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Winter 2015



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FROM THE Editor

“ You must be the change you wish to see in the world. ” – Mahatma Gandhi

Thank you to all those who attended this year's ECC Conference 2015, a conference focused for those in leadership and management positions. I hope you all came away inspired with new ideas to either research further or put into action. Good luck!

Within this issue are two strong themes, “Quality ECE” and “Communication”. The article, *‘What is quality’* discusses the indicators used to define quality in ECE and whether current government policy is helping or hindering the ability for many ECE providers to deliver quality ECE.

New Zealand has long been considered a world leader in our teaching with young children. We were front runners with the introduction of the first ECE curriculum world-wide. *Te Whāriki* has now been our ECE curriculum for nearly 20 years, and some are now asking, is it time for a review? Professor Anne Smith has provided *Swings & Roundabouts* with an article which reflects on the lasting value of *Te Whāriki* and reminds us that to prevent stagnation and encourage improvement within any curriculum informed

critique must occur. She offers suggestions on how to achieve this, the current barriers to achieving this, and the need for quality education to achieve the best outcomes for children. Alongside this article is feedback from an Early Childhood Council survey in 2013 that sought a range of thoughts on current teaching practice and curriculum implementation.

Tony Robbins says, ‘To effectively communicate we must realise that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others’. This quote rings true for many working in our diverse ECE sector who may work with many co-workers and families with a different background to their own. With such diversity, how can you pull together as a team? To help with this question we have three articles on communication within this issue. The first article looks at the challenge of creating good team communication and offers some ideas on how to achieve this. The second article offers a range of team-building exercises to promote communication, trust and problem-solving within your team.

And thirdly there is an article on effective communication, including a side-bar on validating feelings.

Other topics in this issue include the importance of an effective website, how a community law book can help you make a difference within your ECE community and the danger of button batteries.

Thank you to all who contributed to this Winter issue of *Swings & Roundabouts*. Themes in upcoming issues include:

- Learning stories
- Embracing bicultural practices in ECE
- Value of leadership development for all teachers
- Mentoring – why its important and some good strategies for those mentoring

If you'd like to write an article on any of the above articles or another topic close to your heart please contact me at publications@ecc.org.nz

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Budget 2015

and what it might mean for the future for ECE

There's a big idea that explains much of what the National Government is doing in early childhood education. The Minister of Finance calls it 'social investment'.

Social investment should not be mistaken for traditional social welfare. Its objective is not the wellbeing of individuals. Its objective is reducing long-term government spending. 'At-risk', in this context, does not mean children at risk of living an impoverished life. 'At-risk' means children at risk of becoming a future drain on the welfare and criminal justice budgets.

The idea of 'social investment' explains much of the current Government's social policy. It explains, for example, National's support for the Māori Party's Whānau Ora. It explains the investment in mentors to get young sole parents off the benefit. And it explains why prisoners at the new Kohuora Men's Prison are getting tablet computers if they enrol in Open Polytechnic courses.

Free computer technology for prisoners is not exactly the traditional centre-right approach to crime, but it is a solid social investment if the second chance for

prisoners leads to jobs, and reduces costs to the taxpayer of re-offending.

From the social investment point of view, early childhood education centres in middle class neighbourhoods are most definitely not a focus of concern. Children in these services are likely to get jobs and pay tax whether or not they receive any early childhood education whatsoever. They are unlikely to go on the dole or to prison, and unlikely therefore to be a long-term drain on taxpayer funds.

This is why the Government has, since 2010, cut per-child funding for thousands of early childhood services, and diverted money to increasing access for low-income, Māori and Pasifika children. From the social investment point of view it is entirely correct to spend less on those at low risk of being a future burden on the taxpayer, and more on those at high risk.

The outcome of this thinking for early childhood services has been ugly. It has included loss of the additional money we used to get for having more than 80% qualified staff, loss of funding for

professional development to help new teachers into full registration, and large falls in the real value of universal subsidies. These and other losses have forced centres to replace qualified staff with the unqualified, move backwards on teacher-child ratios, and retrench or eliminate professional development.

When Finance Minister Bill English drafted last week's Government Budget, however, the idea of social investment was obviously top of his mind.

The ECE sector got \$74.9 million to accommodate an increased volume of service, but nothing to maintain the level of universal subsidies against inflation. No increase in the basic universal subsidy. No increase in 20 Hours. And nothing to compensate centres for increases in teacher remuneration.

There was an increase, however, in the targeted childcare subsidy for low-income families -from \$4 to \$5 an hour, for up to 50 hours of childcare a week per child.



By Peter Reynolds

From a social investment point of view it makes sense to do this: to reduce funding for well-off children, in order to deliver more to the most needy, because it makes sense for government to invest most where the reduction in its long-term spending obligation is greatest. Sadly, however, this does not make sense for early childhood centres struggling to both maintain quality and keep parent fees to a minimum.

The ECE bottom line for Budget 2015 is this. It will cost an average 50-child centre about \$15,000 a year in lost revenue. Add that to the substantial losses we had endured already, and we get what we have today - a 9.3% fall in universal subsidies for an average 50-child centre since Budget 2010; centres under financial pressure; less professional development for teachers; backwards movement on teacher-child ratios; and increasing parent fees.

This, I think, is not the end of the bad news. There is almost certainly more to come, this 'more to come' being implied by what was absent from Budget 2015.

When Bill English talks about social investment, he talks of 'million dollar kids', by which he means children who go on to cost government millions in welfare and imprisonment. And he talks also of the failure of existing systems that pass these children from agency to agency with no one agency taking responsibility.

It is quite clear what he wants from 'social investment', though he does not use the

words. He wants 'management by objectives'. Management by objectives applied to social policy. He wants:

- A means of identifying the most at-risk of families;
- Specific outcome measures;
- Intensive family-focussed interventions; and
- Providers in the gun if outcomes are not achieved.

This thinking has, I think, at least three major implications for the future of early childhood education services.

Firstly... It impacts how we should engage with the current Government. For example, a review of special education has just got underway. An understanding of the social investment model suggests the review will create more change if we can provide evidence that interventions will reduce future welfare costs, and much less change if we cannot.

Secondly... From a social investment point of view it is not really good enough to focus on low-income children, Māori and Pasifika - as the Government is doing with its participation target. This is because not all low-income, Māori and Pasifika children pose a long-term fiscal risk to the taxpayer. The Prime Minister himself grew up in a state house and did just fine. And most Māori and Pasifika do not become a burden to the welfare state or go to jail. I expect, therefore, there may

be pressure on the Government's new ECE funding system, currently in development, to reallocate funding from universal to tightly-defined targeted locations.

Thirdly... The new Early Learning Information System may well have a roll in the relocation of funding. ELI gives each child a 'national student number'. This allows government to track where children enrol in ECE, when, and for how long. And this gives officials the ability to correlate this information with later educational and other outcomes, identify which children benefit from which kinds of early childhood education, and direct funding accordingly.

To summarise and conclude. 'Social investment' is about investing in at-risk people. Not with the goal of easing their pain, but with the goal of reducing their long-term cost to the taxpayer. It is 'management by objectives' applied to social policy. For those centres serving middle class families, it comes with challenges: a requirement to adapt to ongoing downward pressure on universal subsidies; and the temptation to sell out to ECE corporates whose economies of scale allow easier adaptation to falling government revenue.

Our sector faces a dilemma. Do we accept ongoing cuts to universal subsidies? Or do we increase the political risks for Government by making middle class voters aware they are paying more to get less? This is, I think, the big political question for ECE providers in 2015.



So You know

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

- Sunnynook Preschool, Takapuna
- George Street Children, Matamata
- Mt Roskill Baptist Kindergarten, Auckland
- Peanuts Childcare & Education Centre, Whitianga
- Northland Community Preschool, Wellington
- Kids Castle Limited, Dannevirke
- Jumpstart Preschools, New Plymouth
- Ohapu Childcare, Ohaupo (Waikato)
- Our Space Early Education Centre, Whangaporoa
- Kids.com Educare, Rotorua
- Mountain View Preschool, Rotorua
- Acorn Kids Ltd, Tauranga
- Little Villa Ltd, Rotorua
- Learning Curves (Waikato Childcare Ltd), Morrinsville
- Aubrey Early Learning Centre, Auckland
- Conductive Education Canterbury Inc, Christchurch
- Nature's Explorers, Auckland
- Talented Tots (Provincial Childcare Holdings), Auckland
- York Place Preschool & Nursery, Dunedin
- Riverside Kindergarten & Childcare, Wainuiomata
- Care -A-Lot Childcare Centre, Auckland
- Sovereign star Nursery and Preschool, Christchurch
- JRD Early Learning Centre, Gisborne
- Baby Steps, Whangarei
- Karori Kids Incorporated, Wellington
- Kids Castle Education and Care Centre, Dannevirke
- Conductive Education Canterbury Inc, Christchurch
- Little Tamariki Montessori Preschool, Kaikoura
- Biggles Childcare, Auckland
- Matakana Village Preschool, Matakana (Provisional member)
- Coastal Distribution Ltd, Gulf Harbour (Provisional member)

Welcome

ECE Funding Handbook Update: April 2015

The Ministry of Education has reviewed and updated the Early Childhood Education Funding Handbook (the Funding Handbook).

There are no changes to funding rates in this update.

There are four important changes to be aware of:

1. **New information about ELI Principles of Use**
2. **A change to the funding rule regarding the calculation of Discretionary Hours, and clarification of the uses of Discretionary Hours (effective from 1 June 2015)**
3. **A change to the process for Emergency Closures and Substitute Days**
4. **Explanation of the uses of the EC20 form.**

The updated version of the Funding Handbook is available in the Funding section of the ECE Lead website. If your service keeps a printed copy, you should print and replace the entire Funding Handbook.

Please note that the funding-related forms that make up Appendix 2 are now available on ECE Lead to download as individual documents.

The Ministry of Education has also made a number of clarifications to make the Funding Handbook information clearer and easier to understand:

- Requirements for the attestation of registered teachers' salaries have been clarified. Refer to the Education.govt.nz website for more information.
- The frequent absence rule extension for non-operation is now contained within the Funding Handbook.
- Requirements for storing records in an electronic format have been added.
- How new services can apply for a review of their initial Equity Index (EQI) rating.



- How services eligible for the Annual Top-Up for Isolated Services (ATIS) are notified of their receipt of ATIS funding
- Where hospital-based service adult to child ratios apply has been changed.
- Minimum qualification requirements for Playcentre group supervision.
- Discretionary situations for Playcentres on standard funding.
- All information relating to the now ceased PRT and ECESTE6 grants has been removed.
- Removal of home-based quality rate requirements prior to 1 July 2011.
- Inclusion of references to the Early Learning Information (ELI) system throughout the Funding Handbook.
- Requirements when there is only one signatory to a service's bank account.

Circulars, Editorial Changes and Forms

Along with the changes to the Funding Handbook, three Education Circulars have been withdrawn to reflect the clarifications made:

- 2008/9 – Attestation of Teachers' Salaries
- 2007/11 – Attestation of Teachers' Salaries
- 2001/16 – Playcentre Qualifications.

There have also been various changes to layout, grammar and punctuation. These do not impact on the information contained in the Funding Handbook.

- **Information about the changes to each Chapter is available on ECE Lead (<http://www.lead.ece.govt.nz/ManagementInformation/Funding/FundingHandbook/ChangesByChapterAndSection.aspx>).**

New ECC innovative products for ECE centres

Centre Manager CPD System

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) is pleased to introduce a system designed to help early childhood education centre managers identify, plan and record their ongoing professional development activities as managers, the ECC's Continuous Professional Development (CPD) system. CPD ensures that all centre managers are committed to keeping up-to-date with new ideas, continuing their learning, contributing to the sector, and potentially undertaking further study or research.

Quality early childhood education includes leadership, planning, use of knowledge, and a great deal more. While teachers are required to maintain their ongoing professional development activity in order to maintain their professional registration, there is no such motivation for many centre managers.

The idea behind the ECC's Centre Manager CPD system is to enable centre managers to self-review their management practice, to determine their strengths and weaknesses; to plan their PD activities for the next period; and then finally - using the system, record these activities in a way that helps the Centre Manager to determine how much activity is needed to drive their ongoing PD.

The ECC Centre Manager CPD system features a downloadable self-review template and a planning template. This report can be downloaded at any time for appraisals/performance reviews or other purposes. The system itself features a points system that allocates points to different types of PD activities. If the centre manager enrolls in an ECC workshop, conference or other PD event, then their CPD record will be updated

automatically. But you don't have to use ECC activities, you can use any activity designed to improve your ongoing centre management practice. Each system user will then see a total of their PD activity points for the year to date. They will also see how their peers are going in a system average. Finally, the ECC provides a benchmark target representing the total number of points a centre manager should aim to achieve over a year. By meeting these sector benchmarks; centre managers can expect to be acknowledged by employers and sector groups as being committed to excellence in early childhood education service management.

This is the first time such a system has been made available to childcare centre managers in New Zealand. Centre Managers attending the recent ECC Conference in Queenstown have been treated to a complimentary subscription to the system for 12 months. Everyone else is encouraged to find out more by going to www.ecc.org.nz.

Indeks - an innovative new cloud-based service

Indeks is a new document management system built with early childhood centres in mind. It's an innovative cloud-based service from Sharp Corporation (ECC Preferred Supplier) and Sublime Software that enables you to store your records safely in the cloud.

Early childhood centres often place heavy demands on document management. If these processes fall down, it can have all sorts of undesirable impacts around issues such as compliance and maintaining the standards that everyone you're interacting with seeks and expects, from officials through to parents.

The vision for Indeks is that you'll be able to meet the demands and deadlines associated with keeping vital documents and records up-to-date in a more streamlined, seamless and consistent way. On top of the many advantages of having a trustworthy and affordable document management system that's simple to use and simple to follow, Indeks can give you peace of mind that your essential records are safe and sound.

That's an important consideration given the level of reporting you're required to make, and the necessary security of everything concerned with the smooth running of your centres. Being cloud-based you're also protected against the real risk of document destruction by fire or other property-related events.

Indeks opens up the possibility of less physical document storage in already overcrowded spaces, less hassle around retrieval when staff change, less worries about having the correct versions of regulatory forms on hand, and no costly time wasted on lost files.

Indeks also offers up a simpler way too of staying on top of complete sets of documents and avoiding gaps in the processes that underpin your daily activities with the people who matter most: the ones under three foot tall! To find out more go to www.ecc.org.nz

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SHARP

ECC Art Competition 2015

This year's art award theme was 'If I had a zoo...' and every submitted piece of artwork (25 murals) celebrated creativity with sparkle, bright colours and imagination dazzling this year's ECC conference attendees.

Thank you to all centres who entered into the competition, the high calibre of artistic talent, use of colour, art media, originality, and the collaboration of many children working together as a group with their teachers is to be applauded and celebrated. Our judges had a very difficult job indeed!

Overall we had three prizes. The overall winner and runner-up chosen by our judges and the People's Choice Award chosen by those attending this year's ECC Conference.



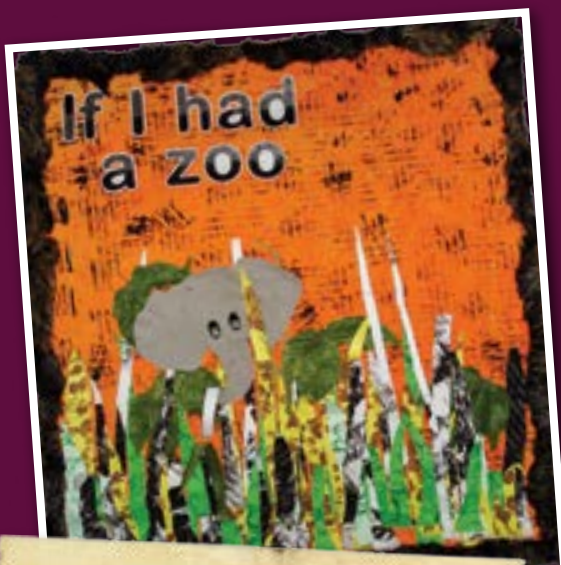
Winner

HeadStart Childcare & Early Education Centre, Auckland



Runner-up

JRD Early Learning Centre, Gisborne



People's Choice Award

The Tot Spot Early Learning Centre, Tauranga

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What is **QUALITY**?



The question of 'quality' when asked in the context of early childhood education is not devoid of controversy.

It is this Government's goal, that by 2016, 98% of children starting school will have participated in quality early childhood education. The objective is that children who have a quality early childhood education have a much higher probability of doing well across a range of indicators, and this is especially so for children living with relative deprivation.

The collation of 2016 ECE participation statistics will not be known until 2017. The reason for this is that ECE participation statistics are counted from school enrolment data. When a parent enrolls their child at school, they are asked to state whether their child has attended some form of ECE participation prior to starting school. Parents are not asked the question about whether the ECE experience was of a good quality.

Where is the parent voice in assessing quality and how do we know what is true quality in an ECE context?

Since the inception of the ECE participation target, overall ECE participation statistics have not been far behind 98%. The real concern was that Māori and Pasifika children had a lot of catching up to do in order to reach this target.

On 30 April 2015, Hon Hekia Parata proudly announced, "Between March 2012 and March 2015, Māori ECE participation increased by 3.5 percentage points and Pasifika ECE participation by 4.8 percentage points. The Māori participation rate now stands at 93.8 per cent and the Pasifika rate at 91 per cent. The overall rate is 96.1 per cent, up 0.2 percentage points on a year ago and 1.4 percentage points on March 2012.

Rightly so, the question is being increasingly asked, "Are we driving up ECE participation at the expense of quality?"

Is it not *all* of our responsibility to question and demand quality early childhood education for our children? Not just academics, politicians, the media, and interest groups?

Dispelling the myths

As at July 2014 there were 4,308 licensed ECE services in New Zealand. 1,851 of these are privately-owned and 2,457 are community-owned. These services have a variety of different operating structures, philosophies and affiliations, and are known by many different names - Playcentres, Montessori, Early Learning Centres, Childcare Centres, Kindergartens, Kohanga reo, A'oga Amata, Rudolf Steiner, etc.

The majority of privately-owned ECE services are education and care centres although proportionately, there are a significant number of privately-owned home-based networks. Out of the 2,364 education and care ECE centres, 1,532 (65%) are defined as privately-owned and the remaining 832 (35%) are community-owned. Of the 389 Home-based networks, 70 are community-owned and 319 are privately-owned. Community-owned services are spread across Education and Care centres, Kindergartens, Kohanga Reo, Playcentres, and Home-based.

For both privately-owned and community-owned ECE services, the Government provides some funding, sets standards to maintain quality and monitors quality and compliance against regulations. Both community-owned and privately-owned ECE services exist in a competitive market where they must demonstrate value to parents in order to retain enrolments.

There is no evidence to put a blanket statement across all privately-owned ECE services that they are driven by profit alone, any more than a community-owned ECE is purely driven to make a surplus.

The growth in privately-owned ECE centres reflects two things:

1. Many teaching professionals have taken the opportunity to "set up and own their own centre" instead of continuing to work for someone else as a wage-earner.
2. The demand for quality ECE services by parents.

The Government openly encourages independent providers of quality ECE services (irrespective of ownership type) to meet demand through the licensing regime. Each licensed service provider (community-owned or privately-owned) must comply with Te Whāriki, New Zealand's curriculum standard set out in regulation to:

- plan, implement, and evaluate a curriculum that is designed to enhance children's learning and development through the provision of learning experiences, and that is consistent with any curriculum framework prescribed by the Minister that applies to the service; and that
- responds to the learning interests, strengths, and capabilities of enrolled children; and
- provides a positive learning environment for those children; and
- reflects an understanding of learning and development that is consistent with current research, theory, and practices in early childhood education; and
- encourages children to be confident in their own culture and develop an understanding, and respect for, other cultures; and
- acknowledges and reflects the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua; and
- respects and acknowledges the aspirations of parents, family, and whānau.

How do we decide on quality?

There is substantive research evidence showing that training and qualifications of staff, high rates of staff pay, high staff:child ratios, and small group size are associated with good quality education for infants and young children (sometimes referred to as the “iron triangle”).

Other research such as an ERO report, *Quality in Early Childhood Services* (August 2010), highlighted that in high quality services, it is the interrelationships between the following features, rather than any one on its own, that underpins the quality of education and care provided:

- Leadership
- Philosophy
- Vision
- Relationships and interactions
- Teaching and learning
- Assessment and planning
- Professional learning, qualifications and support
- Self review management.

In addition, a comprehensive literature review conducted by Linda Mitchell, Cathy Wylie and Margaret Carr, New Zealand Council for Educational Research (May 2008), *Outcomes of Early Childhood Education: Literature Review*, found that the conditions that support the teaching and learning that in turn directly contributes to good quality outcomes for children and parents are:

- Intentional teaching;
- Family engagement with ECE teachers and programmes, where social/cultural capital and interests from home are included, and both family and teachers can best support the child’s learning; and
- a complex curriculum involving both cognitive and non-cognitive dimensions.

The 2010 ERO Report: *Quality in Early Childhood Services* found having all educators qualified does not on its own ensure high quality education for children, where other aspects are absent. Although qualifications are important, it is the combination of the range of factors discussed in this report that contributes to the overall quality of provision for children.

The report found that where services are experiencing difficulty or need additional help, in areas identified by ERO and/or by the service, support needs to be timely and

focused on building capability and capacity. A stronger accountability and compliance focus may be necessary for some services along with a wider range of interventions. It also suggests that opportunities for high quality services to work collaboratively with other services in clusters or in regions may also be useful. Nowhere does it mention that privately-owned ECE centres are of particular concern.

There is also no wider evidence to support the contention that privately-owned services offer less quality to their community-owned counterparts. Parents may also choose privately-owned centres because they do not have the time or do not want to be involved in governance (e.g., Elliott, cited in Carnachan, 2002, p. 55).

Quality Indicators

The quality in ECE is decided through a combination of factors including ERO reviews. ERO reviews can be a stressful time for centres that have a window opportunity to showcase how well their centre is doing. We all know how it feels to be examined and often “Murphy’s Law” type events can happen leading up to and surrounding an ERO review.

To come out with a glowing ERO review report must be a relief to a centre. The rewards are numerous such as reputation, confirmation that what they are doing is good, a marketing tool for increased enrolments, and they can breathe easy for a few years until the next review.

For those who don’t rate too well, do not despair. The good news is that feedback is given such as areas identified for closer attention/reflection, and sometimes deeper self review and team bonding results.

But let us not forget our parent voice. It is important for parents to make informed decisions about the combination of factors to take into account when deciding on what makes for a quality early childhood experience for their child.

Parting comments

- ECE is a great place to start a child’s educational journey. This lays the foundation for a child’s successful transition to the compulsory schooling curriculum.
- Quality in ECE is decided through a combination of the ERO review process, parental feedback and the successful transition to the schooling curriculum.

- A stronger accountability and compliance focus may be necessary for some services along with a wider range of interventions rather than singling out an ownership type.
- Sound business practices and good governance makes a strong contribution to quality.
- A centre that values and respects a child’s home values, culture, language and religion is a key component to implementing Te Whāriki. This is in line with its principles of empowerment, holistic development, family and community and relationships.
- The mix of ownership types, together with the range of philosophies, styles and cultures is what New Zealand parents want and what works for making quality ECE available to all children.

Definitions of Quality

noun

1. *The standard of something as measured against other things of a similar kind; the degree of excellence of something.*

“an improvement in product quality”

synonyms: standard, grade, class, classification, calibre, status, condition, character, nature, constitution, make-up, form, rank, worth, value, level;

general excellence of standard or level.

“a masterpiece for connoisseurs of quality”

synonyms: excellence, superiority, merit, worth, value, virtue, calibre, eminence, pre-eminence, supremacy, transcendence, distinction, refinement, incomparability, account; More talent, skill, skilfulness, virtuosity, expertise, brilliance, craftsmanship, flair, finish, mastery

2. *a distinctive attribute or characteristic possessed by someone or something.*

“he shows strong leadership qualities”

synonyms: feature, trait, attribute, characteristic, point, aspect, facet, side, streak, property, peculiarity, idiosyncrasy, quirk, badge, stamp, hallmark, trademark

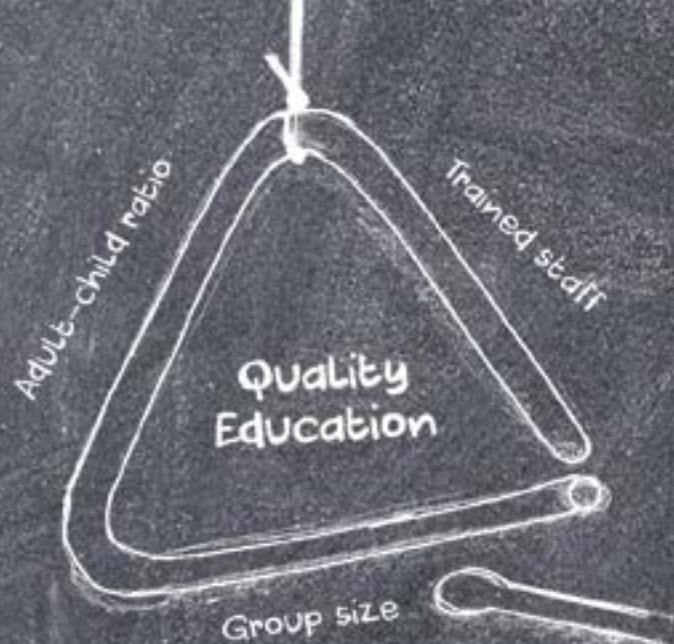
adjective: quality

1. *Of good quality; excellent.*

“he’s a quality player”

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for children, whānau, families and communities (SELO)



SELO is a professional development programme for early learning. It is targeted at early childhood education providers and kōhanga reo that have low participation rates or need support in providing quality early learning. There are three different programmes available. Each programme will be shaped to the service's needs.

Programme 1

This programme provides in-depth professional development. It is available to licensed early childhood education (ECE) services and kōhanga reo in locations identified by the Ministry of Education. A facilitator will work directly with management and teachers/educators to ensure a shift in practice towards delivering high quality early childhood education.

Programme 2

This programme focuses on community specific professional development in locations identified by the Ministry of Education. Different aspects of the community are taken into account. This is to ensure that the service is responsive to its identity, language and culture.

Professional development designed for certificated playgroups and children/whānau with special education needs are included in this programme.

Programme 3

This programme covers 7 threads. These threads focus on different areas within the early childhood education environment:

- Strengthening early learning opportunities for infants and toddlers
- Strengthening early learning opportunities in Te AhoTukutuku/early mathematics
- Strengthening early learning opportunities in early literacy
- Strengthening Māori leadership in early childhood services
- Strengthening Pasifika leadership in early childhood services
- Strengthening leaders in early childhood services
- Whakapiki i te Reo Māori

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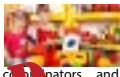
- ECE services: contact an ECE advisor at your regional Ministry of Education office
- Te Kōhanga Reo: contact your district manager
- Playcentres: contact the Playcentre Federation
- For SELO 3, contact one of the suppliers in your region;
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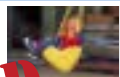
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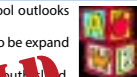


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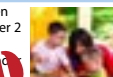


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Te Whāriki: An enduring legacy?

By Anne B. Smith, Emeritus Professor,
University of Otago College of
Education



It is a good thing to reflect on the lasting value of our curriculum guidelines *Te Whāriki* at this time in history, almost twenty years after the guidelines were first published in 1996. A curriculum expresses what a society wants from its education system (Laevers, 2004, cited by Miller & Pound, 2011, p. 8), and provides a structure and ongoing direction to guide teachers in their work. I write here about how well *Te Whāriki* reflects what we in Aotearoa New Zealand want to achieve in early childhood education, and what barriers there are to its implementation.

What is special about *Te Whāriki*?

Te Whāriki is a uniquely Aotearoa New Zealand curriculum, holistic and bi-cultural, with a sound theoretical base. Children are seen as gradually coming to know and understand the world in communication with other people, in rich cultural contexts (people, places and things). Children take initiative themselves, building on 'funds of knowledge' from their families and communities, but also respond to the opportunities and provocations that teachers plan, to engage them in learning. The contexts of learning, particularly close relationships, responsiveness to children's strengths and interests, and opportunities for children to extend their knowledge and engage in problem-solving, are key components of *Te Whāriki*.

Te Whāriki reflects our understanding that the most important goal of an early childhood curriculum is to trigger a lifelong engagement with learning, rather than to teach a set of fragmented academic skills. In contrast the UK *Early Years Foundation Stage* emphasises play from a technicist perspective, to encourage curriculum goals

of literacy and numeracy (Wood, 2013).

Te Whāriki is instead a curriculum focused on dynamic motivational goals rather than static subject-based goals. *Te Whāriki* is designed to encourage children's agency, commitment, exploration and aspirations, recognising that there is not one pathway for learning, but a variety of possible pathways depending on culturally valued goals. Ideally with *Te Whāriki* as a framework, children are not worried when they make a mistake or can't at first achieve a goal, but persist and look for alternative solutions, and for guidance in achieving these. *Te Whāriki* aims to strengthen children's learning dispositions - tendencies or habits of mind that enable them to recognise, search for, respond, and engage with learning opportunities.

Another really special thing about *Te Whāriki* is that it recognises the competencies and capabilities of children, and respects their differences, rather than focusing on their deficits or failures. "The language of *Te Whāriki* is not one of risk, vulnerability and competition. It speaks, instead, of opportunity, respect and relationships" (Nuttall, 2013, p. 2-3). I have argued (Smith, 2007) that *Te Whāriki* is a model of how children's participation rights can be embedded in a curriculum, because it is respectful of their voice, values them as active learners, and gives them the opportunity to be in control of their own learning. Participation rights are a fundamental component of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), recognising children's personality and autonomy, and that children are people not just objects of concern, who must be listened to, and given the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect them. That children are stakeholders in their own learning is deeply embedded in *Te Whāriki*, as well as the importance of children being

able to make choices, express their opinions, and take responsibility for their own learning.

One of the reasons that we know that *Te Whāriki* is special, is that it is well-known and influential in many parts of the world, and has influenced curriculum developments in the UK, Australia, Canada, and Singapore and several other countries. The most sincere form of flattery is imitation, and the Australian curriculum *Belonging, Being and Becoming – the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (2009) seems to be quite closely modelled on *Te Whāriki*. *Te Whāriki* has been praised by international researchers (Moss, 2008; Nutbrown, 1996; OECD, 2004; Pramling Samuelsson, Sheridan & Williams, 2006), and by early childhood practitioners in New Zealand, and was chosen by the OECD in 2004 as one of five positive examples of early childhood curricula. The OECD report (2004) asserted that an early childhood curriculum: "should give centres, teachers and children the largest possible freedom, but still retain the direction of overall common goals" (p.26) and that programmes should be open and make room for children's initiatives and experiences. "In this openness there is room for exploring, trying things out, for raising open questions to which there are no fixed and final answers" (p.29). In my opinion, *Te Whāriki* meets the criteria of freedom and openness, and therefore provides valuable guidance for teachers in early childhood centres in Aotearoa New Zealand, without stifling their professionalism and creativity. I think that we should be proud of our *Te Whāriki*, and celebrate how it can nurture happy childhoods and a love of learning for New Zealand children, as well as the contribution that it has made to national and international developments in early childhood.

Problems with implementing

It is important, however, that informed critique occurs, to prevent stagnation and encourage improvement for any curriculum. Joy Cullen, thought that *Te Whāriki* "had taken on a gospel-like status" (Cullen, 1996), and her view was supported by Alvestad & Duncan's (2006) research revealing that most New Zealand teachers they interviewed regarded it as a document of great significance and importance, as illustrated by this comment from a teacher.

“(Te Whāriki) that’s basically our bible. We always look at Te Whāriki to make sure we have done it correctly”

(Alvestad & Duncan, 2006, p. 36).

Most teachers have a sense of ownership over *Te Whāriki* and believe that it gives them a shared language, enhances their professionalism, and makes what they do with children more visible (May, 2009). These teacher attitudes contrast with those in countries where a curriculum is imposed from above in a top-down manner.

There are some dangers though in this widespread acceptance, especially when teachers use *Te Whāriki* in a very limited way. Joy Cullen (1996) pointed out that there can be a big gap between the practice and achievement of the ideals in *Te Whāriki*, especially if the teachers do not have comprehensive training and strong theoretical foundations. If *Te Whāriki* is used uncritically it can be a conservative force, affirming what is currently being practiced, such as the use of worksheets and teaching numbers. Since Cullen's initial criticism, many more early childhood teachers have become qualified and have developed a more sophisticated understanding of *Te Whāriki*. Linda Mitchell and her colleagues (2011) found that teacher understanding of *Te Whāriki* increased from 2004 to 2006 to 2009, and that teachers who rated well for implementing *Te Whāriki* were more likely to have taken up professional development associated with *Kei Tua o Te Pae* (the exemplars).

There is now a large international literature on *Te Whāriki*, and when I googled it today I got 51,900 hits (2,830 on google scholar)! It is important for teachers to engage with this critical literature, and a good place to start is Joce Nuttall's second edition of *Weaving Te Whāriki* (2013). I wrote in 2011 that “*Te Whāriki* has been analysed, admired, praised,

criticised, deconstructed and debunked, but it has certainly not been a dead document lying on a shelf” (Smith, 2011, p.157) and this statement is still true in 2015.

It is difficult for teachers to engage critically and reflectively with *Te Whāriki*, however, if they are not fully trained, do not have access to quality professional development, lack opportunities for reflection and discussion, and work with inadequate ratios and group sizes. The biggest problem with *Te Whāriki* today is that support and resources for its full implementation have been weakened. Government policy is focused on increasing participation in early childhood education, rather than improving or maintaining its quality. Dropping funding for centres with 100% qualified staff, not improving ratio and group size regulations, cutbacks and targeting of professional development funding, and cessation of the Centres of Innovation projects, are examples of current barriers to the implementation of *Te Whāriki*. There is abundant evidence that these elements of quality – training, ratios, group size and curriculum implementation – are necessary to achieve the best outcomes for children. It is important that continuing critical reflection on *Te Whāriki* takes place, and if necessary revisions made, but this is a total waste of time if there is not the necessary support for the elements of early childhood quality, of which curriculum is just one part.

About the author

Anne Smith is Professor Emeritus at the University of Otago and Adjunct Professor at Southern Cross University, New South Wales. Formerly Director of the Children's Issues Centre, she has been involved in teaching, research, policy development and advocacy about children and childhood since the 1970s. In 2011, Anne was a member of the Ministry of Education Early Childhood Task-force. She Published *Understanding Children and Childhood* in 2013, and *Enhancing Children's Rights: Connecting Research, Policy and Practice* in 2015.

email: anneb.smith@otago.ac.nz

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Te Whāriki: So what do you think?

The Early Childhood Council (ECC) surveyed its members in 2013 to seek a range of thoughts on current teaching practice and curriculum implementation for children from birth to eight years of age. We also asked respondents on how we could strengthen the implementation of *Te Whāriki*. A total of 140 members responded.

One of the strongest outcomes of this survey demonstrated the importance the ECE sector still held for the ECE curriculum, *Te Whāriki*. With respondents stating that *Te Whāriki* was the foundation for lifelong successful learning. Other key findings include;

- **89%** of respondents to the survey said it is relevant to everything they do.
- **78.63%** of respondents said the indicators in *Te Whāriki* are tight enough to support the special character of their centre.
- **58.27%** of respondents said they recommended no updates to *Te Whāriki*, however **17.32%**, **20.47%**, **31.50%** and **29.92%** respectively stated they would make changes to the principles, strands, goals and indicators (more than one answer was allowed for this question).

In the survey members were asked, "How does your centre/s implement *Te Whāriki* outcomes for children in your centre/s?"

- **51%** said that they indirectly implement *Te Whāriki* through their centre philosophy.
- **81%** also said that they keep a portfolio for each child that records progress against *Te Whāriki*.

We also asked respondents how their centre/s evaluated the extent to which

Te Whāriki outcomes were being achieved by the children in your centre/s;

- Over **50%** said they have their own measurable framework.
- **11%** said they waited for ERO.

Respondents were asked if there were barriers to implementing *Te Whāriki*, with **58%** of respondents saying that there were none. Barriers that did affect some centres included;

- It does not sufficiently accommodate for the diverse needs of the children in my centre (**6.87%**).
- We implement *Te Whāriki* every day but do not have the time to record or describe how we implement it (**26%**).

Members also shared the type of initiatives that they thought would offer the most improvement to the implementation of *Te Whāriki* for all learners, these responses included;

- Develop some tools and templates and best practice stories.
- Offer a range of workshops nationally to focus on how to implement *Te Whāriki*.
- A sector-wide approach to PD, with funding, and with recognition of non-contact time by the Ministry.

*What do you think? Do you think *Te Whāriki* needs updating, or do you think it is fine as is? How do you evaluate the extent to which *Te Whāriki* outcomes are being achieved in your centre? Any other thoughts?*

Email your feedback/thoughts/ideas to the Swings & Roundabouts editor, publications@ecc.org.nz

The ECC is the largest representative body of quality, licensed early childhood centres in New Zealand. We have more than 1,000 member centres, 30% of which are community-owned and 70% of which are privately-owned. Our membership employs thousands of teachers, and educates tens of thousands of children. We have Pasifika and Māori members, Christian, Montessori and Steiner, and many with no special affiliation. We believe families have the right to choose from this educational diversity that which they believe is best for their own children.

Our member centres range from ten child places to over 150 child places and are spread throughout the country. Membership is voluntary, and open to all licensed independent early childhood centres.

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Passion is a driving force in all of us, and for Ninu George and Lucy Wood it is passion for early childhood education that has resulted in them becoming the first Master of Education (Early Childhood Education) graduates from New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC), the only private education institution in New Zealand to offer a Master of Education in ECE.

Ninu is incredibly proud to be the first international student to complete a Master of Education (ECE) at NZTC.

“Everyone at the college is very happy for me and proud of my achievement. I consider it a privilege to study at NZTC with the supportive team of teachers and lecturers,” said Ninu.

After moving from India to New Zealand in July 2011, it took Ninu a little while to adjust to NZTC's unique online learning mode, but she credits the staff with supporting her through the process as she quickly began to enjoy the flexibility of online learning.

After beginning her career as a high school teacher in India, Ninu found that her real passion lay with early childhood education, so she convinced her husband to move to New Zealand so she could pursue her study at NZTC.

Ninu brought her Indian teaching experiences to New Zealand and used these to write her Master's dissertation, a comparison between the early childhood education systems in India and New Zealand titled - *'Transitional experiences of Indian teachers from Indian education system to New Zealand early childhood education'*.

Lucy, who wrote her thesis on *'Rhizomatic Arts Practice with Students (R.A.P.S)'*, feels that she didn't choose ECE, but rather ECE chose her. She always envisaged herself becoming a primary school teacher after being inspired by her grandmother from a young age, but after leaving school she needed a job and began working at an ECE centre where she instantly adored working with younger children.

“The owner introduced me to NZTC and I was attracted to the fact that I could continue to work, gathering valuable practical skills and industry experience, and study by distance. The first years of life are so significant in shaping future outcomes and it is an honour to work with young children,” said Lucy.

Ninu aspires to be a lecturer in early childhood education at NZTC, while Lucy adores her current job at the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic where she teaches future ECE teachers; a job that she finds interesting, challenging and engaging.

Lucy thoroughly enjoyed writing her thesis as she embraced the quiet evenings at home in front of her laptop, surrounded by textbooks, truly engaged in the writing process. With two young children the busy mum is looking forward to having more time to spend with friends and family now that she has completed her Master's degree.

Both women have every intention of continuing their studies. Lucy is currently completing a Certificate in Te Reo Maori and would like to complete a PhD in the next couple of years, while Ninu is interested in pursuing a Master's in English literature after having completed a bachelor's degree in this subject area a few years ago.

For more information on this Master of Education (CE) programme go to the New Zealand Tertiary College website: www.nztertiarycollege.ac.nz



Left to Right - Ninu George, Christoph Teschers (NZTC Academic Dean), Lucy Wood



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Team communication: Getting everyone on the same page



By **Phil Sales**

The recent ANZAC remembrance seems to have left its mark on my thinking.

Many years ago, when I was far younger and far, far fitter, I represented Hutt Valley on the sports field. Our annual competition was a tournament known as Maadi Cup. No, not the secondary schools' rowing competition but a slightly smaller scale hockey event featuring teams from Nelson, Marlborough and West Coast, as well as ourselves.

This particular Maadi Cup had been initiated after the Second World War as a commemoration of the camp in Egypt where 76,000 New Zealand soldiers had been stationed during the 1940s. An important part of our tournament dinner was a formal acknowledgement of the service of these soldiers and, on one occasion, Hutt Valley was called upon to propose the toast.

At that time, one of my team mates was an army major (coincidentally known to us a 'The Major'). As was appropriate, The Major stood up and spoke, without notes, in a very clear

and knowledgeable fashion on his subject, with respect and passion. His preparation came from deep understanding and years of involvement in his chosen field. He didn't falter in what he had to say and his message was understood by all present.

There are some important lessons here for anyone aspiring to lead their team to greatness. We can lead through what we say and what we do. We can lead by setting the standard and by challenging everyone else to join us. And we can make it all happen by living and breathing our work with a practiced commitment and dedication that changes a simple occupation into a true vocation.

Doing and saying, however, are only part of the story. The whole team has to be part of that story, actively engaged in, and supportive of, the outcomes. This is where another of The Major's examples becomes relevant.

The Major said that while hierarchy was extremely important in day-to-day operations in the army, there were times when rank

effectively meant absolutely nothing at all. As he put it to us, you can't play a game of hockey in the armed services by saying 'please pass me the ball, Sir'. Similarly, in pressure situations, there is no time for parading or saluting. Things just happen far too quickly 'in the field' to be bounded by conventional formality and process.

His message was quite simple: Getting a job done quickly and effectively means that everyone needs to know their role and then to do what is required of them. Knowledge, practice and a willingness to work towards a common goal are the things that underpin our performance in teams.

Perhaps more tellingly, The Major was suggesting that a lack of accepted formality doesn't automatically mean that a breakdown in professional standards, discipline or respect has occurred. In fact, it sometimes seems as if the best performances (in sport, business and other settings) occur spontaneously and with very little fuss.

For some people, this situation seems to be rather counter-intuitive. After all, good team performance requires clear communication between people, agreement on goals and strategy, checking for understanding and the opportunity to resolve conflicts through open dialogue. How can we explain quality team performance in fast-moving and complex environments which appear to leave little room for any of these things to happen?

A few weeks ago, I visited an early childhood centre and one of the things that struck me was the way in which everyone took charge of their own responsibilities. There was no visible 'ringmaster' directing the performance and no obvious way for me to tell who might be the person in charge. Yet everything was happening smoothly and effectively (at least to my unpracticed eye!).

Of course, the reality of these sorts of situations is that they require a combination of practice, confidence and trust among team members. On reflection, I suspect that what I saw was the result of intimate knowledge of the tasks-in-hand, continuous preparation and rehearsal, and a fair helping of reciprocal respect and professionalism.

The challenge to good team communication, of course, is to make it happen and then to keep it happening.

One way to achieve this is by benchmarking from our own personal experience. In all likelihood, we can each fondly recall a perfect job from our past (if we aren't currently in that perfect job now!) when personalities just 'clicked' and things ran like clockwork. Try asking yourself 'why?' and see what answers you can come up with.

I am picking that your answers probably include phrases such as "we invested time

in each other", "we respected the other person's contribution", and "we trusted the people around us".

Now try asking the people in your team to write down their answers and get them to bring their lists to your next team meeting. Ask each person to describe their favourite situation in detail (so that you can share their fond memories with them) and then whiteboard all of the reasons 'why'.

Chances are that (in addition to learning new things about their team mates) most people will start seeing commonalities that they share with others around them. Then try taking this activity one step further and see whether you can identify any actions that you can take that might reinforce the exercise.

Maybe those actions are a team event or an opportunity for someone in the team to do something special. It might be the wider sharing of important stories or new activities. It could be ideas for extending your own centre's networks or finding missing skill sets.

Another useful exercise is to explore the descriptions that your staff use. Privately ask each person in your centre for a single word that best describes what your centre means to the people who use it. You may need to give them time to think about their response and if you give them a day or two to reflect on their possible answer then the result may be the better for it.

The words and phrases that people use to describe themselves and their relationship with other team members are also packed with insights into the ways that teams operate. Try asking each person on your team to pick just one noun that best describes the job that they do at your

early childhood centre. Do they describe themselves as teachers, staff, guides, educators, facilitators, helpers or something else? Do the various people in your team describe themselves with the same word or do they each use different words?

Then try the same exercise with adjectives and see what the results are. Do your team members describe themselves as professional, pro-active, empathic, dedicated, helpful, hard-working? Again, are there commonalities across your team and how do the results reflect on the wider messages that you are putting out to families and the community?

A final suggestion is to ask each person what they think their colleagues would say about them if they were asked to provide a reference. See how well their responses tally against the vision that you have for your team and whether they reinforce the things that you want your centre to be known for.

Regardless of the specific outcomes of these exercises, the process of sharing stories and self-descriptions is incredibly important in its own right. Understanding (coupled with a degree of empathy) underpins all successful messages. So let's put some insight into our communications and start making team communication work for all of us!

About the author

Phil Sales heads up Business Development and Entrepreneurship for the Faculty of Business and Information Technology at Whitireia New Zealand [www.whitireia.ac.nz]. Whitireia are the ECC preferred suppliers for the ECC Centre Manager workshops [go to www.ecc.org.nz for upcoming centre manager workshops].

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Building team communication & trust through group exercises

We've all been in that situation where we are sitting in a staff meeting or a workshop, when the facilitator asks you all to stand – inwardly you groan – because you know it's time for the...icebreaker or a team building exercise!

But do these team building exercises really work? Can communication and staff relationships improve among your staff/team through these exercises?

Research shows that results can vary depending on what type of exercise you do, but in general these exercises can help co-workers better understand one another and learn how to be more effective at working together. This time together is also an opportunity for co-workers to forget about the daily structure and pressure of a working day and focus on socialising informally. Not only that, depending on the exercises, they can also help colleagues develop learning problem-solving techniques, improve communication skills, boost morale, motivate, give an opportunity to learn more about one another, and discover each others strengths and weaknesses. This all helps to build trust, which can go a long way toward achieving better communication.

Before you decide to all go bungee jumping or organise a game of paintball next week, think about the overall goal of what you want the team exercise to achieve. Are there trust issues within the group? If so, focus on activities designed to build trust, or if your staff seem to have trouble communicating effectively, focus on communication exercises, and so on and so on.

Also consider who is going to be involved. Is it just the teaching staff? Or are others being included such as those working in management or those working in the kitchen? There is no right or wrong decision here if you have an overall goal you want to achieve, but remember staff will appreciate those in management joining in! Nothing much works better than breaking down barriers between management and staff than a good laugh, or a chance for people to share something about themselves for better understanding.

Communication & icebreakers

Find 10 things in common (10-15 minutes)

Divide the participants into groups of four or five people. Each group has to find ten things they all have in common that have nothing to do with work, or body parts (we all have legs) or clothing (we all wear shoes). One person from each group takes notes. At the conclusion each group reads their list to the whole group. Reading off the lists can generate a lot of laughter and discussion.

Two truths and a lie (15-30 minutes)

Start out by having every participant secretly write down two truths about themselves and one lie on a small piece of paper. Nobody reveals what they wrote down. Once each person has completed this step, allow 10-15 minutes for open conversation where everyone quizzes each other on their three questions. The idea is to convince others that your lie is actually a truth, while on the

other hand, you try to guess other people's truths/lies by asking them questions. Don't reveal your truths or lie to anyone – even if the majority of the office already has it figured out! After the conversational period, gather in a circle and one by one repeat each one of your three statements and have the group vote on which one they think is the lie. This game helps to encourage better communication in the office, as well as it lets you get to know your co-workers better.

Classification game (10-15 minutes)

Split the group into teams of around four people. Then explain the concept of "pigeon-holing someone," which means classifying someone as something or stereotyping someone. It should be made clear that this type of classification is subjective and unhelpfully judgemental. Then instruct the participants to introduce themselves to those in their team, then as a group discuss some of their likes, dislikes, etc. After a few minutes of discussion, reveal to the teams that it will be their job to discover how they should classify themselves as a team. They need to think of two or three subgroups by using criteria that contains no negative, prejudicial, or discriminatory judgments. Examples of these subgroups can include night owls and morning people, pineapple pizza lovers and sushi lovers, etc. This activity encourages co-workers to get to know each other better and enables them to collectively consider the nature of all individuals within the team.

Problem solving exercises

Picture pieces game (30 minutes)

This problem solving exercise requires having a well known picture/cartoon that is full of detail. The picture needs to be cut into as many equal squares as there are participants in the exercise. Each participant should be given a piece of the "puzzle" and instructed to create an exact copy of their piece of the puzzle five times bigger than its original size. They are posed with the problem of not knowing why or how their own work affects the larger picture. Supply pencils, markers, and paper. When everyone has completed their enlargement, ask them to assemble their pieces into a giant copy of the original picture. This problem solving exercise will teach how to work in a team and it demonstrates divisionalised 'departmental' working, which is the understanding that each person working on their own part contributes to an overall group result.

Sneak a peek game (10 minutes)

This problem solving exercise requires a couple of sets of children's building blocks. The facilitator/team leader builds a small sculpture with some of the building blocks

before the meeting, and hides it from the group. Each team (approx. four people) should be given enough building material so that they can duplicate the structure the facilitator already created. The facilitator then places their sculpture in front of the groups. One member from each team comes up at the same time to look at the sculpture for ten seconds, then returns to their team. They then have twenty-five seconds to instruct their teams about how to build an exact replica of the instructor's sculpture. (The sculpture is covered/hidden.) After one minute of trying to recreate the sculpture, another member from each team can come up for a "sneak a peek" before returning to their team and trying to recreate the sculpture. The game should be continued in this pattern until one of the team's successfully duplicates the original sculpture. This game will teach participants how to problem solve in a group and communicate effectively.

Trust exercises

Eye contact (5 minutes)

This trust exercise requires no special equipment, just an even number of

participants. Making eye contact is sometimes difficult for people, as it requires a certain amount of trust and respect. Some people avoid it, while others simply aren't very good at it; they may look away often or appear awkward or uncomfortable, sometimes fidgeting with other objects. This exercise, though simple, can help co-workers become more comfortable and trusting of each other through the practicing of eye contact. For this activity, have people group into pairs and stand facing each other. The idea is to have them stare into their partner's eyes for at least 60 seconds. Neither participant should be wearing glasses or sunglasses of any kind. There may be some giggles at first, as it can feel somewhat awkward during the first try, but as participants get the hang of it, it should become easier for them to make eye contact for prolonged amounts of time.

Remember for team exercises to be successful, don't leave them for only one or two events per year, incorporate these activities into regular events, maybe at your weekly/monthly meetings.

Exercises sourced from <https://www.huddle.com/blog/team-building-activities/>

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Effective communication

By Leah Davies, M.Ed.

Being able to communicate is vital to being an effective educator. Communication not only conveys information, but it encourages effort, modifies attitudes, and stimulates thinking. Without it, stereotypes develop, messages become distorted, and learning is stifled.

Communication is the process of understanding and sharing information where listening plays an important role. Intrapersonal or internal communication includes planning, problem solving, self-talk, and evaluation of self and others. It is a continuous process that prepares the speaker to proceed in a clear and concise manner. Interpersonal communication is sharing meaning between oneself and at least one other person. The goal of interpersonal communication is to send relevant and objective messages.

We communicate with others, not only verbally, but by how we act. Since we are constantly sending messages, we need to be aware of our appearance, gestures, posture, eye contact, use of space, body movement, what we carry with us, how close we stand or sit to others, and our facial expressions. When what we say contradicts our non-verbal behaviour, mistrust and confusion results because listeners believe what they see.

Examples of incongruence between our non-verbal communication and what we say are:

- A teacher frowns and says to a child: "I am pleased you are in my class."
- An administrator says as they look at a clock: "My door is always open."
- A teacher scowls and says to a parent: "Johnny is such a delight!"

We must be honest as we attempt to be effective communicators.

Listening is the process of receiving and interpreting a message. It occupies more of our time than talking, reading, or writing. We often forget or misinterpret more than half of what we hear. The reasons human beings are inefficient listeners are because:

1. We think more rapidly than someone else can talk, so we spend time daydreaming or thinking of what we are going to say next.
2. We do not want to grapple with difficult material.
3. We are close-minded to the message.
4. We jump to conclusions before we hear the entire message.
5. We let things distract us.

Listening requires active participation and energy. It is the responsibility of both the speaker and the listener to make sure that the message was understood. There are five phases of the listening process:

1. Give attention.
2. Physically hear the message.
3. Assign meaning to it.
4. Evaluate it against past experience.
5. Remember it.

If the process goes amiss at any point, communication has not taken place.

Effective communication skills that build a positive environment are self-awareness; sending direct, complete, relevant, congruent messages; listening; using feedback and being aware of what we are communicating non-verbally. Communication is not only understanding and acknowledgement, it is agreement and commitment. As educational leaders, we know we are effective communicators if those with whom we work have a positive attitude toward each other, their students and their school.

Validating feelings

Validation is another powerful communication skill. It can dismantle power struggles, resolve arguments, and build deeply trusting relationships. Validation is an advanced skill, and builds upon the more basic skill of "reflective listening".

Validation communicates to another person that their feelings, thoughts, and actions make sense and are understandable to you in a particular situation.

One of the greatest challenges of good communication is validating the feelings someone has about you. When someone has a negative feeling toward us our first impulse is usually defensiveness. Here are a few examples of the difference between defensiveness, reflective listening, and validation:

Child: *This is a drag. You never take us anywhere fun.*

Dad (defensive): *What do you mean! What about last weekend!*

Dad (reflective): *You are bored with what we are doing.*

Dad (validating): *I can see how it might get pretty boring just hanging around here all day.*

It's important to remember that validation is not the same as agreement. Validation also doesn't necessarily mean that you like, or agree with, what the other person is doing, saying, or feeling. It does mean that you understand where the other person is coming from.

About the author

Leah Davies received her Master's Degree from the Department of Counselling and Counselling Psychology, Auburn University. She has been dedicated to the well-being of children for 44 years as a certified teacher, counsellor, prevention specialist, parent, and grandparent. You can find more about Leah at <http://www.kellybear.com>. (Article re-printed with permission by author.)

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By Jamie Lainson

How an effective website can increase enrolments in your ECE centre

In a time where 90 internet connections exist for every 100 New Zealand households, and where the internet is easily accessed from mobile devices in our pockets, having an effective website for your early childhood education (ECE) brand or centre has become more crucial than ever. Your website is a vital marketing tool and used properly it provides an opportunity to communicate with your target audience while you have their full attention.

It's no secret that the internet possesses a convenient wealth of information that can be explored from the comfort of our own homes, or wherever we happen to be. Your website is the most easily accessible source of information for parents looking to enrol their child in an ECE centre and plays a huge role in creating the first impression parents form of your brand or centre. You don't get a second chance at making that first impression and as a result, your website can be the main factor parents consider when deciding whether or not to make that initial visit to your centre and subsequently enrol their child, so it is crucial that it is both appealing and of excellent quality.

An effective website builds trust

There are several aspects of your website to consider when determining its effectiveness, including the overall website design, the quality of the content, the amount of information available and the website's discoverability (Search Engine Optimisation). A neglected or old and outdated website is off-putting to parents looking to enrol their child in an ECE centre because it plants a

seed of doubt in their mind about the quality of the service, and may even make them wonder about the legitimacy of your brand or centre. When the well-being of their child is concerned, even the slightest doubt can quite rightly be enough to turn a parent away from even considering enrolling their child in your centre.

Since your website will often be the first significant interaction with parents who are looking to enrol their child, it must be effective in immediately showing your care, quality, and professionalism to earn that all important trust. First impressions are extremely difficult to change, so it is imperative that parents visiting your website experience an instant feeling of safety, quality, and general trustworthiness so that they may then consider enrolling their child in your centre. A modern and up to date

website helps create this impression by demonstrating your legitimacy, attention to detail, and concern for quality.

Trust leads to enrolment

This first impression created by your website has the capacity to make or break your chances of having a parent enrol their child in your centre, and earning parents' trust gives you a competitive edge. Of course, you know already how committed you are to the children in your care, but how do you convey that to a parent who is just checking you out online? Once a parent starts trusting your brand or centre, and getting a true sense of who you are and what you offer, they are much more likely to visit and subsequently enrol their child. This initial trust puts you one step ahead in securing enrolments.



Not only will you likely receive new enrolments this way but you will likely also find that those parents recommend your brand or centre to others in a 'chain reaction' type effect. In marketing, this is known as "brand loyalty," and is extremely powerful in creating a positive brand image through word of mouth.

Maximise your audience

The past few years have seen a rapid increase in mobile device usage of the internet around the world, and New Zealand is certainly no exception. Access to the internet has been made easier and more convenient than ever thanks to smart-phones and tablets.

In a report published by Statistics New Zealand in 2013, it is stated that "a third of households used a mobile phone to access the Internet in 2012, an increase of 26 percent since 2009." Another report states that in 2014, there were 3.7 million mobile internet connections in New Zealand. Globally, mobile device usage of the internet is still on the rise, and it is essential that your website caters for this massive proportion of users by being responsive, or mobile-friendly.

A responsive website is one which is able to adapt to various screen sizes so that it best utilises the available space to display information as effectively as possible. Put simply, a website is responsive if the content 'responds' to the size of the screen that it is being viewed on by displaying differently, often by changing layout and/or design.

If your website is not responsive, mobile users will have a frustrating experience when using your website on their mobile device since the website is not designed to accommodate smaller screen sizes. For example, your users might have to zoom in to read content on mobile devices, or scroll sideways to view the rest of the page. Users very quickly navigate away from websites that frustrate them with poor user experience, with the potential for limiting the number of enrolments you receive if your website is not responsive.

Did you know...

Google has caught on to this mobile device trend to the point where they have changed their search engine algorithm to encourage a mobile-friendly internet. As of April 21st 2015, websites that are not responsive or mobile-friendly are being penalised in their Google search rankings, meaning that they are appearing below their mobile-friendly

competitors in Google search results on mobile devices. Conversely, websites that are mobile-friendly are now earning a higher search ranking than their non-mobile-friendly counterparts.

Putting it simply, if a prospective parent searches 'early childhood centre, anytown' on Google using their mobile device, the top of the results list will be those centres with mobile-friendly websites.

Ultimately, having a responsive website will make your brand or centre significantly more discoverable on Google so that you can reach more parents, whilst also providing these parents with the best possible user experience no matter what type of device they are browsing the internet with. These

consequences combine to an increased likelihood of enrolment in your centre.

In summary

It is a simple truth that users of the internet will very quickly leave a website that they do not trust, and this is especially true when the safety and well-being of their child is at stake. Your website needs to be both appealing and trustworthy by having a professional, modern design, with up to date content and relevant information to encourage parents to enrol their children in your ECE centre. Additionally, your website needs to be mobile-friendly in order to reach a larger audience of parents, and also provide them with the best possible user experience.

About the author

Jamie Lainson is the Director/Web Developer at Zesty Design Limited. You can contact him on 021 068 0292 or jamie@zestydesign.co.nz, or visit his website: www.zestydesign.co.nz



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What does early childhood have to do with the law? And what can centres do about it anyway?

One option may be Community Law

By Alexandra Keeble

For many families with young children, the law can be more like a game of snakes and ladders than a great day out on swings and roundabouts.

The same can also be said for early childhood providers, particularly if they are small, community-run and struggle with resourcing.

You may have families in your centre who are quietly dealing with difficult landlords or sub-standard housing. They might be facing small or large debts or unpaid fines, or be contending with Work and Income bureaucracy. They might be handling issues their older children are facing at school, or even within the Youth Justice system. They might be navigating painful family law matters or, at the sharp end of things, dealing with Child Youth and Family. Grandparents or older caregivers might themselves be thinking about protecting their family's future and be questioning whether they can afford to make a will or organise an Enduring Power of Attorney.

Early childhood centre managers themselves need to understand a huge amount of law, from their obligations and rights as employers, to their obligations as charities (if they are charities), to privacy issues and the rights of parents to access information about their children. They may need to understand how protection orders work if any of their families are experiencing domestic violence.

When you see the range of issues children, their families, and early childhood centres grapple with on a day-to-day basis, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. But with legal problems, often the hardest step is in fact the first step – reaching out to find information and the best way forward.

Community Law Centres embrace the philosophy of early intervention, both for an individual's legal problems and also for the legal issues centres themselves may be facing.

We believe that early childhood teachers and centres are well-placed to notice when families might be struggling. It goes without saying that families who feel they have support are more likely to seek the (legal) help they need. There is a role for centre staff

in keeping your ears open for when whānau may be facing legal problems. You can encourage them to make contact with their local Community Law Centre or just seek some more information from the Community Law Manual.

What does Community Law do?

To put it briefly, Community Law Centres offer free legal help.

We help individuals, families and hapū. We also help community organisations and small NGOs.

Many centres provide specialist lawyers (for example, employment or family lawyers) at particular times. Some centres also offer Kaupapa Māori, tikanga-based services.

Every Community Law Centre is a bit different. Some prefer you to make appointments, while others run drop-in sessions where you don't need an appointment. Sometimes your first contact with us might be a telephone call, but we often prefer to meet kanohi ki te kanohi.

There are 24 Community Law Centres throughout Aotearoa, and many centres also provide outreach legal help – we come to your community so that you don't have to come to us.

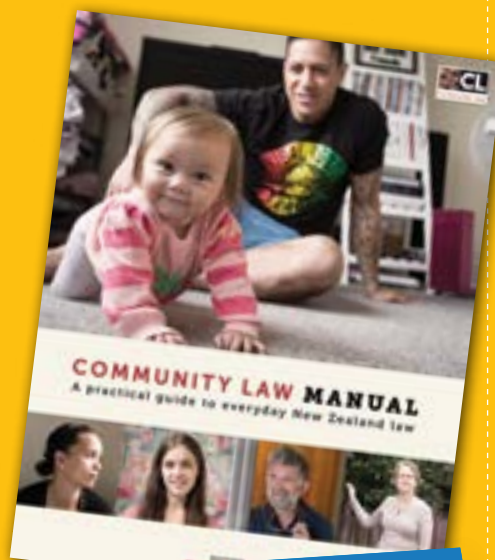
Our forthcoming Community Law Manual

Community Law also publishes annually a resource we believe is useful and relevant to the day-to-day activities of early childhood education.

The Community Law Manual is a practical and hands-on tool for people at the interface of families and the law.

The Manual can help early education providers navigate problems that arise in their centres and in the lives of the children they care for. From dealing with Work and Income to navigating the Family Court, the Community Law Manual covers just about everything.

By having a Community Law Manual in your centre it can help increase access to justice for children and their families.



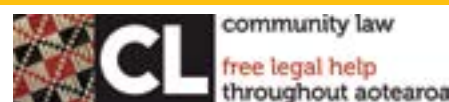
How to order the Community Law Manual

You can order directly from Community Law Wellington and Hutt Valley by emailing info@wclc.org.nz

- \$150 each (commercial centres) = full price
- \$100 each (community-run or charitable centres) = 33% discount
- If your centre can get together with other centres to arrange a bulk order (10 copies or more) we can provide substantial discounts. The main aim is to get this resource out into the community.

About the author:

Alexandra Keeble is editor of the national Community Law Manual and also the Client and Community Services Manager at Community Law Wellington and Hutt Valley. Her work involves thinking of new and better ways to increase access to justice for vulnerable members of our communities, and to promote peaceful, thriving, child-centred communities.



By the Numbers

145

the number of years we've had the same flag.

643,438,425

the total number of hours all children in New Zealand who are under six years of age watch TV each year (2013 Census plus TVNZ research).

365

the points scored for "quixotry" in 2007, the highest scoring word actually played in Scrabble history.

19,733

the number of notifications requiring further action to Child, Youth and Family for the 2010/2011 year for children aged 0 to 5 inclusive.

\$9,700

the investment in dollars per child participating in early childhood education in New Zealand in 2013 (MoE, excludes home-based and under twos).

\$13,135

the current investment in dollars per student participating in tertiary-level study in New Zealand (2005).
(www.educationcounts.govt.nz)

481

the number of education and care centres reviewed by ERO from January to October 2014 with a review result score of 3 or 4 (there were 78 with a score of 1 or 2) (ERO).

1,078

the number of licensed childcare centres that are members of the Early Childhood Council (ECC).

94

the number of professional development workshops offered by the ECC in 2014.

2,435

the distribution of the ECC's Swings & Roundabouts quarterly magazine.

The ECC exists to support independent childcare centre owners and managers. This support is more than just numbers. The support is real. The information timely. The advice, reliable. We will help you to run a more successful childcare centre. We will save you money.

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**Early Childhood
Council**

ECE STAFF AWARENESS NEEDED TO REDUCE GROWING BUTTON BATTERY RISK

Safekids Aotearoa is calling for all Early Childhood Education (ECE) services to make sure their staff are aware of a little known danger that can have fatal consequences to small children—the ingestion or insertion of powerful button batteries or coin-sized lithium batteries.

When a child swallows a button battery or inserts it in the nose or ears, it can get stuck. Saliva or secretions trigger an electrical current causing severe burns within two hours. This results in serious injury that may require surgery, or even the death of the child.

Ann Weaver, Director of Safekids Aotearoa, warns that symptoms of button battery ingestion are similar to other common illnesses (coughing, drooling, loss of appetite and discomfort), making it very difficult to detect.

This means prevention measures and active supervision are important.

"Many of button battery injury cases involve children accessing batteries from common devices such as torches, clocks, scales, remotes, singing books and greeting cards, LED lights and hearing aids. These devices

have battery compartments that are easy to open, even by babies."

"ECE staff must make sure that these devices are secure and kept out of sight and reach of babies and small children, and that spare batteries are kept in a locked place," Ms Weaver said.

The short time it takes for a button battery to cause serious injury also makes immediate response critical.

"If you even suspect a child in your care has swallowed a button battery, take the child to the nearest hospital emergency department IMMEDIATELY to have it removed," Ms Weaver said.

What you must do: SEARCH, SECURE and SHARE

- ♦ SEARCH any place children go for gadgets that may contain button batteries. These include remotes, electric scales, singing greeting cards, clocks, hearing aids and electric candles.
- ♦ SECURE these gadgets and keep them out of sight and reach of babies and small children. Keep loose batteries locked away.
- ♦ SHARE this life-saving information with your ECE staff, parents, caregivers, friends, family and community.

In an emergency: GET HELP FAST

- Go to the nearest hospital emergency department IMMEDIATELY. Tell doctors and nurses that the child may have swallowed a button battery.

- ♦ If possible, provide the medical team with the identification number found on the battery's pack.
- ♦ Do not let the child eat or drink until an X-ray can determine if a battery is present.
- ♦ Do not induce vomiting.



Safekids Aotearoa, in partnership with Energizer has FREE posters and flyers that remind ECE staff and parents about the need for button battery safety. Order these by registering as a partner at www.TheBatteryControlled.co.nz

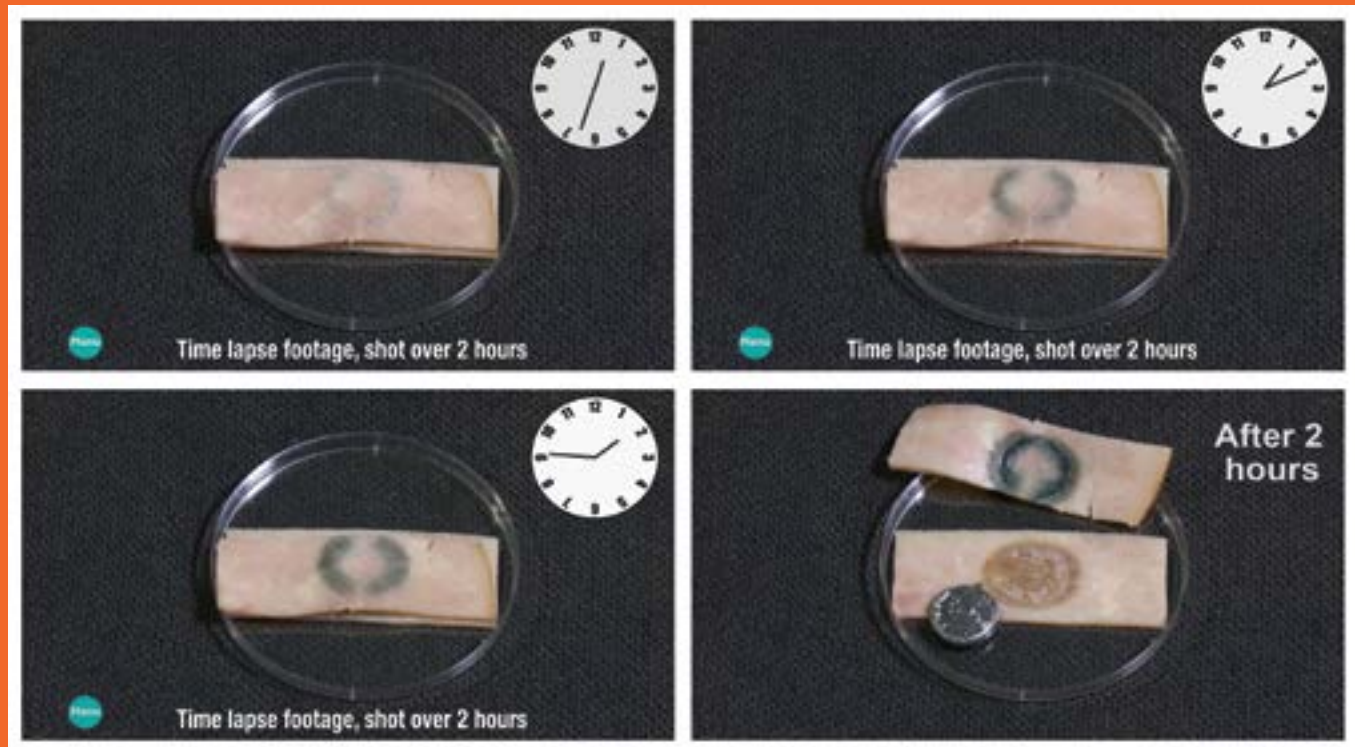
safekids
Aotearoa



A visual demonstration of a button battery injury

Remotes, scales, clocks, electric candles, singing greeting cards and other electric devices may seem harmless, but the button batteries they may contain can result to severe or fatal injury to children.

The image below shows a demonstration of how a button battery almost burns through a piece of ham in just two hours. Watch the actual experiment at www.TheBatteryControlled.co.nz.



Aside from the demonstration, the website features useful information and safety messages for parents, caregivers, doctors and emergency staff.

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2015 ECC Conference

Growing Leadership and Management

To tell this story, one has to go back to the beginning of the week at least. There I was watching the weather reports like a hawk. Approaching front. Snow, rain, wind, pestilence – all were predicted! So, it was with some relief that when I flew down to Queenstown on Tuesday, the weather was clearing and Queenstown was at its picturesque best.

My next challenge was to ensure our trade exhibitors and delegates were comfortable in the trade exhibit area. This had the potential to go wrong, but four gas-powered blast furnaces put that fear to rest.

The conference itself was something new for the ECC. An event targeting childcare centre owners and managers; without any concurrent choice and with little pedagogical

content in the programme. How would delegates take it? It appears – very well. While we won't be following this formula every year, the idea of focussing on the needs of owners and managers (whether from privately-owned centres or community-owned), has struck a chord.

Many also commented favourably about the absence of concurrent workshops, meaning that no one missed out on anything.

We introduced another new feature this year, in the form of "Mentoring in 10 Minutes" sessions. Delegates were able to book 10 minute one-on-one sessions with a specialist mentor of their choice. On offer was employment law, financial management, marketing and operational management. At this early stage in gathering our satisfaction

feedback from conference, these sessions were also very well received. We will continue this feature next year.

Finally, we included the gala dinner price in the overall registration price. Again, most delegates found this an attractive option. Budget permitting, we look forward to continuing with this approach. Those who attended the gala dinner this year – up the gondola at the Skyline Restaurant – raved about the buffet, Dr Tom's presentation, and even the ride in the freezing gondola!

So, now that conference is over for another year, and on behalf of my team and our Executive, can I take the opportunity to thank all the conference delegates, trade exhibitors and stakeholders for making the 2015 ECC conference the brilliant event it was.



Winners from the Crombie Lockwood jet boat prize pack.

"The ECC stand once again put on another creative competition this year for conference. The 'Yeah right!' competition was a chance for our delegates to display their great sense of humour, originality and witty ECE related slogans.

There was a great response and entries were pouring in during the conference. Choosing a winner was very difficult, however two very creative and daring delegates took away a brand new android phone and an iPhone 6. Thank you to Spark who sponsored this event. You can read some of these slogans over the next few pages...enjoy!"



Hekia was the most insightful part of the day...



The Government is for quality not quantity in ECE...





John Key will support ECE...



We don't need a pay rise...





Early Childhood teachers don't love what they do, they just do it for the money...



We don't need more funding for 2 year olds...





Yes Teacher! My
child finished
vomiting
48 hours ago...



ECE teachers are just
glorified babysitters...



John key loves early
Childcare Centres ...
(WINNER ON DAY 1)



The Police Vetting process
will be quick and efficient...
(WINNER ON DAY 2)

Add some magic to your wintry days

It's been one rainy day after another, and everyone, from the teaching staff to the youngest child in your centre are suffering from cabin fever. Sound familiar? Hopefully at least one of the ideas below will be something you can add to spice up your day and have a little bit of fun...and pretend you are in a winter wonderland!

Snow slime recipe

Although many of us don't have regular snow falls, some of us do, and even if we don't we can get very excited by the thought of a snow fall. This snow slime recipe is great fun and satisfies that snow play itch. This snow slime is icy cold to the touch and sparkly white, making it a sure win as far as snow play goes. Kids can stretch and pull this faux snow in ways the real stuff could never allow.

All you need:

- 2 cups of white school glue (you could also use silver glitter glue)
- 1 & 1/2 cups of very warm water
- Optional: a few drops of peppermint extract to give the snow slime a fresh and clean scent

Combine above ingredients in a small bowl.

In a second bowl combine:

- 3/4 teaspoons of borax
- 1 & 1/3 cups of very warm water

Mix the ingredients of both bowls well and then combine both bowls and mix. After the initial mixing you will need to dive in and mix the ingredients with your hands for a few minutes. As the ingredients are mixed the snow slime will form. Once the slime is mixed you can add glitter to make the snow slime sparkle, iridescent glitter is a good option. Make it cold by storing it in a zip seal bag in the fridge before and after play.

(www.growingajeweledrose.com/2012/12/slime28.html#sthash.6uDmx8xo.dpuf)



Make your own "fake" sensory snow

All you need to do is mix 3 cups of baking soda to 1/2 cup hair conditioner (white, if you want traditional white 'snow'). So simple!

Frozen erupting snow

All will need:

- 1 x 500g bag of bicarbonate soda
- 1 x can of shaving cream/foam
- blue glitter
- vinegar

Pour your bicarbonate soda into a large mixing bowl. Add the can of shaving cream (you only need about 3/4 of a can to get the thick 'snow like' consistency). Add as much glitter as you like. To get the 'erupting' part of this activity happening, you just need to pour the vinegar over your snow and watch the magic happen...(<http://pagingfunmums.com/2014/07/13/frozen-erupting-snow/>)

Snow storm in a jar

All you need:

- A jar or similar container
- Baby oil
- White paint
- Water
- Iridescent glitter
- Alka Seltzer

Fill the jar 3/4 of the way with baby oil. In a bowl mix together very warm water and white paint to make white water. The amount of paint you need will depend on how much water you are using with the idea being to use enough water so that you can fill the jar almost to the top. Once mixed, pour the white water into the jar. Sprinkle in glitter. Then wait for the glitter and water to settle at the bottom of the jar.

Once the water is settled it is time to make the snow storm. Add an alka seltzer tablet and break it into pieces and watch what happens. (www.growingajeweledrose.com/2013/12/snow-storm-in-jar_9.html#sthash.QvNBmSL3.dpuf)

Snow pearls play

Have you ever explored with water beads?

They are fun for kids as long as they are out of the mouthing stage. The water beads are water filled and come in a packet and are really tiny until they are soaked in water. As they are soaked the water transforms the tiny pellets into amazing water filled gems

All you need:

- Clear water beads
- White paint
- Water
- A refrigerator or freezer
- Optional additions: Iridescent glitter and /or peppermint extract

To make snow pearls soak them in white water. To make the white water simply mix a few drops of white paint into warm water. Then add enough water to submerge the beads, adding more water as the beads grow. You can add a few drops of peppermint extract to the water to give the beads a wintry scent. Once the water beads expand, place them in the fridge overnight. As play ensues you can add iridescent glitter as well as cars, trucks, and scoopers to the sensory bin. When everyone has had their fun, place the pearls into the freezer. Hours later you will have frozen snow pearls. Watch the frozen snow pearls transform during play. (www.growingajeweledrose.com/2014/01/snow-pearls-play.html#sthash.7V9U5sXy.dpuf)



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Childcare Centre - Bay of Plenty Ref. 18052
This centre is well-located, has excellent staff, good consistent occupancy. Licensed for over 30, the centre shows good profitability and would be suitable for someone wanting to purchase a centre or an owner-operator. Current cash surplus to a plus. The owner is in excess of \$145,000 pa. **SOLD** \$450,000

Childcare Centre - Waikato Ref. 17478
Licensed for 45+ with room to expand. Modern purpose-built centre, spacious and well-located, with long established reputation. The owner would suit an owner-operator or an investor. The owner works part-time in the centre, leaving day-to-day management to the very experienced centre supervisor. **SOLD** \$649,000



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Resource Reviews



The Moon & Farmer McPhee

By Margaret Mahy

Illustrated by David Elliot

Penguin Random House

Farmer McPhee is an overworked and grumpy farmer who only wants to get some sleep. But his cows and sheep think differently and believe that Farmer McPhee should stop frowning and start frisking! Can Farmer McPhee change his ways?

This book is a reminder that we all need to have a bit of fun now and then. My first

thought after reading the book was who was this book designed for? Those listening to the story or those reading the book, because as we know, children, particularly young children know how to have fun, and find delight in the smallest things, something many of us adults forget from time to time! But of course this moral to the story is not written with a heavy hand under Mahy, but written with a love of language and a sense of delight. The illustrations are also enchanting and bring the characters to life through their vivid expressions. This is a perfect book to share between an adult and a child or a group of children.



Hairy Maclary and Friends: Colours

Hairy Maclary and Friends: Opposites

By Lynley Dodd

Penguin Random House

These two small, sturdy and beautiful hardback books are a perfect way for young

learners to discover colour and opposites with the help from the always popular Hairy Maclary and his rollicking gang of friends. Dodd's mischievous illustrations will delight and draw the readers to the book, making the reading of these books much more fun. The books also lend to being a perfect introduction to Hairy Maclary and his merry makers!



The Very Hungry Caterpillar's Pop-Up Playmat

By Eric Carle

Penguin Random House

This book has been designed for the youngest of readers and is ideal for use during tummy time. It features Eric Carle's beautiful

collage artwork and is a fold-out book with touch and feel textures to explore. There are three colourful sections - in the garden, in the sky and under the sea. Although the book is made from board, it would be best used in rooms designed for young babies for longevity. This book would also make a perfect gift for those with new babies.



Our Father

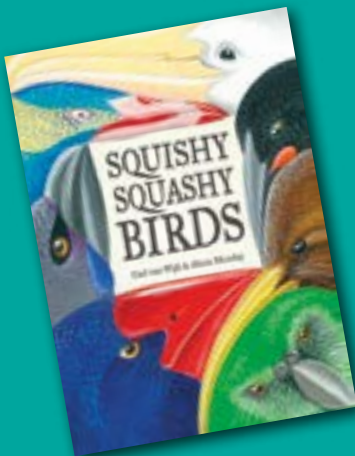
By Juliet David

Illustrated by Julie Clay

Lion Hudson

For those working in Christian-based ECE centres, this book will make a great addition to your library, or make a special gift for a special occasion. The story is a simply worded version of the Lord's Prayer to introduce very young readers to this prayer,

following closely to the words of Scripture in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 6 verses 9 - 13. The pictures are simple but effective, and the book has a white padded cover with silver foiling making an ideal gift. The book has been written for those aged 2 - 5 years. Due to the size of the book, the book is best shared in small groups or better still one-on-one. Although the actual wording could be used to share in large groups to help learn this simple prayer.



Squishy Squashy Birds

By Alicia Munday

Illustrated by Carl van Wijk

Potter & Burton

In this book we discover and learn about some of New Zealand's endangered birds through the playful and rhyming text that show-off each bird's quirky personality. The exquisite illustrations continue this quirky

theme with the birds perched in awkward positions on the pages, instead of being drawn in their natural habitats. That is until Sammy, the owner of the book decides to share his book at Show and Tell, and opens the pages! What happens when the birds are set free? This fun and colourful book will be enjoyed by both reader and listener alike, perfect for small or large groups and those that have a love for nature.



When Dad Showed Me the Universe

By Ulf Stark

Illustrated by Eva Eriksson

Gecko Press

This is a beautifully written book, where a father wants to share with his son, something very special, the universe. Together they go out after wrapping up warm and buying provisions for their adventure. Along the

way they both discover that sometimes the journey is more important than the destination, and that sometimes the most important things are right under your nose! Young readers will enjoy the hilarious ending. This touch of humour rounds off the story perfectly. The classic-looking illustrations too are beautiful and also enhance the tenderness and humour of the story. A book best for older preschoolers and read one-on-one or in small groups.



Help! The Wolf is Coming!

By Cédric Ramadier

Illustrated by Vincent Bourgeau

Gecko Press

This book is a must-buy for the toddlers in your centre. It's an interactive boardbook that will cause shrieks of excitement: "Oh no! The wolf is coming! He's getting closer and closer –

you'd better turn the page, tilt the book, shake, and then slam it shut."

This book encourages literacy, by sharing how much fun reading can be and also how to follow simple instructions. The simple yet effective illustrations work, with the wolf getting larger and larger the closer he gets... which adds a bit of tension to the reading as well. Be prepared for repeat readings!



Where is Pim?

By Lena Landström

Illustrated by Olof Landström

Gecko Press

Where is Pim? is a simple story designed for toddlers, aged 1+.

Although this story has few words it still manages to express humour and heart and

cover various themes such as friendship, adventure and hide-and-seek. It's a nice change to have a real story/plot to share with toddlers to help expand ideas and their language. The delightful illustrations will also make this book a sure winner with both adults and children alike. This book will be a worthwhile buy for your centre's library. A great book to share one-on-one or in small groups.



Max's Bath Max's Bear Max's Wagon

By Barbro Lindgren

Illustrated by Eva Eriksson

Gecko Press

These three books are a real delight to read and share with your youngest children (aged 1+). The books celebrate the fun of play, bath

time (water play) and friendship (with Max's dog) through the boisterous character of Max. Although the book is simple, it's rich in detail, emotion and concepts and very funny when read with capuche. *Max's Bath* could also be a good book for those toddlers who are resisting bath time at home. Being a boardbook these books will last the distance when explored by small hands. Due to its small size the book will be best read one-on-one or small groups.

Ideas for Play: Literacy

By Emma Smoldon & Megan Howell

Ako Books



This book has been designed for parents, family and teachers to support early literacy learning and is a straightforward entry into emergent literacy. It brings into focus the importance of 'multiliteracies' and encourages the reader to not only view literacy as being all about reading and writing but to consider the linguistic, visual, auditory, gestural and spatial forms of communication. It also reminds us that to teach literacy we don't need to use worksheets. Instead the book shows us how literacy can be enhanced through play. Each play area has a description of the literacy learning that

can occur, levels of development, real life examples and a variety of ideas for deepening the play levels. Some sections also have examples of relevant books that can support and enrich the play.

The book written is by two parents, who were part of a Ministry of Education funded Literacy Leadership Cluster facilitated by the Educational Leadership Project at their playcentre, and shares what they have learnt through the project.

This book would be perfect in a centre's 'Parents Bookshelf' to loan to parents who want some ideas on how they can enhance learning at home within a play environment, and also a good resource for new teachers or teachers who are feel like they need a few fresh ideas.



Penguin Random House Prize Pack

Win!

Penguin Random House has kindly donated THREE prize packs for Swings and Roundabouts readers, each pack containing FIVE Books!

To win a free Penguin Random House prize pack answer the below question:

What's your favourite Lynley Dodd picture book?

Email your contact details and the answer to the above question to publications@ecc.org.nz by Friday 31 July 2015 and be in to win.



Competition Winner

Congratulations to the following winner who has just won 5 books for their ECE centre from the March 2015 issue:

**Chris and Sue,
Dudley Creek Preschool, Mairahau, Christchurch**



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Nat & Andy, Grandparents

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Gail Gillard, Mona Vale Kindergarten



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Last Laugh

- The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.
- Scouts are saving aluminium cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.
- Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.
- Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.
- At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice.

These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced at church services:

- Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.
- The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.
- This evening at 7pm there will be a hymn singing in the park across from the Church. Bring a blanket and come prepared to sin.
- Weight Watchers will meet at 7 PM at the First Presbyterian Church. Please use large double door at the side entrance.
- The Associate Minister unveiled the church's new campaign slogan last Sunday: 'I Upped My Pledge - Up Yours.'

"Human beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable for their apparent disinclination to do so."

- Douglas Adams



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