

Paper presentation

Biography of presenter

Carolynne Noonan and Annie Tudor-Lynch

Carolynne Noonan is a Children's Services Manager for Queensland Lutheran Early Childhood Services (QLECS). She has worked in Victoria and Queensland as an Early Childhood Teacher, Director, Consultant and manager for 22 years. Carolynne holds a Diploma of Social Science – Early Childhood Studies, Bachelor of Education and Certificate 4 in Work Health and Safety. In her current position Carolynne manages 9 services for (QLECS) and oversees the Work Health and Safety for all QLECS services in Queensland. Carolynne believes strongly in the importance of developing natural play spaces that encourage children to make choices and take risks.

Annie Tudor-Lynch

Annie is the Teacher/Director of Martin Luther Kindergarten co-located with Martin Luther Primary Campus in Toowoomba, Queensland. Annie has been teaching for over 30 years in Australian and England. Since 2008 Annie has worked with the families and community of Martin Luther in developing many natural outdoor play spaces with a variety of small play areas for children to explore the environment. Annie has introduced numerous sustainable practices that are now embedded into the children's play.

Method of delivery- Paper and power point presentation

Title: How to develop an outdoor natural play space on a budget?

A description of the issue or problem to be solved

Over the last two decades many early childhood settings exploded with synthetic grass, plastic play structures and poles wrapped in padding. To meet the requirements under the Natural Quality Framework, early childhood services settings need trees, rocks, wood, water, sand, mud and gardens which allow children to explore the environment. How can services change these unnatural play grounds into stimulating environments to meet standards and healthier play spaces for children on a budget?

A description of why the audience should care for the issue

Education Care Services National Regulation 113 states Outdoor spaces –national environment. "The approved provider of a centre based service must ensure that the outdoor space provided at the education and care service premises allow children to explore and experience the national environment". All early childhood services are challenged under the National Quality Framework to provide natural play spaces for children. Quality Area 3, Physical Environments-requires early childhood education to embed sustainable practices into the program, encourage children to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environments.

Approach used to solve it

Create a vision, sell your vision, own the vision and your community will embrace the idea.

How this presentation links to theme/s of the conference

What shapes quality education in a Lutheran school?

What is the role of Lutheran Schools in developing wise citizens of the 21st century?

Submission of Abstract:

Four years ago Martin Luther Kindergarten's outdoor play space was a sand pit, swings, grass and large trees. Today the outdoor play space is rich with many natural play spaces that support children's ideas and social play. A vision for the playground was developed by the Directors and QLECS and presented to the Kindergartens Community Liaison Group. Small projects were achieved through working bees and funded by a fundraising levy. A successful small grant enabled a large mud patch and bike track to be built. The educators observed the children during play then designed a variety of fixed and removal equipment to support and enhance play. The presenters will explain the ideas behind the equipment and how the children use them today to exploring the environment. Sustainable practices are embedded into the Kindergarten and supported by the families and community. A power point presentation will be shown to assist in the explaining of how the community developed and implemented its vision and involved the children and families.