### Title
What is sustainable learning-rich leadership in early childhood education?

### Overview
This project investigates the nature of sustainable learning-rich leadership in early childhood education. The link between effective leadership, staff development and improved outcomes for children has been established but research on leadership in early childhood education has stalled internationally. This project will advance a new conceptualisation of leadership to enhance the learning and wellbeing of the 1.9 million children attending early childhood education in Australia. The project includes the first national survey of leader health and wellbeing in early childhood education and will use an innovative methodology to develop evidence-based exemplars of sustainable learning-rich leadership for use in leadership development.

### Funding bodies and amount
Centacare Brisbane, City of Knox, The Gowrie Queensland and Independent Schools Victoria (2011-2014, total funding $63,400) Australian Research Council (application under review)

### Research partners
ACU

### Industry partners involved
The Gowrie (Queensland) and Independent Schools Victoria

### Timeline/Duration
2013-2017

### Research Problem
Early childhood education (ECE) faces a crisis of leadership. Early childhood education is a key policy domain for Australian governments and successive governments have identified the need for high-quality ECE to ameliorate the effects of early deprivation and build human capital. Every early childhood service in Australia is now required to designate a suitably qualified and experienced Educational Leader to lead the learning of staff teams. However, empirical research suggests a failure of leadership has arisen because leaders in ECE are oriented toward children’s learning and neglect workforce learning, focusing instead on organizational management and administration. This orientation to learning arises because, as a field, ECE has limited understanding of ‘learning-rich’ leadership work. This project is developing a new theory and practice of leadership-for-learning in early childhood education.

### Findings, including emerging findings
Initial findings confirm that leaders in early childhood services in Australia are confident in the management and administration of services but do not have effective or coherent strategies for fostering the learning of colleagues. Most leaders are employing strategies such as individual performance management to develop colleagues but high rates of staff leave and turnover mean that centre-wide development continues to elude leaders.