

Teachers taught some new tricks

Gathering of early years staff a success at EMPAC

By SIMON CRASE

THE inaugural Alpine Early Years Conference proved to be the ideal forum for people involved in the sector as they converged on EMPAC recently.

Information stalls were set-up in the foyer, and with a theme relating to the Year of Reading, literacy and reading was at the heart of much of the discussion.

Lake View Children's Centre co-educator, Gaby Thomson, has been involved in early children's education for more than a decade and she took plenty from the day-long forum, which included four key speakers and workshop sessions.

"The main thing for me was the reinforcement of the ideas I already have and the practices we already practice," she said.

"It felt inspiring to be doing the right thing by parents and children... in your heart you know anyway, but it's good for me to hear people who are going around the state talking about early child-



TEACHING THE TEACHERS: Lake View Children's Centre educator Gaby Thomson and Alpine Children's Services day care worker/kindergarten assistant Mica Corscadden attend the Alpine Educators Conference at EMPAC.

PHOTO: Simon Crase

Having a close relationship with the children and respecting kids and the family is paramount, as well as an appreciation for development, according to Ms Thomson.

"We're all individuals, we have our own favors, traits, likes, dislikes and these need to be respected," she said.

"We are lucky in kin-

things we believe are right where in primary school it is much more regulated... we can focus on resilience and life skills, you still do the cutting and drawing but there is not the level of achievement so if some can cut out in detail and others only circles, that's OK."

Alpine Children's Services day care worker

taking part in a session based on partnerships and believes they play a critical role in ensuring the best outcomes.

"It's really important to know what is going on in the children's day-to-day lives at home because it can affect the way they develop and grow," she said.

Wandiligong-based educator and speaker Anthea

for engaging all readers and writers from the pre-school years onwards.

Changes stemming from research have led to an understanding of different learning styles and phonemic awareness on an individual basis and the need for a balanced approach from educators.

Alpine Children's Ser-