

Welcome and Update

In this Newsletter:

- Information about the PSFO service
- Where to find the [PSFO Individual Child Referral Form](#)
- Inclusive Practice for Kindergartens - Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships
- Reflecting on the Power of Your Role with a Child in Play
- Encouraging Play
- Self Care for Teachers
- Gateways Online Educator Resources Information
- Useful Websites
- Information about Other Services teachers can refer to
- Articles of Further Interest

Attached: PSFO Fact Sheet
PSFO Initial Visit Letter for teachers to give to parents
ECEI Path Record (for teachers)
PSFO Referral Form
Gateways Online Educator Resources Information
Articles of Further Interest

Focusing on Positive Teacher-Child Relationships

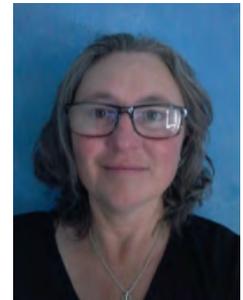
'Research has suggested that teacher-child relationships play a significant role in influencing your children's social and emotional development.'
Estrosky & Young

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Roll out of 3-year-old Funded Kindergarten.

A PSFO referral form has been attached to this newsletter and can be used for children who attend a funded 3-year-old program as well as funded 4 year old programs. This funding has begun in Colac Otway and South West Regions and will be rolled out in the Barwon Region in 2022.

THE PSFO PROGRAM

- The PSFO program actively builds capacity ... of early childhood educators also referred to as a 'with and through others' approach.
- This approach recognises that those who are with the child the most, will have a greater impact on the child's development.
- The PSFO does not directly deliver intervention to a child within the kindergarten setting, yet acts as a **consultant and coach** to the early childhood teacher....in a manner that respects the educator's ongoing relationship with the child and family.
(Preschool Field Officer Program Guide DET— see attached **PSFO Fact Sheet**)

The 2021 referral process:

Teacher to complete the **PSFO Program - Individual Child Referral Form** together with the family.
Referral form can be found at www.gateways.com.au (go to Inclusion Support/Preschool Field Officer)

If a referral is received from someone other than the kindergarten teacher, such as a therapist or Paediatrician, we will contact the referrer to explain that the kindergarten teacher is to be made aware of the referral, and that it must be filled in **with** the family/carers.

The kindergarten teacher also needs to sign the referral form.

PSFO Individual Child Referral Service delivery:

- The PSFO referrals will be processed and allocated on a weekly basis. The PSFO will respond to referrals in a timely manner. Indicating the level of concern is helpful in processing the referrals.
- Only referrals on the **current** referral form will be actioned.
- Please detail the type of service required.
- PSFO will contact the teacher to discuss support needs.
- A **PSFO Initial Visit Letter for Parents** will be provided to the **teacher to complete and to give to parents**, in order to inform them of the PSFO's name, the type of support the PSFO provides to the kindergarten teacher and the date of their first visit.
- The allocated PSFO will visit the kindergarten to observe the referred child in the program.
- If a meeting is required, it will be an opportunity to share observations, information and discuss strategies that may support the child's meaningful inclusion within the kindergarten program and to collaborate to devise a **Support Plan** (if needed).
- ***It is the teachers responsibility to arrange a meeting with parent/carers if required, and to confirm the date and time of this with the PSFO.***
- A plan for future service will be discussed and actions agreed upon.
- The PSFO can be contacted by phone or email if any new or further concerns arise.

Key Things to Remember when discussing the PSFO Individual Child referral with families:

- The PSFO role is to carry out **play based observations** of referred children to support inclusion.
- The PSFO doesn't 'assess' a child or make the final decision as to whether a child has a developmental delay or additional needs, or if they are 'ready' to transition to school. However the PSFO can collaborate and guide conversations around these issues.
- The **frequency, duration and type** of the PSFO service will be provided according to individual referral requirements.
- A Brigance screening can be administered when concerns arise that warrant further investigation.

Thank you to all the educators who responded to our satisfaction survey in 2020. We were so very pleased that 100% of responders were satisfied with the support their received. 60% were extremely satisfied and 30% were very satisfied. We hope to continue to provide a high quality service to you in 2021!



Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships

HANDOUT

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Positive teacher-child relationships are important because:

- ✓ They influence a child's emotional, cognitive, and social development
- ✓ They help children develop secure relationships with other adults
- ✓ They help children develop good peer relationships
- ✓ They help reduce the frequency of behavior problems (e.g., tantrums)
- ✓ They help children develop positive self-esteem
- ✓ They can result in higher rates of child engagement



When interacting with young children, remember to:

- ✓ Engage in one-to-one, face-to-face interactions
- ✓ Get on the child's level for face-to-face interactions
- ✓ Use a pleasant, calm voice and simple language while making eye contact
- ✓ Provide warm, responsive physical contact
- ✓ Follow the child's lead and interest during play
- ✓ Help children understand classroom expectations
- ✓ Redirect children when they engage in challenging behavior
- ✓ Listen to children and encourage them to listen to others
- ✓ Acknowledge children for their accomplishments and effort



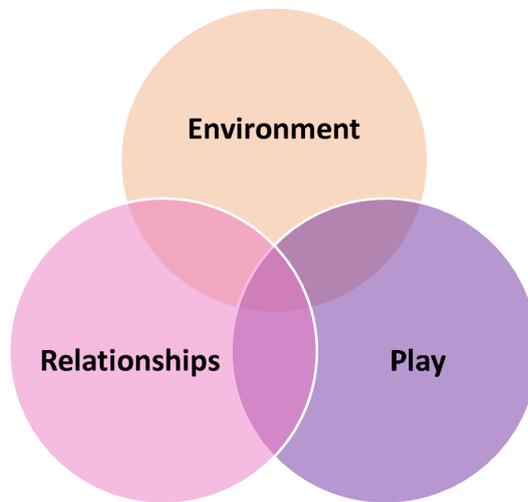
Positive teacher-child relationships include:

- ✓ Consideration of the individual needs and interaction styles of young children
- ✓ Consideration of the children's and families' cultural, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds

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Have **YOU** Ever Wondered...

About the **Power of Your Role** with a Child in Play?



Adapted from Kirk, G. & Jay, J. (2018).

Teacher-Child Interaction  Guided Participation

Guided participation, also known as integrated teaching and learning, participatory teaching, adult-child play, involves learning through the use of play and allows for in-depth social facilitation (conversations, questions, reciprocal interactions) and learning.

It could involve learning about different cultural tools (e.g. making tea at a tea party; collecting nature samples on a walk for later art and craft) whereby both the adult and child use and discover ways of interacting with the world around them.

The teacher allows the child to explore while wondering aloud and adding to the child's investigations. The teacher's attitude is one of observer and co-learner. Guiding when necessary while allowing new discoveries from the child to take place.

References

- Kirk, G., and Jay, J. (2018). Supporting kindergarten children's social and emotional development: Examining the synergic role of environments, play, and relationships. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 32, 4, PP. 472-485. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2018.1495671>
- Marbina,L., Church, A. and Tayler, C. (2011) Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, Evidence Paper Practice Principle 6: Integrated teaching and learning approaches. *Department of Education and Early Childhood Development*. <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/professionals/learning/Pages/veyldfproflearn.aspx> Accessed 8/02/2021.

Encouraging Play

Play is essential for children.

More and more **research** confirms the importance of play and why it should be an integral part of children's lives.

Free play allows children to practice decision-making skills, learn to work in groups, share, resolve conflict and advocate for themselves. It allows them to discover what they enjoy, at their own pace. It is critical for becoming socially adept, coping with stress and building cognitive skills such as problem solving.

Play is so important that it is even part of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Article 31 states that children have the right
'to engage in play and recreational activities'

Play is how children learn.

As children develop and grow, so does their way of playing.

Margaret Parten outlined the six stages of social play...and it starts at birth.

Unoccupied Play (babies)

Solitary Play

Onlooker Play

Parallel Play

Associative Play

Social Play

When '**Playskills**' are discussed it refers to the collective foundation skills of Planning and Sequencing, Executive Function, Body Awareness, Problem Solving, Social Skills, Language and Self-Regulation.

If a child appears to have a delay in the development of Playskills, it may warrant further investigation.

If you have **concerns** about a child's interest in or ability to play or interact with peers, it is important to help them to move forward so that they don't miss out on the opportunity to get the most out their preschool year, by strengthening skills through play.



Adults should support children by engaging in play with them to:

- scaffold
- offer ideas
- share
- model

So that the child **learns to play.**



The **environment** provided needs to be inviting, and provide play spaces for children to play alone as well as in pairs or small groups.

It should cater for the children to be able to follow their own interests and also to expand their interests.



Self-Care for Teachers

Regulating your responses when children's behaviors push your buttons



When children engage in behavior that pushes your buttons, it is important to be intentional in how you respond. Making a plan will help you remain calm when you respond. By being calm, you will be able to objectively observe the child's behavior and think about what the behavior is communicating. This will help you respond in a way that is supportive of the child.

Below are strategies that you might use when a child's behavior pushes your buttons:

Before Your Buttons Are Pushed

Think, Think, Think about your PLAN!

- ▶ How can I respond when the child starts pushing my buttons?
- ▶ How can I take care of myself and still support the child?
- ▶ Can I make changes in the environment to support the child and decrease the challenging behavior?
 - Have I taught rules to the child in my classroom? Have I provided individual supports for the child?
 - What activities does the child particularly enjoy?
 - What helps the child calm down?
 - What helps the child feel safe and secure?
 - Have I taught strategies to help the child calm down?

Hot Button Activity



Check out the Hot Button Activity to reflect on behaviors that push your buttons and how your responses affect children and families.

<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Hot-Buttons.pdf>

ReFRAME your thinking about the child's behavior that pushes your buttons.

"Jalen is tired and needs a break."

"Susan is frustrated because she doesn't want to wear a mask."

"Marco doesn't understand the new routine and needs some help."

"John doesn't feel safe."

While Your Buttons are Being Pushed



Try one or more of these:

- ▶ Pause and take a deep breathe
- ▶ Breathe slowly and deeply
- ▶ Focus on breathing. Notice your breath, try counting when you inhale and counting when you exhale
- ▶ Step back (not away)
- ▶ Count to 10
- ▶ Use positive self-talk: "I've got this!"
- ▶ Hold and squish a stress ball
- ▶ Help the child use their preferred way to calm down
- ▶ Tag in a colleague to help support the child if you need a break



ReFRAME the child's behavior. What might they be trying to tell me?

"I don't know what to do."

"I miss home."

"I don't have words to tell you how I feel."

"I am frustrated and this is hard."

"Can you help me?"

After the Button-Pushing Behavior has Ended



- ▶ Take time to breathe!
- ▶ Reflect
 - Identify your emotions.
 - What was the child trying to tell you?
 - Is there another strategy that might have worked better?



- ▶ Journal about the experience.
- ▶ Collaborate and connect. Find a colleague to check in with and reflect.
- ▶ Find positive ways to re-connect with the child to strengthen your relationship.



ReFRAME! Challenging behavior is a signal that the child may need support and instruction in social-emotional skills. What skills might I teach them?

Teach the child...

- ▶ ways to calm down and regulate their emotions.
- ▶ how to express emotions.
- ▶ how to communicate needs.

In 2020 the PSFO team created the Online Early Childhood Educators library. We did promote this via email and through the newsletter but not a lot of educators engaged with this resource. When we completed the PSFO satisfaction survey at the end of 2020, we asked educators if you engaged with the library and if you found it useful. Many commented that they didn't know we had a library and asked what resources were available for loan. Based on this feedback we have renamed the resource to be the Online Educator Resources. This is an online platform of fact sheets and articles that we think will be of interest to you in your role as an early childhood educator. We can create further articles and fact sheets based on your feedback and requests. You could print off this information to give to parents or your teaching team. The idea of this resource is to support you through another method instead of just receiving referrals for individuals. We hope you find it useful!



Online Educator Resources

Please follow the link below to access the Gateways Online Educators Resources:

<https://www.gateways.com.au/services/pre-school-inclusion-services/early-childhood-educators-library>

A brief overview of the available resources:

Autism Spectrum Disorder – General Resources and Teaching Strategies to support children with Autism.

Being the First to Raise Issues with a Family – Tips and Ideas for having that first conversation with families in regards to developmental concerns.

The **Cognitive Assessment Process** – Explain what comes first in this process, helps teachers to assist parents to access this service if it is needed.

Calming Strategies – A range of strategies to trial in assisting children to calm and regulate. Building a 'tool box' of strategies that work for children to choose from.

Discussing Concerns during COVID 19

Having Difficult Conversations with Carers – Step by step guidance for having difficult conversations with families, for those not confident with having difficult conversations.

Referral Pathways – Options for further support to discuss with families

Supporting Extremely Challenging Children – When you are feeling overwhelmed by challenging behaviours read this!

Websites of Interest COVID 19

Dealing with an Angry Carer – Understanding and responding to a parent or caregiver who seems angry.

Zones of Regulation – Understanding and using a social thinking resource designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control

Key Word Signing – Tips and strategies for those beginning to use key word signing.

Using Visuals to Support Routines and Choice-making – Different kinds of visuals and how to use them to support children in following routines and making choices

Promoting Social Skills in Preschool – Positive ways to support and foster social skills.

Using Visuals to Support Communication – What is AAC? Resources, tips and ideas about the ways that children can use Augmentative and Alternative ways to communicate with others.

There is a quick questionnaire link at the bottom of the screen to provide feedback or suggestions for further topics.

Useful Websites

Healthshare to access local private services, including Pediatricians and Allied Health Services

<https://www.healthshare.com.au/>

Orange Door <https://www.bethany.org.au>

BeYou (Kismatter & Beyond Blue <https://beyou.edu.au>

Drummond Street <https://ds.org.au>

Geelong Parenting Network <https://www.geelongaustralia.com.au>

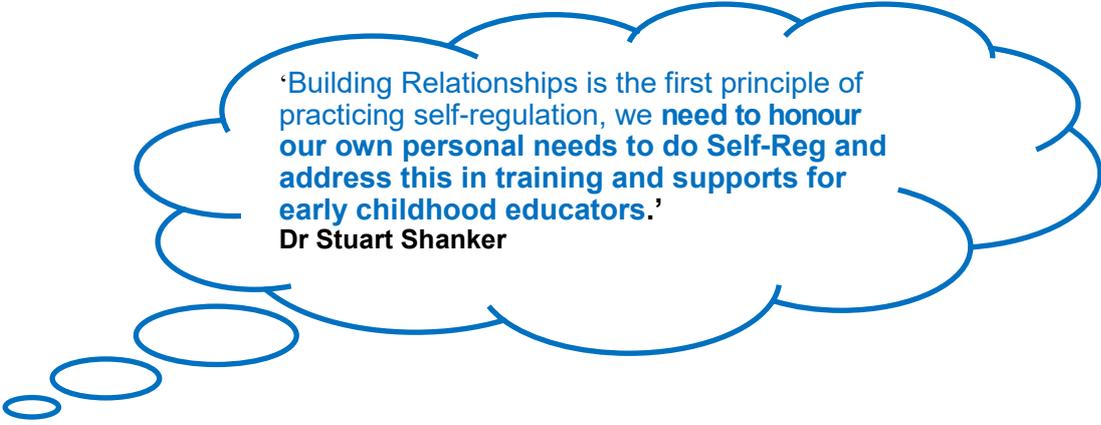
ECA Hub <https://learninghub.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au>

DET website <https://education.vic.gov.au>

Geelong Continence Clinic <https://www.barwonhealth.org.au/services->

Play Skills - Kid Sense childdevelopment.com.au

Learn to Play - Karen Stagnitti www.learntoplayevents.com



‘Building Relationships is the first principle of practicing self-regulation, we **need to honour our own personal needs to do Self-Reg and address this in training and supports for early childhood educators.**’
Dr Stuart Shanker

When you identify children with additional needs **YOU** can also refer to:

Community Health

if the child has one area of concern (mostly used for Speech concerns)

or

Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Service

If the child has a delay in 2 or more areas of development

The provider of the ECEI service in the Barwon Region is Barwon Child, Youth and Family (BCYF)

Click on the link below to access the BCYF ECEI Referral form

<https://www.bcyf.org.au/what-we-do/early-years/early-childhood-intervention-services>

The provider of the ECEI service in the South West Region is Latrobe Community Health

—Contact 1800 242 696

or

Barwon Health North - Child and Family Health Service

(If the family lives in postcodes 3212, 3213, 3214, 3215)

For further information about the Barwon Health North Service, Referral Guidelines and Referral Form click on the links below:

www.barwonhealthnorth.org.au/services/item/child-and-family-health-services

https://www.barwonhealthnorth.org.au/images/CFS_referral_form-FINAL_PDF.docx.pdf

https://www.barwonhealthnorth.org.au/images/CFS_referral_guidelines_final_002.pdf

Further Resources to Check OUT!

8 Inspiring TED Talks

1. 'Play is more than just fun' by Stuart Brown
2. 'Every kid needs a champion' by Rita Pierson
3. 'Three rules to spark learning' by Ramsey Musallam
4. 'The linguistic genius of babies' by Patricia Kuhl
5. 'Improving early childhood development with words' by Dr Brenda Fitzgerald
6. 'Turning trash into toys for learning' by Arvind Gupta
7. 'Do the first 1000 days determine the rest of your life?' By DeeDee Yates
8. 'What do babies think?' By Alison Gopnick

https://www.google.com/search?q=inspiring+TED+talks+for+EC+Educators+edutribe&rlz=1C1CHBD_en-GBAU863AU863&oq=inspiring+TED+talks+for+E

Further Articles of Interest

(that are attached to this newsletter)

Building Positive Teacher-Child Relationships
(full article)

Play and Social Skills

Practice Principle 6 - Integrated Teaching

Supporting Kinder Children's Social and Emotional
Development

Thank you for taking the time to read our Newsletter.

Wishing you a year of Positive Connections in 2021,
Deb, Kate, Raeleigh, Lana and Josie