**Australian Children's Laureate - Sally Rippin**

AISWA EC, in partnership with ACLF, has been thrilled to host Sally Rippin as the Australian Children's Laureate. Sally has published over 100 books and is well known for her book series *Billie B Brown, Hey Jack, School of Monsters and Polly and Buster.* Sally has engaged and inspired budding authors and illustrators across WA the past two weeks, sharing her message 'All kids can be readers!'

A huge thank you to the schools that made us feel so welcome throughout our travels:

Australian Christian College Darling Downs

Living Waters Lutheran College

Rockingham Montessori School

Austin Cove Baptist College

Helena River Steiner School

Australian Islamic College Henley Brook

Atlantis Beach Baptist College

Immaculate Heart College

Emmanuel Christian School

We also spent a morning at Paper Bird: Children’s Books and Art in Fremantle, where we were joined by Sally Rippin fans and the PP students from Lance Holt School.

**Tinker Lab - Iona Presentation College**

AISWA Early Childhood recently visited Iona Presentation College’s incredible Tinker Lab. The space is beautifully curated to spark curiosity and creativity and we loved sharing images and videos of students engaging with learning in the space. The visit has provoked ideas and inspiration for 2025 planning.

**Vocabulary Development in Early Childhood Research**

Are you passionate about young children's vocabulary development?

If so, The University of Notre Dame invites you to participate in an exciting research project on Vocabulary Development in Early Childhood. As an early childhood educator, your valuable insights from the classroom are essential to this study. By participating, you will complete a brief online questionnaire (10-20 minutes) and a semi-structured interview (20-30 minutes), during which you can share your experiences and strategies for teaching vocabulary.

This is a fantastic opportunity to reflect on your teaching practices, connect with fellow educators, and contribute to important research that will benefit early childhood education.

If you would like further information, please [contact Kelly Taylor.](mailto:kelly.taylor@nd.edu.au)

**The Benefits of Belonging to a Playgroup at School**

The EYLF V.2 reminds us that in early childhood, and throughout life, trusting relationships and affirming experiences are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become (p.5). Playgroups offered on school sites are a fantastic way to support a child’s educational journey and enhance the opportunity for schools to build strong relationships and partnerships with families in their own community.

According to the Telethon Kids Institute, children who do not attend playgroups are 1.78 times more likely to be developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDC at school entry, even after adjusting for socio-economic and demographic differences. Research by the Telethon Kids Institute (2016) also highlights the extensive advantages of playgroups for young children’s holistic development including language and communication skills, social and emotional skills, physical and cognitive development.

**Who and where do we run a playgroup?**

Playgroups do not need to be run solely by educators; parents and carers can act as playgroup leaders, helping to bridge partnerships with families and build the child's transition to school. Also, we no longer need to offer a single room for playgroup, perhaps it could be offered in a school library, outdoor nature space or art area? Perhaps it could be a mobile playgroup?

**Targeting the needs of children in our school community**

The national census information obtained from the Australian Early Development Census (released in March 2025) also provide playgroups with an opportunity to be even more targeted in meeting the needs of children in their own community.

If you have a questions regarding playgroup at your AISWA school, contact [Lynne McCarney.](mailto:lmccarney@ais.wa.edu.au)