

## INNOVATIVE NEW ROLE AT BIG FAT SMILE CREATING AN INDUSTRY-LEADING EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Big Fat Smile - one of Australia's leading providers of early childhood education and care – is delivering further support to educators and positive outcomes to families with the development and recruitment of an industry-first Pedagogical Thinker in Residence role. Industry expert, Ms. Michele Peden, was recently appointed to the position to further enhance education and care outcomes.

The Pedagogical Thinker in Residence will develop an educational framework for children aged naught to 12-years-old, that spans all of Big Fat Smile's services including it's 27 Community Preschools, 14 Fun Clubs, Artspace Program and Green Bean Play Café.

The framework will enable parents to better understand exactly what their child is learning, providing assurance that the important educational outcomes for a child's development are achieved. It will also further equip and support educators to deliver innovative educational programs that are reflective of current research.

Big Fat Smile CEO, Ms. Jenni Hutchins, says that the position will benefit families by enabling them to associate the day-to-day practice of their child's educators with an educational framework which values the whole child and their family.

"In our latest 2017 Parent Survey our families spoke about their desire for an understanding of our educational framework. As part of Big Fat Smile's recent consultations and co-design approach to our new Strategic Plan, we determined that our educational ethos and practice were critical to the happiness, wellbeing and success of our children, families and educators.

"These factors, as well as our strategic priority to be leaders in the development of innovative educational practices for our children, led to the creation of the Pedagogical Thinker in Resident position," Ms. Hutchins explains.

The successful candidate – Ms. Michele Peden – is an industry expert with 20-years' experience in the early childhood education and care industry!. Her experience includes working with the University of Wollongong as a project manager and researcher for the Faculty of Social Science – School of Education and Early Start.

Big Fat Smile Pedagogical Thinker in Residence, Ms. Michele Peden, says she is a passionate advocate for the industry and welcomes the opportunity to work in an innovative organisation that advocates for quality care and education for children, families and staff; and that has a clear set of values and beliefs that underpin a strong strategic plan.



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"I am incredibly excited about this new role and the opportunity that it represents for Big Fat Smile, its families, the industry and me professionally.

"The Pedagogical Thinker in Residence role shines light on the educational framework that our children receive whilst attending our centres and services. My role is to nurture, support, inspire and collaborate with the educators at Big Fat Smile to enhance the current educational programs and create a culture that challenges and questions current educational practices, to boost the developmental outcomes for all children," Ms. Peden comments.

One-month into the role, Ms. Peden's early priorities are to gain a deeper understanding of the theoretical foundations that underpin current educational practices across all services within Big Fat Smile. Following close collaborations with educators, the position will then shift its focus to investigating and determining innovative learning platforms that will support educators to deliver industry-leading programs that support the learning outcomes of all Big Fat Smile children and families.

**Ms. Peden adds:** "Big Fat Smile's current educational programs and practices are strong, adhering to the latest industry standards and guidelines. The focus of this role is to see the Organisation further enhance its educational framework for the purpose of creating an even higher standard of education and care for its children and families.

"The introduction of this role into the Organisation proves that Big Fat Smile is dedicated and committed to providing the highest quality educational programs for children engaged in our Community Preschools, Fun Clubs and Artspace Program."

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**For further information, including interview requests, contact LBPR:**

- Interview opportunities are available with Big Fat Smile CEO Jenni Hutchins and newly appointed Pedagogical Thinker in Residence Ms. Michele Peden, upon request.

**Media contact:** LBPR | Tabitha Galvin | 0422 260 413 | [tabitha@lbpr.com.au](mailto:tabitha@lbpr.com.au)

### About Big Fat Smile

Big Fat Smile believes in a braver, brighter, more creative world. It's their reason for being.

Big Fat Smile engages highly qualified, passionate educators so that every child has the best start to life and learning. Quality is central to everything Big Fat Smile does, with 100 per cent of centres assessed in 2014 and 2015 achieving the coveted 'exceeding' rating under the demanding National Quality Standard.

Headquartered in Corimal, Big Fat Smile employs more than 650 staff at 42 early learning and school age care centres in 11 local government areas across the Illawarra, Sydney Metropolitan Area, Southern Highlands, Wollondilly and Tablelands.