

# SWINGS

## ROUNDABOUTS

MARCH 2009

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**Getting  
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conference  
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job you really  
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# Inside this issue...

<b>FROM THE EDITOR</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>CEO'S MESSAGE</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>CONFERENCE</b>	
Getting the most from your conference experience	<b>10</b>
<b>BOOK REVIEWS</b>	
The Outdoor Playspace Naturally	
Dinosaurs Love Underpants	
Every Second Friday	
Visions of Creativity in Early Childhood: Connecting theory, practice and reflection	
Le Café Petit on O'Sullivan St.	
Cork and the Bottle	
Daddy Hug	<b>13</b>
<b>STAFF/EMPLOYMENT</b>	
The challenges with staff performance	<b>16</b>
How to get the job you really want in early childhood	<b>18</b>
<b>CURRICULUM</b>	
More than being a language teacher	<b>20</b>
Resolving conflicts among children	<b>22</b>
<b>BUSINESS/FINANCIAL</b>	
Don't miss out on Working for Families tax credits	<b>24</b>
Time for a financial tune-up?	<b>26</b>
<b>EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINING DIRECTORY</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>HEALTH/WEELLBEING</b>	
Encouraging healthy eating	<b>30</b>
Planning play through Active Movement learning experiences	<b>32</b>
Young children's spirituality – what's that about?	<b>34</b>
A question of trust – developing relationships with children with autism	<b>36</b>
<b>BUILT ENVIRONMENT</b>	
Early childhood design: let nature be your guide	<b>38</b>
<b>PROFILE</b>	
ECE centres have a role to play in the B4 School Check	<b>40</b>
<b>ECC MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>UPCOMING ECC EVENTS</b>	<b>46</b>



# Early Childhood Council

New Zealand's leading early childhood education organisation supporting the managers, owners, and committee members of education and care centres, with a membership of over 1000 centres nationwide.

## Your ECC Membership

### Advocacy and representation

- Belong to the largest representative body of licensed early childhood centres in New Zealand. Our 1000+ member centres are both community-owned and commercially owned, employ more than 7000 staff, and care for more than 50,000 children.
- The Early Childhood Council represents YOUR interests to government and the wider early childhood and business communities.

### Member Benefit Schemes

#### Access to members-only prices on products

- Photocopiers, televisions, teaching resources, stationery, art/craft supplies, and more!

#### Access to members-only prices on services

- Direct debit services, bulk funding advances, telephone and internet services
- The best deal on insurance for your centre with our Child Proof Insurance Scheme

### Professional Development

- Member discounts on the ECC Annual Conference and Seminar Series
- Access to members-only professional development seminars

### Information and Advice

#### Access to the ECC's expert advisors

- Employment, business, compliance and sector issues, regulations and government policy

#### Access to HypertECC

- The ECC's online information portal and weekly electronic news

#### ECC Member Handbooks

- Employer's Handbook
- Policy Handbook
- Health and Safety Handbook
- Performance Review Handbook
- Good Governance Guide and Toolkit for community-owned centres

For more information go to the membership section of our website at [www.ecc.org.nz](http://www.ecc.org.nz), contact us on 0800 742 742, email [admin@ecc.org.nz](mailto:admin@ecc.org.nz), or fill in the membership application form in this issue of Swings & Roundabouts.

The ECC is proud to have associations with the following companies:



# From the editor...

## Welcome to our first issue for 2009!

By now you'll all be back in the swing of things at work – hopefully still feeling invigorated by your Christmas break. No? Well, there are plenty of things to inspire you in this issue if you need a bit of motivation.

With the recession still making headlines, it might be a good time to have a look at John Makowem's article on giving yourself a financial tune up. You might also like to photocopy the article for parents on Working for Families tax credits – they could well be owed money. You are welcome to put copies of articles like this in your parent communications – but please do acknowledge where the article came from.

With the ECC Annual Conference coming up in May, it seemed like a perfect opportunity to get some of our conference presenters to share some ideas.

Elizabeth Fahey from Power Stanfield offers some great practical advice on resolving staff performance issues; it's so easy to get caught up in the negative, but Elizabeth makes it easy to take positive action towards a difficult situation.

Drawing on research and her own personal experience, Rita Huang takes a look at some ideas for teaching children from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Neil Stuart and Julie Timmins from Oaklynn Special School provide some wonderful examples of how to engage children with autism.

And Denise Heald discusses children's spirituality and just what that might mean.

For those of you who are attending this year's conference, have a read of former ECC CEO Sue Thorne's article on making the most of the experience. There's some great advice on how to make sure it's an event that will have a long-lasting and positive impact on you and your centre.

Minister of Education, Anne Tolley has kindly agreed to address our conference delegates on the Friday. With all the changes that a new government means for early childhood education, this is a chance to hear the Minister directly address the sector.

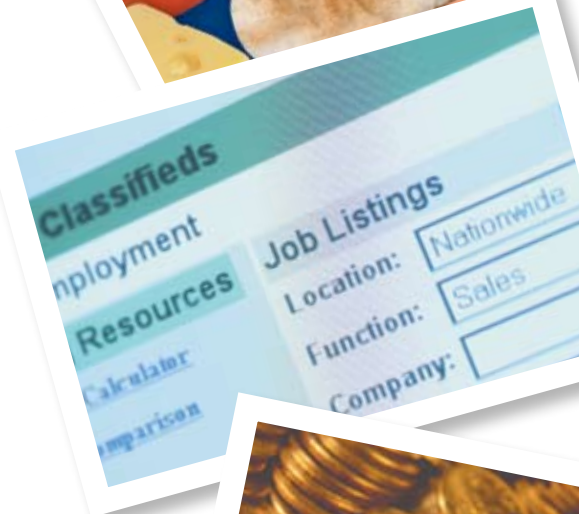
We've also got some exciting news about the closing events of our annual conference... see page 9 for more details...

And there's plenty more! This is a very full issue, and we really hope you enjoy it.

See you in June!



**Sarah Ellich**  
Publications Manager  
Early Childhood Council





# CEO's message

Welcome to this year's first edition of Swings and Roundabouts! It's jam packed full of interesting articles and helpful information for you and for centres throughout New Zealand.

At the ECC office we are just a small team of staff but we aim to achieve big for our members! How do we do this? Let me give you some examples.

We are focused on serving our members and representing them. We are purely a membership organisation and we are not involved in any other activities such as teacher education.

We represent every type and every size of independent early childhood education centre – well over 1,000 centres! We treasure difference and don't believe that centres should fit into a single mould.

Through diversity of membership comes the strength of the ECC to work on your behalf. We provide a strong, informed, and appreciated voice in lobbying. And we are the representative group most often listened to.

Instead of finding out about the latest requirements and policy changes by chance via the Ministry of Education website or other means, our members are informed straight away. This helps our centre members with planning and preparation and reduces any possibility of later getting into administrative, legal or financial trouble.

Notices of interest and a CEO's report covering the week's happening are available via the members-only web portal. Members can also share their views on a broad range of topics from what software they use at their centre to what they think about Learning Stories as an assessment approach.

Professional development seems to be in short supply across the country, but ECC members get access to seminars on a range of policy, management, teaching and curriculum topics at a discounted price. The regulatory seminar series held last year in many regions was attended by an extraordinary number of people. Feedback was that the ECC seminar series provided the best preparation available for centres. The regulations were explained in detail and put into plain English while concerns were shared and questions answered.

The ECC organises the largest annual early childhood conference in New Zealand. This is a professionally valuable event and what's more – it is FUN!

We have partnered with a range of businesses and organisations that offer exclusive support and discount

benefits to centre members. You will find information about these exclusive membership benefits in this magazine.

The ECC is a dynamic and inclusive organisation. The latest membership figure shows well in excess of 1,000 member centres and we are receiving an extraordinarily high number of new members' applications this year. We represent both community-owned and privately owned centres.

**“The ECC organises the largest annual early childhood conference in New Zealand. This is a professionally valuable event and what's more – it is FUN! There is no other conference quite like it.”**

Our sector is facing many challenges. The ECC's objectives of supporting parental choice of education and care services, representing and advising diverse education and care centres and seeking to protect the special character of centres remain even more important objectives today than when they were first conceived.

The change of government, with its keenness to reduce red tape and the micro-management of education services, brings opportunity to work more as partners with government and officials. An urgent problem we want to see solved is the shortage of qualified and registered teachers, which is having a tremendously negative impact on the sustainability of many centres, on getting staff that fit well into the team, and on the stability of staffing for the benefit of children. At this moment, a second major area in which we are representing member interests is the review of the 2008 regulations, including providing feedback about what paperwork and compliance requirements can be done away with without adversely affecting children.

While the ECC already does much for members, we have a number of new plans to do even more over the coming year. If your centre does not already belong to the ECC then see the membership form in this magazine issue, complete it, and send it in. I look forward to working with you and for you.

**Sarah Farquhar**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Early Childhood Council





# Three more reasons!

As if the range of national and international speakers, a huge trade fair and the best gala dinner ever aren't enough reasons to attend the ECC Annual Conference 2009 – here are three more!

## Major Prize Draw

This year's major prize draw is a spectacular one. Sharp Corporation of New Zealand has very generously donated this 46" Wide Screen LCD Colour TV with Built In Freeview HD with a recommended retail price of \$4,199.99

### Features

- Full HD 100Hz Freeview ready • 1920x1080 Black TFT panel • Built in digital tuner for watching Freeview channels • OPC & unique Ecology mode for power saving • High contrast ratio: 10,000:1 Dynamic and 2,000:1 Native
- High brightness: 450cd/m2 • RGB Plus backlight system • PC Connectivity

If your name is called, you must be there to claim the prize; if not we'll draw another winner. You don't want to miss the chance to win this!

The ECC/Sharp Membership Benefit Scheme gives ECC members fantastic discounts on photocopiers, TVs, microwaves, DVD players and much more. If you're a member of the ECC, but you haven't yet found out about the great deals you can get through Sharp, contact Donald Cruickshank on (09) 920 4136, or visit Donald and Shane at stands 20-21 at the conference trade fair.



## The First ECC Conference Auction

For the first time ever we will be holding an auction at the close of our conference! This amazing wooden loft (similar to the one pictured) has been very kindly donated for auction by Darren and Michelle Engelbrecht from Naturally Wood. The purpose-built loft features steps up to a platform with a lookout over the centre. The space beneath can be transformed through imaginative play into a kitchen, a bedroom, the inside of spaceship, wherever the children's minds take it! The space required for the loft is approximately 3.0m x 2.1m x 1.85m high.

The loft will be in display at the conference, so make sure you come and have a climb and explore the possibilities it could add to your centre.

The loft is worth between \$5,500 - \$6,000 retail, but who knows what it might go for on the day! So bring along your cheque books and join us on Sunday afternoon for the first ever ECC Conference Auction!

Check out Darren and Michelle's website at [www.naturallywood.co.nz](http://www.naturallywood.co.nz) or contact them on 09 2352980.



## WIN an inflatable ball pit for your centre!

Vero Insurance together with Crombie Lockwood are giving conference delegates the chance to win an inflatable ball pit and balls valued at \$3000 for their centre!

Make sure you drop into the ChildProof stand at the ECC Annual Conference to enter and to have a chance to collect over 50 Spot Prizes!

The prize will be drawn at the end of the conference and a representative of the winning centre must collect the prize or another centre's name will be drawn.



**To register for the ECC Annual Conference 2009 go to our website:**  
**[www.ecc.org.nz/conference/registration.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/registration.html) Download a registration form or register online.**

# Getting the most from your conference experience

FORMER ECC CEO SUE THORNE REPORTS



For the first time in over a decade I have not started a New Year with the ECC Annual Conference to organise. Instead, in 2009 I have the privilege of looking forward to the conference as a speaker and a delegate. That feels just a little strange, but it also feels rather exciting. And it got me thinking about what I would like to get out of my weekend in Rotorua in May 2009.

Many of you will have by now registered to attend the conference. For some of you it will be your first experience at an ECC conference, for many others you will be making your annual pilgrimage to the largest annual early childhood event in New Zealand.

Either way, you or your employer will have made a substantial investment to get you there. There are registration fees, accommodation and travel costs, and in many cases, reliever costs to replace you at your centre during your absence.

Obviously, the quality of the conference venue, the speakers, the networking events, the trade exhibition and your accommodation will all have a significant impact on your conference experience. However, as a delegate there is also much that you can do to ensure you get the very best return on the investment of time and money that has been made in getting you to the conference.

I've put together a few ideas that I hope might help you to do so.

## PRE CONFERENCE

Read all the conference material before you leave home. Make sure you are booked into the sessions you want to attend and that you are familiar with the floor plan of the venue and the route from your accommodation to the conference venue itself.

Remember to pack essential medications and to advise the conference event manager well in advance if you have any special dietary or other special needs. In almost all cases the venue can accommodate your requests, but don't leave it to the last minute to advise them.

Check out the list of trade exhibitors on the ECC conference website and discuss with your colleagues who are not attending the conference those exhibitors they would like you to visit and bring information back from.

Bring an umbrella or a coat. It's Rotorua, it's autumn, and any weather is possible!

If more than one of you from your centre is attending the conference, book in to attend different concurrent sessions and plan to share the notes and information you gain.

If you have business cards then bring a generous stack of them with you. If you don't have any, then make some up some on your computer.

If you can, add a holiday on the end of the conference to enjoy the local sights.

Leave some room in your bag to bring home the conference goodies you will get – if your bag is stuffed full when you leave home you are going to be under pressure to get everything in on the way back.

If you are on a budget consider sharing travel costs. With the conference in Rotorua this year many delegates will be driving to the event. Through your networks at the ECC, find someone to carpool with. Likewise you might be able to find someone wanting to share a room. Choose accommodation that allows you to make your own breakfasts and evening meals, such as one of the many motels in Rotorua.

Pack a small wallet of photos of innovative things you do in your centre. These will make a great conversation starter, particularly if you are attending the conference on your own. Remember that everyone at the conference will have an interest in ECE, so be ready to share what you are doing at your centre.



## AT THE CONFERENCE

Layer your clothing. I have read thousands of conference evaluations over the years and you can guarantee that in the same room there will be one person complaining that the room was too cold and another sitting alongside them saying it is too hot! Because room temperature is such a personal thing there is very little that a conference organiser can do to please everyone. I bring a light but warm wrap to all events and whenever I am traveling; it takes up very little room and means I am in control of the temperature!

Find the bathrooms, water and catering stations, and emergency exits in advance of the first break so you are not wandering around lost.

Use the time spent queuing for meals and coffee wisely by networking with those around you - don't just stand there. If you are an 'old hand' at ECC conferences, make a point of seeking out at least one new person to be extra nice to. Try to remember what it was like to go to a conference alone, before you knew everyone. Welcome them to the organisation and to the sector.

Stay to the end - The ECC Annual Conference traditionally has a major prize draw at the close of the conference, so don't miss out! The closing address is also a great chance to reflect on the conference.

Conference sessions, particularly plenary sessions, are generally designed to engage and challenge you. Do not prejudge a speaker - listen attentively, keep your mind open and be prepared to be provoked.

Arrive early to your sessions and get a good seat. The closer you are to the front the less distracting the rest of the audience will be. This is particularly important at large plenary sessions.

Meet at least one new person every day. Swap cards with them, or at the very least email or phone numbers. Make sure you always wear your nametag. Be interested in what others have to say and be prepared to share information about your centre and about yourself. Conference does not have to be all work. Getting to know people personally, making new friends and renewing old acquaintances is a big part of an enjoyable conference experience.

Please make a point of attending the Annual General Meeting. This is where you can see the real work accomplished by the association's leadership in the preceding year. You will meet the Executive Committee and the CEO. Meet them, talk to them, and thank them! They do what they do for you, the members.

As a courtesy to others have your cellphone on vibrate only or better still, for your own benefit, have it turned off completely. Have your calls diverted to someone who can make decisions in your absence. These days we find ourselves constantly distracted because there is an expectation that we should be contactable at all times. Consider whether this is necessary or whether you deserve three days of uninterrupted learning and stimulation.

Don't be afraid to ask people to join you for dinner - sharing a meal is a great networking opportunity.

Spend a good amount of time exploring the trade exhibition. The ECC Conference trade exhibition is a huge event in itself these days and you will never have a better opportunity to talk face to face with so many vendors in one place. Enter all the draws and competitions they have. Ask them what new products they have this year or what enhancements they have made to existing products.

Try to go to the conference gala dinner. It's guaranteed to be a wonderful evening and you'll make friends for life. And join into the spirit of the theme; trust me, if you don't you will be in the minority!

Don't toss your conference bag into the staff room on your return never to be looked at again because you are too 'busy'. Unpack and file these valuable resources in a place where you and others in your centre will be able to find them.

Share all that you have learned with your colleagues and parents. Consider using some of the new information you have to write articles for your parent newsletters, or to run your own session for parents and other staff.

Remember to get your work colleagues who did not have the opportunity to attend the conference up to speed and on board with you before you go ahead with your great plans. You may be brimming with excitement but remember their world will not have changed while you have been away. You need to enthuse them as you have been to avoid resistance.

Don't try to implement all you have learned in the first week - decide what new ideas you'd like to experiment with in your centre and then tackle them one at a time.

Update your phone and email contacts with all the details of the new people you have met.

**My best advice is, come to the conference well prepared and well organised, bring your best smile and your most open mind with you, meet new people and have fun, and most importantly come back different!**  
I look forward to seeing many of you in Rotorua in 2009!  
Until then, warmest regards from Taguig City, The Philippines.

## POST CONFERENCE



# SCHOOL SUPPLIES

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- Better Service
- Every time – Guaranteed!

You Can Do It! Education is pleased to announce a new Early Childhood Program for four to six year olds.

The Social-emotional learning curriculum was developed by Professor Michael Bernard with the help of early childhood teachers from Victoria, Queensland, Western Australia and New Zealand.

A key idea to have in mind in employing this YCDI! Early Childhood Program is to provide children with multiple opportunities and contexts to learn the five Foundations for Success and the 12 Habits of the Mind that lead to positive social-emotional well-being and learning outcomes in children. This can be accomplished through the use of the following resources found in this program:

- Lessons to teach positive habits of the mind, and the five foundations for success: Persistence, Organisation, Getting Along, Confidence, and Emotional Resilience.
- Five Puppets to support role playing - also five finger puppets
- CD with sing-along lyrics
- 18 A3 teaching posters
- Parents' guide offering a structured presentation format for introducing the fundamentals of the You Can Do It! program
- Survey for assessing children's social-emotional capabilities
- Recommended literature to support the program



To order or for more information, contact:  
Ph: 0508 You Can Do It • Fax: 0508 YCDI Fax

# Book reviews

REVIEWED BY SARAH ELLICH



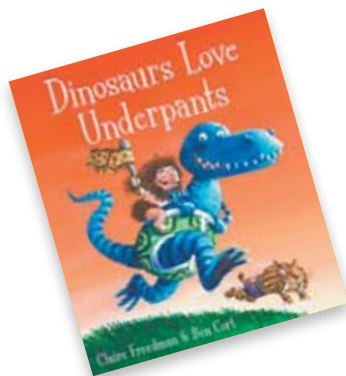
## **The Outdoor Playspace Naturally: For children birth to five years**

**Barbara Champion, Julie Davis, Sue Elliott, Michelle Hocking, Mary Jeavons, Ric McConaghy, Kerry Rogers, Joanne Sorenson, Sue Vaealiki, Tracy Young**  
Pademelon Press

Just looking at the pictures in this book will make you want to get outside and explore the potential of your centre's outdoor play spaces. The book is easy to read, and theories regarding play are realised in the myriad examples, photographs and suggestions.

An incredible range of topics is covered, so whether you were planning a complete revamp of your outdoor area or looking to implement some small but meaningful changes, this book will give you the inspiration and know-how to do it.

The text takes an in-depth look at the principles and processes of creating natural play spaces, including fostering connections with nature, meeting developmental needs, creating access for children with disabilities, and planning. A series of case studies from Australia illustrate the ideas presented and there is a section on international perspectives from Denmark, England and New Zealand.



## **Dinosaurs Love Underpants**

**Claire Freedman and Ben Cort**  
Simon and Schuster

This book is hilarious. It begins: "Dinosaurs were all wiped out/ A long way back in history/ No one knows quite how or why/ Now this book solves the mystery..." If you can figure out how they got from that to underpants

being responsible for the downfall of the dinosaur then maybe you should think about writing children's books! The rhyme scheme and the illustrations and the overall nuttiness of the story make this a book that children will love and adults will love to read. There is an exuberance and sense of pure fun in *Dinosaurs Love Underpants*, and it will make you laugh out loud!



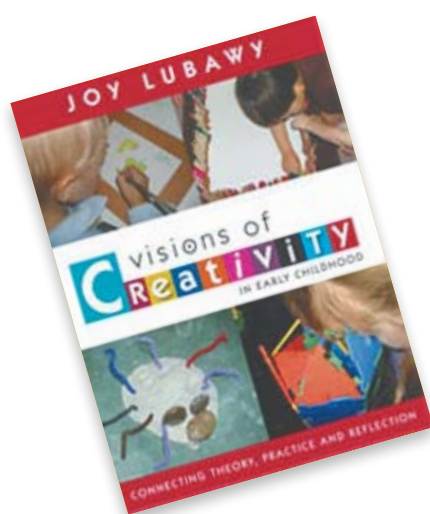
## **Every Second Friday**

**Kiri Lightfoot and Ben Galbraith**  
Hodder Children's Books

Every second Friday, Margaret Madeleine (nickname Margi) and Thomas Theodore (nickname Totty) pack their bags and go to their father's house. While this is obviously a story about children whose parents have separated, this is not the focal point of the book. The children's father is "a collector of bits and bobs", and the story involves all the mad and wonderful

adventures they get up to at his house. *Every Second Friday* captures the power of imagination perfectly as the children embark on a piratical adventure with Dad and some of his collected items. It shows a positive and special relationship between the family and the children's recognition that their dad loves them and that his house is their house too. The illustrations are full of chaotic energy and are lots of fun to look at, as there are plenty of details of all the things that Dad collects.





## Visions of Creativity in Early Childhood: Connecting theory, practice and reflection

**Joy Lubawy**  
**Pademelon Press**

Just one of the chapters in this book could keep your mind and imagination fed for weeks with new ideas to stimulate learning and creativity with children. Taken as a whole this book is a treasure trove of ideas, understanding, and inspiration. Joy is someone who thinks very hard about what she is teaching and how. She is constantly questioning the ways we go about teaching and it's obvious that much of her learning is inspired by the children themselves. It feels like what teaching should be all about – adults and children stimulating each other's creativity in an ongoing cycle of give and take.

Abundant examples from real life are interspersed throughout the book illustrating the ideas discussed in the main text. There are chapters on exploring a number of dimensions: visual and aesthetic, musical and rhythmic, kinaesthetic, mathematical and logical, naturalist, linguistic, interpersonal, planning, evaluation and documentation.

Joy writes with a light touch – you feel as if she is speaking to you rather than writing a resource. She is encouraging and supportive, but really challenges educators to think hard about their experiences, to explore new ideas, and to take careful note of the ways children are telling us they love to learn.

*Joy will be a keynote speaker and workshop presenter at the ECC Annual Conference 2009. Go to the website [www.ecc.org.nz/conference/home.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/home.html) for further details.*



## Le Café Petit on O'Sullivan St.

**Written and illustrated by**  
**Raymond McGrath**  
**Penguin Group**

In this book featuring “Me and My Dad (plus one or two of our friends)”, a girl and her father plan to spend the day at their favourite café. When they arrive it is empty, but one by one an extraordinarily eclectic bunch of people arrive and the café gets fuller and fuller and louder and louder. People talk, a brass band and church choir turn up, joggers and cyclists stop by – all

contributing to the colourful, distorted images that make McGrath's book so distinctive. The pictures are so full of life and movement that you can almost hear the overwhelming noise, and feel the relief of the café's waitress as one by one they leave again. There are some great words in this book, like “discordant harmony” and “melodic cacophony” and some great made-up phrases such as “gossip-chit-chattering” and “a dib-dabbling artist”. The language is as busy and full of life and movement as the illustrations and the café itself – a fun read.





## Cork and the Bottle

**Written by Mark Sommerset**  
**Illustrated by Rowan**  
**Random House New Zealand**

*Cork and the Bottle* continues the adventures that began in *Cork on the Ocean*. The pair met at the end of the first book and in this story they dance with jellyfish, marvel at a sunfish, catch a wave across a dangerous reef, and talk with a beautiful swallow. Then, one day, they are separated and Cork, with the help of an angelfish, relocates

his friend at the bottom of the ocean. There's something very sweet about this tale of two friends travelling the seas together. The deceptively simple tan, yellow and turquoise illustrations give a sense of the gently rolling sea that perfectly matches the pace of the story as the pair bob and float from one adventure to another. The rhyme scheme makes it perfect for reading out loud, and it might be a good book to read before sleep time, as there is something soothing about the quality of the language and the drawings.



## Daddy Hug

**Tim Warnes**  
**Illustrated by Jane Chapman**  
**HarperCollins Children's Books**

From monkeys and sheep to walruses, bees, racoons and lizards, *Daddy Hug* features fathers and their children.

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# The challenges with staff performance

ELIZABETH FAHEY REPORTS

Don't we all love our star employees? They get on with their jobs, require very little supervision and add value to the team. On the other hand, there are those employees who require constant attention and supervision, and still fail to make the grade. When an employee is not performing they provide you with the perfect opportunity to change their behaviour and transform them into a high-performing employee and advocate of your business.

## What do we mean by poor performance?

The first step to managing poor performance is identifying what the problem is. This can sometimes be the most difficult part because it is important to identify whether the problem is an individual's 'way' of doing their job (capability) or their 'will' to do their job (conduct). Each situation requires a different approach, so identifying the problem correctly up front is vital.

### Way – the way in which an individual can or cannot do their job is dependent on a number of factors.

- a) They may have received insufficient training in how to do this job.
- b) It may be that they do not have the aptitude to do this job.
- c) It may be that there are health reasons preventing them from achieving the required performance levels.

### Will – an individual's lack of will to do a job is often referred to as misconduct. There are two forms:

- a) Misconduct – for example, lateness, swearing, bad attitude, breach of company policy, insubordination.

- b) Serious misconduct – for example, theft, bullying, physical violence.

## Key tips for dealing with a poor performer

So, where do you begin when your employee is not performing? You need to assess where they are at now and where you expect them to be. This is called the 'performance gap'. What have you communicated to them so far? Have you been giving them effective feedback? Do they actually realise there is a problem? Once you're on the same page about current performance levels, how do you then motivate them to continue to improve performance?

Here are three simple things to remember when endeavouring to improve the performance of an employee.

### • The Performance Gap

The first step is to identify what the performance gap is. To do this you need to begin with the individual's job description and answer these questions.

- Are the tasks required accurately outlined in the role profile?
- What are the relevant policies?
- How are the tasks required different to the actual performance?
- Do you have concrete examples of where performance is lacking?
- Have they had appropriate training?
- Most important of all – have you communicated your concerns with the employee? Too often we expect our employees to be mind readers.

### • Giving effective feedback

Too often as managers we are either 'too nice', where we struggle to give direct feedback and just hint at what

we mean or 'too mean', where we are aggressive and judgmental in our feedback. Neither of these methods engenders respect, buy-in or a commitment to change or improve.

On-target feedback is the best feedback method to create a win/win situation. It is non-judgmental and always supported by evidence.

### Try some of the following techniques:

Observation – "I notice you have submitted the monthly report late twice."

Importance – "That means I can't get the Ministry of Education forms completed on time."

Question/Suggestion/Request – "Can we talk about it?" "What needs to happen for you to get it in on time?" "Can you get it in on time next month?"

### OR

Analyse the situation – "I notice you have submitted the monthly report late twice. Why do you think this is?"

Generate options – "What do you think we can do about this? Do you need some extra computer training?"

Agree on a solution – "Ok – I will work with you to show you how to complete the report this month and to clarify my expectation of the layout."

### • Set goals and action plans

One of the important aspects of improving performance is to document the progress. (This will also stand you in good stead should performance not improve and you need to go down the performance management path). Ensure you have set goals for performance improvement that

are SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

For example: To submit the monthly reports no later than 12pm on the second working day after the end of the month.

This method ensures that you are both clear on the requirements for the future. It is advisable to also set a timeframe for reviewing progress. In this situation the third working day of the month following would be appropriate.

*Elizabeth Fahey is Director of Power Stanfield Consulting Ltd, a human resources consulting company. She has 14 years' experience in the business arena as a business owner, HR manager, coach and consultant. Elizabeth's expertise includes HR strategy development, coaching, facilitation, project management, organisational change, leadership development and career planning. She will be presenting a workshop at this year's ECC Annual Conference. Visit [www.ecc.org.nz/workshop.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/workshop.html)*

## Motivating employees



Believe it or not – you can't motivate your employee. Sounds contradictory to everything you were ever taught at management school? In fact, the only person who can motivate an employee is the employee. What you can do though is create the right environment for their natural motivators to thrive. It is common for managers to think that if they can just provide the right information/challenge/bribe, an employee will see the wisdom of doing what the manager wants. This is the 'tell and sell' method of motivation. This may work temporarily but for an employee to continue to be motivated they must find that motivation within themselves. You can assist them by taking some time to find out what makes them tick, try another approach if you feel like you're banging your head against a brick wall, look at the other person's reality not just your

own. Your biggest contribution will be in removing the barriers to them finding their own motivation.

Improving an employee's performance is about identifying the gap, providing constructive feedback and setting goals for improvement plus providing them with an appropriate environment to encourage their motivation.

The benefits of taking your time to deal with a poor performing employee will have its rewards. It can be difficult and time consuming, some employees will respond quickly, others will take a lot of trial and error. However, in the end you will have a better performing employee and an increase in organisational productivity, which also of course means a better-looking bottom line!

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# How to get the job you really want in early childhood

**STUART BIRCH REPORTS**

Right now the shortage of trained and registered early childhood teachers is causing headaches for centre owners and managers all over New Zealand. In fact, recently, the Early Childhood Council has identified staffing as the number one problem facing the sector.

This labour market creates an interesting dilemma for trained and registered ECE teachers. You know that with any job you apply for your chances of getting an interview are above 90%, and that your chances of getting a job offer are very high (if you are not getting interviews that means your CV needs sorting out). You know that centres are so desperate that even if they do not feel a specific person is right for a specific job, they are very likely to make an offer... simply because they have no other options.

What a great position for trained and registered teachers to be in – more job opportunities than you could dream of. However, the current market also creates problems for trained and registered teachers. Pressure to accept a position can be very high and just because a centre wants you, it does not mean you want them.

And there are other dangers. It can be tempting to just test drive a permanent job. An ECE teacher said to me

recently that they can just take any job because if they don't like it after a couple of months they can resign and get another position. They are right, but that pathway is going to lead to nasty places, for the profession, for children and also for the teacher. A string of short-term jobs on a CV means that while some sort of job will be available it will be with centres that are desperate for staff. High quality employers will always avoid teachers with a history of job-hopping.

You spend around half your waking hours at work and more time with your workmates than you do with your family. Your work environment has a huge affect on your health and happiness. And despite the demand for your skills, not all the centres that want you are going to look after you. And not all of them are going to suit your personal situation, family needs or career path.

So you need to make sure that your new job is the right one for you. But exactly how do you do that?

A recent survey shows that 32% of New Zealanders left their last job because of bad management. And 29% left because they didn't feel appreciated. You don't want to be one of them. Shifting jobs is disruptive, and wrong moves are going to damage your career.



You need to make sure the job you are taking is the right one for you.

One of the best ways to check out centres and see if they fit your needs is through relief teaching. That's right, you can get paid to research different centres! In the main cities, a quality relief company will get you working in centres and then you can check them out thoroughly from the inside. In provincial areas you can approach centres directly.

Jobs in early childhood education are plentiful at the moment but to get the job you really want you need to be careful and thorough in your process. For your own happiness you need to make sure you have found out all you can before you say "yes" to any offer.

*The list of 21 things you should know about an ECE centre is from the booklet "The Six Classic Mistakes Made When Applying for Early Childhood Jobs" published by*

*Education Personnel Ltd. Stu Birch is the Managing Director of Education Personnel Ltd & Skillbase Migration Ltd. Email: [stuart.birch@edperson.co.nz](mailto:stuart.birch@edperson.co.nz). He has been recruiting teachers for ECE centres and schools for 14 years. Prior to this he was a teacher and senior teacher in Wellington, Spain and London. Education Personnel is a Ministry of Education preferred international recruiter for teachers.*

*Stuart Birch will be presenting at the ECC Annual Conference 2009.*

## Do your research

Many people spend more time researching what fridge or car to buy than they do finding out about their new work place. There are (at least!) 21 things you should know about a centre before you take a job there. Find these details out yourself, or a quality recruitment company will provide you with this information. Remember that you are in demand so ensure you are also (tactfully!) interviewing any centre that is interested in you.

1. Why is the job available?
2. How many staff are qualified? Do they meet the ratios?
3. Do they offer professional development?
4. What is the community like that the kids are from?
5. How many children at the centre?
6. What are the ages of the children?
7. What benefits do they offer (holidays, sick pay, phone etc),
8. How experienced is the team?

9. What is the centre's philosophy?
10. What opportunity is there for career development?
11. What is their staffing structure?
12. Who owns the centre?
13. Is it a structured or free-play environment?
14. Is there a mentor for teacher registration?
15. How often are staff appraisals?
16. How high has staff turnover been?
17. Is the pay scale negotiable?
18. Is the centre community run or privately owned?
19. What sort of area is the centre in?
20. What is the management structure of the centre?
21. How much non-contact time is there in a day?

Also make sure you check the ERO Report for any centre you are interested in, talk to your contacts in the sector and give some thought to which direction you are wanting your career to move in.

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# More than being a language teacher

**SUPPORTING CHILDREN FROM NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS IN YOUR CENTRE. RITA HUANG REPORTS**



How much do you know about children and their families who are from a non-English-speaking background (NESB)? Do you sometimes feel frustrated when a child is screaming for Mummy and cannot understand you? Besides helping the child to learn English in order to communicate, what else can we do to support their wellbeing and sense of belonging in their journey of learning? As early childhood educators, our role should be more than being a language teacher. This article discusses how children learn a second language and strategies to support children and their families who are from an NESB background.

How would you feel if you were lost in a foreign country where nobody understood you and you did not understand them? This could be applied to an NESB child who starts attending a new early childhood centre in an English-speaking country. The child will be settled easily when she finds someone who understands and cares about her. Once the child has developed a trusting relationship with the staff in the centre, her journey of learning will be as same as other children.

The following story illustrates how a child learns a second language, which I believe is absolutely different to my own language learning experience as an adult learner:

My daughter was 4 years old when we immigrated to New Zealand from Taiwan. Although she could not speak any English before we came to New Zealand, she was quite happy waving goodbye on her first day of kindy. She was fascinated by all the toys and activities, which were all new to her. She

quickly made a friend named Melissa, who was a local girl, and they played and did everything together. Often her teacher told her not to copy Melissa's paintings. However, it did not work. My daughter liked doing everything Melissa did. Two months later, while I was pushing my 10-month-old son in a stroller, I heard my daughter speak English for the first time. To my surprise, it was not just an English word but a full sentence, "Look! This is my baby brother!" I then realised that Melissa had a younger brother who was the same age as my son. She had said the same sentence before when showing her brother to my daughter. After that she started to speak English more fluently and without problems.

Unlike an adult learning a second language, children pick it up more easily as long as they are immersed in an environment where the second language is spoken. They do not need to learn grammar before they can speak. The way they learn a second language is similar to a baby learning her first language. "Children are thought to acquire their first language rather than learn it, and it is suggested that children acquire a second language in much the same way as their first" (Schofield, 2007, p. 24). Therefore, one of our roles as early childhood teachers in supporting children from NESBs is to help them to settle into the centre, so they can start to make friends and embark on their learning.

The parents of children who are from NESBs may have different expectations from other parents. One of the reasons for immigrating to English-speaking countries for many families is for their children to have a better future and

education (Statistics NZ, 2008). Thus, these parents might get upset if their child only interacts with children who speak their first language.

Learning a second language cannot be achieved overnight. In addition, it can be very frustrating when trying to communicate with parents from an NESB. But bear in mind that many parents read and write English well, even though they might not be able to speak it. Thus, providing a newsletter or a written report will help with your communication with these parents. In addition, the following things need to be taken into account when working with families who are from NESBs:

- Developing positive parent-teacher relationships;
- An attitude of respect and a commitment to communicate;
- Trying to see things from the parents' perspective, especially when differences or tensions arise;
- Knowing parents' expectations;
- Encouraging and supporting parents to nurture their child's appreciation of their language and culture;
- Realising that parents can be resources and teachers for staff.

When working with NESB children, here are some strategies you can consider:

- Using mime and real objects to illustrate speech;
- Use non-verbal communication such as facial expressions, body language and tone of voice;
- Singing songs and rhymes as much as possible;



- Encouraging children from NESBs in groups with those who know English;
- Providing a relaxed environment rather than “teaching the language”.

Here are some suggestions when planning the curriculum / environment:

- The environment should be relaxed and rich in comprehensible language;
- Providing an environment that promotes belonging and security;
- A language-rich environment is necessary to acquire the principles and parameters of the language;
- Encouraging a respect for diversity by children, staff and parents;
- Teaching activities and practices that support language learning.

Although working with NESB children and their families is challenging, it is also rewarding when you see them settled into the classroom and embarking on their learning. Early childhood educators should not only teach children from

NESBs another language, they can also cater for these children’s wellbeing and holistic development. These can be achieved by early childhood educators providing an environment where children can trust and be immersed in their second language.

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*Rita Huang is a registered ECE teacher and a lecturer at New Zealand Tertiary College. She has many years of experience working with NESB children and families in New Zealand. Rita will present a workshop in supporting NESB children at the 2009 Early Childhood Council Annual Conference in Rotorua. For details, see [www.ecc.org.nz/workshops.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/workshops.html)*



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# Resolving conflicts among children

ROBIN CHAMPION REPORTS

Competition over resources is natural; animals compete for food, mates and territory. Primates, including humans, have the added stress of competing over tools, while children attending early childhood centres compete over toys and educational resources. These resources might be scarce (not enough for the number of children attending), useful (children use them as props to their play and learning) or carry particular prestige (for various reasons children agree that this is a very desirable resource).

Many squabbles are a mystery. I've seen children fight over a felt tip pen that doesn't work, a pebble, a dead ladybird, a nearly dead worm, a broken plastic spade, a ball (how can you really have fun with a ball without sharing it?), a piece of dried up flax, and much more. Even when I ask these children what they are going to do with the object or observe subsequent activity, the value of the object does not become clear to me.

Frequently the dispute is brought to a halt (or not) by the teacher as an authority figure deciding that one child only has the right to temporarily 'own' the object. As the responsible adult we feel a compulsion to deliver justice.

Teachers make decisions about ownership of resources, often based on scant evidence. Who is the perpetrator and who is the victim? Typically, the teacher will respond to a conflict situation with something like: "Joshua had it first. Caleb, give the spade to Joshua." While Caleb may very well have snatched the spade from the vulnerable and innocent Joshua, this might not be the case.

On many occasions one child will be engaged in play and temporarily put down the toy to carry out another part of the game. Another child, thinking that the tool is now available, begins to play with it. Indignant, the first child snatches it back and both begin a battle of "I had it first." So, who did actually have it 'first'?

Neither case would stand up in a court of law (it's a shared resource anyway), so why do so many ECE teachers feel compelled to establish who had it first? If we're interested in who had it 'first' we would have to have a start time (I had it first – yesterday at lunchtime). Children in environments where 'first' is important often work the system with behaviours such as rushing to save a bike as soon as outdoor play begins or carefully guarding a toy while playing with something else.

Interestingly, the same centres that have "Who had it first?" as the focus of enquiry also have "It's someone else's turn now." This fosters children who are quick to use one or other argument in their own defence. Teacher says, "Caroline had it first." Child says, "But she's having a LONG turn." Teacher says, "It's Rebecca's turn now." Caroline says, "But I had it first." It's a no-brainer really. The two concepts contradict one another.

These everyday conflicts can be turned into cooperative play. In the following example both children are able to come to the realisation that they do in fact have an ethical dilemma.

The two children, initially playing harmoniously but independently in the sandpit, are pretend cooking. After some time they both need the wooden spoon. "I had it" is bantered backwards and forwards for several minutes. Both cling to the spoon but neither is able to provide any more elaborate argument than "I had it first." For emphasis they both raise their voices, shouting their right of ownership.

I waited and then said, "I think you both had it first. I'm going to look after it while you talk about it." I was surprised at the speed at which these children agreed with me. One said, "Yeah, we both did have it first." The other quickly said "Yeah", intonation and body language indicating sincerity.

They then returned their voices to conversational pitch and maintained a relatively complex conversation about how the misunderstanding had arisen and what they were doing with their play baking. I listened for a few minutes, placed the wooden spoon down beside them and moved to another area. They continued their play, neither using the wooden spoon. Some time later, one child came to show me a plastic ladle "I'm going to use this," she said.

In retrospect, I didn't need to 'look after' the object. These children had the competence to resolve their dilemma once I had made the suggestion that both may have had it 'first'.



It's worth noting, though, that an argument that has escalated to physical and verbal assault (children do things to each other that would be a criminal offence in the adult world) is quickly diffused by the teacher taking care of the object temporarily. Removal of the resource does not need to be a punishment for fighting, and children appreciate the teacher as caretaker that resolves their dilemma. Rather than growling at the squabbling couple, the teacher can say, "I can see you can't agree. I'll look after it for awhile." Children accept this intervention and seem to hold no grudges against the teacher or the opponent.

Unwittingly, teachers frequently reinforce competition between individuals. By buying into the argument, the importance of the possession of material goods is actively promoted. By doing this, I believe teachers are undermining the virtue of kindness and goodwill to others.

We don't want children to become playground victims or martyrs, but, by offering alternatives, I believe teachers can promote virtues such as goodwill. Here are some suggestions for resolving children's disputes:

- Are there other suitable resources available? "Look, there are heaps of other trucks in the sandpit box. Which one would you like? This dump truck or this concrete mixer?"
- Is the battle over egos rather than resource? Should the individual children be separated? "Alex, you play with it now. Ben, come along with me I've got an important job for you to help with."
- Does resolution need to be immediate? Can we facilitate the concept of delayed gratification? "Look it's only morning tea time. Mums and Dads don't come to pick us up until after we've had afternoon tea. Cara, you use it now and then, when you've finished, pass it on to Daisy. We're here until our Mums and Dads come so we've ALL got time to have long turns."
- Is the resource really valuable? "That's just plain silly. It's a dead leaf. I don't want to listen to an argument over a dead leaf." OR "Why don't you both sit down and tell me a story about what you want to do with the leaf."
- Is distraction a useful solution? "Oh look what Keisha is doing over there. I think I'll go and see what she's doing. Why don't you come too?"
- Is it a resource that could or should be used cooperatively? "Oh but the baby (doll) doesn't want you to fight. Babies need lots of people to love them. Why don't you be the auntie and you be the other auntie." Or "Two children, one trolley. You can push it together."
- Are the children able to discuss the issue amongst themselves? "Can you go and tell Lily that you would like to use it when she's finished." OR "Oh, so Nyra is having a long turn. Have you told her that you've been waiting for a long time?" OR "Did you ask if you could join in the game so you can use the tea set together?"
- Does the child need your help with the language to negotiate the situation? "Zak, say, 'Travis can I play with that train after you.'" Providing the direct speech makes the task easier for the child. Children who are developing their language will happily repeat these prompts. Conversely, imagine the cognitive task for a child learning

English as their first, or additional language if you say "Zak, tell Travis that you want a turn with the train." The whole grammatical structure has to change in order for Zak to deliver the message to Travis. Without the help of responsible adults, children may never develop the communicative skills to negotiate difficult situations.

In the next issue of Swings & Roundabouts, Robin will take an in-depth look at a particular conflict between children and how it was resolved in order to illustrate some conflict resolution philosophies that have implications for overall centre culture.

## Resources:

Drewery, W., & Bird, L. (2004). *Human development in Aotearoa: A journey through life*. Auckland: MacGraw-Hill.

*Robin Champion works both as a relieving early childhood teacher and an independent trainer delivering workshops to centres. She has a BA (Social Science), Diploma in Second Language Teaching and Graduate Diploma in Teaching (ECE). She is beginning her Masters on a part-time basis this year in children and public policy.*

*Her areas of interest in ECE are: children's acquisition of ethics and values, and creation and evolution of centre culture. Robin's contact details are: Robin Champion, PO Box 20 286, Glen Eden, rchamp@paradise.net.nz*

*Robin will be presenting a workshop at the ECC Annual Conference 2009.*

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# Don't miss out on Working For Families tax credits

**MANY PARENTS WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN ARE MISSING OUT ON WORKING FOR FAMILIES TAX CREDITS BECAUSE THEY MISTAKENLY THINK THEY ARE EARNING TOO MUCH.**

When Wellington parents John Harvey and Sarah Lawn asked about Working for Families tax credits they were told they were not eligible.

"We have two children and we were told we were earning too much," says John, who works for Weta Workshop in the Wellington suburb of Miramar.

However, when Chartered Accountant Adair Craik worked on their taxes, she found they were owed a tax credit of more than \$9,000.

John says the refund was a windfall the family wasn't expecting. "I took three weeks' leave and hung out with the kids and did stuff around the house. It was great, it just gave us a little bit of freedom, got us on top of things again," John says.

John and Sarah's story is a timely reminder for all families with dependent children to check whether they qualify for Working for Families.

Many families are unaware they are eligible because the scheme has changed over time, with the government significantly increasing the thresholds at which Working for Family Tax credits apply, Adair says.

As well, in 2007 the Government introduced an In-Work Tax Credit, which means many families who previously were not covered were now entitled to Working for Families tax credits.

"For instance, a family with a combined income of \$70,000, with two children, and jointly working 30 or more hours a week became entitled to a tax credit for more than \$3,000 a year," Adair says. "Previously they would not have received anything."

The fact that families have to apply for Working for Families means it has limited uptake, Adair says. "You have to be proactive; you don't just get it automatically. It involves filling out forms and no one likes forms."

"As well, there are a number of things you need to factor in to work out your Working for Families credit, such as the ages of your children, when their birthdays fall, and fluctuations in your income. It's quite complex; it's not an easy calculation."

"You also have to be prepared to share details of your family circumstances. For people with blended families, shared custody or stop-start relationships this can involve quite sensitive issues. People don't always like disclosing that information to the IRD," Adair says.

*Information in this article was supplied by TaxRefunds.co.nz, which operates the only Internet-based system certified for e-filing with Inland Revenue (www.taxrefunds.co.nz). TaxRefunds.co.nz offers a free, online, no obligation tax refund estimate service. The company is administered by Chartered Accountants McKenzie Craik Ltd.*

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## How to find out if you're eligible

For families who do not want to deal directly with the IRD there are alternatives:

- Use an online tax refund specialist, who typically will charge a percentage fee based on any successful return. The advantage is that the form filling-out process is simplified and the initial estimates are free. Another advantage is that you don't have to reveal confidential family information to Inland Revenue only to find that your family is not eligible. You only pay if you are getting a refund. However, it pays to shop around because the percentage of the refund charged can vary from an industry low of 12.5% (with a maximum \$500) to around 30% of the gross refund.
- Get an accountant or tax agent to work out your entitlement. This removes the hassle factor of form filling and again you don't have to reveal confidential family information to the IRD if your family is not eligible. You may incur professional-level fees regardless of whether you qualify for a tax credit or not.
- For families who want to investigate their eligibility for themselves, visit the IRD website ([www.ird.govt.nz](http://www.ird.govt.nz)) and go to the orange Forms and Guides section on the bottom right hand side of the home page. Scroll to the bottom of the list to Working For Families Tax Credits registration pack (it's 16th on the list of forms). There's also details about Working for Families on the site, including a chart that lets you estimate your entitlement.

**“Many families are unaware they are eligible because the scheme has changed over time, with the government significantly increasing the thresholds...”**



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# Time for a financial tune-up?

**IN MANY WAYS, RUNNING YOUR FINANCES IS LIKE RUNNING A CAR. JOHN MAKOWEM REPORTS**

We know that cars need regular servicing to help keep them on the road and expensive repair bills down to a minimum, but in real life actually booking the car in to the garage and arranging alternative transport can be a mission.

We often have the same attitude towards our money. We don't lift the lid on our finances partly because we're a wee bit scared of what we might find or where to start. As long as we have enough money to keep life ticking over payday to payday, most of us are happy enough to put our dreams on the back burner – but it doesn't need to be that way!

Most of us do have the option of making those dreams or plans a reality by taking a serious look at and changing the way we spend money day to day. The following seven steps to financial freedom will help you on your way.

## 1. Spend less than you earn

There is one fundamental law that governs your money. If you master this, you have mastered the entire game: To gain wealth, you must spend less than you earn.

## 2. Join a subsidised superannuation scheme

One of the best returns you will ever earn on your money is to invest in a subsidised scheme like KiwiSaver. Joining a subsidised scheme is a good way to start your retirement planning.

## 3. Pay off short-term debt

Getting rid of short-term debt should be one of your top priorities once you are spending less than you earn. Get rid of your high-interest debt first (such as credit cards and hire purchase). Next, see if you can increase your loan repayments to clear your other debt more quickly.

## 4. Set up an emergency fund

No matter how secure your situation is now, it's important you prepare for life's unexpected events. Having other funds set aside can assist greatly if unexpected events arise. We recommend you hold around three to six months of your net salary in liquid assets (that can be readily converted to cash).

## 5. Pay off your mortgage

The first and most obvious reason to pay off your mortgage as soon as possible is that it will save you tens of thousands of dollars in reduced interest payments.

Overpay your mortgage each month if you can do it without penalty. Overpaying even \$50 a month could save you thousands of dollars in interest in the long term and take years off the term of your mortgage, bringing forward the day when you own your home outright.

## 6. Set up a savings and investment portfolio

You will need two streams of savings. One should be for short- and medium-term goals such as a new car, a holiday or that new room you want to add to the house. You'll also need one for longer-term goals such as retirement. Although paying off your mortgage is a priority, it is good to get into the savings habit early so that once the mortgage has gone, you'll find it easier to save.

## 7. Protect your wealth

Creating wealth takes time, effort, focus and discipline. It's important to protect the wealth you create from adverse events that might destroy it. As well as insurance, good estate and tax planning will help preserve your wealth.

Like anything worthwhile, the time you invest in mapping out your 'big picture' financial goals can pay off many times over. Sorting out what you really want to achieve financially means you're not only covered if the worst happens, but you can begin to use your pay packet to turn dreams into possibilities.







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# Encouraging healthy eating

ALISSA TOSSWILL REPORTS



It is important that preschool children eat many different kinds of foods and eat enough for their activity and growth. One way to ensure this is to allow children to eat nutritious mini-meals or snacks and save the treat foods for special occasions held at home. Children need to be offered water and milk as their first drinks. Aim to make it a policy at your centre that only water comes in their bottles, and milk is offered as a good drinking snack in between meals.

Children learn about healthy eating from a very young age. As adults we need to take responsibility for teaching the children in our care healthy eating habits. We do this by role-modeling good eating habits ourselves. Centre events provide a great opportunity to get everyone involved in this.

## Centre Events

- Ensure the celebration is the key focus – not the food.
- Remember that sweet treats do not have to come out of a packet – encourage parents to bring foods that are as natural as possible.
- Aim to provide foods that are full of nutrients and not empty calories.

## Event Foods

- Celebrate children's birthdays with a special fruit box rather than a birthday cake. You could put candles in a half cut melon for the child to blow out!

- Cut up pieces of fruit into small bite-size chunks and let the children make their own fruit kebabs. Pieces of pineapple, orange, melon, banana and grape look interesting to eat and it is a great way to increase their 5+ a day.
- Instead of a sausage sizzle have a vegetable sizzle. Cut up large slices of zucchini, different coloured capsicum, eggplant and mushroom. BBQ until slightly charred to get that bbq flavour without the extra fat contained in sausages.
- Plan a trip to the local fruit shop and let the children pick out a piece of fruit each that they would like to eat.

**“...ensure you pack a healthy lunch box too!”**

## Healthy Lunchboxes

Encourage parents to include healthy foods in the lunch box. Let parents know that you will be focusing on healthy eating at the centre, as a means of both educating the children and optimising their health. Tell them in advance that

you will be checking the children's lunch boxes and sending what should be considered treat food home – you might like to include a friendly note explaining why you have done this. Have a bunch of bananas or a bowl of apples handy to give to children if you do find unsuitable lunch box foods, so that children do not go hungry or feel left out. The children will watch what you are eating, so ensure you pack a healthy lunch box too! Provide parents with some ideas from the list opposite in your next newsletter so that you are helping them to ensure they are providing healthy foods.

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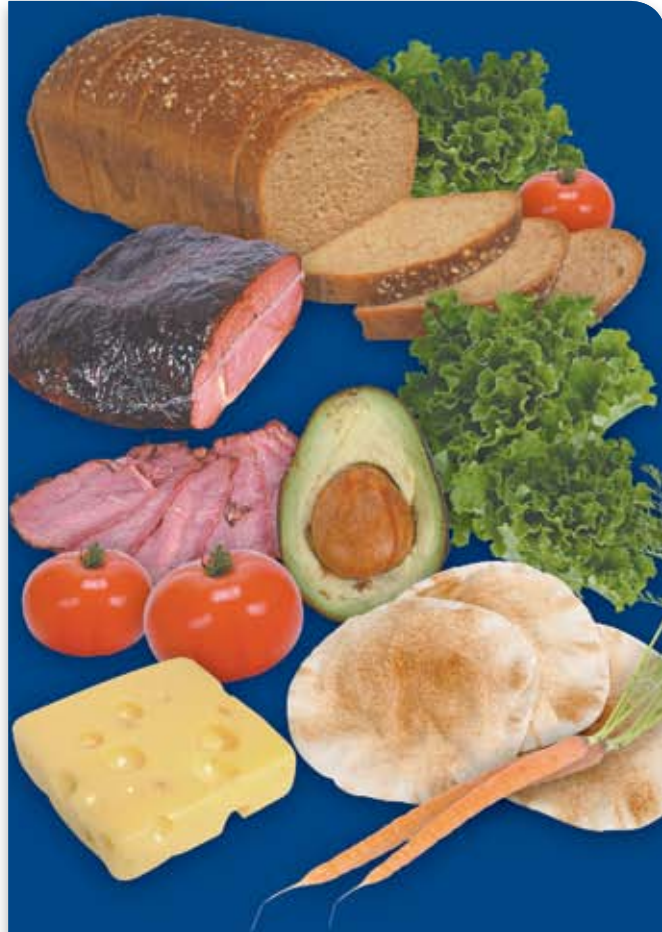
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## Ideas for parents

### The Lunchbox

**Sandwiches – make in a grainy roll, with wholegrain bread or in a pita pocket**

- Tuna, hummus and tomato
- Chicken and coleslaw
- Leftover meat with salad
- Marmite, cheese and lettuce
- Egg and mayonnaise
- Ham, cheese and tomato relish
- Avocado and grated carrot
- Chicken, cream cheese and apricot
- Cheese and tomato
- Marmite, peanut butter or jam

### Snacks

- Cherry tomatoes and cube of cheese
- Carrot or capsicum sticks with or without hummus
- Mini bag of popcorn
- Small baked potato
- Pottle of diced fruit
- Hard boiled egg
- Yoghurt pottle
- Small mix of dried fruit and raw nuts
- Fresh pineapple chunks
- Pita bread cut into slices and toasted



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# Planning play through Active Movement learning experiences

ALISSA TOSSWILL REPORTS

Playtime is a busy time for children under 5 and this is the perfect time for children to learn the basic movement skills needed to build the foundations for later learning. Children are born with the desire to move; through movement they learn about their bodies, and their brains develop as pathways become wired for learning. As a teacher you have the opportunity to guide children's play and offer lots of different activities to stimulate their bodies and minds. By offering a combination of free, guided and directed play you can ensure that children will learn the fundamental movement skills (FMS) to develop their whole bodies.

Free play allows children to explore in their own time through discovery and exploration. Guided play allows for you as the teacher to provide the equipment or stimulus. This type of play is especially important, as sometimes children do not have the confidence to try something new. If you allow them to explore this in their own way by gently guiding them towards the activity, they will gain the confidence to make the activity part of their free play. Directed play is when you want to teach the children a specific skill or new learning activity, which is why planning the activities you are going to offer is so important. Finding the correct balance of the three types of play will make for happy, confident and healthy children. Remember that children will only participate in an activity when they are developmentally and emotionally ready; you should never force a child to participate. A child that sits back and watches is soaking in the new information and waiting for the right moment when she or he feels comfortable to join in – she or he is still learning, but in a different way to the child that is full speed ahead and giving it a go.

So how can you plan your play for the children? One way to do this is by breaking each term up into weeks and each week focusing on a fundamental movement skill (FMS),

while still including activities that the children are familiar with. The Active Movement set of 14 activity guides can help you to do this by providing ideas. Each week you could have a new activity guide focus and the guided/directed play will be the learning experience. For example, one week you may focus on "catching, throwing and kicking", so each day you might offer a planned learning experience that involves these movement skills. It is important to have a plan on how to individualise the activity to make it more

or less challenging so all children can be involved. Pick a time during the day where you will focus on these particular skills so that over the course of the year the children will be involved in some planned physical activity every day. Have fun with the children, as playtime can be a great way to develop daily active movement learning experiences.

Don't forget to celebrate the children's successes through stories and take-home newsletters. Happy Active Movement!

*For more information about Active Movement, or to contact the nearest Active Movement Advisor, call 0800 ACTIVE (228483) or visit [www.sparc.org.nz](http://www.sparc.org.nz).*

*Alissa Tosswill is the Active Movement Advisor for Sport*

*Auckland. She has a double degree in Physical Education and Human Nutrition. She is passionate about ensuring a healthy start in life through physical activity and healthy eating.*

*Alissa will be presenting a workshop at the ECC Annual Conference 2009.*

**“Free play allows children to explore in their own time through discovery and exploration. Guided play allows for you as the teacher to provide the equipment or stimulus.”**





## How to plan Active Movement learning experiences:

- 1) Create an annual plan: Each term decide on the FMS to be developed and decide which Active Movement guides you will use for activity ideas.
- 2) Create a term plan: Break term down into weeks, each week state which FMS will be developed and which activity you will use.
- 3) Create daily learning experiences based on the FMS being developed that week.

## Sample Learning Experience:

Active Movement Guide:  
Catching, Throwing and Kicking

Learning Experience (FMS):  
Throwing and Catching

Other learning outcomes: listening, body awareness, eye fitness.

Individualise Up: Throw scarf into the air and catch on a body part the teacher names.

Individualise Down: Place scarf on the body parts the teacher names.

Equipment Needed: Scarf



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# Young children's spirituality – what's that about?

DENISE HEALD REPORTS

In the course of my work as an early childhood professional development facilitator I get asked a lot of questions, some are easier to answer than others. The one about children's spirituality is a tricky one because it really does mean different things to different people and, like all other dimensions of children's development, cannot be easily compartmentalised into a little box labelled 'spirituality'. Just as other domains of development overlap and dovetail, so too does spirituality. I can only write from my perspective and I have no expectations that this will become your perspective. They are just a collection of ideas, some my own, some that I have read, but I hope they

will provoke an investigation into understanding your own spirituality as well as that of the children you work with.

I can remember having a professional discussion with a colleague about spirituality. She felt that spirituality was no different from emotion. I heartedly disagreed with her. For me, spirituality is much more than an emotion or feeling. My feelings are not reliable because they are dependent on a range of variables at any given time of the day or night, for example, if I am hungry I might feel grumpy and lethargic; if I have a good night's sleep I feel energised. My feelings are also dependent upon whom I am with or whom I am missing. Sometimes I feel sad, jealous, surprised, disappointed, happy, perturbed, excited. As an adult I am able to control my feelings (to a degree!).

My spirit, on the other hand, 'speaks' to me. When I sense a stirring in my spirit I might be compelled to speak out about something or to take action. Some say that this is a 'women's intuition', but for me it is my spirit that gives me courage.

My spirit lifts me. People talk about being in 'good spirits'. I enjoy a sense of humour and I always feel in good spirits after I've had a good laugh with friends or family. My spirit calms me. Every day I cross the Auckland harbour bridge to get to work and most days I am presented with stunning views. I have a sense of awe and wonder and think how privileged I am to be living in such a beautiful place and this lifts my spirits. I actually enjoy sitting in traffic on the harbour bridge because it gives me even more time to enjoy the view. What a great start to the day! I sometimes think of people in other parts of the world who have to work in horrible industrialised areas and I empathise with them because I too have travelled that course in my working life. But now I am here in beautiful Aotearoa New Zealand – I could never live anywhere else! Whereas these are feelings that I have, Wolf (2000) explains that spirituality is a way of reflecting on the meaning of life and of feeling uplifted and moved beyond ordinary experiences. So perhaps our feelings are an expression of our spirit.

So, is spirituality about religion? Well, for some people it clearly is. Do you have to be 'religious' in order to be 'spiritual'? I don't think you do and other people who have written about this topic have explained that secular spirituality is about becoming a person in the fullest sense; it is the

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essence of uniqueness. It encompasses attributes such as self-acceptance; a sense of responsibility; concern for others, a sense of awe and wonder and a desire to live in harmony with one another (Turner, 2000, Tisdell, 2001 and Wolf, 2002). Meggit (1999) explains that spirituality is linked to the ways we relate to others ethically, morally and compassionately, and Jane Bone believes that spirituality is all around us and need only be welcomed (2003).

So how does this relate to young children's spirituality? Te Whariki states, "adults should acknowledge spiritual dimensions and have concern of how past, present, and future influence children's self-esteem and are of prime importance of Maori and Tangata Pasifika families" (MoE, 1996 p. 46). However, the authors also emphasise that teachers must recognise "the spiritual dimensions of children's lives in culturally, socially and individually appropriate ways" (MoE, 1996 p. 41). This statement, I believe, encompasses all children. In actual fact, spirituality is woven through every principle and strand of Te Whariki and offers an excellent guide for teachers on how to ensure that this dimension of children's development is not overlooked, but I wonder if it is...

Jane Bone (2003) explains that spirituality could be supported in education by recognising "everyday spirituality" (p.3). One example she gives is that spiritual moments can be found in the rituals of the centre as well as the celebrations. In a later article Jane writes about 'spiritual with-ness' in which "we are completely with someone else in the sense of minds meeting" and she provides an example given by a teacher to explain this: "...it's in the way children look at each other ...it's in the unspoken interaction that I have with my friend..." (2008, p.9).

I have my own story of a 'spiritual moment' that I once observed. I saw a young child who wanted to wash her hands but couldn't quite reach the taps. Another child saw this and fetched a little step for her to stand on. No words were spoken as he offered her assistance. This was a real 'wow!' moment for me and really touched my spirit. As this boy left the bathroom I gave him the thumbs up sign and he smiled at me before rushing away to rejoin play. I wanted him to know that I acknowledged his act of altruism.

Parker Palmer who wrote *The Courage to Teach* believes that it is important that teachers have opportunities to discuss spirituality with confidence (1998). This might provide an opportunity to acknowledge what the spiritual can bring – a sense of joy, a sense of wonder, a sense of appreciation, and a sense of connectedness to each other and the world.

*(Please note that parts of this article have previously been published in Early Education (Spring, 2008) and I would like to acknowledge the work that Jane Bone and Sue Stover did in shaping that article with me.)*

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*Denise is an experienced early childhood practitioner who has been in the profession for 27 years. She has owned and managed early childhood centres overseas and for the past 8 years she has been employed within the tertiary sector educating students to become early childhood teachers. Denise is currently the operations manager of Maestros, which supports early childhood educators and centres throughout New Zealand with professional development, Teacher Registration, ICT, centre management support, property services and more.*

*Denise will be presenting a workshop at the Early Childhood Council Annual Conference, exploring practical ways of supporting young children's spirituality. Maestros will also be at Stand 22 at this year's conference trade fair – be sure to drop by and visit.*



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# A question of trust – developing relationships with children with autism

NEIL STUART AND JULIE TIMMINS REPORT

If you can imagine for one minute that you are walking down a strange street in a strange town and it is dark. Up ahead you can see a man you don't know and he's beckoning you to walk down a dark alley with him. Would you go? My guess is that you wouldn't. In fact you would probably feel highly anxious, you might try and avert your eyes and you may, in fact, walk in the other direction. Certainly, if the man tried to take your hand and pull you towards the dark alley, you would struggle. However, if you recognised the man as someone you trusted, or someone you have good times with then you might be tempted to see what is down the dark alley.

This is the situation for many young children with autism who have not built up relationships of trust. This is not due to parenting styles but the nature of autism itself. With increasing numbers of diagnosed children with autism in early childhood centres it is ever more likely that staff will be coming into contact and looking for a way in to play with them. How can we develop the sort of relationships that motivate children with autism to take on challenging situations?

First, it's interesting to see what sorts of situations children with autism find challenging and which they find easy. Certainly there are many occasions where they appear to cope well. When activities are solitary, they are in control and involved in a simple pattern game, such as placing objects in a long line, all seems fine. But what about when the changes are more unpredictable, when things are spontaneous and happen at the same time? It is on these occasions where the challenges mount up and the dark alley looms large. It is these types of activities that are likely to cause alarm bells for the child with autism.

Typically developing children in these situations learn to cope initially by checking in with their caregivers (referencing). They then become confident, believing they can cope in challenging situations and learn from their

mistakes. For children with autism, their autism gets in the way. They fail to comprehend that it is important to look to their caregivers and get the reassurance needed, and end up avoiding challenging situations. And it is important to become familiar with these types of changing situations for they are the ones that allow us to grow in our understanding, wisdom and relationships.

The bottom line is that success for children with autism is best measured in the development of relationships of trust. We have developed a set of simple strategies for staff and parents that help to begin the process of relationship development.

## Principles of Relationship Development

### 1. Patterns

The adult creates activities with clear, simple patterns that the student is able to take part in. Over time the child realises that they are taking actions that are dependent on the adult and vice versa. Children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) constantly look for patterns and are more willing to take part where they can predict what will happen.

*Teacher notices Derek running in a circle and joins in with him. Derek stops and looks at him. Teacher says, "Go" and they run around together again.*

### 2. Variations

The adult establishes himself as a guide by introducing slight variations to the patterns. The patterns are the same but slightly changed. These just noticeable differences are the first introduction into flexible thinking. *Teacher takes Derek's hand and says, "Slow". They plod round in circles. Teacher stops and turns around and they plod round in circles the other way.*

### 3. Memory catchphrase

The adult creates a catchphrase (word(s) and/or action) used within the pattern to create a positive memory

**"For children with autism, their autism gets in the way."**

for the child. Children with ASD have difficulty drawing on memories of previous experiences. By creating, emphasising and subsequently reintroducing positive memories of interactions the students are more likely to want to engage with the adult again. *Teacher chants, "Marching round in circles" each time they stop and start.*

#### 4. Active roles

The adult makes sure that the child has a relevant and appropriate role in the activity. The adult realises that motivation comes from feeling able to take part and having fun. Establishing the child's role depends on their competencies. *Teacher and Derek are doing the same thing, walking, at the same time.*

#### 5. Being the guide

The adult's intention is to lead the interaction and understand that if left to the student the pattern will remain the same, not leading to growth. The guide's role is not to force or direct the student but to establish co-dependence within the pattern by using strategies such as: physical connection, demonstration and placing themselves in a role where they can add variations. *Teacher decides when to stop, which direction to run and if Derek continues by himself, he waits for Derek to return to him.*

#### 6. Highlighting

The adult determines what is important in the activity. The adult can emphasise a certain aspect of the interaction e.g. doing something together. The adult needs to consider how to cut down on distractions, how close should the connection be to the student and what they choose to ignore. *Teacher says, "We stopped together" in an enthusiastic voice and they look at each other and smile.*

#### 7. Adult's communication style

The adult maintains a non-directive approach. The adult emphasises the importance of non-verbal communication by using facial expressions, body language, gesture and intonation to appear interesting to the student. He or she reduces the amount of language by using single words or short phrases or not using any language within the pattern. The adult slows the pace of the interaction and waits allowing the student time to respond. *Teacher always seeks to get at Derek's eye level and smiles often. After they have*

*stopped Teacher holds out his hands and says "G-g-g-g-g-o!" in a voice with rising intonation and Derek shows his excitement by looking to Teacher.*

These strategies offer the child a way in to playing interactive games that can lead to positive memories of interacting with adults. The children become confident participants and develop a desire to be with those adults in trusting relationships.

*Neil and Julie both work at Oaklynn Special School in West Auckland and with families who have preschool children with autism. They recently presented at the National Autism Conference and will be presenting at the Early Childhood Council Conference at Rotorua in May.*



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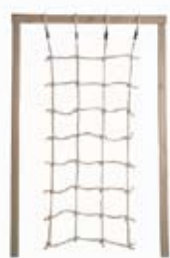
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# Early childhood design: let nature be your guide

PHIL SMITH REPORTS

There is clear evidence that the first five years of our lives are some of the most formative. Our cognitive development crystallises: we learn language skills, learn to balance and walk, we learn social skills, how to interact etc, all of which forms the basis of the person we become.

The importance of early childhood education during these years is undisputed and has been proven to enhance our lives dramatically in later years. And yet, while we accept all of this, I am frequently surprised by how little importance we place on the quality of the spaces that provide this.

This is not the case in other areas of education: in English secondary education, much research has gone into identifying links between enhanced performance and well-designed spaces. Strong links have been identified between the ability to focus and concentrate with an increase in natural daylight and increased fresh outside air. Equally, the psychological and social effects of design have been analysed, and the results used to inform new designs. For example, many of the secondary schools I designed in England catered for over 1200 pupils, some were as large as 3000! And they were all in low decile areas with many social problems. The potential for conflict, bullying and vandalism with these numbers is huge.

The solutions we devised very successfully tackled all of these issues at the design stage. Simply put, we didn't provide a space for these things to happen: classrooms were arranged

overlooking study spaces and walled with glass. This allowed casual observation of both the study spaces and other classrooms. The operative word here is casual – the spaces did not have to be controlled specifically by an individual, as is the case with cellular spaces – they were controlled by the staff that were teaching as they would do normally in their classrooms.

Equally, the way spaces were connected and the materials used gave the students the cues as to how they were meant to behave. Corridors were non-existent – corridors are where bullying and vandalism happen, as they are tight spaces, not easily observed. The main connecting spaces between all these blocks of classrooms and study spaces (which were called faculties and given an identity so that the students each 'belonged' to a faculty) were again open and overlooked from above.

Materials suggested a more relaxed atmosphere in this space; we even put a cafe in the centre. By making it obvious how they were supposed to behave, noise and rowdiness were controlled –

Natural light, connection to the outdoors, natural features - trees, sand, grass and an interesting vibrant entrance. Note how the entrance design evokes movement from inside to out.



Study space at heart of faculty: note the visual transparency and amount of daylight. Note also how calm the space feels.



the students could let off a little steam in this space, but they knew the moment they were back in the faculties it was business time!

And the results back from this have been tremendous: bullying is virtually non-existent within school grounds, and there has been no vandalism of any of the school. The exam results also indicate a marked difference in attitude: they have doubled the amount of students getting A-C grades from within the same body of students. And we achieved all of this from a standard Department for Education budget.

So coming from this background, it is immediately noticeable to me how poor our under-five spaces generally are. The general model seems to be based on



the old villa with a quarter acre section, whether it's a renovation or a brand new design. Car park in the front straight off the road, big square one storey building in the middle of the section, playgrounds at the back. To make matters worse, we then typically cover the playgrounds in Astroturf and put a few token plants around the perimeter. Compared to the school I described above, it doesn't sound very exciting does it?

And for those who don't believe that the quality of spaces matter to children, have a read of Professor Robert Winston's *Human Instinct*. In it he conducted a fascinating experiment where he showed pictures of a variety of landscape types to a broad cross section of people of all ages and cultures. The results from people over eight years old were not conclusive (due to external influences), but the results of the under eights were dramatic: all said that they preferred the African savannah landscape to any of the others (all of which were equally dramatic and beautiful). Regardless of whether you believe Professor Winston's assertion that this is proof that we carry very ancient 'memories' as part of our DNA derived from having a single common ancestor that originated in the African savannah, the results show that this wide, open, light-filled landscape is fundamentally attractive to young children. For me, these points are essential to any space I design – particularly for children.

Now, think about spaces you love – that inspire you. I bet they are full of daylight, with patches of sunlight hitting the

room, where you can feel the warmth of the sun coming through the glass. I would expect they have a view of a natural feature – a beautiful garden, the sea, a forest or mountain range. And equally, I can tell you what they won't be: they won't be views of barren Astroturf with a few climbing frames, viewed through pokey glass doors or narrow windows!

So what should we be looking for in our early childhood designs? We are dealing with very different issues to secondary or even primary education, but some solutions are universally appropriate to any great human space:

- The space should be flooded with natural daylight (to the point where artificial lighting is not necessary). Our bodies respond to the circadian rhythms of night and day, and it is very important that we can sense the changes in light throughout the day, especially for children.
- The space should have connection with outside. As in the Robert Winston example, we want to be outdoors.
- The space should have plenty of fresh outside air. Remember, fresh air has less CO<sub>2</sub> (which makes us feel drowsy), and increased oxygen levels, which makes us feel energetic and able to concentrate better.
- Use natural materials to give a warm and inviting, yet natural feel. Timber can be a great way of bringing nature indoors and has a great scent. Its warmth enhances any space. Try to avoid vinyl as it's

the most unnatural material possible and the garish colours it comes in only make things worse!

- Use the building fabric to control the environment. For ideal comfort conditions, the New Zealand climate does require a little cooling in summer and a little heating in winter. With the right 'passive' design, the building's 'fabric' can be made to cool and heat the building giving natural comfort conditions – it's the same effect as going into a cave – cool in summer, warm in winter!
- Make use of your environment. Flat is not always best. Yes it's cheaper, but some of the best building and play spaces utilise the natural topography to give changes in height and allow overlooking to create movement.

Any space that incorporates the above features will be a great space for both children and staff.

*Phil Smith is an English trained architect, now working in New Zealand, specialising in early childhood design and 'green' buildings of all types. He spent 10 years in London, working at the practice of Lord Norman Foster, where he learnt much about sustainable architecture and designed many sustainable buildings including schools, office towers, and city quarters. He can be contacted on philiplawrencsmith@yahoo.com or mobile: 021 716 893.*

*Phil will be presenting a workshop at the ECC Annual Conference 2009.*



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# ECE centres have a role to play in the B4 School Check

You may have heard of the B4 School Check, a free health and development check for four year olds that was introduced around the country last year.

The Ministry of Health's Chief Advisor Child and Youth Health, Dr Pat Tuohy, says the check is designed to make sure children get the maximum benefit from school.

"The B4 School Check offers parents and caregivers of children turning four the opportunity to spend up to an hour talking with a registered nurse about their child's health, wellbeing, and development.

"Included is a check of the child's vision and hearing, oral health, height and weight, and immunisation history. The B4 School Check also includes general questions on the child's health and development and an assessment of the child's social and emotional strengths and difficulties. The check can take place in a variety of settings including GP clinics, early childhood education centres and community centres.

"If any concerns are identified from the B4 School Check, action can usually be taken early and the nurse can refer the child to appropriate services before they start school. Referral will be to providers who can help with the child's social or emotional needs."

Dr Tuohy says while the B4 School Check has a number of components, staff at early childhood education centres are likely to be most involved with the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

"The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is used to assess a child's social and emotional development.

"Staff at ECE centres will be asked to fill out the teacher's version of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire - the SDQ-T. This is based on their observations of the child in a wider social setting."

The SDQ is based on the Child Behaviour Checklist and Rutter questionnaires, which have long been used in clinical

and educational practice. Its focus is on whether a child has difficulty with emotions, concentration, behaviour or getting along with others.

Dr Tuohy says the SDQ is not used to diagnose or label children, rather it is a tool designed to get an overall picture of the child's social and emotional strengths and difficulties.

"The advantage of using the SDQ is that it puts more emphasis on the child's strengths rather than just their difficulties. It is not only well respected by specialists and researchers and used by several countries, but it is quick and easy to score."

As well as the SDQ-T for teachers, there is an SDQ-P for parents, describing their child's interactions at home.

The nurse then combines the information gained from the home environment (SDQ-P) and the learning environment (SDQ-T). They discuss this with the child's parents.

The SDQ results and discussion with parents contribute to a holistic picture of the child's health and wellbeing. Particular concerns may prompt a referral process.

The use of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire is supported by both the Ministries of Education and Health.

Both ministries acknowledge the value of the input from early childhood education teachers.

"I hope ECE centres will support the B4 School Check and complete the SDQ-T, as it is an opportunity for teachers to support parents and ensure children have every opportunity to learn to their full potential. Any teacher who knows the child well can complete an SDQ-T," Dr Tuohy says.

"The checks are free, and may pick up a health or development issue that, when addressed, will make all the difference to a child's ability to learn when they start school."

**"The B4 School Check offers parents and caregivers of children turning four the opportunity to talk with a registered nurse about their child's health..."**



A joint letter from the Ministries of Education and Health was mailed out in June 2008 to approximately 4,000 ECE centres around the country encouraging teachers to complete the SDQ-T. A second joint letter, enclosing a copy of a B4 School Check Information for the education sector pamphlet and a list of frequently asked questions, was sent to ECE centres in February 2009. The ministries will be communicating with ECE centres about the B4 School Check programme as it develops.

Parents and caregivers of children who are turning four will receive an invitation from their local B4 School Check team for their child to attend a check. If they have not received an invitation, a list of local contacts is available on the Ministry of Health's website: [www.moh.govt.nz/b4schoolcheck](http://www.moh.govt.nz/b4schoolcheck)

For more information, parents can also call the free 24-hour health advice service Healthline (0800 611 116), which includes a Well Child line that provides parenting advice and health education information.

Information pamphlets about the B4 School Check have been developed for parents and caregivers, and for the education sector. Copies of these pamphlets can be downloaded from the Ministry of Health's website, or can be requested in hard copy from local B4 School Check teams.

*Pat Tuohy from the Ministry of Health and Karl le Quesne from the Ministry of Education will be presenting on the B4 School Checks at the ECC Annual Conference 2009.*

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*ECC Constitution defines members as follows:*

- Rule 2.4: "Member" means an Independent Early Childhood Centre, (see definition below) or group of centres under the same Licensee, or Management Group (see definition below) who is recognised as such by the Association and whose subscription is current.
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Card No

# Let us paint you a picture.



New Zealand owned and operated, Kidicorp offers their teachers long term stability and genuine opportunities for career growth and development. The teachers in our centres benefit from being part of a strong, supportive company who can offer its employees an acclaimed advice and guidance programme and exceptional professional development opportunities. We encourage creativity, individuality and the freedom to share your ideas in a supported environment, letting you be the best ECE teacher you can be and providing our children with the best care and education possible.

To find out more about opportunities with Kidicorp in your area – Go to our new recruitment website [www.recruitment.kidicorp.co.nz](http://www.recruitment.kidicorp.co.nz) or Call our National Recruitment Manager, Julia Anderson on 0800 KIDICORP (0800 5434 2677)



While we have many centres nationally under The Kidicorp umbrella, our philosophy is to embrace individuality and let it prosper. This allows each team member to enjoy a work environment that suits them best. And because we're taking care of the 'business

stuff', you're free to focus on what matters most – providing children with the finest early childhood education and developing your future to match your ambitions. To find out more about the "Kidicorp Experience" go to [recruitment.kidicorp.co.nz](http://recruitment.kidicorp.co.nz)

[recruitment.kidicorp.co.nz](http://recruitment.kidicorp.co.nz)

**KIDICORP**  
STRONG VALUES. STRONG TEAM.



## PLAYGROUND SAFETY SURFACING



Play Mattas

Safety Mattas

Rebound Mattas

Kids Mattas

# MATTA

**Matta Products Limited**

Email: [sales@mattaproducts.com](mailto:sales@mattaproducts.com)

Internet: [www.mattaproducts.com](http://www.mattaproducts.com)

NEW ZEALAND: Phone: 0800 MATTAS (628 827)

Fax: 0800 MATFAX (628 329)

AUSTRALIA: Phone: 1800 4 MATTAS (462 8827)

Fax: 1800 4 MATFAX (462 8329)



**CREATED TO PROTECT**



# Upcoming ECC Events

**Mark your diaries now!** Keep an eye on our events page on our website for further details and to register for ECC events: [www.ecc.org.nz/events](http://www.ecc.org.nz/events)

## MARCH 2009

### INCREASING YOUR EXPERTISE IN INFANT/TODDLER CARE

For early education teachers, it is critical to understand what attachment is (and isn't) and how this understanding can be woven into practice. Lauren Porter from the Centre for Attachment will discuss why and how the relationship a young child makes with his/her teacher can be instrumental in charting a positive course for life. Practical applications of the latest research to the early childhood setting and how practice changes can help reduce stress for the children in care will be covered. Sarah Farquhar from the Early Childhood Council will take you through the steps to becoming a breast-feeding

friendly service and provide practical advice. The seminar will conclude with a look at the primary role of the infant/toddler teacher in providing care, with participants being invited to ask questions and discuss day-to-day practices.

- Presenters: Dr Sarah Farquhar and Lauren Porter
- Three locations: Wellington 25th March, Auckland 26th March, Christchurch 27th March.
- ECC member discounted price \$250  
Non-member price \$325.
- Go to [www.ecc.org.nz/events](http://www.ecc.org.nz/events) to download a registration form, or call us on 0800 742 742

## MAY 2009

### ECC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2009

**Registrations open now! Visit [www.ecc.org.nz/conference/home.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/home.html)**

Registrations are now open for the ECC Annual Conference 2009! We have another wonderful conference planned, with national and international keynote speakers, special events, a huge trade fair and a fantastic range of workshops.

Our keynote speakers include Dr Stephen Rollin, Dr Glenda MacNaughton, Joy Lubawy, Sue Thorne and Dr Lester Levy. Find out more about them on the website: [www.ecc.org.nz/conference/presenters.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/presenters.html)

Our workshops range from the mathematical to the spiritual, from individual to team topics, from ICT to yoga for kids... There are so many options to choose from!

Many of our keynotes will also be presenting workshops; this is a great opportunity to hear these presenters in a smaller setting, often with the chance to ask questions.

Keep an eye out on the website for more details and information: [www.ecc.org.nz/conference/workshop.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/workshop.html) for details.

Our Gala Dinner will be a spectacular affair! This year's theme is "Come dressed as what you wanted to be when you grew up".

The 2009 conference is being held over Queen's Birthday weekend - why not spend Monday with staff and make it a fun team-building day (tax deductible of course!). Or take your family - there's plenty for them to do during the day when you are at the conference, and lots of lovely restaurants and things to do in the evenings together. Have a look at some of the amazing things Rotorua has to offer: [www.rotoruanz.com](http://www.rotoruanz.com)

This will be a busy weekend in Rotorua, so make sure you book your flights and accommodation early.

Accommodation bookings are available when you register and we have secured some great rates for our delegates at four hotels close to the conference venue. Have a look at the website for more details: [www.ecc.org.nz/conference/accommodation.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/accommodation.html)

Standard registrations are available from 1 January to 31 March 2009. Late registration after 31 March 2009.

The 2008 conference sold out six weeks before the event, so don't miss out!

To register online or to download a registration form, go to: [www.ecc.org.nz/conference/registration.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/registration.html)

## AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2009

### REGULATIONS UPDATE

As part of its advocacy and representative role, the ECC has been keeping up to date with the impact National has had on

the previous government's proposed regulatory changes. These seminars will provide an update on the requirements of centres once the government's review has taken place.

# Early Childhood Council Annual Conference 2009

New Zealand's largest annual early childhood conference

**29 - 31 May 2009**  
**Energy Events Centre**  
**Rotorua, New Zealand**

- International and New Zealand keynote speakers
- Huge range of workshops
- Trade Fair
- Gala Dinner
- Social and networking opportunities

**REGISTRATIONS AVAILABLE NOW!**

Standard Registration: 1 January - 31 March 2009  
Late Registration: After 31 March 2009

2008 sold out six weeks prior to the event - Register early to ensure you don't miss out in 2009!

For all ECC Annual Conference information go to  
[www.ecc.org.nz/conference/home.html](http://www.ecc.org.nz/conference/home.html)  
or contact us at [admin@ecc.org.nz](mailto:admin@ecc.org.nz)  
or phone 0800 742 742

This is New Zealand's premier early childhood event  
**Don't miss out in 2009!**



**Early Childhood  
Council**

Don't forget – You can use your Support Grant for Provisionally Registered Teachers for the Early Childhood Council Annual Conference





# First Base

## Admin software for early childhood centres

First and foremost, its easy to use

### Keep comprehensive child records

Store staff records & MoE staff funding data

## Create rolls, sign in lists & general reports easily

### Control invoicing, receipts & debtors

Produce Ministry Returns (RS7, RS61, WINZ forms)

### Auto-activation of future enrolment agreements

### Keep medical & vaccination records

Make waiting lists & keep full histories

Keep confidential notes

## Bar Code Data Entry

### Easy payment options

# 20 Free ECE

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

[illegible]

JUNE 2008										Service No. 000			
Saskatoon Tutorial Class Hours					Tram Tutorial Class Hours					Buff Staff Hours			
Center 1		Center 2			Area 1		Area 2/3/4/5			400 Quarter Hours and Equivalent			
										Time		%	
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The software is fully networkable & is available for Windows or MacOS users.

FirstBase is already in use in  
hundreds of centres & kindergartens.

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

**Includes  
MoE  
Staffing  
Returns**

**PO Box 52-241, Kingsland Auckland**

**Ph: 09 377 2881 Fax: 09 377 2887**

**Web: [www.first-base.co.nz](http://www.first-base.co.nz)**

**Email: [info@first-base.co.nz](mailto:info@first-base.co.nz)**



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SOFTWARE