

# Research Forum

clever • skilled • creative

## Assessing the effectiveness of early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs in Australian communities

Professor Karen Thorpe, Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology

Tuesday 16 February 2010, 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Conference Room, Floor 12 Education House, 30 Mary Street, Brisbane

The Australian Research Council (ARC) recently awarded a grant of more than \$2.2m over five (5) years to a study involving a consortium of researchers from The University of Melbourne and the Queensland University of Technology, partnered with the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Queensland Department of Education and Training and Office for Early Childhood Education and Care.

The focus of this research is optimising early learning and social experiences and establishing positive life trajectories for Australia's children. The study will provide evidence about the effectiveness of ECEC programs in diverse Australian communities, including South East Queensland and Mt Isa, and examine the contribution of different types of ECEC provision to children's attainments at school entry through to the first national testing at age 8.

This important research has the potential to inform theory internationally, and policy, investment and ECEC practices across Australia.

**At this forum**, Professor Thorpe will present the background research and policy context regarding ECEC practices in Australia and introduce the proposed design of the current study. Discussion and feedback will be invited from forum attendees.

**Karen Thorpe** is currently Professor of Developmental Psychology at the Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology. Professor Thorpe has significant expertise in developmental science, evaluation of early intervention and education and longitudinal research, and the impact of early environment on children's developmental attainments. She has worked on a number of large World Health Organisation initiated longitudinal studies within two international research centres, and has published extensively.

In 2003-2004, Professor Thorpe worked for the Queensland Government in the Preparing for School study. This study was a large scale longitudinal investigation of the effectiveness of various early childhood education models across 39 sites in Queensland, including the Torres Strait islands.

Currently, Karen is a lead investigator on the ARC-funded linkage project "Assessing the effectiveness of ECEC programs in Australian communities".

Please RSVP your attendance by Thursday 11 February to [Sajida.Khan@deta.qld.gov.au](mailto:Sajida.Khan@deta.qld.gov.au)

Refreshments will be available during the event.