

# early childhood education council of nsw inc

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*This is the fourth newsletter of 2005 for the Early Childhood Education Council of NSW. Please refer any comments to the Editor, c/- PO Box 418 Leichhardt NSW 2040 [editor@ecec.asn.au](mailto:editor@ecec.asn.au)*

## Our Vision

The Early Childhood Education Council of NSW Inc. is a professional association promoting child centred practices through advocacy and professional development, informing on current trends in early childhood education and ensuring a high profile for early childhood issues.



### Christmas message for the president

From the ECEC I wish all members a very merry Christmas and a happy and safe holiday season.

In 2006 our efforts focused on the conference held on 28 October and we were rather neglectful of our other responsibilities. The conference was a great success and we hope to carry the momentum into 2007 which is our 25<sup>th</sup> year. I express the committee's appreciation for the work of the sub committee for all their efforts in developing the program for the conference.

The Early Childhood Education Council on NSW was formed by a group of early childhood educators who were known as Infants mistresses. This was at the time, twenty-five years ago, when primary schools became K-6 schools and teachers were expected to teach any grade, and the specialist expertise of these people began to be ignored. In order to continue to provide support for early childhood teachers this energetic group of women began to hold regular practical inservice sessions and gradually the informal group proposed the establishment of this organisation.

The Infants Mistress had responsibility for the Infants section of the school. They were able to be mentors and role models for many early childhood teachers. Unfortunately, over the past 10 years the role they served and the expertise they provided in the area of early

childhood education is not acknowledged and their expertise is being lost as many have retired. This is happening at a time when early childhood is beginning to gain importance on the national education agenda.

In NSW there are still some separate Infants schools. One of these is Russell Lea in Five Dock. Lesley Pike the principal since 1976 and is retiring. Lesley has very kindly written article about her very special school. We wish her the very best wishes for her retirement.

### Lesley Pike, Teaching Principal at Russell Lea Infants' School

Separate infants' schools were established in the 1930s and 40s so that young children did not have to travel great distances to their local school. My school, Russell Lea Infants' School, was established in 1931 to cater for the needs of the young children in the Drummoyne Municipality in their first years of schooling.



When I was appointed to this school in 1976 there were 43 separate infants' schools in

NSW. Now there are only 19 left. Russell Lea Infants' School is the largest separate infants' school in the state and the only one that has an Assistant Principal. Our students are drawn from a wide area within the City of Canada Bay. After attending Russell Lea Infants' School the Year 2 students go into Year 3 at many of our local schools. In 1976 there were 3 classes but, over the years, enrolments have increased and class sizes decreased so that there are now 7 classes.

Our parents and caregivers are committed to the philosophy that young children learn best in a nurturing and caring environment with teachers who specialise in early childhood education. Our whole school community believes that the educational and social benefits of attending a separate infants' school are many and these outweigh any reservations about the transition to Year 3.

Russell Lea Infants' School was built on farmland but now is set in beautiful grounds surrounded by native bush gardens and playing fields. The gardens are contained by log edgings with seating for the students. The children play among the trees and bushes, weed the gardens, plant trees, care about the wildlife and consequently develop a love for the environment. Picnic tables are situated under the trees and are used at lunchtime and also as an outdoor classroom.

There is a two-storey main building with classrooms and administration offices, an Assembly Hall, a modern library, a Cottage classroom, an OOSH Centre and a new toilet block.

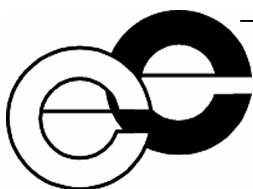
My classroom is situated immediately opposite the Principal's Office to make my dual role easier. The job of a Teaching Principal is a demanding one. Not only am I responsible for the administration and leadership of the school but I have also a full teaching program for my class. However, I consider that being a teacher 'at the coal-face' is a privilege and I have gained great satisfaction from my teaching and continue to do so. Teaching enables me as a Principal to better understand the changing role of classroom teachers and the demands, workloads and pressures placed upon them.

Over the years I have experienced many changes in education and, with the help of my staff, I have instigated innovative practices at Russell Lea. The school community has supported many of the changes which have included new teaching spaces and resources. Parent support through the P & C and the School Council has been an integral part of the success of the school and 'Parents in Partnership' has been foremost in the planning for the school.

I believe that a Principal needs to remain at a school for a number of years in order for the school community to benefit from the Principal's leadership. To 'make a difference' a Principal needs to grow with the community, learning from previous years, establishing relationships with families and local businesses, providing continuity and developing an ethos for the school. In consultation with students, parents and staff this becomes a way of life which is continually evaluated and therefore creates a vital school where equal importance is placed on the past and the present while looking to the future.

During my 30 years at Russell Lea Infants' School as Teaching Principal I have taught many young children and have been involved in the school-life of hundreds of students and their families. I love to hear news about my ex-students (their results at school, college and university – their new careers and partners). Many of them return every year to visit our School Fete; some write to me or phone me at school – they are successful, delightful and confident young people (the school still has a place in their hearts and minds!). I have reached the unique situation where I am teaching now the children of some of my ex-students – a truly wonderful and meaningful experience for me!

(This year at our recent 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations the P & C, on behalf of the school community, presented me with a plaque naming the new school library after me - to commemorate my 30th year as Principal at Russell Lea Infants' School! I was thrilled by the honour!)



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education council of nsw inc**

**CURRENT PUBLICATIONS**

**ABN: 40-452-650-361 – Not Registered for GST**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>		<b>Cost</b>
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	Developmental Play	\$10.00	
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	Higher Order Thinking Skills	\$10.00	
	Kindergarten Orientation Programs – revised edition	\$10.00	
	Patterns and Algebra	\$10.00	
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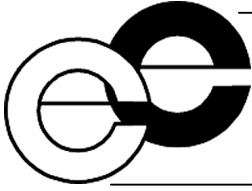
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# early childhood education council of nsw inc

ABN: 40452650361 – Not Registered for GST

## 2007 Membership Form

*(Privacy Statement: The data collected is for the purpose of Membership only and will not be disclosed to other parties.)*

Please indicate by ticking the appropriate boxes

New  **Renewal**  **and Membership No.** \_\_\_\_\_ (Not sure? Then leave blank)

### Individual Membership

\*Student Membership  \*Student No. \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

Ms/Mrs/Miss/Mr/Dr):- Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ Given Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address: No. \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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### School Membership (Remember to complete the contact person's name in the section above.)

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: No. \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb/Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please note school membership will be mailed to school address)*

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### Payment Details

Individual: \$50.00  School: \$100.00  Student: \$10.00

Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to cover the cost of my/our 2007 membership. (Current to March 2008)

Signature of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make cheque payable to ECEC and forward to** ECEC, Membership Secretary,  
PO Box 418 Leichhardt NSW 2040

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#### OFFICE USE ONLY

Rec: \_\_\_\_\_ Membership No: \_\_\_\_\_ Filed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Accepted by the management committee on \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

*Early Childhood Education of NSW inc No 4 December 2006 Newsletter*

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