



Professor Collette Tayler holds the Chair in Early Childhood Education and Care in the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (since December 2007). She conducts local and cross-national studies of the ways that social, family and educational policies and practices affect early childhood education and care outcomes. Collette's work addresses access and engagement by children, families and communities; public and private investments; program standards and quality; the curriculum and pedagogy applied in different services; leadership and staff engagement; child and family involvement and program outcomes. Her research

seeks to understand and explain both universal principles and contextual variation in the care, education and upbringing of young children. Recent projects include: The Brain and Learning in Early Childhood (with Sebastian-Galles), Starting Strong II (with Dr John Bennett), Early Childhood Intervention programs: Towards a cost-benefit analysis for Australia (with Cloney, Thorpe & Wilson, AESOC, MCEETYA), and A review of the approach to setting national standards and assuring the quality of care in Australian child care services (with Wills, Hayden and Wilson).

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Promoting creativity and the arts in early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs

In 2008 Australia has opened new conversations about contemporary society and is revealing new stories that attend to social bridging and inclusion in a multi-cultural democracy. Creativity, the arts and innovation in this context open new possibilities for social bridging and community cohesion. In this address I will investigate the place of creativity and the arts in newly developing Australian early educational concepts (e.g. in early learning frameworks). By illustrating some of the initiatives taking place in ECEC programs today I will raise questions about the arts both in early childhood centres and in public spaces. My intention is to consider the way creativity and the arts promote innovative thinking and learning and provide the means to represent ideas and help social bridging. Examples and illustrations of projects with very young children will be used where the children operate as catalysts in communities of learning, use new technologies to access people in and beyond their own locality and pose deep questions about their physical and cultural worlds. The paper highlights the place and future of the arts, design, and technologies in a contemporary society to grow participation. The ingenuity and capacity of young children to engage with and challenge experts in a variety of disciplines and spaces promotes a picture of capable, imaginative children who can make important contributions in a world seeking sustainable development.