A short note from the E4kids team

How time flies - we are now wrapping up our second year of data collection!

The number of childcare services, kindergartens and schools participating in the E4Kids study in 2011 has grown significantly and the success of this study lies in the continuing support from the children and families, teachers, directors and principals who make up this study.

In 2010, we were able to visit 2,140 (86%) of the study children and in 2011 we visited 2,173 (84%). In 2010 we collected valuable survey information from more than 1,870 (75%) parents and guardians.

In 2010, 240 (80%) observations were made in childcare or school classrooms in the study. These fantastic rates have only been achieved through the active participation of children and families, teachers, directors and principals.

We hope you enjoy the break and we look forward to seeing you in the coming year.

Allie Taylor, Karen Thorpe

Which service or school will your child attend in 2012?

There are more than 2,600 children participating in the E4Kids study. In 2010 these children were located in 144 childcare services across Victoria and Queensland.

Since then many of these children have moved into their first year at school, kindergarten, another childcare service or other arrangements. Some children attend more than one service and some of the children have moved interstate or even internationally.

As E4Kids follows the study children to their new childcare services or schools this meant visiting up to 750 services in 2011. It has been a busy but exciting year for the team as we are getting a really detailed picture of the patterns of use in early education and childcare settings. The E4Kids team are now preparing for 2012. Thank you to those who have completed the 2011 Main Caregiver Survey and told us which service or school your child will attend in 2012. If we haven’t heard from you, one of our team will be in touch soon.

Survey Reminder

Thank you to all parents, guardians and teachers who have completed their 2011 surveys. These surveys provide rich and important information and we appreciate the time spent completing them.

If you haven’t yet had a chance to complete your 2011 survey we will be in touch in the coming weeks. The 2011 Director and Principal Survey will also be available soon.

If you have any questions please contact us - our details are on the back of this newsletter.
The E4Kids Research Bulletin: Did you know?

* The E4Kids study uses 10 main measures. These include direct measurement with individual study children, interaction measures amongst children, adult-child interaction, survey information from families and information from early childhood education and care services and schools.

* A study similar to the E4Kids study, “The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE)” is Europe's largest longitudinal investigation into the effects of preschool education on children's developmental outcomes (age 3-7 years). One of the findings of the EPPE Study was that the quality of preschool centres is directly related to better intellectual, social and behavioural development in children.

* Each year, Australia invests over $4.6 billion in early childhood education and care services. The question for government is how are these resources best used to maximise their value for young children and families?

If you would like to find out more, please download the first E4Kids Research Bulletin from our website www.e4kids.org.au/news

Activities4Kids

Developing writing skills

Drawing and colouring are examples of activities that are great for helping children develop writing skills. Some children however are reluctant to engage in these activities. For these children, it is far better to encourage them to participate in related activities that support the development of the hand and finger muscles needed to correctly hold and use pencils and scissors, rather than to force them to do writing activities before they are ready.

Such related activities might include;

- Picking up objects using oversized tongs or tweezers
- Activating and playing with wind-up toys
- Spinning small hand held tops
- Popping plastic bubble wrap with thumb and index fingers
- Drawing in the sand with a stick, feather or straw
- Using clothes pegs to help hang up clothes or pictures
- Using squeeze trigger containers

Adapted from “Fingergym™ Fine Motor Skills School Readiness Program” (Brook, Wagenfeld & Thompson, 2006)

We need to keep in touch with you throughout the year. If you are moving or any of your contact details are about to change, please let us know.

Email: e4-kids@unimelb.edu.au
Website: www.e4kids.org.au

Victoria
Phone: (+613) 9035 8515
Fax: (+613) 8344 0993

Queensland
Phone: (+617) 3138 8441
Fax: (+617) 3138 0486

Who am I?

My name is Cassandra Pattinson. I am a Fieldwork Manager for the E4Kids Queensland team.

What I like about E4Kids

I am very fortunate to be a part of the E4Kids study and there are many facets to my job and E4Kids that I enjoy. For example, I have been very privileged to work in Mt Isa — seeing the different challenges and opportunities that exist in that region has been incredible.

E4Kids has also given me a new insight and respect for teachers and group leaders in schools and child care settings, these people do the most amazing job and work so hard.

My happiest memory from school days...

I grew up in Glenden, a small Mining town in Queensland. One of my best memories was sleeping over at the school for our grade three camp. We ate “Toad in a Hole” (Cut the middle out of the bread, place an egg in the ‘hole’ and cook), slept in tents and woke up in the morning to hundreds of kangaroos in the surrounding bushlands of the school which we tried to sneak up on!