



Three reasons some educators are lacking motivation

Galina Zenin > Bonkers Beat

According to the 'Occupation report for early childhood teachers' published in August 2014 by DEEWR, some states such as Queensland, New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory are experiencing a shortage of pre-school teachers and continue to experience significant difficulty recruiting early childhood teachers.

The reasons for the shortage of staff range from "...education opportunities, graduates leaving the profession, work conditions and status of the profession. These reasons are exacerbated by the fragmentation of the profession, funding restrictions, limited career opportunities, mismatch between training and job expectations, level of administrative work required, workplace stress and burnout."

Other states did not have a shortage of applicants; however, "...many services find the candidates unsuitable for a variety of reasons

with the most common being: lack of experience, knowledge of the National Quality Standards (NQS), familiarity of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), absence of interpersonal or classroom management skills. The ability to work well with other staff and integrate within the workplace environment was also a key consideration in applicant suitability."

After teaching children for more than 30 years, I still remember how it all started for me...

During my third year at the music college, I had a placement in one of

the primary schools in Moscow. After a few weeks of running music classes, I was invited to the principal's office and offered a part-time job at that school. At the age of 16, my teaching journey began.

Since the very beginning of the Bonkers Beat Music Kinder, I've met and worked with many early childhood educators. A few educators really stood out and are still part of the Bonkers Beat teaching team. But I also met so many who had no interest or desire for the job.

And I was wondering, why? Why are so many educators not motivated?

Over the last few years I started asking directors, owners and early childhood consultants the same question: 'What do you think is the biggest challenge across the industry and in your service?' The most common answer was - motivating staff.

So here, as I believe, is one of the reasons why early childhood educators are not motivated. They have:

NOT ENOUGH PASSION Simple as that!

'Passion' came from the Greek verb "πασχω", which means to 'suffer'. It is a very strong feeling about a person or thing or an intense emotion, a compelling enthusiasm and desire for something. Passion is an emotion, which drives and ignites us.

I've heard many people saying that the shortage of educators is primarily due to low pay and poor conditions. But is this the main reason?

If we focus on these two factors, then I can't explain how we have unmotivated and not passionate doctors and lawyers, but have passionate gardeners and cleaners.

Is it really a profession or our personal desires and our purpose in life?

Tony Hsieh, the founder of Zappos, said, "When work is something you are passionate about it's not about work or life; it's just life."

I also found another common reason why some early childhood educators are not motivated. And it is:

NOT ENOUGH KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge is crucial for any profession, but to work with young children requires much more than just a piece of paper. Due to lack of sound knowledge and understanding of children's development, not only are the educators unmotivated, but also many get stressed and change their career within the first few years after receiving their qualifications. So why is that?

Time has proven that the quality of the high education and teaching degrees is much more important than the quantity of graduates. Now we have a number of reports from the early childhood sector indicating that students are taking leave from their courses because they are being employed as teachers or degree

qualified educators ('Early childhood education under qualifications threat', Prof. Kay Margetts, The Age, Feb 10, 2014).

Over the last few years, I have witnessed myself how new graduates and inexperienced students rush to take on leading positions and start working on their own. In many cases they even reject an opportunity to temporarily work side by side with an experienced educator to lend knowledge and gain more skills. But knowing WHAT to do and HOW to do it are very different things.

Unfortunately, many educators even after completing their degrees and training courses are not equipped with basic practical tools and have:

NOT ENOUGH SKILLS

"ABS data shows that annually around 20.4 per cent of childcare educators leave their occupation and change their profession" (Labour Market Research - Child Care Occupations, Australia 2014). So if the early childhood educators have a passion for teaching, a sound knowledge of what to do, what else could help them to enjoy work and be motivated?

How to set up a room and outdoor equipment, how to do programming, planning and observation, how to organise individual and group experience, how to deal with children's behavior, challenges with colleagues and parents, how to run music and movement sessions, how to introduce wellbeing routines, how to organise smooth transitions, art experiences, displays, portfolios - the list goes on and on.

Most of these tasks, which are crucial for successful teaching, are learnt at work. So when university students have only 100 contact hours to learn all of the above plus a hundred more skills, I question how effectively can they teach on their own?

But it's not only how many hours students spent learning these practical skills, but where. Does the service have the best practice, passionate and experienced mentors, and a system in place to support the students and give them an opportunity to learn these skills?

The good news is that there are answers to all these reasons.

PASSION

If you are passionate about educating young children - enjoy every moment and every minute! You are blessed with having one of the most rewarding and extraordinary jobs in the world. If you are not passionate about your job, be brave - look for your purpose in life. Search for it and you will find it.

KNOWLEDGE

Even if you have knowledge, don't stop your education. Learning is a lifelong process. The world is changing, children are changing and education is changing too.

SKILLS

Acquiring new skills will reduce stress, give you confidence and joy. When we apply skills, we can solve problems and be excited about every day.

In Africa they say, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

So, follow your passion, keep learning, look for ways to gain more practical ideas, work as a team, share your knowledge, your skills - and motivation will be there.

www.BonkersBeat.com

www.Facebook.com/BonkersBeat

