



Montessori Australia Foundation Limited

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Supporting the Montessori Movement in Australia

Montessori Long Day Care Forum

Saturday & Sunday 1-2 May 2010
Gold Coast International Hotel

Welcome

Welcome from Megan Tyne, Executive Director

Megan welcomed everyone for attending the inaugural meeting of the Long Day Care sector.

Introductions and Issues

Barb Langford, JSC Montessori Centres (SA) – owner/operator of 4 centres in SA, President Childcare Association Australia

Sara Brady, AMI 0-3 Training of Trainers Program (NSW) – 0-3 & 3-6 trained, started out by nannying, worked at CA Montessori Centre then a preschool. Has 3 children and is a parent and teacher at Forestville Montessori School.

Melissa Wray, Chancery Lane Montessori (SA) – started out in a normal long day care, then 12mths in a Montessori centre and would never go back. Has an interest in the accreditation process and promoting Montessori to the wider community.

Susan Reade, National Childcare Accreditation Council (NSW) – NCAC provides support to 9700 services. Previously worked in long day care, interested and excited to hear about Montessori and their challenges and successes with the accreditation.

Margie Pesu, Harmony Montessori Children's House (QLD) – 3-6 & 0-3 trained, experienced in normal day care, also Steiner and Reggio. Interested in the challenges to meld creative project work into Montessori.

Mariam Beatty, Harmony Montessori Children's House (QLD) – 30yrs in Montessori, studied in South Africa, worked in USA, ran a school in South Africa, worked in NZ, opened long day care in a USA school. Interested in providing emotional support to children and parents in different Montessori settings.

Amy Kirkham, AMI 3-6 Director of Training (VIC) – trainer for the Australian Montessori Teacher Education Foundation (AMTEF) AMI 3-6 training course in Melbourne. Interested in understanding the specific training needs for the long day care sector.

Jill Vizec, Kalker Montessori Centre (VIC) – interested in understanding more about long day care as the centre is considering providing this service.

Pam Staton, Inner Sydney Montessori School (NSW) – involved in Montessori for over 30yrs, 3-6 & 0-3 trained. There are 360 children at the school with 100 families in the PTP and Nido

programme. Involved in projects in Thailand and is on the Board of MAF. Is looking into the option of providing childcare at the school.

Kerri Steele, Karinya Montessori Children's House (QLD) – opened long day care centre recently, 16yrs experience in Montessori, previously worked in a childcare centre. Focused on excellence in Montessori long day care sector.

Cathy Swan, Inner Sydney Montessori School (NSW) – 7mths in Australia as principal of ISMS, AMI 3-6 Auxiliary Trainer, experience as Head of School in Chicago with long day care. Interested in Australian perspective and accreditation issues.

Rachel Walker, Southbank Montessori (WA) – opened a childcare centre in Perth and now runs a preschool. Interested in assisting people open new centres.

Ayesha Meer, Montessori Stepping Stones (WA) – originally worked in nursery schools in South Africa, then in Brunei, was an AMS trainer in Brunei. Now trying to understand about the accreditation requirements in Australia.

Rikke Durr Lindgren, Montessori Stepping Stones (WA) – originally worked in Denmark where they are very advanced in childcare philosophy, then worked at day care settings in Perth but was frustrated and wanted a place with a home or grandparent home environment. About to undertake their first accreditation.

Anna Standish & Elsa Sottile, Adelaide Montessori Early Learning Centre (SA) – setting up a centre and would like to open more centres in Adelaide, identified difficulties in finding staff, concerned about losing relationship with families if they open more centres. Undertaken difficult first accreditation.

Dianne Davis, Melbourne Montessori School (VIC) – was a mainstream educator, 9-12 trained, a classroom teacher for 8yrs, then principal at Plenty Valley Montessori School. Retired, but then asked to step in as principal at Melbourne for short term. Interested in teaching and mentoring future leaders. MMS interested in long day care.

Marlene Guclu, Montessori Marvels Preschool (VIC) – currently applying for full licensing of the centre and wanting to gain more insight from others in the group.

Ronali Weeratne, Oceania Montessori School (QLD) – worked in long day care, worked in 3-6 and set up 0-3. Challenge of how to do Montessori in a long day care setting, opened school for nearly a year, interested in accreditation process.

Jessica Rafton, Oceania Montessori School (QLD) – started working in the centre her daughter was in, then moved to another, Assistant to Ronali. Has found the biggest obstacle is the parents, most of them it is their first time leaving children in care, challenges teaching them about Montessori in the home environment. Wanting to learn about the accreditation – frustrated about the onerous paperwork and repetitiveness.

Debbie Warner, Brisbane Montessori School (QLD) – has children in Montessori and working as a Director in the school.

Steven Arnold, Brisbane Montessori School (QLD) – 0-12 programmes offered, the AMTEF AMI training centre is currently running a 3-6 at the school. They have a 0-3 programme with parents but are wanting a child only programme, interested in a parent centre, birthing classes. Has accreditation on Tuesday, issues with the school currently a building site. Currently undertaking 3-6 training and is 6-12 & 12-18 trained.

Vicki Ward, Building Futures Montessori (QLD) – originally a secondary teacher, trained in Montessori then opened centre in Wavell Heights, followed by a second centre in Forest Lake. Has a management consultancy RTO. Is encouraged that people are taking a strategic look at long day care.

Tammy Fraser, Building Futures Montessori (QLD) – working at a centre with Vicki, moved to centre after working in 3-6, then another as a Director. Also a resource developer for the RTO.

Bianca Reeding, CA Montessori Children's Centre (NSW) – worked in long day care for 16yrs, degree early childhood, AMI 0-3, council setting for 5yrs beforehand, Assistant then management for 11yrs. CA is a work based long day care for CA employees. If children need to be in care for 10hrs a day, then offer them the best environment, which is Montessori.

Emma Elegado, CA Montessori Children's Centre (NSW) – worked in the Nido programme, but now that her daughter is there has moved to working in the infant community. Being from the Philippines, she was familiar with Montessori. Most of the staff employed do not have Montessori so it is important to do in-house training with staff and parents and striving to keep the authenticity of Montessori. All day Montessori.

Sharon Glanville, Kotara Montessori Children's Centre (NSW) – owns Kotara in Newcastle and another non-Montessori day care, about to do accreditation at both. Very different between the two centres. Wants to establish networking connections. Interested in dispelling myths in the local community. Concerned that accreditation in a Montessori environment may just involve ticking boxes.

Melissa Cannon, Montessori Childcare Taringa (QLD) – worked in normal childcare, but has been interested in Montessori for a long time. Undertaking Montessori training. Also found that there were many myths in the community. Runs 15mth-2.5yr room and loves the independent nature of the children.

Bronwyn Marshall, Montessori Educational Child Care Centre (QLD) – holds a Cert III, however, a Diploma is now required to work in Qld. Frustrated with limitations in accreditation requirements.

Linda Klein, Montessori Educational Child Care Centre (QLD) – trained in Germany, heard about Montessori when someone worked with handicapped children and Montessori. Started Barrenjoey for 8yrs, moved into IT training, now in long day care Montessori. Difficulties with non-consistency of children in care and record keeping. Trainer at the centre in Cert III and Montessori.

Gloria Bainbrigge, Montessori Garden Early Learning and Childcare Centre (QLD) – originally a teacher for 18yrs, ran a kindy for 8yrs, then a Montessori centre for 27yrs. Long day care with 75 children per day. Problem with children coming inconsistently and with the amount of paperwork. Onerous accreditation requirements. Non recognition of Montessori qualifications. Full-time and part-time staff total 19 staff with many from overseas, with different Montessori training. Children come from 39 different cultures.

Janet Stania, Montessori Childcare Taringa (QLD) – hadn't heard of Montessori before owning Taringa, opened another centre last year.

Sandra Allen, Montessori Australia Foundation (NSW) – previous careers in customer service, hospitality and IT. Daughter in Montessori, then moved to the UK for 2 years and worked as the course administrator for the AMI training centre in London. Returned to Australia to work as Office Manager for MAF.

Christine Harrison, Montessori Australia Foundation (NSW) – came into Montessori when she was 3mths pregnant and was given a gift of a Montessori book by her husband. Started as a parent at Canberra Montessori School, then administrator, then principal for 11 years. School wasn't accredited. Working with government departments as part of her role as president MAF. Recently established the MAF Early Childhood Taskforce.

Megan Tyne, Montessori Australia Foundation (NSW) – also coming to Montessori by way of her children, she has been involved in Montessori for 25 years. Is the Executive Director of MAF, AMTEF and the Montessori Children's Foundation. Works as a project officer for AMI.

Authentic Montessori in Long Day Care – Challenges and Rewards

Barb Langford – slide presentation

Some of the Unique Elements of LDC

- Training of staff
- 52 weeks means children don't always take holidays
- High proportion of families getting child care assistance means that they are only allowed to have 42 days absent to receive the benefit
- Analogies from Maria Montessori's first Casa dei Bambini
- What are Montessorian's doing overseas? Do we have to reinvent the wheel?
 - In the USA, they don't have the same levels of regulation and they have much better funding
- Feeder schools pushing parents to start the children at 3 and 4 years taking away the 3-6 pre-school grouping
- Individual programming for children (expectations of accreditation) vs Montessori philosophy

Comments from the group included:

- Government agencies both state and federal do not understand the requirements and face their own issues with changing staff.
- Some have found that DEEWR are very committed and have found the relationship very productive.
- MAF are now on the national stakeholders reference group and involved in the national curriculum.
- MAF Early Learning Taskforce looking at EYLF and what it means for Montessori. Have looked at mapping Montessori with the EYLF and developed a diagram (copy provided).

Authentic Montessori

Vicki Ward - slide presentation

Comments from the group included:

- Suggestion to support transition transfers between Montessori programmes e.g. Waiving the bond
- AMI Digital – website with materials from 0-12 to be launched next year e.g. language cards, mobiles patterns
- AMTEF AMI 3-6 training course – block course format from July 2011 on Sunshine Coast in Queensland

Recent Experience

Melissa Wray, Director of Chancery Lane discussed issues around the time, money and staffing has gone into setting up a Montessori long day care centre including:

- Let go of staff that were not passionate in taking on Montessori
- Tried on different programmes including starting with one that met accreditation requirements and moving towards incorporating Montessori
- Communicated with both staff and parents that changes were coming to improve the programme
- Word of mouth enrolments only, no advertising required so far, waiting list. Many parents enrolled because of the long day care provision rather than the Montessori programme
- Educate parents about what the differences are in a Montessori setting e.g. Why there are no children's' paintings up on the wall
- Set aside time in the morning with the parents so they can have time to discuss their children – need to have enough staff for this.
- Goodbye cards to ensure that parents are in contact with staff as they leave with their children
- Website for better parent contact
- Staff must be qualified
- All staff do the programming together rather than a team leader
- Additional teacher in a classroom so do other activities such as parent interviews so as not to compromise staff on the floor
- Issues as an owner/operator especially expenditure on professional development, where the responsibility lies, risk etc.
- Universal access as applied in centres

Comments from the group included:

- even if you don't own the centre think of place as your own will assist with thinking about finances
- concerned that there may be centres having to interrupt the children's work cycle because of regulations
- also regulations and logistics which mean compromises on other aspects of the Montessori programme
- need to have discipline before freedom, have to have the prepared environment which has more challenges in a long day care setting. Need to have staff that understand this.
- NCAC point of view that every centre starts empty and wants to know what you brought in. Difference with Montessori is that we start off the centre full, with a rich curriculum, which is then added to.
- important to work in partnership with government, not in opposition. Inviting in the regional validators for orientation or professional development day.
- unfortunately you get different validators which you have to spend time educating – can we get national validators who have Montessori training? Need to have good news stories about the accreditation process.
- importance to not be fearful, but to learn about the process
- NCAC contacted MAF and Amy did a session with their validators to expose them to Montessori.
- would almost like to see more frequent informal style visits rather than a huge accreditation

Update on the National ECEC Agenda

Barb Langford – slide presentation

Creating a Nurturing Environment that Supports the Child's Daily Life

Sara Brady – slide presentation

Reading Recommendations:

Baby Moves by Marianne Hermsen-van Wanrooy, Baby Moves Publication

Active Baby, Healthy Brain by Margaret Sasse, The Experiment Publishing

National Childcare Accreditation Council

Susan Reade – General Manager Quality Assurance NCAC

- Making a Difference for Children book published by NCAC this year
- Australia is a world first to have a government funded quality assurance body
- NCAC will cease to exist at the end of next year
- The licensing will be under one body going forward, not NCAC and a state licensing body
- “New service” category also includes centres under new management
- Can choose not to participate in NCAC accreditation but you cannot receive CCB (in Qld you can't be licensed if you are not accredited). Going forward, to be licensed by the state, you would be required to be accredited.
- 70-80 validators across Australia, assessed on indicators of quality care using quality practices guides
- System has a prescriptive nature at the moment, new standards will be written from an outcome basis
- Criticism of the current system in focusing too much on the policies – need to include families and staff in their development and adoption of these policies
- Include in the self-assessment survey what you do at your centre and why you do it
- Note reasons why if there are gaps in the child's learning documentation
- Having a policy about the use and storage of potentially dangerous substances and how to manage any repercussion
- Policy for using knives in the classroom would be acceptable for managing the risk
- Electrical cords and hand washing a major contributor towards negative accreditation
- Templates on the MAF website for School/Centre Subscribers for policies and procedures pertaining to Montessori environments
- Templates on the NCAC website about what to include in all the required policies and procedures and how to develop them in your setting
- “Recognised authority” – Steven – is this MAF? Susan – would need to see their recommendation and where these were drawn from
- No requirement to force children to sleep
- Families are aware of the exclusion policy – need reminders
- During the validation, if something is marked unsatisfactory, the validator must provide a written explanation in their validation report. The centre can discuss their point of view with the validator, and also write this down on the validation report. They can also call up NCAC to speak with a childcare adviser about the issue, and can put it in writing as part of

the evaluation report. Should this not be resolved to satisfaction, the moderator can be called upon.

New System National Quality Standard and Rating Framework

- Outcomes based
- 7 quality areas, 23 standards (outcomes), 65 elements
- 5 rating levels – unsatisfactory, operating national quality, standard, high quality and excellent
- The body has yet to establish what is needed to support these elements and how to assess them
- Legislation and regulation being developed (firstly in Victoria, but then adopted by each state to have a national standard)
- Use of the term educator (also used in the EYLF)
- Developing a framework for out of school hours care
- Separate campuses likely to be assessed separately and given separate ratings
- How does the MAF Quality Assurance fit in – Amy and Susan have met and discussed this to ensure that the system dovetails. Will also work with the new body to ensure alignment. Also taking into consideration the national Montessori curriculum and EYLF. The ideal would be that if a Montessori centre is participating in the Montessori Quality Assurance programme and adopting the Montessori National Curriculum, then this would automatically provide them with either all a full or partial registration.
- As part of the Montessori Quality Assurance Programme, MAF want to include long day care specific mentors
- Early Childhood Australia member of state body, responsible for holding the forums
- Move towards record keeping in digital format – NCAC accept this but it is a new concept that some validators may not be fully aware of this and need training.
- New IT system to administer the quality assurance scheme

Practical Montessori Activities for Children Under Three

Pam Staton, NIDO and PTP Director, Inner Sydney Montessori School – slide presentation

Montessori EYLF and Documenting Montessori for Quality Assurance Audits

Amy Kirkham – slide presentation

Barb Langford – slide presentation

Vicki Ward – slide presentation

MAF Overview

Megan Tyne – slide presentation