Preschool Directors Association of South Australia
Position Paper on Early Childhood Leadership

Context
Currently in South Australia, leadership for the education of children in early childhood services takes many forms. Within the public sector there have been many changes to the structures of administration which have created a destabilised atmosphere within the early childhood field. Various terms such as landscaping, integration, amalgamation, co-location, merging, local management, re-location, incorporation, assimilation and shared service sites etc. have seen the picture of early childhood service provision in South Australia change in recent years. Changes, as a result of the implementation of the ideas behind these terms, have seen funding decisions altered, leadership within these services reduced or threatened and some kindergartens have closed or relocated to school-based sites where line management has been re-worked. In addition, Child parent centres still exist without the numbers of children enrolled in these services counted in leadership allocations for their schools. Within this changing context, the Preschool Director’s Association have collaborated to discuss the importance of opportunities, for children in their early childhood years, created by leadership within this sector. One action, resulting from such discussions, has been to generate the Early Childhood Leadership Position Paper which documents positions, fundamental to the provision of high quality leadership. High quality leadership is that which is based in sound understandings of early childhood philosophy and creates optimum learning environments for children.

Guiding Principles

1. Preschool Directors’ Association recognizes early childhood as an internationally acknowledged and specialised area of education and therefore supports high quality leadership as an essential provision in any (educational) service with children between the ages of 0-8.
2. Preschool Directors’ Association is committed to models of early childhood leadership that support optimum learning outcomes for children
3. Preschool Director’s Association is committed to the dual role of the preschool director as both teacher and leader, and this contributes to and guides the quality of teaching in the early childhood setting.

Issues

- Qualifications: Our position: Preschool Directors’ Association asserts that only persons with appropriate Early Childhood qualifications should hold leadership positions in education services for children aged 0-5.
- Line management: Our position: Early Childhood leaders must be line managed within the same hierarchical structures as other educational site leaders.
- Staffing ratios: Our position: Whatever the leadership model it is essential that the teaching dimension of the director’s role is not devalued by replacing with less qualified staff.
- Integration and amalgamation: Our position: Where kindergartens move to school sites due to closure, amalgamation or integrations of services the leadership of the kindergarten must be maintained by a preschool director.
- Consultation: Our position: Preschool Director’s Association, as the professional representative body, must be consulted when integrations, amalgamations, or variants on leadership in early childhood centres are proposed or investigated.

For further information, please contact:
Jen Mathwin-Raymond – 82716343
Director, The Lady George Kindergarten