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I have been in the early childhood sector for the past 11 years. I began when I was 18 years of age. In the beginning I worked in early childhood environments that only really allowed for networking *within* the organisation.

I found it was my own passion and my own curiosity about the sector which motivated me to branch out and meet a variety of educators and professionals. Networking taught me many new things, not just about regulations, accreditation and all the obvious benefits, but it also gave me opportunities to reflect on my experiences and create my own professional philosophy about what I believe and value about the sector as through networking I was able to observe and reflect on what I had observed, heard or experienced.

Networking allows you to feel less isolated and you are able to easily relate to others in the sector who have experienced many of the same things that you have experienced. I think networking gives an added quality to your work as it enables you to evaluate your own practice and to improve. I believe if you remain isolated you run the risk of going stale and it is not possible to improve. Children deserve better than this and really so do educators and families. Every networking opportunity I get I am sure to take it.

I have come across too many directors who feel they know everything and there is no room to learn more. I know I am learning more and more every day and this shapes my practice and keeps me abreast of current thinking and educational theories. I have noticed there are directors' groups now forming and this is something many in the sector are now seeking. However, it saddens me that there are still some settings that choose to remain isolated and I think that business and competition may be the reason for them not connecting with other programs. If we all networked and created communities of learners then children and their families and staff would benefit.