

President's Ponderings

Before I begin this long overdue newsletter I would like to apologise for the delay. I have been working to upgrade the IFDCO website which has been sadly out of date for a very long time and relocating the site to Australia has not been a straightforward process. However, it has been a task that I considered to be a priority and one that I needed some expert help to accomplish. It is still a 'work in progress' but hopefully is beginning to take on more of a professional appearance.

I hope that you are achieving some of the goals that you have set for yourself in 2011. The weeks, months and years all race by so quickly that we can not always cover everything that we would like to. Family Child Care is such a busy place to be; it would all be similar wherever we are.

A great deal has happened in Australia during the past six months. As many of you may have seen on your TV news, severe flooding in many parts of Australia, including Brisbane in Queensland, has caused heartbreak and financial ruin for so many families who will never recover from the experience. There has also been loss of life with people missing in flooded rivers and streams. Brisbane being a River City has suffered immense damage with houses and other structures being washed away and businesses in the CBD being ruined.

Other parts of the State have suffered badly as well. For some people flood waters had gone through their homes and properties so quickly and suddenly with no possibility of being able to save anything and not being able to return

to their homes for weeks until the flooding subsided. Evacuation Centres were set up and Volunteers from across Australia and New Zealand worked around the clock. Then there was the unenviable task of having to try to clean off the mud that had settled over everything that was left in the homes. People did not know what they have left until it was safe for them to return.

It is the worst flooding experience ever for some parts of the country and the worst in over one hundred years for other parts.

Then, there are the parts of the country where drought conditions continue to plague farms and properties that could really benefit from some of the rain that has fallen and caused the flooding in other places. Heat waves were experienced in some states and there were bush fires that caused even more trauma for some parts of the country. In the south there was even snow, at that time of the year, mid summer! Can you believe it?

Australia sure is a country of such extremes - a bit like the USA. We are blaming it all on the La Nina weather patterns. For the meteorological minded, Google the definition of La Nina. We see that Brazil and Sri Lanka are having similar problems with flooding and many more lives have been lost there.

Mount Etna the volcano in Sicily has erupted causing more fear and devastation for that part of Italy and Japan has experienced even more devastation.

New Zealand then saw even more unthinkable destruction with the earthquakes in Christchurch. We are all living in such an unpredictable world, no one knows what might happen next. (14th

June) More earthquakes in Christchurch NZ and more after shocks following,!

As well, we are now experiencing volcanic ash from the volcano in Chile which has closed airports here in Australia and New Zealand and caused turmoil to the travelling public....who would have thought.....

The Family Day Care community has been badly affected as some of the services are in the flooded areas. People could not get to work or their homes have been washed away or their workplaces have had to close down. It is all very tragic and traumatic for children as well as adults. Thank you to those people who have shown concern for the Australian flood victims via their e-mails, it has been amazing.

And then, the north of Queensland was hit by a Category Five Cyclone. This has caused more damage to communities in the direct path of the cyclone as well as to surrounding areas. It is devastating for the people who have had to prepare for it over several days and who have had to watch and wait to see what destruction has occurred to their properties. It was very fortunate that there was no loss of life. People living in tropical zones of the world are often exposed to cyclonic conditions at certain times of the year but it is no less traumatic when a cyclone strikes.

We hope that all of these natural disasters are behind us now as we all look forward to a brighter year ahead.

Here in Brisbane, Australia we are working hard towards our next IFDCO Conference set for 18-21 July 2012 to be held at the Brisbane Convention Centre, which will have recovered from the flood by then.

We, on the Conference Planning Committee are meeting regularly either via teleconference link ups or as a group. We can guarantee you that there will be some very interesting aspects to the conference and urge you all to make it your priority to attend; it will be well worth your efforts. We want it to be as international as possible not just an Australian Conference.

We are proud to be sharing the hosting of the conference with Family Day Care Australia, who have a great reputation when it comes to

hosting Conferences, they do it all so well, so we are in for a treat, or actually, many treats. The actual professional Conference Organisation who are doing much of the really hard work are to be found at, www.conferencedesign.com.au then go to Family Day Care Conference 2012. Keep visiting the site to see updates as time progresses.

The focus in Family Day Care in Australia is currently on the National Early Years Learning Framework and how everyone is engaging in it. The system aims to ensure that all children have the best possible start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the Nation. The Educators that care for the Nations youngest citizens need to be knowledgeable, ethical and skilful professionals who provide an environment that invites enquiry and a sense of fun whilst at the same time making it a place where learning occurs naturally and the interests of the children are the priority.

The staff at each of the Family Day Care services has the task of training the Educators to better understand the Early Years Learning Framework and this occurs in many different ways, including focus group meetings, networking with other services, invited guest speakers, seminars, newsletter items and Co-ordinator conversations. Government input is in the form of seminars and electronic information as well as documentation and updates.

New systems are often challenging for some people and may take some time to accept, but Family Day Care in Australia, and internationally, is a very resilient group of very capable people who have had to cope successfully with many Government changes over the years, I am confident that we will all adapt to this new system as time progresses.

The next major change for us in Australia will be the new National Quality Framework in 2012. This assessment and rating of services will replace the current National Quality Accreditation system that has been in operation since 2004. New Government legislation introduced in the state of Victoria was the first step in having nationally consistent legislation to ensure high quality early childhood education and care across Australia. Other states and territories will now move to pass legislation. The

Act will take effect from Jan 2012 and will apply to Long Day Care, (Child Care Centres) Family Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, and Pre-schools and Kindergartens. For Services covered by the Act, the National Quality Framework will replace the current licensing and regulations processes in each state and territory as well as Commonwealth quality assurance processes.

The new Act will be accompanied by a set of Regulations which set out the administration processes. These Regulations will include processes for applying for Educator and Service approvals, assessment and ratings processes and minimum quality standards such as space, staff to child ratios and staff qualifications.

All of these new initiatives puts Family Day Care in Australia at the front of, or at least level with other parental child care options and ensures that the care being offered will continue to meet the high standards and requirements of families.

Another exciting development for Australian Families was introduced from the beginning of this year. Paid Parental Leave is now available for up to eighteen weeks at the National Minimum Wage.

Paid Parental leave is funded by the Australian Government and is available to:

- birth mothers and primary carers who meet the work income and residency requirements;
- can be transferred to the other parent if eligible;
- must be taken in a continuous period within the first year after birth;
- is also available to adoptive parents;
- can be received before, after or at the same time as employer provided paid leave, such as recreation or annual leave and employer provided paid and unpaid parental leave.

Many other countries have been using a similar system for years but this is a first for Australia and has been warmly welcomed by new parents who will find the assistance very helpful at this time.

In my role as President of IFDCO I attended the United States National Family Child Care

Conference in Nashville, Tennessee in July 2010. This was an amazing gathering of approximately 1,200 delegates. It was a conference full of very informative and interesting workshops, guest speakers and presenters. I was able to meet Family Child Care personnel from all over the United States and learn how they operate their services and the type of support that they receive. I also spent time in Atlanta being so generously hosted by Kathy Alexander and her husband Ricky. Kathy is on our IFDCO Board as one of the two US representatives as well as the International Information Officer.

Whilst I was in Atlanta, Georgia, I was able to visit with several Educators to see how their services operate. Workers from the local Atlanta Resource Office took me on these visits which I really appreciated and enjoyed. I was also invited to a local Educators Meeting which helped me to learn of the activities and training that takes place in this particular area. I was able to talk to the group and share some of our Australian perspectives with them. I was also fortunate to spend time with a group of Kathy's work colleagues discussing and comparing the differences in Family Child Care in Australia and the USA.

In September of 2010, along with Cathy Castelli our IFDCO Treasurer, I attended the New Zealand Early Childhood Educators Conference in Auckland. New Zealand is well ahead of many countries with regard to their Child Care and Education programs and for such a small country, there are so many great things happening there that I am sure we can all learn from. But there are currently concerns re the lack of Government support for Home-based Care which is very disappointing. (See newsletter contribution from NZ.) Being so close to New Zealand, we are looking forward to seeing a large contingent of delegates attending the Conference in 2012.

Membership of International Family Day Care is badly in need of a boost in new members. Members will have access to the very latest international Family Child Care news as well as researchers' news, conference news and contact details of members in other countries; you never know when you might need to contact someone or pass details on to someone who might be travelling or moving to another country. The cost of membership is a very reasonable AUD\$10

and this remains current for the three year term between International conferences. If there is a group of you who would be interested in joining the Organisation, you could save on bank charges by sending the funds as one amount with a list of who is included in the group so that you can receive individual receipts.. The Treasurer of IFDCO is Cathy Castelli who works with me and she is contactable at bbfdc@pfcs.com.au Cathy can give you more information by return e-mail.

I recently updated our entry in the International Year Book of non-profit organisations. This profiles the activities and locations of many different organisations throughout the world. It is a useful guide for people who might be interested in trying to locate a particular organisation. The Yearbook contains entries on 63,993 civil society organisations in 300 countries and territories in every field of human endeavour. It also promotes upcoming conferences. Take yourself to the website and have a look at which organisations are registered. Google Union of International Associations/ Yearbook. The office is located in Belgium.

I have recently had an e-mail conversation with Ramona Freeman, Program Director, Early Childhood Education, Kent State University, Salem, USA. Ramona has been heavily involved in working on the manuscript of International Family Child Care with Dr Elise Davis Melbourne University, Australia, regarding how each of the countries involved in the project operate their services. Some of the questions related to what Government support is offered to services, regulations, policies and limits on numbers of children being cared for by one Educator plus many other relevant points of interest. The manuscript has been finalised with submissions to one of two international journals. It will be a very interesting read, we will inform you as to where it can be obtained in the very near future. It has been a mammoth task for the people working on it and we should all applaud the efforts that have gone in to its' completion.

One of the more interesting things that I have been doing recently is working/sharing information with a gentleman who is interested in starting up Family Day Care in Egypt. The concept is all very new to that country so I was able to explain how it all works for

us here in Australia and with my service in particular. His focus was on explaining to women what is involved in working with other people's children, the safety, hygiene and environmental requirements, the programming and developmental needs of particular age groups, and the child care fees to be charged and what is included in these fees. I guess that any Government requirements would need to be met before anything could begin but it all sounds quite promising and positive and I look forward to seeing what eventuates in the future, it is obviously a 'work in progress'.

We have also had an enquiry from a gentleman from Sierra Leone who was interested in attending the conference in 2012, and wondering if there were scholarships available to attend so it is really heartening to know that people are eager to learn more about International Family Day Care.

I will close this section of the newsletter by encouraging you all to keep up the valuable work that we all do with children. There is no more satisfying and rewarding occupation even though, some days are definitely better than others. I would also encourage input to this newsletter, it is so interesting to read what other countries are doing in this area of childcare. Anyone can send an article to me, I am contactable on Grace@pfcs.com.au or Gracemcd@tpg.com.au

Grace McDonald

President

International Family Day Care Organisation.



Family Child Care News from New York

In New York, we are working to fully implement a QUALITYstarsNY rating system, which recently completed field-testing in 13 communities. Such a system looks to support providers as they work to raise standard of care. Every parent wants the highest quality care for his or her child and we must ensure that access. NY's rating instrument to evaluate performance is similar to the quality rating and improvement systems in place for early care and learning programs in nearly 30 states. NYS providers, parents and advocates are urging newly elected Governor Cuomo and the Legislature to increase funding for QUALITYstarsNY to \$3 million for FY2011 - to increase the number of children, parents, and programs supported. To find out more about QUALITYstarsNY visit www.qualitystarsny.org.

All NYS registered family and licensed group family child care providers outside of New York City were notified recently that they will receive a grant up to \$500 USD through the CSEA Child Care Quality Grant (CCQD). This grant will be used to purchase items needed to provide quality child care and run their small business, including health & safety items, program materials & supplies, tuition, professional development training and/or Infant child CPR-First Aid Training. NYS Providers have two options on how they can utilize the \$500 grant: 1) Kaplan Early Learning Company credit (no money out-of-pocket) or 2) reimbursed for allowable tuition or training expenses or approved purchases (original receipts required).

Recent laws passed that affect NYS Family Child Care Providers:

Increased Capacity - Group family child care providers may now care for up to 12 children of all ages. Up to four additional school-age children may be in care for a maximum capacity of 16 children. NYS Office of Children & Family Services will assess the program for adequate indoor space for the comfort of the children and to accommodate a variety of activities for the children prior to issuing a new license reflecting a change in maximum capacity.

CPR/First Aid Training a Requirement - A law went into effect on December 11, 2010 (with a grace period until March 1, 2011) which requires all NYS Child Care Providers to have at least one employee who holds a valid certificate in

CPR & First Aid on premises of the child care program during the program's operating hours. In addition, substitutes for Family child care providers would also need to be trained in CPR & First Aid when supervising children in the absence of a provider and alternate provider. This new law affects all modalities of care: Family Child Care; Group Family Child Care; Day Care Centers & School Age Programs.

Licensing Renewal Period Extended – A recent law passed which extends the licensing renewal period from 2 to 4 years, saving New York State millions of dollars in costs relating to processing of applications WITHOUT lowering standards for inspections and training requirements.

The Family Child Care Association of NYS, Inc (FCCANYS) 20th Annual Conference, "Refueling our Body & Mind" will be on April 1 & 2, 2011 at the charming historic Gideon Putnam Resort & Spa on the unspoiled grounds of the Saratoga State Park in Saratoga, NY. In celebration of their 20th Annual Conference, FCCANYS is excited to bring Comedienne Kathy Buckley, California to perform as well as Keynotes Patricia Dischler, Wisconsin & Maryann Harman - Music with Mar, Florida plus 20+ workshop presenters. FCCANYS is also offering a Child & Adult Food Program (CACFP) track at the conference for CACFP sponsors and monitors. Visit FCCANYS website for more information on the conference or the statewide organization @ www.fccanys.org.

The New York State Child Care Educational Incentive Program (EIP) is a scholarship program which helps providers pay for high quality training and education they need to provide quality care to children. Eligibility is based on employment status, level of income and course or training chosen.

Upstate providers may be eligible to access up to \$1,500 and Downstate providers may be eligible for up to \$2,000 in 2011.

EIP scholarships fund non-credit bearing training, college tuition, training and assessment fees associated with certain credential or certificate programs. All courses taken as part of an early childhood or related degree program are eligible for scholarship. Training or course work must clearly reflect one or more of the subject areas that are required by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services regulations. To find out more about NYS EIP visit www.ecetp.pdp.albany.edu.

Scottish News Round-up

Regulating care in Scotland from April 2011: What the changeover means for childminders

From April 1 2011 two new public bodies will begin operating in Scotland; Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) and Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS). These bodies have been created by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010.

SCSWIS

SCSWIS will inspect, regulate and support improvement of social care and social work services across Scotland including childminders. The Care Commission and the Social Work Inspection Agency (SWIA) will no longer exist and responsibility for elements of the work they did will pass to SCSWIS. The child protection work currently done by HMIE will also pass to SCSWIS.

The new Act

The work of the Care Commission is governed by the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001. The work of SCSWIS and HIS will be governed by the Public Services Reform (Scotland) Act 2010. This means that the regulations will be different and activities like registration, inspection, complaints, enforcement and so on will be dealt with according to the law as set out in the new Act. Scottish Childminding Association was involved in the consultation process for the new Act to ensure childminders were represented and their needs were considered.

More information

For the latest information on changeover and how the new bodies will work, visit www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/health/scrutiny

Extract from 'Regulating care in Scotland from April 2011: what the changeover means for care service providers'

Getting it right briefings published

The Scottish Government's Getting it right for every child team has just published a series of practice briefings for practitioners and managers involved in providing services to children and young people.

The briefings build on the 'Guide to Getting it right for every child' and provide a wealth of useful detail on various aspects of the programme.

"The briefings draw on independent evaluations, learning and best practice from areas that are well ahead with implementing the Getting it right approach," says Marj Stewart, who has led the project team putting the briefings together.

Read the practice briefings on the GIRFEC website: www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Young-People/childrenservices/girfec/publications/

Pre-Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Children and Families

The national guidance and multimedia resource, Pre-Birth to Three: Positive Outcomes for Scotland's Children and Families, replaces Birth to Three. SCMA has worked closely with Learning and Teaching Scotland to develop the new resource and to ensure childminding services were represented during discussions.

The national guidance and accompanying support materials, which include a DVD, a CD and poster, is relevant for all adults working with and for babies and young children.

The resource has been developed as an online tool to allow ready access to those who engage with young children and families. It also allows changes to current thinking to be added quickly keeping the information current and topical. There is 'Getting started guidance' to help users navigate the national guidance and multimedia resource.

The online version of the national guidance, which combines all of the materials contained in the pack, is now available on the LTS website: <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/earlyyears/prebirthtothree/nationalguidance/index.asp>

SCMA Launches Unity Lottery

SCMA has launched its very own Unity lottery which you can sign up for today!

Unity is a lottery with a difference. We receive profits directly from the number of lottery players we recruit, so we need your support.

For every £1 entry – 50p comes directly to us as profit. For just £1 per week you will be allocated with a six digit Unity Lottery number, which will remain yours for as long as you wish to keep playing. You can purchase more than one number if you wish. Every Saturday, the lucky winners are selected at random and prize cheques are issued and posted directly to you, so there is no need for you to claim. Winners have to match 3, 4, 5 or all 6 digits of the winning number in the correct place in the sequence.

- 6 digits in the correct place wins £25,000
- 5 digits in the correct place wins £1,000
- 4 digits in the correct place wins £25

- 3 digits in the correct place wins £5

You have a 1 in 63 chance of winning a prize.

The winning Unity number will be published on the results page of www.unitylottery.co.uk or alternatively you can call the Unity winners hotline Tel: 0870 055 2291.

You have the option to pay in two ways by direct debit or cheque. You must be 16 or over to enter and be resident in Great Britain.

If you have any queries please the Unity Lottery hotline on Tel: 0870 050 9240. To sign up now either download the form using the link below or go to: www.unitylottery.co.uk.

NZ HOME-BASED

Early Childhood Education Association



Te Roopu Matauranga Tamariki a te Papakainga ki Aotearoa

and Kindergarten enrolments are still declining.

The early childhood sector is awaiting release of the report on “Childcare for Under Two’s” from the Children’s Commissioner and the UN report on Child Mortality in New Zealand.

IFDCO News from New Zealand

The future of childcare in New Zealand is currently under review with a Government appointed taskforce currently considering submissions before making recommendations to the Minister. Unfortunately there is no representation from Homebased Childcare on the taskforce and we have little faith that the views of our sector will be taken into account. We have had no success with having our strategic plan begin adopted by Government and envy the Australians for the support their Government provides to Family Day Care.

Homebased in New Zealand is rapidly growing, recording 74% growth in enrolments in the past year; however we still only provide 9% of the total enrolments in early childhood in New Zealand. The good news is that this is up from just under 6% 5 years ago. Childcare centres and kindergartens are now the only other two groups who have larger percentages of provision of care

There are many major issues around poverty and child abuse that our country seriously needs to address instead of building more prisons. Work on getting the message to politicians and the general public regarding quality childcare and the benefit of primary care for under 3 year olds in services such as home-based is still a priority for our organisation. Homebased childcare is the only service that provides a ratio of 1:2 for children aged under two.

On a sadder note we would like to acknowledge the loss to Family Daycare Australia with the resignation of their CEO due to terminal illness. Rhonda Bignell has been a true ambassador of Family Daycare and has been instrumental in bringing the relationship between our country organisations closer together. We would also like to extend our sympathy and best wishes to Rhonda and her family at this time.

Carol Stovold
President