

Address by

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THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND HOW WE CAN ALL ADVOCATE FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Mr Barry Elvish, Chief Executive Officer of the Creche and Kindergarten Association and Early Childhood Advocates...

Thank you for inviting me to speak with you this morning. I have been asked me to address two questions:

What is the role of the Commission for Children and Young People, and how can we all advocate for young children?

As professionals in the area of early childhood education and care, I am sure you are abundantly aware that the early years make a crucial difference both to the child, and to the adult they become.

You may also be aware that in State, national and international arenas, early childhood issues are attracting unprecedented attention politicians, social commentators and rights activists, criminologists, scientists, health professionals and, of course, educational researchers and practitioners.

This attention in part reflects the fact that ‘the past 10 to 15 years have seen an explosion of research’ⁱ in the neurobiological, behavioural and social sciences around early childhood.

As stated by the authors of an influential new report on early childhood development from the United States:

*We now know that what happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides an indelible blueprint for adult well being, but because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows.*ⁱⁱ

To a large degree, the attention focussed on early childhood issues also reflects a growing realisation of the costs, both social and economic, of failing to prevent the adverse outcomes of damaging early childhood experiences.

Last year, a working group advising the Prime Minister’s Science, Engineering and Innovation Council on child developmental health and well being in Australia painted this grim scenarioⁱⁱⁱ:

Recent scientific advances ... have demonstrated the importance of early life experiences on brain development, health and social outcomes throughout life.

Measures of developmental health and well being of Australian children and young people demonstrate a significant deterioration in a number of key indicators.

The cost burden of these adverse outcomes is enormous and increases with time. Reversal of these trends is essential for the continued cohesion of our social fabric and the wealth of the nation.

In more positive terms, the Queensland Government's proposal to trial full-time prep school in 50 schools around the state through its *Preparing for School*^{iv} program in 2003 and 2004 is underpinned by the argument that:

'High quality early education gives people more opportunities in their lives and therefore they have a greater capacity to contribute to our State's social and economic success.'^v

The Commonwealth Government and various state governments' recent allocation of funds to projects such as the National Longitudinal Survey of Australian Children (LSAC) signals their growing recognition of the significance of the early years.

In a proactive move, the Queensland Government has allocated \$100 000 dollars a year for four years to the Commission for Children and Young People, for activities which will improve knowledge about the early years of childhood and enhance policy and practice.

As a first step towards profiling children and young people in Queensland, a draft report - *Children and Young People in Queensland: A snapshot* – has been produced.

This document aims to highlight the available data that *can* provide indicators of the levels of well-being of our children and young people, as well as pointing to data not currently available that *could* provide such indications.

This report should be a useful resource for all organisations engaged in monitoring and assisting the wellbeing of children and young people throughout the state.

From a global perspective, the OECD reports that current research is impacting on governmental approaches, and that in all twelve countries taking part in their most recent review 'the education and care of young children is firmly on the national policy agendas'^{vi}.

As Commissioner for Children and Young People I believe that nurturing, protecting and ensuring the health and well being our children is a responsibility we all share, whether as parents, professionals working in this area, public administrators or simply as members of the community.

The challenges are significant – and the price of failure is high.

As early childhood educators and carers, you are in a unique position to help both children and their parents. I would like to commend your focus today on advocacy for young children.

I also welcome the opportunity to tell you about the Commission's role, to share some of my insights into the early childhood field, and to suggest ways in which you can advocate for young children.

You may be aware that the *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000* was proclaimed in February last year. It provided for the re-establishment of the Queensland Children's Commission with a broadened scope, functions and powers. The new Commission promotes and protects the rights, interests and well being of all Queenslanders under 18 years of age.

The *Commission for Children and Young People Act 2000* provides for the most multi-functional and empowered Children's Commission in the world. It specifically acknowledges the rights of children and young people and embodies aspects of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in its overarching principles.

This legislation empowers the Commission to make a difference in the lives of Queensland children and young people, particularly those who are most disadvantaged.

Under the provisions of the Act, the Commission is an independent statutory body attached to the Premier's portfolio. It advocates for the rights, interests and well being of all Queenslanders under 18 years of age.

It also:

- administers a state-wide community visitor program
- receives, seeks to resolve and investigates complaints about the delivery of services to children and young people in care
- establishes youth and other expert advisory committees to advise the Commission about specific issues
- monitors and reviews laws, policies and practices relating to or affecting children and young people
- conducts and coordinates research into issues affecting children and young people, and
- administers employment screening for people in child-related employment.

The new Act is unique, as it provides the Commission with both ombudsman and advocacy functions.

To more precisely define the concept of advocacy, I would like to quote from a New South Wales Standing Committee report^{vii} - 'Social Issues Inquiry into Children's Advocacy':

'Advocacy for children is about systems and individuals recognising the rights and needs of all children and young people and responding to those rights and needs. It also involves allowing children and young people to have a say in decisions that are likely to affect them.'

Children's advocacy is not about undermining the role of parents and families, nor is it about denying children the fact of childhood and their need for protection.'

It is about taking a proactive approach to ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential as human beings...'

This definition of advocacy is a useful framework to illustrate the types of advocacy undertaken by the Commission:

Systemic advocacy – A major part of our role is to provide information to government departments and community agencies that deliver services to children and young people.

Our Community Visitors monitor standards state wide in residential facilities including detention centres, mental health services and those for children and young people, and provide independent reports pinpointing both good practice and areas needing attention.

The Commission also conducts and coordinates research on issues impacting on children and young people. We recently co-sponsored forums with peak academic, health and community organisations, involving Canadian child health expert, Professor Clyde Hertzmann, to focus attention on the economic logic of investing in the early years of life.

I frequently use this slide in advocating for investment in early childhood development at the systemic level. I particularly encourage service providers to develop mechanisms to enable children and young people to participate in decision-making, and play an active advocacy role on working groups, committees and councils such as the Child Care Forum and Child Protection Council.

The Commission's 'working with children' check involves screening all people working in child-related employment, including volunteers, to ensure they have not committed an offence that would make them unsuitable to work with children and young people.

Individual/representative advocacy - Any child or young person, or an adult acting on their behalf, can express a concern or grievance to the Commission about children's services or issues such as accommodation, health, education, transport, justice, or financial support.

Many issues are resolved through consultation and mediation. The Commission may exercise its formal advocacy function when internal complaint resolution has been exhausted.

Underpinning our advocacy role is a commitment to adopt work practices that ensure the Commission is accessible to children and young people, and to be sensitive to ethnic or cultural identity and values, particularly of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Parental advocacy - The Commission recognises that the family has primary responsibility for a child's upbringing and development and should be supported in that

role. The recent, very successful Focus on Fathering forum is an example of our proactive advocacy for the vital role of parenting.

Self/peer advocacy - It is important the Commission promotes our capacity to advocate for children and young people on a wide range of issues.

To do this, we listen to, and seriously consider, the concerns, views and wishes of children and young people.

We also promote and participate in child-friendly community activities and make strategic use of media opportunities on issues that are a priority for children and young people.

Partnerships with universities and groups such as the Creche and Kindergarten Association are valuable avenues for promoting the Commission's role.

Citizen/Voluntary advocacy - Like many of you, the staff of the Commission is actively involved in community services and groups. An initiative we introduced last year – the International Year of the Volunteer – gave staff the opportunity to do voluntary work for up to two weeks a year during working hours. We saw this as enhancing their professional knowledge while giving something back to the community.

As Commissioner for Children and Young People, the recurring focus of my interaction with Queenslanders, and in national and international forums, is the importance of the early years and provision of quality services to our youngest citizens and their families.

I am also the Queensland director for NIFTeY, the National Investment for the Early Years. The NIFTeY initiative has brought together policy makers, academics and practitioners in medical, educational, health and other welfare fields. NIFTeY's gathers and disseminates information, acts as a knowledge broker, networks and advocates to advance the health, development and well being of Australian children, particularly the most disadvantaged.

We are lobbying members of parliament to work together at all levels of government and across all sectors, consulting with parents and the community to develop a National Agenda for Australian Children.

NIFTeY argues that 'concerted...responses are needed to address the growing crisis affecting the health and well being of Australia's children^{viii}.' I thoroughly support this direction and believe we need to look at what countries like Canada^{ix} and Ireland^x have done to develop their National Children's Strategies to determine how we can be as inclusive as possible in formulating Australia's vision.

You may ask why there is such a sense of urgency to improve the experiences and outcomes of Australia's young children and their families. What is the current situation? And what are the implications for you as early childhood professionals?

I would like to outline some perspectives, issues and challenges that I see as significant features in the landscape of early childhood development today. I will add my own form of pragmatic idealism (arising from my previous life in education) to the analytical

perspective of researchers, the reformist perspective of community workers and activists, and the economic rationalist view of policy makers, to ask what works? How can we make a difference?

What do young children need in order to thrive? On the front door of the Commission, we have a poster that was sent to us entitled, The 10 things children need most.

It lists:

- The basics: food, clothing, warmth, shelter – and love
- To feel safe and secure
- To be hugged and cuddled
- Frequent smiles
- Praise and encouragement
- Talking
- Listening
- New experiences
- Respect for their feelings
- Your time and care

You might noticed there is not a play station, mobile phone or child's credit card amongst them. While I do not think this list is exhaustive of all the things children need, it is not a bad start.

Some things I would add would be good role models, peer acceptance, self-confidence and the need for play and physical activity.

These needs it into the four categories of rights enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child^{xi}:

- The right to survival
- The right to develop to the fullest
- The right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, and
- The right to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

Each of these rights is inherent to human dignity and harmonious development of every child. Children's rights and needs are essentially timeless: they do not change with fashion nor vary from place to place.

A concern I have is that the rapid technological and social change of the past few decades has had an impact on children, biologically, socially and emotionally, that we are sometimes slow to recognise.

For example, Eric Jensen, in his book, *Teaching with the brain in mind*, asks: 'Are Kids Today Biologically Different Than They Were 30 years Ago?'^{xii}

He identifies a number of influences to support his suggestion that we at least need to look at the issue. He says that compared with 30 years ago, children now experience:

- Fewer natural foods and more additives
- More exposure to drugs and medications
- Less mobility through car travel and seat restraints
- More exposure to electronically mediated stimulation

- Commercialisation of childhood — children as consumers
- More single parent households, and
- Less early motor stimulation from swings, see-saws, merry-go-rounds because of safety concerns.

What do these changes mean to you as educators? How do the children you work with now have different experiences and competencies from children even a decade ago?

I am concerned that rapid changes to the way we live and the way the world operates will result in an excessive concentration of certain types of experiences and activities, and a gradual but powerful limiting of how children experience the world in other ways.

In the process, many valuable learning experiences and developmental processes that occurred naturally in the social and physical environment in the past tend to be taken for granted, and could be lost.

We already have examples of this with the skewing towards indoor, electronic, sedentary and solitary play, and increasing numbers of overweight and obese children.

Is this the emergence of the 'mouse potato' – the on-line, wired generation's version of the couch potato - with some schools having to teach children to be physically active, and how to play?

With prolonged playing of computer games goes a loss of socialisation and communication skills. We need to consider the effects of substituting a local community and friends with a cyber-community, the diminished sensory experiences that indoor electronic play provides, and the effect of violence and persistent role-playing.

I am also concerned about some of the less identified effects of change on personal and social development. For example, what replaces the sense of independence that a child used to derive from walking to school? Or the sense of contributing derived by watering a neighbour's garden when they were sick, or the sense of community that came with being able to name every household in the street?

I ask you to recall what you did as a child that your children, or the children you work with, can no longer do, and determine what needs - neurological, physical, emotional or social - those activities fulfilled. Are there substitute activities that a child can do nowadays that would serve the same purposes?

I am not suggesting that there are not, and sometimes those activities are much more interesting than those in the past. I am not attempting to hark back to a 'golden age' that never really existed, but to query whether there are needs and experiences that may not be adequately met because of changes to the way we live.

For you as educators, one of the key influences to consider is the impact of computer use on children. We do not yet fully understand the physical, cognitive or social consequences for children individually, or the evolutionary effects on children over time. What we do know is that computers have profoundly changed childhood experiences over the last decade.

Queensland academic, Dale Spender, has identified behavioural and cultural changes that she argues have resulted from computer use and characterise children of the information age.

She argues that by school age, children operate in two worlds – dependent and passive, in a print dominated environment; and fearless, independent and confident manipulators of the digital environment.

Characteristics of the dependent passive world ^{xiii} are:

- sit still
- concentrate
- disciplined eye movement
- requires memory retention
- ability to follow a linear argument (usually someone else's)
- reduce meaning
- fosters a particular and ordered world view
- cause and effect
- beginning and end

Characteristics of the fearless, independent, and confident world ^{xiv} are:

- developing rapid hand-eye coordination
- encompassing eye movement
- mental agility to make rapid connections
 - ability to organise information
- deal with the absence of ending
- access rather than memorise
- put a 'spin' on information rather than reduce its meaning

Spender even claims that the current epidemic of Attention Deficit Disorder is a measure of this cultural shift ^{xv}. These changes impact on children across the socio-economic spectrum.

The challenge for educators is to recognise the effects that Spender has identified, to identify the deficits and opportunities resulting from these changes, and to encourage activities that help compensate for deficits while exploiting the gains so children develop fully.

As I mentioned earlier, grave concern about the need for radical attention to early childhood is currently generating a rare consensus across governments and professional and community groups.

Despite Australia's increasing wealth and generally high level of education, many children are being raised in what has been called a 'toxic environment' that jeopardises their development ^{xvi} and contributes to increasing health and social problems.

We now know that important areas of brain development occurring in the first few years of life depend on the quality of an infant's environment ^{xvii}. We also know that cumulative 'risk factors' such as parental stresses, socio-economic disadvantage, family

instability and lack of social support^{xviii} make young children vulnerable to developmental problems.

In addition, we know that patterns of behaviour and emotional responses set in the early years are difficult to change or make up for in other ways. Health and social problems have been linked to family adversity^{xix} in children's early years.

These include:

- obesity
- eating disorders
- juvenile crime
- asthma and suicide - which have trebled over the last 30 years^{xx}
- mental health problems
- learning disabilities
- school dropout and truancy
- illicit drug and alcohol use
- aggressive behaviours, and violence^{xxi}.

Other affluent countries have experienced similar trends, prompting intensified research and longitudinal studies^{xxii}. Several countries, notably Canada, Ireland and the UK, have created programs to minimise the risk factors that make children vulnerable to developmental problems, and to promote the protective factors that help them adjust to stresses^{xxiii}. The logic is that greater investments in early childhood programs not only benefit children, but save governments money by reducing welfare payments, increasing tax revenues and decreasing criminal justice system costs. (The total estimated cost of crime in Australia is over four percent of Gross Domestic Product, or around \$1,000 per person.^{xxiv})

In other words, successful intervention at an early age is a cost-effective preventative strategy which results in improved outcomes for children, their families, and ultimately, for communities^{xxv}.

I won't go into the details of early intervention programs here, but we believe the key features of successful programs^{xxvi} include:

- well designed and fairly intense home visiting schemes for mothers and families with babies
- parent training
- early detection of problems
- specialist services, and
- quality childcare and preschool.

In the United States, a Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development (USA) evaluated current research in this field. I would like to focus on some of their conclusions as an overview of early childhood issues and challenges.^{xxvii}

From birth to age 5, children rapidly develop foundational capabilities on which subsequent development builds. In addition to linguistic and cognitive gains, they show dramatic progress in their emotional, social, regulatory and moral capacities. All these critical dimensions of early development are intertwined, and each requires focused attention. Striking differences in what children know and can do are evident well before

they enter kindergarten. These differences are strongly associated with social and economic circumstances, and influence subsequent academic performance. Children grow and thrive on close and dependable relationships that provide love and nurturing, security, responsive interaction and encouragement for exploration. The effect of childcare on development depends on its safety, the opportunities it provides for nurturing and stable relationships, and whether it provides a linguistically and cognitively rich environment.

Early childhood program models that deliver interventions have been shown to influence the developmental pathways of children threatened by socio-economic disadvantage, family disruption or disability. The elements of early intervention programs that enhance social and emotional development are just as important as the components that enhance linguistic and cognitive competence.

I see these conclusions as underscoring the enormous importance and value of the work you do. They also highlight the need for young children – and their families - to have knowledgeable people like you advocating as individuals, staff members and collectively, as a professional association.

First, in your everyday role, you can provide children with care that is warm, understanding and supportive, keeping in mind that, for some children, your care is the most consistent they receive. Studies^{xxviii} have shown that many 'high risk' children, such as those exposed to chronic family adversity from a young age, do not develop intractable problems.

The crucial factor in such children's resilience has been the 'presence of a competent, stable caregiver attuned to the child's needs.' Somebody, somewhere, provided them with love and support, giving them a personal sense of self worth and the courage to redefine themselves beyond their experience of abuse. The level of acceptance and respect you show children can go a long way to improving their sense of their own worth and belief in themselves.

Secondly, you can use a range of teaching strategies in an environment rich with opportunities and experiences that promote a child's development and understanding. Earlier, I spoke of the social and technological changes impacting on children's experiences of the world, and some of the challenges these changes present to you as educators. I note that today's workshops indicate some of the ways in which you are responding to such challenges. The workshop themes and strategies – including language and social skills development, music, puppetry and books, helping children cope with death and loss, and harnessing the riches offered by media and technology – recognise both the timelessness of children's needs and the demands of a constantly changing society.

Thirdly, an important part of advocating for children and young people is to listen to their views, to do what one research project^{xxix} refers to as 'treating children as experts in their own lives'. You have an important role in helping children develop an understanding of their rights and responsibilities. I am concerned that children and young people are remarkably silent in discussions on major decisions that affect the quality of their lives.

We need to listen to children and young people, think more about what they need and take explicit steps with and for them.

Tackling the challenge of understanding the views of children under five, two London University researchers gave children cameras and asked them to take pictures of 'important things.'

The children took the researchers on tours of the nursery and drew maps of their surroundings. Along with impressions supplied by parents and nursery staff, these formed a mosaic, which revealed each child's priorities and impressions of nursery life.

The children's priorities were:

- friends and changing friendships, including relationships with important adults and siblings
- favourite spaces including 'hidden' spaces outside
- conflict and how it is dealt with by adults
- memories of important people who have left and aspirations about the future.

Closer to home, the Commission recently held a series of forums involving children and young people, in association with CHOGM. Asked what a 'child and youth friendly community' would mean, those involved spoke of 'a place where we . . .^{xxx}

- can enjoy the freedom of childhood
- have opportunities to succeed
- can get help from others if we fail
- are given choices
- are not hurt
- have a say, are listened to, taken seriously, and
- are not discriminated against or stereotyped on the basis of age.

A fourth way of advocating for young children involves your partnerships with parents and the community. As individuals and staff, your behaviour and the way in which you communicate with children provide parents with appropriate role models. Each time you discuss an issue with a parent, you increase their bank of parenting knowledge and skills.

Each time you validate their parenting behaviour, you increase their confidence and sense of self-efficacy; and each time you make them feel welcome or seek their opinion or support, you draw them a little more into the community of your Centre. Viewing families as partners impacts on the way parents feel about themselves and their capacity to parent, which, in turn, has an impact on the way they interact with, and parent their child.

I cannot emphasise enough the value of your working and consulting with families, both individually and through parent groups. Working with families and parent groups means that a Centre is working with the local community, with a greater understanding of local issues and pressures that those families face. This means you can develop programs more responsive to the cultural backgrounds, needs and circumstances of the children in your community. Just as a consistent, supportive relationship can build resilience in an individual child, there is growing support for adopting a 'strengths-

based' or 'asset-building' approach to working with families and communities, recognising that all families have strengths and capabilities.

'A focus on strengths does not deny shortcomings - it suggests that focusing on the shortcomings is often not a helpful way in which to address them.'^{xxxix} My own experience and contact with parents gives me a sense that people are concerned about being good parents. Even 'bad' parents have that concern, and we need to respect and support them.

I know that extra involvement with parents and families is time consuming and can be demanding. I recognise that you are not remunerated for these additional services. But I also know that each time somebody goes out of their way to strengthen a family, the children ultimately benefit. For this reason, I thank you for what you do, and encourage you to continue providing that extra care and attention, information and support, and that extra sense of community you give to children and their families, particularly the most vulnerable.

I would like to add a fifth form of advocacy, and that is active involvement in professional associations and networks. Keeping abreast of the continually expanding knowledge in any profession can be daunting. In the current climate, early childhood development is a 'hot topic', offering both opportunities and challenges. For example, you have an opportunity to contribute your views, perhaps even participate in a trial program, in the Preparing for School trials being proposed by the Queensland Government.

A wealth of information and interactive forums are available through traditional models of study, seminars like this one, and also online. You may be aware of the Early Childhood Connections website, which aims 'to build a network of professional organisations, groups and individuals that share the vision of the early childhood years.'^{xxxix}

The Australian Early Childhood Education On Line mailing list (AECEOL), established by the University of Southern Queensland, claims to be 'the first Australian on line discussion group for early childhood professionals..., a global forum for information, discussion, new ideas and issues relating to early childhood [with a] focus on Australian issues and contexts'^{xxxix}.

I strongly encourage you to forge both live and virtual links with your fellow early childhood practitioners, to generate your own research and development projects, to evaluate your programs and to share your learning and your successes. I am sure you will be able to add to my suggestions, perhaps using the framework of Systemic, Individual, Parental, Self/peer and Citizen/voluntary advocacy to brainstorm further strategies enabling you to advocate for young children.

I am convinced that we need a national dialogue to develop a shared vision for all Australia's children and young people, and a plan for concerted action to ensure that vision becomes a reality. At the Commission for Children and Young People, we are committed to helping progress this goal through our advocacy, research and monitoring roles.

At the grass roots level, we need you to be:

- informed, committed early childhood practitioners who listen to and support children,
- work individually and collectively with parents and the community, and
- contribute your professional wisdom to what is becoming a major national agenda.

Our children deserve no less.

ⁱⁱ Bagnall, D. 2002, Kidstakes, *The Bulletin*, January 15, 2002, p.18.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Adams (eds) Board on Children, Youth and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

^{iv} Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council 2001, *Child Developmental Health and Well Being into the 21st Century*, Paper prepared by an independent working group for the seventh meeting – 28 June 2001, p.1.

^v The State of Queensland, Department of the Premier and Cabinet, March 2002. *Queensland the Smart State – Education and Training Reforms for the Future*, Part 1 Getting Ready for School, Part 1, p.3

^{vi} Ibid, Part 1, p.1.

^{vii} OECD 2000, *Starting Strong – Early childhood education and care*, Paris: OECD Publications, p. 45

^{viii} New South Wales Standing Committee on 'Social Issues Inquiry into Children's Advocacy' Report No. 10, September 1996.

^{ix} National Investment for the Early Years, Australia, Ltd., http://www.niftey.cyh.com/web_pages/objective/objectives_frame.htm, website accessed 18 March 2002.

^x Canada's Federal, Provincial and Territorial Governments 2000, *Public Report: Public Dialogue on the National Children's Agenda Developing a Shared Vision*, [Online] Available: http://socialunion.gc.ca/nca/June21-2000/english/index_e.html, accessed 26 September 2001.

^{xi} The National Children's Strategy 2000, *The National Children's Strategy: Our Children, Their Lives*, Dublin: The Stationery Office.

^{xii} UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child, <http://www.unicef.org.cr.introduction.htm>, accessed 25 February 2002.

^{xiii} Jensen, E. 1998, *Teaching with the Brain in Mind*, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Alexandria, p.18.

^{xiv} Spender, D. 2000, in an interview with, Bagnall, D. 2000, Born to be wired, *the Bulletin*, August 15, 2000, 28-29.

^{xv} Spender, D. 2000, in an interview with, Bagnall, D. 2000, Born to be wired, *the Bulletin*, August 15, 2000, 28-29.

^{xvi} Spender, D. 2000, in an interview with, Bagnall, D. 2000, Born to be wired, *the Bulletin*, August 15, 2000, p.26.

^{xvii} Bagnall, D. 2002, Kidstakes, *The Bulletin*, January 15, 2002, quote attributed to Fiona Stanley, Director of Institute for Child Health and Research, West Australia, p.20.

^{xviii} Health Canada 1998, Voices for Children – Fact Sheet # 10, *Investing in Children*,

<http://www.voices4children.org.factsheet/factsheet10.htm>, accessed 21 September 1999, p.1.

^{xix} Department of Family and Community Services 2000, *A Review of the Early Childhood Literature*, The Centre for Community and Child Health, background paper for the National Families Strategy, February, p. 10.

^{xx} Department of Family and Community Services 2000, *A Review of the Early Childhood Literature*, The Centre for Community and Child Health, background paper for the National Families Strategy, February 2000, p.5.

^{xxi} Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council, 2001, *Child Developmental Health and Well Being into the 21st Century*, Paper prepared by an independent working group for the seventh meeting – 28 June 2001, p.2.

^{xxii} Bagnall, D. 2002, Kidstakes, *The Bulletin*, January 15, 2002, p.20.

^{xxiii} Ibid, pp. 4-6.

^{xxiv} Health Canada 1998, Voices for Children – Fact Sheet # 10, *Investing in Children*,

<http://www.voices4children.org.factsheet/factsheet10.htm>, accessed 21 September 1999, pp. 2-3.

^{xxv} Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council, 2001, *Child Developmental Health and Well Being into the 21st Century*, Paper prepared by an independent working group for the seventh meeting – 28 June 2001, p.13.

^{xxvi} The Developmental Crime Prevention Consortium, 1998, *Pathways to Prevention: Developmental and Early Intervention Approaches to Crime in Australia*. A Report for the National Campaign Against Violence & Crime and the National Anti-Crime Strategy, p. ix.

^{xxvii} Department of Family and Community Services 2000, *A Review of the Early Childhood Literature*, The Centre for Community and Child Health, background paper for the National Families Strategy, February 2000, pp. 1-2.

^{xxviii} National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2000, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Adams (eds) Board on Children, Youth and Families, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, pp. 5-11.

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^{xxix} Institute of Education, University of London 2001, Understanding What Matters to Young Children, *Listening to young children: the mosaic approach*, Press release 23 March 2001, <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/media/r0010323.htm> accessed 25 February 2002.

^{xxx} Commission for Children and Young People 2002, *Blueprint for a child and youth friendly Commonwealth*, Queensland Government, March 2002. p.2.

^{xxxi} Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council 2001, *Child Developmental Health and Well Being Into the 21st Century*, Paper prepared by an independent working group for the seventh meeting – 28 June 2001, p.18, citing Scott & O'Neill 1996: xiii - Reference not available.

^{xxxii} Early Childhood Connections website <http://www.econnections.com.au>, Accessed 18 March 2002.

^{xxxiii} Australian Early Childhood Association, Discussion Group, <http://www.aeca.com.au/discussion.html> accessed 18 March, 2002.