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Spring 2013

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Cover photo courtesy of Little Star Montessori.

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# FROM THE Editor

## Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower. - Steve Jobs

There used to be a thought that great leaders were born not made, and when working with children you notice these leaders straight away. But this doesn't mean we all don't have the potential to become a leader in our field of expertise, in our workplace and to inspire others.

Throughout this issue you can read examples of leadership from the ECE centres who share their story. These are centres who have a clear vision, who can articulate this vision to others, who are innovative, who have taken risks by making change and able to get others to work toward their vision.

We have articles on leadership from both EC Professional Support and Whitireia, and the ECC's preferred suppliers for workshops for teachers and centre managers. Each article gives you examples of leadership style and the opportunity to reflect and extend your leadership ability.

Linda Ward, owner and director of Reach Forward Early Learning Centre shares her story on how she encourages staff culture within her centre.

Plus we have stories on using ICT/ social media with the children in your centre, your centre whānau and ideas on how to reach your community.

Brian Puerling, who many of you will know from this year's ECC conference shares more ideas on how to use social media in your ECE centres by sharing what works for his school in the US. From Twitter to blogs children are learning about how to use media to help in their learning and engage with their families and communities.

Capital City Preschool share how they use digital technology and social media at their centre and how these technologies made a difference in the recent Wellington earthquakes.

Not sure whether to implement e-portfolios? Read how Little Star Montessori implemented e-portfolios and discover

how it radically changed communication in their centre. Creators Christian Childcare shares how management and then the children in the centre used 'Skype' to communicate with another preschool in the US and the changes this has led to.

These stories are innovative ECE in action. Have a read.

At the back of the magazine are pages dedicated to the ECC's preferred suppliers. If you're an ECC member check out who the ECC's preferred suppliers are and how they might back a difference to your bottom line. And if you're not an ECC member, have a read, and find out what you are missing out by not being a member.

Thank you to all contributors, especially those authors who work in ECE by sharing your story. You are showing leadership in your sector and giving other educators a chance to pause, reflect and be inspired. Thank you.

If you have a story to share on the below themes or any other topic that you think will be relevant to readers, email me at: [info@ecc.org.nz](mailto:info@ecc.org.nz)

- How to keep staff meetings fun?
- Religion at Christmas? How do we celebrate Christmas and celebrate diversity in our centres?
- Gifted children in ECE
- Art in ECE – Is your centre still using templates?

**Trudi Sutcliffe**

**Editor**

### Correction

The editor apologises for the misspelling of Topcare Early Childhood Learning Centre in the Swings & Roundabout Winter issue. Topcare Early Childhood Learning Centre was a finalist in the ECC-Telecom Innovation & Improvement Award.

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# CEO's Message

By Peter Reynolds



I examine two issues below: the suspension of the Government's review of home-based early childhood education; and the possibility that an increasing number of early childhood centres might not be entirely secure in their tenancy of primary school land.

## Suspension of home-based review leaves thousands with substandard education and care

The suspension of the Government's review of home-based early childhood education leaves thousands of children with low-quality education and care.

The move benefits home-based providers wishing to maintain their current business models; well-off parents who continue to get government ECE subsidies for au pairs to wash their dishes; and a Government seeking to achieve its ECE participation objectives on the cheap. But its absurdity is clear when one considers that it leaves most home-based workers unqualified, and many responsible for delivering a national early childhood curriculum they have not even heard of.

A 2009 ERO monograph found a third of home-based early childhood services had problems complying with regulations. This related mostly to inconsistent application of rules and failure to improve the performance of coordinators and educators when required. The 2011 ECE Taskforce found this 'deeply troubling', concluded quality of care was unacceptably low and recommended an urgent review. This is the review Government has now suspended.

We are left, as a result of this action, with a system in which centre-based early childhood teachers have strict rules for the supervision of inexperienced staff and are required to have between 50% and 80% fully-qualified teachers; while one qualified home-based teacher can be responsible for 20 unqualified workers in multiple locations and in charge of 80 children.

My question is this: If an unqualified, under-supervised plumber is not allowed to fix a toilet, what is the policy logic for having unqualified, under-supervised workers responsible for the education and safety of children?

While some in the home-based sector are happy to profit handsomely from this status quo – others are concerned. The New Zealand Home-Based ECE Association, for example, has called for the qualification level to be raised from level 3 to level 4, and for this new qualification to be mandatory – before an educator starts in the job.

The ECC supports this as a promising first step. But our ultimate aim is 'equivalent regulated quality'. This does not mean 'one-size-fits-all'. Our sector is too diverse for that. What we do want, however, is the guarantee for parents that all genre of ECE services are regulated to deliver on a promise of similarly high standards.

The ECE Taskforce said current levels of supervision in home-based ECE were 'unacceptable'. It said quality was low.

And it is a grave disappointment that Government has chosen to leave these problems unaddressed.

## Are ECE centres secure in tenancy on primary school land?

Population increases in urban areas around the country are seeing schools full to bursting point and beyond, and I am increasingly concerned that some might seek relief by attempting to remove early childhood centres from their grounds.

This concern has been prompted by the plight of a specific early childhood service struggling currently to retain a school site it has occupied for almost 30 years. The Ministry of Education, in mid-2011, gave the service until the end of 2012 to remove itself, but local protest saw the removal delayed.

The service cannot afford the extremely high price of alternative local land, and spent some time believing it might be forced from existence – before being given assurances not only that it could stay if no 'suitable' alternative site were found, but that it could decide what was and was not 'suitable'.

With Auckland Council and others seeking to concentrate residents in higher-rise buildings I am concerned about the implications for the many ECE centres located currently on school land around the country. I am told there is variation in occupancy agreements and I recommend that centres in this situation take a good look at their particular arrangements.

We all know the benefits for children of ECE location adjacent to schools:

- Easier transition to primary education for all
- The preparation, in ECE, of at-risk families and children for positive engagement with school culture; and
- A kick start in primary education for children with special needs.

The ECC is concerned, however, that population expansion at schools in high-growth areas will see ECE centres under pressure to move on. Schools have bigger parent communities than early childhood centres – and in the event of conflict there is risk Central Government will give way to the interest that influences the most votes.

Should you find your centre/centres under any sort of pressure to vacate school land, the ECC would be interested in hearing from you.

It is our view that the solution to the shortage of school space lies in planning for population growth, increasing use of multi-story classrooms, and the development of new schools. It must not reside with the removal of early childhood centres from school sites – and we will be monitoring the situation closely.



# So you know



## Welcome

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

- Country Kids Pre School, Tauranga
- Stepping Stones Early Childhood Centre, Okato, Taranaki
- Wymondley Early Learning Centre, Otara
- Montessori House Of Children, Blenheim
- Te Puna Reo O Raparapaririki, Ruatoria
- Nature's Play Preschool-Pegasus in Pegasus, Canterbury
- Woodhouse Early Learning Centre, Invercargill
- Tess Neal of Castle Kids Early Childhood Centres, Waikanae
- The Beehive Childcare Centre, Snells Beach, Auckland (Provisional)
- Rukshana Kapadia ( no name yet), Mt Wellington, Auckland (Provisional)
- School Of Fish, Epsom, Auckland (Provisional)

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## Consultation on the review of the New Zealand Teachers Council

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) surveyed its members and the members of Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand and the members of the Christian Early Childhood Education Association in response to the Government's consultation on the review of the New Zealand Teachers Council.

The ECC submitted the survey highlights to the review panel, stressing the particular importance of an employer representative as a member of the final New Zealand Teachers Council governing body.

### Survey Highlights of NZTC Review Proposals

- A significant majority (69.44%) are in favour of the disestablishment of the current Teachers Council
- Just over half are concerned about the appointment of the Teachers Council Board by the Minister, although soliciting sector input into the appointment process is likely to allay concerns
- Most were keen to see an employer representative on the governing Board to ensure a balanced view of issues pertaining to the profession
- Almost all respondents felt strongly that the ECE sector must be represented on the governing Board
- While support was evident for splitting the registration and practicing certificate component– and introducing a scope of practice for teacher type– most are in favour of retaining a low fee
- There is general support for the proposed "Authority to Educate" category.
- A high proportion of respondents favour the provision of professional development and are happy for individual teachers or services to be accountable for this.

Advice is currently being prepared for the Minister of Education who will make the final announcement.

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# Teaching in the Digital Age



## - Using Social Media

By Brian Puerling

**Today there are a whole host of ways people communicate: we call, text, speak, leave notes, use sign language, email, send a letter, instant message, and video-conference.**

Some of the more recent methods of communication reside in social media resources. People are taking advantage of these new methods within social media resources to have constant access to information. In our personal lives we use Facebook to connect with old friends, use Instagram to put a creative touch on a photograph with a breath-taking view, or use Twitter to quickly share a link to a breaking news article.

**In the classroom, teachers are beginning to use these same resources and networks to show children how they can connect with the world around them.** A simple note in the school bag will still happen, but teachers are beginning to utilise new ways to reach out and connect to families.



In schools and ECE centres, administrators and teachers have begun to use Facebook as a means to quickly send "need to know" information such as reminders about events or closings. Facebook is also being used to share articles which describe classroom practices that are aligned with the centre's philosophy.

**Many teachers are finding that Twitter can be an effective way for students to explore the concepts of "sharing learning" and "audience".** In the past, the refrigerator was the way to share children's accomplishments. Teachers and children can utilise Twitter as a way to reach a large amount of people in a quick period of time. Children are excited when they recognise they've learnt something or discovered they can do something they have not been able to do before. Teachers can now utilise resources such as Twitter to help their students share their learning and achievements.

Children can identify something they learnt that day which they would like to share with the world. For example, after a trip to the beach, children may want to share the ocean life they saw. As a classroom's network grows, the class can take a look at who is following them and base their tweets or posts accordingly. If a majority of the followers are family members, friends, and other classrooms of the same age, this will be helpful in deciding what they will share with that audience.

When children get home, families often ask the question, "What did you do today,"

with the classic responses of "nothing," or "I don't know". Twitter can be a great way to share a quick tidbit of information with families and provide authentic content for conversations when the child gets home.

**While sharing information with the world is important, children can also use the world as a resource to help answer questions they have.** It is important for children to develop a sense of inquiry and wonder. In order to encourage this, teachers invite questions from children and of course there will be times when teachers and books can not answer these questions. This is another opportunity where social media can be used. Children can tweet or post questions for followers or friends to answer. By doing this young children are learning that there are all sorts of resources to learn information: teachers, books, peers, family members, videos, photographs, and much more! This is one way for children to authentically try out using people as resources without having to ask their question face to face, the world is at their finger tips!

**Schools and ECE centres have also begun blogging as a way to communicate with families.** When the idea of blogs arises, a common quick response is, "but I already have a website". There is a distinct difference between a blog and a website. A website is revised and updated less frequent than a blog. A website has a goal to inform and to market their service, whereas a blog is an ever changing space that has the goal to inform and invite thought and conversation. A website will offer details on





programme components, staff information, lunch menu and philosophy, and the like. Blogs offer a way for managers and teachers to describe classroom events in detail. Blogging provides an opportunity to share the thought and intention behind learning experiences. Through examples of school events and learning experiences, families are better able to understand their child's growth, development, learning, and contribution to the centre community.

**QR codes (quick response) are another way to instantaneously provide families access to information.** QR codes can serve as avenues to all sorts of information: websites, coupons, videos, and audio files to name a few. In an ECE centre a QR code can be posted on a bulletin board next to a child's artwork. The QR code, when scanned by a smartphone, can take parents to an audio link where they can hear their child describing their artwork. Outside of the classroom, teachers can include QR codes in newsletters. When parents scan the QR codes, they can be taken to videos of classroom events or reminders for upcoming events. At Catherine Cook School in Chicago, IL, where I am the Director of Education Technology, teachers this past year explored all sorts of ways to use QR codes to share information with families. The QR code on this page took parents to a video which gave them a quick recap of a Skype conversation

with children's author Todd Parr. This Skype conversation was a culminating experience after an in-depth author study.



If you have a smartphone, download a QR code scanner app (it's free) and scan the code. See what those parents saw.

#### **Future enrolment is always something to consider when making choices regarding curriculum and communication.**

Social media can be an effective way to market your centre or programme to perspective families. While centres use social media resources to communicate with families through posting event reminders, asking questions, sharing photos, and announcing celebrations, a natural and authentic timeline and journal of curriculum and programme events are created. Sharing your Twitter handle, Facebook page, or blog site may help prospective families make their decision and choose your centre. Making the right choice for an early childhood programme can be a cumbersome process for families, so providing an additional window into the learning, community, and environment can be a comforting way to welcome new families into your centre.

#### **ECE centres that are considering social media resources as a way to communicate with families and the greater community are strongly encouraged to develop a release/consent form for all families enrolled.**

This form should succinctly outline how the centre, classroom, and children will be present on the web through the social media networks. Also it may be necessary to have a meeting with families to share your social media intentions.

By sharing this information ahead of time you can put families at ease.

If you are considering using social media in any of the ways described above, do some research, share with your team and families and experiment. You, your staff and your families will not regret it.

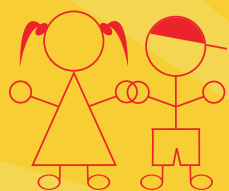
### **About the Author**

**Brian Puerling is a National Board Certified Teacher. He is a graduate of the Erikson Institute and is a former preschool teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. He is currently the Director of Education Technology at the Catherine Cook School in Chicago and is on the Board of Directors for the Chicago Metro Association for Education of Young Children. He has worked as an early childhood teacher coach, a curriculum reviewer, consultant, and professional development facilitator for various schools and organisations such as the Chicago Public Schools, United Way, and the Erikson Institute in Chicago. Brian is a former participant on the Sesame Workshop Teacher Council, and is a recipient of the PBS Innovative Educator Award and PBS Teacher's Choice Award in 2010.**

**Brian is the author of three books:**

- *Teaching in the Digital Age: Smart Tools for Age 3 to Grade 3*
- *Children in the Digital Age: A Guide for Families*
- *Teaching in the Digital Age PowerPoint Presentations – CD-ROM*

**These books can be found at Pademelon Press: [www.pademelonpress.com](http://www.pademelonpress.com) or from The Book Garden: [www.thebookgarden.co.nz](http://www.thebookgarden.co.nz)**



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# Capital City Preschool uses technology to grow in bits and bytes



By Lisa Marshall and Christina Gillmore

**How many of the following technologies do you use on a daily basis: Digital photos, iPads, iPods, iTunes, Twitter, Facebook, internet, WiFi, application downloads/uploads, emails, CDs and DVDs?**

Do any of these terms sound new to you? Not to the technical savvy 3 and 4 year old children at Capital City Preschool (CCP).

CCP's digital dabbling has been a progressive process. Other than using basic computer software programmes, such as the Microsoft Suite – Word for writing profile stories and Excel for completing basic accounting functions – our real technological bud wasn't pollinated until 2003 with the Preschool's introduction of the digital camera.

Used to snap copious amounts of photos of the Preschool's children learning in action, the significant benefit of this device was

that blurred or skewed photos could be deleted, which was a 180 from the 'hit and miss' quality of the wind-up cameras where one would only discover potential negative photos after they had been developed. We also found that having a myriad of photos to capture children's learning moments could also be used as an opportunity for children to back up their experiences and be reflective. Digital technology provided teachers with the medium to click photos to their hearts content, without the added cost.

**Since then and with the added advancement of technology, CCP has embraced the 'technological rush' integrating digital mediums as part of daily business and the education curriculum.** Being digital is a high priority. Using technology is part of what we do on a daily basis, and also extends into many other realms within the wider Preschool community.

Technology went from bud to full bloom when we started using Facebook in April

2011 followed by Twitter shortly after. Linked together, the Preschool uses these types of social media to connect with new, current and past whānau and friends informing them about what's happening at the Preschool. With the push of a button here, and a double click there, teachers update these pages with photos and posts of children's learning, trips and other events almost daily.

**Even though parents are at work, they don't have to miss out on what their children are doing throughout the day.**

They can still take part in the action by logging onto the various online applications, such as Facebook, and see and comment on what their kids are up to. Our children can then discuss and engage in meaningful conversations with their parents on the bus or car ride home from Preschool.

While the teachers have their fingers in all the pies by completing their regular teacher duties as well as pushing buttons, the preschoolers also engage in free flow technology. iPads, iPods and Apple



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computers are available for them to use throughout their free time in addition to a variety of rich activities. The children use technology to learn numeracy and literacy skills in the forms of learning applications, songs and stories. Since technology is included in their daily free-play the novelty of using technology is about the same as the other more traditional forms of learning. In times when multiple children are interested in using the digital mediums teachers implement a rostered schedule and children are free to engage in other activities until the point that they are called for their turn.

**Around 95% of the CCP community are familiar with using social media, and use technology on a regular basis.** The more traditional forms of communication, such as face-to-face communication, personal emails, phone calls and newsletters won't be replaced, but progressing to all things digital will be an increasingly important and popular form of their communication.

**Digital communication has been integrated into the way we do things at this Preschool because it is an important medium for accomplishing tasks and learning within society.** We want the children at CCP to become accustomed to technology as part of their everyday life. Since technology is just another option the children move equally between all the rich and varied activities we provide for them, technology included. As technology consistently advances, the need for being skilled and versed in all things bits and bytes also increases. It is only natural that education follows suit, embracing this technological pursuit. For CCP, this means integrating technology into the educational pathway, and embracing this movement from strength to strength, or in botanical terms from flowering to fruit.



### The use of digital technology and social media in an emergency

Informing parents with urgent news was especially important after the recent earthquakes, in particular, the earthquake which occurred Sunday 21 July. Using social media was the quickest way to communicate to parents about the Preschool's closure the following Monday. In addition to the teachers phoning all the families' landlines, parents could also 'like' and comment on the Preschool's Facebook posts allowing management to identify who had received their message, saving valuable time.

**In times of emergency people can be anywhere, and most likely when people are out and about they are unable to answer their landlines.** With many people having access to their emails and Facebook profiles via mobile technology we can still contact them almost immediately. We believe that these more mobile forms of communication will become more and more common practice. We also had a family on holiday in Hong Kong and through our social media we were able to inform them that Grandma and child were okay since they couldn't get through on the phone.

### Quick tips and tricks for integrating technology as part of your Early Childhood Centre's educational platform

- Tip # 1: Be prepared to invest funding into good quality equipment with an on-going strategic plan to keep equipment upgraded
- Tip # 2: Allow time for team members to learn and use equipment personally as well as professionally. Provide training for team members on how to use the social media mediums. Find applications they will be interested in (when people are invested in something personally, they are more likely to use it professionally)
- Tip # 3: Get your whole Early Childhood Centre community behind you. Communicate the benefits of marketing and communicating the learning that is occurring in your setting within your wider community.

*Capital City Preschool is located in the heart of Wellington's Central Business District. The Preschool exists to provide excellent education and care for children by helping them fulfil their potential while facilitating progress beyond whānau to the wider world and, in particular, to school. CCP's programme is child-focused, and includes an emphasis on nurturing creativity, independence and individuality and adopting a wide variety of teaching and learning styles. The education direction is to provide children with the opportunities for them to grow into competent and confident learners, pursuing a life-long love for learning.*

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# The Global Classroom

## - Making meaningful relationship around the world through the use of ICT



By Rick Fourie  
and Phil Smith

**In March 2012 we at Creators Christian Childcare were inspired by a beautiful centre in America called Bambini Creativi after we saw their Youtube video showcasing their environment.**

We reached out to them through email, and were so pleased to receive a very warm and positive reply from the Director, Brianne Bongiovani. From there we arranged a Skype meeting and from that very first meeting our hearts collided in an explosion of passion for high quality, innovative and joyful education!

**Both our centres are inspired by the Reggio Approach, and Brianne was an intern in Reggio Emilia for a year before she opened her centre in Kansas City, US.** Her wealth of experience, and ability to clearly articulate the philosophical principles of the Reggio Approach in a practical way made the conversations over Skype delightfully inspirational. To learn, understand and see how the Reggio Approach inspired her practise in the sociocultural context of America was insightful. It made our staff rethink our own understanding of Reggio, as well as research and looking again at our way of teaching, our environments as well as our community of learners. In August of 2012 Brianne did a professional development session through Skype at our staff retreat, and for many it was the highlight of the retreat. At the same time, Bambini and their staff learned about early childhood education in the context of Aotearoa.

They started to learn about our wonderful guiding document Te Whāriki, and the implementation of a bicultural curriculum.

It was a time of growth and expansion for us as staff. The 'virtual' relationship we formed with the staff from Bambini was strong, meaningful and mutually beneficial. So we started to think 'If this virtual relationship has become so meaningful, how would our children experience this?'

**Through conversations with Brianne and her team, as well as amongst ourselves, we started to dream about the concept of 'The Global Classroom'.** A community of learners, from different cultures and backgrounds, connected globally via the internet, using Skype, blogs, Facebook and other social media tools available.

The topic quickly became the buzz around the centre, and we arranged a time for some of our children to meet their new

friends all the way over in America. This turned out to be trickier than first thought, with a big time difference between the time zones, the only time that worked was 8.45am in the morning NZT which gave us 15 minutes before they closed for the day at Bambini.

**As teachers we framed the experience with some wondering.** We wondered "Would children be confident in sharing or be cautious?" "What will they think about each others accents?" and "Would it be possible for the children to form meaningful friendships through a virtual platform?"

**Our first Skype call was a delight to watch.** Our children participating in the Skype call used our Macbook and crowded around with eager expectation. We stood back as we saw the children starting to connect with strangers who within a





few minutes felt more like friends. They were very eager to show each other their classroom environments and the latest work they were doing. Although the first Skype meeting was short, it sparked a wealth of conversation in our classroom. Children wanted to know more about America. "How do we get to America?" "Why do our friends live in America?" "Where is America?" Their questions lead us into an exciting inquiry discovering the reality of the global culture they are growing up in. From writing letters to their friends, to sending class photos and sharing their current work with their new global friends, children experienced a learning environment that was relevant which made the new information researched exciting and meaningful.

**In October 2012 our Director and two staff members were fortunate enough to visit Bambini Creativi in Kansas City.**

It was a tremendously inspiring trip and such a treat to meet our 'virtual' friends in real life. We took gifts from our children, as well as photos and letters. The trip felt like we were visiting family and drove home the potential of creating real and meaningful relationship in the context of our global world.

Since then we purchased a new Samsung Smart TV for our classroom, which among other things, we can now use to Skype our friends in Bambini, and any other friends we make globally over the next little while. One of our teachers are currently doing an 5 week missions trip working in Waitoto Children's Village in Uganda. We are wondering if we can connect with them?

## Making ICT meaningful

Using ICT in the classroom in an innovative and meaningful way is becoming increasingly essential in the global, connected world in which we are finding ourselves in. As educators, we are well aware of the unknown landscapes our tamariki will be treading on as they continue on their path as lifelong learners. Much of the change is being driven by the ever expanding landscape of technology and innovation.

For us, using ICT to promote global connection and relationship is one of the most important ways we can use this resource available to us. The possibilities feels endless. We are dreaming of a global, connected classroom, where talking and interacting with friends from different countries and cultures are a natural part of the curriculum. And in order for



Bambini Creativi in Kansas City, US

this to happen we have to make sure that the various technology becomes a language that our learning community is fluent in. This includes a fluency in the skills required to use the particular technology, as well as integrating the technology in the classroom in such a way that its use is very natural and accessible to the children and the teachers.

## Opportunity for Integration into building design

We are currently designing a new centre for Creators and discussing this amazing use of ICT has allowed us to really explore an 'open global classroom' approach. We have the opportunity in a new design to fully integrate the ICT – so in this case we can have a large projection screen or interactive whiteboard and ceiling mounted projector in the ideal location within the classroom. This really gives the full potential for the classrooms to connect across the world, as it allows a window into the other room which can stay open indefinitely. Time zones are of course an issue!

If you're thinking of creating a similar set up, discuss your ideas with your Internet provider and talk to Chorus about their fibre to the home programme as this has the capacity to cope with such intensive ICT use. Chorus can connect their fibre to existing as well as new buildings so they can cover most scenarios.

Ideal location of the whiteboard is in a darker area of the room not directly facing any large windows or glare can become an issue. At Creators we have been able to integrate the screen

fully into their classroom layout, so it sits within the 'discovery' zone of the room where other compatible displays can be incorporated around.

Schools have been using similar technology for a while, but not in the same way, so this is a really exciting opportunity to see what can be achieved with it. We look forward to sharing our findings with everyone – maybe over a skype conference call!

## About the Authors

**Rick Fourie is the founder and director of the Creators Educational Trust and believes in innovation and reform within the Education sector and is passionate about providing every child with a high quality, positive educational experience.**

**Creators Christian Childcare can be found in Hamilton providing a culture of innovative learning in the centre through pedagogical research and implementation of the Reggio Emilia Approach to early childhood education. ([www.creators.org.nz](http://www.creators.org.nz))**

**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. Phil has an office in NZ and the UK and can be contacted in NZ on 021716893 or [phil@philsmith.co.nz](mailto:phil@philsmith.co.nz)**

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

# Little Star Montessori's Journey in implementing e-portfolios



By Rachel Loo



**In 2012 I went to the ECC Conference and discovered a web-based portfolio system called EDUCA.**

**This led to a review on how we document and communicate with parents about their children's learning.**

## **Our review focus:**

To record children's learning stories using a web-based system to:

- Encourage families/whānau to make written contribution/feedback
- Encourage parents/whānau to record stories from home events
- Improve efficiency.



## **What information did we gather?**

The staff reviewed the existing documenting system and discussed why the current hard copy system was not successful:

Parents didn't provide feedback about their children's learning even though a template was provided.

Each time parents returned their children's portfolios, the teachers had to encourage them to write comments/feedback that morning.

Some parents forgot to return their children's portfolio and at times held their children's portfolio for a term and some portfolios had been lost.

The teachers found it difficult to document the continuity of their children's learning without any reference from the missing or overdue portfolio.

The teachers found the old system challenging due to the time spent sorting out photos (Management decided to provide each teacher a camera and a computer to alleviate the problems but the teachers still found the system challenging).

The teachers found the process of retrieving photos to document the continuation of the learning journey of a particular skill time consuming.

The children's learning stories were not current because parents usually collected their children's portfolios approximately at the end of each month.

## **Who will be involved?**

After I obtained further information about e-portfolios and discussed this with the teachers, they all unanimously agreed to use this new format of documentation. Staff also had training on how to use the programme.

In order to activate the new system, we needed to seek our parent's support. We explained the benefits of e-portfolios and the features of the system in our newsletter and requested their written consent. Once we received all our parents email addresses we sent them an invitation, which once accepted, they were able to view their children's stories on line.

We received overwhelming support from the majority of parents who were very excited about implementing the e-portfolios.

## **How will these changes benefit parents?**

- Help to improve teacher/parent relationship
- Parents are able to access their children's story online as well as give feedback immediately upon receiving their children's story
- The ability to write their own 'parent's' learning stories and add photos to their children's portfolio
- Children's stories can be shared with other family/whānau wherever they are (even overseas via email or web)
- Stories can be accessed on the iPhone/iPad and shared with their child/children





We are able to capture children's live performances and send to parents using the video clip feature.

We are able to use the learning stories as exemplars for the purpose of self-review or reflection in the EDUCA teacher's registration module.

The documented learning stories shows that the teachers notice and recognise children's learning and how they responded to the children's interests and informed families of the breadth of their children's learning and development.

The teachers are listening to the children's ideas and valuing their opinions.

Resources and environment are set up the following day to continue to stimulate interest in learning.

The teachers shared the responsibilities to write two stories a month for each child.

## How do children access their e-portfolios and comment on their learning?

We provide two iPads for the children to access their e-portfolios.

Educa Stories for iPads is specially designed for children to read their learning stories on the iPad application.

The children can navigate through their learning stories, photos and videos with ease and read them just like a book.

Any comments the children made were added to their learning stories. The teacher helped to type in their comments.

They were also able to revisit their learning through wall displays and computer presentations of digital photographs.

We achieved 'Very Well Placed' in our recent Education Review Report, dated 14th June 2013. One of the review findings commented that our centre's e-portfolios enable parents to respond to their child's on going learning development and involvement in their children's learning stories.

## About the Author

**Rachel Loo is the Centre Owner and Principal Directress of Little Star Montessori located at 21 Buisson Glade, West Harbour, Auckland. The centre was established in 1993 and rebuilt in November 2011 to cater for 45 children from 2 to 6 years old.**  
**Phone number: 09-4169696.**  
**Email: littlestar Montessori@xtra.co.nz.**

- Parents will receive two stories a month to inform them of their child's interest, interactions, learning and development
- Teachers will reply to parent's comments within a week in regard to their child's learning stories
- Children can view the stories together with their parents and explain to their parents what they have been learning at Little Star
- New parents receive their child's first learning story within a week.

One of the features of the program is the Draft Parent Stories. This feature allows parents to save a story as a draft story. Working parents are often time poor. To encourage parents to write more stories, Educa has added this feature, so parents can start a story, save it as draft and then come back, complete it when the time is convenient to them. To resize the photos, parent can go to the resize photo tab to do it.

## Impact of changes:

Children, teachers and parents have input into the learning stories. The system has a feedback tab where appropriate people can contribute. Since we have started using this e-portfolio, parents and grandparents have contributed by providing feedback on their children's learning and some have written parent stories. When children travelled and spent time with their family on holiday, parents and children were encouraged to record their learning and send their stories to us. We then provided feedback on these stories.

New parents get to view their children's learning stories within a week. This on-line documentation brings relief to the new parents as they can view from the photos and learning story that their child is settled and is adjusting well in their new environment.

During staff meetings we use samples of different learning stories to discuss children's learning focusing on the child's disposition, documenting the learning process and the child's significant learning and possibilities. We read, share and discuss each other's learning stories.

Since we have used the e-portfolio, we have displayed the learning stories and photographs in a well placed area at a suitable height so children can return to discuss them, and revisit past learning and progress.

Children are able to access their learning stories through the centre iPads. By having the opportunity to look at their learning stories it gives the children a perspective on what they were thinking at that time, help them to revisit past experiences and learning, and reflect on these.

This digital system is more efficient because it has a lot of special features such as uploading and resizing photos to the desired size at the touch of the button, spell check, crop photos, draft stories, feedback, group stories and an edit tab.

The children's learning stories are current because the alert mark in the system helps to remind us that the children's learning stories are due to be sent out.

# Technology in the Classroom



## Maria cares for 12 toddlers and preschoolers in her classroom. At story time, she reads aloud a board book.

She and the children discuss action words from the story – like 'bow' and 'twirl', review the words, and act out the motions. Later, Maria and the children look at and listen to the e-book version of the same story on a tablet. While Maria serves lunch, three children take turns touching particular words on the screen to hear them read aloud or using their fingers to cause a character to bow or twirl. The e-book animations add playful actions that support the story line and inspire discussion. They also offer visual support for the action words.

Technology is increasingly recognised as a powerful learning tool. As long as the core principles of healthy development are kept in mind, use of technology in the classroom provides the opportunity to enrich, implement, individually customise, extend and increase enjoyment in the overall curriculum. Appropriately use of technology has actually been proven to promote the social, linguistic and cognitive development of young children (Gimbert & Cristol, 2004; National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1996).

Studies have found technology is particularly beneficial in an early childhood environment, where learning is still very much a form of play (Couse & Chen, 2010). Integrating technology into the curriculum can increase engagement and motivation to learn, providing access to a multitude of resources that will help to create an enjoyable and rewarding learning experience and provide a platform for children to express themselves.

Technology also lends itself to the varied learning styles of children in ECE, helping to make the learning experience more effective. As you'll know, children in this age group are typically active learners with short attention spans; technology

can assist in delivering interactive, multi-modal experiences – helping children to develop and express ideas. In the classroom, technology can individualise the learning experience, allowing teachers to address different learning styles and learning disabilities and bringing the world into the classroom (Kneas & Perry, 2013).

Today, the question that educators ask is no longer whether to bring in technology but rather how it should be used (Clements & Sarama, 2003). Tablets are a popular choice – being mobile, relatively robust, highly functional and providing access to a growing database of specialised apps to facilitate early childhood learning. 'Alphabet deluxe', 'Stories about me', and 'Letterschool' are among those targeted at early childhood students. These learning games, books and writing/drawing applications are proving to be popular. A growing number of websites are also dedicated to supporting teachers in early childhood environments to integrate technology such as EriksonTED (<http://teccenter.erikson.edu>) and Sesame Workshop ([www.sesameworkshop.org](http://www.sesameworkshop.org)).

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- Includes a stylus pen for easy writing and note taking
- Resistant to scratches and dents.
- Multi-window view for students who want to multitask
- Photo editing capabilities ensure maximum creativity and effects

### *iPad 4 with Retina Display*

- High definition retina display for crisp, lifelike images
- Fast speed to deliver graphics performance without compromising battery life
- Fast Wi-Fi capabilities for faster learning and interaction

### *Mitsubishi Interactive Projector set*

- Includes Mitsubishi projector, Interactive Module add on, pen and long pointer
- Movement of the pen or pointer is detected allowing you to make notes on any screen
- Enables you to carry out computer operations meaning you don't need to go back and forth between computer and projector
- Long battery life
- Cost is significantly less than an interactive whiteboard.



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# Getting all the ducks in a row: Alignment as a key leadership activity



By Kiri Eames, Barbara Watson, Bridgit Williams

**The interest around effective pedagogical leadership in early childhood contexts, both in New Zealand and globally, and the resulting dialogue signals that the issue is rapidly becoming the 'hot' topic for the sector.**

Many researchers and writers have highlighted the importance of robust and purposeful leadership in promoting a culture that is focused on the critical examination, by teaching teams, of their own practice (Thornton 2010; Jansen, Cammock & Conner, 2010; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). The intention is to develop a collegial environment committed to ongoing improvement to practice with the aim of enhancing outcomes for children.

This article argues that a key task of an effective leader is to achieve alignment between the centre's vision and its systems, processes and practice. This alignment is achieved by deliberately enacting the goals, beliefs and values of the centre and teaching team. As a consequence, teaching and learning that is highly representative of the centre's over arching philosophy will be evident in practice. It is essential that systems, structures and decision-making are aligned with the agreed strategic direction of the

centre. This requires the strategic vision of the centre to focus specifically on improving outcomes for children and their families and on the teachers' role in achieving this.

The idea of alignment is supported in local and international literature. 'Leaderful actions' (New Zealand Teachers Council, 2010) require leaders to take active responsibility for the learning of others (both children and teachers) and to foster a culture where teachers inquire into practice with a view to improvement. The leadership model used in the First Time Principals programme (Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, C, 2009) emphasises the need for leaders to establish clear goals and expectations, resource strategically, lead teacher learning and development and to create educationally powerful connections. Leaders who articulate and demonstrate how systems, processes and teaching practice are related to each other create a culture focused on quality outcomes. The idea of making connections (alignment) is echoed by Fullen, Cuttress and Kilcher (2005) who agree that the ability of leaders to make connections coherent are those who are most likely to successfully lead sustainable change.

Based on the literature, there are several key foci for leaders' consideration, in their pursuit of alignment.

**Developing a strategic vision that focuses on improving specified outcomes for children, families and teachers**

Although a leader will be largely concerned with the 'big picture' of where the centre might be headed, it is essential to ensure the connections between this strategic vision and teacher actions are clearly articulated and made visible to the teaching team. The leader ought to take on the role of inspiring the team to work purposefully in their teaching with the strategic vision in mind. This requires a broad and strategic view, the development of a professional learning culture and a commitment to ongoing improvement. A good starting point for leaders is to facilitate the clarification of the centre's strategic direction in discussion with key stakeholders.

**Pursuing alignment between centre goals and the beliefs and values of teaching staff**

In our work with teaching teams we often come across passionate, driven leaders who are frustrated by their inability to successfully motivate those they lead. Experience has shown us, as facilitators, that passion and enthusiasm are not sufficient to successfully create a centre culture based on a commitment to ongoing learning and improvement.



An ideal starting point is embarking on a thorough exploration of teachers' values and beliefs with a view to exposing diverse views and creating a synergy between teachers, where the common ground is a commitment to quality and improved outcomes for children. Being clear about the desired outcomes will help to inform the leader's decision-making and ensure that any changes contribute to the strategic direction of the centre and the ongoing learning and development of teachers.

Exploration and consultation with the team before embarking on changes within a centre or a professional learning programme will mean that the change process is supported by the team. This co-constructed approach increases the likelihood that teachers will feel a part of the learning programme and therefore participate more actively in it. They will enter into the process having had an opportunity to contribute and their beliefs and values acknowledged. Conversely, a 'being done to' approach is likely to result in resistance and resentment from a team who have not had their opinions sought, let alone valued. This results in the desired outcomes not being met.

### Aligning philosophy and practice

Effective leaders guide robust self-review that identifies the gaps between current teacher knowledge and capability and desired programme outcomes and teaching practice. The exposure of the 'gap' between what we believe (espoused theory) and what we do (theory in use) (Argyris & Schön, 1974) will provide a potential focus for professional learning and growth within the team. A collaborative approach that involves professional discussion within the team is most likely to achieve coherence and consistency in teachers' understandings, beliefs and approaches. Insights gained through the professional discussion equip the leader with what s/he needs to plan, guide and drive improvement. Such collaboration creates a sense of ownership and control within the team and therefore sets the scene for continued engagement, thinking and discussion as the professional learning continues.

Often whole-centre professional learning with an external facilitator, involving the whole teaching team, provides an alternative viewpoint on current practice, new content knowledge and facilitated

development of strategies in order to affect change (Blenkin and Kelly, 1997). Research shows that in-centre professional learning, involving the whole teaching team over an extended time period, is most likely to result in improved team relationships, shared understandings and sustained and purposeful change (Timperley, Wilson, Barrar, & Fung, 2007). Teams working within whole centre programmes often report that a key outcome is enhanced teamwork resulting from a purposeful, collaborative inquiry into improving an aspect of practice. Whole centre programmes therefore, serve the dual purpose of improving practice and supporting the development of a professional learning community and culture (Thornton, 2010).

### Creating connected systems, structures and decision making

The leaders' role in creating coherence between desired outcomes and ways of working is critical. Purposefully using such processes as appraisal and self-review to leverage progress towards strategic goals ensures that teachers are actively contributing to on-going improvement. Strategic direction should also serve as the key informant of decisions about professional learning and resourcing.

The active and purposeful engagement of the professional leader in fostering a culture of on-going improvement has significant impact on outcomes for children. In order to do this successfully a leader must consciously seek to make coherent connections between centre philosophy, practice, systems and processes. By taking a strategic view and deliberately identifying with the teaching team the desired outcomes, a leader can make robust decisions about how to allocate resources for the optimum effect. If a leader views alignment as the key task of their role then they will inevitably be promoting quality outcomes for children and whānau.

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# Leadership

## – Opinion Piece

By Phil Sales



**I am a sceptic. Sceptics like to question things. Very important things. Things like leadership.**

I will come clean now and admit that I have never really liked the 'pop' approach to leadership ("This is how Steve Jobs runs Apple ...") or the academic approach ("There is a strong correlation between leadership and intelligence ...").

Similarly, I have never really been very happy with the myriad of approaches used in the study of leadership. As stand-alone solutions we have trait theory, behavioural analysis, social and functional theories all competing, to varying degrees, as explanations to the leadership conundrum. Rather like Einstein looking for his elusive 'unified field theory' to explain relativity and electromagnetism, I can't help but think that there is something more (or less, depending on your point-of-view) to all this.

If we accept that leadership is about using influence to achieve outcomes then we rapidly find ourselves gravitating towards a traditional model based around 'leaders' and 'followers' with an emphasis on classical management concepts such as legitimacy, authority, responsibility and accountability.

The classical approach may be all-well-and-good in the right setting (whatever that might be) but just how useful is it in getting the best out of a team of professionals in an early childhood education setting?

Experienced managers would probably say that the classical approach is very useful when dealing with bureaucratic processes or critical issues such as health and safety or financial accountability.

But are there other ways that we can look at leadership in similar settings?

Before we dive in to the subject, let us start by acknowledging that management and leadership are NOT the same thing. As the Hatter might have said to Alice, "To say "I am an early childhood centre manager therefore I am a leader" is not the same thing as saying "I am an early childhood centre leader therefore I am a manager"."

If you are interested in this debate between management and leadership then you should look at the Kotter Change Management series that Whitireia New Zealand runs for public sector organisations. The easiest way to describe the difference that Kotter sees between management and leadership is to go to this link: <http://www.kotterinternational.com/our-principles/change-leadership>.

On a personal level, one of my earliest introductions to leadership was through my father. He was very British and just the sort of person that you would want to have by your side when things got tough.

He was thirteen years old when World War II broke out and he went through scouts and army cadets before enlisting in the regular army. He was rapidly promoted to Sergeant where his role was to direct and organise soldiers towards a common goal.

His style of leadership was the same that he used in post-war years on the rugby

field: "Come on Boys, there's a job to be done!" and he would be the first to pick up a shovel (or the ball) and get stuck in.

That is inspirational leadership in action, wrapped up with a fair bit of charismatic leadership and leadership-by-example. The sort of leader that you would follow into battle or willingly die alongside (although we hope that it doesn't come to that in the early childhood education sector!)

However, not all leadership qualities reside inside the leader. More often than not, leaders are defined by the people that they have around them. After all, you can hardly lead if there is no one behind you to follow!

Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of former US President Franklin D Roosevelt and a United Nations delegate, is credited with saying "No one can make you feel inferior without your consent." She might well have added "... and no one can lead you without your permission."

And what do we make of collaborative situations where people share the leadership task(s) according to egalitarian principles? The Royal Navy may have led through a hierarchy of commissioned officers but their arch-nemesis, the pirate fraternity, often made community decisions through 'public acclaim' while their 'captain' led only in battle or in times of crisis.

Moreover, what can we make of situations in which leadership comes neither from management nor from a team of professionals but from the very people who we are supposed to be serving? As educationalists, we know that learners can provide their own leadership within learning environments.



As my own children constantly remind me, kids are showing, influencing and leading adults all the time, if only we bother to notice!

In more recent times, organisational specialists such as Charles Handy have tried to make sense of these apparent anomalies by suggesting that different work cultures tell us important things about leaders and followers.

Handy's seminal work, *Gods of Management*, used a Greek mythology motif to split workplace cultures into four distinct types: Club (Zeus), role (Apollo), task (Athena) and existential (Dionysus) cultures. Each of these cultures has its own implications for the type of leadership that works best in that environment.

Zeus / Club culture is very hierarchical. However, there is a high level of trust involved in Zeus culture as promotion and responsibility are largely based on "admission to a club of equals". The members of the club respect their peers and decisions get made through empathy and understanding.

Apollo/Role culture tends to be traditional and bureaucratic. Apollo culture values rules, procedures and function. Initiative and innovation rate lowly in role culture while predictability and stability are praised and rewarded. The civil service and local government are typical examples of apollonian culture in action.

Athena / Task culture is based around meeting objectives and solving problems. Expertise, talent and creativity are important virtues for Athenians and people are rated on their ability to get results.

Dionysus / Existential culture emphasises the importance of the individual, rather than the organisation. Members typically see themselves as peers and decisions are agreed upon rather than being imposed.

Early Childhood Centre managers can probably pick out which type of organisation they feel most comfortable with. Once you know the environment that you are working in, the challenge then becomes one of matching leadership style to meet the demands of the culture.

So, here is your question to ponder for the next few weeks: If your board dis-established your early childhood centre manager position tomorrow and re-employed you as an early childhood centre leader, then what (if anything) would you do differently?

### About the Author

**Phil Sales is a former business advisor with the Wellington Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Government's biz Information service ([www.business.govt.nz](http://www.business.govt.nz)). He currently heads up Business Development and Entrepreneurship for the Faculty of Business and Information Technology at Whitireia New Zealand ([www.whitireia.ac.nz](http://www.whitireia.ac.nz)). Whitireia are the ECC preferred suppliers for our centre-manger stream (see advertisement in magazine or go to [www.eecc.org.nz](http://www.eecc.org.nz) to find out what workshops are being offered for centre manager workshops. Or alternately Phil can be contacted at: [phil.sales@whitireia.ac.nz](mailto:phil.sales@whitireia.ac.nz) or 027 331 9658.**

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# Staff Culture

By Linda Ward



**Reach Forward Early Learning Centre has a staff of 12 and we have made an annual practice of setting aside a day or two to 'retreat'; taking time to evaluate where we currently are and where we want to be.**

This annual staff event has elements of social fun, reflective learning, risk taking, dreaming of the future, strategic planning, vision casting, professional development, exploration into our teaching philosophy, team building games, debate and creativity.

This year we decided to answer the six most important questions for providing clarity in an organisation:

- Why do we exist?
- How do we behave?
- What do we do?
- How will we succeed?
- What is important, right now?
- Who must do what?

As the owner and manager I had a fairly deep understanding of the answers

to those questions. But we are a team and therefore I have a responsibility to ensure that there is clarity for all.

Clarity is all about achieving alignment. We are not talking about alignment of teaching practice (even though we do talk about that often) but the clarity we were striving to achieve was the alignment of practices that concern deeper issues such as work ethics, behavioural values and staff culture. We have a great staff culture but we wanted to make it plain and simple – for all to see – the behaviours that make us successful.

*"For organisational clarity and alignment, intolerance is essential. If an organisation is tolerant of everything, they will stand for nothing."* Quote from Patrick Lencioni.

## **What behaviours will we not tolerate? What behaviours do we applaud?**

As a team, during our retreat, we decided to spend a morning answering the second question: How do we behave? We explored the fundamental principles that guide our adult behaviours and decisions. This clarification of behavioural values should preserve through time the true essence of our centre – they define our 'personality'.

One of the things I, as the leader, particularly dislike is 'micro-management' as it demoralises the staff and the professional environment. Ensuring that there is clarity about how to behave should reduce inefficiency and micro-management.

So the first step was to identify all of the core values – not the ones written in our job descriptions – but the ones that are demonstrated by the leader (me) and thus expected from all that are employed to develop the vision. 'It flows from the top'. These core values lie at the heart of our centre identity, do not change over time and already exist.

Staff were asked to list some of the specific and often highlighted or rewarded ways that adults within Reach Forward behave. Everyone just called out the words that they thought I, as their leader, praised staff for or modelled to them. The list included words such as smile, confident, initiate, risk takers, reliable, honest, integral, professional, flexible, organised, communicative, competent, ever-improving, knowledgeable and skilled, disciplined, going the extra mile, pro-active, punctual, clean, neat and tidy. These qualities formed the initial pool of potential core values.





We talked about how we admire people who do those words and how annoying it is to have a staff member who does the opposite to our words. This helped clarify the importance or non-importance of some of the words.

Hoops were placed on the ground and the words were then grouped by similarities. Once similar words were together the staff found a word or two to describe that set of words. Thus we had defined our three core values. We then wrote the following statement:

*How do we behave?*

**We behave with friendliness, professionalism and with a willingness to do more.**

- *Friendliness speaks of connection*
- *Professionalism speaks of self-governance, knowledge, constant improvement, cleanliness.*

*Willingness speaks of having no concerns about status or ego, willing to do whatever it takes to help Reach Forward succeed, no job is beneath any employee, going the second mile.*

We continued with the exploration of these three core values by doing a creative exercise. Each staff member was given a word (not sharing their word with each other). They were then asked to symbolically draw what this word 'looked like' or meant to them. Afterwards, each member showed their pictures, explained

them and the staff guessed which of the three words the picture related to.

Finally the core values were written on our annual and strategic plans. Over lunch in a very casual setting one of the teachers said "That activity was so well worth doing as it was lots of fun discovering the core values that you – our leader – portray and thus expect of us."

The three core values will not be written on nice posters to hang on the staffroom wall as this just becomes annoying. The values should be apparent without visual daily reminders. Too often, clarity of practice is not achieved through a series of buzzwords or aspirational phrases stuck up on the wall somewhere to become background wallpaper. Clarity requires a much more rigorous and unpretentious approach.

Core values are not a matter of convenience, but they guide every aspect of our centre from hiring to firing, to strategy and performance management. This exercise in defining our staff culture by identifying our core behavioural values was powerful as it supports accountability focused systems of appraisal which require a shared understanding of expectations. Now that we have successfully identified and described our core behavioural values we must do our best to be intolerant of anything less than what we value, they must not be minimised as mere idealism but be our building blocks for operations and culture.

Reach Forward Early Learning Centre continues to grow and we look forward to many more staff 'retreats'!

### About the Author

**Linda Ward is the owner / director of two Reach Forward Early Learning Centres, one in Albany, North Shore, Auckland and the other in Helensville, North West, Auckland. [www.reachforward.co.nz](http://www.reachforward.co.nz).**



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# Democratising Curriculum in Early Childhood Centres



By Richelle Young (Shelly)

*I would like to acknowledge Anita Mortlock for her encouragement and feedback in writing this article.*

What does it mean to democratise curriculum? Let us define each word. To democratise something is to make it democratic, i.e:

*"To change the governing structure of a society or group of people in order to make the governing body one that is ruled by the people, or to make something more widely available to everyone" (Your Dictionary, 2013).*

Further, our national early childhood curriculum document, *Te Whāriki*, defines curriculum as:

*"The sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development" (MOE, 1996, p.10).*

The importance of an early childhood environment and all it has to offer, its 'curriculum' being a place that reflects our democratic right as citizens is very much encompassed in *Te Whāriki*. It is a curriculum that reflects an 'open curricula model', in that it provides opportunities to explore and try things out with no fixed answers, to provide opportunities to think and reflect, to question, be creative and to challenge and be challenged. It is compatible with different learning styles and is emergent and fluid. Every child can freely choose and engage in activities and experiences appropriate to their own interests and needs for learning and development (Pramling, Sheridan and Williams, 2004, cited in Dalli 2011).

*Te Whāriki* encourages, welcomes and provides space for all involved to participate

freely within the early childhood setting. It allows room for individual learning styles, strategies and dispositions for learning. Within an effective facilitation each child can find a learning space that respects their individuality and provides relevant and appropriate activities and experiences within the programme irrespective of race, social class, gender, religion, nationality, culture, age and developmental stage and abilities.

Importantly, this essence of non-prescription is important to democratising curriculum (Moss, 2007). "*Te Whāriki*" means "woven mat". Metaphorically it refers to a tapestry worked by many that is inclusive of multiple perspectives, cultures and approaches. It was the author's intent to avoid a traditional curriculum consisting of content and activities (Pramling, Sheirdan, and Williams, 2004). Further, the bicultural nature of *Te Whāriki* reflects not only theory and discourse prevalent in contemporary early childhood sectors but is a reflection of a Māori worldview that is based on democracy (Orange, 2004, Ritchie, 2008).

I believe that as early childhood professionals identify, recognise and facilitate ways to further democratise curriculum, the more effectively *Te Whāriki* will be implemented. This, in turn, will create a more inclusive, non-biased early childhood environment rich in learning opportunities open to all who choose to participate.

The importance of democratic practice is also very much reflected in the current popular theories and pedagogy such as, Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory (1979), Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), a 'community of learners' discourse

(Berk and Winsler, 1995) and a 'quality of life discourse', (Ferran Casas 1998, 2000). The practices of many teachers stem from these and are already helping democratise curriculum. For example, when we make links between or with all the settings and people that children are involved with, it fosters inter-connectedness and involvement: A community of learners (Berk and Winsler, 1995).

A further example can be seen when we document children's learning in ways that help to make their thinking, thought processes, understandings and interests known. It gives tangible evidence of their learning journey that they are able to revisit and for parents to share in as well. It provides opportunity for children, families and teachers to evaluate and identify future goals and areas of interest and gives children a message that their learning is valued and their work respected (Malaguzzi, 1998).

## Recommendations

- Keep up-to-date with current theories and pedagogies
- Provide children daily with a well-resourced, organised, aesthetically pleasing environment using quality materials and resources
- Create a physical, interpersonal and temporal environment that reflects the ideas, ethics, attitudes and culture of the people within it
- Document and display children's learning journeys
- Include the views of children and their families alongside other documentation



- Offer children multi-modal ways to explore, communicate, enquire and research their interests
- Undertake project work with children starting from their point of focus/interest
- Share aspects of centre management with families, such as budgets, and invite comment
- Encourage and invite parents/family/whānau to share their areas of expertise, passion, existing knowledge, and culture within the early childhood environment
- Actively involve children in the day to day decision making around the daily programme including what activities, equipment and resources they would like on offer
- Regular trips out into the immediate and wider community. Where possible link these to parents/family and whānau workplaces, places/areas of involvement etc
- Use open ended questions as a tool to explore, encourage and extend children's thinking
- Provide time within the daily programme for children to evaluate and critique their work, others work and their learning.

A curriculum that is decided on by all the people involved in the early childhood community within its setting is democratic. All of these practices support the principles, strands and goals of our bicultural curriculum *Te Whāriki* being enacted; they also support our role as teachers to work with families and to exercise good human relation skills with both the immediate and wider early childhood community.

Not one practice will singularly achieve democratising curriculum. I believe, when all practices listed are implemented on a daily basis, they will go a long way to achieving this. I am certain there are other practices I have not yet identified that I will add to this list as I continue my learning journey.

## Conclusion

We need to listen to children's voices, identify what it is they want to learn about, follow their lead and let them make the decisions on what the curriculum will entail. This puts children in a position that challenges power relations between the teacher and child and

creates a more democratic process for deciding curriculum (Duhn, 2006).

It is important that teachers are reflective practitioners and critically reflect and analyse their views behind their teaching practices in an on-going manner in order to see what beliefs and values they are conveying (Pramling, Sheridan and Williams, 2004).

A curriculum that reflects democratic practices will foster each unique individual to grow up as a competent and confident learner and communicator, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.9).

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## About the Author

**My name is Shelly Young. I have been in the early childhood profession for over 20 years in a variety of roles, from starting out as a Nanny, to completing the Diploma of Teaching. I have taught in Kindergartens and Daycares in a variety of roles including; teacher, head teacher and supervisor. I have been both a co-ordinator for Barnardos Kidstart and as a home caregiver while my son was a pre-schooler and recently upgraded my Dip(Tchg)ECE to a Bed(Tchg)EC.**

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# Kids 'Sing to Learn'

## ECE Outcomes



By Prue Whoo

### Music has long been recognised as a way of engaging and enriching young children's learning lives.

It was Plato who said 'Music is a more potent instrument than any other for education'. In saying this, it can be the key to unlock a child's learning abilities. There is a vast amount of information and longstanding research now that shows that neural pathways in the brain are formed and shaped by early experiences. Experts say that rich experiences are necessary to build the brain's neuro-circuitry. This influences development and general wellbeing and later academic performance in school.

Music and songs can be used to deliver and re-enforce messages to children about many issues such as health, the meaning of co-operation, anti-bullying, self-esteem, environmental issues, sustainable energy, cyber safety, our natural environment and much more. This helps children engage at a deeper level. Through the process of association, these songs can be linked to ECE principles, strands and goals creating a fun and interactive way for children to learn.

Recent studies have found that music uses both sides of the brain, a fact that makes it invaluable in all areas of development [Source S. Ruth Harris, O.D., M.A.T.]. Integrating music with content

learning has a long history. In the 1800's, lessons in mathematics, history, science, geography and language arts were regularly reinforced with song. We all intuitively understand how the 'ABC Song' demonstrates effectiveness of music and learning. Music can also create and activate 'prior knowledge'. We learn most effectively when we already know something about a subject. Prior knowledge provides 'hooks' on which children can attach new material. When kids are able to link new information to the old, they show increased interest in a subject. They can learn with a sense of purpose.

Music is an enjoyable way to provide the base of prior knowledge that is so critical to learning. The use of music in the classroom is consistent with theories of multisensory learning. Music can help focus a learner's attention; again, research has confirmed what intuitive teachers have always known. Additionally, children who are actively involved and engaged in singing, music & movement, storytelling, art and craft activities, are significantly advantaged as this lays down unique brain connections that have short and long term impacts on the developmental pathways.

Music can evoke emotion, timelessness, peace, memories, joy, sadness and of course happiness. For the purposes of education, it can take us back to places we have been. We all know or recognise a piece of music, a song from somewhere that will instantly transport us back to a place, time and/or event. That piece of music is then associated and linked to that event or in educational terms – outcome or goal. Keeping this association in mind, by way of linking music & songs to ECE outcomes, children learn by teachers connecting the lyrics to the chosen ECE principles, strands and goals. It's always there, never changes, because the association and relationship between the two has been made. It's connected in the brain and accessible anytime you want it. These 'hooks' build on prior knowledge

which allows easy recall. Children will absorb the message without confrontation and without fear. It gives children from all backgrounds, cultures, abilities a level playing field as music has no boundaries, is non-selective and is inclusive.

Making the song fun and interactive is the start. Actions can be done to consolidate the story line in the verses and chorus, which engages the child in the learning practice. Open discussions about the meaning of the song's lyrics can provide dialogue on relevant issues and allows the children to instantly become involved and immersed in learning whilst having fun! It is a simple, yet effective way of teaching and learning, whilst achieving ECE mandatory strands and goals. Children learn best when they are having fun. There is no better way to be taught!



**Australian Children's Educational Entertainer Prue Whoo has written a program that does just that. Her original songs in her programme "Let's Sing To Learn" have all been linked to ECE strands and goals. It allows the classroom teacher to deliver ECE outcomes to children in a fun and interactive way whilst saving precious lesson preparation time (lessons included). It provides the 'hooks' in which children can build on prior knowledge and makes re-call as simple as putting on a CD. Prue will be touring the country during November to present her popular 'The Power of Music in Education' workshops. Visit her website for more details at [www.pruewhoo.com.au](http://www.pruewhoo.com.au) or email [pruewhoo@pruewhoo.com.au](mailto:pruewhoo@pruewhoo.com.au) Phone +61 412 875 514**







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# When a Child Tells

By Eric Hollis

## Responding to disclosure of sexual abuse

When a child tells an adult that she/he has been sexually abused, the adult may feel uncomfortable and may not know what to say or do. The following guidelines should be used when responding to children who say they have been sexually abused.

### What to Say

If a child even hints in a vague way that sexual abuse has occurred, encourage him or her to talk freely. Don't make judgmental comments such as "Why didn't you tell me?"

Show that you understand and take seriously what the child is saying. Child and adolescent specialists have found that children who are listened to and understood do much better than those who are not.

Assure the child that they did the right thing in telling. A child who is close to the abuser may feel guilty about revealing the secret. The child may feel frightened if the abuser has threatened to harm the child or other family members as punishment for telling the secret.

Make sure that the child knows that she/he is not to blame for the sexual abuse. Most children in attempting to make sense out of the abuse will believe that somehow they caused it or may even view it as a form of punishment for imagined or real wrongdoings.

Finally, offer protection and assure the child that you will do all you can to stop the abuse.

### What to Do

Protect the child's privacy by limiting who you tell. Report any suspicion of

child abuse to Child, Youth and Families (0508 FAMILY) or to the police. Individuals reporting in good faith are immune from prosecution. The agency receiving the report will conduct an evaluation and will take action to protect the child.

The Police should consult with a Doctor and/or paediatrician who specialises in evaluating and treating sexual abuse. The examining doctor will evaluate the child's condition and treat any physical problem related to the abuse, gather forensic evidence in case the matter goes to court, and support the child and the caregiver.

The child is dependent on caregivers for their welfare. Parents/caregivers need to contact a qualified professional who specialises in sexual abuse to access help for themselves and to discuss possible effects of the abuse on the child. They will determine whether on-going professional help is necessary for the child to deal with any trauma resulting from the abuse. The professional may also provide support to other family members/friends who may be upset by the abuse.

Adults, because of their maturity and knowledge, are always responsible for any abuse of children. The abused children should never be blamed. When a child tells someone about sexual abuse, a supportive, caring response is the first step in getting help for child and re-establishing his or her trust in adults.

### Listen

Your response to a child's disclosure of sexual abuse is critical to that child's ability to resolve and heal any negative effects of sexual abuse.

#### How to Listen:

- Avoid minimising the situation, always act on to your suspicions
- Know how to listen to children who tell about sexual abuse

- Listen and believe the child
- Do not question the child. If you don't know what to say, echo back the child's own words
- Do not deny the problem or blame the child
- Stay calm! If you get upset or angry, it may frighten the child
- Try to talk quietly with the child
- Tell the child that he or she is not to blame
- Tell the child that you will do your best to make him/her safe
- Tell your child that he or she did the right thing to tell you
- Do not confront the alleged offender
- Always seek advice and support.

Visit [sexualabuse.org.nz](http://sexualabuse.org.nz) and click 'Get Help Now' to find sexual abuse support near you.

- **Sexual Abuse Centre (Rotorua Inc):**  
[sexualabuse.org.nz](http://sexualabuse.org.nz)  
(07) 348 1555 or  
[help@sexualabuse.org.nz](mailto:help@sexualabuse.org.nz)
- **Child, Youth and Family**  
CYF Helpline: 0508 326 459

### About the Author

*Eric is the educator at the Sexual Abuse Centre (Rotorua). Alongside his work in child protection, he owns and manages The Ole Schoolhouse Early Childhood Centre in Rotorua and undertakes special project work for the Ministry of Education. You can contact Eric through his email: [education@sexualabuse.org.nz](mailto:education@sexualabuse.org.nz)*



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*These centre manager workshops are being offered by Whitireia in partnership with the ECC.*

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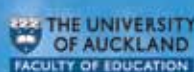
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# 10 useful marketing tips for centres wanting to build their enrolment levels



By Peter Reynolds

1.

## Do a "Sherlock Holmes Check" of your centre.

When parents visit you, they come with an investigative eye, and quickly form an impression that influences their enrolment decision. You never get a second chance to make that first impression! So check carefully how your centre looks, sounds, and smells to a parent visiting for the first time. Include your parking lot, sign, landscaping, front door, and inside your entry. If it looks like something needs tending to, your prospects wonder what else is not getting attention – the programme, safety precautions, the children?

2.

## Market professionally in your e-mail signature.

Think about how many people a day receive e-mails from you. You can maximise the repeated exposure your e-mail signature gives you without it costing you anything! In addition to your name, make sure your e-mail signature includes your centre name, logo, tagline, contact information, and a directive statement that is a call-to-action with a link, such as: *Click here to visit our website.*

3.

## Make your voice mail a marketing tool.

If your voice mail message does not include your centre name and a statement to direct callers to your website, you are missing a free marketing opportunity. Adding your tagline to your message can help drive your unique niche. Giving callers a time frame within which you will return their call gives you the opportunity to fulfil their expectation and begin building a solid relationship. Here is a sample: "Thank you for calling Little Learners, a special place for children to learn and grow. We're not available now, so please leave a message with your name, number, and tell us how we might help you. We'll get back to you within 24 hours. In the meantime, please visit our website at [littlelearners.co.nz](http://littlelearners.co.nz). We look forward to talking with you soon. Goodbye." See if you can pick out each of the recommended elements for a good voice mail message in this example.

4.

## Wear those company-labeled clothes everywhere!

Those shirts and hats and umbrellas that have your centre name and logo on them are for way more than wearing only at your centre and during community events. You never know where you will find your

next inquiry or referral. You want to cause the people who see your name all over town to ask about you and the nursery or child care services you provide. Having your centre-identifying shirt or jacket on can easily help begin that conversation.

5.

## Design a great business card.

This can be your most cost-efficient marketing tool. Keep it consistent with your image, use heavy enough paper stock, print on both sides, and distribute them widely. It's smart marketing to get business cards for your staff, as well. Have them printed with a blank line where staff can fill in their names. It markets your staff as the early care professionals they are, and as an important part of your child care service team. That communicates a good message that makes parents want to know more.

6.

## Generate good publicity about your early childhood programme and services.

Yes, this takes some time and a little know-how, but the exposure and third-party endorsement it gives you can pay big dividends. It costs very little, if anything, to obtain good publicity.



When you do, the image prospective parents get of your programme quality and services is often more believable than you saying the same thing in an ad or on your website. The good feeling that causes in your prospects yield inquiries, and that's effective marketing!

## 7. Label everything.

That goes into your prospects' hands with your centre's identity and contact information. Label articles, brochures describing other services or partners in your community, anything that does not already have your name on it. What should you use? – Make or purchase stickers printed with the words: "Compliments of...", then add your centre name and logo, your web address and your phone number.

## 8. Cooperative marketing.

Share resources and responsibilities for event promotion, such as a Hop-a-thon for Muscular Dystrophy, with a few

other early childhood centre colleagues in your area for maximum reach and impact at minimal cost. Even if parents then investigate all of you, it gives you the opportunity to get inquiries you would not have gotten otherwise. Once they contact you, use your enrolment building skills to communicate your differences that can meet their specific needs, and invite them to your centre for an enrolment visit. Marketing mission accomplished!

## 9. Build a database and follow up.

Time is the biggest expenditure you will have on follow-up, but it's where the fortune lies. Gather prospect names everywhere – from telephone and online inquiries, in guest books at events, in person. Be sure to request e-mail addresses and permission to send them information of value in selecting quality child care. Note this, along with their special interests and concerns, on the prospect profiles in your contact management system. With permission to contact your prospective enrollees, you

can cost-efficiently set-up and maintain a follow up programme that pays off big time.

## 10. Finally, develop and USE a marketing action plan.

Consider a good marketing action plan as your GPS, directing you to more enrolment inquiries. In a good plan, you will have noted the low-cost marketing actions you plan to take, the timelines for implementing them, the budget you have allocated for each (if there is any expense at all), the people involved, and the results you will use to evaluate the effectiveness of each effort. A good marketing action plan helps you know where you are going, how you will get there, and what worked best. Smart marketing!

*To learn more on marketing your centre attend the 'Marketing in a Competitive Environment' workshop provided by Whitireia in partnership with the ECC. For more information go to [www.ecc.org.nz](http://www.ecc.org.nz) (Under events)*

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# Research Resources worth another look:

## Children's learning outcomes and Community Wellness



By Judith Duncan

### What difference does adult participation in early childhood settings make to children's learning outcomes and community wellness?

This was the research focus of a two-year study based at the Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergarten and Early Learning Centres (CBK), and funded by the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI), 2010-2012. Our research has led us to rethink the roles of 'people, places and things'.

We included all four teaching teams, parent facilitators, and management of the four early childhood centres, the 303 Parenting Resource Centre (303), and the management and administrators at the CBK. Judith Duncan

(University of Canterbury) and Sarah Te One (Victoria University of Wellington) worked alongside the CBK teams as researcher leaders over the two years of the project.

A major focus of our work was to generate findings (results) that could be used by other teachers, educators and practitioners in a wide range of early childhood settings. This led us to develop methods and tools through the project that others could use for professional purposes (as well as research), for example, in self-review or curriculum revisions. As well as a written summary of findings we have produced four short videos (8-9 minutes each) for use with teachers, parents, students, and communities. The videos present our key findings under the areas that we were most engaged.

### Increasing parent participation in our settings: "Seeing and Being Seen"

Focusing the teachers' gazes on the adults in the environment, as well as on the children, increased the visibility of the parents in the environment, and the recognition of the importance of the daily interactions. As the parents experienced 'being seen' in the environment their ease at interacting with the teachers, and other parents in the environment, increased. To ensure that each family member was 'seen' by the teachers we rearranged the layouts of the centres to assist in the visibility and to create reasons for the parents to enter the programmes (not just come in and out the door). Management incorporated this approach into their rebuilding of Office and Administration space so that children and their whānau could see into the areas as they arrived, and/or passed by, offering a welcoming and connection that had previously been 'hidden'. See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ylbt1\\_cUmAE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ylbt1_cUmAE)

### Intentional teaching approaches to connect with families/whānau and communities

The key is for teachers and services to be intentional and deliberate in their interactions with whānau and their local communities. Intentionally building a learning tradition involved a multi-layered approach to building

relationships, reshaping provisions, and encouraging participation enables diverse responses and practices that could meet the preferences of the participating families and whānau at any ECE service in a way that is relevant to their community. The teachers looked for daily opportunities to expand and extend their connections and conversations with the parents, and were rewarded with increased interest and participation by the parents. See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9l9S97MRaY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9l9S97MRaY)

### Children's Learning Outcomes

In this video we discuss a new way of accessing learning outcomes in early childhood education that includes families, parents and community. Following a 'golden tread' of progression we trace the interaction between home/ECE and ECE/home and community on children's learning.

See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fe\\_B0BS7LBU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fe_B0BS7LBU)

### ECE as embedded in the community

We asked: "What does a community partnership approach to teaching and learning look like?", "How does this support community wellness?", and "How can we involve our centres in the community?" instead of the more usual question of "How can we involve the community in our centres?" This conceptual shift in approach was a cornerstone to the increased community participation that occurred over the two years of the project. See [www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLDDFedc0zM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLDDFedc0zM)

For more information see:

- [www.centralbaptistkindergarten.org.nz/Innovations](http://www.centralbaptistkindergarten.org.nz/Innovations)
- [www.tlri.org.nz/tlri-research/research-progress/ece-sector/active-adult-participation-ece-enhancing-learning-and/summary-report](http://www.tlri.org.nz/tlri-research/research-progress/ece-sector/active-adult-participation-ece-enhancing-learning-and/summary-report)
- [www.education.canterbury.ac.nz/research\\_labs/eye/index.shtml](http://www.education.canterbury.ac.nz/research_labs/eye/index.shtml)

**Judith Duncan is an Associate Professor of Education at University of Canterbury.**

**Email: [judith.duncan@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:judith.duncan@canterbury.ac.nz)**

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Dr Jenny Poskitt, postgraduate lecturer at Massey's Institute of Education, has expertise in professional learning, assessment and middle year student engagement.  
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# Resource Reviews



## Farm: Little Fronds

By Matthew Williamson

Illustrated by Fraser Williamson

Puffin

This board book has been designed for the 'Kiwi' baby, with bright colourful and simple illustrations, so young New Zealanders

can explore the typical farm experience using well known New Zealand symbols.

I really enjoyed the fun illustrations from the Māori farmer to the farm dog that has a mischievous glint in its eyes (most appropriate for a working farm dog). A very 'Kiwi' atheistic.

**Reviewed by Trudi Sutcliffe.**



## Beach: Little Fronds

By Matthew Williamson

Illustrated by Fraser Williamson

Puffin

This is another board book from the Little Fronds series. This time the young reader

explores the 'Kiwi' beach. Throughout the book the reader discovers typical images that could be seen at any New Zealand beach, from boogie boards to rock polls to a seagull sitting on driftwood. Other titles in the Little Fronds series include: ABC, Colours, and Counting.

**Reviewed by Trudi Sutcliffe.**



## I Love Lemonade

By Mark Sommerset

Illustrated by Rowan Sommerset

Dreamboat Books

If you liked "Baa Baa Smart Sheep" then you'll love the antics in "I Love Lemonade" by Mark Sommerset. Preschoolers and adults alike will enjoy the comic humour in

this amusing picture book about the cheeky discourse between two friends. Pages are free from distraction and the clean, simple illustrations by Rowan Sommerset are a great example of 'less is more'. After being tricked into eating Little Baa Baa's 'smarty tablets', Quirky Turkey decides it's payback time. But has Quirky got what it takes to pull the wool over Baa Baa's eyes?

**Reviewed by Rhonda McPeake.**



## 'Let's Sing to Learn'

By Prue Whoo

An ECE linked music programme for New Zealand ECE centres and services. This CD has 20 songs ranging from all issues children and educators deal with and often discussed in daily interactions or in projects, from healthy eating, to being safe, and to feelings such as the song 'Happy Face'.

With the CD you receive a booklet with the lyrics, lesson and activity ideas and suggested connections to the other songs on the CD. The suggestions are useful for educators who are using the songs to link to discussions/projects being discussed in the ECE centre.

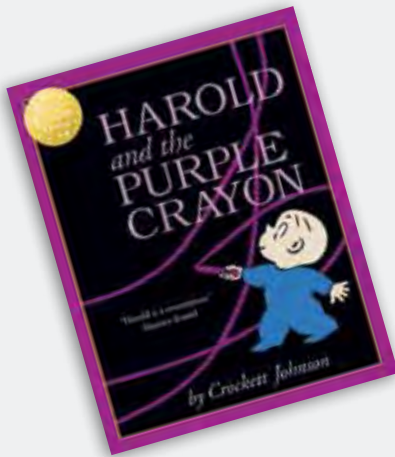
Music includes songs like 'My Body', and 'It's ok to be different'. These are fun catchy songs with an upbeat tone that will enthuse even the most reluctant musician/dancer! 'My Body' celebrates what our bodies do and the actions to the song are self-explanatory. Children will enjoy the pounding of the heart and the counting up to ten. In Prue's video she ends the song with a muscle pose. A must pose for all!

*'It's ok to be different, it's ok to be the odd one out, you see black isn't white and white isn't red, I'd rather be different than be the same instead. Yeah!'*

If you want to find out more about Prue's music go to [www.prue.whoo.com.au](http://www.prue.whoo.com.au) or read her article on page 30.

**Reviewed by Trudi Sutcliffe.**





## Harold and the Purple Crayon

By Crockett Johnson

HarperCollins

This picture book is about little Harold who brought excitement into his everyday life by using his imagination to draw a landscape with a single purple crayon. Harold stole the heart of the children because of his simple approach to making a dull day enjoyable. He used a purple crayon and his imagination – two things that all children have within their reach!

The children liked the book because it stretched their imagination and kept them in suspense till the end. It was neither too long nor too short. The illustrations coincided very well with the text and were vivid.

I would recommend this book for ages 3 to 5 because it has simple illustrations and vocabulary, can be easily understood and captivates the children with an achievable idea for them to experiment with, if they wish to.

**Reviewed by the children in the Green Room at City Heights Childcare in Dunedin.**



## The Magical Life of Mr Renny

By Leo Timmers

Gecko Press

This picture book is about a painter, Mr Renny, for whom an inner wish was granted – all his paintings turned to reality 'until he had had enough of it.

The children enjoyed Mr Renny's character and were one with him through

his frustration and his delight. They enjoyed the very attractive and colourful illustrations with the short understandable sentences that went with them.

I would recommend this book for ages 3 to 5 because it has a moral, gives scope for discussion and extends children's vocabulary.

**Reviewed by the children in the Green Room at City Heights Childcare in Dunedin.**



## Mr Whistler

By Margaret Mahy

Illustrated by Gavin Bishop

Gecko Press

This picture book is about Mr Whistler, an absent-minded man who does nonsensical things while trying to find his lost train ticket. The children enjoyed the funny things Mr Whistler did and his sense of humour.

This age group of children though, found the vocabulary slightly difficult to comprehend and the sentence construction and line arrangement was a little complicated for them to enjoy the actual essence of this style of writing.

I would recommend this book to a higher age group of children because it is a funny, true-to-life experience with a lot of humour. It also portrays a different style of writing.

**Reviewed by the children in the Green Room at City Heights Childcare in Dunedin.**



## Recipes for Play

Recipes by Rachel Sumner

Photography by Ruth Mitchener

Puffin

This book's theme is all about fun ideas for small hands and large imaginations and is aimed at preschoolers and their families. Although many of these ideas would be fantastic for ECE centres that feel they need a few more ideas for messy

and sensory play or new teachers wanting to have a few ideas up their sleeve.

Just be aware that some recipes use food products, in saying that some of the 'food' used is for making natural food colouring, with food items such as turmeric, dark cabbage leaves and beetroot. Other ideas in the book include: blow bubble darts, fairy housing, fizzy ice, jelly eggs and taped up!

Good ideas for families who want to introduce messy play to their weekends!!!

**Reviewed by Trudi Sutcliffe.**



## Mangu & Ma

By Megan Bowers – Vette

HarperCollins

This beautiful black and white small board book is illustrated with 16 refreshingly crisp, fuss-free real-life pictures of a variety of objects, from shells to sheep

and tiki to telephones, arranged simply, yet interestingly. Large, clear, contrasting images are sure to capture the attention of young babies and the book is sturdy enough to be propped up for "tummy time" entertainment. The reviewer's new-born loved studying the intricate details of each page.

**Reviewed by Amy Hooson.**



## 123 Little Donkey

By Rindert Kromhout; English translation by Bill Nagelkerke

Illustrated by Annemarie van Haeringen

Gecko Press

A counting book for younger readers. The illustrations tell a more complicated story than the text, which gives numbers

between 1 and 10, names an object (for example "5 kitchen shelves"), and describes what the characters say. The text also contains words with relatively complex meanings, such as "pleading". This allows for discussions of varying depths to take place, depending on the needs and abilities of the readers. A story to educate, entertain and stimulate conversation.

**Reviewed by Sean Martin.**



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- **Sally Clifford**

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# Member Benefits Programme

## Benefits of joining up with ECC's Preferred Suppliers



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Choosing an ECC-accredited Preferred Supplier means you avoid the hassle of finding your own supplier, or one with an understanding of the early childhood sector.

This year the ECC has worked hard to provide you, our members with a wider selection of providers. New preferred suppliers include: Mercury Energy, Telecom, Rubiix and BNZ.

For example being an ECC member gets you a higher Prompt Payment Discount of 12%, and the best pricing Mercury can offer you when you sign-up to the **ECC Mercury Energy Plan**.

**Telecom** offers ECC members Landline, Broadband and Mobile solutions as special packages at competitive rates.

Getting the best for your money is important but so is service. ECE centres are unique businesses, and to make life easier you need services that understand your business. Preferred Suppliers **Rubiix** offer an accounting service package exclusively for Early Childhood Education [ECE] providers. Their system is designed to improve the performance of your enterprise by giving you more time to focus on your core business, better

information for decision making and improved compliance with Early Childhood Education (ECE) and IRD requirements.

**BNZ** is available to help you and your childcare business be good with money, no matter the size of your business—small or large. BNZ have products and services designed specifically with Small Businesses in mind.

As an ex-teacher I shudder about how much money was spent on office supplies, art and craft products, cleaning products, technology products and teaching resources. By using **OfficeMax** as a preferred supplier, members receive a retail discount. This discount ranges depending on the product but you can save up to 20 per cent on some lines.

The above examples only give a glimpse of the savings to be made. Read the following advertisements and discover the benefits of joining up with ECC and their Preferred Suppliers.



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For help with employment law issues, Buddle Findlay provides an ECC member helpline for up to 15 minutes free legal advice - call 0800 742 742, option 4.

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# HANDS UP

## WHO WANTS ELECTRICITY SAVINGS

As an ECC member, you'll get the best pricing we can offer, plus a 12% Prompt Payment Discount\*. Your centre can also get a \$50 credit on its power for each parent or teacher that mentions your centre when they join Mercury online.

Put your hand up by calling 0800 20 18 20 or email [business@mercury.co.nz](mailto:business@mercury.co.nz)



\*ECC Mercury Energy Plan Terms and Conditions apply



**Mercury Energy**  
Good energy





### Educa is the leading online portfolio system for New Zealand early childhood centres

The system has been developed with feedback from ECE teachers and parents, so we know it delivers what you need.

Our current customers love the increased engagement they have with parents, and parents love the increased engagement they have with their children's learning.

The unique Educa iPhone, Android and iPad app are sector first, centres say that the apps help them save on non-contact time and made it easy for children to revisit their learning.

And the portfolios they create are more relevant and exciting, because Educa makes it easy for teachers to post photos and videos and to link entries with learning stories, Te Whariki and the centre's own curriculum and goals.

**Educa offers ECC members 10% off our monthly subscription fees!**

Go to **www.educa.co.nz** to find out more or sign up for a free 30-day trial. Or contact us on **0800 233 822** or **hello@educal.co.nz**



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Email: [info@childcarefinance.co.nz](mailto:info@childcarefinance.co.nz)

**www.childcarefinance.co.nz**

# SHARP®

## Sharp & the Early Childhood Council support Childcare centres with better printing solutions.

Sharp New Zealand has been working with the ECC and its member centres throughout the country for over 7 years, placing better & more efficient business equipment, with products that would not normally be in reach of many centres without special arrangements available through ECC.

Quality colour business machines save valuable space and time for centres, and are a better investment than the money spent on expensive ink cartridges for low cost printers.

Our new Sharp printers have the ability to Air Print from ipads and iphones.

Sharp have successfully achieved placement with hundreds of member centres around the country who are now using Sharp colour copiers / network printers and scanners as the primary device for all their needs.

The preferred supplier agreement with the ECC means that its members are able to purchase many other Sharp products at preferential pricing including:

- Interactive White Board Solutions
- Televisions: LCD/ LED & 3D
- Information Display Panels (IPD)
- Microwave Ovens
- Calculators
- Data Projectors
- Refrigeration
- Colour A3 & A4 Copiers
- Network Printers / Air Print
- Network Scanners / Faxes (Best in Class)

**Please Contact:** Donald Cruickshank DDI: 09 920 4136 Mob: 021 720 878  
Email: [dcruickshank@sharp.net.nz](mailto:dcruickshank@sharp.net.nz) [www.sharp.net.nz](http://www.sharp.net.nz)



## The Solution for your Annual Audit

**William Buck**  
Christmas Gouland

Simplifying the audit process and reducing your audit costs

William Buck Christmas Gouland is the auditor of the Early Childhood Council.

### 5 Reasons why you benefit from this audit solution:

- ✓ It saves you money
- ✓ It saves you time
- ✓ It's flexible
- ✓ It is purpose built to meet the Ministry's requirements
- ✓ An experienced and dedicated audit team is here to help you

**We also audit community based centres in the greater Auckland area. Contact us now for a no-obligation quote.**

*Contact us now for a free information pack.*

### Questions?

Phone Darren Wright  
or Charissa Coy  
Phone: (09) 366 5068  
Email: [audit@wbcg.co.nz](mailto:audit@wbcg.co.nz)

Your annual audit:

From only **\$795 +GST** for  
**ECC members** and from  
**\$895 +GST** for **non ECC**  
**members** (for privately  
owned centres only)

## Looking for workshops on ECE Management?



**Whitireia**  
NEW ZEALAND

The ECC in partnership with Whitireia have designed workshops for ECE centre managers

Workshops from Marketing to Governance to Strategic Planning to Managing People...plus more!

Go to [www.ecc.org.nz](http://www.ecc.org.nz) or ring 0800 742 742  
to find out more or register today

## We're protecting the future of child's play.

Child Proof insures over 750 ECC members' centres, ensuring children continue to have a place to play.

To learn more visit [www.childproof.co.nz](http://www.childproof.co.nz)



Child Proof is an education insurance service managed by Crombie Lockwood.





## EC Professional Support | Your solution to professional learning

### Do you want to:

- Make the biggest difference to teachers' practice?
- Improve outcomes for children?
- Raise the quality of your ECE centre?

Let us support and work with you to design the best approach to professional learning and development for your team.

### Services we offer include:

- Whole team (in-centre) programmes.
- Specialised programme for Mentors.
- Consultancy and appraisal for centre owners/managers.

To discuss ways we can support your team's learning needs, contact:

**Bridgit Williams,**  
Acting Director

Phone: +64 9 623 8899 ext 48433

Email: [bj.williams@auckland.ac.nz](mailto:bj.williams@auckland.ac.nz)



See our webpage [www.education.auckland.ac.nz/ecps](http://www.education.auckland.ac.nz/ecps)

# WE'LL COME TO YOU

Call **0800 BUSINESS (287 463)** to arrange  
your 30 minute tech check for your centre  
[telecom.co.nz/businesshub](http://telecom.co.nz/businesshub)



## Early Childhood Council members can save a bundle on much more than just office stationery

As an Early Childhood Council member you can receive  
discounts on over 7,000 products from OfficeMax,  
including;

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- Technology
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# LAST LAUGH

**Q: What's black and white and red all over?**

A: An embarrassed skunk!

**Q: In what state was Abraham Lincoln born?**

A: Naked and screaming like the rest of us.

**Q: How is a cat drinking milk like a track star?**

A: They both enjoy taking a few laps.

**Q: What do you call artificial spaghetti?**

A: Mockaroni!

**Q: What did the hamburger name his daughter?**

A: Patty!

**Q: What is the strongest bird?**

A: A crane!

**Q: What does a cow get when it gets sick?**

A: Moocus!

**Q: What do you get when you cross a frog with a rabbit?**

A: A Bunny Ribbit!

**Q: After the flash on his camera malfunctioned, what did Satan get back from the drugstore?**

A: Prints of darkness.

**Q: Why did the rooster cross the road?**

A: To prove he wasn't a chicken.

**Q: Why did the Pope cross the road?**

A: He crosses everything.

**Q: What's grey, has four legs and a trunk?**

A: A mouse on vacation.



This cartoon has been kindly reproduced from the book: *'The Little Things: More sanity savers for mums and dads'*, a clever, poignant and sometimes downright hilarious read, it will make parents laugh, make them think, and best of all remind them that no parent has it easy.

**Q: Who are some of the werewolves' cousins?**

A: The whatwolves and the whenwolves.

**Q: Why are Venetian blinds the greatest invention in the history of mankind?**

A: If it wasn't for Venetian blinds, it would have been curtains for all of us.

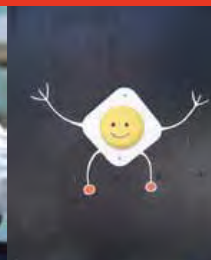
**"America is the only country where a significant proportion of the population believes that professional wrestling is real but the moon landing was faked."**

– David Letterman

**"A gossip is one who talks to you about others, a bore is one who talks to you about himself; and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself."**

– Lisa Kirk

Exploring the world of numbers through play and meaningful activities.



"We all love thinking about maths!"

"A favourite activity at our centre!"



# NaturallyWood by design

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



This gazebo is an Outdoor Retreat in a preschool playground.



This portfolio shelf made in solid timber has 12 divisions and easily holds 36 portfolios. This shelf doubles as an attractive table.



This infant climber has four sides each with different climbing and tactile experience with a platform at the top.



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.

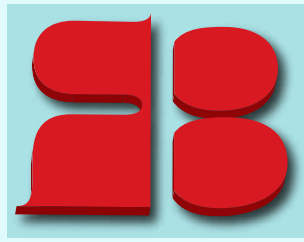


This display panel has a removable perspex cover which makes it particularly suitable for infant and toddler classrooms.

We specialise in  
Early Childhood Centres

For further information see our website  
Website [www.naturallywood.co.nz](http://www.naturallywood.co.nz)  
Phone 09 2352980 Fax 09 2352981  
Email [naturallywood@paradise.net.nz](mailto:naturallywood@paradise.net.nz)

# FirstBase



## Administration Software for NZ Early Childhood

**FirstBase keeps the administration tasks simple, so you can spend more time with children in your charge.**

- >>> Easy to use
- >>> Keep comprehensive child records
- >>> Store staff records & MoE staff funding data
- >>> Create rolls, sign in lists & general reports easily
- >>> Control invoicing, receipts & debtors
- >>> Produce ministry returns ( RS7, RS61, WINZ forms )
- >>> Auto-activation of future enrolment agreements
- >>> Keep medical & vaccination records
- >>> Staffing ratio optimisation

JANUARY 2011										Service No. 666	
Subsidy Funded Child Hours					20-ECE Funded Child Hours					Staff Hour Count	
		Under 2	Over 2				20ECE Hours	Plus 10 Hours		ECE Qualified and Registered	
										Yes No	
Sat 1					Sat 1					Sat 1	
Sun 2					Sun 2					Sun 2	
Mon 3					Mon 3					Mon 3	
Tue 4					Tue 4					Tue 4	
Wed 5			54		Wed 5	234		30		Wed 5	24 1
Thu 6			48		Thu 6	228		30		Thu 6	24 1
Fri 7			54		Fri 7	168		12		Fri 7	26
Sat 8					Sat 8					Sat 8	
Sun 9					Sun 9					Sun 9	
Mon 10			48		Mon 10	158		94		Mon 10	32 1
Tue 11					Tue 11					Tue 11	
Wed 12			60		Wed 12	228		12		Wed 12	30 1
Thu 13			48		Thu 13	234		18		Thu 13	25 1
Fri 14			48		Fri 14	160		24		Fri 14	31 1
Sat 15					Sat 15					Sat 15	
Sun 16					Sun 16					Sun 16	
Mon 17			48		Mon 17	158		94		Mon 17	40
Tue 18			72		Tue 18	228				Tue 18	38 1
Wed 19			66		Wed 19	234		12		Wed 19	38
Thu 20			54		Thu 20	234		12		Thu 20	33 1
Fri 21			54		Fri 21	172		74		Fri 21	36
Sat 22					Sat 22					Sat 22	
Sun 23					Sun 23					Sun 23	
Mon 24			42		Mon 24	164		94		Mon 24	38 2
Tue 25			60		Tue 25	234		6		Tue 25	39 2
Wed 26			60		Wed 26	270				Wed 26	38 2
Thu 27			48		Thu 27	246		6		Thu 27	38 2
Fri 28			42		Fri 28	180		78		Fri 28	38 2
Sat 29					Sat 29					Sat 29	
Sun 30					Sun 30					Sun 30	
Mon 31					Mon 31					Mon 31	
		<b>906</b>			<b>3890</b>		<b>706</b>			<b>968</b>	<b>18</b>

Teacher Registration Targets: Numbers of Teaching Staff			
This question refers to all teaching staff usually employed in your service to deliver education and care programmes during the week Monday, 6th December - Friday, 10th December 2010. This question is used for statistical purposes only and does not impact upon funding. You should count part-time and full-time teachers, and you should include the Person(s) Responsible. You should not count day-to-day relievers, nor any staff not directly involved with teaching children.			
How many teaching staff (as a number) are:	ECE Qualified	Non ECE Qualified	Total
Registered Teachers? (that is, holders of current Practising Certificates)	6		6
Unregistered Teachers? (that is, are not holders of current Practising Certificates)		2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	

Number of Children				
How many children claimed in your service during the week of Mon 6 December 2010 to Fri 10 December 2010. Only count each child once during this week.				
Subsidy Funding		20 Hours ECE		
Under 2	2 & Over Not receiving 20 ECE	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years
	14	34	24	2

Printed from FirstBase on 14 Feb 2011

**Personal Details For Hilbo Baggins** Educator Toddlers

Child: **Hilbo Baggins** Enrolment No. 5327/03/4 Centre No. 9999

Preferred: **Hilbo** Family Code Baggins-54

Gender: ☒ M ☐ F Date of Birth: 15 Oct 01 Verified: ☐ Age on: 19 Apr 06 4 6

Street: 54 Jelly Street Suburb: Jellicoe Town: Wonka Village Tel: 566 935 Email:

**Demographic Information**

Ethnicity: NZ European /Pakeha Citizenship: New Zealand Language: English English Index: 0 Religion:  Iwi:

**Comments**

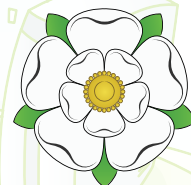
Cat died last month

**Future Attendees**

First Name	Family Name	Gender	Date of Birth
Freddo	Baggins	M	1 Feb 00

Advance Enrols:

Incident Log:



**Skagerrak Software**

**Skagerrak Software**  
PO Box 56-710

**Dominion Road Mt Eden**  
**Auckland 1446**

**0800 367 658**

**sales@kidbase.co.nz**

**www.kidbase.co.nz**

The software is fully networkable & is available for **Windows & Mac** users. FirstBase is already in use in hundreds of centres and kindergartens.

It maximises your funding, and handles even most taxing setups.