



ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

The parent voice on public education

Early Learning Committee (ELC)

November 11, 2019, 7.00pm – ACT Education Directorate, Stirling

Attending: Marina Spurgin, Early Learning Officer (MS)
Crystal Cox (CC)
Viv Pearce, Life Member (VP)

Summary of meeting minutes

[previous minutes](#) available on Council website

Previous meeting Sep 11, 2019. Next meeting March 11, 2020

preschool parent association experiences – *the good, the bad...*

The committee noted the difficulty getting to meetings for preschool parents and discussed the barriers to participation for EL parents. Video streaming has been used by some P&C's to facilitate participation. While there can be challenges with streaming meetings, Zoom was recommended (app provides remote, cloud-based conferencing services) as it allows meeting participants to join in from where they are based. The software is limited to groups smaller than 100 rather than being a public event.

Zoom or similar tech may help to promote wider discussion of the agenda topics. Feedback could also be obtained prior to meetings via survey software.

Early Learning Parent Forums

September forum *Transition to School*

Council's first EL parent forum attracted 60 people. Recordings of speakers and resource materials were requested by a further 54 and are now available online via Council's website.

Speakers were from P&C Council, ACT Education Directorate and ECA. Topics covered preparation tips, communication and getting involved with your school. The lead speaker Kathryn Hopps (transition researcher) has extensive experience as a teacher and transition researcher.

The committee suggested

- providing more opportunities for parents to network with each other while recognising they're not from the same school.
- having principals speak about transitions would be useful for parents
- lunchboxes are a big issue for EL parents; Nb Tuckatalk poster.

Transition to *PRE*school – theme at Council's October *PlayFEST* display. PlayFest is ACT Playgroup's annual event attracting parents of 0-5 year olds. Parents selected a range of resources on transitioning to preschool and asked questions about enrolment options. Issues raised included choosing and enrolling in preschool, AQF and regulations, and priority enrolment areas (PEA's). One parent noted problems arose when her family moved after completing their online enrolment.

Future parent forum topics

Assess topics via members. Including 'parents as a child's first teacher' and 'the role of play in learning' including messy play and nature play (based on previous discussions with parents, the ELC, ACT Education Directorate and Council staff).

MS proposed a parent forum in the first half of the year and the Transition (to School/PREschool) forum events in the second half. Reasoning that: parents are fatigued by meetings and events and we must provide value for time; forums also present opportunities for broader communication (and digital recording/promotion), networking and awareness raising – activities which also take time to implement.

VP noted it's too expensive to bring in speakers from outside ACT and recommended Wendy McDuff from [ACEQCA](#), EDU and CECA for guidance regarding forum topics, parent resources, speakers and information.

CC mentioned the Bike library that started around the active play program in one ACT school, it's a great initiative to borrow a bike. And an example of resources inspiring other projects.

Triple P Positive Parenting Programs

The Education Directorate has asked Council to promote the Triple P online programs to parents via our fortnightly newsletter eCommunicator. The Minister recommended the programs for parents.

Triple P (positive parenting programs) - developed at UQ in the early 1990s. The system includes a range of online courses and resources for parents and facilitators. Programs include course facilitator training for psychologists (to offer face-to-face seminars for parents), and for preschool educators (to support children and parents), and online training for parents (8 online modules \$80).

Priorities 2020 - EL issues

Engaging with and responding to preschool parent members is a priority for the ELC. Acknowledging important EL issues and the concerns of our members requires ongoing monitoring to develop issue and position summaries. Maintaining a conversation with our preschool members is vital.

Early Learning Issues:

- access, quality and inclusion
- children with additional or complex needs
- Parents as first teacher
- preschool for 3 year olds
- Play: the role of play, perspectives and perceptions, diminishing free-play
- relationship and consent education approaches for pre-schoolers
- Preschool curriculum
- pedagogy: literacy development
- workforce
- national quality framework and regulations
- costs: wrap-around childcare and childcare subsidy
- mental health
- Grant funding and Preschool fundraising
- Family and parenting resources
- PBL, 'positive behaviours for learning'
- digital technology and children.

Preschool member support

In relation to Council's 47 preschool members, review and strategically build on:

- data collection processes, for Council **and** P&Cs/parent organisations
- member requirements and needs - strategies to provide support services
- member engagement
- awareness building
- partner organisations, key relationships and networks.

The value of play

Promoting the value of play and the long-term benefits of early learning continue to be highlighted as important topics for parents (and policy-makers) to understand. VP referred to the importance of extending play-based learning upwards into primary school and the overuse of technology.

Parents are sometimes looking for evidence of literacy/numeracy education and resources at preschool. This interest is positive and provides an opportunity for parents and teachers. When preschool teachers regularly communicate with parents, showing how and why processes are implemented at preschool and their child focussed approach, teacher expertise is promoted.

CC wants to ensure that promoting the value of play ties in with getting parents involved in their P&C. VP noted that having parents value what happens in their school is important to P&Cs but we don't want to be duplicating what they do.

Lived experience

CC discussed her experience with her daughter needing speech therapy. The shortage of speech therapists ought to be included in the budget submission. Fewer speech therapists are available in the ACT and it takes too long to navigate the system. Therapists in the ACT agree that they are not able to meet demand.

UANP Review

The Universal access national partnership agreement is being reviewed. Media report in SMH regarding review. Concerns regarding use of consultants (Nous) and if there are plans to change, reduce or discontinue preschool funding. Push for consistency through long-term commitment. States/Education meeting in December. Link to public [submissions](#).

ELC Business Plan

The ELC business plan provides strategic direction for the committee. It also provides a background for grant applications. It brings together all the requirements for planning and is the backbone to all that the ELO and the ELC will do to support the bridge between parents and educators.

Meeting Close

9.30 pm

**ACTION LIST
EARLY LEARNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday 19 November 2019

Minute	Action	Who	By	
2)	Send new minutes to ELC for approval Agenda Points to Directorate Education Minister, the Director, Louise Marootians, Manager, Early Childhood Education, Elizabeth Lea, Support at Preschool Team Leader	MS	5/12	
3)a	Re technology options, review experiences of other P&C associations. Trial zoom meeting - MS to contact CC re date and time.		19/12	
4)a	Meet with Michele Foley and Linda from EDU re forum feedback. Meet with Kathryn Hopps re T2S survey series. Send draft T2S survey questions to the ELC.		10/12	
4)b	Contact re speakers: Wendy McDuff <u>ACEQCA</u> , EnvEd. Network, National Capital Authority, principal's association, ECA. Test Parent Forum topics via membership ie PPA parents. Draft forum summary.		10/01	
4)c	Request how PBL ties in with the triple P approach? Send response and manual to the ELC.		18/12	
5)a	2 nd draft business plan for 2020 ELC meeting		2/02	
5)b	Organise a reporting meeting with EDU for the ELO			
6)b	Marina to meet with CC regarding FB stats			
6)d	Council's EL policy to ELC			
6)e	Attach ELO report to ELC Council flyers for preschool teachers PD; posters and flyers for preschool noticeboards <i>for parents</i> . preschool teacher sign-up sheet			