

SWINGS & ROUNDABOUTS

DECEMBER 2009

SENT FREE TO ALL INDEPENDENT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRES IN NEW ZEALAND

Fun with
fizz! Finding
chemistry in
your centre

Building
an enviro
preschool

Edible
gardening

Beyond
Bollywood -
weaving the
flax of Indian
culture into
your centres'
Whaariki

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Inside this issue...

FROM THE EDITOR & CEO'S MESSAGE	7
CURRICULUM	
Fun with fizz! Finding chemistry in your centre	8
HEALTH / WELLBEING	
Active Movement	10
Create a rainbow of fruit and vegetables for summer	12
ICT	
Inspiring and engaging learners through ICT	14
CENTRE OPENINGS	
Pioneers in Manukau	16
EARLY CHILDHOOD TRAINING DIRECTORY	17
NOISE LEVELS	
An oasis of calm	18
BUILT ENVIRONMENT	
Building an enviro preschool	20
A space to be who we are	22
Edible gardening	24
REVIEWS	
The CSIRO Wellbeing Plan for Kids	
The Merry Christmas Activity Book	
Walking Through the Jungle	
Me and You	
Moonrabbit	
Atchoo! The Complete Guide to Good Manners	
AquAnimals 2 - Mysteries of the Deep	
One Day a Taniwha	27
CULTURE	
Beyond Bollywood - weaving the flax of Indian culture into your centres' Whaariki	30
MUSIC	
Making the most of music for children	34
STAFF / MANAGEMENT	
You don't get harmony when everyone sings the same note!	36
ECE SECTOR INFORMATION	
Self review and external review in early childhood services	38
ECC MEMBERSHIP	40
UPCOMING ECC EVENTS	42



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From the editor

Now that the weather is finally starting to behave as it should it's a great time to start thinking about your outdoor environment and a chance to spruce up the indoors too. We have two great articles from centres who have designed very different environments to meet the needs of the children in their care and to inspire staff, children and their families. Makauri Rural Kindergarten has put an extraordinary amount of effort into ensuring its outdoor environment works for and reflects its community, its centre's culture, and desired learning outcomes. Anja Geelen and her husband recently opened Little Earth Montessori – an eco preschool on the Kapiti Coast. Anja shares the pitfalls and joys of designing and building a "green" preschool. And Jules Moore from Plantet Earth discusses two centres that have created magnificent edible gardens.

We have several more articles from this year's conference presenters including one on personality profiles from Jean Elmer, self review by Sandra Collins from ERO, and part two of Robin Champion's article on creating an oasis of calm in your centre. Tania Coutts and Beverly Kaye share some ideas on how they have incorporated ICT into their centre. Any Mysore and Chitra Deshpande from My Desh were also very popular at this year's conference with their session on empowering children by celebrating Indian culture – their article is a great starting point for centres in this important area.

Brendon and Karen Miller have written an absolutely brilliant article on introducing chemistry experiments to the children in your care – there are some great ideas here and we hope you have fun trying them out! Kelvin Roy and Trevor Thwaites talk about the importance of music, in particular rhythm, to young children. And, finally, our regular nutrition and Active Movement writer Alissa Tosswill has got some great activity ideas and thoughts on creating a food rainbow for the summer to keep everyone fit, happy and healthy.

Don't forget to share this magazine with others at your centre, and feel free to share information from the articles with parents – just remember to credit where the information came from and the authors!

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and thoroughly enjoy your well-earned Christmas break.



Sarah Ellich
Publications Manager
ECC

CEO's Message

A lot has happened this year and a lot hasn't happened. We've had a big scare about Swine Flu, but this was well managed, and we didn't see large-scale centre closures as was feared. The worsening recession resulting in higher unemployment figures did not have a major impact on our sector. Petrol prices dropped back down and we have seen the housing market stabilise. Demand for childcare continues to be high. New centres continue to open.

On the political front we've had a new government but one who so far is pretty much for keeping in place the early childhood policies of the previous government. Our number one issue for the sector, the staffing shortage, has received a lot of coverage and is very well known but concrete ways of addressing this have yet to be announced.

It does seem like this year has flown. For many in the sector it has been a hard year. And the drawn out winter weather hasn't helped! With Christmas just around the corner and the promise of a lovely summer take a deep breath and release some of that stress.

Do something just for fun for you. Do something just for fun for your colleagues and staff. Make time to encourage laughter and join in the laughter with children at your centre.

This summer issue of *Swings & Roundabouts* comes to you packed with recommended children's books, things to think about, and material with a summer theme.

With the longer summer evenings I'm looking forward to spending time with my children outdoors and in the pool. And, I'm thinking I really must make time to sow sunflower seeds. As the sunflowers shoot skywards they look really remarkable and the kids just love them. Sunflower heads make great bird feeders during autumn. Peas and carrots are also easy to grow and great fun for kids to pick – and munch on!

On behalf of the ECC and our team in the office, best wishes for the festive season and for 2010.



Sarah Farquhar
Chief Executive Officer
ECC

Fun with fizz! Finding chemistry in your centre

KAREN MILLER AND BRENDON MILLER REPORT

What do we mean by chemistry? Is it the great vibes that come from dedicated teachers working together to create fun learning activities? Could it be the great relationships that form between children, caregivers and their families?

Relationships might be one type of chemistry. The 'other' science-based chemistry may come to mind less readily. Think about reactions between substances and contemplate the children's excitement when they see a volcano in the sandpit when vinegar and baking soda combine to release a mixture of carbon dioxide and water! Substances have been changed by a chemical reaction – chemistry! This article introduces appropriate ways to experiment with chemistry and supports content knowledge with explanations of what is occurring. As many simple chemical compounds are toxic to some degree, care is needed when selecting chemical experiments to carry out in an early childhood centre.

Mixing materials or making reversible change such as turning water to ice or steam – this we call physics. Reactions that irreversibly change a substance are chemistry. Focusing on chemistry in the centre can be an exciting way to support exploring and developing working theories about the material world.

Cooking is a great example of chemistry in action. Consider popcorn. Heating causes a tiny amount of moisture inside the kernel to expand, creates pressure, and eventually causes the outside coating or pericarp to burst, making a 'POP', and releasing the solid inside tissue as the light air-filled material we enjoy eating. Here's another example:

when placed with water or acid, baking soda forms carbon dioxide gas, which bubbles upwards to cause cakes to rise in the oven or to change molten toffee to hokey pokey!

When planning to extend on children's interests in ways that engage, challenge and enrich learning, subject learning areas can be identified and strategies planned to draw in content knowledge leading to relevant, authentic learning opportunities. This is where connections should be made to curriculum documentation. Learning is seldom restricted to specific areas, so carrying out chemical experiments is likely to involve several aspects of the curriculum, including communication.

Look for instance at the Te Whāriki strand of exploration in which children develop working theories about "the nature and properties of a range of substances" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 90). Chemistry belongs in the material world strand of the science learning area in The New Zealand Curriculum. The supporting document *Science in the New Zealand Curriculum* provides suggestions to support the achievement objectives around changes of matter and the properties and uses of common materials that are likely to inspire further learning opportunities.

As with all curriculum planning, some research and content knowledge will enhance your confidence. Scientific explanations of the experiments we have described and lots of others, together with explanations of the scientific processes involved can be found in *Making Better Sense of the Material World* (Ministry of Education, 1998).

Do have lots of 'fun with fizz' as you explore working theories about chemical reactions in your centre along with relationships between both people and substances.

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Karen Miller is a lecturer at New Zealand Tertiary College. She has a Masters of Education (Early Years) and has watched with interest as the ECE profession has evolved during the 26 years she has worked in the sector. Science has always been an interest in the Miller household. Karen's son, Brendon Miller, has a PhD from Imperial College, University of London and has spent the past eight years working in London as a senior process engineer designing and commissioning chemical processing plants, developing technology for bio fuel production from organic wastes, synthetic diesel from natural gas and reducing emissions from oil fields. Brendon and his family have recently returned to New Zealand.

Photos courtesy of Karen Miller and Brendon Miller.

Try these fun experiments...

The Mini Fire Extinguisher



Most teachers know the benefits of using vinegar and baking soda to create volcano effects, but did you know that when the same chemicals are placed into a bottle we can inflate a balloon with the carbon dioxide that they release? Ideally the bottle should be about quarter filled with vinegar, at least three teaspoons of baking soda added and the balloon quickly placed it over the neck of the bottle as the chemicals combine. Another option is to put the baking soda into the balloon first. A funnel is helpful here.

The same reaction can create a mini fire extinguisher. Instead of a balloon, the bottle is covered with a cork or lid through which a bent drinking straw or section of tubing has been inserted tightly, one end inside the bottle, the other aimed at a flame. Carbon dioxide coming through the straw should be sufficient

to extinguish the flame of a candle placed next to it. Too much fix will cause the foam to come out the straw! Playing around with the quantities is part of the fun of experimentation. When undertaking this experiment, ensure that gas can escape through the tubing. An unexpected flying cork could become a danger. With a flame involved do take care to use a fireproof surface such as a metal tray, keep flammable materials at a distance, have water readily available and remind the children about fire safety. Long hair should be kept away from the flame and this experiment closely supervised. Activities that require care and organisation are a great way to engage with the strands of Te Whaariki, particularly when talking to children about safety and taking responsibility. Asking "what would we do if the straw caught fire?" could be a relevant way to promote discussion.

The Dancing Currants



How about making currants dance? Place baking soda – about 1-2 teaspoonfuls – and a few dried currants or sultanas in a jar. Add vinegar (white vinegar gives a clearer view). Watch the dried fruit travel as bubbles of rising carbon dioxide lift them to the surface to then fall back through the liquid until there are no bubbles left. This can continue for some time!

Remember that these experiments may turn out quite differently from what is expected. Working out why is what science is about. As a tip, before carrying out these experiments show children the ingredients and ask them to hypothesise about what might happen.

Recording their ideas for revisiting is a stimulating way to collect their voice for self assessment and to reinforce learning about chemical change. Development of working theories can be enhanced through asking what they can see, hear and smell. Provide provocation instead of answers, guide by asking "what do you think?". In line with the credit-based approach taken by Te Whaariki adults should "listen to children's ideas and questions", extending strengths and interests through "sensitive interventions and encouragement", developing "strengths, interests, and abilities" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 69).

How It Works



Here is a description of the chemistry involved in the reaction between vinegar and baking soda:

The vinegar contains acetic acid (CH_3COOH), which reacts with the baking soda (NaHCO_3). The acetic acid donates one of its hydrogen atoms to the baking soda, and becomes a negatively charged acetate ion (CH_3COO^-). This attracts the sodium from the baking soda to make sodium acetate ($\text{Na}+\text{CH}_3\text{COO}^-$) whilst oxygen and the hydrogen from the baking soda join the hydrogen from the acetic acid to make water. The remaining CO_2 from the baking soda

is carbon dioxide – the gas that is evolved. Overall the reaction is: $\text{CH}_3\text{COOH} + \text{NaHCO}_3 \rightarrow \text{Na}+\text{CH}_3\text{COO}^- + \text{H}_2\text{O} + \text{CO}_2$. So you are left with a mixture of water, sodium acetate and whatever else was in the vinegar to start with 'fizzed' by the carbon dioxide coming off.

As an aside there are two chemical names for the compound in baking soda. The modern name is sodium hydrogen carbonate and the older, non-systematic name is sodium bicarbonate. Confusingly the 'bi' in the old name does not refer to two of anything.

Active Movement

ACTIVE MOVEMENT BUILDS THE FOUNDATIONS FOR FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILL DEVELOPMENT. ALISSA TOSSWILL REPORTS

When children participate in Active Movement they are building the foundations needed for fundamental movement skill development. These skills are used throughout life to enable movement in both formal and informal activity sessions. Competency in these skills provides enjoyment in sport and physical activity. In addition, these skills assist with learning to read and write, being able to maintain body position and developing an understanding of the world. Within your environment it is important to implement a child-centered approach by providing Active Movement activities that allow children to explore and discover for themselves.

What are fundamental movement skills?

There are different types of fundamental movement skills; the ones we will focus on for Active Movement are locomotor, stability, manipulative and body awareness skills.

- **Locomotor skills.** Developing the ability to be able to move from one place to another. This is moving freely through space, on large body surfaces, on the floor, in the air and through or around equipment. The first locomotor skill a baby learns (which is also a milestone) is rolling, which leads to crawling, followed by walking.
- **Stability skills.** These involve the body balancing in one place (static), moving in motion (dynamic) and also rotation (turning). Jumping can be learnt any time from 18 months; prior to that a toddler bobbing up and down is practising stability and balance as his knees bend up and down.
- **Manipulative skills.** These involve imposing force from one object to another and a skill using the hands and feet. A child will develop

hand-eye, foot-eye and body-eye coordination, grip strength and coordination skills. When a baby plays with a ball between their hands, or a toddler uses a straw to tap bubbles floating in the air they are developing their manipulative skills.

- **Body awareness skills.** This is where a child learns their body has two sides, understands how big they are and how they fit in space. A child may learn to cross their mid-line at about 2½ years old, prior to this offering things at the mid-line allows for a child to use both sides of the body. It is also important that when using songs such as “heads, shoulders, knees and toes” to touch both shoulders, both knees and both feet to ensure a child learns about both sides of the body.

When you set up your environment to empower children for fundamental skill development remember the following.

- **Ensure the play area is not cluttered.** When children have too many things to choose from the activity is not always completed correctly and the intended learning outcome may not be achieved.
- **Alternate the set up of activities.** Some days have circuits for the children to move through sequentially and on other days have stations where directed outcomes are required. Try placing play stations in different parts of the centre than where they were the week before.
- **Only introduce one new challenging activity per day.** Let the children experiment and improve on newly learnt skills. Self-esteem and a sense of achievement are important.
- **Safety set up.** Always have one part of the equipment that is high, but

make sure it is well supervised. It is important that we give children the message that they have the confidence to try tricky new things as long as we show them it is safe.

- **Individualise up and down.** Provide an easier and a harder option for each activity so it is challenging for all children – no matter what age.
- **Turn your indoor area into an exploration area.** The floor should be the child’s gymnasium, take away the hazards and let the child explore the floor.
- **Outdoor games can be brought inside.** Just because you thought that a game was intended for outdoors doesn’t mean you are restricted by the weather conditions. Adapt the equipment you might use to the space you have.
- **Let household items be used for Active Movement.** Pots for drums, fly swat for a bat, cling film or paper towel tubes to blow through, tongs to pick up items, create a “texture” box by placing various items with a range of textures in an ice cream container, stones in a jar for a shaker, cardboard box for a tunnel... the ideas are only limited by your imagination.
- **Let the child’s imagination guide you.** With your guidance let the children teach you about Active Movement with the space and equipment you have.

What are some activities to develop fundamental movement skills?

Stability skills

- Have the children in pairs. Ask each pair to sit back to back with their spines nice and straight and

touching. Ask each child to cross their legs and lift their left arm up and twist to place it on their partner's right knee. They then look to the side they are facing. Lifting the left arm back up to face neutral. Repeat with the right side. This provides a light twist of the spine and the children can support each other, feeling the warmth in their spines.

- Have the children stretch up tall like a tree and flop down low to touch their toes. Hang there for a few seconds before slowly coming up to repeat.
- When it is time to wash hands for morning tea ask the children to perform a turn one way and then back the other way at the sink before washing hands.

Locomotor skills

- Draw lines on the concrete with chalk or place rope down; encourage the children to walk heel to toe along the lines. Can they walk backwards, stepping high and low?

- Ask the children to lie on the ground and stretch out like a pencil, roll one way and then roll the other way.
- Play crawling follow the leader; ask the children to crawl in different ways, like different animals around the centre and outside on the grass.

Manipulative skills

- Collect lots of different sized boxes for children to stack or roll balls through.
- Ask the children to bring old newspapers, which are great for tearing up. Ask the children to tear a piece of paper slowly and then quickly. Can they count how many strips they can tear up in one sheet?
- Practise bouncing balls up and down with both the left and right hand.

Body awareness skills

- Provide the children with a small mirror each and some paints. Ask the children to look in the mirror and paint their faces. Transfer the image onto paper.

- Throw a scarf into the air and suggest different body parts for the children to catch it on.
- Ask the children to 'wake up' their body by gently tapping their whole body. Start at the feet and work up the legs, over stomach, across back, over shoulders, around head, down arms, and over each hand.

For more information about Active Movement, or to contact the nearest Active Movement Advisor, call 0800 ACTIVE (228 483) or visit 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. Alissa is very passionate about ensuring a healthy start in life and has recently developed a service called Eat Play Grow, which aims to support child development through nutrition and movement. Visit www.eatplaygrow.co.nz for more information on how Alissa can help you!

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Create a rainbow of fruit and vegetables for summer!

ALISSA TOSSWILL REPORTS

It is a well-known fact that fruit and vegetables are good for us; you will be aware that we need to eat at least two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables a day; you will know that a serving size is a good handful... but do you know which fruit/vegetables

contain which vitamins and why they are so good for us? Using colour as a guideline you will find a list of common fruit and vegetables with the key vitamin or mineral that they contain and why it is worth eating a variety every day.

Create a rainbow of fruit and vegetables for summer and turn eating into a healthy fun part of your day!

It is important to teach children from a young age why eating fruit and vegetables is so good for us.

Red to keep a healthy heart

Apple - The skin of an apple is a great source of fibre, which is essential for maintaining a healthy digestive system.

Strawberry - Strawberries contain a small amount of calcium, which helps to build strong bones.

Tomatoes - Rich in lycopene, which helps to prevent cardiovascular disease and cancers. Lycopene absorption increases when a tomato is cooked.

Yellow for energy and digestion

Banana - A good source of vitamin B6, which helps the body to produce antibodies to fight infection. A banana is best eaten ripe, when the skin is freckled brown.

Pineapple - A sweet treat that contains bromelain, an enzyme that helps to aid digestion and reduce inflammation.

Sweetcorn - Contains folate, which cannot be made by the body and must come from the diet. It plays a role in DNA (makes up of our genes) and RNA (needed to make proteins).

Green for health and vitality

Kiwifruit - Full of vitamin C, which is important for the formation of collagen; this strengthens bones and secures teeth into the gums.

Broccoli - Contains beta-carotene; a provitamin that is converted to an active form of vitamin A in the body. Vitamin A plays a role in your eyes adjusting to being able to see in the dark.

Spinach - Filled with iron so especially important for vegetarians. Iron is a component of haemoglobin, which plays a role in transporting oxygen around the body.

Find pictures of different fruits and vegetables, cut out the pictures and use them in the following games:

- Create a salad or use skewers to make a kebab with the pictures. Ask the children what they would like in their salad and on their kebab through imagery. You never know what new recipe you may get!
- Talk about the different fruits and vegetables and what they are good for in the body. Ask the children to place the picture on a body part that the fruit/vegetable is good for e.g. carrots are filled with vitamin A, which is good for our eyesight.
- Take a picture of the fruit/vegetable and ask the children to match the picture with a real

piece of the fruit/vegetable. Start with the piece in its whole form and then try it in different way e.g. sliced apple, grated carrot and mashed banana. Once matched let the children taste it!

Alissa Tosswill is the Active Movement Advisor for Sport Auckland. She has a double degree in physical education and human nutrition. Alissa is very passionate about ensuring a healthy start in life and has recently developed a service called Eat Play Grow, which aims to support child development through nutrition and movement. Visit www.eatplaygrow.co.nz for more information on how Alissa can help you!



Purple to live long and healthy

Beetroot - Filled with phytochemicals that have an antioxidant effect that protects cells from cancer and cardiovascular disease.

Plums - Are a good source of vitamin C and also potassium. Potassium helps the body store blood sugar in the form of glycogen. This is the main source of energy to get muscles working.

Grapes - Purple grapes contain antioxidants that protect against cancer; they are also high in vitamin C.

Blueberries - Contain flavonoids that improve circulation and help the body defend against infection.



Orange to prevent disease

Carrots - A medium carrot gives a substantial amount of vitamin A. It also provides vitamin B1, which has an important role in helping the body convert carbohydrates and fats into energy.

Oranges - Filled with vitamin C, an orange or a glass of orange juice at mealtime will increase absorption of iron in the body. Remember it is better to eat the fruit than drink a juice, as juice is high in sugar.

Pumpkin - The colour orange provides antioxidants that will give a healthy heart, improve vision and keep a healthy immune system.

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Inspiring and engaging learners through ICT

TANIA COUTTS AND BEVERLY KAYE REPORT

Beverly and Tania presented at this year's ECC Annual Conference and inspired our delegates with their ICT journey. We asked them to share their ideas with us in this issue of Swings & Roundabouts.

Manaia Kindergarten, situated on the Whangarei Heads, is a three teacher kindergarten licensed for 30 children. In 2006 we became part of the Ministry of Education funded initiative, Early Childhood Education (ECE) Information Communication Technology (ICT) Professional Learning Programme. The programme was facilitated by CORE Education. As part of our action research we investigated the benefits of introducing ICT into the everyday curriculum.

We found that the use of ICT demanded a new and holistic approach to teaching and learning. For us, ICT is not about the technology; the technology is merely a tool for deeper learning and collaboration. It has empowered children as leaders and connected children and teachers with previously unattainable audiences throughout the world, providing authentic teaching and learning opportunities.

We are continually impressed with how ICT has become an integral part of our programme. Families have found that emailing and blogging provide an instant connection with their children's education. Parents are more involved in their children's learning and the day-to-day programme – contributing to portfolios, sharing home experiences, and making movies with their children. The use of ICT has helped families

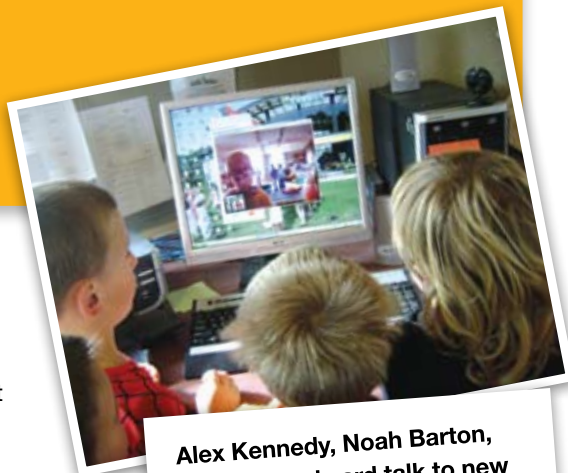
to participate in the emergent curriculum. Children use ICT as part of their everyday practice just as the sandpit, swings, and art area are integral environments and resources for learning.

ICT is becoming an integral part of education and our emergent curriculum. The opportunities that ICT provides are endless and as teachers we are continually working to keep up to date with professional learning.

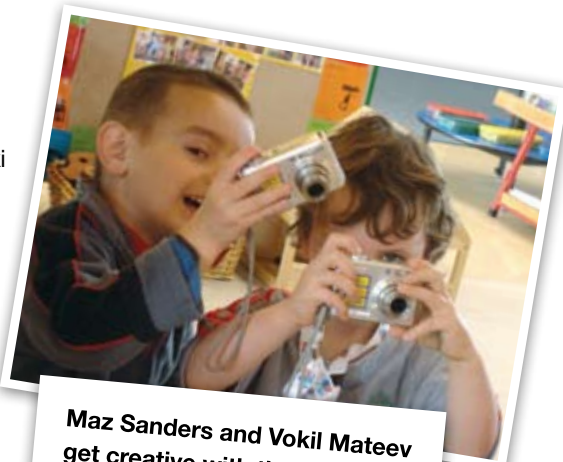
We have established a kindergarten wiki to share ICT tools and software: www.manaiakindergarten.wikispaces.com

A few of the ICTs used at Manaia Kindergarten

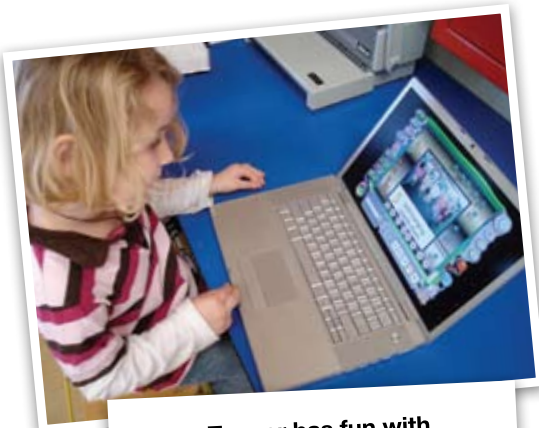
Blogging A blog is a type of online digital diary that provides you with the opportunity to easily publish ideas and stories online. Entries, called posts, can contain text, graphics, audio or video. Each blog post provides a link for readers to leave comments and respond to the bloggers' stories. Our kindergarten blog is our public diary used to showcase children's learning and interests with whanau, friends, our local community and the wider world. Blogging is embedded into our centre programme and culture and has led us on a journey of discovery and growth. When children achieve their goals, explore areas of interest, or have 'light bulb' moments they can often be heard saying: "Can we blog about this?" Children appreciate and expect the reciprocal



Alex Kennedy, Noah Barton, Daniel Woodward talk to new friends via Skype.



Maz Sanders and Vokil Mateev get creative with the centre's digital cameras.



Freya Topper has fun with Kid Pix.

Photos courtesy of Tania Coutts and Beverly Kaye.

nature of blogging and eagerly await comments left on the blog from family, friends and educators. Our blog is more than a window into our kindergarten; it is a link to engage children and teachers in professional global conversations. Blogging has been an opportune tool for supporting our goal to strengthen community relationships. Relationships with local schools have also been enhanced through blogging. Check out our kindergarten blog at www.manaiakindergarten.blogspot.com

Digital Cameras Children and teachers have utilised digital cameras to record learning experiences at kindergarten, at home and on visits within the community. Cameras are readily available to all children, families and whanau. Children and teachers learn to how to use cameras and how to keep them safe. Lanyards are used to hang cameras around our necks and they are kept out of the sandpit and water play. Children take a photo of their name to identify that the photos that follow are theirs. Using cameras provides children with the opportunity to record their learning from their perspective, to explore a different medium and to be creative and discerning with their photography skills. Children often take digital cameras home to record special events or visits from one of the kindergarten puppets.

Photo Story 3 has been our free software of choice for creating digital stories with children. The programme provides children with the opportunity to take their photographic skills to a deeper level. It provides an easy-to-follow format to showcase children's photos, record their voice, add text and create copyright free music. Photostory3 movies are easily uploaded onto our blog. They are also saved onto children's personal DVDs. PC only. To download a free copy of Photo Story 3: www.windowsphotostory.com

Comic Life is used at Manaia Kindergarten for our learning stories, displays, posters, and certificates. We found Comic Life provided a platform to easily mix pictures and text in creative formats. In addition, it is equally usable on Mac and PC. Comic Life is very easy to upload as a jpeg onto blogs. This

software package appeals to teachers, children and parents alike. Using a drag and drop system for photos and text means that our children can independently create their own learning stories and assess their learning, which develops a sense of ownership and pride. It is a highly visual documentation process that engages children in their prior learning. The ability to email stories straight to families is an added bonus, as it provides an inexpensive way to share children's learning instantly with families. Comic Life can be downloaded for a free 30-day trial, and a bulk licence (Mac and PC combined) can be purchased for educational settings: www.plasq.com/comiclife

"ICT is becoming an integral part of education... the opportunities that ICT provides are endless..."

Skype is a free download for both Macs and PCs offering free online phone calls around the world. All you need is a webcam and microphone (these are inbuilt into newer computers). Skype enables you to talk via video link, send instant text messages, images and files, and offers the tools to talk to more than one connection at a time. Skype has been a wonderful way for Manaia Kindergarten children to 'meet' children from other kindergartens around New Zealand. We have many examples of children crowding around a computer skyping children from Geraldine, Fiordland and Auckland. Our skyping buddies have shared their knowledge of painting, Matariki, possums and stoats. As a result, children practise their oral language and listening skills in authentic conversations. As teachers we are able to hold professional conversations with teachers around New Zealand and as far away as Chicago: www.skype.com

Google Docs is a tool for sharing staff meeting notes, staff appraisals, fundraising notes, and a variety of other

documents with specified collaborators. Basically Google Docs is like an online Microsoft Office application, AND it can be accessed anywhere, anytime as long as you have internet access. It has been an amazing tool for collaborating and communicating with team members, committee members and the other professionals we are working alongside. A Google Doc can be a private document or shared with others, all you need to do is to set up a free Google account: www.google.com/accounts

Tux Paint – is FREE computer art software for children. Again it can be used on Mac and PC. To use successfully, you need to download Tux Paint and then the stamps. Just like art, Tux Paint involves learning a process and allows children to freely explore digital paint tools and be creative with colour and texture. As with art, it is often not about the finished product but the enjoyment of the process and playing with ideas: www.tuxpaint.org

Digital Microscope - this was one of our first digital purchases. It created excitement within the kindergarten for children, families and whanau as we explored "everything" in microscopic detail! The digital microscope connects via USB to the laptop/desktop and is PC and Mac compatible. Our children use the microscope to discover and extend their usual interest in bugs at up to 200% enlargement. With the microscope children can take photos and movies of their findings. Our "David Attenborough" moment was recording a praying mantis eating a cricket under the watchful eyes of children, teachers and whanau: www.sitech.co.nz

Kid Pix - Another amazing art and animation software programme. Kid Pix does cost but it is worth it! Kid Pix combines realistic art tools and inspires creativity. It offers a huge array of tools, colours, textures as well as pre-designed stamps and backgrounds to inspire children. They can easily create their own pictures and slideshows to showcase their work. Kid Pix also has the ability to record children's voice and add music. Kid Pix can be purchased at most major electronic suppliers and online through education software providers.

Pioneers in Manukau

ECC CEO SARAH FARQUHAR REPORTS ON THE OFFICIAL OPENINGS OF TWO DIFFERENT EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES

What makes one early childhood service stand apart from others? What creates that really difficult to describe “WOW” factor?

It happens when service founders think outside of the square. When their decisions are not limited by knowledge of what is possible. They are driven by a vision, ambition, and passion to make a difference for children. Importantly, the founders seek out others, from architects and building contractors through to managers and staff who share in their vision, commitment and energy.

In recent months I have attended the official openings of two new early childhood services in Manukau. One in the area of Mangere East and the second in the area of Favona. Both are in areas rated at the bottom of the scale for affluence/poverty.

Households in Manukau have consistently been the most crowded for many years. Families struggle to access health and education services. Broadband is not even available in Favona for the new early childhood service to connect to.

A new Kiwicare centre for the Mangere East community officially opened in August at 48 Tennessee Avenue. It is an exceptional example of enterprise – of what can be achieved by a private operator in a very poor area. Heather Anderson (CEO/Director), Mike Clark (Director) and their dedicated top team of professionals are providing a new facility that has proven very popular with families. At the opening the children really enjoyed and got into the occasion and the huge crowd of parents and family members

present and their proud faces said it all. Kiwicare’s motto is “healthy bodies, educated minds”.

The first Living and Learning Family Centre officially opened in October at 6 Bickell Road. The centre architecturally is very different from the norm, and creates a new standard for childcare environments. On site, families can access child health services and a range of family services including legal, employment and financial advice. Funding was obtained from private donation, the Ministry of Education’s Discretionary Grants Scheme and grants from a number of charitable sources. The vision of the Living and Learning Foundation trustees, Community Projects Manager Michelle Pratt, Nikki Prendergast Children’s Services Advisor, and staff is “To bring hope and healing through education and empowerment”

The participation rate of Manukau children in early childhood education is nationally low at 41 per cent. While government over recent years has substantially increased its spending on early childhood education, the participation rate in Manukau city has remained low. The Ministry of Education now has in place projects to change this and the government recently announced it would fund the design and construction of five new centres in South Auckland.

The new Kiwicare Pre School and the Living and Learning Family Centre show that private and community centres can succeed in this very poor area and contribute wonderfully to providing community-based solutions for enabling more families to get access to early childhood education and support.



Kiwicare Pre School - Hon. John Key (Prime Minister), Dr Sarah Farquhar (ECC), Dr Relinde Tap (Kiwicare).



Children and staff at Kiwicare’s opening.



Living and Learning Family Centre opening (from left to right) Glennie Oborn (trustee), Hon. John Key (Prime Minister), and Michelle Pratt (Community Projects manager).

Photos courtesy of Sarah Farquhar.

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An oasis of calm

ROBIN CHAMPION REPORTS

In the last issue of *Swings and Roundabouts* I discussed noise in centres as well as the hazards of too much noise. I offered some suggestions as to how staff can reduce the noise levels in their centre so they can provide children with some quiet learning spaces. In this article I continue with the theme of calm by focusing on promoting a calm culture. I will discuss acknowledging children, commands versus requests, music, mat times, individual differences, pace and 'rolling' morning teas. By considering the different aspects of centre life, teaching teams can promote a positive centre culture and move towards an oasis of calm.

Cast your mind back to the last time somebody said something nice to you. How did it make you feel? Likewise can you remember the last time that you acknowledged someone else? Acknowledging others, both children and co-workers, is not only an effective strategy for promoting a positive centre culture but it is also something that, as evolved social beings, we should be giving and receiving regularly in our daily lives. Things like persevering to complete a task, playing cooperatively, listening to others or asking questions

are all worthy of praise. It means a lot to children to know that their teachers notice them and the expressions below are some ways you can show children that you value them.

"I saw that, well done", "Oh, you can swing all the way across the monkey bars now", "You've worked hard on that picture.", "Goodness, what a big hole you've dug in the sand pit", "Gosh, you can run fast", "I like your smile", "That's a good question – good thinking"

Idea – Put up a chart so staff can write and share expressions useful for acknowledging children.

"By considering the aspects of centre life, teaching teams can promote a positive culture..."

Teachers can acknowledge children's good behaviour by giving praise immediately. This should happen frequently and for all children. Having laid this as a foundation within your centre, disruptive behaviour is likely to be reduced. Once positive relationships have been built, any subsequent guidance or intervention is likely to be more effective.

Acknowledging children publicly is also an effective strategy. A regular event at mat time could include phrases such as "I saw Rebecca putting the pens back when she'd finished drawing" or "Thank you for helping wipe the tables after lunch today, Jason". The child being praised will burst with pride while the others will get an indication of behaviours that teachers approve of.

Mentioning to a parent something positive their child has done strengthens relationships within your centre community. It's an opportunity for staff to make conversation with a parent; it's good for the child's self-esteem and the parent/child bond is strengthened by this good news at the end of their busy day. A small event is noticed and by communicating it to others, a culture of awareness, communicating and appreciating can develop.

Some disruptive behaviours can jeopardise the health, safety or emotional wellbeing of children in the centre. In these cases, the responsible adult must intervene. Typically intervention is in the form of a command, threat or punishment.

Options do exist though. I believe children have a capacity for being responsible and they frequently respond to calm matter-of-fact requests. To demonstrate, let me share an experience. I was on outside duty when I noticed that a little boy had taken a hammer away from the carpentry table. He was walking around with it held high above his head. Initially I panicked because I had previously seen him hurting other children. I was afraid that he might hit another child over the head with the hammer. My initial urge was to shout in my sternest voice, "Mathew, stop that immediately" but I held back because I'd also previously seen him ignoring the commands of other teachers. I could not take this risk. So, I moved over to him and whispered so that he was the only one who could hear this very important : "Mathew...would you mind putting the hammer down carefully and then back on the carpentry table so that you can keep all the children safe". He nodded knowingly, did exactly as I had requested and went on to a different activity within the centre. I have used this strategy on



numerous similar occasions. Children have a capacity for being responsible and teachers can provide opportunities for them to be so.

Many children think that the purpose of musical instruments is to make as much noise as possible. Noise levels can be intolerable when children do this and they are capable of more sophisticated musical skills than this. Time that teachers spend sitting with children to guide them in the use of making music is time well spent. Try having children beat rhythms with imaginary drums. Singing softly as well as loud is also a valuable skill to teach children. There are some excellent children's CDs available but in creating an oasis of calm, staff should think carefully about how and why CDs are used. As the noise level rises teachers often put on CDs in an attempt to mask the noise. Obviously, this means that children will need to be even noisier to be heard. This is what is called the 'café effect'. Putting a CD on doesn't help achieve this. Teachers should be thinking about ways to lower the average decibels over the day.

Are your mat times conducive to 'calm'? What purpose does mat time fill and how do children and staff feel about it? If 'power struggles' are a regular feature of mat times, your team needs to do some serious thinking. Some strategies to get you started: smaller groups; shorter mat times (acknowledge children who have behaved appropriately prior to mat time, one story, one song, finish mat time); insist that the mat time teacher always has at least one support teacher; ask the children what they like and don't like about mat time; trial having optional mat times or hold more regular impromptu teacher-led activities instead of full mat times.

Children rarely tell us when the environment is too noisy and chaotic for them. By observation we can see individual differences in tolerance levels. Some children are reluctant to come to meal times, hand washing times and mat times. Some teachers might interpret this as non-compliance but I would suggest that it is individual disposition. They might spend time in the quieter parts of the centre and avoid areas where groups of children are crowding. Some children should be

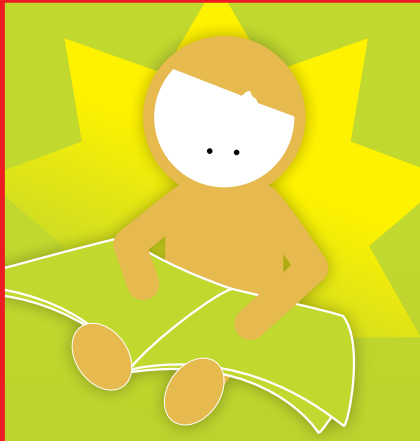
allowed to come to wash hands after the queue of children has gone down for example. By allowing them space you are providing them with an environment that is appropriate for them. You could explain to these children that they can finish what they are doing and then come to wash their hands.

Children are capable of making decisions. Opportunities should be provided for them to exercise this important life skill. Has your centre ever considered giving children choice about morning tea? Morning tea can be made available for perhaps an hour. Children can come and sit down to eat during this time or they can continue on with their activities until lunch time. They will not fall down from hunger if they skip morning tea and they can have the satisfaction of finishing their morning activity. Power struggles are eliminated and children will develop autonomy. Children who choose to eat will be able to sit down with their friends and teachers to enjoy quiet conversation, food and drink at a time that fits their own activities.

Some centres might appear calm because they are relatively quiet. Scratching beneath the surface though will reveal that staff have time constraints that the children must comply with. Do you expect children to adjust to your pace? Do you grow impatient or tell/ask children to hurry up? Try starting tasks earlier so that you and the children don't need to rush, allow flexibility if timeframes are not met and give 'very soon' or 5 minute warnings. For example, "It's going to be lunch time very soon, so don't start something new" or "Just finish doing that, then come inside for afternoon tea".

In this article I've presented some ideas for you to consider. Your own situation is unique and I suggest that your team continues to engage in discussions with the aim of creating a calm centre culture.

Robin presented on this topic at the ECC Annual Conference and many delegates said they got some great ideas. She runs professional development workshops at early childhood centres and can be contacted by emailing rchamp@paradise.net.nz



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Building an enviro preschool

ANJA GEELEN REPORTS

"We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it"
- George Eliot.

These are the words on a plaque unveiled at the opening of Little Earth Montessori, a new preschool with a strong environmental focus in Kapiti, North of Wellington.

Close to 200,000 children are currently enrolled in an early childhood centre in New Zealand. Another 80,000 people in our country - teachers, administrators, and support staff spend their days in ECE centres across the country. Yet, many of our ECE centres are models of unsustainability, and contributors to society's broader environmental and health problems.

Children are our most vulnerable group in society, and the most susceptible to unhealthy environments. Early childhood

centres play an important role in determining the long-term health, educational achievement and future success of our children. So, when my husband and I decided to open another preschool we agreed that building from the ground up would be the best way to

go if we wanted a more healthy and environmentally friendly environment for the children. With that decision we started a project that proved to be a mission. Building a new early childhood centre is a huge task, trying to do this in as green and eco-conscious a way as possible adds a whole new dimension to the task.

Having done the usual research involved with setting up and opening an early childhood centre, we now had to familiarise ourselves with the green building sector and products available. We were not only looking for products that were "greener", but also products that would give our new centre a "homier" feeling, rather than an institutional look. In addition, safety had to be paramount.

Classified as a new commercial building there were strict building regulations we had to meet. Things as simple as a door handle had to meet certain criteria or be of a commercial grade, often limiting our choice. Fire rating of products proved to be a major limiting factor in what we could and could not do. Often "green" products are made from natural products and therefore have a higher fire rating or are not rated at all, hence not meeting the building code criteria. This proved to be the biggest frustration of the project, as several times throughout the construction process we had to make changes, as the product of choice was deemed unacceptable by New Zealand standards, unavailable, or exorbitantly expensive. Other times, methods we wanted to use, which had proven to be highly successful overseas, were hard to use here due to the absence of expertise.

Critical to the success of our building project was the choice of architect. We carefully selected an architect who

was behind our project and would understand our needs and wishes, as well as having the expertise in "green design". Don Jamieson Architecture in Wellington has done a fabulous job in the design and project management of Little Earth. Following our design brief they designed a green preschool based on environmental and sustainable principles.

The design brief contained all our wishes. Some of our wishes were unrealistic or idealistic, some were beyond our budget, some were untimely, but many were feasible and executable, much to our delight.

Our first design wish was the principle of eco building. My personal wish, a straw bale building, had to give way to rammed earth walls, mainly because the lack of a building code for straw bale building proved too risky for us as private owners. Rammed earth walls, on the other hand, are a proven method in New Zealand and have their own building code. In addition, rammed earth walls would be an excellent alternative, as they would enable us to recycle the soil excavated from the construction site. How much more environmentally friendly can it get - this was recycling to the max!

Heating was another important design principle. The preschool is designed to maximise passive solar heating and is positioned to face the sun. Underfloor



Photos courtesy of Don Jamieson Architecture.

heating and a hot water heat pump provide efficient and effective heating. Solar heating is ready to be installed once its technology in New Zealand has caught up with overseas trends and become more affordable. Double glazing and double wool insulation, as well as the 300mm thick earth wall provide a comfortable environment all year round.

Air quality was another important principle. We wanted to keep harmful toxins out of the building and minimise sources of indoor and outdoor pollution through the use of non-toxic floor coverings, such as marmoleum, natural sandstone and untreated timber. Joinery, table tops, and wall linings are made of eco friendly products such as eco-ply and untreated macrocarpa, and treated with low voc paints and natural oils.

An abundance of windows fills the preschool with natural light. The high windows allow the sun to stream in for natural heating during the winter, and the eaves reduce the chance of overheating in the summer.

Water is a precious resource on the Kapiti Coast, with water shortages during the summer. To conserve water we installed rainwater tanks for garden use and flushing toilets.

Finding a balance between the building code criteria, costs and environmental impact was the biggest challenge. From a very early point we involved the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education. The regional early childhood teams of both Ministries were fantastic and promptly answered our questions and took time to research any answers they did not have on hand, due to our unusual questions and outside-the-square project (can we use grey water, what about the impact of a huge heated concrete slab, how about using earth walls?).

Little Earth is not just a green building. What we were looking for was a holistic approach to being an environmental green preschool, beyond recycling and reducing waste or power consumption. We are a member of Enviroschools New Zealand and, as such, committed to building a

sustainable community. This is reflected in our carbon-conscious practices and operation principles, our living curriculum, a supportive community and our natural environment.

With the help of our preschoolers and parents we are now creating a unique outdoor natural environment where children can explore nature first hand, cultivate their own fruit and vegetables and learn more about animals and natural habitats. There will be no or very limited room for asphalt, rubber, steel, concrete or plastic. Our outdoor environment will be a living landscape with natural discovery spaces, an organic garden and spaces set aside for the development of natural habitats. You are more than welcome to visit us on your way to the capital or you can follow us on www.eyesonnature.blogspot.com

In September 2009 Anja Geelen opened her second preschool, a new purpose build enviro Montessori preschool, Little Earth, in Paraparaumu - New Zealand. Anja is passionate about reconnecting our children with nature in a time when children are so "plugged in". When she is not jumping in puddles or rescuing earth worms with the children at her two preschools she is exchanging ideas and inspirations with her world wide web friends and colleagues about nurturing young children's sense of wonder. Following the success of the natural outdoor living landscape at her other preschool, Tawa Montessori Preschool, Anja presents workshops on reconnecting young children with nature and naturalising outdoor environments. www.littleearth.school.nz

Little Earth Montessori was a recently a runner up in the NZ Wood Timber Design Awards 2009 for sustainability.



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A space to be who we are

SHERYL HOPKINS AND LUCY BRUCE REPORT



Makauri Rural Kindergarten is a sessional kindergarten, 10 minutes from Gisborne Central.

They have developed a wonderful outdoor environment based around the needs of the children, families and community they serve. Here they share some of the ideas they have implemented and how they have helped to create a space that supports their philosophy to "aspire for children to be confident explorers, keen inquiries and creative thinkers."

Several years ago we had very little outside area. Our neighbour, Makauri School, expanded and needed our space. We were offered land to the side of the school, which we had to negotiate and discuss to increase the size.

Foresight was used in designing the environment and planting trees. Our community is rural, with farming, orchards and cropping, and this is reflected in the children we serve. We have always been passionate about the natural outside environment, so tracing our history and whakapapa was important and we challenged our community to be involved. With the help of local iwi, Maori agencies and tangata whenua we discovered the uniqueness of our land, filled with history and meaning. For example, one of the understandings of 'makauri' is a kahikatea tree. Northland was blessed by Tane Mahuta with the enormous

makauri trees. We adopted Tane Mahuta as our guardian of the land. He has helped us to recycle through the stories and songs we have created. His face looks over the recycling bins, reminding us to care for the land.

Our children have space to run, space to think, and space to be who they are. They have permission to be active, interactive, noisy and messy. Most of all, they have room to find solitude and peace. Our outdoor environment is designed to engage and challenge the children. They can climb trees – safety procedures are in place and a yellow line marks the trees, which the children know means "our feet do not pass this point".



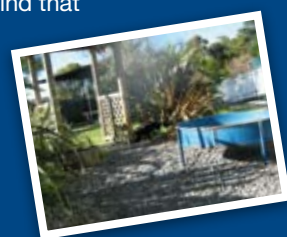
Children are encouraged to respect and look after these body-building natural climbing frames. They are able to ensure their friends know the limits and boundaries of exploring the trees.

We have no swings, but ropes hang off the trees, one with a tyre on it, so children have to make their own movement. The upper body strength that is needed to climb a rope or swing from the tree is vital to growing bodies. We have a large challenging swinging log, which extends balance,



body movement and coordination; this is also an opportunity for children to utilise their social skills, as it can hold up to ten

children. The bridge that links our deck and living hill is wobbly and challenging. It lives amongst the flax and cabbage trees; to cross the bridge is an experience that is reflective and empowering. We find that lots of children will take time out of their busy lives to sit and think here.



Our water play is on smooth river stones, surrounded by flax. This has the calming effect of a river scene. Children initiate activities around water play in a serene environment. Digging in the stones is encouraged; stones are moved around the kindergarten, always reminding children where they came from. This highlights the respect shown for the environment. We have a hand pump in the water trough, if children want to use the water elsewhere they have to pump it themselves. We are on tank water, so this encourages respect and conservation, as well as physical exercise. This empowers us to be conservationists relating to Whakamana – empowerment – as described in Te Whaariki.

Using gross motor skills is vital to growing bodies. We are able to dig in the bark around the climbing tyres and swing log. Children can move the bark to where they feel it is needed (they are the caretakers) and this is encouraged. Trolleys, wheelbarrows and trucks are used in the move. This promotes leadership skills and cooperative



play. Our sandpit is in the deck, it is deep and challenging. Around the sandpit we have cooking

facilities; and we encourage the inclusion of girls and boys.

Gross motor skills are also used when

building the wooden house. Large planks of wood have been pre-drilled with holes; the children are able to hammer on these boards to create a pre-built house frame. The skills used are immense. The ladders take them higher for the roof work. Care and attention is needed to keep our friends safe below. When the house is knocked down to start again, children are reminded to use the magnets to pick up the nails; safety and science are everywhere! The house encourages Ng Hononga – relationships – as set out in Te Whaariki.

As our deck is under cover, we are outside in all weather. The teachers are role models and dress

up warmly and they expect this from the children. We have found that going outside in cold weather, rather than being cooped up inside, reduces the risk of infection of colds and flu, and the physical exercise and exhilaration makes our blood flow!

The deck is a work of ingenuity; it stretches around the corner giving two large areas of space. The deck interacts with the trees and the living hill, creating a perception of space and security, surrounded by nature. Large sliding doors enhance the indoor/outdoor flow and assist the indoor curriculum to extend outside. Low tables and cushions are used.

We have a running lane of grass, so children can extend and challenge

themselves – they need to release tension and stress. Teachers also feel a sense of release when outdoors.

Our path leads us around the building and can be used with trolleys, prams and trucks. Using their own body strength to push or pull is not only healthy for the children, but also very rewarding. Bikes, although they offer skills such as balance and cooperation, are not encouraged, as this is a more individual pursuit, which can lead to children coveting and not sharing equipment. We feel disputes and bullying are minimal because of the natural design and use of equipment.

The children are the caretakers of the environment, so gardening is an essential element in our programming and planning. When there is planting or harvesting to be done, the children are always involved. This is research work, and elements of conservation and science are eminent. The garden work is recorded by assessment and photos for our term programming, planning books and self-review. Information is available for the parents and community to revisit.

The positive effect of having a natural environment creates a sense of harmony for everyone.

Families who are visiting for the first time often comment on the relaxing environment. Teachers often relate feelings of calm and peacefulness.

We hope that you gain insight and enlightenment from our outdoor environment, and thank you for taking the time to share our passion.

*Kia puawai koe ki te ao,
Ka kitea a painga*

*So you shall blossom into the world
And the world in turn is transformed.*

(ke Tua o Te Pae)

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Edible gardening

JULES MOORE REPORTS

The arrival of the edible phenomenon has been gaining popularity in recent times worldwide. So it's not surprising that there has been an increasingly popular movement to educate the future of our little people about this within the early childhood education sectors. This exciting new concept is emerging as a popular choice for some centres, and planting anything edible has become the thing to do for the first time in many years. With careful planning and knowledge of the plants' growth and requirements, planting within centres has never been easier; trees that normally would be considered too large are now being shaped or pruned, standardised or espaliered, thus accommodating a smaller area for planting.

This holistic approach is beneficial for the adult (teacher) and child alike. Whether it's a small window box growing some strawberries, a slightly larger boxed veggie garden or a mini orchard of everything fruity from blueberries and plums to lemons and oranges, this is an exciting new trend and one I'm predicting will be embraced by many.

My goal is not only health and wellbeing related, but one that is on a more interactive level with the children. The first speaks for itself but the second is really all about getting back to basics and the buzz that naturally occurs within us all genetically when we harvest, prepare and eat what we have grown. In doing this, endorphins are released and as a result you feel good. From as early as 8 years old I can remember growing and propagating plants, and these life skills have remained with me, inspired me and now it's important for me to pass on this knowledge. So by putting my design skills into practice, together with a lifetime of horticulture experience, and by expanding my own plant palette of edibles in my nursery, I can now say the

way is paved for a fundamental change of heart, if this is what you want to achieve within your own centre.

Space for planting, which has always been an issue, needs to be carefully considered. How do you best maximise the available area you have for your centre's edible potential? A good design with knowledge is paramount, and with clever design nearly all-year-round production can be achieved. Of course, planting is only a small part of your centre; there are so many other things to consider too. So it is important if you are starting out to make every plant count. For years we haven't thought too much about this, planting native griselinia hedges where lemons, oranges, feijoas or even guavas could go instead. This makes for a much better use of planting. In The Superstart Pre-school on Ruby Drive in East Tamaki, recently landscaped by the Plantet Earth team, the council had already passed off the plant choices. It was a mixture of native griselinias, hebes and pohutukawas. Working with my client Lyn Burgisser and with the council for a more sustainable approach we were able to turn this around – as a result she now has a wonderful choice of alternatives, that will provide a food source for her centre.

The design was created especially with the edible and sustainable concept in mind. A small green house with its own water tank that will be used for propagating and growing vegetables takes pride of place within the playground. The veggie gardens are raised beds, filled with good earth mix for optimum growth. Within the green house area there is also a dual kitchen sink. One sink drains into a bucket so that the children learn to recycle water during the summer months and the other is plumbed normally, and this is used during the winter months.



We started by planting out the perimeter in several different hybrids of feijoas, forming a hedge barrier or windbreak for the centre. The hybrids ripen at different times allowing an even production over three months instead of all at once. Feijoa juice is particularly high in fibre and antioxidants and, of course, feijoas are delicious eaten raw. Other raised planters also contain standard mandarins so that the height can be maintained with an under-planting of strawberries for easy picking. Once again we used different mandarin hybrids. Satsuma ripening in July, then Silver Hill, Clementine, and finally Encore in November and December. In front of some of the plantings, mrytis ugni (New Zealand cranberry) was used and clipped lower to allow for a compact small shrub. Its delicious red berries can be harvested from these bushes in March.

On another boundary we have planted a slightly higher hedge of lemons, oranges and macropiper excelsum (kawakawa). The latter is included in my homemade lemonade recipe with ginger and honey (over page). This is not only a refreshing drink, warm for winter or chilled for summer, but is an extremely good natural tonic for children and adults as well. The lemons are a healthy way of giving children their daily intake of vitamin C. With careful trimming the

Photos on this page courtesy of Jules Moore.

lemons, oranges and kawakawa clip beautifully into hedges just as you would trim a row of griselinias but with the added benefit of all-year fruiting.

Other edibles planted within Superstart Pre-school are goji berries, blueberries, thornless blackberries, boysenberries, raspberries, strawberries, yacon, ginger, and figs (great for shade). And there's more – a triple-grafted pear, greengage plum, peaches, the “anti – cancer apple” Monty Surprise', two espaliered pears and apples (fruiting at different times), red guavas, a mulberry, climbers: grapes Iona and Albany Surprise, stauntonia hexaphylla (tropical fruit), and passionfruit, plus different herbs and many veggies. The garden also has a sensory element too, with scents from the different flowers and leaves. All in all, this entire garden has a 95% edible occupancy!

In another centre in Mangere Bridge pioneered by Michele Pratt and her team at Living and Learning and designed by Architect Phil Smith, we have worked with a similar theme but with some special differences. Because of its location Michelle had concerns that the side entrance to the community centre would be a target for graffiti. By planting out a 40-metre length of lemon yen bens and citrus tangor ugni along the side of the centre the problem will definitely be reduced. The slender thorns of these citrus trees are cleverly disguised behind the lush citrus leaves, leaving the unsuspecting thief or vandal to be reminded they shouldn't be there. The centre also gets to benefit when the fruit are harvested too. Within the main edible area the staff and children alike have embraced Phil's amazing design and planted their own veggies. The centre has a good cross section of edibles similar to the one in East Tamaki. The design even impressed the Prime Minister when he visited the centre and opened it officially in October this year.

Taking this sustainable approach is a matter of thinking outside the square, utilising what we have at our fingertips and making it count. It certainly is a great place to be in. Edible garden design is not only aesthetically rewarding but also delicious for our taste buds, our body and soul.

Edible planting choices...

The Mangere Bridge Living and Learning Family Centre. The children put their own finishing touches to the landscape by incorporating a dinosaur egg hatching.

Photo courtesy of Jules Moore



One of the super fruits containing antioxidants, blueberries taste delicious and are incredibly good for you.

Photo courtesy of Jules Moore

Commonly known as the mulberry, this hardy, fast-growing tree is mildly drought-tolerant and provides a unique, sweetly tart taste

Photo courtesy of matthewsbotanicalimages.com



This rich-flowering miniature cherry produces sweet-tasting fruits during spring and early summer, tolerating most soil types.

Photo courtesy of matthewsbotanicalimages.com

The New Zealand cranberry can be used as a hedging alternative. Eaten raw or used in cooking, this versatile fruit is high in antioxidants.

Photo courtesy of Jules Moore



Plantet Earth is an award-winning landscape design and construction company. Lead designer Jules Moore has more than 28 years' experience as a horticulturist and landscape designer. Jules won Gold and the People's Choice Award at both the 2005 and 2007 Ellerslie Flower Show. She is passionate about plants and people alike and gives of her time and energy to projects that inspire her - early childhood centres are one of her passions. You can contact Jules at jules@plantetearth.co.nz or on 021 809 089 or have a look at the Plantet Earth website: www.plantetearth.co.nz

Phil Smith is an English-trained architect, now working in New Zealand, who specialises 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 phil@philsmith.co.nz or mobile: 021 716 893. For projects see www.philsmith.co.nz

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ROYAL ACADEMY OF
DANCE

Old-fashioned homemade lemonade with kawakawa and ginger



What you'll need:

- 1½ cups honey or 1 cup sugar, you can use less sugar if you prefer a tarter taste
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup lemon juice
- 2 cups of water
- Ginger root
- Kawakawa leaves (steeped)

How to make it:

Make a simple sugar syrup, first by dissolving the sugar in the boiling water and simmering for 3 minutes. Add the rest of your water, lemon juice, ginger root and kawakawa leaves and leave to stand for 15 minutes. Chill for an hour and serve with ice.

To make the lemonade pink you can add a cup of raspberry juice, blackcurrant juice, blueberry juice, or any other fruit juice and add 1 cup of water per cup of pure juice.

Ginger: the facts

The health benefits of gingers: Gingers are a deciduous perennial with thick branching rhizomes and sturdy upright stems. Their sweet, pungent, aromatic qualities increase perspiration and improve digestion and liver function. Gingers can control nausea, vomiting, coughing and are useful with ulcers.

They can also improve circulation, warming the body and the mind and sharpening the memory and our senses. Gingers will also 'ground' a person while stimulating the mind, and are very effective in restoring excess moisture from the body (phlegm or catarrh).

Externally on the skin it will reduce bruising and sores. Ginger has the following qualities: analgesic, antiseptic, anti-spasmodic, bactericidal, carminative, expectorant, febrifuge, laxative, stimulant, stomachic and tonic properties.

Reviews

BY SARAH ELLICH



The CSIRO Wellbeing Plan for Kids

Dr Jane Bowen, Dr Nadia Corsini, Claire Gardner, Dr Rebecca Golley, Dr Amy Slater
Penguin Books

What stands out about this book is how incredibly practical and useful it is. Published by the Australian Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), it is the result of a consumer study into what people have found most useful about the CSIRO Total Wellbeing Diet books. Using that information they have created a book that aims to help parents and caregivers “make their family’s lifestyle a top priority”. It covers essential information about kinds of

food, nutritional information for different ages, food habits and behaviours, and it incorporates meal plans, exercise ideas and 100 recipes. But what makes it really helpful is that is genuinely takes into account how families work – things like what times of the day are busiest for families, the myriad reasons why children won’t eat or won’t get active and, most importantly, some very sensible and workable ideas about how to handle these situations. Tips and ideas on monitoring, setting boundaries, reinforcing the positive, encouraging desirable behaviours and managing resistance are added to each section. The book is aimed primarily at parents, but centres could gain a great deal of beneficial information from this fantastic resource.



The Merry Christmas Activity Book

Jane Bull
Dorling Kindersley

This book is full of ideas for creative, decorative, (and some edible) Christmas activities. From the glittery tree decorations to the glowing candle holders there are plenty of ideas that could be adapted for younger or older children based on their level of dexterity

and trustworthiness with scissors! Most of the ideas use resources that you are likely to have to hand or that can be bought cheaply or sourced from parents, such as paper, glitter, cloth, and jars. There are some great recipes for making pomanders and pot pourri and decorated biscuits and chocolate Rudolfs. As well as following the easy instructions to make the items in the book, it’s a good source of inspiration for craft ideas at other times of the year.



Walking Through the Jungle

Debbie Harter
Barefoot Books

This book works really well with the accompanying sing-along CD. A simple tune, complete with sound effects, with each line sung first by the adult and repeated by the children makes it absolutely perfect for an energetic sing

along. In each section we are introduced to a new verb and a new animal and the noise it makes (Walking through the jungle... What do you see?... I think I see a lion... Roar! Roar! Roar!... Chasing after me). Great for acting out the verbs such as swimming, climbing, slipping, as well as the animal noises – it might not be the quietest reading time you’ll ever have – but it might be one of the most fun!



Me and You

Janet A. Holmes and Judith Rossell

Little Hare Books

There are many things that the rabbit in this story likes about being himself, like being able to stand on his hands, turn

somersaults or blow up balloons, but the thing that he likes most about being himself is that he can be with his friend, the mouse. Simple and straightforward, with joyful illustrations of the rabbit and the mouse performing a range of fun activities – this is a great hard cover book for the under 2s about friendship and being yourself.

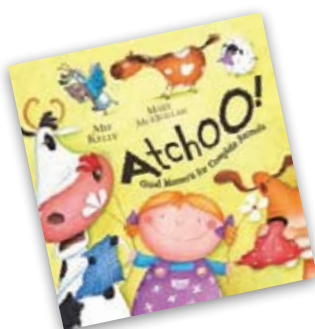


Moonrabbit

Megan Kelliher
Illustrations by Dominique Ford
Puffin Books

Moonrabbit is a rather magical book – the images throughout are of the moonrabbit in a night sky glowing softly with stars as he travels to find a child

to grant a dream to. The story takes on a kind of mythology all of its own, as the moonrabbit with his softly closed eyes floats from page to page scenting children's dreams. It is likely to be one of those books that children remember into adulthood as being particularly special. A wonderful and gentle story to read at sleep time.



Atchoo! The Complete Guide to Good Manners

Mij Kelly and Mary McQuillan
Hodder Children's Books

Children will appreciate the humour in this cautionary tale of Suzy Sue who went "atchoo" and didn't cover her nose. Her animal friends are horrified at her bad manners and this sets them off on a crusade to modify each other's bad habits. The dog is smelly, the pigs' table manners are atrocious, and the

cats fight and won't share. But in telling each other their faults, they all end up offending each other. So Suzy Sue tells them that the golden rule is to be kind and to "always do what you'd like others to do". By leading by example the animals are able to teach each other how to behave properly and still be friends. Humorous illustrations create some great characters, and there's lots of fun language and rhymes, so it's a great book to read out loud with lots of energy and different voices for the animals.



AquAnimals2 – Mysteries of the Deep

Kelvin Roy
Martian Music

Many of the songs on Kelvin Roy's second CD about aquatic animals focus on physical descriptions and the animals' movements. Combined with the strong percussive element of the songs this makes it a good album for children to move to. There is a lot of information about each animal in the song, so they

could be a useful starting point for talking about a particular animal – listen to the song, then have a look at a picture or video clip of the animal to see what the lyrics mean when they talk about jellyfish tentacles hanging "like ropes" or to find out how to walk like a crab. The CDs are available from Kelvin Roy at Martian Music. You can email him for more information at kandcroy@clear.net.nz

Have a look at Kelvin's article on page 36 in this issue of *Swings & Roundabouts* on the importance of music to children.



One Day a Taniwha

**Written and sung by Aunty Bea –
Piatarihi Tui Yates**

**Illustrations by Katherine Quin
Aunty Bea Publications**

Accompanied by a sing-along CD, this book tells the story of a taniwha who tries to befriend a boy. Set in a recognisably New Zealand landscape including sea and land animals and trees, this deceptively simple book packs a lot into its 11 pages. The words are set to the tune of You are

my Sunshine and are in both Maori and English. The English version also includes some Maori words, the meaning of which is clear from the illustrations. This creates a great interplay between the English and Maori versions, highlighting not just vocabulary but the different syntax of the languages. The final page includes a diagram of the taniwha with the Maori names for body parts highlighted, adding another element of learning to the book. You can order copies from www.auntybea.co.nz



Be in to win copies of these books and CDs!

We have a review copy of each of these books and CDs to give away. This issue there will be three lucky winners. To be in to win one of these fantastic parcels of books and CDs, simply write your centre name and address and the answer to the following question on the back of an envelope and post to: ECC December Book Giveaway, PO Box 31672, Lower Hutt. 5040 by Wednesday 23 December 2009.

Thanks to Wheelers for sending us a copy of *Me and You*, *Atchoo! The Complete Guide to Good Manners*, *Walking Through the Jungle*, and *The Merry Christmas Activity Book*.

Question: Who went “atchoo” and didn’t cover her nose?



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Beyond Bollywood - weaving the flax of Indian culture into your centres' Whaariki

ANU MYSORE AND CHITRA DESHPANDE REPORT

Anu and Chitra presented a workshop at this year's ECC Annual Conference – they were some of our most popular presenters, so we asked them to write us an article about how centres can introduce aspects of Indian culture into their centres.

Culture

Culture is the sum total of experiences, values, behaviour, skills, traditions that a child receives from the previous generation. It includes songs, stories, food, clothes, celebrations, festivals, ceremonies, arts and artifacts that are unique to a particular cultural group. To maintain and promote cultural identity, it is critical that a child grows up in their own cultural milieu or has exposure to many of the cultural aspects associated with their culture.

An ever-growing young migrant Indian population in New Zealand is reflected in the increasing numbers of Indian children participating in early childhood settings. Therefore, it is important that parents and teachers of young children join hands in celebrating and affirming these children's languages and cultural identities.

Beginning our journey

In 1995, as passionate early childhood educators, working with children and families in New Zealand early childhood settings, we were very impressed and empowered by the fact that these settings celebrated and affirmed different languages and

cultures. We found that our new early childhood curriculum, Te Whaariki, was fluid and flexible, emerging from and mirroring the hopes and aspirations of our bicultural nation. The curriculum went even further, to affirm the language and culture of various other ethnicities who had embraced New Zealand as their new home.

Walking the talk

Te Whaariki in its communication goal 3 discusses that children should experience an environment where they are exposed to the stories and symbols of their own and other cultures. Keeping this in mind, as and where appropriate, we began to introduce the languages, cultural norms and practices, food, music, traditional clothing, and art and craft into the centre's curricular whaariki. To do this, we had to look beyond the four walls of our centres, in addition to relying on existing centre resources. We found some authentic and appropriate resources to work with Maori, European, and Polynesian families. We were also able to access professional development to empower teachers to work confidently with families and children from these cultures. However, finding quality resources and accessing professional development to work with families and children from other cultures became a challenge. We had to rely on the expertise and involvement of families within our centres to affirm the cultural identities of children from the other diverse ethnic groups.



Taking small steps

We found that we were able to contribute meaningfully in incorporating Indian culture and languages into our centres. We utilised our personal cultural capital to integrate Indian children and families into our centres. When it came to finding appropriate cultural resources, we found a definite lack of quality ideas and resources reflecting Indian culture and languages. We relied heavily upon Bollywood music and dance to epitomise Indian culture. We did not find this very apt, as the richness of Indian languages and culture go far beyond the capacity that Bollywood has to portray them.

Bridging the gaps

We started to think about how we could bridge the gap to overcome this paucity of Indian cultural and language resources. We sensed that there was an explicit and implicit need amongst the various stakeholders in early childhood, including families and teachers, to find ways and means of integrating Indian

Photos courtesy of www.photos.com

families and children into their centres. We found that teachers wanted answers to questions like:

How can we enhance a sense of belonging for Indian children and families?

How can we incorporate Indian languages and culture into our daily practice?

After much deliberation, we decided to take the plunge and our vision was born. It was to:

- Celebrate cultures; Empower children.
- Enhance a sense of belonging for children from Indian communities in early childhood settings.
- Promote Indian languages and culture through innovative resources.
- Offer professional development to empower teachers and early childhood communities to integrate Indian culture and language into New Zealand settings.

We were aware that this was a pioneering step and had no precedent. We knew we would need to walk the hard yards. Thus, in August 2008, My Desh came into being.

Beyond Bollywood

Reaching beyond Bollywood, could be achieved by finding some answers to the questions posed above:

“How can we enhance a sense of belonging for Indian children and families?”

“How can we incorporate Indian languages and culture into our daily practice?”

Every New Zealand early childhood setting has woven into its flax the notion of cultivating and enhancing a sense of belonging for all children and their families. We would like to share some strategies that teachers would be able to incorporate into their practice easily to create an Indian ambience, provide appropriate music, books, toys, pictures and experiences offering a taste of India. This would ensure that children and families find visible links with their home country and culture. The nostalgic feelings evoked would enhance their sense of belonging within the early childhood setting.

Some fun facts about India...

Below are some great fun facts about India, its people, and the culture.

India fact file

- 325 languages spoken – 1,652 dialects
- 18 official languages
- 29 states, 5 union territories
- Predominantly Hindu religion. Other religions include Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Parsi, and other.
- Fastest growing IT super power
- Indian Railways, the biggest employer in the world.

Some Indian states, their capital cities, and the languages spoken there

States	Capital	Languages
Andhra Pradesh	Hyderabad	Telugu and Urdu
Assam	Dispur	Assamese
Bihar	Patna	Hindi
Goa	Panaji	Marathi and Konkani
Gujarat	Gandhinagar	Gujarati
Haryana	Chandigarh	Hindi, Haryanvi
Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar (Summer)	Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu, Ladakhi
	Jammu (Winter)	Pahari, Punjabi and Dadri
Karnataka	Bangalore	Kannada
Kerala	Trivandrum	Malayalam
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal	Hindi
Maharashtra	Bombay	Marathi
Orissa	Bhubaneswar	Oriya
Punjab	Chandigarh	Punjabi
Rajasthan	Jaipur	Rajasthani and Hindi
Tamil Nadu	Chennai	Tamil
Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow	Hindi
West Bengal	Calcutta	Bengali

Greetings in different Indian regions/languages

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|
| • West and North India | Namaste, Namaskar, Namashkar |
| • Punjab | Sat sri akaal |
| • Bengali | Nomoshkar nomaashkaar |
| • Telugu | Namaskaramu, Namaskaram |
| • Tamil | Vannakam |
| • Malayalam | Namaskaaram, Sughamaano? |

Teachers will feel empowered by gaining a basic awareness and genuine knowledge about Indian people, their traditions, religions, sights, sounds, smells, costumes, music, monuments, celebration, food, etc. They will then be able to have an authentic and meaningful dialogue with children, families and whanau, enabling them to build trust and rapport and a true partnership with them, thus doing away with tokenism as they interact with families. One these pages are some interesting facts that teachers can incorporate into their interactions and conversations with Indian families, making their comments valid and informed.

We hope that empowered by these ideas and conversation starters all teachers will begin this journey to take early childhood settings in New Zealand beyond Bollywood!

Anu Mysore Head Teacher, Glenavon Early Childhood Centre, (Diploma of Teaching, ECE, Bachelor of Education, University of Auckland). My Desh Educational Consultant. Teaching in New Zealand early childhood settings for 14 years.

Chitra Deshpande Professional Practice Manager, Auckland Community Early Childhood Trust, and Early Childhood Educational Consultant. (Diploma of Teaching, ECE, Post Graduate Diploma in Education, University of Auckland). My Desh Educational Consultants. Teaching in New Zealand early childhood settings for 14 years.

Resources available

- Locally produced audio CD with book: "Sing India in 6 Indian languages".
- See India - A big read-together book that showcases some of India's famous monuments.
- Diwali Dhani - An all-in-one kit for teachers, with plenty of ideas and hands-on experiences to celebrate Diwali.
- Katputhli - Authentic handcrafted puppets from Rajasthan with a folktale.

Professional development workshops

- Indian ways of 'Being and Doing'
- Common Indian vocabulary and pronunciation for use in your centre
- Sing India
- Diwali

Contact: mydesh.edu@gmail.com

More fun facts about India...

Famous personalities

- Mahatma Gandhi
- Mother Teresa - Nobel prize winner
- Sachin Tendulkar - Cricket
- Amitabh Bacchan - Legendary Bollywood actor
- Aishwarya Rai - Miss World and Bollywood Super star
- A.R. Rahman - Winner of Oscar Awards – famous composition - 'Jai ho...'

Famous monuments

- Taj Mahal - Agra
- Qutab Minar - Delhi
- Gate way of India - Mumbai
- Hawa Mahal - Jaipur
- Red Fort - Dehli
- India Gate - Delhi
- Charminar - Hyderabad

Traditional Indian garments

- Saree
- Churidaar Kurta
- Ghagra choli/Lehenga - Long skirt and blouse
- Pagadi -Head gear/Turban for men
- Dhoti kurta
- Shalwar Kameez
- Dupatta- long scarf
- Kurta Pyjama - Men's wear
- Topi - Head gear

Some common delicacies

- Naan, parantha, roti, puri, phulka
- Butter chicken/paneer
- Channa bhatura
- Dhal makhani
- Samosa, kachori, pakori
- Biryani
- Dosa, idli, vada, chutney, sambar
- Upma
- Tamarind rice, lemon rice, curd rice
- Maachar jhol

Desserts

- Gulaab jamoon, rasagulla
- Laddoo
- Shrikhand
- Aamras

Significant festivals of India

Hindu festivals

- Diwali
- Dusshera/Navaratri/Durga Pooja
- Holi
- Pongal
- Raksha Bandan

Muslim festival

- Bakri Id,

Ramadan

- Id-I-Milad

Christian festival

- Easter
- Christmas

Sikh festival

- Lodhi
- Baisakhi



Ladybird Early Childhood Centre recently opened its new dedicated Infants and Toddler Centre in Greytown. Built by **Keith Hay Homes** the building was specially designed to meet the needs of this very young age group. "Keith Hay did a superb job, Alison says, "working around the children and inspiring them to take on building projects themselves. **Keith Hay Homes** have done a fantastic job, we're thrilled".

Keith Hay Homes understands the importance of early childhood education for children and our designs will assist you in providing a quality childhood education service in your community.

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Making the most of music for children

KELVIN ROY AND TREVOR THWAITES REPORT



Trevor Thwaites



Kelvin Roy



To learn while having fun is really the essence of music. "Dance, after all, not only antedates music, but is probably the most specific source of music and most of the other art forms as well".¹ It's no wonder then that the first reaction a child has to music is to move. In fact, it is widely believed that it is the rhythmic elements that stimulate the brain the most. It has been shown music activates virtually every part of the brain. "Music takes hold of people on levels that precede intentional articulation...and that is why words, when they are sustained by the immediacy of music have a unique power. They represent, they articulate - and they penetrate."² This is good news for preschools wishing to engage children in pursuit of knowledge in very effective ways.

The second reaction is to sing along. "Dynamism is built into the nature of melody. Unlike the spoken word, when we 'remember' a melody, it plays in our mind; it becomes newly alive, thus we can listen again and again to a [song] ...and yet it can seem as fresh as new, as the first time we heard it."³ And it doesn't take a child very long when listening to music to begin singing along with it - it's spontaneous, including their

sense of and response to rhythm. "[The] linking of auditory and motor systems seems universal in humans and shows itself spontaneously, early in life."⁴ Every preschool should have some simple percussion instruments like maracas and clave (music sticks). Let the music play... watch and be amazed! Aristotle believed that music is a form of character building, and we can note its impact whether soothing the savage beast or stirring children into action.

One of the great beauties of music is that it creates a level playing field for children's learning. "In a group situation or social activity music is a communal experience and there seems to be, in some sense, an actual binding of nervous systems. The binding is accomplished by rhythm - not only heard but internalized identically in all who are present. Rhythm turns listeners into participants, making listening active and motoric and synchronizes the brains and minds (and since emotion is intertwined with music, the 'hearts') of all who participate...drawn into communal singing and dancing."⁵ And this eminently fuels and fulfils children's natural desire to participate.

The ability to remember words from a song transcends time. "Music has the power to embed sequences and do this when other forms of organization (including verbal forms) fail. Every culture has songs and rhythms to help children learn the alphabet, numbers and other lists. The most powerful mnemonic devices are rhyme, meter and song."⁶ The impression lasts. Words with a melody line give people a focal point within the music. So the words get remembered - it is literacy in action through music.

Using repetition and rehearsal in music can help to develop the implicit and procedural memories of children. "[And] all these develop long before the explicit or episodic memory develops."⁷ Important skills like the ability to memorise can be learned early. This is wonderful knowledge - that we can start early and concentrate the learning for preschool children in a fun, moving way that will be of great benefit to them as they continue through their lives of learning.

With children being forced by the media effect to grow up ever more quickly it is increasingly important that preschools engage children in the positive messages and stimuli that music can deliver. Children need their own music. And the benefits to their character development are manifold. Music (via its rhythmic elements in particular) motivates kids to exercise via dance and movement, while the educational

Profile photos courtesy of Trevor Thwaites and Kelvin Roy. Classroom photo courtesy of Creation House.

message in the music exercises their minds. There may be suggested movements in the music or the preschool teacher can suggest some. Because many children are now more inactive at home, it is really important that they become more physically active in ECE so that their learning becomes embodied. Music, particularly music with a strong rhythmic content, provides a very absorbing way of achieving this.

Te Whaariki, the official national document for the early childhood curriculum has, as its stated aspiration, that children should "grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they can make a valued contribution to society" (pp. 9). I suggest that music enables the child to meet all of these goals. It also helps with the principles of holistic development (kotahitanga), it is empowering (whakamana), it builds communities and bonds families and helps to establish relationships. It also contributes toward meeting the strands of wellbeing, belonging, contributions, communication and exploration. Music affords us the opportunity to impart knowledge to preschool children that stimulates their imaginations and creativity, building bridges to their futures in a most immediate way. There is nothing like a song and the song is you.

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Kelvin Roy is a writer, multi-instrumentalist and producer of children's educational music living in Hawkes Bay. Kelvin currently has four children's music CDs that are available to schools, preschools, libraries and the wider community. A new

CD, "Grooving with the Animals" - featuring songs personally selected by Di Charlton of Apple Activities - has just been released and a multimedia CD/DVD release is planned for 2010.

Dr Trevor Thwaites is Principal Lecturer in Music Education and Deputy Head of School of Arts, Languages and Literacies at the Faculty of Education, The University of Auckland. Trevor is involved in national assessment systems and was National Moderator for secondary school music from 2000 to 2008, he was Project Director for Music in the writing of The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum (2000) and was on the Arts Advisory Group for The New Zealand Curriculum (2007). He is also an active jazz drummer around Auckland and leads his own 18-piece big band.

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You don't get harmony when everyone sings the same note!

JEAN ELMER REPORTS

Jean presented a workshop at this year's ECC Annual Conference. Attendees found her presentation on the role of a manager extremely useful, so we asked her to write us an article for Swings & Roundabouts.

Teachers working in the early childhood sector recognise the importance of building responsive and reciprocal relationships with colleagues, the children and families. Effective communication and consultation is essential; however, there are times when we may encounter someone whose temperament and personality style may challenge existing team dynamics.

The better you understand your own personality and that of other people, the more likely you are to realise how others perceive and interact with you.

Knowing how to adapt the way you work with others, how you communicate, provide information and learning, and how you agree on tasks are the main factors enabling successful management and motivating others – and yourself.

Just as we value the uniqueness of each child we teach, so, too, should we appreciate the individuality that everyone brings to a team. We all have diverse drives, abilities, personalities and blend of temperaments that shape our character.

Self-awareness means knowing what makes each of us unique. We need to recognise our own needs, our values, our passions, our idiosyncratic quirks,

our strengths and limitations. It requires reflective self-examination, feedback from others, and knowledge of who you are, where you are going, and why you are going there.

The nature versus nurture theory has long been debated and it is now recognised by many that our personalities are shaped by both our genetic makeup and the influence of our upbringing and the environment.

According to current research on brain development, we are each born with structural differences in specific regions of the brain. Developing understanding of personality typology, personality traits, thinking and learning style theories improves our knowledge of motivation and behaviour of self and others, in the workplace and beyond.

We often choose to work with people who have similar personalities to our own; however, those with opposing traits can bring strengths to a team that complement the styles of others. There are many qualities that are desirable for staff to have when working in early childhood. We need individuals on each team who are visionary and decisive; those that have skills in strategic planning; those that inject fun, ideas, and creativity; and those that are dependable, nurturing, and approachable.

The four temperaments (also known as the four humours), is arguably the oldest of all profiling systems, and it is fascinating that so many echoes of these ancient ideas are still found in modern psychology. The Greek

physician Hippocrates (circa 450BC) was the first on record to study individual personality differences. Hugo Munsterburg (1913) created the first personality test aimed at helping employers make the 'best' hiring decisions. Carl Jung (1922) was the first to theorise that people prefer certain behaviours given a free choice. Allport and Odbert (1936) extracted 17,953 words from dictionaries that described personality traits. These were grouped into clusters and are a baseline of many tests still used today. Katherine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers created the widely used Myers Briggs Model during World War II. They believed that having a self awareness of personality would help women entering the industrial workforce for the first time identify which war-time jobs they would be most comfortable working in (see table on right).

Understanding your psychological type is useful in understanding work habits, decision-making, communication styles, and team interaction. Personality theories are immensely helpful in achieving greater self-awareness, and in helping yourself and others to develop personal potential, effectiveness and fulfillment, at work and in life as a whole.

I would encourage your workplace to explore personality profiling, as when we acknowledge each other's strengths rather than bemoaning individual weaknesses, efficiency is higher and the general work atmosphere will be enhanced. Knowing about people's preferred styles and strengths enables

Photo courtesy of Jean Elmer.

us to provide our colleagues with assistance, opportunities, direction, and responsibilities that fit well with their needs and motivations and also to see more clearly our own true potential.

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Jean Elmer is an experienced early childhood teacher who has been in the profession for thirty years. She was a professional services manager for the Auckland Kindergarten Association (AKA) for four years and is currently the Advisory Services Manager for KiNZ, a subsidiary of the AKA. Her role involves tutoring provisionally registered teachers and supporting early childhood practitioners through professional development.



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New Zealand culture

Today there are many personality models and psychometrics tests available. In New Zealand, Allison Mooney, (author of *Pressing the Right Buttons*) has adapted a model developed by Florence Littauer that she believes depicts categories and traits that embody our New Zealand culture.

Personality Type Comparison Chart

Hippocrates - 370BC	Blood	Black Bile	Yellow Bile	Phlegm
Plato - 340BC	Artistic	Sensible	Intuitive	Reasoning
Galen - 190AD	Sanguine	Choleric	Melancholy	Phlegmatic
Eysenck - 1950's	Lively Talkative Carefree Outgoing	Sober Reserved Quiet Rigid	Restless Excitable Optimistic Impulsive	Careful Controlled Thoughtful Reliable
Myers 1958 (M) - Myers 1958 (K)	Perceiving Probing	Judging Scheduling	Feeling Friendly	Thinking Tough-minded
Merril-Reid - Social Styles 1964	Expressive Peacock	Driving Eagle	Analytical Owl	Amiable Dove
Smalley & Trent	Otter	Lion	Beaver	Golden Retriever
Alessandra & Cathcart	Socialiser	Director	Thinker	Relator
Florence Littauer - 1992	Popular	Powerful	Perfect	Peaceful
Allison Mooney - 2007	Playful	Powerful	Precise	Peaceful

Self review and external review in early childhood services

SANDRA COLLINS REPORTS

What is self review and how is it different from external review?

Self review, like external review, is a way of evaluating the quality of education for children in early childhood services. Self review is the responsibility of those working in or involved in an early childhood service and those people decide what gets reviewed. External review, on the other hand, is undertaken by people outside the service and in New Zealand the Education Review Office (ERO) reviews early childhood services. Services may also engage other 'outsiders' to carry out an external review.

Why is self review important?

ERO's Framework for Education Reviews in Early Childhood Services notes that self review is complementary to and supported by the external review process. Where services have undertaken self review they have a really good starting point for discussions with review officers at the time of their ERO review.

Although self review (also known as internal review) has been a feature of the early childhood landscape for many years, it is becoming more accepted as part of the daily life of those involved in early childhood services. Educators (teachers), parents and managers use self review to improve what they do so children get the opportunity to learn, develop and experience success.

The early childhood strategic plan, *Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki*, gives a particular focus to self review as a means of improving quality and contributing to external review. *Nga Arohaehae Whai Hua: Self-review Guidelines for Early Childhood Education* was published by the Ministry of Education in late 2006 to support services in their self review.

Evaluating self review

ERO recently evaluated how well self review was understood and implemented, in 397 early childhood

services. The findings of this evaluation were reported in a national evaluation report –

Implementing Self Review in Early Childhood Services, January 2009.

This report was sent to all licensed and chartered services early in 2009.



So what did ERO find?

Across the services involved in ERO's evaluation there was wide variation in the understanding of self review, and in the quality of how it was carried out.

What helped services in their self review?

Self review was well understood and carried out in services where leaders (managers and/or educators) saw the value of self review, and could lead others in the process. Professional development opportunities that included a focus on self review helped services to make use of self review to improve practice. Collaborative team work helped to make review more inclusive, especially when educators had been working together in the service for a while. Self review was more effective when those involved were clear about what they were reviewing, and had a plan and/or a process to guide them. Developing guidelines or procedures for self review helped bring everyone in the service on board with both the purpose and how to go about it.

What made self review difficult for some services?

Leaders didn't always understand the purpose of self review or see any value in it. In some services, managers

and supervisors/head teachers were not committed to it and did not have the knowledge and skills to develop procedures to guide self review.

In its report, ERO made several recommendations to help services improve their self review. One of the recommendations focused on services using external review to complement their self review.

So how might self review and external review work together?

Self review and external review each have their benefits and limitations. Self review is more likely to be owned by those involved and is more meaningful because it reflects what is important in the service at the time it is carried out. However, self review is often criticised for lacking rigour and being an easy option. External review, on the other hand, can provide a reality check through a fresh set of eyes. It can also affirm self-review findings and stimulate further review by highlighting aspects of the service that might benefit. However, there is a risk that services become dependent on external review to tell them how they are doing.

Bringing self review and external review together, by recognising the value and benefits of each, offers some exciting opportunities for early childhood services and for ERO.

Some questions to think about

How might your next ERO review build on what you have learnt from your own self review?

How might your service use the findings of your most recent (or next) ERO review as part of your ongoing self review?

How does your service maximise the benefits of self and external review?

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Sandra Collins is a senior education evaluator who works in the Evaluation Services team in ERO's Corporate Office. She presented a well-received session on self-review at the ECC's Annual Conference 2009.

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person, the country's flag or an iconic building - let your imagination roam worldwide! Prizes for the best dressed!

Programme

We are really excited about our new conference programme format for 2010. It has been designed to offer our delegates more session choices and to allow our weekend delegates to get the benefit of hearing more of our keynote speakers. We have also included a broader range of plenary session styles so that we can cover a wide range of issues that will be of value to our delegates. We are currently working on putting together an exciting group of keynote speakers and session presenters for 2010 to educate, entertain and inspire you!

Trade Fair

The 2010 trade fair is almost sold out already! A great range of our regular exhibitors and some new faces will be at the conference from early each day until the end of the sessions – make sure you make the most of this opportunity to source great products, services and resources for your centre.

Registration

Our online registration system for 2010 can accommodate multiple registrations, so you can easily register more than one person at a time. Register online and make your accommodation bookings at the same time. It's so easy! Registrations open 20 November – don't miss out on the earlybird registration rates!



Find out all you need to know about the Early Childhood Council Annual Conference 2010 at www.ecc.org.nz/conference/home.html. Registrations open now!

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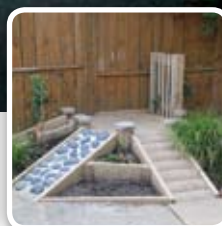
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