



## Lady Gowrie Child Centre (Melb) Inc.

### Rethinking observation and program planning - a journey of change Angela Follacchio

Workplace Programs

Training

Bookshop & Library

Children's Program



## Traditional method of planning

- Written observations of children
- Interpretation of observations – predetermined ideas about development
- Limited input from child and family
- Individual program – deficit model
  - objectives
  - experiences
  - strategies
  - evaluation



## Why rethink traditional methods?

- Focus on developmental ages and stages and a segmented view of children
- Children had little involvement with what and how information was recorded and shared with their family
- Children's work not visible
- Little opportunity for reflection
- Foresaw the curriculum
- Individual focus of the child



## The journey of change

- Rethink and experiment with the ways in which we observe and document children's learning
- Consider ways of including children and family in decisions about what and how we document children's learning
- Explore ways to 'really listen' to the voice of each child and family
- Critique traditional approaches to observation and planning



## The journey of change - tools

- Pedagogical documentation
- Individual portfolios
- Technology: use of tape recorder, lap top and digital camera
- Group reflections
- Meetings
- Meaningful opportunities for children and families to contribute to the program



## The journey of change - these changes have:

- Increased the involvement of children and parents
- Given all children and families a voice
- Developed a socially and culturally meaningful program
- Recognised, considered and extended the children's interests and strengths
- Developed more meaningful and collaborative partnerships
- Provided an opportunity to experiment with different ways of documenting to make visible the children's work and learning



## The journey ahead

- Focus on individual portfolios – making learning visible
- Continuity across the centre
- Improved evaluation techniques
- Parent involvement
- Changes to planning tools
- Professional development



## Collaborative research



**2005**

LGCC began a collaborative research project with Monash University

Project title:

*Enhancing Curriculum and Pedagogy in Early Childhood Education*



## Aims of the project

- To investigate, develop and evaluate a program of high quality curriculum in the children's program at LGCC
- To identify ways in which aspects of this program can be shared with the early childhood community



## Key concepts underpinning the project

- The fundamental importance of *relationships* in the construction of new understandings and practices
- The development of *dispositions* towards teaching and learning in children and adults
- The need to be aware of the opportunities and constraints of the *early childhood setting*
- The importance of education and professional development in generating *new knowledge* about children's learning
- The role of *critical pedagogy* in early childhood practice and professional development



## What the project is not about

- Displacing the rich history and experience of LGCC
- Creating a new 'recipe' for how to 'do' curriculum – the model will be one of continuous reflection and development
- Imposing a particular way of thinking about teaching and learning – teachers need to be able to draw on many examples of theory and practice
- A 'fast fix' – the project acknowledges that meaningful change takes time and requires a focus on relationships



## Why think about early childhood curriculum and pedagogy in this way in 21st century settings?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Pre-determined ideas about development | ➔ | Understanding development as socially and culturally located |
| Child-centered programs                | ➔ | Family-centered programs                                     |
| Early childhood services as welfare    | ➔ | Early childhood services as care and education               |
| Transmission of old knowledge          | ➔ | Co-construction of new knowledge for new times               |