all."¹

1. Bruce, T (2001) *Learning through play: Babies, Toddlers and the Foundation Years*.

cause and allows for individual attendance to be agreed between principal and parent.

Even though enrolment in kindergarten and pre-primary is not compulsory schools are obligated to record and monitor student attendance (as per the Department's *Attendance Policy*).

Principals are alerted to recent data that indicates concerns associated with Year One attendance levels.

Important Dates

12 May 2007 Edith Cowan Memorial Conference: *Equity & Diversity in Early Childhood Settings: Manageable or Mythical?*

Associate Professor Glenda MacNaughton, Director of the Centre of Equity and Innovation, Melbourne University is the keynote speaker at the 7th Edith Cowan Memorial Conference for early childhood professionals working with children 0-8 years

25 - 26 May 2007 ALEA State conference: *Engaging Literacy with Passion*.

13 - 15 June 2007 WAPPA Conference: *Children First: Tomorrow's Schooling and the Knowledge Explosion*.

Dr Deborah Phillips, author of *Neurons to Neighbourhoods. The Science of Early Childhood Development* is speaking at the 2007 Western Australian Primary Principals Association Conference.

15 June 2007 AISWA Conference: *The Early Years Partnership and Prevention*.

27 July 2007 Closing date for applications for enrolments.

Did You Know...?

- The Early Childhood Education Directorate has visited most education districts to meet with key early childhood stakeholders. This preliminary consultation has provided an important opportunity to discuss issues and share district and school initiatives for early childhood education. This information will be used by the Directorate and the Early Childhood Education Advisory Group to help guide early childhood policy and planning.
- Over thirty district representatives from across the state attended an early childhood *Directions* seminar held in March 2007. All participants agreed that it was a resounding success.
- The *Kindergarten and Pre-primary Profile* introductory sessions have been successfully delivered to approximately 1500 participants across Western Australia throughout 2006/07. Your district education office can advise about future introductory sessions.
- Eighty staff from community kindergartens across the state participated in a two day spaced learning conference in March 2007. The conference centered on the *Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies Preschool* program (PATHS).
- Professional learning for the *Home School Links Family Involvement Program* is now being rolled out to schools in Swan, Canning, West Coast and Bunbury. Roll out to other districts will occur in Semester Two, 2007 and Semester One, 2008.
- A revised version of the 2004 booklet *Learning begins at home: a resource book for parents/carers of young children* has been reprinted due to its popularity and will be sent to all kindergartens in May 2007, for teachers to give to parents.
- Aboriginal kindergarten teachers participated in a two-day spaced professional learning in March 2007. This conference focused on Listening and Speaking which participants found informative and a great networking opportunity.