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# FROM THE Editor



**Three days of listening to inspirational key notes, informative workshop presenters, plus helping to organise prize competitions and run our ECC booth with my fellow ECC colleagues offers up a strange quandary – exhaustion and exhilaration.**

But what a great three days it was! You can read about some of the highlights of this year's conference in this issue. If you didn't make it to the conference this year, seriously consider attending next year – you won't regret it.

If you did attend the ECC Conference I hope you've recovered and now able to share what you've learnt over those three days with your colleagues and maybe even started making some changes to aspects of your programme.

It's never easy implementing change, even minute change, but I encourage you all to share your vision with your colleagues, with your families and with your children, and inspire them all to jump on board and add their thoughts and ideas.

If you've been inspired to make some changes from what you've heard at this year's ECC Conference send me an email, and maybe we can share your initiative in an article or maybe you will want to enter in next year's ECC-Telecom Innovation and Improvement Award!

To find out more about this award, you can read in this issue about the winner, the highly commended entry and the three finalists. Discover why the winning entry stood out above the other finalists and won the award.

Interestingly, three of the finalists had a

focus on ICT, with two centres developing their own software, and another using Facebook. All three were hoping to streamline and improve their programme planning process, as well as allow for deeper understanding and sharing with the parents/whānau of their centres.

One of the sub-themes of this year's ECC Conference was Virtual Spaces: Digital Technologies and Communications in Early Childhood Education, and I know many of you walked away from our key note speaker Brian Peurling and our ICT workshops blown away from the potential that ICT can add to your centre's programme and your children's learning.

In our upcoming Spring issue we hope to share with you some articles on social media and using ICT in ECE. If your centre uses social media, such as Facebook or blogging to reach your families, and you'd like to share your experience let me know. Also if your centre uses ICT with your children we'd also love to hear from you. This could be how children use cameras, videos or digital microscopes in your centre, or how your centre uses various apps or software such as Comic Life, Photo Story or the MoMa Art Lab app. What has your centre discovered and loved?

I'd also love to hear from an ECE centre that has decided not to use ICT with their children, why is this and what can we learn from your example of being ICT free.

Also another upcoming theme is leadership. What makes a great leader? How do you lead your centre through change? If your centre has made successful changes to your programme, share your story with other educators and leaders in ECE. The ECE sector has amazing stories of offering quality ECE, let's share the good news and why children should attend early childhood centres.

If you or your centre has a story to share email me at [info@ecc.org.nz](mailto:info@ecc.org.nz)

**Trudi Sutcliffe**

**Editor**

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# CEO's Message

By Peter Reynolds



## ECE revenue cuts: A brief history

The period since 2010 is the first in the collective memory of our sector in which there has been a sustained decrease in revenue for the majority of centres. The losses have been especially difficult for single centres and small groups who lack the economies of scale of larger groups.

Many centres have been left walking a tightrope trying to both maintain high quality, and cover rising costs with falling incomes.

Centres have lost funding for: the 80 to 99% and 100% qualified teacher funding bands; the Support Grant for Provisionally Registered Teachers; and the equalisation grant that funded pay parity with kindergarten teachers.

Most concerning, we've lost the inflation indexing for key universal subsidies, which means their real value is falling with every new Government Budget.

The Government has, in effect, part-funded its ambitions to increase access for low-income children out of existing revenue for mainstream centres. This, in my view, is the main reason times are tough in ECE.

Centres have been forced to replace qualified staff with the unqualified, slash or end altogether professional development for teachers, and cut teacher-child ratios.

**I understand, even sympathise, with at least some of what is motivating Government to make the cuts.** They see what many see. A system in which too many children in low-income areas miss out on ECE. But while I agree with the goal of lifting educational access for those at the bottom of the social heap, I cannot agree with the Government's means – the cutting of ECE revenue for everyone else.

**In historical terms, I trace the causes of our current predicament to the**

**Before Five policies of the Fourth Labour Government.** Those reforms saw Government pay a funding subsidy based on numbers of children and numbers of hours attended, and led to the rapid growth of our sector as a wide variety of centres evolved to fulfil the needs of an increasingly diverse New Zealand.

### **Before Five, however, had one big flaw.**

It was easier and more profitable to build centres in middle and high-income areas – and more difficult and less profitable to build amongst the poor.

As a result, those children most in need of early childhood education were also those most likely to miss out.

Labour's response, launched in 2007, was 20 Hours Free – a policy designed, in part, to bring the most at-risk of our children into early childhood education by making 20 free hours a week available to all.

### **The policy sounded great in news releases. But it came with three big problems.**

**One:** The lion's share of the new spending was grabbed by middle class families who were, for the most part, accessing early childhood education already.

**Two:** The policy failed to reach thousands of brown and low-income children who continued to get nothing.

**Three:** The policy paid centres at average rates regardless of their expenses. Many centres were much more expensive to operate than others. And as a result, 20 Hours Free payments were simply not enough to cover every centres' costs.

### **When ECE services opted into 20 Hours, in these circumstances, they opened themselves to serious long-term risks.**

One was that a future government might seek to crib back 20-Hours money by cutting other revenue streams.

20 Hours Free, from the viewpoint of the National Party in Opposition, was

outrageously wasteful. Why spend hundreds of millions of dollars of new money on children already accessing ECE? Why not just target new spending at low-income families?

The problem for National in 2008, however, was that 20 Hours was popular with middleclass voters, there was an election to be won, and they promised therefore to retain it.

**Retaining, however, is not the same as supporting.** And the new National Government came to power believing early childhood education was overfunded. But they came believing also that the country faced substantial risk from a rapidly growing underclass of children who might emerge into adulthood undereducated, unemployed, and inclined to crime and welfare payouts.

This is how, in my view, we came to our present dilemma: a Government cutting ECE revenue for mainstream centres (which we do not like) in order to fund increasing access for families at the bottom of the social heap (which we do like).

**The ECC calls this policy 'funding cuts by stealth'.** Government cuts centre revenue in ways voting parents are likely to overlook, and diverts the money to help fund new services for children from low-income families.

**From National's point of view it is all justified.** Justified because a little drop in what they see as excessive funding levels for most centres is, in their view, a cheap price to pay for bringing ECE access to those who need it most.

For many centres, however, the experience is revenue cuts, painful reductions in quality, and the very serious risk that inflation will be used many years into the future to reduce the real value of Government funding for the majority of New Zealand's early childhood education centres.



# So you know



## Welcome

The following early childhood centres joined the Early Childhood Council recently:

- Rainbow Bears Preschool, Henderson
- Tiny Tots Childcare Centre, Northcote, Auckland
- Palms Preschool, Unsworth Heights, Auckland
- Jojo's Childcare Ltd, Kumeu
- Above & Beyond Education & Childcare, Tauranga
- Good Seeds, Mangere
- Glenview Kindy, Hamilton
- Lovely Lotus Childcare Company, Palmerston North
- West Harbour Kindergarten, Auckland
- Eden Campus Early Learning Centre, Mt Eden
- New Shoots Albany, Auckland
- Windsor Park Hub Ltd, Mairangi Bay, Auckland
- Western Heights Pre-school, Rotorua
- Artemis Early Learning Ltd – this includes 7 centres situated in Christchurch, Nelson, Blenheim, Masterton, Wellington, Invercargill and Westport
- Whiz Kids Centre, Kaikohe
- Baby Bears Early Learning Centre 2012, Te Awamutu
- Remuera Discovery Express, Remuera, Auckland
- Zomax Group who have 6 centres around Auckland: Kids Inn-Kakapos, Kids Inn-Nursery, Kids Inn-Fantails,

Tuatara Preschool, Dragonfly Early Learning Centre and Grey Lynn Preschool

- Smiley Faces Educare, Upper Hutt
- Abacus Montessori Preschool, Christchurch
- Little Pearls Educare, Mt Albert, Auckland (Provisional)
- Curious Curls Early Learning Centre, Hamilton (Provisional)
- BJ's Childcare Ltd, Whangarei (Provisional)
- Kid's Barn Child Care Centre, Hawera (Provisional)

## ECC Support Networks for Centre Managers

Over the last year the ECC have set up Support Networks for ECC members. These meetings are informal social get-togethers for an hour or so.

These meetings provide a forum and a source of support for centre managers and owners to discuss any recent issues and to share experiences and advice.

These network groups are an important source of support for participating members and can be 'uplifting' when you know you can confidentially discuss issues with those who understand.

Currently we have three network meetings in Auckland: North West Support Network, North Shore Support Network and Central East Support Network. We also have support network meetings running in Tauranga, Wellington and Christchurch. If you live in one of these areas and haven't yet attended a meeting, I encourage you to give one a go; it will be worth the time invested.

If your area isn't currently having a meeting, and you would like the ECC to set one up, please contact Trudi: [info@ecc.org.nz](mailto:info@ecc.org.nz).

## Partnering with Parents Update



Parents and Teachers who attended a Partnering with Parents session at Early Impressions in Johnsonville, Wellington.

Last year, the Early Childhood Council (ECC) commenced a new project called Partnering with Parents in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) and Plunket.

'Partnering with Parents' is an early childhood centre based programme that brings together parents, early childhood education (ECE) staff, health professionals and others to answer the question: 'How can we best work together to support the children we all care for?'

The programme was piloted at four sites in Tokoroa, Hamilton, Masterton and Avalon in Lower Hutt. The sites were varied in the communities they serve, how they serve them, their numbers and their management structures. An evaluation of this first phase shows that the project shows strong potential to reach its five goals:

### Goals

- Enabling the formation of reciprocal, respectful relationships between early childhood centre staff and their families and whānau, thus strengthening the home service link
- Establishing a system of parents,



teachers, health professionals and other early years professionals sharing knowledge

- Utilises currently available parenting and teaching resources to build the ability of parent teacher communities to care for the children in their joint care
- Promotes a continuous learning environment with children taking part in the conversations as appropriate
- Grow parent leaders who can champion parenting, thus strengthening the ECE community of families to take the messages into the wider community.

## Phase Two

There are now fourteen trained facilitators for this project and the ECC are in the middle of phase two of the project that involves ten more early childhood centres in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North and Wellington. Emphasis in phase two was placed on selecting centres with high numbers of Māori and Pasifika communities and those in lower socioeconomic areas. There is also one teen parent unit involved. Long term evaluations are underway.

The ECE centres that have been involved in this programme have reported some exciting results.

**"The process is stunning"**  
**"It should be offered to every ECE"**  
**"It gets a shift in consciousness in a very short space of time"**

A Partnering with Parents workshop held at the ECC conference in Rotorua attracted keen interest from many conference attendees, most of whom are centre managers, owners and staff, all of who are keen to have better engagement with the parents of children at their centre.

A fully facilitated Partnering with Parents programme is made up of three sessions and involves:

- The identification of parental issues
- Professionals listening to parents

- The formation, by health and education professionals, of responses to parental issues
- The development of plans to strengthen and maintain the relationships between all parties
- Parenting education and support as needed.

The long term aim is that Partnering with Parents can be applied in all ECE settings. The ideal outcomes sought are that there will be a consistent voice between educators and parents, contribute to school readiness and that ECE centres will become known as places of commonality and support.

## Contact

For any questions email: [policy@ecc.org.nz](mailto:policy@ecc.org.nz)

## Weblinks

<http://www.facebook.com/Early.Childhood.Council>  
<http://www.familyservices.govt.nz/skip/>

## New Zealand Teachers Council Te Pouherenga Kaiako o Aotearoa update

### Guidelines for Induction and Mentoring and Mentor Teachers

The Council is supporting a further 15 workshops between May and July 2013 to provide additional opportunities to become familiar with the Guidelines. Workshops will be advertised through Kaimānga.

### Appraisal for Teachers and the Registered Teacher Criteria

The Appraisal project is now underway. It comprises 32 cohorts of leaders and appraisers across the country in a professional learning programme of 15 months duration. The first of the workshops began in April with the second stage beginning in August. The 3rd workshop in the series will take place in 2014. In between the workshops participants will be engaged in professional learning groups and online webinars. There was an overwhelming number of applications to participate in this project and 1700 people have been accommodated.

All resources used in this project will be available via our website so that they could be used to assist any centre with a review of their current appraisal processes.

## Website Refresh

You will have noticed a very different look to our website and our Kaimānga

e-newsletter. We welcome any feedback. If you are looking for resources and can't find them use the search function. Eventually all resources will be migrated to the new site.

## ECE Policy Adviser

Don't forget that Deborah Wansbrough, our ECE Policy adviser at the Council, can be contacted regarding ECE issues: [Deborah.wansbrough@teacherscouncil.govt.nz](mailto:wansbrough@teacherscouncil.govt.nz).

You can follow us on twitter: Follow @TeachersCouncil

## Update from the Education Review Office

As part of its new approach to reviewing early childhood services, the Education Review Office (ERO) has introduced four different review return times.

From 6 May 2013, most early childhood services reviewed will be given one of the following review return times based on how well placed the service is to promote positive learning outcomes for children:

- Very well placed – The next ERO review will be in four years
- Well placed – The next ERO review will be in three years
- Requires further development – The next ERO review will be within two years
- Not well placed – The next ERO review will be in consultation with the Ministry of Education.

The four different return times give ERO the flexibility to spend more time in early childhood services that need support, and less time with those that consistently provide high quality early childhood education. ERO and the Ministry will work closely with services that need to improve and help them build capability.

ERO has developed criteria to support the four judgements and return times. ERO distributed draft criteria for comment earlier this year. A summary of the sector's response to the draft is on ERO's website, as is the refined criteria and review return times:

**[www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/For-Early-Childhood-Services-and-Nga-Kohanga-Reo/ERO-Reviews-of-Early-Childhood-Services](http://www.ero.govt.nz/Review-Process/For-Early-Childhood-Services-and-Nga-Kohanga-Reo/ERO-Reviews-of-Early-Childhood-Services)**

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# The Budget

## - is it really child play?

By Peter Reynolds



It is, as I write this, the day after the announcement of the National Government's sixth Budget. Here are some of the "pros" and "cons" as I see them.

Announcement	Pros	Cons
New investment of \$172.5 million over four years.	This leaves the total spent in ECE to \$1.5 billion.	But existing centres, and the families they serve, will see little of the new funding.
The investment of an additional \$41 million in equity funding to support vulnerable children.	This is the same level of increase as last year, and will create access for many who currently miss out on ECE.	This money will do nothing to address the revenue short fall for centres in middle income areas.
The investment of \$39 million in a universal adjustment for non-salary related costs for all ECE services.	All ECE services will receive a 2% cost adjustment.  This works out to between \$0.01 and \$0.08 per funded child hour; or around \$3,000 per annum for a 50-child centre.	The increase does not apply to salaries. It is therefore only a 0.69% increase; less than the rate of inflation.  It is, in fact, yet another cut to the real value of government subsidies for ECE centres.
The establishment of a new Services Performance Fund of \$12.1 million to support under-performing ECE services.	This is new money to help bring poorly-performing services up to standard.	There is a risk that services identified as "poorly-performing" may be stigmatised.
The investment of \$80.5 million to help meet the target of 98% participation in ECE.  This includes \$24 million for supporting community action groups and trialling new purchasing arrangements with large providers, and \$56.5 million for contingencies.	More children in ECE, especially participation by low-income families, will bring big benefits for both the children in terms of educational achievement, and the country in terms of higher levels of employment (once the children are adults) and lower numbers on benefits.	The emphasis on new service solutions may be at the expense of existing services.

## Is this Budget good or bad for ECE?

**We should not be churlish.** \$172.5 million in extra funding is a substantial amount. The additional \$41 million in equity funding will increase participation amongst our most vulnerable children. The additional \$39 million for the non-salary related universal ECE subsidy is better than nothing. \$12.1 million in special funding to support poorly-performing services acknowledges that a minority of services are struggling, and provides money for the Ministry to help. And the \$80.5 million to lift the participation rate will bring some of

our most needy children into ECE.

### But....

The increase in the non-salary universal subsidy will not cover inflation once salaries are taken into account, and amounts to a funding cut in real terms. Add this to the flood of revenue cuts since 2010, and it is not surprising that many centres will see little to celebrate in Budget 2013.

The Budget sees the complete removal of the Support Grant for Provisionally

Registered Teachers, meaning there is now no government support for the professional development of ECE teachers. A sharp contrast with the support available for primary school teachers.

The sustained revenue cuts of the past three years suggest to us both a Government belief that the sector is not using its funding efficiently, and a concurrent conviction that a greater share of ECE costs should be carried by parents.

This makes it more important than



ever that our sector demonstrate the many great outcomes we achieve. The Government is progressing its review of the ECE funding system, a review that will include outcomes against which

the performance of our sector is to be measured. It is critical to the future of ECE in New Zealand that we engage with this work.

In the meantime, I would characterise

Budget 2013 as a B+ when it comes to getting some of our most needy children into ECE - but a D when it comes to the maintenance of quality in the vast majority of ECE centres.

## PS - the new funding rates in detail

ECE Funding Rates (GST inclusive)			To 30 June 2013	From 1 July 2013	Change
20 Hours ECE	All Day	80%+	\$11.25	\$11.33	\$0.08
		50-79%	\$10.25	\$10.32	\$0.07
		25-49%	\$9.01	\$9.07	\$0.06
		0-24%	\$8.22	\$8.27	\$0.05
	Sessional	80%+	\$6.20	\$6.24	\$0.04
		50-79%	\$5.63	\$5.67	\$0.04
		25-49%	\$4.98	\$5.01	\$0.03
		0-24%	\$4.60	\$4.63	\$0.03
Non-20 Hours	All Day	80%+	\$6.60	\$6.64	\$0.04
		50-79%	\$5.69	\$5.73	\$0.04
		25-49%	\$4.54	\$4.57	\$0.03
		0-24%	\$3.77	\$3.80	\$0.03
	Sessional	80%+	\$4.81	\$4.84	\$0.03
		50-79%	\$4.30	\$4.33	\$0.03
		25-49%	\$3.70	\$3.72	\$0.02
		0-24%	\$3.33	\$3.35	\$0.02
Under 2s	All Day	80%+	\$11.93	\$12.01	\$0.08
		50-79%	\$10.80	\$10.87	\$0.07
		25-49%	\$8.72	\$8.78	\$0.06
		0-24%	\$7.45	\$7.50	\$0.05
	Sessional	80%+	\$10.61	\$10.68	\$0.07
		50-79%	\$9.65	\$9.71	\$0.06
		25-49%	\$7.86	\$7.91	\$0.05
		0-24%	\$6.84	\$6.89	\$0.05

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# Budget 13

## Early Childhood Education

**Budget 13 was announced on Thursday 21 May. Despite the tight economic climate, Government has invested an additional \$172.5 million over four years in early childhood education.**

Budget 13 will see the Government's total investment in early childhood education in 2013/14 at \$1.5 billion, up from \$860 million in 2007/08. This is more than ever before. Our expenditure per child on early childhood education is one of the highest in the OECD (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development).

**Ensuring each and every child gets a good education is the most important thing Government can do to raise living standards, and create a more productive and competitive economy.** Budget 13 reflects the Government's strong focus on supporting priority families to participate in early childhood education. This is driven by the Better Public Services target that in 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in quality early childhood education.

**The Government's 98% target aims to improve participation in quality early childhood education by those currently least likely to engage - Māori, Pasifika and children from low socio-economic backgrounds.** Achieving the 98% target will support improved outcomes for vulnerable children. This is because a significant body of research shows the effect of early childhood education on student achievement throughout schooling and continuing into improved skills and earnings later in life. This in turn supports the growth of the New Zealand economy by maximising our human capital, and reducing costs related to health, justice and welfare.

**Budget 13 includes four early childhood education initiatives:**

- *Funding for the Better Public Services 98% Early Childhood Education*

*target:* A total of \$80.535 million over four years is allocated for costs directly associated with the Better Public Services 98% target.

- *Increase to Equity Funding:* \$41.3 million is being invested over four years in Equity Funding to support early childhood education services that work with children from our most vulnerable communities.
- *Cost adjustment:* \$38.6 million over the next four years will increase early childhood education funding rates.
- *Service Performance Fund:* \$12.120 million over four years is being invested in a Service Performance Fund to ensure services providing early childhood education to our vulnerable communities operate sustainably and responsively.

### Funding for Better Public Services 98% Early Childhood Education Target

The Government is committing a total of \$80.535 million over four years for costs directly associated with achieving the 98% participation rate.

This \$80.535 million recognises the cost of enrolling additional children who are likely to be hard to reach and who require support over and above what currently exists.

**Early childhood education services enrolling children attract subsidy funding which results in higher costs for Government.** We have estimated that the cost of this additional participation will be approximately \$56.535 million over four years.

**We recognise that the majority of children who are currently not participating and their families and whānau need extra support before they can access early childhood education.** An additional \$24 million (over four years) will be used to support action groups in high priority communities by:

- Establishing key relationships with community organisations and non-government organisations
- Drawing on partners from outside the Ministry (who have knowledge, expertise, and resources that we do not have) as well as contributing Government support (\$2 million a year)
- Trial new outcomes-based purchase agreements with large providers. These agreements will give large early childhood education providers responsibility, and incentives, for raising participation in targeted areas. This is a new way of working that will see Government working closely with the private sector to achieve better outcomes for our most vulnerable children (\$4 million a year).

### Increase to Equity Funding

A total of \$41.3 million is being invested over four years in Equity Funding to support those early childhood education services that work with children from our most vulnerable communities. The value of the Equity Funding pool has tripled since 2011, when eligibility for Equity Funding was extended to all early childhood education services (previously only community-based services were eligible).

**Equity Funding is the Ministry's main targeted early childhood education funding stream.** Funding will go to early childhood education services in low socio-economic communities and services that deliver early childhood education in languages other than English (such as Te Reo Māori or Pasifika languages). This will also serve to support the Government's target of 98% early childhood education participation in 2016.

Equity Funding is being increased for Components A and B by 0.11c to 0.39c per child funded hour (depending on a service's Equity Index rating) and for Component C by \$110.95 per month per eligible service.



**If your service is interested in applying for equity funding, applications will open in October 2013 for new services that opened between 1 October 2012 and 31 March 2013 and services who wish to apply for a review. Further information is available on: [www.lead.ece.govt.nz](http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz)**

### Cost adjustment

The Government is providing an additional \$38.6 million over the next four years to increase early childhood education funding rates. This is to recognise cost pressures in the early childhood education sector, and to help reduce the need for fee increases to parents.

This initiative provides a 2% cost adjustment to the non-salary component of early childhood education funding rates.

**Early childhood education services will receive an extra \$0.02 to \$0.08 per funded child hour.** The average increase amounts to around \$0.05 per child funded hour which means a service with 50 children would have increased annual funding of around \$3,000 a year.

Within the current fiscal context, providing universal increases to early childhood education funding rates will help to recognise some of the increased costs faced by services, while also taking into account the Government's current fiscal position, and its increasing focus on better targeting resources.

New funding rates will come into effect from 1 July 2013.

### Service Performance Fund

The Service Performance Fund will provide high-intensity intervention in poorly-performing early childhood education services in priority communities.

The Ministry of Education will identify poorly performing early childhood education services (i.e. services with governance and management problems, difficulty delivering quality of teaching and learning experiences or that are unresponsive to the identity, language and culture of their communities).

The Ministry will work with these early childhood education services to identify areas for development, and contract appropriate expertise to address these development needs.

The early childhood education services will be monitored by the Ministry through licensing actions.

The aim of the Service Performance Fund is to ensure that early childhood education services are:

- Sustainable
- Successfully enrolling and retaining priority children
- Offering quality teaching and learning experiences

The Service Performance Fund consolidates investment previously focused on increasing numbers of registered and qualified teachers to improving quality in poorly-performing early childhood education services in priority communities by moving quickly to provide high-intensity intervention.

### Savings

The Ministry was asked to identify savings as a way of maximising the funding available to contribute to the 98% participation goal.

**The early childhood education sector has had success in increasing the number of qualified and registered teachers over the past 10 years.** Our qualification requirements for the early childhood education sector, both in terms of level of qualification and the number of teachers that hold it, are very high by international standards. Now that the vast majority of teacher-led services are being funded for more than 80% of registered teachers, the need for teacher supply initiatives has reduced.

**There has also been greatly reduced demand for the Provisionally Registered Teacher and Early Childhood Education Service Teacher Education grants as a result of changes made in Budget 2010.**

In the last year, only 165 Provisionally Registered Teacher grants and 68 Early Childhood Education Service Teacher Education grants have been paid out. This means that less than a quarter of a percent of early childhood education services received a grant.

We will monitor teacher supply data, and reconsider the introduction of teacher supply initiatives if they are required. In the mean time, we will focus our efforts on ensuring those services in greatest need of help receive timely, intensive support.

**Further information about Budget 2013 is available on the Ministry of Education website at: <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/Budget.aspx>.**

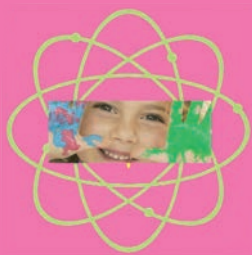


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# Announcing the 2013 ECC - Telecom Innovation & Improvement Award Winner

The Early Childhood Council recognised last year that there was a need to promote and celebrate great ECC ideas. This led to this year's inaugural ECC-Telecom Innovation & Improvement Award. This award will be an annual recognition of innovation and improvement within the early childhood education sector.

The Award recognises examples of innovative practice or improvement in management, curriculum delivery, ECE teaching practice or in some way defined by the centre.

Innovation must be significantly innovative rather than a refinement of something normally done, with the

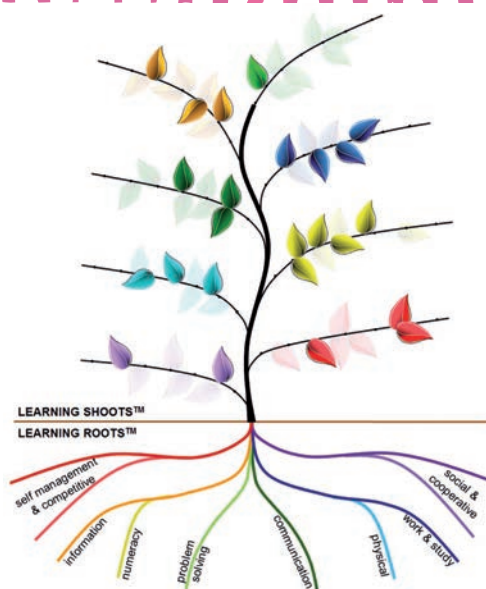
improvement being significant and reflect some aspect of the centre's normal practice.

For this inaugural award, there was a fantastic response with 15 ECC members entering an Expression of Interest. From the 15 entries, five finalists were chosen. These short listed candidates, after submitting a full application, were then rigorously evaluated by a trained team. These reports then went to a judging panel comprising of a sector representative, a representative from the Ministry of Education, and a representative from the New Zealand Business Excellence Foundation, where a winner was chosen.

Congratulations to the inaugural winners of the 2013 Early Childhood Council-Telecom Innovation & Improvement Award, Dr Darius and Nikeeta Singh, for their innovation Learning Roots and Shoots.™ Nikeeta and Darius own and operate two centres, Fern Garden Preschool and Childcare Centre in Tauranga, and Magic Kingdom Childcare and Early Learning Centre in Auckland.

Also congratulations to Ross Penman, Prodigy Preschools, who were placed as Highly Commended for their innovation, The Programme Manager. (To find out more, turn the page.)

## Introducing the Winner: Learning Roots and Shoots™



**Together Dr Darius and Nikeeta Singh developed Learning Roots and Shoots™, a visual, online representation of educational inputs and learning outputs as achieved against the NZ ECE Curriculum.**

The *Learning Roots and Shoots™* model lets you "visualize" a child's entire learning history and learning directions at a single glance.

Families can securely access their child's learning tree online, which holds all learning stories and learning outcomes ever documented about their child from

0-5 years in the form of colour coded roots, branches and leaves.

Each leaf is colour-coded and chronologically placed on the child's tree to represent core skills, interests and achievements as they emerge.

Parents can click any leaf to open the full story that showcases the





**Early Childhood Council**



identified attribute.

The core objectives of this innovation was that the centre owner's core philosophy for their two centres resides in establishing strong partnerships between centre and home, and to create meaningful communication and deeper engagement between parents and teachers via the *Learning Roots and Shoots™* tool.

The evaluators noted that the *Learning Roots and Shoots™* innovations' key strengths were founded in the initiation and leadership of the project. Darius and Nikeeta identified specific objectives at the outset and these remained at the forefront for the duration of the project. All key stakeholders were invited to participate and provided essential information and feedback throughout, including parents and teachers within their own organisation, and the Ministry of Education have also been included in providing feedback. Stakeholders were actively involved in decision-making and their viewpoints were always sought and never assumed. Progress of the project was communicated at regular intervals and opportunity was given for parents to up-skill their awareness and use of electronic information sharing (emails/internet) in order to support their ability to interact with the project. This commitment to customer focus is seen to be an essential part of the success of this innovation.

A comprehensive approach was used to plan and implement the *Learning Roots and Shoots™* innovation. A trademarked method called *Research, Develop & Deploy* (also invented by Dr Darius Singh) was used to work methodically through phases of development with further feedback and feasibility being analysed at the end of each phase. The customer (parents) remained involved, with their needs and expectations considered a key driver of the project and provided valuable feedback in how the final innovation would eventually be represented. There is clear evidence the innovation was actively project managed

and followed a systematic process.

An end date was identified as the centre's impending Education Review and work was set to this timetable. A measured approach continued with regular reviews against the timetable without compromising the detailed involvement of parents and teachers and continuing refinement.

**"A useful and innovative framework for documenting children's learning, interests, next steps and life contexts which includes parent and child voice."**  
- ERO (Education Review Office) April 2012.

Since launching the *Learning Roots and Shoots™* in November 2011, there has been a significant surge in email correspondence by parents together with anecdotal feedback from teachers of longer and deeper discussions during drop off and pick up times. Discussions are focussed about specific interests and skills emerging in children and are directly related to how the invention could be used further.

Staff planning meetings are now efficiently conducted as each child's tree is used as a centralised and coordinated reference of all learning stories written by all teachers. This is used as a guide (but not prescriptive) for general directions in which their interests and skills are emerging and where the extensions and future activities could be based. This is then collated with other children so that centre-wide directions can be plotted also.

**Receiving feedback from new users and implementing that information into new versions and upgrades of the innovation**

**have started.** New work has begun and changes can be expected particularly in the areas relating to children under 2 years and also including dispositions and schema.

**While in its early stages, interest has been generated both within NZ and from further away in Australia.** A license has been given to *Growing Kiwis* to market this innovation and it is slowly being rolled out to other parts of the sector. Revenue is now being received from this invention with the potential for further financial rewards being imminent.

Darius and Nikeeta, together with their staff and parents, have developed a new and unique way of communicating the NZ ECE Curriculum and the principles and goals it expects children to achieve while enrolled in NZ ECE services. Parents are empowered by use of this new system as they have a better understanding of what their children are doing, why that is valuable, and what they are achieving. Dialogue between teachers and parents has been enhanced and there is evidence of a more shared understanding of children's development, the holistic way this happens and an appreciation of what teachers are doing for children. There is now more authentic partnership between the centre and home.

**Judges' comments:** *This innovation demonstrates impressive collaboration between children, centre staff and parents and noted the centre "went the extra mile" to support parents. It incorporates an effective blend of service and technology to support a child's learning and demonstrates a great innovation for the sector, not just in New Zealand.*



## Highly Commended Placing:

## 'Programme Manager'

– Online system for planning, communicating and assessing curriculum plans

This innovation is called **The Programme Manager** and is an online system for preparing and scheduling curriculum plans. It has been developed by Ross Penman and his team at Prodigy Learning Centres; a group of four early childhood centres in the Auckland region.

Having noticed in a series of annual management reviews that programme planning was inconsistent across the organisation, Ross embarked on a significant project to improve current practice. The objective was to develop a web-based application to improve curriculum delivery including planning records and evaluation as well as storage of these records for future reference and compliance.

Plans are able to be rated and assessed for suitability, as well as including key information such as links to the NZ ECE Curriculum. Each activity plan is available to all staff across the organisation, including other locations, and is moderated for quality.

**The Programme Manager has been developed and improved over several years, with regular opportunity having been given to team members to be informed of its progress and to contribute to its development.** New enhancements were identified during this process and items such as menus, recipes and links to children's photos have all been added to its functionality and has improved the overall user experience. These users, or stakeholders, are both parents and teachers. Benefits for both parties have been considerable as is seen in the results. This has included more efficient use of teacher's time, improved use of knowledge and experience across a multi-license organisation and ready access for parents to

their children's programme and the learning outcomes associated with it.

**Teachers now have the ability to plan for the day or the week with the click of the mouse and a 'drag-and-drop' action into their daily timetable.** Plans can be printed and displayed for all to see and are available online for both management and parents to refer to. Evaluation of effectiveness of the programmes has been enhanced with a vast improvement in the volume of evaluations that are being conducted by teachers. Plans are flexible enough that last minute changes can be accommodated on-the-run or retrospectively as is often necessary in a busy ECE centre.

*The Programme Manager* also sets out to benefit children by providing a wider range of proven activity ideas and plans that teachers are able to draw on, hence providing a more varied range of experiences for children.

Each activity is required to have a rationale for choosing it (for the target children) and a note of how it may have been adapted.

Teachers now use *The Programme Manager* on a regular weekly basis for planning and up to 90% of planned activities are efficiently a re-use of previous proven plans which significantly cuts down preparation time and improves the range and creativity of plans.

**To date *The Programme Manager* has experienced limited success in being promoted for use by other services.**

Ross explains that this is largely due to the various ways that ECE services approach their planning processes and that *The Programme Manager* is most likely suited to multi-license organisations with a disciplined view of directives for planning. Opportunities exist perhaps for this to be explored more by trials or focus groups with other organisations and similarly with groups of parents who could also provide more input as an end-user of this product.

Prodigy's main objective was to develop

a web-based application that enables each day's activities to be planned, using a standard activity record structure which incorporates objectives and links to Te Whāriki goals and a suitable description, which enables the activity to be re-used by other teachers, where appropriate.

**Judges' comments:** *The judges felt strongly that this entry deserved a "highly commended" acknowledgement. The centre clearly identified a problem, followed a clear process to identify, design and deliver a workable solution and signalled the ability for a wider group of services to use the "The Programme Manager" tool.*



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Finalist:

# Promoting Respect for Aotearoa through Sustainability

Elim Kiwi Kids Preschool in Nelson is a community based Christian preschool that values diversity, a positive team environment and works in partnership with whānau/families, specialist organisations and their community.

Their entry for the ECC-Telecom Innovation & Improvement Award came about through a review of their curriculum with a focus on sustainability, which had been prompted by student teachers. The improvement was to improve the process of sustainability at the centre and to reduce bio-degradable and non-degradable waste.

Through this review Elim Kiwi Kids Preschool developed a new procedure under their curriculum policy. The aims of this new procedure were to create and improve practices for sustainability through:

- To endeavour to help tamariki/ children to connect and contribute to the world
- Become socially responsible and show respect to the environment

- Teach the three R's: Reduce, Recycle and Reuse

Examples of how Elim Kiwi Kids were to do this include:

- Teach and encourage recycling
- Visit a recycling centre, examine numbers on plastic
- Reuse plastic containers; use boxes for construction
- Encourage no packaging for lunches- use containers, etc



- Vegetable and herb garden; fruit trees
- Compost, worm farm, bokashi bin
- Caring for nature
- Share books and resources about sustainability

- Encourage cloth nappies
- Fix broken products
- Collect natural resources

This improvement has also led to an enhanced team environment, improved their facilities, and broadened their curriculum.

The evaluators commented that one of the key indicators to the success of this improvement was the reduction of waste in the children's lunch boxes.

The evaluators also added that this has been an admirable goal which Elim Kiwi Kids Preschool has taken very seriously and have made some wonderful changes to their practice. They mentioned that the centre has involved many stakeholders and there is still room for other bodies to become involved and that by working with other agencies such as a local re-cycling company and getting their efforts noted in the local paper will help the project to grow.

**Judges' comments:** Elim Kiwi Kids' innovation on sustainability provided a great example of what we can do in New Zealand with staff and children learning more about sustainability and recycling as a result.

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## Finalist:

# How Professor Fizz-Pop takes the 'sigh' out of science in Early Childhood Education!

**Richmond Early Learning (Artemis) in Nelson is a spacious, purpose built facility. It was recognised through a spontaneous self review that teachable moments and children's interests in the area of science and technology were not being supported. This appeared to be due to teachers' limited understanding of scientific questioning and content knowledge. Curriculum Manager, Joanne Bates, decided to become more confident in this area and empower her colleagues to lift the scientific practice in their learning environment. Joanne came up with the concept of *Professor Fizz-Pop*, a wacky scientist who would visit the four year olds once a week and conduct wacky science experiences based on the current interests of the children.**

Joanne led and managed the process improvement but the teaching team worked together to formulate the vision and objectives for this improvement using collaborative leadership.

## Key objectives:

- Bring science into the classroom through a visual and interactive vehicle (the Professor).
- Systematically and critically engage with professional scientific literature to reflect on and refine teaching practice.
- Engage children in meaningful learning experiences to support learning across all the domains.
- Encourage positive parent/teacher interactions through discussions around *Professor Fizz-Pop* and how science fits into the curriculum, which in turn promotes greater awareness of the early childhood curriculum.

Finding resources– particularly perishable ones– were often difficult to source, with Joanne building up a network of professionals in the wider community through professional dialogue, such as he local chemist, a local high school science department, the fisheries (when a shark

was needed to dissect), the abattoir (when they needed some sheep's lungs to test their theories on inhaling and exhaling, which also turned into a tactile experiment as well as a dissection) and Crop and Food Research who supplied live baby snapper.

## The Benefits:

- Smiles and looks of wonder on children's faces when engaged in experiments with the Professor.
- Increased level of engagement in scientific enquiry within the classroom.
- Increased understanding of science based concepts and some associated terminology.
- Increased attention spans of children while engaged with experiments.
- Increased ability to recall experiments that *Professor Fizz-Pop* had engaged the children in several months prior.
- Parents showing an increased interest in the science part of our programme by asking questions about *Professor Fizz-Pop* and the experiments.

Experiments over the last two years include: Dissecting sheep's lungs, Turning milk into plastic, Green eggs and ham, Elephant toothpaste, and Meta-cognitive processes.

Highlights include being published in 'The Space' magazine for the innovative and creative experiments and being asked by New Zealand Tertiary College to do a presentation to their students.

One experiment, Green eggs and ham, came from a query from a child. After reading the Dr Seuss book, *Green Eggs and Ham*, they asked whether or not *Professor Fizz-Pop* could do that. After some research and experimentation the Professor created green eggs with an enthusiastic group of children using the alkaline from red cabbage and adding to the white of an egg that was cooking in a pan; which turned it green! This

experiment was taken ever further and they created their own book of 'Green Eggs and Ham' which was laminated and then sold to families to fund more scientific resources. The books were sold to 40% of their classroom parents.



**The evaluators commented that there was no doubt *Professor Fizz-Pop* had improved the science teaching of the teaching team and has engaged and increased the children's interests in science.** The challenge now is to ensure all the work done is now not lost, with opportunities now for the centre to extend its science areas with activities which children can manage with little or no help from teachers or possibly more participation with parents. They also commented that Joanne has identified a way in which children can identify with a character which has sparked a different way to teach and wonder if this idea could now be transferred into many other areas of the curriculum, maybe extending *Professor Fizz-Pop's* whānau!

**Judges comments:** The judges felt *Professor Fizz-Pop* was an effective way to get great exemplars of science across to children. The breadth of science covered was incredible.



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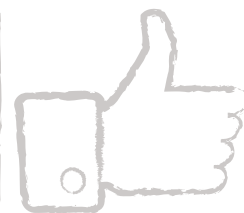


## Engage Parents - Empower Teachers - Educate Children



## Finalist:

## ICT - Facebook



## – Sweet Early Childhood Memories

Topcare Early Learning was established in April 2008 and is a teacher-led service for children from 2-5 years old in the Papatoetoe community. It aims to provide a high quality of Education and Care for preschoolers to develop a healthy life attitude, problem solving skills, literacy and numeracy in preparation for Primary School, focussing on small group learning based on children's interests in a family orientated fun, caring environment and respecting and acknowledging the diverse ethnic cultures they have within their centre amongst children, staff, families/ Whānau and community.

In 2010 Topcare joined Facebook originally for just sharing the children's photos with parents, but by 2011 Topcare had added the monthly programme activities and

centre activities that they had done with the children. As Topcare began to develop the teachers' learning stories skills, the centre started to focus and identify individual and group interests for centre planning, during the process they realised that Facebook could be used as a planning programme tool in staff programme meetings.

Topcare is now using Facebook as a tool for developing their children's portfolios and programme planning. Facebook was chosen as it was seen as being a modern way to connect with busy parents in their childcare centre. Parents can view the centre curriculum by just pushing a button in their mobile. Teachers can also easily view the children's stories, identify the learning goals and plan forward.

The evaluators commented that Centre Manager Jacqueline Hui is committed in her desire to make programme planning easier and less time consuming for teachers. She also values parent-teacher partnerships, which is one of the strengths of this innovation.

The evaluators suggest that an opportunity now exists for Jacqueline to share her vision with the teaching team to further extend their engagement with social media as a tool for programming planning.

**Judges' comments:** The judges felt that Topcare's use of Facebook to aid in parental involvement in a child's portfolio development and learning opportunities was a good example of taking an innovative idea and making it happen.



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## Process



- Taking photos
- Downloading photos
- Categorising photos
- Teacher's regular discussions
- Follow up and extensions
- Monitoring

## Benefits

- Increasing parents engagement: Connecting with busy parents by allowing them to just press a button in their mobile or desktop computer.
- Time saving: Enables teachers to maximise non-contact time by developing the program cycle in Facebook.
- Identify learning goals: Basis for planning, evaluating & improving curriculum programmes.
- Economic way for reporting: ERO review assessment and parents.

## Measurements for Success

- The parents' Facebook satisfactory survey.

- Counting the parents' participation rate.

- Teacher's comments

## Hurdles

- Making sure that the spontaneous play of the children are captured and documented in Facebook.
- The spontaneous play of the children's interests are followed up, supported and extended.
- The teachers reflect and make changes in the environment set up, routine or practice.

## Sensitivity

- Positive, respectful and meaningful
- Culturally appropriate
- Signed agreement
- Cycle development
- Differentiate children's interest

## Conclusion

- Efficient
- Economic
- Environmentally Friendly
- Quality



# ECC Art Competition 2013



**WINNER Kamo Kids Childcare Centre**



**PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD Thames Early Childhood Centre**

The main prize package of \$500, sponsored by the ECC Preferred Suppliers:



Walking into the Energy Events Centre in Rotorua the first thing you saw were the three panels of vibrant colour and creativity from our youngest learners: the 30 murals entered into this year's art competition. This year the theme was: 'Why I love going to my early childhood centre'.

The judges awarded the top prize to Kamo Kids Childcare Centre as they felt this entry had the least teacher directed input and the most child initiated input.

Thank you to all entrants who entered into the art competition – the murals were inspirational and shared the magic of our ECE centres.

The People's Choice Award, sponsored by:





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# How do you incorporate Reggio Emilia in a New Zealand setting?

**Reggio Emilia is a name well known with NZ early childhood practitioners and many of my clients incorporate some part of the philosophy into their daily practice. For those who are unfamiliar with the name, the Reggio philosophy is a child centred learning approach, where children are encouraged to explore their own inherent interests, learning through experience of the senses and expressing themselves through many different mediums and methods. The approach was conceived and evolved in Reggio Emilia, Italy over many years under the guidance of Loris Malaguzzi, a teacher and theoretician, and has been developed into a set of principles or a 'pedagogy'.**

One of the guiding principles of this pedagogy is the acknowledgement of 'environment as the third teacher'. For me as an architect this is the key concept that has set Reggio apart from all other early childhood educational approaches, as it has led to centre designs that are integrated with the pedagogy, creating spaces which enable education, social interaction, identity, openness, connection, culture, belonging and sense of community.

In this article we will look at the concepts behind these enabling spaces and examine how these can be used in a New Zealand context.

**The Reggio philosophy has spurred many centre designs around the world, but perhaps its purest creation is still the Diana Preschool in Italy.** This was a self built project, created by Malaguzzi and the Reggio community and grew directly out of their then experimental pedagogy. The two most obvious points of differentiation in this design were the central piazza (square) and the art ateliers (studios). These

spaces grew directly from the pedagogical requirements and have become central to all Reggio centres since.

The central piazza space was derived from the simple idea of the town square (a familiar public meeting space in most Italian towns) and is used to facilitate relationships, foster encounters and allow group interaction. This was certainly ahead of its time and many modern offices now have similar spaces for the same reason (break out spaces or large public atria – e.g. Telecom or NZI buildings, Auckland). This space was located at the heart of the centre both literally and metaphorically, and all but the most minor service rooms connect directly off it, again further enabling chance encounters and interaction between all users. Further interaction between children was encouraged by placing functions such as the dress-up area in the piazza.



## Diana Preschool Piazza

**The art ateliers have perhaps become the architectural symbol for Reggio, featuring in pretty much all Reggio inspired centres around the world.** In the Diana Preschool these were designed as large art studios capable of holding at least 2 tables of around 6-8 children plus large storage areas for materials, particularly natural materials which the children often help to collect. They could be open as one or sometimes split into a larger and smaller atelier. The space allowed for adequate display of materials allowing children



freedom of choice and enabled them to leave out their artworks over days or weeks meaning that they could experiment with their line of enquiry until they reached a conclusion they were happy with, frequently testing and reworking the initial works.



### Diana Preschool Atelier

Further subtleties can be found throughout the design – the idea of the wider environment as a ‘place of the senses’ communicating weather patterns, seasonal changes, diurnal rhythms and community interaction. This manifests itself architecturally through the use of expansive glazed walls, indoor/outdoor flow, rooflights, wintergardens, plants and trees and installations that make natural forces visible – windchimes etc.



### Diana Preschool Wintergarden

This centre is now over 60 years old but the concepts behind the design are as relevant today as they were when it was created.

**So how do we best incorporate Reggio concepts into a New Zealand context?**

Firstly the early childhood provider must have a clear understanding of their own pedagogy. ‘Importing’ a strong pedagogical approach such as Reggio without a clear understanding of its context or adaptation to local context is not going to lead to the successes of Reggio.

I have seen a beautiful Reggio inspired centre in NZ with a huge central piazza, which may as well have tumbleweeds blowing across it – it is that barren. Clearly, both the client and the architect did not understand the concept of this space or its context. New Zealand has limited history

of town squares and so the space is not easily understood by anyone. Furthermore, parents in urban NZ do not generally want to spend time socialising in a centre – they are on busy schedules and most socialising happens in the classroom whilst settling their child. The Diana centre grew out of its Italian community, where parents helped to build and run it, and the pace of life was far more relaxed and community focussed – hence the piazza was a great success. Its not to say that such a space cannot work in a NZ context, but the drivers that led to its creation in Italy also need to be here in NZ – i.e. it needs to be the heart of a community, and the space needs careful adaptation.

**The best approach to take when creating a Reggio inspired centre, or any new centre to be honest, is to start by creating your own pedagogy and curriculum.**

This will allow you to understand the key things that are important and different about the service you want to offer. Once you have these, a working session with a good conceptual architect familiar in early childhood will enable the key points to be transformed into spaces that bring your own pedagogy to life in 3 dimensions. By doing this you will successfully adapt your ideas to the local context and create architecture which reflects the unique service you offer.

And this can be done with old and new buildings – there is no reason why a refurbished building shouldn’t be just as successful particularly if it is located in a building that is well loved and recognised by the local community.

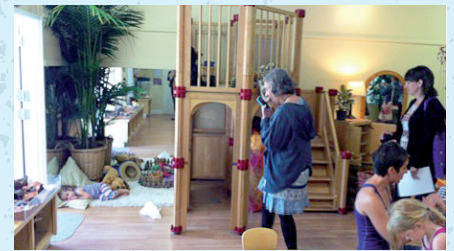


### San Francisco Centre – art space integral to room

**There is a great example of a Reggio inspired centre in San Francisco, in an old community hall, which was refurbished and paid for by the local community.**

There is no piazza here, just a reasonably wide corridor, but there is a large dining/function room. The rooms are light and airy, well connected to the outdoors, whilst

the ateliers are really just spaces within the room for art and nature exploration, not separate spaces.



### San Francisco centre – loft and corner space

**What I really liked about this centre was that there was an obvious understanding of context.** They didn’t need the piazza for much the same reason as described above, however the dining hall gave the opportunity for large group interaction at meal times and for bringing in the community at other times when it was used for holding functions. The use of glazing and planting was similar to Reggio centres but done only where totally needed as budget was limited. The art ateliers were absorbed into the rooms as the artistic exploration was accepted as part of the every day life of the centre, not something that needed to be separated. And all of this was done on an extremely shoestring budget, using community help wherever possible, but the quality of the environment was as good as any brand new Reggio centre I have seen. It should be remembered that the original Reggio philosophy was created by a small community in a tiny place that no-one had ever heard of, and the first centres were built by the community from the rubble of bombed out buildings from WWII. So clearly money is not a pre-requisite for creating a great Reggio inspired centre, but passion, community and strong principles should be there in large measures!

*Phil Smith has specialised in designing world class education architecture for over 12 years, both in NZ and the UK and his designs have won many awards. In 2012, Phil was awarded Lexus Young Designer of the Year for his achievements in sustainable early childhood architecture in NZ.*

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**Website:** [www.casa-uk.com](http://www.casa-uk.com)





# How Bright Sparks implement the **Reggio Emilia** approach to develop **confident & competent** learners

## The Reggio Emilia Philosophy in Infants and Toddlers

How the Reggio Emilia philosophy is implemented with our infants and toddlers is through caring and nurturing as well as learning experiences that are provided daily, based on the children's holistic development. The poem 'Hundred languages of children' by Loris Malaguzzi is referred to as the many different ways that children express their feelings and thoughts through either gestures, crying, word, body language, music, drawing, construction, and pretend play. As teachers

with infants and toddlers, we understand how important it is to 'listen' with all our senses to the individual child and respond appropriately and accordingly to ensure their well being is prioritised.

Teachers also respond by thoughtfully setting up the environment as a third teacher providing hands on and authentic experiences so infants and toddlers are encouraged to use their senses to explore materials and the world around them, to

spark their curiosity, to ignite their thinking, and to test their theories and to foster their learning, growth and development. The ongoing journey of learning and self-discovery is of importance to both the teacher and the child. It strengthens relationships and builds security which contributes to both becoming competent and confident learners.

**By Vaolele Walker**



## Open minds, intelligent materials, multiple possibilities....

The teachers at Bright Sparks, Henderson, bring the Reggio inspired curriculum, which is flexible and emerges from children's ideas, thoughts and observations, to cultivate a lifelong passion for learning and exploration.

The environment is set up for children to learn through relationships, inquiries, opportunities, provocations... which is also interwoven with the ECE curriculum Te Whaariki, where their play is valued as meaningful learning and the ability to make decisions, choose their own materials, and set their own problems as part of their exploration, is an enjoyable, creative and valid approach to learning.

As Malaguzzi quotes "The wider the range the possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivation and the richer their expressions". We strongly believe as teachers providing children the opportunity to explore with resources that are open-ended creates skills for readiness to school.



While children are exploring, experimenting and investigating throughout their day, they construct ideas through play and hands-on activities that make sense to them. They build a foundation of meaning through play that provides the basis for understanding concepts in language, literacy, math, science and arts. As teachers we continually provide and incorporate materials and spaces into our day for children to revisit their interests, and develop their social skills, friendships and relationships with their teachers. We provide this by using areas

of the curriculum including real and pretend situations in both the indoor and outdoor areas.

"Intelligent materials" are open-ended creative resources which encourage "children to think of them as valuable and full of potential, ready to be transformed into any manner of creations and inventions" (Thornton & Brunton, "Bringing the Reggio Approach to Your Early Years Practice", 2010).

By Susan Naidu

## Bright Sparks Child Care Airport Oaks would like to take you all on an enchanting journey with us!

We view all our children as communicators who have the right to express themselves. We as teachers listen with all our senses; we observe and document to make learning visible.

We use a variety of tools to do this, for example observation, anecdotes, learning stories, camera, video, tape recorders and journals. This, when completed is like a narrative of what the child learns at Bright Sparks Child Care.

Partnership with parents and whānau is important, so we use different media to inform: parent breakfasts, parent interviews and daily communication by one-on-one or through email.

Culture and faith is part of the culture at Bright Sparks, with self worth and positive



self image of the child being important for the unique and holistic development of each child.

To foster community, Bright Sparks hosts a variety of workshops, car boot sales, excursions and enhancing water safety and reading skills at our local community pool

and library.

Bright Sparks Child Care ignites the passion to let the child shine, giving the child the knowledge and tools to investigate the world!

By Shellee Hancy



# Reggio Emilia at City Heights

By Ann Barrowclough



**In 2000 I went on a study tour to Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy to see and gain an understanding of the Reggio Emilia method. I had heard Lillian Katz speaking about 'the project**

approach' at an ECE Convention in Dunedin and knew that the Diana School in Reggio Emilia had earned the accolade as best preschool in the world by Newsweek Magazine. The Study Tour is a well organised and highly informative week of lectures, visits to schools and a recycling centre, opportunities to absorb the beautiful Italian culture and architecture and network with other teachers.



Our group comprised of teachers from Australasia, Hong Kong and Singapore. Highlights for me were following a crowd of locals the first evening of arrival and purchasing a ticket to the Monte Carlo Ballet's *Romeo and Juliet* in the beautiful baroque theatre, and in the same theatre hearing an address by Howard Gardner (Multiple Intelligences) who was doing some research with Reggio personnel.

We Australasian teachers discussed how we could never do back home what they do in Reggio— e.g. darkened rooms, power cords running everywhere, children unsupervised in darkened rooms on a spot-lit stage composing music with recording equipment and musical instruments, teachers mainly seeming to observe and take notes rather than engaging in 'quality interactions' and so on. Back home it was virtually impossible to

describe all this to staff let alone try to implement some of it.



It was only some years later, when several teachers had attended Professional Development in Auckland and Melbourne, and we had the opportunity to see the wonderful Montessori-Reggio Emilia school at Helensville, that we were finally able to bring in the Reggio Emilia approach and atmosphere into two of our classrooms. One we tried to run as a conjoint Reggio/Montessori room for a while, but the Montessori curriculum was losing out to Reggio Emilia and parents were concerned that their children were missing out on the full Montessori offered in the parallel class of 3-5s.



So this year we restored Montessori to that room and reverted to our 'Reggio Emilia art programme' which we had piloted earlier. A bit of a cop out, one might say, but for our centre I believe we have, for now, struck the right balance. This depends on

our being fortunate enough to have two extremely talented, dedicated ECE teachers as our Atelieristas, who do not have any other classroom duties for most of the day and a reasonable sized room we can use for this.



The children come from their rooms in groups of eight (all the room holds) for sessions throughout the week. This reduces numbers in their rooms and enables the core classroom teachers to do more in-depth activities with the remaining group, while the children and atelieristas have a fantastic time in the art room or atelier. Not only are the centre walls, spare surfaces and window ledges adorned with fantastic two and three dimensional creations from the atelier, but the art enthusiasm has flowed into the classroom programmes too and inspired the other teachers to encourage more creativity. The classroom and art teachers continually communicate so that both programmes work in tandem with the children's interests and classroom focus topics.

If you are thinking of adopting the Reggio approach or adding a Reggio aspect to your programme, make contact with REANZ for local Reggio Emilia Professional Development, go on-line for lots of information and get staff to study tours if your budget can stand it. You won't regret it. It will enrich the learning for your children and if you are a fairly strict Montessori like us, it provides a great balance of creativity and imagination to the more structured scientific based approach of Maria Montessori.



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# The KidsWords Project



## How many different words do toddlers know?

When do children begin using certain kinds of words such as nouns, verbs and adjectives?

When do they begin joining words together into short phrases and sentences?

When does grammar emerge in children?

These and other questions about children's early language development are being asked by researchers at the University of Canterbury and University of Otago to help parents, teachers, speech and language therapists and researchers come to a better understanding of how language develops in children growing up in New Zealand.

As any parent or early childhood professional knows, listening to children as they develop the uniquely human ability to talk is both fascinating and at times, amusing. Arguably, no other aspect of

children's development is so interesting – and observable – as language development. Some children develop words very rapidly while others take their time, but nearly all children seem to master their native language(s) in a very short amount of time. And when they don't, when should parents and teachers get concerned?

The KidsWords project will address these important questions. It began in October 2012 with the goal of collecting data on 3000 children who are 16 to 30 months of age (100 girls and 100 boys at each month of age) across New Zealand/Aotearoa. Data is collected by asking parents to visit the [kidswords.org](http://kidswords.org) website and complete a simple questionnaire about their child's language development. There are also some questions about the child's birth history and family/whānau. The idea here is that children's language development will be examined in relation to various child and family characteristics. The questionnaire takes from about 15 to 30 minutes to complete and parents responses will remain confidential.

As of early April 2013, nearly 900 parents had completed the questionnaire at [kidswords.org](http://kidswords.org). Parents from every region of the country except one (Gisborne) have responded so far. The aim is to build up a nationally representative sample of children by the time the study ends. To date, 53% of the children in the sample are girls, 57% are first borns and 5% are twins. Parents report that 92% of the children are of New Zealand European origin, with 4% Māori and 4% from Pacifica, Asian and other backgrounds.

If you live in New Zealand and have a child in the 16-30 month age range, we invite you to visit [kidswords.org](http://kidswords.org) and participate. Be a part of the first study of children's early language development in New Zealand!

**Professor Thomas Klee works in the Department of Communication Disorders and is Deputy Director for the New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain & Behavior at University of Canterbury.**



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# Have your say about the future of the New Zealand Teachers' Council

The next phase of consultation on transforming the New Zealand Teachers Council into a professional body fit for the 21st Century is underway.

Education Minister Hekia Parata has released the New Zealand Teachers Council review report together with a discussion document proposing the establishment of a new professional body for teaching and education leadership.

The Government is considering the best and most useful ways for the education profession to be strengthened and represented. It wants your feedback on proposals to build a strong, professional body for the education profession reflecting the best in teaching quality and leadership.

The report has 24 recommendations which fall into four key themes: a new professional body, the regulatory framework for teachers (this includes a broader Authority to Educate to allow individuals with proven expertise to complement the teaching workforce), the disciplinary framework, and resourcing

to support a strong, professional body.

The review also endorsed a move to post graduate entry to the profession for school teachers.

The Government has appointed a Ministerial Advisory Group to lead consultation with the sector and the public on the proposals over the next two months.

The Review of the New Zealand Teachers Council, A Teaching Profession for the 21st Century, the discussion document about the establishment of a new professional body, the members of the Ministerial Advisory Group, and the terms of reference are available on this weblink: [www.minedu.govt.nz/NZTCReviewProposals](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/NZTCReviewProposals)

Submissions are open for comment for the review of the Teachers Council until the 14th July.

<http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/Consultation/NZTCReviewProposals.aspx>

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# Just Words?

By Elizabeth Clements



**It is very easy to swap one word for another. Policy makers are very good at it – they get bored with a word and like to change it for another, often creating a new trend by doing so. However, words are signifiers. They have meaning.**

In the world of early childhood education, there is a trend towards replacing the term 'early childhood educator' with 'teacher'. Many people will say, so what? However, this stealthy change has significant implications.

The word 'education' comes from 'educare' which means 'to bring out'. The idea of education is to support the development of the child by bringing out the child's curiosity, initiative, knowledge and skills, thus allowing them to develop. This is based on the theoretical idea that children are not 'blank slates'. In earlier times, children were seen as blank slates or empty vessels needing to be filled with knowledge from a teacher. Modern neuroscience has confirmed what many philosophers have preached for at least two centuries; that children's brains develop rapidly and engage with the world around them to learn. They act on their environment, just as their environment acts on them. It is not a one way trip.

**The concept of 'educator' matches the philosophical stances implicit in New Zealand's early childhood curriculum, Te Whāriki.** Why then, has there been a trend towards calling early childhood educators, 'teachers'? This trend is part of the professionalisation of early childhood education that has occurred over the past 15 - 20 years. Early childhood educators now receive extensive training and there is continued pressure to ensure they receive salaries and conditions that are in line with other teachers in New Zealand's education system. Calling educators 'teachers' helps the public and government perceive early childhood educators as professionals.

**This could be a mistake.** Not only are we in danger of losing the basic approach to early childhood education that has seen New Zealand recognised as an international leader in early childhood, we are in danger of being out of touch with changes in the school system. There are changes happening in the role of teachers in our school system. Teachers are becoming educators. Co-construction of knowledge no longer belongs almost solely in the early childhood education area. Schools are increasingly recognising that producing 'obedient workers' is not a priority in the 21st century. Our society now needs people who can make things happen, who can lead change. To develop these skills in our children and young people, teachers are becoming educators. They are no longer the sole repositories of knowledge as children increasingly learn online and from each other. Instead they are guiding learning and encouraging the dispositions and skills needed for our children to make their way in today's world.

**Another reason for the shift towards the term 'teachers' is the feeling amongst early childhood educators that they are being treated as babysitters.** Findings from the Early Childhood Council's *Partnering with Parents* project suggest this is not true. Parents consistently recognised the very important and complex role educators play in their child's lives. Even where parents were unhappy with the standard of care and education their children were receiving, they did value the training and experience of staff.

**There is another aspect that needs consideration in this argument.** Our very young children need care as well as education. So often in the Early Childhood Council, we hear centre owners and managers expressing concerns about staff who have just finished their training and who are unwilling to change nappies and supervise food times. Some of these young people have taken to heart their role as 'teachers' and have missed out on the other HALF of the equation – the care element.

**One of the major strengths of New Zealand's early childhood education system, compared to other countries, is its combining of care and education.**

Separating these would be a very big backward step. Bruce Perry (2012) stresses the importance of relationships in the development of the child's brain. Care is part of strong healthy relationships between adults and children. Without this there will not be successful education.

**So do we need a new word?** Should we be talking about educare professionals and early years professionals? Let's not slip backward, losing important strengths of our system by careless use of language.

Early childhood education in New Zealand has much to be proud of. Let's continue to lead the way rather than trying to prove we are as professional as others – who are trying to become more like us.

## About the Author

Dr Elizabeth Clements was the Senior Policy Officer at the ECC's National Office until late 2012. Elizabeth had been battling cancer for around a year previously before giving up work to focus on her family. Sadly Elizabeth passed away this April.

Elizabeth, while part of the ECC National Office team, updated the policy handbook; drafted the evacuation policy template; liaised with the Ministry of Education, Civil Defence and Ministry of Health to get bi-agency approval and designed the *Partnering with Parents* project.

**"Children are the hope and the future, how can you look at the children and think there is no promise for the future. The magic of children is that they're more aware than we are."**

**They accept difference, living in and with diversity, accepting it as natural."**

- Dr Elizabeth Clements





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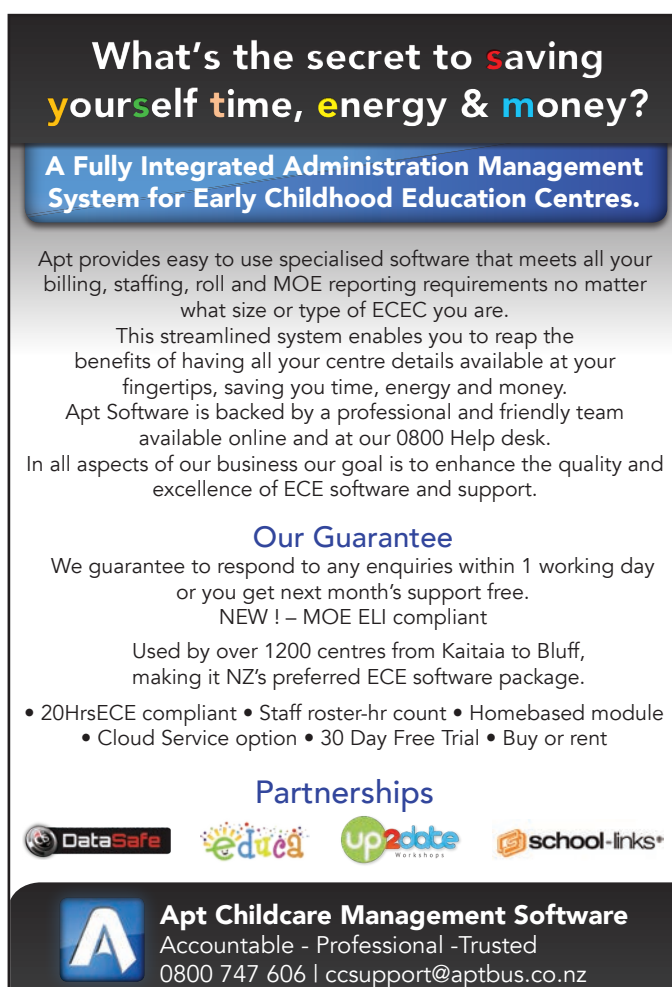
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# How Acorn Early Child Care celebrates events, special days and holidays...

## Children's Day

Even though Children's Day is only one day a year— on March 3rd— here at Acorn we decided to extend the event to a Community, Family and Children's Fun week.

On March 1st we started our Children's Day celebration by inviting our families to a Fish n' Chip evening at the preschool so parents and family could enjoy spending time with

their children in the centre when they weren't in a rush to get to work. This gave families the opportunity to stop and enjoy the wonder that their children do every day when they are with us.

**During the week we promoted Well-being and Belonging in all our classrooms.** As children left for the evening they were asking the teachers what was planned for the next day, thoroughly enjoying being the centre of the topic for the week.

The children in the Clutha Room (3-4

year olds) had the chance to run a mat time. They chose the stories and songs. This was an opportunity for them to take responsibility for their learning and demonstrate their individual abilities and preferences.

The children also made a book during this week. They created the story by each coming up with a sentence. The story was typed up by a teacher, with the children creating the illustrations for the story. The book was then laminated and bound



and kept in the classroom for everyone to read. A tangible reminder to the children that they are competent individuals and their input in their learning is appreciated and essential.

**In the Rakaia Room (1-3 year olds) the walls from floor to ceiling were covered with art work the children created and photos of all the children.** The photos were popular as the children constantly took them on and off the walls and were quick to share the photos with their parents when they arrived to pick them up. This gave the children an opportunity to share with their parents what they had been doing that day. The wall display was a tangible reminder for the children that they belong here in this classroom.

**Our biggest event by far was the Teddy Bear's picnic.** We had been planning it for a while and the children were growing more and more excited as the time drew near. Everyone, including the teachers, brought a teddy bear to preschool. We had a picnic lunch on the floor in our classrooms. Everything in sight was devoured by our hungry teddy bears and children. It was a great opportunity for the children to bring their teddies to the place they go every day and talk about at home, so that their teddies could see where they went when they were not with them. We had some very tired children and teddy bears by the end of the day. The children said they can't wait until next year's Children's Day to see what the teachers are going to plan then.

## Sun, Surf and Sand

**The definition of a holiday to most people is taking time out to relax, enjoy yourself and go on exciting adventures.** We decided here at Acorn that all these things are very important to recharge your batteries and get invigorated by life. Now we know that some children still need to come to preschool during holidays for a variety of reasons, such as their parents working, and sometimes their older siblings are at home because they are off from school, which can be confusing to young children. Taking into account all these different factors we decided to bring the holidays here to Acorn!

**We kicked things off on the first Monday with some Arts n Crafts.** We had someone from the local community who works with the boy scouts come in and create some amazing bugs. The children made butterflies by smudging paint around



and mirroring techniques by folding the paper. These now hang in our main foyer. Next we had a Bike Day and anything with wheels was a go-er, from scooters, to bikes, to ride-ons, to little motorbikes, all zooming around our bike track. The day before Anzac we had an ex-soldier visit us to talk about the meaning of Anzac due to the children asking why preschool was closing and what Anzac was. You are never too young to learn about life around you! Following Anzac Day we enjoyed a fun day of baking with some of our parents coming in to help us. We made so many things, from Lolly cake to white Christmas slice that there was no way we could eat it all here, so we made little care packages to send home with everyone. Just between us, I think the parents might have eaten more than the children!

**The second week of the holidays started off with messy play.** The children got a hold of some shaving foam and decided that it would be a good idea to put it down the slide. I don't even have to tell you what happened next with our 4 year olds.

**The next day we had invited our grandparents and extended families to come and join us here at preschool.** We had an amazing turn out of families throughout the day. The children made scones for the occasion. The children proudly took their families around the centre and showed off their favourite toys and especially their profile books.

**We had the local garden club come to**

**plant some bulbs for the winter with the children.** Once grown we will harvest, cook and eat them here at the centre as part of our life cycle of 'where things come from'.

**We also had the opportunity to practice our ball skills and try lots of new sports on our Sports Day.** We all dressed up in red and black to support our region and Kate Wilkinson, our local MP and our Mayor, David Ayers both surprised us with a visit.

To kick off the start of the new term we are having the local fire brigade bring their fire truck down to the preschool. The children often hear the fire alarm and see the fire trucks driving around so this is to further extend on their questions.

We have been so busy with our School Holiday Programme, but already the children are asking the teachers what is planned for the next holidays. As all of these ideas were triggered by the children's interests and queries, you just never know what they are going to want to investigate next.

**Acorn Early Child Care is in Woodend, North Canterbury.**

**Accru<sup>+</sup>**  
Smith Chilcott



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# ECC Annual Conference 2013 - Nation Building

## Friday 24 May – Sunday 26 May.

By Laree Taula

**Whether you are staff of the Early Childhood Council (ECC), work for Icon, are part of the Rotorua Event Centre, an early childhood centre manager, owner or teacher, an executive of the ECC, or sound technician, the build up to the ECC's conference in Rotorua may have been like a slow and gentle build up, or a sudden eruption.** For many, attending conference is quite a logistical exercise such as your last minute scribble 'to do' list, leaving long suffering husbands and loved ones behind, ensuring your ECE centres are left in safe hands, and then the last minute dash to the \$2 shop to buy your feather bower for the 1920's themed gala dinner on the Saturday night.

Whatever your pre-conference lead up was and the means by which you travelled, the most important thing is that you made it to conference. For some of you, this was as early as Wednesday evening in preparation for the ECE centre tours leaving first thing the following morning.

For those who treated themselves to this precursor to conference, were fortunate to see how other centres operate, what kind of playgrounds they have, their equipment, gardens, how things are set up, the make-up of children, the space they operate in, meet other teachers, owners and managers, and just get a general feel of other centres. To have a glimpse into another world for just a moment can have a powerful effect.

Our first centre to visit was St Francis Whānau Aroha where we were warmly welcomed on to the centre grounds with a powhiri from the children and teachers. This centre showed what it means to be both adaptable and hospitable by moving their powhiri inside as a gentle shower had decided to turn itself on. You could tell the teachers and children were well practiced in singing and performing, a great skill to give children. We were able to leave a message in the visitors' book and hopefully the combined messages we left will give

the centre a boost of encouragement for the good work they are doing.

Each centre visited was truly unique to reflect the needs of the children. When I asked one centre we visited the question, "Is your centre inspired by any particular philosophy?" she said not one particularly but that their centre strongly reflects the wants, needs and values of the parents and children. This confirmed for me just how important it is for the child, the centre and the home life to be aligned.

From the young boy with a gold stud in his ear who was so proud to show me his incredible artistic mosaic made up of colourful pieces of wood, to the 10 month old who had fallen ill and was waiting for his mother to pick him up; to the girl with the colourful head band who gave me a scone in a little paper bag, all left me with me a lasting impression: that there are thousands of children that we entrust each day into the care of our early childhood centres. It was truly humbling and inspiring seeing first hand an amazing group of people that have dedicated their lives to a profession in early childhood education. I think they deserve a medal.

I was told by a proud Rotorua resident that Rotorua had won 'most beautiful city in New Zealand award' two years in a row. I believe this. The rich crimson, yellow and orange leaves floating nostalgically to the ground added to the whole experience. While not the easiest or the cheapest place to get to for some, Rotorua really is a wonderful place to visit and not surprising is the conference capital of New Zealand.

Setting up the ECC stand on Thursday afternoon was when I started to feel the excitement begin. I felt like I had missed a rehearsal because everyone appeared to know exactly what they were doing. There



St Francis Whānau Aroha Centre



were boxes here and there, delivery vans, and technicians, each with their specific job to do. People were relaxed, friendly and appeared to be enjoying themselves. Things were in harmony. Before we knew it we were all set up and ready to relax over a beautiful meal at the Millennium Hotel, with of course, a crème brulee for dessert.

Thursday morning was humming and the Whakatau delivered by local iwi was a fitting opening for a conference that represents over half of all centre based ECE centres in New Zealand. It also matched the spiritual nature of the Māori artwork and design featured at the event centre. For our keynote speakers from abroad, it was clear they were honoured to be part of this ceremony, feeling the sacred place and significance that Māori culture has in New Zealand. One of our staff said to an international keynote speaker, "Look, I even got a photo of you getting a hongi!" To which he replied, "Thank you, I definitely want a copy of that." I especially liked the orator's quirky use of the English language to translate what he'd been saying in Māori, that the ECC conference would be a great opportunity for people to intermingle and jingle, or something to that affect.



The thing about attending large conferences such as these– unless you can clone yourself or morph into separate entities– you have to decide which workshops you are going to attend. Fortunately some occurred more than once which made decision making and planning slightly easier. For some workshops, unless you read the fuller description of the workshop on the ECC website or conference handbook, you had to go by either gut instinct or just a lucky guess it would be worth your while. While sprinting off to one workshop, "*TOUCH – Why we can't keep away from it*", I called back in a panic to my colleagues, "It isn't about touch phones is it?" While I was getting my fingers pulled and rubbed by a complete stranger I said, "This is taking touchy-feely to a whole new level!" She laughed and also remarked that the special balm we were using was amazing and that she uses it on her children's bottoms to sooth nappy rash.



Each and every speaker gave delegates something extra that they did not have before. Some of this is practical and some is non tangible, such as a mind shift or inspiration. This is the power of conferences. Jill Oliver, Director of *Toddler Surf*, and an ECC Executive, likened the conference to an annual flu shot, "but not to protect me from nasty viruses but instead to re-vitalise my passion for ECE."

The camaraderie of conferences helps centres to know that they are not alone in the struggles they face. Many people expressed the hard times that ECE centres are facing with reducing revenue over successive Government budgets. Peter Reynolds, CEO of the Early Childhood Council and Maria Johnson, President, both stated boldly in their opening speeches that literally, the Government's reprioritisation of ECE resources to other areas such as raising participation for Māori and Pasifika children is making it increasingly harder to survive and provide quality care for children in their centres. Peter and Maria called it "funding cuts by stealth". Some people were brave enough to ask the hard questions face to face to the Minister of Education, Hekia Parata, who spoke on Friday afternoon. The collective voice of the ECC membership is our strength. The ECC as the Government's key stakeholder in developing public and social policy that impacts on Early Childhood Education. This makes the ECC an integral strategic player in addressing many ECE issues.



**Bubble Machine Winner – Why I love working in the sector**

**Congratulations to Maria, Karis Kids, Marton for her winning quote:**  
**"Because I can make a positive difference in children lives and teach them that they have the power to be anything they want to be."**  
 (Juded by Brian Puerling, key note speaker)





Best Dressed Female

"Build your dream and your dream will build you."  
- Cam Calkoen



"Risk taking is about exploring the unknown, we can't learn if we don't explore the unknown."  
- Michael Follett



Gary and Peter - Snapped at Childproof

vero





Winner of the Innovation and Improvement Award, Nikeeta Singh, from Fern Garden and Magic Garden Childcare Centres for Learning Roots and Shoots.™



Innovation and Improvement award Highly Commended place getter, Ross Penman, Prodigy Learning Centres, for Programme Manager.



Judging Team



"In business, it is not to do with how smart you are, but a lot to do with how courageous you are"

- Melissa Clark-Reynolds

"Parents and families have fears. We need to be explicit about what these opportunities we are providing."

- Brian Peurling



Best Dressed Male

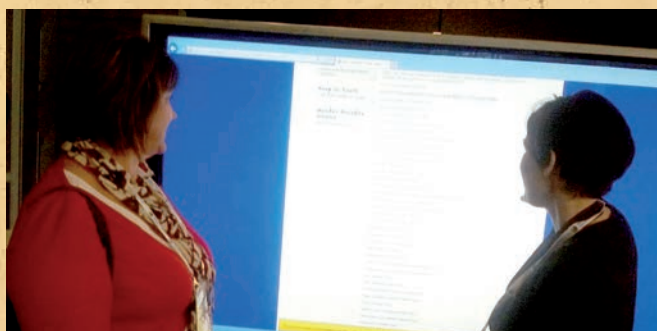




Best Dressed Group

"Access to technology should not diminish any other classroom activities."

- Brian Peurling



The ECC stand demonstrating our website thanks to Foundation Partners and Sharp.

"We are the skipper of our ship."

- Cam Calkoen



Sarah Cook, Naval Childcare, winner of the Bonkers Beat Prize - a PD package.



Tongue and Groove





"Space needs to be designed for those who choose to be alone (back covered, can see what's happening), buddy space to share secrets, out of the view of adults, and space for 'me and my gang'."

- Michael Follett



Whakatau



Lake Okareka Preschool

"Teachers that love their jobs have the best outcomes."

- Melissa Clark-Reynolds



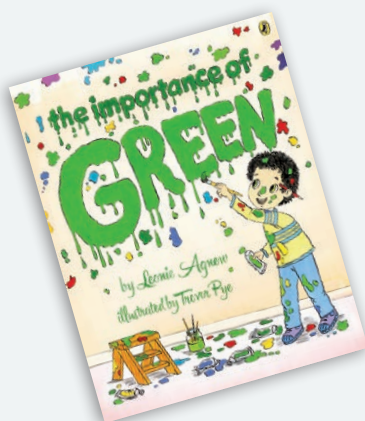
Central City Quality Educare

"A huge thank you for such an interesting, up-to-date and inspiring conference! I can honestly say that I got a little something from each and every speaker and workshop, so I was over the moon. Our heads are buzzing non-stop and now we look forward to trying to put some of the wonderful ideas and inspiration into practice." – Conference attendee



# Resource Reviews

Reviewed by Trudi Sutcliffe



## The Importance of Green

By Leonie Agnew

Illustrated by Trevor Pye

Puffin

This story has a real sense of fun, as well as offering 'scientific educational value' as well. The story is about a boy, Liam Loveday, who would only paint with the colour green, until one day he runs out of his favourite colour – what would a young painter do?

First Liam decides to paint without using the colour green, but what happens in a world

with no green at all? The book explores the importance of colour, giving some meaning to what colour means, ie the green grasshoppers were now yellow and living on a blue grass, which meant they were now prime targets for hungry seagulls....

The book then explores mixing primary colours. Many savvy young listeners will know the answer to Liam's dilemma and will be bursting with the solution. This book could be read out in small groups or at mat time. It's also a fantastic resource for when children are exploring the value of colour and colour mixing.



## The Runaway Toilet

By Jane Buxton

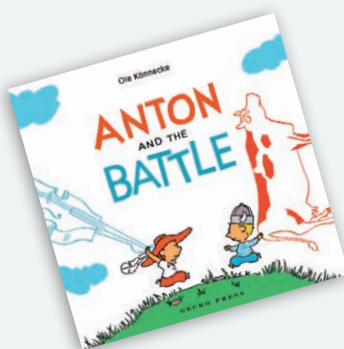
Illustrated by Richard Hoit

Puffin

This book will be loved by older pre-schoolers, especially those who love 'toilet talk'. The story is about a luxurious toilet, Philip, who discovers that his life isn't going to be all he imagined,

so he runs away to find a new job. But things are not easy for a toilet on the loose! What entails next, is Phillip fleeing from one hilarious situation to another, until finally he finds the home for him.

As well as keeping listeners amused with words like: 'poo, wees, and fart', the heart of the story explores the idea of not letting life just happen, but being proactive yourself. A fun book to read in small groups and at mat time.



## Anton and the Battle

By Ole Könnecke

Gecko Press

This is a tale about two young boys competing on who is the strongest out of the two of them.

It starts with one saying; "I'm stronger than you."

Then one boy picks up a stone, and then the other boy picks up a larger stone and so on and so on. Soon it's a competition of who has the wildest imagination, as each fabrication gets

wilder and more exaggerated, and before long they are threatening each other with the largest bomb and slaying a four-headed dragon!

But what happens when a yappy puppy comes along. Who is the bravest and strongest now? And does it really matter for these two young friends?

This is a story that will definitely appeal to all children and especially boys, with its humorous text and illustration. Their conversation would not be uncommon out in the playground. A simple book and definitely a quick, fun easy read at mat time.



## Pipimoomoo

By Justine Summers

Craig Potton Publishing

Pipimoomoo is a story about a girl who always wears jeans, until one day her friend loans Pipimoomoo her favourite skirt. Pipimoomoo falls in love with the skirt. I'm not sure why this is, as it doesn't explain in the text, apart from possibly the pretty material. But this won't matter to a three or four year-old girl. They will understand exactly!!!

Pipimoomoo persuades her mother to make Pipimoomoo her own skirt. The story then explores the process of making the skirt, from choosing the material, cutting the pattern to checking the skirt for size.

This story will appeal to any young girls or boys who enjoy their clothes. The language is descriptive and quirky with simple bright illustrations that will capture the imagination of those reading the story. This would be a great story if children in your ECE centre have an interest in clothes and sewing.





## At the Beach

By Ned Barraud and Gillian Candler

Craig Potton Publishing

This book has been designed for children aged 4-8 years and is a fantastic resource for any ECE centre. The book has detail illustrations of three habitats—the sandy beach, rockpools and mudflats.

Many of the plants and animals that play

a part in these rich ecosystems are shown in situ, and readers are directed from there to pages dedicated to detailed coverage of the creatures that can be found in these habitats.

With such detail you can imagine the avid explorer heading down to the rock pools with book in hand, finding a crab, shell or bird, and then searching the book for the correct name, which is in both English and Māori.



## Kiwi the real story

By Annemarie Florian

Illustrated by Heather Hunt

New Holland Publishers

This non-fiction book is a real gem. It's set in the night-world with graphic illustrations that capture the eye, alongside facts that describes the

nocturnal habits of the kiwi.

Although the primary audience would be older pre-schoolers, you could read this story to younger readers by using the layered poetry that is on each page, and letting the pictures tell the story.

A story to share one-on-one or in small groups.



## Baa Baa Smart Sheep

By Mark Sommerset

Illustrations by Rowan Sommerset

Dreamboats Books

Looking to capture the imagination of children who are struggling to sit through a story and who have a sense of mischief? You may just have a winner if you read *Baa Baa Smart Sheep*. This book will definitely appeal to any young child, especially since most think 'poos' are hilarious, and don't we all!

This story is about a bored sheep, Little Baa Baa, who cannot resist the opportunity to make some mischief when gullible Quirky Turkey comes

along and spies some 'smarty tablets'.

"Are you sure they're not just poo?" asks Quirky Turkey. Little Baa Baa responds that they are not poo but: "Smarty tablets." The banter between these two characters continues.... "That you eat?" asks Quirky Turkey. "That are free?" says Little Baa. "That are free," checks Quirky Turkey. "... but only to Turkeys," says Little Baa Baa. Although the humour is geared at younger readers, adults reading the book won't be able to resist a smile or grimace. Will Quirky Turkey eat the 'tablets'? Read the book and find out.

This book will be enjoyed by older pre-schoolers one-on-one or in both small and larger groups.



## Two Little Bugs

By Mark Sommerset

Illustrations by Rowan Sommerset

Dreamboats Books

This is a story about two little bugs, one who lives on the top of a leaf, Little Bug Red, and Little Bug Blue who leaves underneath. Little Bug Blue has a desire to be watching the world from on top of the leaf but seems to suffer from some 'anxiety', "Oh I don't know," said Little Bug Blue, "I'm not so sure that I'm able to."

Little Bug Red tries to encourage the Little Bug Blue: "Come on up Little Bug Blue, There's plenty of sun for me and you!"

All the while Little Bug Red chomps and chews the leaf much to Little Bug Blue's horror. What will happen when the leaf is finally gone?

Readers of this book, both adults and children will enjoy the simple but expressive illustrations on its chewed-upon and leaf-shaped pages. To be read one-on-one or in both small and larger groups.





## Things We Love to Do

By Kelvin Roy

Martian Music

Another hit CD from musician Kelvin Roy for ECE centres. This CD has music that is fun, interactive and with a jazz groove that young children will relate with and enjoy.

This CD is all about enjoying music by 'doing', 'dancing' and hearing about important values and virtues in a relaxed format. One of my favourite songs on the CD was 'Round and Round'. It's a fun song, but at the same time listeners are practising their listening skills, and learning about taking direction. The chorus goes like this:

"Round and around and around we go,

where we stop nobody knows. Round and around and around we go, let's stop, and stand on our toes."

I know from experience, nearly every child likes to spin and listen for the word, 'stop'. Great fun! Throughout the song you also learn about concepts such as clockwise and anti-clockwise and counting to 12 backwards and forwards, based on a clock face.

Also what I enjoy about Kelvin Roy's CD's is that there is a range of tempo, but the music is clear enough for all to hear so both children and educators can quickly learn the songs and work out the actions together. To find out more about this CD go to [www.kidsounz.com](http://www.kidsounz.com), where you can also download the CD guide and the words to the songs.



## A PUFFIN PRIZE PACK!

Puffin has kindly donated **THREE** Hairy Maclary and Friends Birthday celebration prize packs for Swings and Roundabout readers, each pack containing **FIVE** Books!



To win a Hairy Maclary and Friends Birthday celebration prize packs answer this question:

**Who is Hairy Maclary most scared of?**  
**Schnitzel Von Krumm, Slinky Malinki or Scarface Claw?**

### Puffin Competition Winners

Congratulations to the following winners who have just won a pack of five Puffin books each.

- **Megan Beerworth**, Barnardos Early Learning Centre
- **Gillian Noble**, Cherry's on Maryhill
- **Paula Kendall**, First Steps

Email your contact details and the answer to the above question to [info@ecc.org.nz](mailto:info@ecc.org.nz) by Monday 22 July 2013 and be in to win.



## It's Hairy Maclary's 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday

and you're invited to join in the fun!

Register your centre's participation and you could  
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Register by emailing: [marketing@penguin.co.nz](mailto:marketing@penguin.co.nz)  
Tell us what you are planning and when, and you'll be in the draw.  
(Registration must be received by June 30<sup>th</sup>)



Download your 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday Event Kit at [www.hairymaclary.com](http://www.hairymaclary.com) NOW!



# Can you imagine maths everywhere in your centre?

By Margi Leech

**Maths is all about patterns. Look around your centre- you will see patterns everywhere!**

Patterns are the basis for understanding about our number system and numbers themselves. A pattern is regular. The items are evenly spaced giving a sense of order. Patterns also, because of their regularity, provide a structure for predicting the next item or next in the series.

Look at this series of a pattern. What will the next four items be?



Patterns can be with two items such as those above. But you can add an extra dynamic of change.



Now another dynamic of change can be introduced- series of items can appear inverted and then forward.



Patterns are fun! Language of position oozes from experiences- 'beside, under, after, before, instead of...'

Patterns can vary in textures and positions. Common carpet or wallpaper patterns do this. Patterns in the natural world are created in the most interesting of patterns.



Patterns are fun to explore in music and dance, not only in art with dots of paint or with pieces of glued paper, but in playing with counters.



Make patterns with pegs in a peg board, in playdough with your fingers, pressing buttons in playdough!

By doing this activity, children can explore the nature of numbers, compare the size of them, and arrange them in order!

Maybe this activity is for a warmer day: creating patterns with feet and hands is a fun way to learn about groups of 'five'. This is the introduction to multiplication! Compare the size of feet- this is the beginning of measurement. Seeing the relationships of sizes and the area covered- this is the beginning of geometry!



How many squares across are created with the ropes?  
How many squares are down?  
How many altogether? Can we make this pattern with blocks inside?



How many sticks are holding up this plant? What shape is seen on each side? What is this shape's name? Where else can I find these shapes? If

I want to support 2 plants, how many sticks will I need? If I want to support 3 plants, how many sticks will I need?



Continue this activity to see a pattern! I can see a pattern of two's or pairs in this musical instrument. It can make patterns of sounds... music is full of patterns!

Use pattern blocks and other materials of shapes to create zillions of patterns!

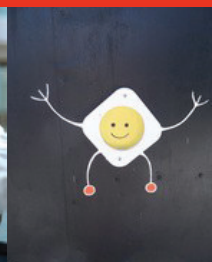
Explore patterns around you. Point them out to children and talk about them. Have conversations about sizes, positions, predicting the next step and asking, 'What if' questions. Invite them to create their own patterns in art, music, poetry and with small toys. Have fun with maths!

Numicon is a maths programme based on patterns designed for early childhood through to Year 4 at school. '1st Steps with Numicon in the Nursery' followed by 'Firm Foundations' for the older children, build the foundation for a strong understanding in numeracy that will set children up for a lifetime of success!

**Margi Leech has a passion for children learning especially in maths, being such a vital subject. Margi is an experienced teacher but now works for Numicon, a math programme designed for early childhood through to Year 4. Numicon teaches children about numbers and what they mean, before and alongside counting and patterning activities through hands-on activities, games, songs, in a structured approach. To find out more see the Numicon advertisement or go to [www.numicon.co.nz](http://www.numicon.co.nz).**

**Exploring the world of numbers through play and meaningful activities.**

Use the voucher from the conference when you place your order!



"We all love thinking about maths!"

"A favourite activity at our centre!"

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# LAST LAUGH

English professors love to catch the errors students make in their term papers, and they love nothing better than to catch mixed metaphors. The "friends and survivors" of Calvin College English department collected this list of mixed metaphors and posted them on their web site:

- "He swept the rug under the carpet."
- "She's burning the midnight oil at both ends."
- "It was so cold last night I had to throw another blanket on the fire."
- "It's time to step up to the plate and cut the mustard."
- "She's robbing Peter to pay the piper."
- "He's up a tree without a paddle."
- "Beware my friend....you are skating on hot water."
- "Keep your ear to the grindstone."
- "Sometimes you've gotta stick your neck out on a limb."
- "Some people sail through life on a bed of roses like a knife slicing through butter."



Re-printed with kind permission from The Daily Telegraph, UK

**Q: Why did the doughnut go to the dentist?**

A: It needed a chocolate filling.

**Q: What did the hot dog say when it crossed the finish line?**

A: I'm the wiener

**Q: What kind of dinosaur is never late?**

A: A pronto-saurus.

**Q: When do cannibals leave the table?**

A: When everyone's eaten.

**Q: How can you tell if a calendar is popular?**

A: It has a lot of dates!

**Q: What did one earthquake say to the other?**

A: It's not my fault.

**Q: What washes up on small beaches?**

A: Microwaves.

**Q: Why was the broom late?**

A: Because it overswept.

**Q: Why did the robber take a bath?**

A: So he could make a clean getaway!

**Q: How do you know that your tiger is telling the truth?**

A: He's not a lion.

**Q: Why did the orchestra have bad manners?**

A: Because it didn't know how to conduct itself.



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**NZCA 50th Annual Conference and AGM,  
19-21 July 2013, Wellington**

**Honouring the past –  
Visioning the future.**

*Huri ngā māhara ki muri –  
Whaia te ara ki mua.*

**Keynote speakers include:**

- **Prof Collette Tayler**, Melbourne Graduate School of Education: Early childhood provision and the learning game
- **Dr Polly Atatoa Carr**, Growing Up in New Zealand: Visioning our future through the eyes of our contemporary longitudinal study – Growing Up in New Zealand
- **Prof Te Ahukaramū Charles Royal**, New Zealand's Indigenous Centre of Research Excellence, and The University of Auckland: He kura te tangata – a mana inspired approach to education
- **Prof Helen May**, University of Otago: Highlighting a 50 year herstory-history of childcare advocacy
- **Hon Hekia Parata MP**, Minister of Education
- **Pale Sauni**, Pasifika Education Consultant at Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

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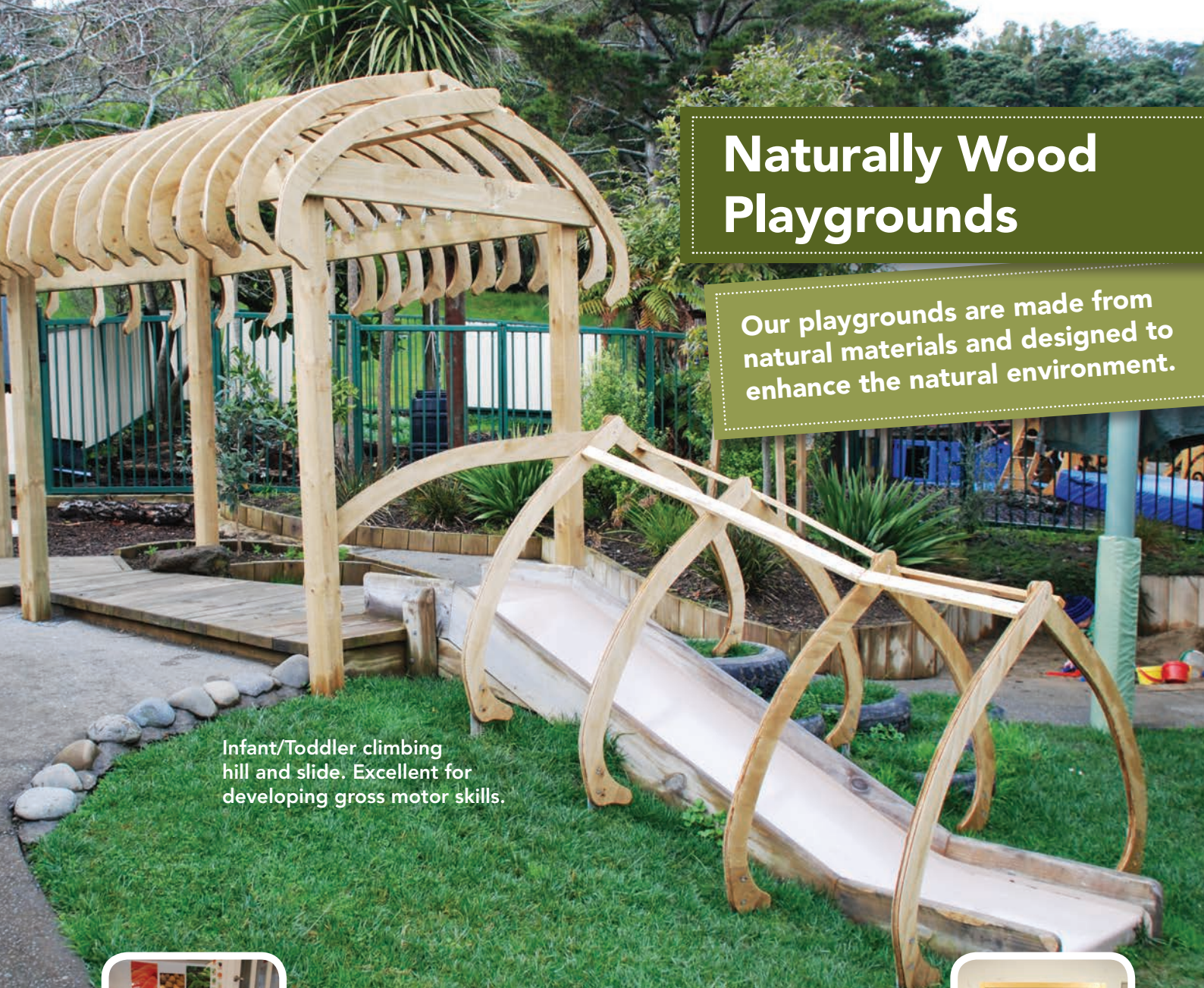
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# Naturally Wood Playgrounds

Our playgrounds are made from natural materials and designed to enhance the natural environment.



Infant/Toddler climbing hill and slide. Excellent for developing gross motor skills.



Infant Dining and self service area. Shelving unit near the infant table for storing lunch boxes, plates, cups, spoons etc



Room Dividers offer freedom for toddlers to move and safety for babies while they are on the floor. We have used shelves in this room divider giving space more storage and display panels.



Purpose built change table with pull out stairs. The stairs enable the children to climb up to the change table on their own and it will help to prevent back injuries for the staff.



Bunk Cots are ideal for sleeping young infants in centres that don't have a lot of room.

## NaturallyWood by design

For further information see our website  
Website [www.naturallywood.co.nz](http://www.naturallywood.co.nz)  
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Email [naturallywood@paradise.net.nz](mailto:naturallywood@paradise.net.nz)



# FirstBase



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- >>> Store staff records & MoE staff funding data
- >>> Create rolls, sign in lists & general reports easily
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- >>> Auto-activation of future enrolment agreements
- >>> Keep medical & vaccination records
- >>> Staffing ratio optimisation

**Personal Details For Hilbo Baggins** Educator Toddlers

Child	Home	Admin	Finance	Medical	Options	List	Menu								
<b>Name:</b> Hilbo Baggins <b>Preferred:</b> Hilbo <b>Gender:</b> <input checked="" type="radio"/> M <input type="radio"/> F <b>Date of Birth:</b> 15 Oct 01 <b>Verified:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Age on:</b> 19 Apr 06 <b>4</b> <b>6</b>	<b>Enrolment No.:</b> 5327/03/4 <b>Centre No.:</b> 9999			<b>Family Code:</b> Baggins-54 <b>Quick Search:</b> <div> <input type="text" value="ba"/> <div> Hilbo Baggins  River Bank </div> </div>											
<b>Demographic Information</b> <b>Ethnicity:</b> NZ European /Pakeha <b>Citizenship:</b> New Zealand <b>Language:</b> English <b>English Index:</b> 0 <b>Religion:</b> <b>Iwi:</b>															
<b>Comments</b> Cat died last month		<b>Future Attendees</b> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>First Name</th> <th>Family Name</th> <th>Gender</th> <th>Date of Birth</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Freddo</td> <td>Baggins</td> <td>M</td> <td>1 Feb 00</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						First Name	Family Name	Gender	Date of Birth	Freddo	Baggins	M	1 Feb 00
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JANUARY 2011										Service No. 666	
Subsidy Funded Child Hours					20-ECE Funded Child Hours					Staff Hour Count	
										ECE Qualified and Registered	