

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION AUSTRALIA (VICTORIAN CHAPTER)
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Concurrent Paper

**Stretching Expertise and Dollars:
Communities of Learning for ECIS Practitioners.**

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In the first half of 2006, the "Excellence in ECI" project researched and documented **common staff competencies** relevant to any practitioner (that is, therapists AND teachers) in Melbourne's Northern Metropolitan Region ECIS sector. These competencies have been content validated with approximately 60 staff and linked to a set of **core learning needs**. The next steps are to establish highly cost-effective **communities of learning** which motivate practitioners and create high levels of ability in working within socially and emotionally complex family and community environments.

In January 2006, a 12 month project *Promoting Excellence in Early Childhood Intervention* commenced in the Northern catchment of the North and Western Metropolitan region.

This Project is funded through the Community Sector Investment Fund (CSIF) which was established by the Victorian Department of Human Services in 2003.

Approximately 38 networks involving 180 Community Sector Organisations were funded to achieve productivity gains, maximise efficiencies and overall sustainability in the sector. While many networks focussed on various potential efficiencies of administrative functions, our network looked at ways of delivering quality **staff development** to 150 Early Childhood Intervention workers in a climate of changing philosophy and practice.

Our network comprises five Early Childhood Intervention Services in the northern catchment of the North and Western Metropolitan region – Broad Insight Group, EPIC, Kalparrin, Scope and Uncle Bobs Development Centre, with representation from DHS. Andrew Hollo of Workwell Consulting is our Project Manager.

The project aims to:

- Develop a partnership approach to the delivery of professional development in ECIS
- Identify efficiencies and deliver financial savings to agencies

There are four stages of the project:

1. Development of common ECIS competencies
2. An analysis of current Learning Needs
3. Development of a Learning Events
4. Evaluation of the project.

In the first half of 2006, the project researched and documented **common staff competencies** relevant to any practitioner working in Early Childhood Intervention. These competencies have been content validated with approximately 60 staff and linked to a set of core **learning needs**.

The next steps are to establish highly cost-effective **communities of learning** which motivate practitioners and create high levels of ability in working within socially and emotionally complex family and community environments.

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