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Hume educator a finalist in national early childhood awards

An early childhood educator from Hume City Council has been named a finalist for the Outstanding Educator Award in the 2012 HESTA Early Childhood Education & Care Awards.

Jacque Simpson — Specialist Early Childhood Intervention Teacher at Dianella Community Health and President of the Mother Goose Program Australia — has been nominated for her outstanding level of care, and commitment to the development of young children and enhancing the child-parent relationship.

Ms Simpson said building a strong bond between children — particularly those with additional needs — siblings and their family was fundamental in childhood development.

“Providing individually-tailored, take-home resources, such as visual cues and story books is a great way of building children’s language and coping skills. It also helps to enhance the bond between carers and their children,” Ms Simpson said.

“It’s also important for all early childhood educators to act, not only as an educator, but as a resource for parents with issues and concerns. For example, navigating the maze of disability services can be quite confronting for a guardian. So, developing a partnership with families is invaluable, as it enables the educator to understand the best way to advise them.”

As an active early childhood educator, Ms Simpson has been instrumental in implementing and furthering numerous programs throughout the City of Hume, including ACTNOW’s Autism Spectrum Disorders: Planning a Successful Transition to Primary School program and the Parent-Child Mother Goose Program. Ms Simpson also is involved in the Northern Autism Spectrum Disorder Network.

Ms Simpson is also a regular presenter at conferences including at the Domestic Violence Resource Centre, Early Childhood Intervention Australia Conferences, Playgroups Victoria Conference and Royal Children’s Hospital forums, where she imparts her extensive knowledge of early intervention and parent-child attachment strategies, continuously demonstrating her commitment to the sector.

Ms Simpson is currently teaching the ‘Preschoolers with autism’ and ‘Tuning into kids’ parent education programs in Melbourne which offer behaviour strategies, emotion coaching and emotion-regulation strategies.

“The most sustainable and effective way to provide intervention to children with additional needs is to build the capacity and skills of their parents,” Ms Simpson said.

The winner of the Outstanding Educator Award — and Advancing Practice Award — will be announced at a gala dinner during Early Childhood Australia’s National Conference, at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre on World Teachers’ Day, Friday 5 October 2012. The Outstanding Educator winner will receive a \$5,000 ME Bank online *EveryDay* Transaction Account and a \$5,000 education grant.

HESTA is one of Australia’s largest super funds, with more than 750,000 members and \$20b in assets. It is chosen by more people working in health and community services than any other fund.

Visit hestaawards.com.au to book tickets for the event or learn more about the awards.

MEDIA CONTACT: Jack Herbert 0405 584 567