

The Networker



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Free to SA child care & Out of School Hours Care services

network sa

Our Vision

A strong and viable children's services sector that enhances the lives of children, families and communities

Our Mission

Our mission is to make a significant contribution to the well-being of children, families and communities through supporting excellence and equity in children's services.

We develop, interpret and disseminate information that strengthens the capacity of children's services to deliver quality programs.

We support the operators of children's services to make informed and sound decisions about the governance, management and administration of their organisations, with a focus on personal, social and fiscal responsibility.

We uphold the Indigenous cultures of Australia, seeking to support the inclusion of Aboriginal children in all children's services and to deepen community understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal family and community values.

We are committed to the provision of services that foster community spirit and help to create a humane and productive society.

NO FEAR: GROWING UP IN A RISK-AVERSE SOCIETY

In reflecting on your (middle) childhood, what activities do you remember as your "play favourites"? Did you enjoy these activities under the watchful eyes of adults?

The greatest probability is that the activities that came to mind were outdoor activities and there is a 95% chance that they were not supervised by adults.

This was the introduction to a lecture presented by Tim Gill, one of the UK's leading thinkers on childhood in Sydney on Monday. The session was sponsored by Network of Community Activities – the OSHC peak body in NSW.

How much do we adults pause to reflect on our own childhood as we plan programs for children in care/ education settings? Sadly for many children outside play does not feature highly in their routines.

In some countries, the world of today's children has been colonised by risk aversion strategists who set goals of zero risk to children. This eliminates the scope for children to try new experiences and experiment with new social or physical concepts. Tim's direction is to move away from child protection to child resilience and he challenged his audience to consider how to do this. He also emphasised the need to work towards the creation of more child friendly areas within communities so that children might have opportunities to play in peer groups rather than always under adult supervision. He illustrated this with comparisons between playgrounds that are sterile and fenced and playgrounds that have piles of logs for children to use creatively.

Recent stories of the rise of Casey Stoner (MotoGP World Champion) to the pinnacle of his sport tell of his early experiences on motor bikes from a very young age. Clearly Casey did not grow up in a risk-averse environment.

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Resource Paper
enclosed

The OSHC Operator's Management Checklist
See blue insert

Why does it matter?

Consider the following: childhood is a journey from being fully dependent to adulthood where we hope people develop in way that allows them to function efficiently and responsibly on their own. Child development can be seen as the transfer of risk management from the parents or care givers to the individual. If children are subjected to "paranoid parenting" it is unlikely that this transfer will be successful. More adults may need to rediscover the "art of benign neglect" or in other words let go more liberally and so enable children to learn from mistakes they will inevitably make.

It is not unusual to hear older folk tell stories of being shuffled out doors after breakfast to go and play and "make sure you are home before dark". In today's world this would probably be viewed as neglect and changes in the pace of life do impinge on this high level of freedom. However, as adults of the future, children do need to develop resilience and the capacity to take responsibility for their own safety.

Please take time to reflect on your practice as you develop programs for children. Always take time to listen to their requests and also be prepared to ensure a range of activities and new options to try. Reflect to on what they might be doing if they were not in your care? What would education and care facilities offer if it was not "compulsory" for children to be there?

For further information about Tim Gill and the work he does, go to www.rethinkingchildhood.com

Kay Thomas
OSHC Projects Coordinator
Network SA

It was announced that Network of Community Activities (Sydney) were hoping to offer more sessions of this type in the future. The session was a 2 hour session with a lecture style presentation followed by discussion. The cost was \$33. You might consider whether your service could take an opportunity to have staff attend a similar session. The availability of cheap air fares could make this an option worth considering. The opportunity to network with interstate counterparts is always great and the chance to hear international speakers is invaluable. From Network SA we will do our best to promote such opportunities in time for people to source cheap flights.

COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CENTRES SA

A FRESH LOOK, A NEW APPROACH

LEARNING TOGETHER, EVERY DAY

From 18 September 2007 SAACBCCCS has been known as CCCSA or Community Children's Centres SA after an historic vote at SAACBCCCS's recent AGM. Our vision is that Community Based Child Care Centres will be positioned as the leaders in providing high quality early years care and education. We aim to provide this in warm, inclusive interactive learning environments delivered by a staff team dedicated to working in partnerships with families in order to develop each child to their fullest potential. Our new brand is the key to our success in communicating this message.

Now is a great time to consider becoming a member of CCCSA so that together we can advocate for change for all children and families accessing Community Based Care. Our next meeting as CCCSA is on Tuesday 16 October 2007 at the Lady Gowrie, Thebarton @ 9.30am. Hope to see you there!

Melanie Gohl
Chairperson
CCCSA



Network SA Resource, Advisory & Management Services Inc.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

5.30pm Wednesday 31st October 2007

at the office of Network SA & ARMSU

Building 2, The Parks Community Centre, Trafford Street, Angle Park

All welcome.

A light meal and drinks will be provided from
5.00pm.

Guest Speaker:
Haydyn Bromley
Bookabee Tours

We've had a brainwave about Aboriginal cultural tours for Child Care Professionals. Come along and find out more!

The meeting will receive reports of the 2006 —2007 financial year and appoint Board members for the next 2 years.

See insert in this newsletter for information about nominations for Board positions.

RSVP by 19th October.

Call 8445 8128 or email: info@networksa.org.au.

New Directors' Day

For Long Day Care and Out of School Hours Care Directors

10.00am - 3.30pm

Friday 19th October 2007

or

Tuesday 11th March 2008

43 Dew Street, Thebarton



As a member of the adviser's panel, I am looking forward to this day.

I am interested in all aspects of management, but my speciality area is financial management.

Please come and ask me lots of questions!

Gail Gullickson
Management
Consultant
Network SA

Taking on the role of Director can be a very exciting experience. There is so much to think about and so much to do.

You will need time to gain experience and learn new skills. No one is an expert at their job on day one, or even at the end of year one. Even if you have acted as a Director for short periods before, it is not the same. Taking on the total long term responsibility involves much more.

If you are a new Director, are planning to move into the Director role, or just want to increase your knowledge, the New Director's Day is designed for you.

Advisers from Gowrie, Inclusive Directions and Network SA will be available to provide information, discuss resources and answer your questions. Experienced Directors will also be on hand to discuss critical issues you may come across as a Director, and answer questions.

This is also a chance for you to meet other Directors with similar interests and concerns.

To book, fill in a registration form and send it with payment to the Gowrie Training Centre or register online at www.pscsa.org.au.

Registration forms can be found on the PSC website (see previous para) or in the back of your PSC September 2007 - February 2008 Training Schedule.

For enquiries contact the Gowrie Training Centre - Phone 1800 129 606 Fax 8234 5850 or email train@gowrie-adelaide.com.au

Superannuation

We have had a number of enquiries lately about super choice. There are different rules for those employed under State awards, those under NAPSAs and those employed under AWAs or collective agreements.

The Australian Tax Office (ATO) has a fact sheet which includes a helpful flow chart for employers which would be just as interesting for employees. It's called *Choice of superannuation fund - how to determine if your employees are eligible* (NAT 13592-04.2006).

For more information call the ATO on 13 10 20 or visit www.ato.gov.au/super or www.superchoice.gov.au.

We Need OSHC Regulations

There are no regulations covering Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) in our State. Child care centres are regulated. Operators must be licensed and their services must conform to the Children's Services (Child Care Centre) Regulations 1998. The regulations form the operational framework for a child care centre e.g. staff-child ratios, staff qualifications, facilities, health and safety, providing a structure on which quality processes can be built.

The OSHC environment is different. Some OSHC services have very good facilities, but many share their venue with others. The same space may be used for multiple activities between OSHC before and after school sessions. This has implications for programming, storage, security and the types of activities provided. Sometimes the OSHC providers feel like the poor cousins, expected to accept second best. This happens in schools and it happens in other locations too. We know of an OSHC that was denied storage space by their landlord, a community centre (they resorted to buying a trailer to carry equipment and resources).

There are National Standards for OSHC (and for centre based care and Family Day Care) . Compliance with the Standards is compulsory for OSHC services operating on Department of Education & Children's Services sites in South Australia. On a DECS school site the operator is usually the Governing Council. The services on these sites are required to carry out an annual self-assessment which must be signed, dated and endorsed by the OSHC Director, the School Principal and the Council Chairperson/Operator, then tabled at the next School Governing Council meeting.

Governing Councils are liable for the operations and activities of the OSHC service. Members of school councils may have little or no direct knowledge of the OSHC. Governing Councils are advised by DECS that they should negotiate with the Principal or 'the owner of the building' re issues relating to the maintenance of facilities. If you are a busy school Principal with an onerous workload you will probably be very careful about facilities issues that pose Occupational Health & Safety risks, but other matters relating to OSHC facilities may not be high on your list of priorities.

How many Council members are aware that there are no regulations in place to ensure consistency in standards, protecting children, staff and them as operators of services? How many OSHC parents know that there are no regulations? Parents who have used long day care previously have told me that they just assumed that care services are always regulated.

What about non-DECS sites? As I understand it, if the OSHC is not operated by a DECS school governing council, compliance with standards is not compulsory. A code of practice for compliance is recommended for those OSHC services operating on a non-DECS site.

The Commonwealth Government had a freeze on new OSHC places for several years, and one of the outcomes of this was that there were some controls over where and when new services were established. Now, anyone wanting to set up an OSHC service must sign a statement that Commonwealth Government's Department of Families, Community and Indigenous Affairs 'suitability requirements' have been fulfilled, but I believe that no-one will check if the claims are correct. The operator of the service is responsible for ensuring standards are met.

There are some good supports in place for OSHC (for instance DECS has a team of OSHC Project Officers who provide professional support to the sector, along with staff from agencies like the Gowrie and Network SA) and there are some inspirational people working in OSHC. It is my belief that the absence of enforceable regulations makes their job harder.

Quality assurance standards set by the National Childcare Accreditation Council, which is funded federally, do help to maintain standards of care, but OSHCQA and National Standards are not enough on their own.

So what happens in other States?

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Tasmania, Western Australia, Queensland and the ACT already have regulations in place for school age care services. In NSW, a 2 stage process for enacting regulations is underway. In Victoria, the Office for Children is conducting a review to update the current (child care) regulations, which expire in May 2008 and to provide for the regulation of both family day care (FDC) and outside school hours care (OSHC).

These States have not gone through the costly process on regulating OSHC on a whim. They have responded to a real need for a regulatory framework to ensure consistency in the standard of service provided to children and families no matter where the service is located, and to give assurance to families that in all settings there are legally enforceable minimum standards in place to provide for their children's safety and developmental needs.

South Australia has gone part way towards having regulations in place for OSHC (Children's Services (OSHC) Amendment Bill 2005), but the process has stalled. Given that it started, I have to assume that our government saw value in regulating OSHC, maybe for the same reasons that other governments saw the need. Governments are answerable to the community for the health, safety and well-being of children while they are in out of school hours care

Here is the Western Australian Government's rationale for regulations in all children's services:

- Regulations protect children's health, safety and wellbeing. They are the minimum rules for operating a child care service for children of pre-school or school age.
- Regulations prevent the incidence of predictable risks of harm to children in child care settings. This includes family day care, outside school hours care and long day care.
- Regulations address both the immediate and cumulative risks to children in child care. Poor hygiene practices or unsafe equipment and premises have an immediate risk to a child's health and safety. Unstimulating and inappropriate programs have a cumulative, negative effect on a child's developmental wellbeing.
- Regulations reflect community values and attitudes towards children. It is widely acknowledged that children need adults to protect, nurture and care for them.
- Regulations contribute to providing assurance to parents that their children are cared for by skilled, knowledgeable and carefully selected care givers who are required to maintain standards of care to protect their children.
- Regulations are also based on research that shows the necessary standards and qualities to ensure children's health, safety and well being. Current research addresses topics such as early brain development, academic enhancement for children in outside school hours care services, staff:child ratios and developmental wellbeing, and, the relationship between television viewing and children's behaviour.

(WA Government Department for Communities website <http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/> accessed 10th August 2007)

I would add that regulations also affect community values and attitudes towards OSHC staff and the work they do. Without regulations, they are vulnerable to situations where they can be treated as second class within the school and community context with limited back-up support and no credibility.

Maureen McGuire
Executive Officer
Network SA & ARMSU



New Strategic Planning Resource

Do you find the mere thought of strategic planning a bit overwhelming? Would you like to find a tool that makes strategic planning manageable for busy people?

Network SA is now an agent for the **Meeting Success Strategic Action Plan**™ software.

By following the 'switch on pop-up prompts', this easy to use on-line software provides a step-by-step process to build a one page Strategic Plan.

On completion of the Strategic Plan you are guided through the process of creating an Action Plan to implement, manage, monitor and report on your progress in achieving your Strategic Plan Directions (or goals).

Click on 'Try it out' at www.meetingsuccess.org and if you decide to sign up, include the code NWSA in your user name to get the Non Profit Organisation 3 Year Subscription for the introductory price of \$299.

Existing users' comments...

"... would have saved us 100's of hours if I'd had it earlier."

"... I really enjoy using it."

"... is just so logical and easy".

To the Long Day Care Sector Only

You are invited to an information session for the

Child Care Management System – CCMS

Allyson Essex, Branch Manager - Child Care Management Taskforce from FACSIA Canberra, will be giving a presentation on CCMS and will have a question time at the end of the session.

**Tuesday 23rd October 2007 – 10.30am to 12
noon**

AAMI Stadium - Park Café

Turner Drive, West Lakes

(Free parking is available)

RSVP is essential to:

Deb Chernoff, email : deb@economicoutlook.net

New Checklist from the ATO

The Australian Tax Office (ATO) has released a new checklist to help non-profit organisations understand their tax and superannuation obligations in relation to workers.

The checklist covers employees, independent contractors and volunteers

- when a new worker starts
- during the period of engagement, and
- when a worker leaves.

The checklist is available at www.ato.gov.au/nonprofit on the recently updated *Employees, volunteers and other workers* web page.

network sa

Network SA Resource, Advisory & Management Services Inc. (Network SA) is a non-profit community organisation providing information, support, resources and training to the children's services sector in South Australia.



ARMSU is a specialist unit within Network SA. ARMSU operates SA's Indigenous Professional Support Unit (www.ipsusa.org.au), funded through the Australian Government Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Services provided to the children's services sector by Network SA & ARMSU include:

- Advice and support for Directors, managers, office staff, committee members, operators and other people responsible for effective management of child care and OSHC services
- Training and professional development services
- Specialist advice, support and training for Aboriginal services
- Aboriginal cultural awareness activities for children, and training for staff teams

The Networker is published bi-monthly in August, October, December, February, April and June. Closing dates for each edition are 20th July, 20th September, 20th November, 20th January, 20th March and 20th May. Contributions are welcome. Contact the editor Maureen McGuire.

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Network SA & ARMSU are located in Building 2 at The Parks Community Centre, Angle Park.

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Email: info@networksa.org.au

Website: www.networksa.org.au.

The material contained in this publication is of a general nature only and not intended to be advice on any particular matter.

Please share this newsletter with others in your service:

- Director / Assistant Director
- Staff
- Administration
- Committee members
- Principal
- Line Manager
- Owner
- Parents

Letter to the Editor - An OSHCQA Experience

We were validated in September 2007. Our validator came in the morning prior to commencing our validation visit. She made me feel welcome, at ease, even the children were made to feel relaxed. The process was thoroughly explained to me and I was given an agenda of when and what was happening. I handed her our folders and proceeded to assess our ratings. I was given many opportunities to discuss the principles and show evidence.

Overall I was impressed with our visit and the professionalism displayed. Upon her departure I let out a loud hooray and thanked everyone for their hard work, dedication and patience throughout the process. I promised the boys a party was happening next term! They are already preparing for our AFL Party, having so many Power supporters, myself included!

I would like to take this opportunity to let everyone know to make their policies airtight and to keep up with documentation. And be relaxed on the day, no matter how many things could/may go wrong! The most important thing to remember is how you handle the situation is how you will be rated. Good luck to other centres and I wish them all the best.

Cheers,

Lina Panuccio.
Blackfriars OSHC
September 2007

Always read something that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.

~P.J. O'Rourke