Unpacking the complex challenges of professional practice in early childhood education
A collaborative plan for your ongoing professional learning

The inspiration

Our Thinker in Residence platform has drawn inspiration from the outstanding Thinkers program funded by the South Australian Government and now the Don Dunstan Foundation. As a ‘global first’, the program has examined a broad range of social challenges.

At APECC, our hope is to provide collaborative opportunities for the exploration of innovative and authentic approaches to practice change in early childhood education. We are particularly grateful to work that was undertaken in SA by Prof Carla Rinaldi in 2012 and beyond, which continues to motivate and influence the thinking and practice of many education professionals.

An overview

Walking alongside your leadership team, we will work towards a focused and long-term sustainable plan for quality improvement. Using a professional inquiry lens, which sits alongside children’s inquiries, our attention will be on critically reflective practices that support teachers and educators as researchers.

APECC has developed an organising framework called ‘planning for the possible’ that includes listening with intent, developing inquiries, seeing the bigger intentional teaching picture, documenting with purpose and examining the value of what we share with others. Our work with you is steadfastly centered on the notion of an intelligent curriculum.
Planning for the possible

Our work together begins with standing on the doorstep of your classroom/centre/school to examine what you do well and what you are challenged by in order to appreciate the foundation on which we will build.

Understanding the values you have, the community’s expectations, your aspirations as a team, what you wish to change and the image of child you currently hold are important influencers in setting the pace of our collaboration.

We look at clear reference points, both from our profession and from your own context, to consider what is expected of us so we make informed decisions about ‘where to next’.

Listening with intent is the key driver for decision-making and gives a sharper focus to what you are listening for (and with). We look at the lenses for listening that serve different purposes at different stages of your reflective planning. We explore how children listen as mediators and assessors of their own learning, your teaching and the environment being offered.

Seeking significance in what we hear, see and understand, from our shared experiences alongside children, assists in centering our practice and to start to consider potential professional inquires about teaching and learning.

Generating a professional inquiry from initial interpretations of teaching and learning we may begin to give shape to the planning framework. We are seeking to build our joint professional knowledge about children, childhood and intentional teaching from a lens critical for professional growth.

Curating an intentional context for teaching and learning includes the physical environment and the expectations for relationships between people, spaces and resources as vital to the success of both professional inquiry and children’s inquiries.

Documenting teaching and learning as evidence of, and a key driver for, professional decision-making and NOT as an onerous task is a big challenge for many. We seek to bring joy to our responsibility and accountability as documenters and to rethink the purpose, value and role of educational documentation.

Sharing teaching and learning is proposed as more than a display, social media upload or online platform. We will focus on the processes of teaching and learning and the process elements you believe have value, meaning and currency in influencing your community’s broader understanding of early childhood.

You have to use the talents you have because this is what your context is.

Sussana Mantovani
Who is Dr. Deborah Harcourt?

As a children’s advocate and professional practice thought leader, Deborah seeks to support and encourage the broader early childhood community to change its current version of itself. She trusts in the power of critical reflection as a unifying and practical way for teams of educators to make a positive change for themselves, children, families, colleagues and the broader community.

Through sustained shared thinking, Deborah believes there are enormous possibilities to reconfigure the way we see ourselves and the way the community sees us, to form authentic alliances with families, and importantly, influence the regulatory and policy environment in which we work. Within an educator and child inquiry framework, and working thinking in order to authentically lay claim to the notion of both children and teachers as researchers.

You will be carefully considering how, when and why you are sharing teaching and learning with children, families and the community. Your team conversations will be robust and challenging for all. Your thinker will stretch the team’s thinking in order to authentically lay claim to the notion of both children and teachers as researchers.

**Year/Tier one (beginners)**

As a team you might be ready to change but don't quite know where to start. This means we will work intensively together through as many sessions as is both financially and practically viable.

We take it very slowly at the beginning and guide the team through each step of planning for the possible, leaving nobody behind in the process.

**Year/Tier two (on the way)**

As a team you might have made a start on inquiries (alone or with our Thinker) but have become a bit uncertain – it does take time and practice to refine what works for you.

At this stage we focus a lot on critical reflection and use it as a tool for professional conversations about practice, with particular attention on building the capacity of the educational leadership.

**Year/Tier three (nearly there)**

As a team you are well on your way but now wish to give greater emphasis to the lens of professional inquiry and seek greater depth to children’s inquiries.

You will be carefully considering how, when and why you are sharing teaching and learning with children, families and the community.

Within an educator and child inquiry framework, and working thinking in order to authentically lay claim to the notion of both children and teachers as researchers.
Our website has additional information including:

- Suggested fee structures
- Exclusive access to our learning management system (LMS)
- Suggested residency plans
- Booking your free discussion meeting
- Testimonials from current clients
- Free APECC membership with access to all our social media platforms and podcasts

Excited?

Contact us today to discuss your team’s aspirations

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