**[Mary Holwell]:** Listening to you really affirms the view that babies and young children can do so much. And this leads me to think about how do early childhood professionals make this knowledge and learning visible in the documentation that they develop. From your perspective, do you think that there's a need to present this type of learning and development to others, and should we be doing it in a different or more creative way? And what might this look like?

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** I think it starts by knowing their, baby's actual developmental capacities. And in lots of ways that means starting where they are at and what do you see before you and building from there, because then you can plan and document. I think, in the same ways we do with older children because really the cycle is the same, it's just what we're observing might be qualitatively different. I think, yes, we need to put it out there. I mean, that's a big part of my work now. If you do read the last line of that, ‘if the early learning matters start with the babies’. I guess I'll put that out there now, that happened at the end of a research day with colleagues who are from primary education, secondary education, tertiary education, pedagogy education and praxis is the focus. And really I've been the first person from early childhood education in Australia to be using this theory, and the way they were talking was similar to what Suzy was saying, it was as if it just starts when they come into kindergarten.

And so that last line, ‘if early learning matters, start with the babies’ was said by me, slamming my hand down on a table. I think we need to be active, we need to be advocates in a vocal way. So, a part of that is being intentional about showcasing their sophisticated practices. Make a night of it. If you want to, you can do it in different ways, and the first ideas that I had were using videos because that's a really helpful way, I think, for people to actually see what's happening. PowerPoint presentations. I don’t know, I like a good PowerPoint presentation so that's just me. But looping back to the few answers, again, it takes sophisticated and knowledgeable staff to do this.

So then for me, the next question is who have you got in your baby rooms? Why are they there? And again, that to me is a right’s based conversation and there's ethical and professional responsibilities to uphold the rights of babies equal to any other child... I want to say in early childhood education but all the way through. So what do these people know about babies? Is it all anecdotal? One of the things that came out of my PhD was this idea of implicit theories and naive beliefs. Is that what drives our practice? The number of stories I heard about people's babies, "Oh, my baby used to do this so it must be blah, blah, blah." And so there's more.

**[Mary Holwell]:** One of the things that you just said made me have a bit of a smile because we've been having a bit of a talk in our team the other day, and we spoke about the fact that often educators who work with the youngest children in services, sometimes feel that their work isn't highly valued. There's a bit of a view, kind of a story going around that if you work with the older children, you sit at the front end of the plane, you're in the business class, first class. You work with the youngest children, there's a bit of a view that suggests perhaps you're working in economy, you're down the other end of the plane. I think one of the things that you've done for us tonight is reorganised the allocation of the seating and reposition the work that educators and other early childhood professionals are doing with those youngest children. To reposition them at the front end of the plane. That this is important work, that this is really valuable and useful for us to think about and to consider.

And in the context of this, I think you've given us a couple of things that people can take away and immediately think about in their practice. That idea of building resiliency, that idea of taking children back to revisit things and to be curious and from that will build or will come their stronger sense of identity, that one thing leads into another, nothing happens in isolation. I think that's a really important thing for us to think about in the context of these very young children. I'm just going to have a quick look at my notes. The other thing that I think you spoke about that I found very worthwhile from a practice point of view was that it was really important that we remembered that babies do reach out and reach up, and that they do use sophisticated expression. So, if we're looking for those kinds of things in the work we do with young children, then we will be richer for it in terms of what we can offer next.

And that's what our observations are for. To drive what we can offer next, and to drive those conversations that we have with families so that they know what to offer next. Because working with the youngest children puts every educator in that unique position where not only is their day-to-day work with the child important, but they have that wonderful opportunity to build and create further learning opportunities for the child beyond the centre through the way that they engage with that child's family. So all of those things will enrich outcomes for the child. I wonder Andi, just before we close off, whether there's a particular takeaway message that you might like everybody to leave with?

**[Dr Andi Salamon]:** Start with the babies. Start with the babies.

**[Mary Holwell]:** Start with the babies.

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