

# reflections

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## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: SHARING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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*This article is an educator reflection on one of the centre's strategies to connect with the local community.*

Although our program is guided by children's interests and abilities, our own personal passions and interests can be a great source of education and inspiration for the children. A personal interest of mine is supporting community, particularly people experiencing disadvantage. Over the last four years I have utilised my role as an early childhood educator by working with many

charity organisations across Melbourne, to engage children to explore concepts such as fairness, empathy and our relationship with others as part of a wider community.

The opening paragraph of Gowrie Victoria philosophy states that 'we believe in the recognition of the uniqueness of each child and family and the need for children to develop an understanding and respect for self and others'. I believe that children who develop a positive

## LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS: A SENSORY LANDSCAPE (CONTINUED)

self-respect feel connectedness and belonging to their surroundings, have better mental health, engage with learning and new experiences confidently and feel safe and secure. By feeling included they often show more care, compassion and empathy towards others and are accepting of the diversity that surrounds them.

Educators are able to role model important values such as compassion, care, respect, understanding and inclusion on a day to day basis within the centre to help children develop a greater understanding. We can also support children with these values by reaching out and making connections with our community and offer many rich opportunities to build these strong, meaningful connections that can help make a difference to others.

One organisation that we are working with is called 'The Nappy Collective'. It is a great initiative that collects unused, disposable nappies no longer required to redistribute them to social services around Australia that support families in crisis or in need. They are helping thousands of families to focus more of their time and energy on getting their lives back on track. The Nappy Collective have collections twice a year and we have been involved for the last three collections. With each collection I gather a small group of children to make a poster to advertise to families. This time allows me to talk to the children and let them know why we are having the

collection and who the nappies are for. During our last collection Sophie asked 'What are the nappies for?' I explained that sometimes adults can't afford to buy nappies for their children, so we are helping them by giving them our left over nappies that we don't need anymore. Sophie was then able to walk around to each room in the centre and ask for spare nappies 'for the children'.

During the collection period we received nappy donations from families. In addition, children went on excursions to the local supermarket to purchase nappies and pop them in the box together.

We aim to have children involved each step of the way when working on these projects to allow children to have many discussions around the collection and to get a deeper understanding. It is a great opportunity for children to understand their rights and responsibilities as an active member of their community; that they can help make a positive impact regardless of their age. Fundraising and giving back to our community is a continuous journey. We aim to embed it into our daily practices which supports a new generation of kind, compassionate adults.

For more information about the Nappy Collective click on the link below: <http://www.thenappycollective.com/>



For your professional learning and support contact your state based Gowrie listed below:

NSW [www.gowriensw.com.au](http://www.gowriensw.com.au)

TAS [www.gowrie-tas.com.au](http://www.gowrie-tas.com.au)

QLD [www.gowrieqld.com.au](http://www.gowrieqld.com.au)

VIC [www.gowrievictoria.com.au](http://www.gowrievictoria.com.au)

SA [www.gowriesa.org.au](http://www.gowriesa.org.au)

WA [www.gowrie-wa.com.au](http://www.gowrie-wa.com.au)