

Inclusion Ready News

Issue 7 – 7 October 2021



IN THIS ISSUE

This is our last newsletter for 2021, a year that completely turned our world upside-down *again* and one we're sure some of us would rather forget. But before you do wipe it from your minds, please take time to reflect on how remarkable you and your teams have been during this time.

Your jobs were completely redefined for a second time and many of you worked through extremely uncertain and stressful circumstances, often going 'above and beyond' to make sure your preschool children and families stayed connected and safe while you continued to provide quality, inclusive early childhood education. You are amazing!

In this issue we take a look at some new resources we have added to the Inclusion Gateway website (www.kudisabilityinclusion.com.au), including the wonderful ideas that many of you shared about how you are keeping in touch with your families throughout lockdown. We also share some ideas regarding transition to school for children with disabilities and preschool orientation during COVID restrictions. Additionally, we update you on our upcoming term 4 webinars, new resources, Disability and Inclusion Program (DIP) funding cut off dates and remind you of the ways in which your Preschool Inclusion Consultants can help you even though we can't visit just yet.

We appreciate your feedback

In December this year, the contract for the Sector Capacity Building Program will be going to tender. Your feedback on the program would be really helpful as we prepare our submission. We'd love to know what you value about the KU Sector Capacity Building Program, as well as what you would like to see in the future.

Please use the below link to answer two quick questions. Thank you for your time and feedback.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3LPTGGN>

What's new on the Inclusion Gateway website

The feedback regarding KU's Inclusion Gateway website has been fabulous. Thank you! We are continuously improving the site and adding new resources, fact sheets, professional development and articles. It's the one-stop-shop for all things "inclusion". Make sure you pop by and view some of our most recent additions:

New pages

Supporting families

A page with everything you need to know about working sensitively in partnership with families when a child has developmental differences:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/finding-help/supporting-families>

Understanding and supporting families using the 'Stages of Change' framework:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/finding-help/supporting-families/understanding-the-stages-of-change>

News and articles

Come to this new page for all our latest news and articles about inclusion:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/professional-learning/news-and-articles>

Read about gifted young children and twice-exceptionality here:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/professional-learning/news-and-articles/giftedness-and-twice-exceptionality>.

Stay tuned for the recording of the webinar we had on this subject to be posted on the Professional Learning page.

Take a look at some of the fantastic ideas shared by some preschools on the ways in which they are keeping in touch with their community during lockdown:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/professional-learning/news-and-articles/keeping-in-touch-during-lockdown>

New fact sheets and resources

School Exemption fact sheet – Useful information for preschools to know when families are applying for a school exemption: <https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/school-exemption-fact-sheet>

Consent to communicate with external professionals resource – A template to make documenting families' consent for information sharing between stakeholders quick and easy:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/consent-to-communicate-with-external-professionals>

Working with Preschools - Information for therapists – Information sheet for therapists outlining the way preschools work inclusively with children and how visiting therapists and educators can work together:

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/working-with-preschools-information-for-therapists>

New webinar recordings

Exploring the Pyramid model to increase social emotional competencies in young children and prevent challenging behaviour

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/exploring-the-pyramid-model-to-increase-social-emotional-competencies-in-young-children-and-prevent-challenging-behaviour>

Trauma - Impacts on development and strategies for educators

<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/trauma-impacts-and-strategies>

Upcoming term 4 professional development

Coming Soon: Free Live Webinar

Presented by Dr Kathy Cologon, Senior Lecturer in Inclusive Education, Macquarie University School of Education
Tuesday 12 October 2021, 4:30pm-5:45pm

More information and register here

In this webinar, Kathy will explore important considerations for creating a culture of inclusion within preschool settings. In doing so, Kathy will identify important facilitators of, and barriers to, genuine inclusion. Drawing on research, Kathy will offer theoretical tools alongside practical examples, as well as provocations for critical reflection and praxis.



About the presenter

With extensive experience in the field prior to commencing her work in academia, followed by a decade of educating teachers for inclusion, and ongoing research engagement with children, families, teachers and allied professionals, Kathy Cologon has a depth and breadth of understanding of the many facets of inclusive education. Her book *Inclusive Education in the Early Years: Right from the start* has become a core component of undergraduate and postgraduate teacher education for inclusion across Australia and internationally.

Why Mindset Matters – See the Meaning in Children’s Behaviour: Free 3 Part Live Webinar

Presented by Beth MacGregor

Part 1: Tuesday 26 October 2021, 4:30pm-5:45pm

Part 2: Tuesday 2 November 2021, 4:30pm-5:45pm

Part 3: Tuesday 9 November 2021, 4:30pm-5:45pm

More information and register here

This webinar series explores the question: *How does the way we think about children, especially those who are behaving in ways we might find challenging, affect our ability to provide the nurturing relationships they need for true inclusion and emotional wellbeing?* Participants will identify ways in which authentic and secure relationships with children help when things go wrong and identify responsive, positive strategies that support children’s self-regulation.

This is a three part course with a limited group size of 22 participants to support the interactive format of the training.

Please note: Due to the size limit, for this course only, we ask that just one educator per preschool registers. It is important that the same educator is able to commit to attending all three webinars in the series, as content from each session will be linked. Participants will have their video camera on for all parts of these webinars.



About the facilitator

Beth Macgregor is a psychologist who provides training and development support to child health, welfare and education services. She began her career as a child protection caseworker, and since 1993 has worked in various roles to support the most vulnerable children in our community. She has had the privilege of training thousands of educators across Australia, assisting them to understand and respond to the emotional needs and challenging behaviours of children.

Sensory Processing: Free Live Webinar and Launch of Sensory Processing Share and Show Cards and Guidebook

Presented by Emma Sheezel, Occupational Therapist

Monday 1 November 2021, 4:30pm-5:45pm

More information and register here

We are excited to be launching our newest resource along with a webinar on Sensory Processing. See below for more details about the Sensory Processing Cards and Guidebook.

In the webinar, Emma will encourage educators to consider how their preschool environment impacts on children's sensory processing, how to identify barriers to inclusion due to sensory preferences and she will explore how auditing the sensory environment can support inclusion. We will also consider how creating sensory choice within environments to support preferences. The Sector Capacity Building Program team will also launch and introduce our new sensory processing guidebook and 'Share and Show' sensory card set.



About the facilitator

Emma Sheezel is an Occupational Therapist with extensive experience working with children and their families across a variety of settings. She believes that creating the right support around a child will allow them to thrive and lead meaningful lives. Emma has worked in many sectors across Australia and the United Kingdom. She believes working in partnership with parents and carers is the key to success in achieving positive outcomes for children with developmental differences.

Coming Soon: New 'Delving Deeper' Podcast

Sara Stockman from Pyramid Model Australia will be answering questions about the Pyramid Model and looking in more depth at some of the information presented in her webinar *Exploring the Pyramid Model*.

More Early Childhood Inclusion training

For some additional training on inclusion, check out this series of webinars by the STaR Association, funded by the Department of Education:

<https://www.star.org.au/what-we-do/early-childhood-early-intervention-webinar-series>

Webinar topics include:

- ▶ Best practice examples of inclusive early childhood education
- ▶ Recording observations that demonstrate frequency, intensity and duration of educational supports required
- ▶ Planning for and implementing research-based individual learning plans for young children with disabilities/delays, in collaboration with their families and other professionals.

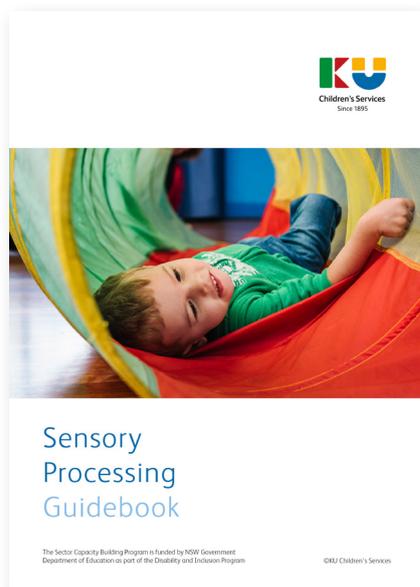
Sensory Processing Guidebook and 'Share and Show' card set

We are excited to be launching a new set of cards and guidebook to complement your existing **'Share and Show' board game for educators**. The Sensory Processing Guidebook provides information about sensory processing in young children – how it develops, the seven senses, how sensory processing is linked with emotional regulation, and understanding and supporting sensory processing differences.

The set of reflective scenarios and questions in these playing cards supports educator understanding, confidence and inclusive practice with questions and scenarios which prompt reflection and discussion.

Every preschool will receive these new resources to add to your 'Share and Show' board game this term.

Our virtual launch of this resource will occur during the Sensory Processing webinar on Monday 1 November. We hope you can join us for this event.



Transition to school for children with disabilities or additional needs

Transition to school this year will look different with the impact of ongoing COVID restrictions. We have developed a lockdown checklist to guide your discussions with families of children with disabilities and additional needs as they prepare for this transition.

You can find the checklist attached at the end of this newsletter and also on our Inclusion Gateway website: <https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources/lockdown-transition-to-school-checklist>

Preschool Orientation for 2021-2022

Orientation for children starting preschool in 2022 may look a little different again this year. Orientation visits in term 4 are usually a time where children and families get to know more about preschool, and you have an opportunity to start building a relationship with new children and families. Orientation also offers an early opportunity to see children within your environment. Providing opportunities for children to become familiar with the preschool environment is still an important component of a smooth transition into preschool.

Here are some creative COVID-safe options you might like to try:

- ▶ Create a video or welcome message from the preschool. This can be recorded and uploaded to YouTube, Dropbox or OneDrive and the link then shared with families.
- ▶ Create a social story to introduce your preschool to new children. We've created a template in several languages that you can download and adapt for your preschool – you can find these on the resource page of our Inclusion Gateway website by typing 'social story' in the search function:
<https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/resources?showing=17&keywords=social%20story>
- ▶ Provide a virtual tour of the preschool environment. This could be live streamed to your preschool's Facebook page or broadcast through Skype, Zoom or Facetime.
- ▶ Create a live or recorded story time with educators.
- ▶ Schedule a live online event with a question-and-answer session for new families and children.
- ▶ Create orientation packages that can be sent home. These could include social stories, photographs of educators, the preschool environment and some preschool experiences and any other relevant information.
- ▶ For families who identify any specific concerns, you may like to consider arranging an individual time when they could visit in a COVID-safe way.
- ▶ Your Preschool Inclusion Consultant is available to support you in preparing to welcome any children with a disability or additional need into your preschool.

Funding cut-off date reminders

The due date for High Learning Support Needs (HLSN) and Minor Capitol Works funding applications is: **5:00pm Friday 15 October 2021**. This deadline relates to any final adjustments which includes new applications and variations for 2021. The Disability and Inclusion Guidelines for 2022 will be available soon with the closing dates for all quarterly rounds for Disability and Inclusion Program funding applications.

Please feel free to contact your Preschool Inclusion Consultant for support with submitting funding applications.

HLSN variations relating to COVID restrictions and lockdown

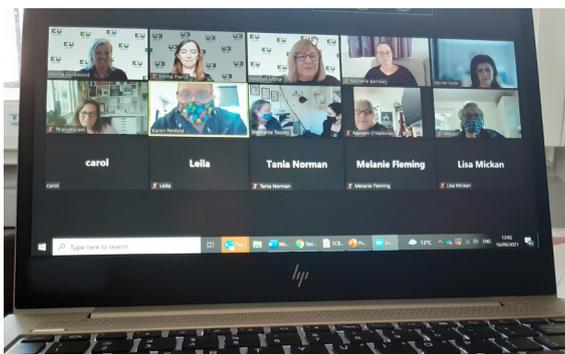
The Department of Education website has recently been updated to include additional information on how to manage variations relating to High Learning Support Needs funding. Please note, services will **not** be required to submit "extended absence" or "decrease in hours" variation applications where:

- ▶ A child is absent from preschool or attends preschool for less hours between 1 July – 30 September 2021 (Quarter 3) but continues to be enrolled for the same number of hours; and
- ▶ HLSN funding continues to be utilised to provide a preschool program for the absent child.

Further information about updated COVID-19 arrangements for HLSN funding can be found at:
<https://education.nsw.gov.au/early-childhood-education/coronavirus/funding#Disability9>

Reflecting on professional development from term 3

Zoom networking meetings



In term 3, we ran a number of successful Zoom networking meetings with educators in the Inner West, Eastern Suburbs and Illawarra regions.

The meetings have been an informal way to connect and share experiences and ideas for managing the challenges that have come our way over the term. We have shared information on ways of connecting with children during lockdown, how to write social stories and transition to school for children with additional needs during lockdown.

We will continue to offer these meetings in term 4 until we are able to get back to visiting you in 'real life'. Please let us know if there is a topic you would like us to focus discussion on. We would love to see you at a Zoom networking meeting if we haven't already.

Live webinars

It was wonderful to see so many educators joining our live webinars in term 3. We hope you have found these informative and useful.

We have been fortunate to present a range of topics to support your inclusive practice with experienced and engaging presenters, including the following:

▶ Exploring the Pyramid Model to Increase Social emotional Competencies in Young Children

Sara Stockman presented an overview of the Pyramid Model and shared a range of strategies and practical resources for educators to use with children with additional needs – particularly to support children's social and emotional skills. The many resources shared including visual supports, reflective checklists for preschools environments, and parenting information are freely available here:

<https://www.pyramidmodel.org.au>

▶ Anxiety in Preschoolers

Roxanne Goff, clinical psychologist from the Centre for Emotional Health at Macquarie University, shared information about the brain and anxiety, how anxiety can present in young children, the impacts of anxiety on learning, and practical strategies to support children with anxiety at preschool. Roxanne also outlined some of the specific issues around anxiety for children with autism.

▶ Trauma - Impacts and Strategies

In this 2-part webinar Bronwyn Elliot, Social Worker, provided detailed information about the definition of trauma, the potential impacts of trauma on young children's development and the importance of using a trauma 'lens' along with a compassionate approach. She outlined strategies that educators can use in their work with young children who have experienced trauma, including the 'Attachment Regulation and Competence' model.

Recordings of our webinars *aside from the Anxiety webinar* are available for you to watch at any time here: <https://kudisabilityinclusion.com.au/professional-learning/webinar-recordings>

Your Preschool Inclusion Consultant is here for you

While preschool visits are not possible for the time being, your Preschool Inclusion Consultant is available to support you online and over the phone. Here are some of the ways of how we are continuing to support you until we can resume visits:

- ▶ Online team training
- ▶ Virtual coaching and mentoring sessions
- ▶ Preschool Inclusion Readiness Plan (PIRP) development and regular review/support
- ▶ Sourcing answers and providing resources around your individual inclusive practice concerns
- ▶ Webinar training (both live and recorded)
- ▶ Zoom networking meetings
- ▶ Specific emails about key information to support your practice (such as funding deadline reminders, upcoming inclusion events in your region)
- ▶ Tailored resources such as visual supports, social stories and tip sheets
- ▶ Dropping off or posting hard copies of resources
- ▶ Discussing and supporting educators with ILP development
- ▶ Discussing concerns and questions about individual children (with parent consent)



From our team to yours, we admire the important work you do every day to include all children!

“We are not a team because we work together. We are a team because we respect, trust, and care for each other.” – Vala Afshar

Please let us know of any specific support you may be needing.

*The Sector Capacity Building Program is funded by the
NSW Government Department of Education.*

SECTOR CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM LOCKDOWN TRANSITION TO SCHOOL CHECKLIST



This checklist has been developed for use as a conversation guide to discuss with parents of children with disabilities and additional needs starting school in 2022.

With current COVID restrictions in place and potentially less contact with families, it is important for preschools to check in with families virtually over the phone about how their transition to school plans are progressing this year. This checklist is not designed to hand over to parents to complete.

Questions to ask are listed below.

Have you:

- Enrolled your child at their local public school or received a written offer and confirmed their place at another school?
- Made appointments for any updated assessments, for example, with your child's Speech Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist or Paediatrician?
- Shared a snapshot or key information about your child with the school?
- Asked your child's new school if there are any other forms to complete, for example, funding application forms?
- Contacted your child's school to discuss COVID safe orientation options?
- Arranged a virtual meeting between your family, the preschool and school to pass on the most up-to-date information about your child?
- Asked your child's school, preschool and therapists about how you can help prepare your child for school?