

The parent voice on public education

Minutes

Early Learning Subcommittee Meeting Nov 16, 2023, 7.30 pm, online via Zoom

Council's Early Learning Subcommittee is a forum for parents and carers whose children are attending (or about to attend) a playschool or preschool in the ACT. The subcommittee advocates for parents in early learning and public education, and promotes the benefits of quality early years learning. Download previous minutes here (or registration): <u>Meeting summaries</u>.

Open 7.35 pm

MS welcomed attendees, Acknowledgement of Country Announcements: Council's <u>free training</u> for members

1. Early Childhood Workforce Strategy

On October 12, 2023 the ACT Government released the new early childhood education and care workforce strategy, *Valuing Educators, Values Children: A Workforce Strategy for the ACT Early Childhood Education and Care Profession (2023-25).* The Strategy outlines a range of actions to be delivered over the next few years, across four focus areas: sector support, capability building, career pathways and professional recognition.

Quality early childhood education plays a critical role in supporting children to learn and thrive.

2. Education (Early Childhood) Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

On October 26, 2023 the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Yvette Berry introduced the Education (Early Childhood) Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 to amend the Education Act 2004.

The Bill responds to the Government's 2020 ten-year plan for early childhood education and care in *Set up for Success: An Early Childhood Strategy for the ACT* and paves the way for the registration of Early Childhood Teachers in the ACT.

Through this Bill, the ACT will be the first Australian jurisdiction to enshrine access to two years of quality early childhood education prior to formal schooling in law.

The amendments include a new chapter in the Education Act 2004 dedicated to early childhood education and recognition in law that children start learning from birth.

The Bill will also amend the ACT Teacher Quality Institute Act 2010 to enable the professional registration of early childhood teachers.

Currently, the Teacher Quality Institute regulates the professional registration of teachers in primary and secondary schools. This Bill will introduce a new category of Teacher Quality Institute registration for teachers working in early childhood education and care settings whose expertise is teaching children in their brain building years.

Explanatory statements to the amendment.

3. Recording: Transition to School parent webinar (live Sep 14)

The webinar recording QR code can be shared with parents/carers of 2024 kindy/preschool starters. It's the time of year that P&Cs/PPAs are welcoming new families through orientation and preparation for first day. An opportunity to share useful resources (without recruiting!), and organise valuable playdates.

The webinar details what to expect, how to prepare, and why an understanding of starting preschool or kinder can help families to support children as they prepare for starting school.

Speakers: transitions researcher Dr Kathryn Hopps, from the ACT Education Directorate, Michelle Maier and Sally Johnson. Please get in touch for help creating customised resources for new preschool and kinder families:

<u>Poster template Preschool</u> (term dates/hols, Council/P&C, playdate) <u>Poster template Kinder</u> (term dates/hols, Council/P&C, playdate).



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4. 2023 starters - parent survey closing November 30

An opportunity to invite this year's preschool and kindy parents to share how their child's transition to school went in 2023. We've received valuable feedback and suggestions from parents/carers highlighting the need for families to receive opportunities to connect informally with each other. Results will be shared (anonymously) after survey close. Approx. 5 minutes to complete survey link.

5. Reflecting on 80 years of ACT preschool education

Carolyn Harkness and Gillian Styles in collaboration with the staff of Anslie School organised this celebration to reflect on 80 years since the start of the Canberra Preschool Society (then known as the Canberra Nursery Kindergarten Society). Participants were able to reconnect and exchange memories with colleagues and friends, and share stories about the legacy created. The event was held at Reid Preschool (est. 1945). <u>Photos here</u>.

6. 2024 ACT Election – Council priorities survey

Council has started preparing for the 2024 ACT election. Please help determine our lobbying priorities for next year by completing/sharing this <u>quick and easy 5 minute survey</u>.

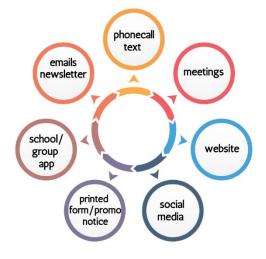
7. ACT Koori Preschools Tour

Council invited families to join Koori Preschool Educators and Education Directorate representatives in September for a tour of the Koori preschool at Narrabundah. There are five Koori preschools across the ACT where co-design with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities has resulted in the development of a *Koori Pre Cultural Safety Framework, Koori Pre Curriculum* and resources that support the evolution of Koori Preschool in the ACT. View the Koori Preschool video.

8. School Parent Communications

School communications have become more varied with the range of electronic options. P&C communications can get lost or add to the potentially confusing array. This variety of options can make communication planning complex. What works best for families, is it working?

A visual representation of available options can help associations, identify options and consider implications. Is there a single contact sheet for school and P&C communication contacts combined? What channels are most effective? Or overlooked?



We've heard many associations are using QR codes to help new parents quickly access links to Facebook or

web pages (even opt-in subscriptions) to access information and association news. One school had the QR code on a cookie label.

A free MailChimp subscription allows for automated email distribution via opt-in subscription to a cohort-based mailing list. With no privacy concerns around managing personal contact lists. <u>Email for details</u> and instruction about setting this up.

Meeting closed 8.30pm

Early Learning Subcommittee Terms of Reference

- Promote the importance of preschool education to ACT families,
- Support parent engagement in early years learning,
- Support families to complete online enrolment for preschool,
- Provide information, training and support services to associations
- Advise Council Executive and meetings on policy and matters relating to ACT preschool/early childhood education,

- Provide input to Council submissions on preschool issues,
- Provide representatives on behalf of Council to related external forums, committees, advisory/working groups or task forces.
- Provide updates to the Education Directorate on activities
- Maintain the early learning subcommittee.