

2007 National Excellence In Teaching Awards

State and Territory Teaching Excellence Award Recipient



Rebecca Smith

Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood), Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)

Saddleworth Early Learning Centre, Saddleworth, South Australia

Nominated By: Governing Council

Position: Early Childhood Teacher • Level taught: Early Childhood • School type: Government • Town: Saddleworth • Category: Early Childhood • State: SA

Facilitating full developmental learning

With her mother and aunt both kindergarten teachers, Rebecca Smith has often commented that she believes 'teaching is in her blood'. Rebecca's warmth, enthusiasm and dedication produce a wonderful learning environment where children are happy to explore and grow. Learning experiences are play based, relevant and interesting, providing opportunities for all children to experience success. Careful efforts are made to ensure learning experiences cover all developmental areas. Innovative programs such as a family camera, memory boxes and family books are used to boost the children's self-esteem, oral language skills, and public speaking skills.

Multiliteracies is firmly embedded within the program ensuring children feel confident using technology in a supportive environment. Excursions and visiting performances are a regular part of the curriculum. Profile books filled with photos and learning stories are used to record children's achievements. Rebecca spends many hours preparing these programs in her own time and liaising with families.

Rebecca is currently working in the Wakefield District Office at Clare as the Early Initiatives Co-ordinator as well as continuing her role as a multi-literacies facilitator.

Insight

Q: In your opinion, what makes a good teacher?

A: A good teacher provides a varied program enabling every child opportunities to reach their full potential.

Q: How do you maintain your enthusiasm for teaching?

A: Sharing in a child's joy of a new discovery, or mastering a new skill, maintains my enthusiasm for teaching and motivates me to provide new experiences to take their learning further.

Q: In hindsight, what do you wish your training provided you with more of?

A: I feel the combination of theory and practical experience provided, left me well prepared for my teaching career.

Q: What is the most difficult aspect of teaching today?

A: Keeping up with rapidly changing technology and children's interests so I can keep my program relevant to the children.

Q: What is your greatest challenge as a teacher?

A: Finding a way to unlock each child's desire to learn.

Q: How has teaching changed over the years?

A: The practices are the same, they just have different names.

Q: What is the single most important thing you, as a teacher, can do to connect with individual students?

A: Talk to children and families. The more you know about a child the easier it is to connect with them and develop a program that is relevant to their individual needs and interests.

Q: If you were the Minister for Education, Science and Training for a week, what would you try to change?

A: I would push for lower class sizes and more recognition for early years staff.

Q: What keeps you awake at night?

A: Making decisions that are in the best interests of the child.

Q: If your students could describe you in three words, what would they say?

A: Caring, nice and favourite.

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