

Co-located field experience placement – for Early Childhood and Nutrition/Dietetics students

WHAT IS THE CO-LOCATED FIELD EXPERIENCE?

The co-located field experience model is part of a broader project - *Health Promoting Early Childhood Education: A collaboration between the Crèche and Kindergarten Association and QUT*. The project focuses on the establishment of mutually-beneficial relationships between C & K and QUT (with cohorts of students from two faculties of Education and Health), and will support staff and students to work with children and families to address key aspects of health and wellbeing.

C & K and QUT are working together to implement an innovative cross-disciplinary model of field experience placement to be being piloted in five C & K long day care centres in April-May 2015. This model will see one Early Childhood student and one Nutrition/Dietetics student complete a field experience placement, working alongside one another and with centre staff. The model will include a focus on collaborative work as one effective strategy to establish, enhance and extend relationships between students, academic staff and early childhood educators to promote health and wellbeing of children and families.

WHO ARE THE STUDENTS AND WHAT IS THEIR ROLE IN THE CENTRE?

A total of 10 students from both Kelvin Grove and Caboolture campus of QUT will participate in the project. Two students (one from the School of Early Childhood and one from the School of Nutrition and Dietetics) will be co-located in each of the five C & K long day care centres. Nutrition/Dietetics students will commence their placement from Monday 14 April for seven weeks, with Early Childhood students commencing placements from Monday 27 April for three weeks.

Students will work collaboratively – along with QUT staff and centre staff – to engage in activities and professional discussions around the topic of health promotion in early childhood. Students will apply their unit content knowledge to real-world contexts as they authentically engage with staff in C&K centres to develop holistic, problem-solving approaches to understanding and supporting health and wellbeing. A key project on “social meal times” will provide an overarching framework for students to engage in richer understandings about health promotion in the early years. Students will develop a greater understanding of the impact of mealtime environments on child health and development and promote optimal nutrition within each of the long day care settings.

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED BENEFITS AND LONG TERM IMPACTS OF THE PROJECT?

This project offers a new model for cross-disciplinary collaborations (QUT faculties of Education and Health) and engagement with C&K as a community partner. Importantly, it is anticipated that there will be benefits for C & K centres, as children, families and staff are provided with support, strategies and resourcing around health and well being. The model will also support QUT students in examining the relationship of their core discipline knowledge with that of the other disciplines. It is envisaged that this co-located placement, and the broader *Health Promoting Early Childhood Education* project, will lay foundations for future collaborations between C & K and QUT, and for future research in this important area.

HOW CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

If you have any questions or require further information about the project please contact Dr Megan Gibson or Mrs Carolyn Keogh as per below. Alternatively, please contact your centre’s C & K Early Childhood Advisor (please ask your centre Director for details).

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