



Professional learning

Is it simply a matter of “when you know better, you do better”?

So why professional learning?

When we take up our first job working with children and families, it isn't possible to know it all. We haven't yet spent time with every child, or heard the struggles of every family, or walked alongside every colleague or risen to the challenge of every community. We haven't yet had all the possible experiences which would surely knock off our rough edges and polish us into well credentialed professionals...if we were only to learn by experience. Experience alone isn't enough and we need to engage in regular, quality professional learning to ensure we are well placed to provide quality education and care. Professional learning puts us on the front foot by giving us a grounding in theory which can prepare us for our varied and diverse work.

We don't know who we will encounter next or in what circumstances we will need to lead or in what environment we will be placed as an educator.

Professional learning will serve to equip us for the unknown challenges. It will expand our repertoire and deepen our understandings. Professional Learning is not just about acquiring skills. It is broader and deeper than that. It offers us the opportunity to reflect on ourselves, to gain a better understanding of our own view point and motivations. It provides a chance to wrestle with new concepts and theories before making changes or implementing new strategies. It invites us to spend time being critical of how things are and contemplate how they could be. And all the while, we know that our work is for children and families.

Professional learning keeps us fresh, gives us a glimpse of what might be over the horizon and offers a means of making the journey to get there.

It's not just about sitting passively in a lecture theatre taking on information. It doesn't have a linear path or a defined timeline. Professional Learning is about dialogue, action, reflection, challenge, risk, play, review, collaboration, inquiry, research, mentoring, de-privatisation. Some would say that genuinely rich professional learning is more about ambiguity than certainty. It is more than being reassured about what we currently do. It's about continuously seeking a better way.

That may seem risky and asking for trouble. It may sound like change and a lot of work. Maybe, maybe not. But learning does take commitment and can provide challenges.

If engaging in professional learning seems costly, we might ask ourselves what is the cost of not engaging in professional learning? If we choose not to seek a different, new, better way, what are the likely outcomes for ourselves as educators and the children we work with?

If you are interested in a longer term approach to your development and learning as a professional then perhaps continuing your study might be right for you.

If it's true that 'when we know better we do better' then what are we frightened of? Better outcomes for children? Loving our job? Being recognised as a professional by the community? Better to ask, "What are we waiting for?"



Professional learning with Gowrie SA

The following series is occasionally scheduled in our professional learning guide and can also be delivered at your service. Call **(08) 8234 5219** to find out more.

Planning Professional Learning series

These sessions will focus on how you can maximise the use of your professional development budget in planning professional learning which will benefit your service and align with your philosophy, QIP and service priorities.

Part 1: Putting the plan together

Considering adult learning principles and how to identify priorities to map out the plan for a whole service. How to balance individual professional learning with centre priorities, why whole-of-service professional learning is more powerful than one-off professional development and how to support deeper level learning through linking topics to create project clusters and staged implementation.

Part 2: Collective and collaborative professional learning

Professional learning can be embedded within day-to-day practice which is complemented by collective professional learning in groups. In this session we will examine how educators learn including in teams, mixed groups and across centre projects. What conditions support participation and how does leadership play a role in supporting the inclusion and participation of all educators?

Part 3: Leading educational change through professional learning

This session will consider the critical role of a director in leading collaborative professional development and learning to achieve educational change. We will consider how an early childhood director can create an environment that will support ongoing critical reflection and professional dialogue that leads to educators' professional learning and a culture of learning throughout a centre.

Cost per participant
\$150.00