

Aboriginal Children's Services Meeting 30th November & 1st December 2006.

Present:

Port Lincoln Children's Centre , Minya Porlar Crèche, Oodnadatta Crèche, Kura Yerlo Children's Centre, Koonibba MACS Wynbring Jida MACS, Minya Bunhii Children's Centre, Umoona MACS (Tjitji Tjapu Tjuta), ARMSU/Network SA staff, Inclusive Directions—Berri

Apologies:

Gidja Club Pt. Lincoln, Kalaya Children's Centre, Kurna Plains Children's Centre, Raukka.

Day 1— Debbie opened the meeting and announced the good news that ARMSU had won the tender to do the IPSU for the next two years. She explained the following:

ARMSU - the Indigenous Professional Support Unit is an initiative of the Inclusion and Professional Program funded by the Australian Government. We will support services to provide quality care that is culturally safe, appropriate and meets the needs of Indigenous children and families

Advice, support, resources, & training on all aspects of running your service:

- Management of staff, finances, OHS&W, resources and administration;
- Programming and planning to meet needs of children, families and communities;
- Corporate governance, management committee support;
- General operational support and referrals; building networks and links.

1800 phone line Use our 1800 129 606 line for Aboriginal services to call us free anytime. We have an answering machine for after hours calls, or when staff are otherwise engaged.

Visits to services We can come to your service to provide advice, support and training at a time to suit you.

Aboriginal Services Meetings Directors, staff and other representatives of SA's Aboriginal children's services are invited to meet together 3 times each year for professional development, training, information sharing and networking

Training We provide training on most aspects of running a child care service and also support services to access culturally aware training from other agencies and organisations

Websites Visit www.ipsusa.org.au or www.networksa.org.au/armsu for quick access to information and resources, plus useful links.

Publications Newsletter published 6 monthly, books and resource papers published as required

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Update from DECS—Heather Dowling

Heather gave an apology from Helen Leo and explained she was the last minute replacement and was asked to give the update on their Department's new services, challenging services and a little background on the changes to Family Day Care. Her Department works very closely with David Rathman's group, Aboriginal Affairs & Reconciliation Division, who are in the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Helen named the new services and explained the background to how they developed and the work and funding needed to get them up and running. They are a direct result of the Virtual Village report that stated families wanted services to be all together. She also spoke of the difficulties in running both pre-school and child care in these new initiatives.

Update from Dept. FaCSIA -Catherine Vockins

Catherine was happy to announce that ARMSU had won the tender to be the IPSU agency in SA and also explained the staff changes in the Department. She, alongside Kathy Priest will be the main departmental staff working with the Aboriginal services in this state. Because of the changes to the JET system the 3 Aboriginal crèches—Oodnadatta, Maree and Yalata will also come under her area and also under the ARMSU support program.

Rachel Amos was the Crèche Coordinator from Oodnadatta who, for the first time was a participant at our Aboriginal Children's Services Meeting. Rachel introduced herself and explained a little about the type of service she worked in and how many children were attending. We hope the other two services will be sending representatives to the first meeting in 2007. Cathy then asked for any questions and spent some time during the break answering individual services' requests.

Challenging Behaviours Workshop—Gowrie Training Centre

This session looked at the principles that underpin a relationship approach to managing behaviour. We learnt how to identify influences that impact on the behaviour of children. We also explored new ways of viewing and responding to challenging behaviours. This was very interesting and maybe a little challenging to the ways we may have previously understood and seen behaviour.

We discussed why we believed certain behaviour is challenging to us and why a child is behaving like this. We learnt that when children are attention seeking they are actually seeking connection.

We looked at attachment between the child and the carer/parent and looked at the circle of security. *We learnt that we must always be bigger, stronger, wiser and kind. Wherever possible follow your child's need. Whenever necessary take charge.*

This was a great workshop and very interesting

Getting Started with Learning Stories Workshop—Rebecca Heath, Gowrie Training Centre

Learning stories are another way of assessment and assessment can be thought of as "how we in our everyday practice:

- observe children's learning,
- strive to understand it,
- put our understanding to good use"

Assessment involves noticing, recognising, responding, recording and revisiting.

So Learning Stories are a style of assessment that helps us to document what we are noticing, recognising and responding to and offer opportunities for children, families and educators to revisit learning and learning experiences.

We learnt that these stories are a narrative form of recording and assessing. They also enable us to describe how children make sense of their world. They tell a story of a child's learning over a period of time and also make that learning visible to the reader.

Learning stories also always focus on what children *can* do not on what they can't do. They also assist us as staff and parents to confirm the importance of children's play. We were also reminded that documenting of these stories is very powerful and can be destructive. Consider what is being documented—how will it be used? Stories could be about interests, abilities or strategies. They should also be meaningful and about real things, important things, involve passion and capture the magic.

All Learning Stories should be analysed because without it they just remain a story. When we analyse the story for learning we are identifying what we noticed, recognised and responded to, using our professional knowledge and experience of working with young children.

What next? The next step is how we might encourage this interest, ability, strategy, disposition to be more complex and appear in different areas or experiences in the program. We as staff must encourage the next step (if appropriate).

Finally this session gave us some good tips of critiquing Learning Stories e.g:

- Did I start the story in the right place?
- Have I kept to the point?
- Have I written more than one story?
- Is everyone portrayed in the best possible light?
- How will the child feel reading this story?
- How will the parents feel reading this story?
- What will people find out about the practices in your service by reading this story?
- What other lenses could I put on this story?
- Focus on one of the underpinning ideas

This session was very useful and we enjoyed it immensely. Rebecca brought along several children's learning stories and they were great examples of learning stories to read and learn from.

SNAICC Update

Debbie informed the group of her acceptance as the South Australian representative on the SNAICC Executive for 2007 and we also thanked Tina Quitadarmo for her term of office and her great input to SNAICC during 2006. Debbie will post out to each service the names of each state representative and also the names of the new executive. Murial Bamblett was re-elected as the SNAICC Chairperson.

As our representative Debbie reminded the services of the upcoming SNAICC "Ngadluko Ngartunnaitya" - "For our Children" Conference here in Adelaide at the Convention Centre between September 19th-21st, 2007. Several of our Directors also agreed to join together to put on a workshop from our South Australian contingent.

Debbie continued with her report on the two day workshop she attended in Melbourne through the SNAICC Resource Service (SRS) that not only looked at Aboriginal child rearing practices but also discussed methods and methodology practices when researching and

evaluating Aboriginal families and children. This workshop was titled "Using Our Knowledge(s) to Grow Up Strong Kids" and was held in collaboration with the Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia (CAFCA).

While it was an intense and at times challenging two days, SNAICC felt that the main aims of the workshops were achieved; to inform the scoping of the child rearing practices project, to share information about current research and facilitate dialogue and networks amongst researchers and evaluators.

The participants' further reflections and feedback on the workshops and the issues raised were welcomed and recognised that there were varying experiences and ideas shared. SNAICC stated "We have already had some very helpful and affirming feedback from many of you and certainly value all contributions and feedback that you shared." SNAICC will also give a written report to all participants in February 2007.

Finally, Debbie asked the group to consider if anyone from the services would be willing to become a proxy for 2007 if she couldn't make any of the meetings.