Early Years Great Careers

## Fact Sheet

## Educational leader

### What do educational leaders do?

An early childhood educational leader is responsible for working with educators and children to develop the program of activities and experiences that support learning in an education and care service. The leader has knowledge and experience about the way children learn and about quality educator practice as their role is also about promoting high quality teaching practice. They may work in metropolitan, rural or remote areas including Aboriginal communities.

The role of educational leaders was created as part of the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF promotes quality, continuous improvement and consistency across early childhood education and care services such as kindergarten, long day care, family day care and outside school hours care. An educational leader must be a suitably qualified and experienced educator or coordinator, able to lead curriculum development and ensure clear goals and expectations for teaching and learning. In addition to this role, they may also be an education and care centre manager, children’s services director or coordinator, team leader or educator/teacher.

Generally, they:

* Provide educational leadership to educators, teachers and administrative staff of early childhood services.
* Coach and mentor educators to support children’s learning in the five learning and development outcomes (identity, community, wellbeing, learning and communication).
* Support high quality teaching and learning for children in a service. – Represent the organisation in networks and committees that focus on children’s learning.
* Develop and review policy, course curricula and teaching/learning materials drawing on a deep understanding of educational theory and practice.
* Collaborate and work with parents and families as partners in children’s learning.

### Fast facts

* Settings may include education and care services such as stand-alone (sessional) kindergartens, long day care centres, occasional care, family day care services

### What should I study at school?

Useful subjects include English, maths, health and human development, psychology, science, arts, music, VET – Certificate II in Community Services Work and selected units from Certificate III in Community Services Work and Certificate III in Education and Care (previously Certificate III in Children’s Services).

**What should I study at university?**

Qualifications will vary according to the exact role. Options could include:

* Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (18 months - 2 years)
* Diploma of School Age Education and Care (one year)
* Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (four years)
* Bachelor of Education (four years)
* Bachelor Degree plus Graduate Diploma of Education
* Certificate IV in Training and Assessment

### What are my other career and leadership options?

Options could include centre manager/team leader in an education and care service; educational leader across a number of services; kindergarten cluster program manager; state government policy officer or authorised officer. With further study, possibilities could include teaching and academic roles.

## Interview

## Lori Farchione-zappia, early childhood teacher and educational leader

### What are your major qualifications?

I have a Bachelor of Arts (Early Childhood Education) and a Diploma of Children’s Services.

### How long have you worked in early childhood and in your current role?

More than 23 years, and in my current position for 10 years.

### What is a typical day?

I prepare and plan challenging materials and activities for children to explore, interact, work on projects and extend on their interests, abilities and strengths. I’m an educational leader as I mentor, lead and inspire others in my team. I work part-time as a presenter running customised training for early childhood educators. I am also involved in researching and developing curriculum approaches.

### What influenced your interest in an early childhood career?

After I completed year 12 I worked for six years as a hairdresser before retraining. I changed my profession because I had a vision about children’s learning. I wanted to advocate best practice and become an inspirational teacher. I was always drawn to children as I truly wanted make a difference in their lives. I wanted to be a different kind of educator

where I could support children’s agency in learning and create a physical environment where learning captures children’s interest, comes alive, stimulates and invites children to wonder and create.

### Describe your career advancement.

I began my career as a mothercraft nurse in a community child care centre. Later I moved to a supervisory administration

position within a child care centre and sessional kindergarten. After I graduated I became a kindergarten teacher. Throughout my career I believed that you advance by motivation, researching, challenging yourself and critically asking questions.

### What do you enjoy most about your career?

What I enjoy most is that I have built relationships with many children and families over the years. I also enjoy the role as educational leader where I contribute my time to listen, mentor and share my skills and knowledge with students and educators. This is a very rewarding part of my career.

### What is the best experience you have had as an early childhood professional?

In 2012 I won the Outstanding Early Childhood Teachers Award. My passion for researching, learning and development

lead me to apply a collaborative approach where children’s voices are honoured and they are active in their own learning and its direction. This allows young children to become capable, independent learners as they make their own discoveries.

### What would you say to others who might be considering a career in early childhood?

You need to be very passionate, dedicated and energetic about working with young children as the first years of a child’s life are the critical time for their development. It can be very challenging and demanding but very rewarding.

### Where do you see yourself in 10 years’ time?

I hope to obtain a job as a pedagogical leader coaching and mentoring more early childhood educators.

### Want to know more?

[www.education.vic.gov.au/earlyyearscareers](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlyyearscareers)

[www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au)

[www.myfuture.edu.au](http://www.myfuture.edu.au)

[www.joboutlook.gov.au](http://www.joboutlook.gov.au)

[www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/qualifications)

Information regarding course and professional pre-requisites is of a general nature. Please consult a career practitioner and/or check with individual institutions to confirm specific course requirements.