



## Pathways to a career in Child Care and Early Learning

Early Childhood Education and Care Industry Roundtables were held across regional and remote Australia to assist the childcare and early learning sector meet the requirements of the National Quality Framework.



Melinda Wren

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Passion for work is what really counts when it comes to recruiting and retaining quality early childhood educators, according to Melinda Wren, Teaching Director at The Basin Preschool in Sanctuary Point, NSW.

"It's definitely the passion that drives you, it's the sheer joy of seeing children learn and accomplish things that is your reward and makes you stay".

Melinda has been working in child care and early learning for over ten years and was invited to share her experiences and ideas at a series of Early Childhood Education and Care Industry Roundtable forums held throughout 2012.

"It was really good to have these forums look at the issues and to try to solve some of the problems together," she said, explaining that recruitment and retention of quality staff was a key issue.

"We discussed lifting the profile of early childhood educators and I thought if we shared why we do what we do -our passion- it would help to recruit people into the sector that way.

"We decided to send letters to see if people would be willing to share what they have done in regards to recruitment and we also

asked if people might be willing to discuss and share aspects of their role with students and others interested in child care and early learning. We also decided to use Facebook to promote child care and early learning as a career.

Melinda started the Shoalhaven ECEC Alliance Facebook page and got the ball rolling with sharing her own journey to a career in child care and early learning.

It was an inspirational Aunty that initially drew Melinda into the child care and early learning sector. "I had a wonderful Aunty who was a deputy headmistress at a public school and she was the most amazing woman," Melinda said. "She always encouraged me and was the most inspiring person to be around that I decided I wanted to be a teacher too."

Melinda is continuing her efforts to inspire others to take up a career in child care and early learning in the same way. "If you value leaving a legacy for the future, then becoming an educator and making a difference in a child's life for the better is for you. It's the most important career in the world".

